



“Furthering Innovative Entrepreneurial Regions in Europe (FIERE)” Project

Communications & Social Media Strategy



Introduction

The “Furthering Innovative Entrepreneurial Regions in Europe (FIERE)” project is a European Union (EU) part-funded project under the Lifelong Learning Programme¹. The project officially commenced on 1 January 2014 and will last for two years.

The project comprises a partnership of seven organisations from across the EU:

Organisation	Location
South-East Regional Authority	Clonmel, Ireland
Waterford Institute of Technology	Waterford, Ireland
Centro Studi ed Iniziative Europeo	Sicily, Italy
Institute for Postgraduate Studies	Sofia, Bulgaria
Allweb Solutions SA	Chalkida, Greece
Associacao Comercial e Industrial de Barcelos	Barcelos, Portugal
Einurd Limited	Egilsstadir, Iceland

The FIERE project stems from a recognition that regional (and local) organisations need to not only be entrepreneurial but also innovative in the pursuit of economic and social development of their regions. “Innovative Entrepreneurship” is a new paradigm and lies at the intersection of entrepreneurship and innovation. It recognises the necessity of teaching innovation, entrepreneurship and creativity skills as part of an integrated programme, and, even more importantly, their application.

The FIERE partnership believes that innovative and entrepreneurial regions can have a greater capacity to achieve their economic and social potential, even in the context of scarce resources. The foundation stone underpinning the project is that providing regional (and local) organisations with innovative entrepreneurship skills — in a holistic and integrated manner — greatly enhances their ability to plan, develop and implement strategies, actions and services for the socio-economic betterment of their regions.

The project will develop an innovative entrepreneurship course specifically for use in the adult education sector that addresses the needs of personnel in community and voluntary organisations. It will also provide innovative entrepreneurship education to policy planners and managers of regional and local organisations (e.g. regional authorities, chambers of commerce, clusters/networks) to enable them to develop and implement their innovative and entrepreneurial policies and programmes. The ultimate aim is to assist regional institutions to make their regions both innovative and entrepreneurial, and to work with other regional stakeholders to turn ideas into jobs. The outputs of the project are intended to raise the skills capabilities of these organisations to develop innovative and entrepreneurial public-private partnerships to tackle challenges in employment, economic development, climate change, energy, etc.

Excellence in communication is vital for achieving these aims and objectives. This Communications & Social Media Strategy is written to support implementation of the FIERE activities. It will clarify for the project partners and stakeholders the channels of communication that are available and how these operate. It will assist with the smooth running and continuity within FIERE.

This Communications & Social Media Strategy will be reviewed and updated regularly by the PSC and feedback and comments from stakeholders are welcomed to assist this process.

¹ See http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/llp/index_en.php for further information on the Lifelong Learning Programme

Communication Objectives

- To generate awareness, amongst the partner organisations, external stakeholder groups and the wider audience, of the FIERE brand, vision and activities;
- Secure the commitment of stakeholders to the project;
- To promote the EU contribution to the project;
- To become an 'information hub' on innovative entrepreneurship in the partner regions.

Key Strategic Communications Aims

- Utilise the FIERE website and social media platforms (LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter) as the primary communication medium 'to speak' to stakeholders;
- Promote and manage the FIERE logo/brand and its activities in a coherent way;
- Make finding out about the project, its activities and events easy;
- Provide and improve communication between the project partners, the PSC and stakeholders;
- Regularly interact and consult with stakeholders and the media;
- Become an 'information hub' on innovative entrepreneurship;
- Publish newsletters and activity reports;
- Establish stronger links with relevant organisations in the partner regions and elsewhere;
- Build national and international alliances and strategic communication partnerships to support the project;
- Maintain and continuously update the website and social media platforms to the very best standard;
- Evaluate on a continual basis, the effectiveness of the Communications & Social Media Strategy.

Target Groups and Stakeholders of FIERE's dissemination and communication activities

- End-users: regional policy planners, managers, administrators, community and voluntary organisations, NGOs, young people, etc.;
- Stakeholders (organisations that can help to reach other people): higher education institutions, private sector training providers, entrepreneurs, teachers, etc.:

Guiding Principles for Internal and External Communications

The Communications & Social Media Strategy has been formulated on the following guiding principles:

- Communication processes must be accessible, clear and known to all stakeholders;
- Compulsory use in every communication (no matter in what form or medium) of the logo relating to the Lifelong Learning Programme. All partners will familiarise themselves with the Programme Guidelines on Information & Publicity and ensure their applicability throughout the project's duration;²
- Wherever possible, communication must be purposeful and timely;
- Wherever possible, communication must be open and transparent;
- In general, information will be available on an open basis, and only in exceptional cases (e.g. to preserve confidentiality or commercial sensitivity), is it not made available;
- Communication is a two-way process. It is not just a question of information and messages being passed to stakeholders; interactive communications are equally important. This is equally true of communications with target external audiences, as perception of the target audience and its response is key to success of the initiative;
- Effective communication increasingly depends on information systems, content and presentation of information and a language style which is easily understood, accessible, robust and reliable;

² For further information, please refer to: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/about/eacea_logos_en.php;
http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/publ/graphics/identity_en.htm

- The FIERE partners must communicate effectively with each other and with the body of stakeholders participating in the project;
- The FIERE operational structure must support effective communication, wherever possible.

Internal Channels of Communication

The project will strive to have internal communication processes that are accessible, clear and known to all partners. Wherever possible, communication must be open and transparent; effective communication depends on regular interaction between the partners and the PSC and on information systems such as email, website, telephone and skype.

Project staff will inform other partner staff of project meetings and will make the necessary arrangements for meetings as well as providing meeting documentation in a timely manner and will utilise online tools such as Dropbox. The project staff will provide the PSC with minutes and notes of meetings and with updates on activities and any relevant developments.

External Channels of Communication

FIERE will communicate with its external stakeholders and target audiences using the following channels:

- The FIERE logo;
- The FIERE website;
- The FIERE social media accounts (such as LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter);
- Publications, which include newsletters, case studies, brochure and activity reports;
- Conferences, seminars and workshops, either FIERE or on a collaborative basis with other organisations;
- Press and media contacts;
- Liaison with appropriate governmental and private bodies and other national and international organisations;
- Other specific and/or once-off communication mechanisms;
- Feedback from stakeholders/businesses.

Logo

The logo will be the primary identifier and stimulus for the project and its mission and activities. Opportunities for FIERE to “co-brand” will be developed by the project partners.

Website

A core communications channel will be the FIERE website which will be an ‘information hub’ on innovative entrepreneurship in the partner regions and of the activity by the project partners. It will play an important role in advertising project activities, including events and in providing access to presentations and papers and links to stakeholder websites.

The home page of the website will be designed to create easy access for stakeholders and businesses and external parties. The website will be designed with good navigational tools and will be linked to appropriate websites to fully connect with relevant organisations and stakeholder groups. All partners should ensure that their website provides a strategically placed endorsement and link on their homepage to FIERE.

Publications

Publications may include:

- Newsletters – will be available as an e-version on the website in EN/IT/BG/EL/PT/IS;
- Case Studies – available as an e-version, the aim will be to publish recognised examples of good practice in innovative entrepreneurship arising in the partner regions and elsewhere;
- Press – issue of press releases and feature articles;
- Posts or online press releases posted on partner organisations’ websites, platforms and portals on the occasion of deliverables being issued, project activities being carried out, etc.

Events and publicity workshops including the International Conference in Brussels

These will include conferences, seminars and workshops, either directly undertaken by FIERE or in collaboration with other third-party organisations. Planned dates for events will be advertised on the website in advance to inform stakeholders. The event programme and registration form will be issued either in hard-copy format and/or via email or website depending on the nature of the event. After the event, relevant reports, presentations and photos will be published on the website and links to other relevant resources will also be added.

Other specific and/or once-off communication mechanisms

At various times and occasions specific and/or once-off mechanisms may be required and undertaken to communicate the project and its activities. An example could be mobile web advertising.

Social media platforms

Social media tools and platforms will be integrated in the project's communication strategy. FIERE's main outcomes and deliverables will be publicised through, for example, a Facebook FIERE account, Twitter, YouTube and Vimeo.

Feedback Mechanisms

These mechanisms will be used to gain continual insights and feedback from stakeholders and businesses as regards the relevance and enhancement of project activities and may include questionnaires and focus groups.

Statement of Disclaimer

Any notice or publication in relation to FIERE, made in any form and by any means, including the internet, must state that it reflects the author's views and that the Lifelong Learning Programme Authorities are not liable for any use that may be made of the information contained therein.³

Recording of Publicity Activity

The project must keep a full record (including copies) of all publicity activities, ensuring the correct use of logos and acknowledgement of the EU grant award.

The project could be subject to a reclaim of some or the entire grant amount if the EU support is not acknowledged in accordance with the guidance on publicity.

Implementation of Communications & Social Media Strategy

There is a need to ensure that the implementation of the Communications & Social Media Strategy is managed correctly in order to effectively support FIERE and its activities and to obtain value-for-money. This will be overseen by Centro Studi ed Iniziative Europeo (CESIE) as Lead Partner for WP6 Dissemination, supported by the PSC.

³ http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/about/eacea_logos_en.php;
http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/publ/graphics/identity_en.htm