



NECOBELAC Project

Project number: 230583

A network of collaboration between Europe
and Latin American Caribbean (LAC) countries
to spread know-how in scientific writing and provide the best tools
to exploit open access information for the safeguard of public health

Deliverable – D 1.1 ***First Review Report***

Due date of deliverable: **Month 5**
Start date of the Project: June 30rd **2009**

Organisation name of WP lead: ISS

NECOBELAC Partners

- Istituto Superiore di Sanità (ISS) Italy (The project coordinator)
- Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (CSIC) Spain
- The University of Nottingham (UNOTT) United Kingdom
- Centro Latino Americano e do Caribe de Informação em Ciências da Saúde, Brasil, BIREME/PAHO/WHO
- Instituto de Salud Pública (ISP), Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Colombia
- Universidade do Minho (UMINHO) Portugal
 - Key Perspectives Ltd. United Kingdom (subcontractor WP2)
 - Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia de Madrid (UNED) Spain (third party of WP4)

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Introduction

A project review by two external experts has been planned and included in the Description of Work (DoW) in order to coordinate the project working plan and to achieve an independent evaluation of the on-going activities.

The external reviewers are required to provide the evaluation of project activities at two different stages of the project. The first review report was planned at Month 5, while the second one will be delivered at Month 24. These two deadlines were selected to allow the project coordinator to optimize the work plan, the deliverable achievements as well as the impact of the project.

This document contains the two external review reports concerning the activities of the NECOBELAC project on the basis of the kick off meeting, the Deliverable 2.1 (including the Questionnaire NECOBELAC Q1*) and the initial release of the Project website (www.necobelac.eu).

In order to support the external reviewers, a questionnaire (Annex 1) has been prepared by the ISS project management team and project coordinator, according to the tasks of the WP1. The use of a single questionnaire was extremely useful in order to let the external reviewers focus on those critical issues affecting the coordination action as well as the project work flow. In particular, the questionnaire is aimed to collect: an overall assessment of the project, objectives and work plan as well as of the project coordination and the project infrastructure development. Furthermore, the two external reviewers were required to indicate their proposals or advices to implement the project.

The report also contains some comments by the ISS team on the above review reports.

* One of the first concrete actions agreed among the parties convened at the Project kick-off meeting (Rome, February 23 and 24) was that of drawing up an initial scenario where NECOBELAC activities will be developed. In this regard, the idea of a survey was launched in order to explore the expectations of a potential audience of users in the different countries and to explicitly target the issue of delivering ad-hoc courses accordingly. More precisely, the initial planned task consisted in setting up a questionnaire (NECOBELAC Q1) drawn up by the Istituto Superiore di Sanità (ISS) taking into account of the partners' suggestions and comments. Comparing data resulting from the survey should be the further task to be accomplished once all the parties have performed parallel actions to arrange the questionnaire in the other Project languages and then to distribute it to the appropriate institutions.

External experts biographical profile

The reviewers in charge of offering evaluation on the first Project activities are:

Elise Langdon-Neuner and Paola Gargiulo

E. Langdon-Neuner is the editor of The Write Stuff, which is the journal of The European Medical Writers Association (EMWA), and a member of the editorial board of European Science Editing, which is the journal of The European Association of Science Editors (EASE). She has a BSc in zoology, is a qualified British solicitor and was formerly managing editor of Diabetologia and The Journal of Men's Health and Gender. She currently works as an author's editor at Baxter BioScience, Vienna, Austria.

Paola Gargiulo graduated in Philosophy at University of Naples in 1978 and obtained a Post-Lauream diploma in Library Science at University of Naples in 1980. She was awarded an MLIS at University of California, Berkeley in 1981. She is presently working in an Italian interuniversity Supercomputing consortium - CASPUR as electronic information resources specialist. Her current job includes liaison activities with 26 Central and Southern Italian university library consortia (CIBER) on electronic resources acquisition, conducting analysis on academic e-publishing market, and organizing public services and support activities to end users on "Emeroteca Virtuale", the digital platform run by CASPUR which aggregates over 334000 current academic e-journals. She is also involved in various activities and initiatives carried by CILEA and CASPUR in supporting and promoting OA in Italy. She collaborates with the PLEIADI initiative. She is a speaker on library consortia issues, electronic resources and user services, scholarly communication, and OA in Italy and occasionally abroad. She is actively involved with INFER (Italian National Forum on Electronic Resources) and with SELL (Southern European Libraries Link).

First review report by Elise Langdon

FIRST REVIEW REPORT

Grant Agreement number: **230583**

Project Acronym: **NECOBELAC**

Project title: **A network of collaboration between Europe and Latin American Caribbean (LAC) countries to spread know-how in scientific writing and provide the best tools to exploit open access information for the safeguard of public health**

Project starting date: **February 1, 2009**

Project duration: **3 Years**

Name of the scientific representative of the Project's coordinator and organisation: **Istituto Superiore di Sanità (ISS)**

Period covered by the report, from **1st month** to **5th month**

Individual report

Name of experts drafting the report: **Elise Langdon-Neuner**

1. OVERALL ASSESSMENT

- 1.1 Overall assessment of the NECOBELAC project as a whole; comments, in particular highlighting the scientific/technical aspects of the Project, including its potential impact:

This project is an excellent and innovative initiative. The European Commission should be commended for supporting the initiative because open access to scientific information will facilitate research interaction and ultimately benefit public health. The partners in the project have complementary and probably the best credentials in open access expertise in Europe and the Latin American countries. Their vibrant enthusiasm bodes well for the success of the project. The involvement of partners from different cultural backgrounds will lead to a valuable cross fertilisation of ideas and the different language backgrounds will reflect and help to tackle existing difficulties in scientific communication.

2. OBJECTIVES and WORKPLAN

- 2.1 Have the Project objectives been satisfactory defined?
(with reference to Description of Work (DoW) - Annexe I to the Grant Agreement)

Yes

Partially

No

Comments

I have set out my comments below with reference to the individual DoW section. My comments relate to where I think the DoW needs clarification:

A.2 Project summary

This section states that the main goal is to spread know-how in LAC on the basis of European and LAC experiences. Here the benefit to Europe of increased access to research in LAC countries is presented as a side-effect. Is this still the main goal? I get the impression from Deliverable D 2.1 that there has been a change in emphasis.

B.1.1 Concept and objectives

The emphasis here is on a culture change by which is meant greater dissemination and exchange of health information based on free and unconditional open access between institutions and to include the general public. It states that it will be useful to develop writing skills.

However, this raises a few questions. The cultural change should also include the scientific writing itself. To perpetuate traditional scientific writing will not help anyone because it is deliberately obscure and inaccessible to the general public and indeed the readability of scientists outside the author's specific discipline is hampered by complex word structures and jargon typical of science writing. This hinders interdisciplinary exchange. For this

reason I wonder if there are any other EU projects that are directly tackling readability in science publication and whether such a project could be linked to the NECOBELAC project because the task of tackling a culture change in scientific writing is too great for the single partner charged with training in this project.

What is meant by South of Europe (last words in B.1.1—isn't Italy in the south of Europe?). Is the intention here just to include countries where English, Italian, Spanish or Portuguese is the language spoken?

B.1.2

This section refers to up-dated trends and guidelines in scientific writing. I am not sure what 'up-dated' means here but it gives me the opportunity to make my point again. Pressure needs to be exerted to simplify and improve readability of scientific writing. To date the *Open Access movement has not had any effect on readability of science.*

This section also refers to a multicultural approach taking account of the difficulties arising from language barriers. Will this also involve a multilingual approach? By this I do not mean the languages used on the NECOBELAC website but

-whether scientific writing will only be in English,

-whether the project will seek to promote communication in the local language for the local general public,

-whether it will help scientists in non-English speaking countries, especially in LAC countries, to publish in their own language,

i.e. the project as a whole seeks to dispel the hegemony of subscription publication of scientific research will it also tackle the hegemony of English?

In the 7th paragraph 'a multi-language structure' is mentioned that is being developed to facilitate access from diverse platforms. Could you please give me details of what you are referring to here as I am not aware of this?

B.1.3.1

Here EASE, MET and AuthorAID are mentioned. I think this should also include the European Medical Writers Association, EMWA, (I am on the Executive committee of this organisation) as there is an increasing trend for articles to be written by medical writers. There are other organisations too, e.g. The Society for Editors and Proofreaders (SfEP) who have criticised a new report to improve skills for the publishing industry produced by the British government. Another group of teachers of English for Medical Purposes (EMP) based at universities in Austria, Hungary, Serbia and Japan plans to set up a standardised EMP testing system would be a good collaborator. Tokyo University has an interesting online project. I have attached an abstract (in English) of an article (in Japanese) about the project.

B.1.3.5

The deliverables for WP6 also refer to the implementation of different languages for access and navigation of digital contents but does not state whether the articles that may be accessed will also be translated into different languages.

The WP7 Description of work Task 7.2 refers to 'common technical standards in scientific writing'. Which standards are envisaged here? Likewise in Task 7.3 which guidelines are envisaged to 'ensure quality of scientific writing'? In the Deliverables (7.3) for WP7 what is meant by 'standard methods in scientific writing'?

B.2 Implementation

I have not been able to find mention of any adjustments (first paragraph on page 43) in Deliverable D 2.1 (except amendments to the slides which were presented). But I believe some were made.

There is no mention in Deliverable D 2.1 of the Project Steering Committee or Advisory Board. Who are they?

B. 3 Potential Impact

Here it is stated that it is very important that Spanish and Portuguese speaking countries are involved to facilitate production of documents in these languages because often the prevalence of documents in English prevents an original production and subsequent use of relevant research. Is the intention then to translate articles that have been published in journals in English?

I would also be interested to know more about the key approach that are mentioned to improve document production and publication in high quality journals regards author's training in scientific editing which will involve local institutions.

2.2 Has the Project bi-directional approach (exchanges and sharing of experiences, tools and strategies between Europe and LAC countries) been shared by all Beneficiaries involved in the Project?

Yes

Partially

No

Comments

I have not been privy to the email exchanges between the partners but the impression I gained from the kick-off meeting was that of an equal exchange between all partners. All partners came to the meeting well-prepared and presented their expertise and WPs to the group. Discussion was lively and involved all partners. I believe all partners gained new knowledge from the other partners at the meeting.

2.3 Comments on the first Project activities carried out: kick-off meeting and kick-off meeting report (Deliverable 2.1 DoW)

Comments

The presentations made at **the kick-off meeting** were of a high professional standard. As stated in my last comment there was a lively and involved discussion which included all partners. The enthusiasm for the project by all partners was impressive. Questions were raised and new ideas developed during the meeting. Ideas also arose from a presentation by the FAO of the e-learning program that they have developed. This could be easily adapted to the NECOBELAC project and the FAO who clearly have excellent expertise are keen to co-operate having previously started a scientific writing project with a French organisation which then lacked the funding to take the project further.

The following are my comments on **Deliverable D 2.1**

WP4, Task 4.5 what will this involve? Are there to be different training according to whether the modules are for researchers or healthworkers? But how will you deal with the writing itself which would as things stand at the moment be different for a research article and a communication to the public (or policy maker without a scientific background)?

WP6, what is meant by non-conventional documents? This needs to be explained. I assume it is grey literature as mentioned in Annex I in the B.1.3.5 deliverables in WP6.

WP7, 2nd phase what sort of scientific associations do you mean here?

Deliverable D 2.1 and the Annex I to the Grant Agreement do have some language/spelling/typing errors. I am not sure how important this is if it is only to be used as an internal document but for the outside world there is a problem here as one of the aims of the project is to develop writing skills.

British English is used in Annex I to the Grant Agreement but there is an inconsistency in the use of the word 'programme' and 'program'. In British English 'program' refers to a computer program therefore the normal spelling which should be used in this document is 'programme'.

2.4 Are the Project Workpackages well interconnected according to the DoW objectives?

Yes

Partially

No

Comments

The workpackages are well-thought through and interconnect according to the DoW objectives.

2.5 Has the initial ISS Coordination action (with reference to WP1 and WP2) been effectively performed?

Yes

Partially

No

Comments

Yes, the Kick-off meeting was very well organised and Deliverable D 2.1 was timely completed.

2.6 Does the Project infrastructure development (website implementation www.necobelac.eu) match the goals of the Project planned in the DoW (e.g Circulating information and supporting all beneficiaries in their initial activities)?

Yes

Partially

No

Comments

The project infrastructure will consist of email exchanges, a website and wiki, which should be sufficient to support the partners in their activities both internally and externally. The website is set up and has received some document postings. It would be interesting to know how many hits the site has received. Is this planned for the future? Different languages are available on the website but not yet for all the documents posted. Currently internal exchanges primarily operate by email as far as I am aware. Email communications from ISP are in Spanish which regrettably I, along with at least one of the project partners, do not understand. The wiki has yet to be activated. The goals for this very early stage seem to have been reached.

2.7 Are other collaborative subjects beyond the Consortium (e.g national and international institutions, existing networks, etc.) likely to be involved from the first steps of the Project?

Comments

Some groups who will be collaborating are listed in B.1.3.1 of the DoW . The FAO mentioned above will also be collaborating with the project. To my knowledge contacts have been established with scientific/publishing organisations in various parts of South America, even at the ICORD conference new contacts were made. This is important because the situation regarding dissemination of scientific information varies considerably on the continent, with Brazil and Argentina advanced compared with for e.g. Venezuela and Caribbean countries.

There is a potential for contacts with other European scientific writing groups and groups that encompass Europe as I mention in my comments on section B.1.3.1 of the DoW in answer to question 2.8.

2.8 Would you make any proposals or advice to implement the Project main areas of intervention?

Comments

I have concentrated my comments on the ‘scientific writing’ aspect. Although scientific writing is mentioned in Annex I e.g:

B.1.3 in relation to the wider scale uptake of open access refers to the need of embedding the use of sound and effective scientific writing practices

B.1.1 mentions that it will be *useful* to develop writing skills,

I gain the impression that there is more emphasis on the scientific writing aspect in Deliverable D 2.1 than in Annex I. Work package 4 in Annex 1 includes ‘how to write and spread scientific data’ as one among other training . The emphasis is greatly changed in the NECOBELAC leaflet too which states at the outset ‘This network is intended to spread know-how in: scientific writing, open access publishing’. It maybe then that the importance of the ‘scientific writing’ side of the project grew as the project developed. However, now that it has developed I think it would be important to include a partner with language expertise in scientific writing. This expert should come with the same ‘free access’ –rather than a commercial—ideal as the current partners.

The cultural change referred to in Annex I relates to the dissemination of scientific information by open access. Open access infringes on the interests of commercial publishers and learned societies which rely on subscription income, which is why significant work on advocacy and community engagement is required as stated in B.1.3. In the same way developing scientific writing training will infringe on the interests of the ever more lucrative commercial writing courses. As a rule neither these courses nor the trainers are accredited by any authority and there is no standard or standardisation. There is therefore an important opportunity for academic institutions to provide approved courses within their curriculum. It would be interesting to know with reference to the questionnaire NECOBELAC Project Survey of the initial scenario whether any training activities are provided by the institution or whether they are available as a separate commercial enterprise.

References to training do not make it clear in the context of scientific writing whether this training is intended to be in writing in English or the local language.

If 'Scientific writing' is really to include the language of writing my main proposal would be to introduce at least a qualified English language partner—because English is currently the language of science—based at an academic institution.(see again comments on section B.1.3.1 of the DoW in answer to question 2.8.).

Name of the expert: Elise Langdon-Neuner

Date: 08.06.09

Signature:



First review report by Paola Gargiulo

FIRST REVIEW REPORT

Grant Agreement number: **230583**

Project Acronym: **NECOBELAC**

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Project starting date: **February 1, 2009**

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Name of the scientific representative of the Project's coordinator and organisation: **Istituto Superiore di Sanità (ISS)**

Period covered by the report, from **1st month** to **5th month**

Individual report

Name of experts drafting the report:
Paola Gargiulo

1. OVERALL ASSESSMENT

1.1 Overall assessment of the NECOBELAC project as a whole; comments, in particular highlighting the scientific/technical aspects of the Project, including its potential impact:

The project is well thought out; it clearly defines its goals and objectives. Globalization and its impact on public health is a crucial issue. Therefore dissemination of scientific information on health related issues in an open access environment is vital for all societies. The future of mankind is based on better economic, socio-cultural and environmental conditions which are also strictly related to health conditions. This project goes straight in that direction: it aims to improve scientific writing in an open access context which means to disseminate quality information to both an expert audience as well as to lay people in order to increase knowledge and awareness on public health. It also reinforces ties between Europe and Latin America and Caribbean countries on public health issues. Health conditions in these two areas of the world are still different and a bi-directional approach will be a learning experience to both. Its potential impact is to contribute to improve health and life conditions, by raising knowledge and awareness and to strengthen ties and trigger future collaboration between European and Latin American stakeholders in specific areas of public health.

2. OBJECTIVES and WORKPLAN

2.1 Have the Project objectives been satisfactory defined?
(with reference to Description of Work (DoW) - Annexe I to the Grant Agreement)

X

Yes

Partially

No

Comments

Yes.

The work plan of the project is well paced and the different area of actions (training, awareness advocacy/ promotion) are well interconnected. The use of the web platform and the other Internet based tools will be crucial for partners collaboration as well as for awareness purposes.

The objectives are also satisfactory defined.

2.2 Has the Project bi-directional approach (exchanges and sharing of experiences, tools and strategies between Europe and LAC countries) been shared by all Beneficiaries involved in the Project?

X

Yes

Partially

No

Comments

Yes.

All beneficiaries showed great interest and desire to share and exchange experiences and strategies. Due to either the common background (public health) or to shared interest (open access and scientific communication) a good deal of beneficiaries have known each other for several years. Furthermore most of them have more than language in common. The majority is fluent in English and Spanish. This is also of help.

The project gives them the opportunity to strengthen their reciprocal knowledge, to learn from each other work experience and work organization and to collaborate on common strategies by using common tools.

2.3 Comments on the first Project activities carried out: kick-off meeting and kick-off meeting report (deliverable 2.1 DoW)

Comments

The kick off meeting was fruitful, the atmosphere was very friendly. Some of the beneficiaries knew each other, this helped the interaction during the meeting which was informal and constructive. Each presentation of the work package was well prepared, a Q/A session followed each presentation, therefore possible doubts were dispelled, request for clarifications about concept and approaches were fulfilled.

The report of the meeting is well done, it clearly summarizes the presentations of the different work packages delivered during the meeting, stresses the fulfilled objectives of the meeting and the main points of discussions.

2.4 Are the Project Workpackages well interconnected according to the DoW objectives?

X

Yes

Partially

No

Comments

Yes. They are. WP3 plays a vital role in the project. A good web platform and good usage of collaborating tools (wiki, blog), of communication tools (emailing, web conferences) and of disseminating and awareness tools (news service, RSS, presence on social networking platform i.e Facebook) will contribute to interconnection and to the success of the project.

2.5 Has the initial ISS Coordination action (with reference to WP1 and WP2) been effectively performed?

X

Yes

Partially

No

Comments

Yes. The ISS coordination action has been effectively performed. ISS approach has been very professional and enthusiastic. All necessary information has been clearly provided. It is tangible that ISS is a solid and internationally open agency with a consolidated network in the public health areas and a strong internal structure to rely on. Moreover ISS staff showed a personal and human touch and ability to motivate people and to move them to action.

2.6 Does the Project infrastructure development (website implementation www.necobelac.eu) match the goals of the Project planned in the DoW (e.g Circulating information and supporting all beneficiaries in their initial activities)?

X

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yes	Partially	No

Comments

Partially so far. Probably it is too early to comment on the website. Currently the website plainly collects the information so far produced in the languages of the project. So far there has been little correspondence through e-mailing. It is still an early stage. It is important that as the project progresses the website really plays a pivotal role by making available all the necessary collaborative tools for the partners to create and share documents, comments (e.g.wiki), to share knowledge (e.g. e-mailing, blog ecc.) and all the tools available to raise awareness on this project (RSS, a page on social platform; Twitter).
More actions will be seen on this side as the project moves on.

2.7 Are other collaborative subjects beyond the Consortium (e.g national and international institutions, existing networks, etc.) likely to be involved from the first steps of the Project?

Comments

FAO participation in the kick-off meeting was very positive. Their willingness to share their experience about their successful and well planned out e-learning training programme and their consolidated knowledge on the issues of scientific communication are promising and will be a great asset for the success of the NECOBELAC project. WHO also showed great interest.

2.8 Would you make any proposals or advice to implement the Project main areas of intervention?

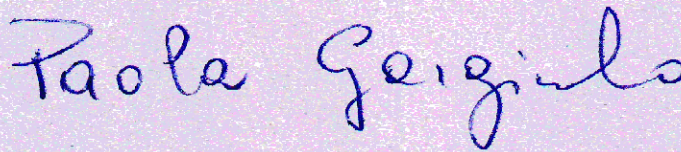
Comments

The project is well planned out and well coordinated. Given the physical distance among the beneficiaries, communication and collaboration through the web is crucial to exchange information in real time, to strengthen their sense of community, to share information, documents. My advice is to start using these tools very soon, to test also which best suits all of them, given also possible differences in communication and networking infrastructure.

Name of the expert: **Paola Gargiulo**

Date: **2009-06-29**

Signature:

A handwritten signature in blue ink on a light purple background. The signature reads "Paola Gargiulo" in a cursive script.

Reflections and Comments

The following aspects of the Project initiatives have been highlighted and critically evaluated:

The different cultural background of Project partners represents a valuable element in favouring the development of the planned activities for the improvement of the scientific communication system.

With respect to DoW initial statements, the point concerning the relationship, exchange of expertise and mutual benefits between Europe and LAC partners has been made explicit in terms of setting up a bi-directional perspective. This has led to a more balanced view of initiatives to be undertaken beyond an Eurocentric perspective. In this regard, all partners have committed to observe a bi-directional EU-LAC-EU approach in addressing the issues pertaining the Project activities.

The goal of improving the writing skills of the scientists and medical staff will contribute to a larger understanding of science among the authors of specific subject areas. As a consequence, this will result in an indirect impact on the general public as well. The issue of quality scientific writing should be considered as an essential tool of a cultural change to be reached when working on the complex domain of scientific communication.

Another issue raised up by the reviewers was that relating to the multicultural approach and the implementation of differential languages to facilitate the access to digital contents; both these aspects should be considered as a tool to overcome the problem of language barriers. The initial idea is to define a training activity programme intended for trainers who will deliver courses in local languages to the benefit of end users. Further aspects concerning the design of the training programmes will be discussed among partners, in order to reach a shared and flexible schema. Trainers will be properly skilled in order to adjust their teaching programmes according to different local needs and audience (researchers, health workers, policy makers). During the kick-off meeting a new collaboration with the FAO has been taking into account, on the basis of its sound expertise in delivering e-learning worldwide. This opportunity reveals the potential appeal of the Project towards cooperative initiatives with international organisations dealing with educational goals and objectives in public health related disciplines.

The issue of facilitating the production of scientific literature by non-English speaking countries is gaining increasing interest among the stakeholders. In this respect, the Project dissemination activities have already envisaged the production of information material in the four Project languages. Moreover, contributions intended to foster the Project impact are being published in Spanish, Portuguese and Italian as well in English, on international and national journals and magazines.

The existing scenario of international collaboration could be enlarged and involve other institutions acting in the field of medical scientific writing in different local areas in Europe and outside Europe.

The need of identifying the existing guidelines and common technical standard in scientific writing has been stressed. This point reveals the importance to use well tested materials and methods to improve the quality of scholarly communication within the scientific community

As regards the Project Steering Committee mentioned in the DoW, its role has been defined in Section 1 (Definitions) of the Consortium Agreement (CA) as “one representative of each project beneficiaries who are charged with planning the agenda of activities according to the project WPs, setting specific working groups among partners, providing detailed definition of deliverables including partners’ specific tasks with respect to the scheduled deadlines. The Project Steering Committee is the ultimate decision-making body of the Consortium and the supervisory body for the execution of the Project”. More detailed information on its tasks and commitments are reported on CA in Section 6 (Governance Structure). In particular the Project Steering Committee is committed to support the Project coordinator in preparing material to be condensed in the Project deliverables. This target has been achieved by all partners in providing full descriptions of their tasks in the WPs, as reported in the Deliverable 2.1, although the precise mention of “Project Steering Committee” was missing.

The Advisory Board was mentioned in the DoW, but it was not mentioned in Deliverable 2.1. This is because as the Project was developing, it was considered useless to create an Advisory board when a Steering Committee (made up of all participants) and two external project reviewers already acted as Advisors. Furthermore, other experts may be called to give their advise to the project Steering Committee whenever it will be deemed necessary.

Communication on the ongoing Project activities among the partners plays a strategic role in re-affirming the objectives of NECOBELAC. In fact, continuing exchange of opinions and proposals emphasized the aspect of interconnection among the different Partners’ working package tasks.

Communication has been interpreted as a means to create a network of institutions collaborating for the Project aims (external communication) and also to guarantee a coherent development of the Project activities themselves within the Project partners (internal communication).

As regards internal communication:

e-mail communication was most often used, but also the reserved area of the website started to be populated with some useful documents;

Telephone communication was rather frequent with some partners whenever it was fundamental to discuss difficult questions;

Virtual Conferences using Elluminate software to communicate among partners and share documents were also carried out in June 2009 thanks to ISP support and facilities (participating partners: ISP, BIREME, ISS).

Partners informally met in Pisa, Italy (ISS-CSIC), Zaragoza, Spain (ISS-CSIC), Madrid (ISS-UNED), Geneva (ISS, UNOTT, UMINHO, Key Perspectives) while attending relevant national and international Conferences related to scientific writing and Open Access. New meetings are planned in October 2009 in Lima (Peru) and in Madrid (Spain).

As regards external communication:

the dissemination of Project objectives was developed through the production of articles and posters as well as oral communications in relevant conference and workshops (Annex 2).

Here are some examples of fruitful collaborations in the initial stage:

- participation in the Open Access Week (October 19-23, 2009)
- cross-fertilization with the eIFL network (Electronic Information for Libraries <http://www.eifl.net/cps/sections/home>)
- inclusions of European journals in the SciELO (Scientific Electronic Library Online) network
- liaison with the ICORD (International Conferences for Rare Diseases and Orphan Drugs) network.

A collaborative project such as NECOBELAC is generally appreciated and most welcome in different geographical areas; it permits all partners to grow in knowledge of different realities, developed strategic plans for information communication in public health and improve existing methodologies also through a better exploitation of ITC technologies.

Annex 1. Questionnaire for the reviewers

FIRST REVIEW REPORT

Grant Agreement number: **230583**

Project Acronym: **NECOBELAC**

Project title: **A network of collaboration between Europe and Latin American Caribbean (LAC) countries to spread know-how in scientific writing and provide the best tools to exploit open access information for the safeguard of public health**

Project starting date: **February 1, 2009**

Project duration: **3 Years**

Name of the scientific representative of the Project's coordinator and organisation: **Istituto Superiore di Sanità (ISS)**

Period covered by the report, from **1st month** to **5th month**

Individual report

Name of experts drafting the report:

1. OVERALL ASSESSMENT

1.1 Overall assessment of the NECOBELAC project as a whole; comments, in particular highlighting the scientific/technical aspects of the Project, including its potential impact:

2. OBJECTIVES and WORKPLAN

2.1 Have the Project objectives been satisfactory defined?
(with reference to Description of Work (DoW) - Annexe I to the Grant Agreement)

Yes

Partially

No

Comments

2.2 Has the Project bi-directional approach (exchanges and sharing of experiences, tools and strategies between Europe and LAC countries) been shared by all Beneficiaries involved in the Project?

Yes

Partially

No

Comments

2.3 Comments on the first Project activities carried out: kick-off meeting and kick-off meeting report (deliverable 2.1 DoW)

Comments

2.4 Are the Project Workpackages well interconnected according to the DoW objectives?

Yes

Partially

No

Comments

2.5 Has the initial ISS Coordination action (with reference to WP1 and WP2) been effectively performed?

Yes

Partially

No

Comments

2.6 Does the Project infrastructure development (website implementation www.necobelac.eu) match the goals of the Project planned in the DoW (e.g Circulating information and supporting all beneficiaries in their initial activities)?

Yes

Partially

No

Comments

2.7 Are other collaborative subjects beyond the Consortium (e.g national and international institutions, existing networks, etc.) likely to be involved from the first steps of the Project?

Comments

2.8 Would you make any proposals or advice to implement the Project main areas of intervention?

Comments

Name of the expert:

Date:

Signature:

Annex 2. Project publications

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