



Europortfolio: a European Network of Eportfolio Experts and Practitioners

Progress Report

Public Part

Project information

Project acronym: EPNET

Project title: Europortfolio: a European Network of Eportfolio Experts and Practitioners

Project number: 531312-LLP-1-2012-1-HR-KA3-KA3NW

Sub-programme or KA: KA3 - ICT

Project website: <http://www.europortfolio.org/>

Reporting period: From 01/01/2013
To 31/05/2014

Report version: 1

Date of preparation: 20/06/2014

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This project has been funded with support from the European Commission.

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Executive Summary

The aim of Europortfolio is to contribute to the realisation of a European area for lifelong learning, using ePortfolios as a means to support reflective learning and practice as well as transparency and trust across all the actors involved in education and employment. This is being achieved by bringing together the community of European ePortfolio experts and practitioners and developing a Learning Community Portal as a space to publish, share and review data and resources on ePortfolio practices and technologies. The Europortfolio network will draw its members from four different sectors: 1. Further and Higher Education; 2. Vocational Education and Training; 3. Employment — human resources management, career counsellors, etc.; and 4. Lifelong Learning — all the actors of non-formal and informal learning.

There are four main groups of target users who will benefit from the results:

- **1st group: EPortfolio experts**, who will become members of the network and have a practical interest. They will particularly benefit from the ePortfolio inventory, creating research partnerships with other experts, and publishing their own findings.
- **2nd group: EPortfolio practitioners**, who will particularly benefit from the ePortfolio inventory, the maturity matrix, online questionnaires for self-assessment, lessons learned, open educational resources and white papers.
- **3rd group: Policy makers and authorities** will work directly with policy makers from EU-27 countries to access their local/regional and national (policy and educational) knowledge. This target group will particularly benefit from the ePortfolio framework, green and white papers, etc.
- **4th group: Global ePortfolio Community** includes researchers, policy experts and practitioners outside of Europe. Inter/Nation Coalition of Eportfolios across USA and Australia will reference Europortfolio and disseminate information about the European ePortfolio network thus expanding the European ePortfolio vision and enabling new, worldwide partnerships.

The Europortfolio is led by ePortfolio experts from 7 European countries with the help of a partner from USA that leads the Inter/National Coalition on electronic portfolio research, each with strong knowledge of domestic policy and beyond. From our long history of ePortfolio research and practice we can refer to substantive concepts and methodological approaches as well as to the experience of early adopters in the field. Each consortium member draws upon stakeholders from higher education, VET, employers and professional bodies. Between them consortium members have around 150 contacts with stakeholders across Europe that deal with ePortfolio; most of these will be invited to join the project as associate partners / target groups in order to establish a European Network of ePortfolio Experts and Practitioners. Extensive knowledge and expertise in various but complementary fields make the consortium a viable Europortfolio operator.

So far the community has risen to roughly 300 registered members from 50 countries. The Europortfolio Learning Community Portal is being updated on almost a daily basis with articles, news, inventory of ePortfolio practices and initiatives, etc. National chapters in 6 different EU countries (Croatia, France, Poland, Nordic countries, Spain and the UK) have been established with country specific initiatives

and activities. The Portal offers a variety of services such as managing online events like webinars including registrations for those events, newsletter production, the publication of different kinds of information, etc.

Over the next period the Portal will receive a facelift thanks to feedback and will offer new collaboration services for the Europortfolio community. The good practice of having at least one online webinar per month led by ePortfolio experts will continue in order to exchange experience and further develop collaboration between stakeholders. Additionally, Europortfolio will organize face2face workshops and events enabling community members to meet in person. The community will actively work on the ePortfolio Maturity Matrix, ePortfolio implementation guidelines and Open Educational Resources. All these will be disseminated through the state-of-the-art Europortfolio Learning Portal available at www.europortfolio.org or www.eportfolio.eu.

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1. Project Objectives

The objective of Europortfolio is to establish a European Cooperation Network of experts and practitioners from four sectors the field of ePortfolios:

1. Further and Higher Education
2. Vocational Education and Training
3. Employment — human resources management, career counsellors, etc.
4. Lifelong Learning — all the actors of non-formal and informal learning

The target groups are ePortfolio experts & practitioners, Policy makers and global ePortfolio community.

In order to support the Network, a **Europortfolio Learning Community Portal** has been created and can be reached at www.europortfolio.org or www.eportfolio.eu. At the end of the project, the Europortfolio Learning Community Portal will be the core resource and a gateway for European communities of stakeholders and interest groups. It will become a fully self-sustainable web based service beyond the lifetime of this project, based on a sound business model and the strong involvement of existing expert and learning communities. Additional liaison with corporate contacts could eventually generate sponsorship options.

Europortfolio fills a substantial gap of current ePortfolio policy and practice. It is generating the first consolidated ePortfolio inventory of its kind in Europe and will contribute to transfers of innovation across regional, institutional and sectorial boundaries, encompassed by a set of policy support documents that currently do not exist (green papers, accreditation framework, Maturity Matrix, etc.). This will add new momentum to research, policy and educational practice within EU-27 countries.

The impact on our four target groups will be as follows:

1st group: EPortfolio experts

They will become members of the network and have a practical interest. They will particularly benefit from the ePortfolio inventory, and contacts with other experts. Europortfolio will help this group in:

- getting a better insight into current ePortfolio practice in Europe
- creating research partnerships with other experts
- exchanging knowledge and experience as well as discuss about emerging trends and streams in ePortfolios
- publish their own findings and provide consultations

2nd group: EPortfolio practitioners

They will become members of the network and have a practical interest. They will particularly benefit from the ePortfolio inventory, the maturity matrix, online questionnaires for self-assessment, lessons learned, open educational resources and white papers. Europortfolio will help in:

- developing evidence-based strategies of effective practice and consistent management

- achieving better returns of investment (in terms of educational outcomes, efficiency and efficacy)
- having ubiquitous access to leading edge ePortfolio practice, key findings and evidence
- benefiting from knowledge generated by early adopters of ePortfolio initiatives (experts)
- creating internal networks and peer groups that can enhance further collaboration and multiplication of the initiatives
- developing new ePortfolio projects and initiatives

3rd group: Policy makers and authorities

We will work directly with policy makers from EU-27 countries to access their local/regional and national (policy and educational) knowledge for the benefit of this project as well as to transfer and exploit our results. This target group will particularly benefit from the ePortfolio framework, green and white papers, etc. Europortfolio will particularly contribute to:

- promoting innovation in education as well as practices of reflective learning
- developing a mutual understanding of ePortfolio practice within EU-27 countries
- supporting strategies towards competency recognition and accreditation in LLL

4th group: Global ePortfolio Community

Additionally, our links to researchers, policy experts and practitioners outside of Europe, e.g. Australia, Canada and USA, will be exploited. The Inter/National Coalition for Electronic Portfolio Research will reference Europortfolio and disseminate information about the Europortfolio network thus expanding the European ePortfolio vision and enabling new, worldwide partnerships.

2. Project Approach

The project is organised in three main (overlapping) phases that roughly match the three years of the project:

Phase 1 was mainly focused on creating an inventory of ePortfolio practices and models where there is evidence (research, evaluation, etc.) of positive impact of ePortfolios on learning, assessment and employability. The collection of data will be organised in cooperation with Associate partners and target groups will be drawn largely from different organisations across sectors in Europe who have large experience in ePortfolios.

The outcomes of this phase have resulted in:

- The Europortfolio Learning Community Portal
- An Inventory of ePortfolio Practices and Models across Europe
- The development of Europortfolio as a European Network of ePortfolio Experts and Practitioners

Phase 2 – the current phase - is mainly focused on the production of reports, guidelines and Open Educational Resources (OER). This is being done in co-operation with the experts and practitioners who are being invited to review and actively contribute to the resources produced by the Europortfolio consortium.

The outcomes of this phase **will be reflected** in a range of resources:

- ePortfolio Maturity Matrix
- ePortfolio Competency Recognition and Accreditation Framework
- ePortfolio Introductory Course
- Implementation Guides
- Executive Reports
- Green & White Papers

Phase 3 is focused on the exploitation and harvesting of the resources produced in Phase 2 in order to prepare the sustainability of the Europortfolio beyond the end of the project.

The outcome of this phase will be:

- An Interactive Map of ePortfolio Initiatives and Concepts
- A Self-Assessment Questionnaire
- The emergence of new projects and initiatives
- A Self-sustainable European Cooperation Network of ePortfolio Experts and Practitioners (Europortfolio)

A dissemination and exploitation strategy was established at the outset, specifying how the different audiences will be reached using different dissemination tools. The main dissemination tool is the Europortfolio Learning Community Portal that will exchange links and banners with relevant organisations, networks and portals (e.g. eLearning Europa) and will be initially used to establish communication channels with the different stakeholders. In addition, mailing lists as well as the exploitation of social networking services (Facebook, Google+, LinkedIn, etc.) are used.

Communication addresses four main groups:

1. Individual ePortfolio experts and practitioners
2. Organisations and learning communities interested by and committed to ePortfolios
3. The 'clients' of the first group of stakeholders: learners, educational managers, employers, etc.
4. Local, regional and national authorities, policy makers

In coordination with project meetings, the project already has and will organise a number of international events and workshops:

1. Each partner will participate in at least one national event per year
2. At least two international events have been/will be organised in co-operation with existing international ePortfolio events (for example, as pre-conference workshops)
3. The consortium as a whole will participate in at least 2 international events per year (e.g. ePIC in London)
4. Each project meeting will organise a public event: whether presentation or workshop.

To ensure the sustainability of Europortfolio beyond the lifetime of the project as well as to ensure that all content on the Europortfolio Learning Community Portal is updated and the Portal is maintained, three different scenarios have been identified. Those will be pursued independently, in combination, or simultaneously, depending on the current stream and factors that will be active in the time project ends.

(1) The first scenario proposes that one of the partners maintains the Europortfolio Learning Community Portal independently from external funding as the cost of keeping a space on a server is reasonable.

(2) The second scenario involves the creation of a new legal entity by the members of the Europortfolio network. This will depend on:

- the will of the members of the network;
- the quality of the work done in the course of the project,
- the need for the services and
- the need for belonging to an ePortfolio community.

The introduction of a membership fee along with the types of services provided to the members will be explored and submitted to the members of the network.

(3) The third scenario will centre upon the provision of capacity building support services for educational authorities and/or practitioners through experts of the Europortfolio consortium, e.g. consultancy, educational design, training, analysis, guidance, etc. Such (chargeable) high-value services could be offered by the consortium experts under the "Europortfolio" label and generate revenues that will finance the maintenance of the platform. Services could be provided (1) to policy makers and/or educational decision makers when

developing regional and/or national LLL, TEL, APL or employment strategies, (2) to coordinators of ePortfolio projects, employers and/or system developers through the provision of advice and scientific support (e.g. when implementing and/or analysing their ePortfolio systems or strategies), or (3) to training institutions or individual trainers when developing targeted educational services and/or programmes (e.g. Train-the-Trainer programmes).

3. Project Outcomes & Results

Two main outcomes of the project that present a basis for all other outcomes and project results are:

1. **Europortfolio, a wide network of committed stakeholders** across nations and sectors, including ePortfolio experts, researchers, practitioners, educational institutions and leaders, employers, policy experts and policy makers as well as interested communities such as school networks
2. **Europortfolio Learning Community Portal** as the core instrument and access point for European communities of stakeholders and interest groups. It will also host most of the resources produced by the project. The Portal is available at: www.europortfolio.org or www.eportfolio.eu.

Beyond this, a series of specific outputs will be produced:

1. A **web based Inventory of ePortfolio Practices and Models** that will be the foundation for the results shown below
2. A series of **National and Thematic Executive Reports** eliciting the readiness of policies, people, organisations and technologies.
3. A range of **Open Educational Resources (OERs)** that support:
 - a. Professionals willing to implement ePortfolios in their institution
 - b. Individuals willing to create and exploit their own ePortfolio.Specifically, these will include:
 - A series of **ePortfolio Implementation Guides** that will compile good practice, policies and implementation strategies.
 - An **ePortfolio maturity matrix model** that will be the basis for an **online self-assessment tool** used by institutions to benchmark the maturity of their ePortfolio initiatives and plan further development (increase maturity).
 - An evidence-based **ePortfolio framework** that contributes to the recognition and accreditation of competencies within EU-27 countries as well as to a shared perspective on ePortfolios.
 - **ePortfolio Introductory Course**, developed as web based learning modules with a total workload of 3 ETCS, usable as self-study modules or modules that can be integrated by teachers or facilitators into existing courses.
4. At least one **Green Paper** and one **White paper** to stimulate debate and inform policies.
5. Eventually, the generation of new ePortfolio projects, initiatives and (formal and/or informal) networks.

4. Partnerships

The Project “Europortfolio” emphasises the **analysis** and **development** of enduring and effective ePortfolio practice via the creation of an open ePortfolio infrastructure and a multilateral network of experts and practitioners (with the strong involvement of learning communities as well as stakeholders from educational and non-educational sectors). A strong emphasis of our project is on exchanging ideas and experiences related to ePortfolios within the network, making processes, benefits and impacts of ePortfolios transparent and transferable across educational sectors as well as on enhancing the use of ePortfolios in practice. To achieve this it is led by a network of ePortfolio experts from 7 European countries, each with knowledge of domestic policy and beyond. From our long history of ePortfolio research and practice we can refer to substantive concepts and methodological approaches as well as to experience of early adopters in the field. Each of our consortium members will draw upon stakeholders from across higher education, VET, employers and professional bodies.

This network will make Europe a leader in ePortfolio practice and contribute to the transformation of 21st century education.

University of Zagreb’s Faculty of Organization and Informatics (FOI) (Croatia) is a leader in ePortfolio implementation and has experience in international projects. The Centre for International Projects will take care of successful project management, administration, reporting and collaboration tools. The Centre for Application Development will play a key role in the Europortfolio Learning Community Portal development.

The Centre for Recording Achievement (CRA) (Great Britain) plays a strategic role in relation to ePortfolios. Its expertise, based on several national projects, ensures it can draw in a range of stakeholders. CRA has experience through work with US and Australian colleagues. CRA will support in involving partners and dissemination.

ADPIOS (France) emphasises ePortfolios as means to develop social and professional identity. It has contributed to a number of ePortfolio projects, and created a network of ePortfolio practitioners. It will co-lead the ePortfolio experts and, with FOI, ensure quality.

Centre of e-Learning (CEL) of AGH University of Science and Technology (AGH UST) (Poland) is a unit responsible for ePortfolio and OER. A member of the European Association of Distance Teaching Universities, Coalition of Open Education and Open Courseware Consortium, it works on ePortfolio implementation within the Polish Ministry of Science national qualification framework (NQF).

Danube University Krems (Austria) has a background in reflective learning based on ePortfolios and experience with ePortfolios in HE. Researchers have developed an ePortfolio taxonomy as well as 37 patterns of ePortfolio use in HE which support a variety of application scenarios more effectively than conventional guidelines

Knowledge Lab, University of Southern Denmark (Denmark), houses the Nordic Portfolio Forum, an association for organisations in Scandinavia. Through this it engages in projects with universities, University Colleges and Business Schools. It has led five national portfolio conferences.

Elearn Center at UOC (Spain) has a strong research and innovation activity on ePortfolios and is leading the Spanish Research Network on ePortfolios fund by the Spanish Ministry of Education. More than 15 institutions are involved and reports and articles are published every year about the use of ePortfolios in Spain. Expanding the NET to the Latinoamerican Institutions.

Besides 7 European partners, the **Inter/National Coalition for Electronic Portfolio Research (I/NCEPR) (USA)** is a key partner, having engaged teams at 60 higher education institutions divided into cohorts in the EU and USA in overlapping three-year projects. Project includes both completed cohorts that have yielded results and ongoing ones. I/NCEPR findings suggest directions for policy that have not yet been disseminated to policymakers and organisational leaders.

Consortium members have a large network of contacts across Europe that deal with ePortfolio practice; most of these will be invited to join the project as associate partners in order to establish a wider European Network of ePortfolio Experts and Practitioners. Extensive knowledge and expertise in various but complementary fields make the consortium a viable Europortfolio operator.

5. Plans for the Future

In the next period we plan, in line with our Proposal to:

- Invite more people to the Europortfolio Network using a variety of dissemination means (public events, social media tools, etc.)
- Create National and Thematic Executive reports
- Produce Green and White Papers
- Further develop the ePortfolio Maturity Matrix as an on-line interactive tool
- Develop and disseminate OERs, specifically:
 - ePortfolio implementation guidelines for individuals, institutions and consortia
 - an introductory course as an OER with a total workload of 3 ECTS credits, usable as self-study module(s) or module(s) that can be integrated by others into existing courses
 - an ePortfolio Competency Recognition and Accreditation Framework
- Upgrade features of the Europortfolio Learning Portal in order to support:
 - Increased user experience and usability
 - The organisation of on-line events
 - Collaboration - to enable registered members to work together
 - A semi-automated newsletter editing and issuing procedure
 - A platform for hosting and managing OERs
 - A member email system
 - A self-assessment questionnaire
 - Portal optimisation for mobile devices
- Organise one public event during Online EDUCA 2014 conference in Berlin, and two public events in 2015 (information will be available via the Europortfolio Learning Portal)
- Organise one open webinar per month led by ePortfolio experts and practitioners involved in Europortfolio
- Organise online collaboration events where the wider community can work together, perhaps building on webinars in order to produce further outputs.

6. Contribution to EU policies

This project is inline with several EU policies such as Lisbon Strategy, Bergen declaration, European Framework for Key Competences for Lifelong Learning, etc. This is specially reflected in:

- **Supporting the realisation of a European area for lifelong learning**

EPortfolios provide a unique opportunity for systemic integration of recognition and accreditation of talents and competencies independently from learning paths (formal, non-formal and informal). Based on the European Qualifications Framework, the Europortfolio Framework will elicit the benefits of ePortfolios as sources of authentic and current evidence of competencies acquired through reflective learning and practice, as basis for informed decisions in the field of education and employment.

- **Supporting the development of innovative ICT-based content, services, pedagogies and practice for lifelong learning**

Europortfolio Learning Community Portal will contain state of the art Open Educational Resources (OER) based on ePortfolio practice across Europe. OERs will contain an ePortfolio implementation and usage guidelines for teachers and organizations that will comprehend both pedagogical and technical aspects as well as examples of best practice in ePortfolios. Europortfolio Portal will act as a gateway to establishing a unique practice of European lifelong learning based on ePortfolios.

- **Promoting digital competence and other key transversal competences for life and employability**

Europortfolio as a network of experts and practitioners across EU member states will promote the use of ePortfolios. By building ePortfolios, learners have the opportunity to demonstrate simultaneously a number of competencies: domain competencies (e.g. managing resources), transversal competencies (e.g. working with others), and digital competencies (using ICT to create an ePortfolio). It also provides an opportunity to record evidence of competencies that can be presented in an employability ePortfolio

- **Making provision for learners with special needs, and in particular by helping to promote their integration into mainstream education and training**

As ePortfolios enable individuals to present what they can actually do they are a tool of choice to support inclusive approaches to education and employment. The European ePortfolio framework will provide guidelines for supporting learners with special needs to be defined and recognised by what they can actually do, rather than by their deficits.

- **Employment**

Europortfolio will explore how ePortfolios contribute to the establishment of trust between education and employment actors as well as it will provide guidelines within ePortfolio Framework for using ePortfolio to record evidence of competencies that can be presented in an employability ePortfolio.

In general, several Added European Values this project brings are:

- Europortfolio Learning Community Portal as a centralised place where European wide ePortfolio practice and ePortfolio framework is presented. Moreover it will be a unique place where ePortfolio experts, practitioner, enthusiasts and beginners can meet and obtain needed information as well as exchange knowledge
- Creating and maintaining an open and accessible environment for publishing, creating, sharing and pooling from ePortfolio practice
- Development of 21st century skills (promoting APL, reflective learning, open education etc.)
- Transferring advice and evidence of ePortfolio implementation to European institutions and practitioners (institutional capacity development, implementation strategies, etc.)
- Creating awareness among policymakers and practitioners (provision of green papers, concepts, evidence, etc.)
- Contribution to the progress of international ePortfolio networks and research