

DigiCulture

O6.4 – Sustainability Plan FINAL

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Executive Summary

This document describes the strategy that will support the sustainability of the outcomes of the DigiCulture project after its lifetime.

It includes information on the project outcomes as well as recommendations and guidelines for using the developed project products.

Objectives of this document

The objectives of this report are to

- Outline the rationale for the DigiCulture project
- Define dissemination and exploitation as elements of sustainability
- Describe the outputs and results of the project
- List the ways in which elements of the project will be used in partner countries

Who is this document for?

This document is intended for

- Policy makers who are interested in learning from or replicating elements of the project
- Educators and trainers who are interested in using the outputs of the project

Contributors

David Evans, JMEA, and all partners

Acknowledgements

All project partners in DigiCulture 2018-2021

Aims and Scope

This document presents a plan for the dissemination and exploitation of products developed by the consortium within the project of DigiCulture. It provides all interested individuals and institutions including those not involved in the project with an overview of the products that are publicly available under Creative Commons Share-Alike licence and some of the ways they could be used. In terms of the potential means of exploitation, the context of each partner country was taken into consideration and the guidelines for reaching target groups and ideas of usage were developed accordingly.

This document relates to Output 6 Evaluation of the effectiveness of Digital Skills for Culture Course, Quality Assurance and Sustainability.

Background and rationale

The original project application contained six outcomes

- O1 - Conceptual Guidelines for Digital Competences and Social Inclusion for Creative Industries
- O2 - Integrated Virtual Learning Hub
- O3 - The Digital Skills for Culture (DSC) online courses (MOOC)
- O4 - Digital Skills E-Assessment and Open Digital Badges for Adult Education
- O5 - *MOOC and DSC pilot phases (not funded – incorporated into O3)*
- O6 - Evaluation of the effectiveness of the DSC course

The application indicated that a Sustainability Plan would be created as part of Output 6 and that this would help to determine what needed to be made available beyond the timeframe of the project. It was recognised that different target groups would be at varying levels of competence in the use of digital communication tools, and that it would be important to consider technological, pedagogical and organisational barriers to sustainability.

The development of a sustainable project in any area needs to involve the following as are relevant (Silvius and Schipper 2014)

- balancing social, environmental and economical interests
- both short-term and long-term considerations
- both local and global orientation
- values and ethics
- transparency and accountability
- stakeholder participation
- risk reduction
- eliminating waste
- consuming income, not capital

Traditional criteria for the evaluation of projects, the ‘iron triangle’ of time, budget and specifications have been criticised in recent years with suggestions that wider stakeholder benefits and longer term sustainability should be added to the measures of success (Atkinson 1999). The Open Badge Network Erasmus+ project, whose findings have been used in Output 4 of the current project proposed four models of sustainability – Sponsorship, Membership (or Merger), Marketplace and Advocacy (Lewis, van den Broek and Mihalyi 2016). This was also developed into a business plan for the longer-term promotion of the concept (Mihalyi 2017).

As the project included among its objectives contributing to the success of specific European Capital of Culture cities, there will be some overlap between the sustainability of project outcomes and the sustainability of initiatives being undertaken by the partner cities. The sustainability plan has been developed through consultations with policymakers involved in the European Capital of Culture programme Timisoara2021 (RO), who were initially partners in the project until delays due to the COVID pandemic and staffing cuts prompted their withdrawal. The project has also developed links with other cultural institutions and networks, and higher education leaders from universities participating in the project and beyond.

The main outputs that have deserve a life beyond the end of the project will be the identification and definition of digital skills and competences required by workers in the culture and heritage industries more

generally, and the creation of an online training course comprising shorter bite-sized modules that are specifically directed towards the needs of particular groups in this population. These will need to be relevant to digital platforms, processes and technologies that are currently available, but they will also need to be adaptable to meet the inevitable changes that will occur in these processes and technologies beyond the lifetime of the project. The project has therefore developed a simple set of sustainability indicators for all outputs to ensure that the long-term sustainability plan will be effective.

The methodology used is based on relevant concepts from innovation theory, including the diffusion of innovation and the adoption of innovation models. It accepts that there are often barriers to sustainability in three dimensions: technological, pedagogical and organisational (Schreurs, Verjans, & Van Petegem, 2006). Validation of this strategy has been achieved through the surveys, multiplier events, online workshops and other project activities.

The final Sustainability plan focuses on leadership, objectives, strategies, outreach and activities. The sustainability plan has been developed in association with the quality assurance plan and with the involvement of key policy organisations inside and outside the partnership such as TM2021, EDEN, Rijeka2020, NoviSad2021, Kaunas2022, Italian Fondazione Idis-Città della Scienza, Foundation InterArt Triade, Art Encounters Foundation, Network of European Museum Organisations (NEMO).

Although the project idea stemmed from specific needs identified by European City of Culture staff and volunteers, the project outputs will also be directly relevant to a larger group of culture and heritage stakeholders, and the needs of these groups will inform the project's sustainability plans.

Methodology, tools and research

In this document **dissemination** is defined as the process of providing information to interested parties on the quality, relevance and effectiveness of the results of the programme and associated initiatives. It can occur as and when the results become available.

Exploitation involves making use of and deriving benefits from the results. For the DigiCulture project, this involves two processes, multiplication and mainstreaming. Multiplication is the process of trying to entuse specific end-users to adopt or apply products, results or solutions developed through the programme. Mainstreaming is the adoption of the successful results of programmes and initiatives by appropriate decision-makers in existing local, regional, national or European systems

Sustainability is the ability of the project itself to continue to exist and function in similar shape or form beyond the end of the contract. This may involve some or all of the project partners continuing to cooperate in the development, dissemination and exploitation of project outcomes and ideas, using their own resources or by the exploitation of other funding opportunities

Outputs and results

This section summarises the planned outcomes of the DigiCulture project, the extent to which they have been achieved and the sustainability possibilities which follow from each.

Output 1, Conceptual Guidelines for Digital Competences and Social Inclusion for Creative Industries was divided into three activities – creation of a conceptual framework for digital competences, a review of existing research on digital competence validation and finally, creation of a set of guidelines on best practices.

The sustainability of Output 1 involves making the conceptual framework and the research on which it was based more widely available under appropriate licence. The research was completed within the timescale envisaged in the project plan and the final version of Output 1.3, Guidelines for Digital Competences for Creative Industries was published online in February 2020. This document is freely available, and further information on the research behind it is available on request from the project authors

Output 2, Integrated Virtual Learning Hub (VLH) involved the design and creation of an integrated, multilingual online and mobile virtual learning hub for digital competences in the culture and heritage sector, based on the Politehnica University of Timisoara's UniCampus platform. Activities included the design of the VLH, technical implementation, development of resources for Output 3 (below), development of a mobile app and user evaluation.

The sustainability of Output 2 involves ensuring that the VLH continues to be freely available, supported and developed for the purposes for which it was intended, and that it is taken up and used by other groups with similar aims. The VLH was launched in (January 2020) and is currently being used to support the completed modules which comprise the DSC online course. The platform will continue to be supported by the Politehnica University of Timisoara for at least (3 years) beyond the end date of the project, and will be adapted, updated and enhanced as necessary to support the number of registered learners

Output 3, The Digital Skills for Culture (DSC) online course was created on the platform prepared under Output 2. Its design and structure was based on the research conducted under Output 1. The course is organised into thirteen modules, each of which can be studied in isolation. Successful completion can lead to the award of a digital badge, prepared under Output 4 (below).

The sustainability of Output 3 will require ensuring that the DSC course continues to be freely available, supported and further developed as necessary on the VLH platform. Its existence will need to be published and disseminated to interested groups.

Course modules are in the process of being launched on the VLH, and it is envisaged that final versions of all modules will be available online by the end of the project in August 2021. Further editing and updating work on these modules will be undertaken by Politehnica University of Timisoara, in consultation with the original module authors and with their active involvement if resources permit. Additional modules may also be added if there is a proven need, and/or if their development can be fully funded or supported through other projects with similar aims that might wish to make use of the same platform.

All course modules (and other intellectual outputs from the project) are to be published with a Creative Commons Share-Alike licence. The intention of this is that project partners and other interested parties may use the whole course or parts of the course with appropriate attribution and recognition of the EU Erasmus+ funding.

Output 4 Digital Skills E-Assessment and Open Digital Badges for Adult Education involved the design of a simple e-assessment process for the modules of the DSC. Both individuals and organisations will be able to assess and analyse the digital skills required for culture and heritage, based on the research conducted under Output 1 (above). Successful assessment can lead to the award of digitally secure Open Badges that can be linked to existing online professional networks or into the stakeholder's organisation or personal site or blog.

The sustainability of Output 4 will need the award and validation of Digital Badges to continue, and for them to be both recognised by and useful to the organisations and individuals for whom they were intended.

The design of the badges and the mechanisms for their delivery was completed within the timescale envisaged in the project plan after a programme of consultation involving project partners and other stakeholders across the EU.

The piloting of the DSC (Output 5) was not funded. A pilot phase was therefore incorporated into Output 3 above.

Finally, **Output 6 concerns the Evaluation of the effectiveness of Digital Skills and Social Inclusion Online and Blended Learning Course (DSC)**. It involved the creation of a Quality Assurance Framework and a Quality Framework for the whole project, together with ongoing and final evaluation of the DSC and all project outcomes, and the creation of a sustainability plan (the current document).

The sustainability of Output 6 will simply involve the recognition of the value of the project overall, and the acceptance of the validity of the various quality assurance, evaluation and sustainability reports created.

Next Steps – Project Outcomes

Output 1

Conceptual Framework of Digital Competences (O1.1) – Sustainability – HIGH

The overview of digital competences showed that there had been little educational research in the field of CI Education. Despite the importance of digital skills to CI workers, there has been hardly any research on the most effective learning methodologies, tools and paths for achieving these learning objectives. Researchers and educators, especially from informal educational contexts, should develop more empirical research activities in this field and define, together with companies and stakeholders in the cultural sector, the profiles required by the labour market and useful for the promotion of workers' social and economic inclusion.

European and National research on digital competence (O1.2) – Sustainability – MEDIUM

The research results underlined the importance of promoting digital competences together with creativity skills in the field of work under consideration. In the next ten years, certain digital skills will become more important, especially Digital Communication and Collaboration and Digital Safety and Digital Communication and Collaboration. With respect to digital skills to be improved by CI employees, information and digital literacy are considered the most important - Managing and Evaluating data, Digital Safety and Protecting personal data and privacy skills. There would be scope for this research to be repeated in the future to assess progress.

Guidelines for Digital Competences (O1.3) – Sustainability - MEDIUM

This output, which drew on the research conducted under O1.3 consists of a table of digital competences and specific tools identified across a wide range of subject areas, many of which have been developed into course modules under Output 3. There is scope for the table to be updated as new tools become available and new skills are identified.

Output 2

Mapping the Virtual Learning Hub Concept (O2.1) – Sustainability – HIGH

Design of the VLH using Moodle involved researching a range of overlapping areas including registration models, course navigation, integration of assessment and digital badges. The research should be useful to any other institution designing anything similar.

Technical Implementation (O2.2) – Sustainability – LOW

Technical implementation issues are mainly specific to the DigiCulture project and less likely to be useful to others.

Technical development of the DSC Course resources (O2.3) – Sustainability – LOW

The collection and listing of OERs is specific to the resources used and cited in the Digital Skills for Culture online course and less likely to be useful to others.

Technical development of the DSC Mobile App (O2.4) – Sustainability – MEDIUM

Alongside the VLH, the project developed a mobile app for iOS and Android which involved the same issues of integration as outlined in O2.1. This innovative work may have implications for others working on similar projects.

Usability Evaluation (O2.5) - Sustainability – LOW

Although an important part of the project, the evaluation of VLH usability employed fairly standard research processes and is unlikely to be particularly sustainable.

Output 3

Digital Skills for Culture Curricula (O3.1), Syllabus (O3.2), Modules (O3.3), OERs (O3.4), MOOCs (O3.5) and Piloting (O3.6) - Sustainability – HIGH

The DSC course itself is the main output of the project and the intention is that it will be both maintained and further developed for the foreseeable future. It is central to the sustainability of the project overall and features in all of the sustainability plans in partner countries.

Output 4

Digital Skills E-Assessment Tool (O4.1) - Sustainability – MEDIUM

The assessment model used within the project needed to initially confirm that the learners had low digital skills, and then to prove that they had obtained new skills on completion of one or more course modules. Assessment used fairly standard tools within Moodle adapted to the specific needs of the project

Design and integration of Open Badges (O4.2) – Sustainability – HIGH

The design of digital badges, the choice of appropriate software to validate them and their integration into the VLH all involved innovative processes which would be valuable to any other project or institution with similar plans.

Assessment of pilot group (O4.3) - Sustainability – LOW

Although an important part of the project, the assessment of the pilot group employed fairly standard research processes and is unlikely to be particularly sustainable.

Output 6

Evaluation Framework (O6.2), Quality Assurance (O6.3) and Sustainability (O6.4) - Sustainability – LOW

The monitoring and evaluation of course activities, although important, is not intended to be part of the sustainability plan in itself, although the processes themselves will continue in a limited way as the project evolves beyond its funding period.

Next steps – Partner Countries

In addition to the sustainability of the outcomes of the project as outlined above, individual partners have presented specific proposals for the sustainability of particular project elements within their specific national contexts. These include liaison with the current and future European City of Culture recipients referenced in the application.

Denmark

Exploitation: Aalborg University is planning to utilize the DigiCulture courses as part of summer school activities for adult learners to use prior to starting their degree.

Dissemination: Aalborg University is planning to continue its research in MOOC-based teaching and build upon the knowledge gained from the DigiCulture courses.

Exploitation: Aalborg University plans to use the hybrid Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality multiplier event as a template for upcoming introductions to VR for students.

Ireland

Dublin City University, in collaboration with the relevant project partners, plan to run additional iterations of some of the DigiCulture courses in both English and Irish on the MOOC platform, FutureLearn. The courses will be adapted accordingly.

Dublin City University (DCU) plans to incorporate DigiCulture OERs and learning activities into the module, FN135 Teicnolaíocht na Faisnéise [Information Technology]. This module is part of the degree BA Gnó agus Gaeilge [Business and Irish] offered by Fiontar agus Scoil na Gaeilge in DCU.

Dublin City University (DCU) plans to present on the project outputs and impact at the I-HE2021 EADTU conference in November 2021. This would serve to further promote the wider use of project OERs and learning resources. For more information: <https://conference.eadtu.eu/ubmit-abstract>

Italy

Use of the DigiCulture courses as specific learning activities within the post-graduate course of "Heritage Education and Digital Technology" (Univ. Modena and Reggio Emilia), directed by Antonella Poce and addressed to future museum professionals. DigiCulture courses will be used to promote students' digital skills in their professional activities.

Dissemination of DigiCulture reports within the postgraduate courses "Heritage Education and Digital Technology" (Univ. Modena and Reggio Emilia), as far as concerned "Standards for Museum Education" and "Museum-based Education" (Univ. Roma Tre), as examples of research documents and materials specifically designed in education research context.

Dissemination of DigiCulture courses, OERs and materials to Museums and Cultural Heritage Institutions partners of the Centre for Museum Studies (CDM – Univ. Roma TRE) as learning materials aimed at soliciting digital skills and social inclusion of Creative Industries employees.

Lithuania

Dissemination: The outputs of the DigiCulture course and the system of Digital Badges will be promoted to the Kaunas European City of Culture project during 2022 with the intention that some elements in the project can be successfully exploited.

UK

Dissemination: The outputs of the DigiCulture course and the system of Digital Badges will be promoted to the Coventry (UK City of Culture) project during 2022 with the intention that some elements in the project can be successfully exploited.

The modules of the DigiCulture course that are relevant to the creation and performance of digital music will be promoted through MakingMusic, the national association for amateur music groups.

Austria

Exploitation: The University of Graz plans to include OERs from the DigiCulture MOOC in its teaching, in the MA in Digital Humanities and it will be recommended also to undergraduate courses in digital skills taught by ZIM staff.

Dissemination: The DigiCulture MOOC has been added to the list of [Digital Humanities projects in Austria](#) and has been promoted through the CLARIAH consortium. The University of Graz will continue to promote the course through CLARIAH and DHA, and promoting the course in Austrian digital skills training.

Multiplication: The University of Graz will include ReInHerit will encourage the use of the DigiCulture MOOCs as part of its work in the H2020 ReInHerit project, in which a section focuses on developing digital tools for the cultural heritage sector – and enabling museum professionals to use these tools (hence training resources will be recommended, including the DigiCulture MOOC).

Romania

Dissemination: The DigiCulture project and the courses have been added to the list of courses offered towards the Creative Industries in Banat region, West Romania - Creativa - and on the courses offered to the volunteers of the Timisoara 2023 European Capital of Culture

Exploitation: The Politehnica University of Timisoara included the DigiCulture Courses among the courses offered to the first year students in the Autumn 2021 as part of their induction week. It will also be recommended as part of the UniCampus courses, sustained and supported by the Politehnica University of Timisoara and offered to all students from the university. UPT will maintain the courses in the UniCampus platform and update them with the necessary technical and functional information and resources.

Multiplication: The DigiCulture Courses are included in the training programme offered as part of the training developed in the Erasmus+ TraCCE - Training on Creative & Cultural Entrepreneurship, a project in which UPT is partner and which started in November 2020.

Conclusions

Research conducted for Output 1 of the project indicated that there was a need for easily accessible training in digital technologies for both new entrants and current employees in the creative industries. The need

was greatest in particular countries (Italy, Romania and Lithuania among project partners), and certain disadvantaged groups of the population.

The project identified specific curriculum areas where the need was greatest, and the course modules created by the project were intended to address these gaps.

During the lifetime of the project, over 1,000 individuals in the project partner countries and beyond made use of the project outputs

The sustainability plan indicates ways in which the outputs of the project can continue to be exploited in the future.

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