the ONE project

SMART | GREEN | SUSTAINABLE

ONE Final Participation and Impact Evaluation Report

An integrated report on partners' views and achievements

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

This document reports on the results of the final evaluation of the impact in the ONE Meeting Project. The interim and final Impact Evaluations are one part of the monitoring activities within the ONE project, that also included monthly and quarterly reporting. In their monthly emails UNIMIB reminded partners to update the status of their decks (milestones) and to fill out a monthly questionnaire that evaluated the ONE platform, ONECloud. In the subsequent monthly partner meeting, UNIMIB presented the results of the report which were discussed and followed by corresponding tasks or agreements. In their quarterly emails UNIMIB reminded partners to update the status of their decks (milestones) and to fill out a monthly questionnaire that evaluated the ONECloud and the quality of collaboration within the project. In the subsequent monthly partner meeting, UNIMIB presented the results of the report which were discussed and followed by corresponding tasks or agreements.

The final Impact Evaluation that is being reported on in this document, opens up an opportunity for reflection and in-depth discussion about the project. It is based on individual consultations with each partner to factor in all views and concerns: they reported on progress, quality, and concerns, allowing to shed light on the positive and negative experiences of partners, plus the three areas of impact that were initially defined: methods and tools, collaborative project management, and environmental awareness and sustainability.

FINAL EVALUATION

The six online video interviews for the final evaluation were conducted by the UNIMIB team and between 12 October and 2 November 2022; their length was between 13 and 32 minutes (average 25 minutes). It focused on the project management and the impact areas during the second year of the project.

The second year of the project included two longer meetings that were focusing on the partnership itself and that provided time for in-depth discussion about the impact, the results, and the dissemination in the ONE Meeting Project. The first event was the February (2022) Meeting – a two half days online event replacing the again postponed ONE Meeting. The second event was the ONE Meeting that finally could take place as a face-to-face meeting in June 2022. The results of the final evaluation reflect that this second year of the project was based on a better understanding of each other, each other's needs, and ways to work and to communicate. Besides, the results reflect the progress state of the project with all Intellectual Outputs (almost) finalized, much of the dissemination done and enough time for the ONE idea to sink in and gain ground in the partners' own beliefs and practices, and beyond.

Overall Evaluation of the ONE project

A *very positive appraisal*

The overall impression shared by all interviewed partners is that the project had very positive outcomes and was in general terms successful. They are confident with the quality of the results despite the very ambitious aim of the project. The positive overall appraisal is grounded in the positive reception of the results, the good collaboration and the responsibilities sharing among partners, as well as the good planning, open communication, and thoughtful project management. At this moment of the project, very close to the end, most partners explicitly expressed their thankfulness and appreciation of the collaboration and their hope for continuation of working together on the ONE idea.

"The project itself had very ambitious goals but I think they were met quite nicely. It was interesting to see how something in paper is little by little turning into results of the project. So, I think it has it was well planned and well so I think it was a positive example" (JYU:89)

"each partner has certain strengths, a clear role in the project" (JYU:89)

"I think overall, it has that has worked very well. Partners have completed and managed their outputs in a very professional and timely manner" (CCL:21)

"The project has worked very well, in general, from the beginning." (eucen:14)

"(…) in this project, it's been a pleasure to work with a team, everybody has been very nice, very effective. Everybody has delivered. So, I think that we need to give good applause to the consortium." (eucen:86)

ONE – a timely and clear idea

The idea of ONE is very clear and connects easily to the reality of the target groups. Environmental issues are daily news so it is easy to connect to the topic of ONE; less traveling blends in well to the basic trend to increasing work-life-balance. The ONE results' combination of research-based explanations and hands-on-tools and guides that enable people to actually use the results in their daily work are ideal to make a difference in peoples' thinking and acting.

"People are going to feel connected to it. It's something that is very practical, it's something that it's day to day in the news." (UOC:69)

"The idea is very clear. And it's something that it sort of sticks into your mind for your current project or future projects. So, the idea of just making one face-to-face meeting. It's something that is very easy to remember. And it's something that is very needed nowadays" (UOC:41)

"It's positive that this kind of efforts exist, where environmental issues are raised in the higher education context and also concrete stuff […].she said that it's nice that she's able to tell a researcher that 'hey, I have this kind of toolkit and this method developed in this project. I can give you the address so you can go to this web page and see what there is.' So that there's something. It is not just idealistic talk. It is something practical because we have these results available now." (JYU:61)

The expected success of the project originates in the idea that ONE is very clear, easy to understand, applicable to many areas and thus good to communicate.

"I think that the good thing about this project is that the idea is very clear." (UOC:41)

"It's a global idea. It can't only be applied in let's say, in education (…) it's more transversal. It's it can be used this main idea into many other areas." (UOC:57)

"Also the title, the naming of the project, ONE project, it's already very powerful. And also the main idea, too, because it's very easy to understand, it's also something that is very in- linked with our reality, we all know, the impact of the climate change." (UOC:57)

"The name of the project and the approach of just ONE meeting it still has a novelty factor so people are curious. And that's a that's a, that's a good starting point." (CCL:57)

ONE is also very timely with regard to the EU Commission's new guidelines that focus on environmental and sustainability issues.

"You know, the EU Commission has really, you know, kind of focused our minds with regard to needing to work smarter with regard to needing to reduce the environmental footprint of projects. So I think ONE was very timely for us and for, you know, for all of the people who will engage with this." (MMS:57)

The ONE approach is seen as an approach that can be integrated step-by-step into one's work. This refers

to the easiness of integrating it but also to the efforts that are needed and a strong role of a coordinator for further reaching steps. One example is that integrating new tools it not so hard, but when it comes to applying methods, this is another thing.

> *"if you really follow all principles of ONE approach method, ONE project method methodology. So, I think it's something that kind of you can take steps towards it. And some of the steps are easier to make than others."* (JYU:73)

> *"participants are much more comfortable with the methods and tools, probably the tools more so than the methods, there may be still a bit of work to be done with. They're still (…) to run a meeting using the same methods as a face-to-face meeting but using digital tools. And I think maybe there's still some work to be done. And in trying to get them to, to change the methods of the way they actually work. Working face-to-face is different to working virtually. So another approach that probably been a faster adaption or adoption of the tools and the methods."* (CCL:41)

ONE – a proof of concept

The ONE project was always planned as a self-experiment – doing a project with ONE meeting only, performing and experimenting with the ONE approach, the tools and methods, the agile project management, with new forms of collaboration and communication. Given the project's success of this experiment – successfully conducting a transnational project with ONE meeting only – is seen as proof of concept that strengthens the ONE idea and helps to communicate and sustain the project's results.

> *"it is possible as a proof of concept, that it is certainly possible to run a very successful project with just one meeting"* (CCL:61)

> *"I think that this idea, the impact is huge, because now we proved that we can do a successful project with just one face-to-face meeting"* (UOC:57)

The ONE Meeting

Having ONE Meeting only as the central idea for reducing environmental impact goes hand in hand with the necessity of explicitly considering the social aspects in cross-cultural (online) collaboration. When within the ONE project the ONE Meeting had initially been planned at the beginning as a kick-off meeting, the pandemic related travel restrictions forced us to postpone it again and again. The interview partners' assessment of the timing of the ONE Meeting varies considerably. One interviewee would have wished it to happen a bit earlier and another one stressed the necessity of having such a unique meeting in the very beginning of a project – not just as a meeting but in form of a workshop where partners get to know each other and start working together.

> *"But what it's clear to me is that the first and unique project meeting, when is needed is at the beginning of the project. That is a crucial moment. Because when you don't know the consortium, is when you need to meet with them."* (eucen:62)

> *"I mean, the more you see your colleagues face-to-face, the more likely is that things are smooth. Because interaction, human interaction cannot really be replaced by online interaction, I think, because it's not the moment that we are talking. If we were face-to-face, and you were recording me face-to-face, when we finished with them, that we will have a coffee, and we talk about this and that and, and that is that that kind of moment of interaction is what is missing with online activities, you don't have that soft discussion, the more human part of interaction goes away. So that's why the first meeting at the beginning of the project is crucial."* (eucen:66)

In contrast to this, one interviewee highlights that the moment when the ONE meeting actually took

place, at the beginning of the last third of the project, was ideal. He claims that socializing can be done online in extended meetings and workshops but having a meeting when the consortium already knows each other well, enables partners to reach another level of collaboration and thinking of sustaining the project results and the partnership.

> *"the final face-to-face meeting, there are six or seven months before the end of the project. I think it's very good because it gives us the time to think about the conclusions about the process. But it also gives us some time to prepare the final parts of the of the project. So, I think that it's the right timing." (UOC:49)*

> *"[Of] course, the kickoff is always very important. But we are able to also do it online and we can spend as much hours as necessary, let's say, to try to address it online and try to, as you know, we can we can also improve in the sense of the kickoff meetings with every partner could make a video presenting itself, share more information about their institution, ways to, of course the kick-off is always a critical time because it's the start. But I also think that to have this timing in the way we also know everything that has been done for the past, for the months before. And then you have also time to make the final editing to make the final progress in the project. I think that's also good because it gives us more food for thought. We all came to the to the meeting with things to say, with already a lot of knowledge about the project. So, I think it's also a moment of explosion of ideas in the workshop that we have that and we are very well prepared. You know, I think that that is also something that is very worth it." (UOC:53)*

Project Management

The ONECloud is a good tool – at last

The ONECloud has been a challenge for most of the partners at the beginning. But with time, all partners learned to use and appreciate it as a useful tool for collaboration. The ONEClouds' functions for storing and organizing files and for working together on documents are mentioned explicitly. The repository function is especially useful when combined with emails that inform about tasks or changed files. As the ONECloud was shaped to the project's needs, it was seen as *our own* platform and not just any platform. This was a motivator for usage and acceptance. Also, some project members installed the desktop app later in the project and praised the advantages that came with it.

> *"it's very good, because it also gives us the opportunity to feel more engaged in the project, because we have, let's say, our own place, it's not just a Google Drive, let's say it's our own place that to have all the content and all the material work there for partners. So, I think that it has been well managed. And this operational decision, I think it's very good." (UOC:21)*

> *"I've grown to appreciate it and took a while to get used to it. But I think it's been a very useful tool as well, in terms of, you know, storing and collecting and organizing our work" (MMS:29)*

> *"I knew exactly where to go and where the thing was and where the document or the archive was" (UOC: 25)*

> *"one thing was about the platform, that I found good ways of using it, also with the desk app, desktop app, which was really, which is really handy and which is really good to work with." (FeU:25)*

> *"Yeah, I think that the email, of course, it's very good. We also have the (…) ONE directory there, where we also have all the information, that it was well structured in different folders in different parts of that directory. So that was very helpful. Because to have our own platform, that to exactly where [?] they are in the documents, to place the all the contents of the video, the pictures, anything, I think that works fantastic. And we also had the second side, which is the is the mail. So, when there was any update, on the ONE site, we also had it in the in the mail. So, I think that this both ways to progress in the project in the Project, I think that it's very appropriate." (UOC:21)*

Partners have learned to use and love the ONECloud over time but at the same time some interviewees

mentioned flaws. One interviewee expresses the wish for automated notifications about changed documents on the ONE Cloud, another criticizes that the coordinator does not send regular Outlook invitations. Yet, those experience flaws could be solved easily by activating and using existing functions of the ONECloud. The ONECloud offers solutions for both the mentioned issues: notifications and integration of the calendar app. In the light of these circumstances, it can be assumed that more people would have expressed their appreciation for the ONECloud (earlier in the project) if one or more of the following things would have occurred: the ONE Cloud would not have been a new tool for almost all partners, there was a better commitment of all partners to take time to learn and integrate it, there was better support in integrating the ONECloud into partners' everyday workflow, it would have been sooner clear how we wanted to use the ONECloud, the coordinator would have been able to set up the platform sooner.

> *"it's not about platform. Once you get used to it and you understand that that is the way to work. So, there's no other option, let's do it. And at the beginning it was really tough; for me was the most annoying part of the project." (eucen:34)*

> *"What I have learned is if the platform is well set up, and if the partners accept that this is the way we have to go, eventually everything gets on board, and it works well. So, that is for me, the important lesson that the tools are important, it is important to choose well. But if you don't choose the most popular, maybe it doesn't matter because partners, if they are interested and willing to do the project, they will get on board and they will overcome any obstacle." (eucen:38)*

Excellent Project Management and Communication

The project management and the coordination are not only rated exceptionally high in more technical terms of project management such as planning and coordinating tasks and meetings. It is also explicitly mentioned that the project stands out due to its consistent approach, its democratic and collaborative management style, its openness and its proper tone and communication.

> *"Project management? No, I think that it's been… it's been excellent" (CCL:25)*

> *"So, I think the coordination has been very good, the arrangement of tasks, the project management meetings to discuss all of the work, I think have been very good." (MMS:29)*

> *"Every time we had a question it was answered, it was well replied. and we had the proper communication on, on all times" (UOC:29)*

> *"partner meetings were well planned, always well planned. And you knew what you were going to discuss. And there was documentation always. Because we were working online, constantly, of course, it was very important to have everything prepared in advance. So, I only can say that there was no improvement because it didn't need improvement. Because everything worked very well from the beginning." (eucen:14)*

> *"the approach has been consistent, and the tone has been perfect" (CCL:29)*

The aspect of the tone of the management refers to an issue raised in the interim evaluation where the tone has been rated somewhat harsh in certain moments. This definitely did change and improve throughout the second year of the project. Besides, project management was more reactive with regard to the needs of partners in this second half.

> *"we're all trying to work and do our best and that there's, you know, maybe a way to communicate, that can be constructive without being too critical. So I think, as we've moved on, into the success of outputs, that there certainly has been more kind of openness in the way and more discussion and dialogue about the way that we address concerns, which I think is good, because I was a little bit worried at one stage." (MMS:49)*

> *"the tone of the of the project management has been very nice in year two" (CCL:17)*

"it has developed during the second year, and it's been more reactive to our wishes, and we know that there has been this COVID time and there has been changes in plan and I think it has reacted quite flexible in a flexible way" (JYU:13)

The openness is explicitly mentioned by several interviewers. This openness and democratic style go together with a good management that creates the environment that allows such open discussion and gives reassurances about the fact that everything is being taken care of. This open atmosphere and confidence also make room for critical feedback that leads to more effort and even better results.

"I've always felt part of the project although I just I just came in January 2022 (…) from the instant moment, I just felt part of it. And I felt (…) very, very welcomed. And I felt that, that the management, of course, have done a great job in that, and that we had our monthly meetings, and that we had all communication. And I've always felt from the beginning part of it." (UOC:77)

"I think that the February meeting, as you mentioned, when we discussed and it was open, and I never experienced any kind of discomfort in the consortium. So, I think that it's been a very honest management, with honest feedback from everybody." (eucen:30)

"that we also have the common confidence, and the common ground also to feel that we are able to express all doubts, or concerns or any other question to the management" (UOC:17)

"from the worksite we feel like in any moment that we had any question, anything that we think that perhaps we couldn't do better or arrange or wherever, we always had the support of the management and the implication that anything will be well and sorted out." (UOC:17)

"we felt always heard, we felt always that we had any question or any suggestion, it was something that we could debate openly" (UOC:29)

"what I learned also was and I think that's where we also learned to know better the partnership is when we got feedback for the ONE guide, which was quite in a way sharp as it was like a feedback to really put things differently, but I think it was a very, very good feedback process we had. And it helped quite a lot to shape the ONE guide as something that was, though we worked on it as something from our partnership as a good guide. So I think this was a good thing." (FeU:25)

Very good Partner Meetings

The Partner Meetings in the second year of the project were described as "very good" by most partners. The **MONTHLY PARTNER MEETINGS** were well planned as usual but designed and organized in a more interactive way. Using MIRO for preparing the Meetings where partners can enter the topics they wanted to discuss was mentioned explicitly as a very good feature.

"The partner meetings were well planned, always well planned. And you knew what you were going to discuss. And there was documentation always. Because we were working online, constantly, of course, it was very important to have everything prepared in advance." (eucen:14)

"They were developed more interactive, and also using this MIRO allowed us to bring quite easily topics we wanted and at our part there, I think it was a very good new thing during this second year." (JYU:17)

"I also liked that we had quite a well structure for working with each other. We did do some changes in this year on the project management. So, we used MIRO for getting more participation of the topics on our monthly partner meetings. I think that helped the partnership to be more- to participate more within the project management. (FeU:9)

In connection with the Monthly Partner Meetings were two types of **PRE-MEETINGS** that were established in the second year of the project. One interviewee mentions the benefit of the pre-meetings that were established for in-depth discussions. Another interviewee describes that the second type of

pre-meeting, the virtual coffee as an attempt to install a pre-meeting for socializing, was not adopted by partners.

> *"Also, something that was very interesting, and I haven't seen in other projects: It was the pre-meeting meetings with smaller groups. That was very good, because sometimes you don't have time to get into in in depth into certain tasks when you have the partners' meeting, but these pre-sessions that we had before the partners meeting, help us to discuss some aspects in small working groups. So that was very good" (eucen:14)*

> *"When it comes to the to the meeting, this one hour before the meeting, I think we worked with that we've used also another tool for that to get have the social aspect. I think it was a nice try, but it didn't really work out. We had some meetings some people came before and we did discuss a bit but it was in the end we didn't use it so much, (…) it was not so well used." (FeU:21)*

The most important meeting in the second year was **THE ONE MEETING** – the only face-to-face meeting in the project. It was seen as a big success by all the interviewees. It was described as an important meeting for getting to know each other better, for in-depth discussions, for working towards finalizing the project results, and for talking about the future.

> *"And I appreciated that I think the most of everything that we did in year two. And I guess it does show the importance of a meeting, especially if you're only having one meeting. And I think there was a lot of recognition that we were only having one meeting. And the meeting was structured and of sufficient intensity and depth to maximize that one meeting." (CCL:17)*

A strong partnership in year two

Year two of the project was characterized by a strong partnership. Partners roles were clearly defined according to their strengths and partners have established a good way for working together. The fact that partners have gotten to know each other better and the progress of the project's results served as push for the project and for the partnership.

> *"we have known getting to know each other better. And, of course, we are more clear who is doing what, and things like that." (JYU:49)*

> *"I think maybe after we had our get-to-know-you in the first year, we were we were I think quite an effective team in year two" (CCL:17)*

> *"the division of work has been excellent" (CCL:21)*

> *"each partner has certain strengths, a clear role in the project" (JYU:89)*

> *"Yeah, and I think one of the most important factors were that we were meeting in person to help strengthening the partnership." (FeU:9)*

> *"we did learn more about each other. This has much to do that we had finally, the face-to-face meeting. So the ONE meeting and I think this was really about us. And this was very important for us as partnership. And for getting to know each other also, about these cultural aspects. I think we really worked with that. And we did a lot of social things to learn more about each other and not only talking about the project. So I think this was a very, this was key to getting to know each other better." (FeU:21)*

> *"I think the aspects that I liked more were on the one hand side that we were working already with results so that it was like we were starting to see what we deliver. And I think this is something that pushed the partnership, and also helped the project management, that we were not dealing with things that were not visible, but that were already [there] so we already had products." (FeU:9)*

Room for improvements: Early involvement and on-time deliveries

There are a few aspects in project management that are mentioned in a more critical way. One aspect is the wish of one interviewee that partners would have been involved earlier in shaping the project. This is based on the impression that the project idea was very clear to the coordinator and maybe some partners but not to all partners, and that there was not enough time to get to know each other. Intriguingly, this feedback is an exact match to the coordinator's statement that in a next project she would try to involve partners earlier more bindingly to raise their commitment.

> *"if I really think that maybe in the very earlier, so first half a year, if I think from our perspective, it took really some time to get it clear what was expected from us. And so we had- so maybe one could think that project partners could have been more in when, in the beginning, when discussing how things, how to do things in practice. (…) putting more time for the earlier for the beginning and get- Yeah. Kind of thinking a little bit that okay, don't fix things too early. Listen, first partners and then fix it, get the final model way of working after partners have had a little bit more effort to that. (…) "maybe because we didn't see meet each other. So we actually have very short time to kind of get to know each other and learn a bit how each of us is we working" (JYU:77)*

> *"I've learned also what we did during the partnership to work before starting the project, even when you're already in the in the project development or proposal development to do that more collaboratively. We didn't do that at that point or just in a small group, but I think you get the more commitment, the more people are involved from the very, very beginning. And I think this is something that we did not do. But we I think that we took with us" (FeU:41)*

Other critical aspect concern **delayed tasks**, **no-shows in meetings** and discussions, and **staff fluctuation**. One idea to address such an unavoidable issue like staff fluctuation is double staffing. Yet, in situations when it is often hard to even fill positions, this might easily sound visionary. Delays in fulfilling tasks and not showing up in meetings leading to information gaps can only be traced back to (too many) other responsibilities of partners, as some interviewees attest. Exactly this issue of needing to run after partners poses a conundrum to the coordinator. One possible solution is earlier involvement of partners (see above), another one is establishing stronger and clearer steering structures, including taking the platform for collaboration and the website into the coordinator's hands.

> *"(regarding this aspect of late feedback from partners, has this improved as well?) Well, maybe this is something that has not improved, so well. At least if- Yeah, I guess that's, it seems that each of us have many other things to do. And maybe also- We are not, we are not communicating to you, when our very busy times are in timetable." (JYU:51)*

> *"partners are a little bit behind just finalizing their or finalizing the translations and that type of thing" (CCL:21)*

> *"it seems that each of us have many other things to do" (JYU:53)*

> *"people were not so committed anymore to have to come to the monthly partner meeting so that we could, like, share our- what we've done, clarify... I think it was more about getting of getting the things together on the road, you know, so for dissemination, and for that, I think I was missing a bit the commitment of the colleagues in being there and discussing. I don't say that they didn't do that, but the commitment of sharing it and make it from our group together." (FeU:17)*

> *"one topic that was problematic for the management is that we, though we were in time with the products more or less, then had long periods of having them really final finished for putting them up on the website. We still deal with the translation, things that we decided quite early. But I think that took quite much more time. So I think we had then delays when we were already having the aim of the product, and we could work with it." (FeU:13)*

Another critical aspect is that **dissemination efforts** could have been more intense. In a discussion about the final evaluation, there turned up the idea for future projects, to create a community, a network based on all contacts of partners to engage more people with the project's idea. The ONE project did have some good first steps by trying to create a shared database of contacts – but in a future project such a collection could be brought to life by using a tool that enables setting up a living and communication network. The evaluation interviews also brought to light more ideas on how to further communicate and/or develop the ONE results (see below).

> *"we could have done more together on dissemination, on promoting it on bringing it out. We had big ideas. But we did it. Everybody, I think did a good job. But I think we could have been stronger in bringing that to the world and also together as one project." (FeU:53)*

Impact

The assessment of the impact has changed significantly since the interim evaluation. The impact in general is seen as huge, with distinctions regarding the range and the kind of impact, as is described below. Although such generalization neglects induvial differences: But if we had to bring the projects' different areas of impact into a hierarchy, it would read as follows (from high impact to low impact): environmental awareness and sustainability – methods and tools (with tools being ranked higher than methods) – collaborative project management. Of course, the experienced impacts can hardly unambiguously be ascribed to the project ONE – especially because of the times of pandemic and climate change we are currently living in. Yet, some of the testaments do hint to the project ONE as likely cause.

> *"No, I think… I think the impact the impact overall, as it has been, it's been huge, probably been the most impactful project at most apparently impactful project in terms of getting changes in people's behavior that I've been involved in. Now. I can't say for sure that it's all down to the ONE project, but people's behavior has changed very quickly. And for the better. I don't think we could have done things much more different, more differently or created more of an impact" (CCL:53)*

Impact on a personal level

Interviewees describe an impact on a personal level for all who are involved directly in the project. The impact concerns especially a changed way of thinking but also a change of behavior such as not using air travels anymore.

> *"For us who are involved with the project, I think it has clearly changed our way of thinking. And I say it honestly, that it really has." (JYU:69)*

> *"I think we all learned a lot, a lot of things here not only for a project, but also for all our personal lives for well, for anytime we have to make a travel, anytime we have to arrange a meeting." (UOC:57)*

> *"For myself, I decided within the project already to travel only by train, and just taking a flight when I'm traveling two days for one meeting; also thinking, of course, the second time when thinking about traveling and why I do that and why it's necessary to meet people face-to-face." (FeU:49)*

Impact on the ONE partners, their future projects, and their project partners

Most interviewees state, that they already do integrate the ONE approach in their new project proposals and/or plan to integrate it in their future projects. When doing so, they often push at an open door because of their partners' already increased awareness for environmental and sustainability issues.

> *"And the big focus for us, I suppose, in terms of impact of our own organization and our work, but also that of*

our partners is that we have brought learnings from ONE into projects that we have designed this year."
(MMS:53)

ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS AND SUSTAINABILITY

Partners experience a positive impact with regard to environmental awareness and sustainability. It is an issue that is easily transported and integrated in their other projects.

"It [The ONE project] certainly has [an impact] combined, obviously, with COVID, and a greater awareness of, of environmental sustainability, generally, partners approach to project meetings that has a participants approach, our approach and the people that we work with, has changed significantly. There is a recognition and I'm surprised at how rapidly it has become the mainstream is that projects need to meet less often."
(CCL:37)

"So I think that this idea is something that is already present in the projects that we are involved in, how to not make that bad impact in the planet, to also be more efficient. To use our resources in a more in a more efficient way and more in a more respectful way for the planet and for the situation that we're currently living in." (UOC:41)

"I think the design of the project is such that, well, the environmental aspect and the, you know, the kind of Smarter working kind of go well together when we discussed ONE with the other partners that we were working on applications with, it was a very easy sell to them." (MMS:57)

METHODS AND TOOLS

Having fewer meetings as a central method is something that in the views of different partners can be integrated easily into future project proposals.

"just one face-to-face meeting, and to the one face-to-face meeting, use it as much as possible, like we did in the in Hagen, we had those workshops we have discussions about the project we have discussions about what's going to happen after the project ends, how we're going to keep this impact." (UOC:41)

"the main idea to have one face-to-face meeting that we can absolutely extract from there" (UOC:49)

"Nearly all partnerships that we work with now and going forward will continue to work with will only meet at most, once per year, two for two year project, that would be that will be twice." (CCL:37)

"And in terms of the way we design the project with minimal, less meetings" (MMS:53)

Partners also stated that they will integrate tools such as the ONE platform but also other tools like MIRO for collaboration.

"I think one hand (…) the way how we work with this monthly partner meeting, so, the way how we structure our communication in a way the tools we were using. I think there are a lot of tools that we also had in our in our virtual toolkit that we most of them, we tried out and I think it changed quite a lot in my small team." (FeU:37)

"the ONE platform, I think that it's something that could be replicable in other in other projects. (…) And also to use this platform on future projects, or at least the idea of the platform, I think that we will do better in the future." (UOC: 41)

"I wasn't very aware, that you could really use it to collaborate, and that it could be very useful in a meeting. So, on an online meeting, so the fact that that we are able to put the all the information about all or IOs about the progress also in the meeting, we have a question from management that we all have to address we could have there our opinions and then sort of combine it and also debates on it. I think that it's a very good tool and something that I was already using for other purposes. But I'm right now going to use for, for a more collaborative union in the sense of how to how to engage all the partners in a project." (UOC:45)

Interviewees also described their will to integrate methods from the ONE approach such as the pre-meetings in their teams and projects, or the way they are already doing that in ongoing projects.

> *"but also in terms of the way when we did meet online that we would use the elements for - So, I think that's been a big impact for us, I don't know, see if it's specific to that first area methods or tools, but certainly, we've taken that into consideration." (MMS:53)*

> *"pre-meeting meetings, it is a very interesting idea. And I think that maybe we will actually incorporate that in our future projects, because it gives you the opportunity (…) where you can actually have different sub-rooms, and each intellectual output team can sit there and discuss their own thing before the meeting and get prepared for the discussion afterwards. It's so much more effective, because when you are talking, the group is not actually arguing or they have time to remember what is the position they have, what they have done. And everything is so clear when you get into the meeting, there are no arguments, you go. So that is a very interesting aspect that I would like to integrate in our management model for the future. Definitely." (eucen:54)*

COLLABORATIVE PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Partners either experienced a definite shift towards more collaborative project management in their teams or already integrated such an approach. Others clearly stated that they learned a lot and that they will integrate this kind of more democratic, open project management approach and atmosphere in future projects.

> *"The collaborative project management probably I mean, with regard to our own organization, we have this kind of approach anyway, we're big into collaboration and co-creation. And there's a number of kins of kind of talk about methods and tools, things that we use to do that. We have very much a shared ownership of our projects. So you can see that you know, Sam came into the project at certain times. Our colleague Juliana was involved, so Orla as well. So I think there's definitely things that we can take from that into our work." (MMS:61)*

> *"what we take from us is, it always pays off, it's always nice to be open to all the suggestions to debate to let's say, the management, of course, although it's sort of be on the top of the of the decision making, I think that we felt like we were all on the same level that we always could talk that we always could express our opinion, and that all the decisions were were made, with all us in and any any problem concerning the intellectual output, or any idea it was always taken into consideration. So I think that this sort of more democratic way to see how we can make this work. It's something that we take from the from the project." (UOC:49)*

IMPEDIMENTS

One partner explicitly mentioned impediments towards integrating the ONE approach. Those include too small financial and time budgets that are necessary. So that applying the ONE approach would be feasible, the European Commission needs to create necessary funding conditions and the EU in general needs to create suitable structures such as trains with working compartments.

> *"I don't think the European Commission understand. They want us to be more ecological and all that, but they are not honestly making the contribution that they should be doing in terms of money for trips and, you know, giving support to the partners that decide to do things in a more ecological way. We'll have to see how it develops." (eucen:58)*

> *"I don't think so. But that is only my very practical point of view. I think that not economically, or time wise, it is practical to change the model of sustainability of our projects, we... - I cannot actually spend one day traveling in a train, when I can do maybe something that can be done in one hour. It's when you have a lot of projects, how can you afford that? It's very difficult. And then also, the price of the train tickets are very expensive. You spend two or three times where you would have spent with a flight. Maybe that will change*

maybe, because now with all the situation we have with fuel, you know, we don't know what will happen, maybe things change and reverse and then I would really be interested to change, also. And maybe you can take the possibility to travel by train and work while you're in the train - depends on the train. Or if you have the possibility to have a silent wagon, where you can actually plug your computer and work. Maybe that wouldn't be that bad if you had internet connection and everything would work. But I'm not totally sure if the world, if Europe is prepared for this, we want to but it doesn't mean that we are prepared. It's very sad. But that's what I think." (eucen:58)

"For us, this kind of, you know - for us particularly, I'm not saying that is a bad thing, but for us, it's very difficult to go into several loops with things because we don't have time. And I'm not saying that is not a good practice, but if I doubt that we will apply that. We don't have time for for so many loops and going back and forward and refining things. So, that is something that we definitely want. I don't think we will be using." (eucen:46)

Impact on partners' organisations

The impact on partner's organizations is rated in different ways by the interviewees. Some institutions clearly have changed values and habits already, while others only show signs of first steps being carried on. This is mostly related to the size and nature of the partner organisation.

"And I think we also got some ideas also on I would say on university level also with regard to some hybrid meetings and ideas on that. That already was, I would say walking up the management in a way."(FeU:37)

"But if thinking about the whole organization, I think it's still we are at the point when after COVID Traveling is kind of people start traveling, start participating to congresses, and meetings. And University is preparing kind of… some kind of environmental policy that's happening. Little by little" (JYU:61)

"in our organization, I think this was not ONE, but I'm all always asked when I'm going on a business trip, if this business trip is really necessary, or if I could do that online. So, this is the question that I get when I'm asking for a business trip." (FeU:49)

"I would say also with regard to the impact on the organization, I think this is a topic of sustainability at our university already. (…) And ONE is actually, if you want, one puzzle or one part that is working towards sustainability and supporting it." (FeU:49)

Impact on the participants of the Multiplier Events

The impact ONE is having on participants of the Multiplier Events (ME) is rated very high. Participants of Multiplier Events were very interested and highly appreciated the ONE approach and the ONE materials as they contribute to a better general understanding of the issue and they are very practical. Those who did not conduct the ME yet, also do expect a huge impact on a solid basis.

"one of our participants in our multiplier event, and she's working with university administration in Erasmus. So she's the person who is consulting researchers when they are doing Erasmus applications. And she said that this was really good information she got from the project, because now she is able to automatically remember and add this environmental part that was not so clear earlier. And she also said that, given the fact that European Council Council, the commission is stressing these environmental issues, that's very likely that other who are found- funding research, for example, are doing the same within the next years, so that that's sounds very clear [?] that that will happen. And in that sense, she said that it's good. It's positive that this kind of efforts exist, where where environmental issues are raised in the higher education context and also concrete stuff, what you're able to give, if that she said that it's nice that she's able to tell a researcher that hey, I have this kind of toolkit and this method developed in this project that lets I give you address so you can go to this web page and see what there is. So that there's something it's not just idealistic talk. It's, it's something that practical also when when, when we when having this results available now." (JYU:61)

"Yeah, we've already had ours. So and there has been genuinely a lot of interest in it. And, and it still has a and that was our thinking. The the name of the project and the approach of just ONE meeting it still has a novelty factor so people are curious. And that's a that's a, that's a good starting point. So yeah, we've had a lot of a lot of interest and a lot of requests for the, for the resources and, and and that type of thing. So yeah." (CCL:57)

"Yeah, for sure. We've actually already had our multiplier event. So we've got a good insight into this. For us, there was a mixture of people in the room, some who had been involved in EU projects before, some who had very little experience of EU projects, but wanted to get involved. So I think the- this mixture of people in the room was good, because we were able to discuss with those who had experience, you know, we did a mentimeter kind of thing to check, what were their, you know, how would they rank things and levels of importance with regard to working on a new project. So we talked about the things in the project, and we threw in a couple of extra ones. And it was really interesting. I don't have the the results of the poll in front of me, but they- everything that we were focusing on, I think we had six or seven or eight categories of things that they should consider important. And everything that we focused in on ONE was at the bottom of their list. So the working smarter, the working collaboratively, the being mindful of the environmental footprint. So I think that was really interesting, because if these were things that weren't at the top of their list, when it came to, you know, considering the projects that they are already involved in and then with regard to those who haven't been involved in projects before they got a really good introduction and understanding of why these different areas are important. So in the future [? 14:30], that we'd be very hopeful that they will, you know, design projects that are more aligned to the principles of ONE" (MMS:73)

"And as I'm saying, this product is something that you can use for future projects, for your current projects, for your - even for your daily life. You know, so I think that the people is going to feel connected to it. It's something that is very practical, it's something that it's day to day in the news. So I think that we are going to be able to connect with the people and to tell to them this this idea of the of the ONE project and I think that they are going to agree because people in this in the projects is very used to traveling. It's very used to go out and about four days away from home and the next week and although four days and and you know when the difficulty sometimes to combine all of that with your family life with your personal life. I think that if they see that it's possible to make a successful project. Of course, never losing the connection between partners and the communication. But with just one, one meeting, I think they are going to take that idea or at least give it a thought." (UOC:69)

For one partner, the International Relationship Offices turned out to be a very important target group and relevant multiplier as they act as translators between project requirements and university staff. Thus, the impact is duplicated as it affects not only the ME participants but also the universities they work at.

"And I think this has more to do also with the German context, that it's a big issue for international offices, who support projects, ERASMUS+ projects, other projects, international projects. And therefore we get- got quite a lot of resonance from international offices from different universities across Germany. So, I think this was a group that we had at the beginning in mind, but we didn't really address it- them during the project. But they became a very important target group because they are the, I don't know how to put that, I think they are the- the transmitters are the translators from project guidelines or program guidelines from Erasmus or what else to the projects developed at universities. So, I think they are very, very important multipliers and also very important target groups of the project." (FeU:49)

With the Multiplier Events we reached those who are already interested in the topic. What sounds like a limited success actually makes perfect sense, because as with all issues that involve change, work must initially address the early adopters. Furthermore, only time will tell how tools are actually going to be used and if and how methods will be implemented.

"I think of course, people who participated to the event were those I guess they were people who are, who were willing to learn more and so we had such people who had positive attitude towards this kind of develop development. So, my answer is yes." (JYU:81)

"And there is quite a lot of projects working on environmental issues in the Multiplier event there was one particular person who is working now. And they were really very interested about the guide, in particular. The Guide, the first intellectual Output 1, the case study, how we had actually got that kind of information, how we had made the calculations, and they thought it was really very interesting and very valuable to have that as a starting point for them, which they were starting now to work in a project of similar topic. So it might be some group that will fight for that, because as I said, it's a very important topic and it's a necessity, but I don't know how far and when it will happen." (eucen:58)

"And I hope that they can actually take some lessons with them. One in particular was telling me that they were so upset not to have known about the All-you-need-to-know-for-project-management, because they've had like six months of all new staff and they thought they - that was the kind of tool that they would have liked to use when training them. So, I think there is potential, now they know the tool is there. So, maybe when they have new staff in the future, they will remember that there is this this guide, and they would use it. So, I have hope for for the use of Multiplier Events and the commitment of the participants to these activities." (eucen:78)

"When we did the multiplier event, it was very clear that some of the participants were very interested, very interested to read about the experience and to learn and to see how have you managed, and how have you managed to get everybody so well coordinated and on this, and they were considering changing methodologies also. So, from that point of view, we will see. We have to give time to people to read and to get really the spirit of the ONE project, sinking it into their, into their practices." (eucen:46)

Take Aways

Asked about their main personal learnings throughout the project, the interviewees named take aways that ranged from personal insights to learnings regarding their work. The professional learnings included new findings regarding project management and methods, the positive experience that a project with ONE meeting only actually can be a success, and the realisation of the significance of this ONE meeting and its social importance. For another thing, one interview partner expressed how valuable it is to carry out a project, that focuses on reflecting one's ongoing project work. ,.

"the ideology of the project was something I really believed and still believe" (JYU:89)

"remembering green values" (JYU:97)

"that you can always have your mind open for learning something new that will help you to work more effectively" (JYU:97)

"there's always the possibility to make things different, and to improve it" (UOC:73)

"that it is certainly possible to run a very successful project with just one meeting." (CCL:61)

"the project has not been weaker or felt less progress because we work mainly online, and we have just had this just one face-to-face meeting. I think that it has, in the end it has been a strength. So that's, that's been the main learning that you can do things different, work well, and take a learning for the future." (UOC:73)

"this ONE meeting is crucial for good international projects. (…) And this social exchange is very, very important. And you really need to find good ways to do that digitally. And I think in the end, you need to meet. I think this essence of meeting face-to-face was something really, really important. (…) it had the social aspect even more. And with regard to that, I would say one central learning is that you could think of, I would not say splitting, but putting different weights on the social component, which for me, would really be more of this face-to-face meeting. (…) But for this exchange, socially and for getting to know each other in these different cultural contexts, which is more necessary than ever, I would say, this ONE meeting is crucial." (FeU:65)

"(…) this is the first project that focused in on EU projects itself. So how we can design them and improve them and work better. So, for me, I think it was a bit of a game changer in that way, (…) the fact that this one

focuses in on helping us the EU project managers kind of work smarter and work better and design better programs, I think that was really the biggest kind of USP as they say, of this project. (…) sometimes you're so busy thinking about the needs of others (…) that you sometimes forget about your own. (…) And it made us consider the way we work and the impact that the projects we design have on others as well." (MMS:77)

"the fact that the tools that you select, sometimes, are difficult at the beginning but if the consortium is a strong consortium with interest in the project, they will learn and they will use these tools and you will be able to work" (eucen:82)

"the [pre-]meeting" (eucen:82)

"I've learned methodology and good schedule, good follow up, good planning, good meetings and pre meetings. I think that everything is giving me more knowledge about the project management experience." (eucen:82)

"Eva's approach to the project management and her- how she engaged the different partners in the consortium consistently throughout the 24 months, and kept them kept them on board and kept them interested and kept them motivated to her how she did that. I think I will, I will use some of her approaches and techniques and maybe little tricks to in my, in my role as a project manager" (CCL:61)

CONCLUSIONS

From an overall perspective, and when bringing together the results from the interim evaluation and the final evaluation, the project can be evaluated positively. Despite temporary flaws, the project management was highly appreciated for its openness, its consistency and its inclusive character while simultaneously keeping everything and everyone on track. Online meetings have always been well structured and prepared and more and more reactive and interactive. And the ONE face-to-face meeting was socially and content-wise a big success. The three areas of impact can be rated as widely successful, as well. Especially the impact on partners themselves and on their immediate reach is eminently distinct – from their teams to their project partners – but also the impact on those the project has reached via the Multiplier Events.

This report ends with a look ahead – in a possible and desirable ONE future.

The ONE Future

Some parts of the evaluation interviews were proof of the partners' enthusiasm about the ONE approach and showed possible future paths of the ONE idea.

Ideas to continue the ONE idea include further developing the ONE results and exploiting them e. g. in train-the-trainer workshops.

"And I'm still having this idea in mind that we should we could go with this project to second step as a project may be where we try to – what is this English word – where we try to get more out of the outcomes of the project, meaning for example, making what we tried to start with the workshops, but not enough in a way like a train the trainer concept or even policy papers. So more like exploiting what we have." (FeU:81)

"And also, second thing is maybe to see how people could work, also reuse and rework our materials where we have now like some ends with it, where we do not come further at this stage of the project." (FeU:81)

The idea of making use of the project's catchy name and establishing ONE as a brand goes well together with the idea of establishing a "ONE award". Using the statements from those that were included in the consultation process could help to further disseminate the ONE results. By using their testimonials and

displaying them as champions would give ONE a more personal tone and could help to better communicate the ONE idea. Doing so could also lead to reaching other target groups, such as bigger research projects.

> *"it's an idea that it can be very, can attract you very much, let's say, if we promote this idea, even more, even when the project ends, because it's always a concern, when a project ends, what it's going to happen with all the material with all the ideas, if we're able to sort of keep the ONE brand, let's say into the future, which I think it's always the main challenge to keep the project alive. Although we are no producing, let's say more material, although the project itself, it's, it's has ended. I think that that's sort of a challenge. But it's something that in this case, not like in other projects that we can keep in with him maintaining, we can promote."* (UOC:61)

> *"a further project in that we look at some kind of like, ONE awards or something like that"* (MMS:65)

> *"Maybe in some ways, I think we had a quite an interesting element in in as part of the output three was we interviewed or we had, you know, surveys with people who were kind of doing interesting things. I know, we had a couple of your project managers involved in that process. And there was no learning from them that I think was really interesting, but I'm not sure how much that came into the resources, I think it informed the resources. But I think maybe we could have done a little bit more with them, almost making them kind of champions of the project, you know, championing their approach and kind of highlighting them as people who were excelling. But, I mean, maybe there's a further project in that we look at some kind of like, ONE awards or something like that. Yeah, I think, you know, when you can make these projects, a little bit personal, and kind of highlight those who are doing really well, kind of role models as such. That's, that's an interesting approach. Now, maybe, yeah, there's a future project there."* (MMS:65)

> *"I think we did not really get to these bigger research projects like horizon, or people who work more interdisciplinary (…). But they were not also not the main target group, I would say."* (FeU:57)

The idea of writing a policy paper or a white paper aims at raising awareness on a very different level. Writing such a document could transpose the ONE idea to the level of decision makers on national level or EU level and would hopefully contribute to inducing a change on theses decision-making levels and thus affect pivotal priorities and investments.

> *"And we [could] actually write a position paper, or a white paper addressed to the European Commission and the ministries, maybe, explaining or the parliament, I don't know, exactly, to whom, but policymakers, and explain, that if the projects need to continue happening, then the budgets have to be according to what they are proposing in terms of sustainability. And the budgets for time for traveling time and for cost of traveling. Or maybe they can push for some arrangement, so traveling is not so difficult, so costly. So, I think that maybe we are still in time of producing a piece of document, one page document, which is kind of strong position and a call for action in a specific area, because without policy regulation and better conditions, people cannot afford doing any changes."* (eucen:70)

> *"we can actually make a short list of points that have to be put into this document and then somebody with a good command of English can actually draft something kind of. I would make it really strong, you know, because even if you make it a strong, we don't have a guarantee that they will listen. But, you know, making the position really, this is what is needed if you want things to change, you have to start and enable us to do it."* (eucen:74)

> *"I think this [idea of writing a policy paper] is a quite interesting idea, because we did now quite a lot of hands on. And I see at least in Germany, also that there are already some papers existing from the rectors conference even from the DAAD and so. So, I think it could make sense. I think we have- because we have on the one hand, we had some scientific papers, if you like, and then this hands-on things. And I think, the policy level, we did not maybe address too much."* (FeU:77)

ANNEX

Interview Guide for the Final Evaluation

- Which aspects of the project and of its management have you appreciated more in the second year of the project and/or overall?
- Which aspects of the project and of its management have you found more problematic in the second year of the project and/or overall?
- (If interview partner is the same person as in the December 2021 interview):
- There were some aspects you mentioned - back in December 2021 - as something that needed to be changed. Do you think something changed about them?
- Methods and tools - do you think that ONE has changed habits of participants in terms of methods and tools that can lead to smarter and greener practices?
- Collaborative Project Management - do you think that ONE has actually changed the way participants collaborate and manage their projects?
- Environmental Awareness & Sustainability - do you think that ONE is having an impact on environmental awareness and sustainability?
- (In case of a negative responses)
- What in ONE do you think should have been different so that it would better reach the targets in the three former questions (Impact on Methods and tools, Collaborative Project Management, Environmental Awareness & Sustainability)
- Do you think ONE will be able to make a difference for those we reach via the multiplier events? If not, why not / what would it need to do so?
- What is your main learning / take away at the end of the project?