

An update on COSTAID: where are we?

Over the past year, the COSTAID project team has worked diligently to achieve our goals and complete the products we set out to create. We have developed comprehensive guidelines to enhance understanding of misinformation and disinformation, and we've designed an interactive toolbox to strengthen media literacy for both trainers and students. We've also made significant progress in building an interactive e-platform and a mobile app to provide easy access to all this information. These products are now finalized and available on the COSTAID website—be sure to check them out!

Throughout the project, we've met regularly online with all partners, but occasionally gathered in person to tackle challenges and plan for the months ahead. Our most recent meeting took place in Brdo, Slovenia, where we had a two-day working session to review the project's past, current, and future phases and address any obstacles we encountered along the way.



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Validating our products

The guidelines and toolbox offer detailed explanations of information disorder—what it is, how to recognize it, and, most importantly, how to combat it. Our team has dedicated significant time and effort to compile this information and present it in a clear, engaging format that is accessible to all. However, before finalising these products, the COSTAID team wanted to validate them.

To ensure the usability and clarity of our products, each member of the COSTAID team collaborated with professionals from our target audience—primarily vocational educators—to validate and refine our materials.

Here are the stories of three of our partners:

International Management institute (Varna, Bulgaria)

Validation in Bulgaria

COSTAID Guidelines and ToolBox were shared with stakeholders and fellow VET professionals to evaluate the quality of the resources and discuss their integration in the existing training curricula at secondary and tertiary level. In March and April 2024 fifteen fellow educators reviewed and considered our work and how to use it in their teaching and counselling practice.

Accordingly, we celebrated World Book Day - April 24 - with two targeted media literacy workshops using COSTAID ToolBox and experimenting with Modules 1 “Awareness” and 3 “Conflict Solving”. With the unique students from the tenth and eleventh grade of the Profiled High School of Tourism and Entrepreneurship "Raiko Tsonchev" in Dobrich we talked about the value of information in the modern world and how it affects us, about media literacy and information disorder, and finally we checked the credibility of our own ideas.



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COSTAID resources are a valuable input for the high-school teachers in Bulgaria for the subject “Civic Education” that is part of the mainstream curriculum. In addition, they are an excellent basis for qualification courses and independent learning for professionals at all levels of education in Bulgaria given the national agenda of the Ministry of Education to train over 18 000 for teachers and trainers to utilize innovative digital tool and improve their media skills by the end of 2024. COSTAID Resources complement wonderfully the information materials and resources about media literacy available on the Digital Backpack platform of the Ministry of Education.

Verwey-Jonker Institute (Utrecht, Netherlands)

Validation in the Netherlands

COSTAID Guidelines and ToolBox were shared with the MBO-Raad (Council for Vocational Education Training), VET teachers, some teachers in pre-school VET and higher education teachers in media and journalism and with [Kennisnet - Laat ict werken voor het onderwijs](#).

Overall teachers in vocational education training (VET) indicate that materials are very informative and useful for themselves, however it may be slightly to theoretical for their students. Some teachers gave the advice to use more innovative examples for the use in their classrooms. The energizing activities are useful for students in the classroom, although some of the activities already appeared to be slightly outdated. Developments around artificial intelligence evolve very quickly, so even teachers have a hard time to keep up with their students.

I would recommend it to my colleagues because it does give some more in-depth information on the topics we discuss in class. It can provide our lessons with more relevant and recent views to teach our students (teacher Mediacollege Amsterdam).

Institute of Media Studies (Leuven, Belgium)

Validation in Belgium

The COSTAID Guidelines and ToolBox were shared with teachers and first-liners in Belgium. Despite the brevity of our questionnaire, the open-ended responses provided the most valuable insights. Here is a snapshot of the feedback from our target group:

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Respondents highlighted several strengths of the materials, including the use of bold key terms, the provision of extensive information on information disorder, and the clear distinction between fake news and reliable news. Additionally, they appreciated the guidance on teaching students to identify fake news, the consideration of cultural and educational contexts, the clear and logical structure, the well-founded and interactive content, the potential for differentiation, and the broad target audience.

When asked if they would use these materials in the future, responses varied. One critique was that the guidelines were more theoretical than practical, with key tips and specific cases being obscured within the text. Another respondent found the material useful as background information but too vague for classroom use. One affirmative respondent mentioned using the guidelines as background information rather than didactic material due to its theoretical nature and the need for more tailored examples for vocational education groups. Another noted the relevance of the material to their students' environment, referencing the frequent discussions among students about being exposed online and the accessibility of platforms like Telegram, which facilitate such exposures.

Outcomes of this validation

We have used the feedback from professionals, gathered during the validation phase, to further refine and finalise the content of the Guidelines and Toolbox. The updated versions are now available on the [COSTAID website](#).

What is next?

The COSTAID project has now entered its final phase: dissemination by multiplier events. Our partners in each country are organizing activities to share the project's outcomes and demonstrate how to use its resources. Interested in joining one of these events? Visit the website of our partner organization in your country to find activities you can participate in!

For links to our partner organisations' websites, visit the [COSTAID website](#).

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