



SEPA

Sustainable Productive Equipped Areas

Lead Partner

Partnership

7 EU Partners

Romania – Municipality of Baia Mare
Italy – Sviluppo Italia Basilicata
– Informest
Greece – Bic of Attika
Hungary – CTNC – Regional Dev. Agency
Slovenia – BUINK – Sezana
Bulgaria – Veda

1 Extra EU Partner:

Serbia - ICT Temerin

WPs

WP1 – Management and Coordination

LP - Municipality of Baia Mare

WP2 – Communication and Dissemination

ERDF-PP6 - Informest

**WP3 – Establishing Implementation
Networks**

ERDF-PP1 - Bic of Attika

WP4 – Modeling SEPA

ERDF-PP2 - Sviluppo Italia Basilicata

WP5 – Elaboration of Feasibility Studies

ERDF-PP3 - CTNC – Regional Dev. Agency

ERDF-PP4 - BUINK Sezana

**WP6 – Scouting of financial and business
investors**

ERDF-PP5 - Veda

WP1 – Transnational Project Management and Coordination

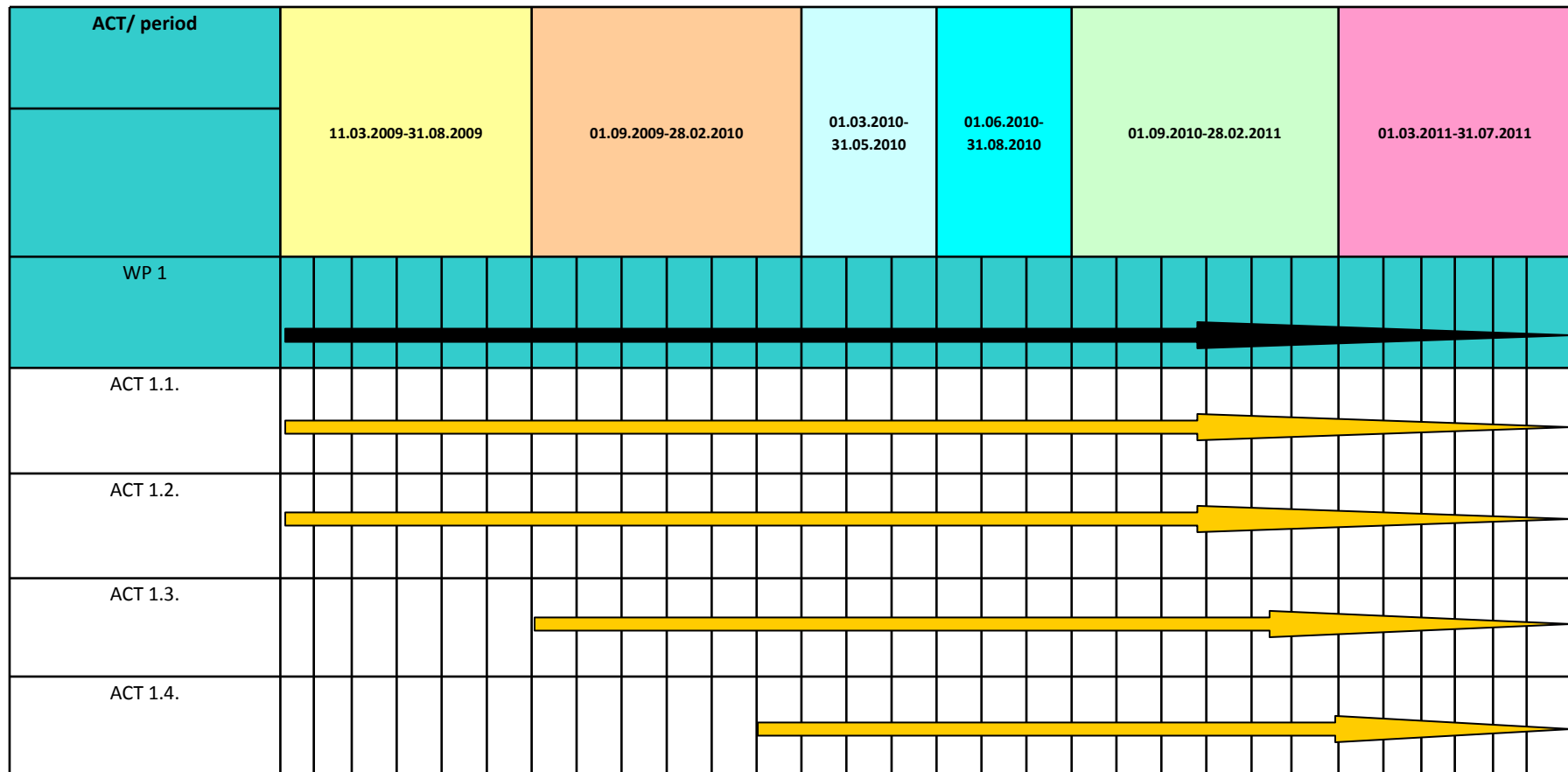
Activities:

- 1. Project Management and coordination SEPA organisation**
- 2. Steering Committee roles and activities**
- 3. External independent financial audits**
- 4. External evaluation**

Tasks: Coordination of the Project Management Unit, Elaboration of Progress, Audit, JTS Reports,

Outputs: JTS reports, Steering Committees, Audit Reports, Interim and Final Reports

WP1 – Transnational Project Management and Coordination



WP2 – Communication and dissemination


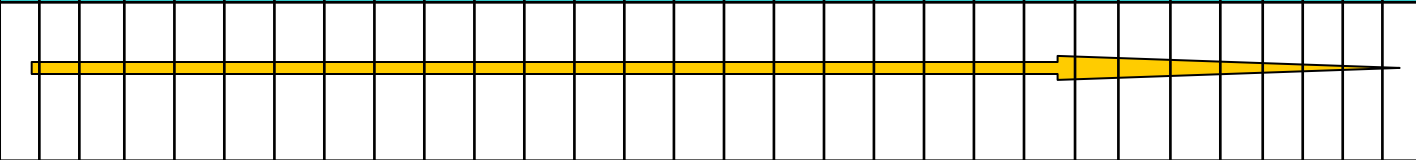
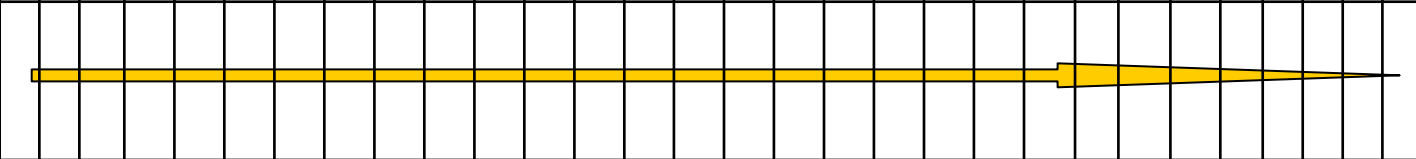
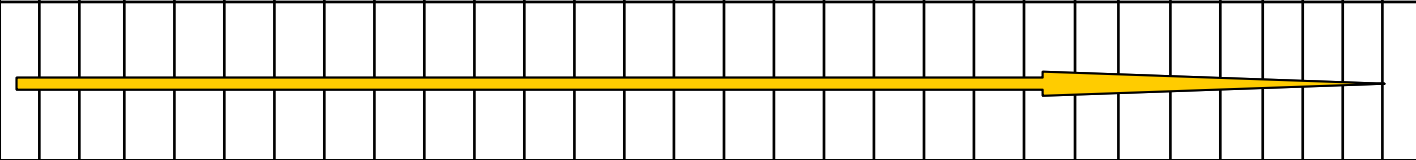
Activities:

- 1. C&D and internal communication SEPA organisation***

Tasks: Elaboration of external and national level C&D, Provision of information for elaborating transnational promotional materials

Outputs: communication plan, website, articles, conferences, brochures, folders, etc.

WP2 –

ACT/ period	11.03.2009-31.08.2009	01.09.2009-28.02.2010	01.03.2010-31.05.2010	01.06.2010-31.08.2010	01.09.2010-28.02.2011	01.03.2011-31.07.2011
WP2						
ACT 2.1.						
ACT 2.2.						
ACT 2.3.						

WP3 – Establishing implementation networks

Activities:




- 1. Establishing SEPA transnational regional local networks***
- 2. SEPA organisation***

Tasks: establishing networks composed by local stakeholders in order to create consensus and facilitate SEPA creation.

Outputs: regional events, involvement of stakeholders with responsibilities at local level, involvement of observers, creation of a management of SEPA's plan.

Target groups: stakeholders, public (municipalities, regions) and private (industrial consortium, chambers, associations, agencies).

WP3 – Establishing implementation networks

ACT/ period	11.03.2009-31.08.2009	01.09.2009-28.02.2010	01.03.2010-31.05.2010	01.06.2010-31.08.2010	01.09.2010-28.02.2011	01.03.2011-31.07.2011
WP3						
ACT 3.1.						
ACT 3.2.						

WP4 – Modelling SEPA

Activities:

1. *SEPA guidelines*
2. *Online training on SEPA guidelines/planning methodology*

Tasks: defining methodologies, criteria and procedures for SEPAs management; training on best practices.

Outputs: guidelines and methodology for SEPAs implementation and management, training on the guidelines.

WP5 – Elaboration of feasibility studies





Activities:

- 1. Identification of SEPAs***
- 2. TOR for feasibility studies***
- 3. Execution of SEPA feasibility studies***

Tasks: identifying SEPA areas, execution of feasibility studies.

Outputs: SEPAs identification, prefeasibility studies, feasibility studies.

WP5 – Elaboration of feasibility studies

ACT/ period	11.03.2009-31.08.2009	01.09.2009-28.02.2010	01.03.2010-31.05.2010	01.06.2010-31.08.2010	01.09.2010-28.02.2011	01.03.2011-31.07.2011
WP5						
ACT 5.1.						
ACT 5.2.						
ACT 5.3.						

WP6 – Scouting of financial and business investors

Activities:

- 1. SEPA marketing tools***
- 2. SEPA promotion/scouting of investors***

Tasks: promote SEPAs at local and transnational levels, identify investors.

Outputs: bid book for investors, database of potential investors, national seminars, international conference.

Evaluation of implementation

To provide the project partners a review of the status, relevance and performance of the project, but also of the partnership itself.

- To identify and describe the problems and to propose solutions
- To identify and describe lessons learned
- To summarize experiences gained so far
- To recommend approaches / methodologies for further dissemination

Key issues to be addressed

- Evaluation of the Project Management (overall requirements to achieve project's objectives)
- Identification of the institutional strengths and weaknesses of the project partners
- Assessment of the project's progress towards attaining its objectives and outcomes (compared with the AF) > activities & outcomes, results in terms of output and performance indicators
- Identification of main deviations from the original plans and exploration of the reasons behind the deviations: problems faced, solutions found
- Recommendations for improving the project in terms of outputs and results

Evaluation of implementation

- Reviewing relevant documents (AF, Progress Reports, WP Action plans, Time Plans, SC meetings' minutes, Outputs & related written documents, Indicators & related written documents, website, brochure, newsletters):
- Field research, visits and interviews with the stakeholders and the target beneficiaries
- Questionnaires
- Aggregated documents related to stakeholders
- Draft documents for the results & outputs of each WP
- Studies, questionnaires related to the selection of SEPA areas
- Criteria to plan & design the SEPA areas (according to EMAS)
- Guidelines for realization of a SEPA area
- Promotional & Communication Instruments

Evaluation Criteria

- ❖ Project Management: responsibilities / tasks/ documentation both for LP and all partners
- ❖ Progress of activities and outputs planned in the 6 components and their financial status
- ❖ Implementation by the partners: quality/timing/outputs/deviations in the plan
- ❖ Risk management
- ❖ Consistency of the project with EU horizontal policies, equal opportunities, environmental sustainability.

The Steering Committee & Management

The Steering Committee and the overall management must act efficiently, providing the necessary information for the partners in terms of activities and outputs ⇒ a new composition of the implementation team at the LP's level who will overtake the day-by-day activities.

Therefore it is a need for an interactive platform for the project members in order to prepare the upcoming periods, to see all deviations and problems, to find solutions in real time.

A need to plan in advance all further Steering Committee.

The Project Management Team

Most common problems related to project management:

- stronger communication needed in order to detect and smooth all problems, to capitalize the projects' results, to solve the different approach in Local Authorities versus Institutions
- partners expertise had difficulties in managing tasks, more communication is needed,
- different regulatory rules in each country (FLC requirements and timing)
- the different legal systems mean difficulties for some partners in terms of (timely) payment.
- Political Board is raising some problems due to its structure – furthermore any change can create problems at partner's level and for the project.
- Language problems exist:
 - Meetings and communication less interactive
 - Misunderstandings also occur very often

The Steering Committee

Based on the previous problems in communication (all messages addressed directly to the LP's Project Manager, lack of time of Mr. Miclaus because of involvement in coordination of Department's activities, etc.) the LP has issued a new Mayor's Disposition for the Management Team at the LP's level as follow:

- **Overall coordinator of the project – Dorin MICLAUS** dorin.miclaus@baiamarecity.ro
- **Project Manager – Dan CARPOV** dan.carpov@baiamarecity.ro
- **Project Manager's Assistant - Dan IEREMIA:** dan.ieremia@baiamarecity.ro
- **Financial Manager - Paul PECE** paul.pece@baiamarecity.ro and **Luminita BUCIUMAN:** luminita.buciuman@baiamarecity.ro
- **Juridical Manager - Catalina IVASCU** catalina.ivascu@baiamarecity.ro
- **Managers of Local Groups and Training - Raluca SPAN** raluca.span@baiamarecity.ro and **Oana RUSU** oana.rusu@baiamarecity.ro
- **Acquisition Manager – Alexandra STOICA:** Alexandra.stoica@baiamarecity.ro
- **Manager for Technical, Building & Utilities conformity (EMAS) – Simona FABIAN** simona.fabian@baiamarecity.ro
- **Manager for Communication, Promotion & Dissemination - Bianca BODEA:** bianca.bodea@baiamarecity.ro and **Anca RAT –** anca.rat@baiamarecity.ro

Documentation of the project

- Must be well organized / transparent
- Documentation in electronic and hard copy versions, using the same filing system
- Up to date and systematic filing system to help the Mid Term Evaluation's work

Assessment of the project's progress

- There were problems related to certified expenditures and partner's involvement for the submission of the 1st progress report to JTS
- There was a delay in timing of the activities thus involving a re-schedule of the SC meetings
- Some outputs not fulfilled so far - *there are some lags in the implementation*

Conclusion: the Management and Coordination Component is in line with the objectives and the requirements. Due to several reasons there were only slight delays in some of the actions.

Assessment of the project's progress

Financial reporting - some problems must be solved:

- In the case of Slovenia – the issuing of the control confirmations is taking much longer than expected - therefore no financial report has been issued for period 1.
- In the case of Italy – the First Level Body has to be clarified - therefore no financial report has been issued for period 0 and 1.

>> costs cannot be included into the progress report of the given period

- due to the delays in some activities there is some deflection from the payment forecasts
- due to differences in the legal systems some issues have to be solved in terms of finance (ex. Common costs)
- project budget is characterised also by underspending.
- Since there are more periods and the activities will be intensive from now on, the project is expected to be on budget by the end of the implementation.

Assessment of the project's progress - Implementation by the partners

Implementation in terms of quality, timing, outputs and main deviations from the plans:

- All of the PP's are actively involved in the project
- All PP's have prepared documents and outputs based on the accepted methodology > but the aggregation / capitalization of such documents was difficult because of diversification
- Different quality of Partner level reports and of the level of information provided to the LP (we know that a lot of activities are taking place but we have not enough details about them).
- Some financial & institutional problems (caused both by the partners and the LP because of the communication difficulties, political board, common methodology for reporting, etc.)
- Deviations – mostly due to delays of activities by PP's (Progress reporting, financial reporting, Dissemination activities, timing, organizing local events)
- competencies of the PPs are very different
- Language - causing problems in understanding of procedures and in communication as well

Assessment of the project's progress - Stakeholder involvement

A key success factor of the project: level of involvement of the stakeholders, i.e.

General experience: stakeholders (who answered the questionnaire) seem to be well informed

Most common problems that stakeholders face:

- Lack of capital
- Lack of marketing
- Lack of continuous demand
- Lack of information
- Ageing sector > recruitment is a problem (with proper skills and experience)

Forms of participation of stakeholders :

- contribution in the form of interviews and questionnaires,
- participation at stakeholders' meeting(s),
- communication, cooperation with the municipalities,
- information exchange.

Risk Management

Risks can be classified as:

- Knowledge risk: the availability of the project management's professionalism, expertise, experience, skills and the Partners' knowledge, capabilities, skills
- Relationship risk : when ineffective collaborations occur
- Process-engagement risk: reduce the productivity and the quality of the project and decrease the cost effectiveness.

Awareness risk

Lack of funds for the proposed project development

Elections (in case of LP)

Change of priorities due to the economical crises.

Expected results

The project will be considered successful in case:

- the project management skills are improving,
- great number of stakeholders participate,
- the main objectives will be achieved on budget,
- it will have an impact on the European and national policies and will be followed by implementing the resulted projects,
- continuity will be ensured; finding new projects, financing opportunities,

Key findings

The Partners understood the importance of the European project financing and realised the power of partnership, cooperation, political support and networking.

The Partners are aware of the value of information, knowledge transfer and exchange of experiences.

The project is at this moment not well managed, not transparent, the reporting system is not working smoothly – due to local & national problems (Romania, Bulgaria, Slovenia, Italy)

There was a delay in some of the actions

The key problems PPs face is due to the different decision making and financing systems, as well as differences of FLCs

There is a underspending in the budget

The partners are motivated and highly interested in achieving the main goal of the project, therefore as of now, the project will fulfill the objectives planned

Recommendations

Keep an eye on schedules and budget

- all PPs should keep the deadlines in terms of reporting and actions;
- PP should take all possible measurements to be able to achieve that the expenditures are paid by the organisations in time and included in the progress report of the period when they appear

Communication and dissemination should be improved significantly:

- **Website:** should be more informative, interesting and regularly updated. It should contain more news from the regions, provide more information for the stakeholders. Interactivity would also be appreciated.
- **Brochures, leaflets:** an updated brochure draft is urgently needed
- **Newsletters:** PPs and stakeholders could be better informed about the activities, events, local actions with the help of the newsletters (to decide if we will issue some)
- **Human resources:** a more interactive cooperation is urgently needed. Due to lack of certain skills and experiences on regional level, regional communication managers need more support, motivation and control.

All in all: ***the communication of the project should be improved. There is a need to increase the awareness level of the SEPA project.***

Recommendations

- The involvement of the Stakeholders should be raised > more active relationship management is needed
- More intensive communication with the Stakeholders and among the partners
- **Involvement of stakeholders:** evaluation shows that the performance of this element is the weakest, although this is one of the key issues of the project!
 - >> a much more intensive relationship should be developed with vocational training institutions, chambers of commerce, development agencies, Tourist Boards, EU foundations etc. Could be achieved by means of: the website, brochures, newsletters, participation in events, personal contacts, consultations, etc.
- **Deviations from the programme:** the Project Management but also all PP's should play a more active role in motivating the regional partners to correspond to the output indicators set (but very detailed information from the part of each PP is required).
- **Best practices:** The best practice catalogue & packages and the actions made suggest that the exchange phase will be successful. The Project Management Team closely working together with the Regional Management Teams has to give proper guidelines and all technical support for the exchange visits.

Recommendations

Deadlines are still not just for a joke!

>> time available for certain activities – should be used as much as possible and not start in the last month, as that is almost certain to lead to delays

Regular information and requests by LP > however, replies not always smooth:

- Not replying by deadlines
- Not replying at all
- Not replying in enough detail

Bottlenecks of cooperation:

- Language barriers
- Differences of national systems and of each PP organization
- Only 1-2 people dealing with SEPA at the PP's organization >> no real involvement of decision making level
- materials for downloading on website for PPs only – has not worked so far...

Recommendations

General experiences of internal (monthly) reporting:

- Still huge differences in PPs' input
- Generally still no content related information is provided!!
- Still not always precise: different amounts compared to the internal progress reports
- Proposed WP action plan not completed by all PP's

Progress Reporting:

- PP report submitted to FLC – should be max. 15 days after the end of reporting period! Being in time is your only tool „against” your FLC!
- PP input for Progress Report sent to LP – should be 20 days after the end of the reporting period (internal progress report template) > lot of improvement! 😊 BUT content and detail of information is still not satisfactory

Internal Progress Report templates:

- Not enough information provided, not detailed enough, explanations missing – would be especially important in case of deviations!
- Not self explanatory
- Not precise: eg. not the exact number of outputs provided; final amount does not equal to the amount reported in internal reporting template; detailed information on external expertise and equipment is missing

Recommendations

Management of underspending – suggestions (reminder)

- **Spend as much as you can** – provide the opportunity of partial invoices in contracts; deadline for payment of invoices should be before the end of the relevant reporting period (if it is possible); report as many staff costs as planned&possible (based on internal calculation)
- **Pressure on financial departments** – explain your financial staff why it is important to pay out invoices in time – if not paid – cannot be reported – no money back
- Where are we in terms of modifications vs flexibility rules?
- numerous modification proposals have been received from PP's
- None of the reallocations reached the lowest flexibility limit laid down in the Subsidy Contract
- First of all: a new budget will be born as a result of the partner change
- Idea of organising a big communication event - an efficient tool for managing underspending
- Costs definitely cannot be spent on project level are to be reallocated for Component 2 – reallocation need between partners (flexibility rules!!!)

Recommendations

- The **operative project manager** must be present in all SC in order to answer incidental questions, to provide additional information if required
- The **operative financial manager** must be present in all SC in order to answer questions related to finance, accountancy (separate handling and separate accountancy in order to avoid double financing!), accountancy system of monthly salaries and social charges, banking information, etc.
- **The person responsible for (public) procurement procedures** might be present – all procurement documentations are checked carefully!

Upcoming tasks for the next period

- **Clarifying reporting problems and deciding on templates and terms**
- **Establishing the next SC**
- **Inputs to website updating – immediately**

Key word should be: **VISIBILITY** - If we are honest, this is one of the weakest points
- Due to various reasons ... BUT we can do the best things in the world, if nobody knows about it, what is the point? And it is a great expectation of the Programme as well

Reminder- Objectives of communication:

- widely communicating SEPA's main objectives, activities and results and increasing its acceptance and success
- bringing to attention the fact that the project has been realised with the help of European Union support and co-financing within the SEE programme by ensuring information
- **Inputs to LP**
- Detailed workplan for the next phase

Upcoming tasks for the next period

Planned outputs & results in Application Form

Outputs	Target

Realized outputs & results so far

<i>Period 1 & 2: 13 March 2009 - 28 February 2010</i>		
Outputs	Planned	Produced

Upcoming tasks for the next period

- low number of press conferences and releases
- website- more materials are needed from PPs in order to inform public (pictures, press releases/appearances, news any kind of releases)
- participation in other events- (Biennale, any international/national/regional event)
- underspending (%)

Upcoming tasks for the next period

- effective communication – wide familiarisation of the project
- more programmes/events at PPs level: eg. Organizing more local stakeholders seminars, workshops, fairs etc.
- be more active- organize more events
- promote our project for the wider public
- use of other means (posters, direct marketing means, flyers, appearances in local/regional electronic media)
- after each event inform the local, regional media (report, news) about what happened, where we exactly are in terms of reaching the objectives of SEPA
- need to increase the awareness level of the project
- translate newsletters to own language and distribute

Upcoming tasks for the next period

Besides fulfilling the targeted outputs & results (which is a must)

**> BE CREATIVE IN COMMUNICATING
ABOUT THE PROJECT AND
DISSEMINATING ITS RESULTS!**

Try to find the most effective and creative
tools – within your budget limits of course 😊