



# ICE BREAKER - project description

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## Executive summary

ICE BREAKER is an educational, multi-level, multi-player, social computer game that inspires young Europeans to undertake and prepare for a first international experience.

ICE BREAKER familiarises players with the impact of cultural differences within Europe, increases their cross-cultural competence promotes exchange of knowledge and insights between players. Through interfaces with Facebook, Youtube and other types of social media, ICE BREAKER moreover helps players build and maintain an international network of peers prior to their

**ICE BREAKER entertains, connects and educates.**

## Partner profile

ICE BREAKER is an ambitious project that provides a unique platform for cross-disciplinary collaboration between prestigious pan-European partners in the fields of education, talent development, Corporate Social Responsibility and media distribution.

The initial development investment required to launch ICE BREAKER amounts to € 400 000. The game will be distributed free-of-charge to millions of young Europeans.

Should the ICE BREAKER initiative fit your company or institution's strategic objectives or CSR portfolio, please let us know how we can join forces.

**The ICE BREAKER team are happy to provide you with detailed partnership opportunities and return-on-investment expectations during a personal meeting.**

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## WHY - case

### Value of international experience

Exposure to international environments early in life helps young professionals **broaden their horizons** and increase their prospects of a rewarding career. It is therefore no surprise that acquiring international experience has been thoroughly promoted amongst youth since as early as the Middle Ages.

European integration and increasingly affordable travel fares have nowadays brought intercultural experience to every European's doorstep.

### Challenges met in practice

Specific skill sets are required to allow individuals to turn their international ambitions into enjoyable and useful experiences. Only when differences between home and host culture are addressed in an adequate manner, may intercultural initiatives anticipate the success they aspire. In most other cases, intercultural experiences are bound to engender confusion and annoyance shortly following the excitement of discovering unknown territory.

Students on an Erasmus exchange may have difficulties integrating with their local peers. Travellers may end up in compromised or dangerous situations. Business plans may fail and investments go to waste. Expats (and their families) may end up feeling lonely and homesick. Migrants may integrate poorly and even resort to the embrace of extremist, nationalist or fundamentalist ideas - to mention but a few of the less successful options.

Proper preparation and education increase the likelihood that even a first introduction on the intercultural stage will prove more pleasant, more effective, **more profitable** and more comfortable.

### Serious game as training tool

Books and theoretical training tools about intercultural communication have been released in vast quantities. Although these methods certainly contain useful insights, they only barely manage to simulate the very impact of cultural differences in practise. Well-selected case descriptions certainly provide a useful starting point. However, they do not manage to simulate the very **impact** that cultural differences may exert, how to deal with them in practise and how to feel about elegantly balancing between local standards and one's own frame of reference.

Serious games provide an excellent learning environment on the edge of education and entertainment. Real-life situations can be simulated in a non-hostile environment, while players are able to directly interact and compete or collaborate with each other to reach a set of predefined objectives on both common and individual levels. Without diluting the fun factor, serious games serve as an equally perfect delivery method for knowledge and insights.



## HOW - game

### Target audience

ICE BREAKER targets European scholars, students and young professionals, roughly in the age group of 14-30. Between the ages of 14 and 30, young people are the most likely to operate in international environments. ICE BREAKER intends to build a bridge between their theoretical background and the international experience they have in mind.

The initial version of the game will be developed in English. A basic understanding of the English language is required to benefit from the full potential of ICE BREAKER.

### Game objectives

ICE BREAKER promotes:

- Insight into cultural diversity in Europe;
- Increased cross-cultural interest and understanding;
- Intercultural dialogue;
- European citizenship.

ICE BREAKER equips players with the following set of cross-cultural competences and tools:

- Theoretical insights into culture, history, geography and civic society
- Knowledge of a wide range cultural differences and implications
- Intercultural skills:
  - Altercentrism
  - Cross-cultural interpretation
  - Self-control
  - Conversation skills and appropriate assertiveness
  - Interaction management
  - Self awareness
- Mindset
  - Mindfulness
  - Self disclosure
  - Uncertainty tolerance
  - Empathy
- Network
  - Contacts throughout Europe
- Practical reminders
  - What not to forget before leaving home
- Increased familiarity with the practical use of social media



## Game concept

ICE BREAKER offers a virtual rendering of the European continent in which players are invited to visit different cities and regions. On their path, they will be challenged to find information, complete tasks and fulfil assignments. The difficulty of these challenges increase as players progress to higher levels.

Successful completion of challenges allow players to collect points, Euros and travel kilometres to help them reach their next challenge and, eventually to higher levels.

- Basic version:
  - Fact finding
  - Collect insights and supporting photo/video
  - Travel planning
- Extended version:
  - Meet fellow players and share or exchange challenges
  - Cases and scenarios
  - Generate and contribute photo/video material

## Topics covered

ICE BREAKER targets a wide variety of topics, including but not limited to:

- Language
- Gestures
- Religion
- Money
- Status
- Etiquette
- Food
- Music and arts
- Stereotypes
- Gender roles
- Organisation and management
- Immigration
- Symbols and rituals
- Taboos
- Heroes
- Practical navigation and travel planning
- Leisure
- Humor





## Rewards

Connections with Facebook, Skype and [eTwinning](#) will allow players to stay in touch alongside the game.

Throughout the game, players will receive rewards that they can display on their social media profiles. This will allow them to put their increasing expertise on display, while at the same time encouraging new players to join the game.

Upon completion of ICE BREAKER, players will receive a personal certificate as a proof of his/her achievement. This certificate may be shown in their future applications for studies or work, and provides evidence of the skills and knowledge collected throughout the game.





## WHO - initiators

Originally conceived by PHOTOLOGIX.NL as an extension to research project 'Us Europeans', ICE BREAKER is now a joint initiative by Tygron Serious Gaming and PHOTOLOGIX.NL, represented by respectively Arthur Tolsma and Bruno van den Elshout.

### Tygron Serious Gaming

Since 2005, Tygron Serious Gaming BV have specialised in converting real-life complex management challenges, which have multiple actors with unique tasks and different interests, into multiplayer serious games. Tygron have a team of enthusiastic game developers, cooperating with experienced and renowned partners with specialised knowledge.

### Arthur Tolsma

Arthur Tolsma (1980, Winterswijk - NL) studied Innovation Management and Entrepreneurship at Delft Technical University and collaborated with fellow students from MIT in Boston (USA). Tolsma is an ambitious entrepreneur, communication specialist and award-winning speaker. His passion for innovation leads him to high-tech companies Tygron Serious Gaming and his own company Greeting, Voicemail 2.0.

Within Tygron Serious Gaming, Tolsma serves as 'innovation evangelist', promoting the tremendous benefits of Serious Gaming as a solution for complex and multi-actor management challenges.

### Bruno van den Elshout

Bruno van den Elshout (1979, The Hague - NL) successfully completed International Marketing and Business Studies (1997-2001), including a 6-month study exchange with the Ecole Supérieure de Commerce in Clermont-Ferrand - FR and a 6-month internship as a competitive intelligence analyst in Paris - FR. Also studied journalism at Fontys Hogeschool in Tilburg (part-time, 2003-2004).

Van den Elshout spent one year travelling all 27 member states of the European Union for his research project 'Us Europeans', a project which led to the publication of 366 articles about cultural programming, the book Crossroad Europe and several photo exhibitions in Sweden, Luxembourg and The Netherlands.

Through positions as strategy analyst, trade specialist, international account manager, volunteer and investment scout, Van den Elshout acquired extensive experience in international business environments.



## WHO - partnerships

ICE BREAKER is an ambitious project that provides a unique platform for cross-disciplinary collaboration between prestigious pan-European partners in a variety of fields. Thanks to its modular set-up, content can be added to ICE BREAKER by external partners so that any existing training method can benefit from ICE BREAKER's underlying architecture.

### Education

Educational institutions are under increased pressure to attract scholars and students on the basis of unique study curricula. Internationalisation provides a perfect path to diversification and amplifies lifelong opportunities for your current and future students.

ICE BREAKER can be played during as well as outside attendance hours and elegantly serves as either the backbone or sidetrack to other international initiatives you may currently be engaged in through [eTwinning](#) or otherwise.

### Talent development

Partnering with ICE BREAKER will help companies with cross-border operations position themselves as innovative employers. Active career development programs help companies reduce HR recruitment expenses, while radiating towards a socially responsible reputation.

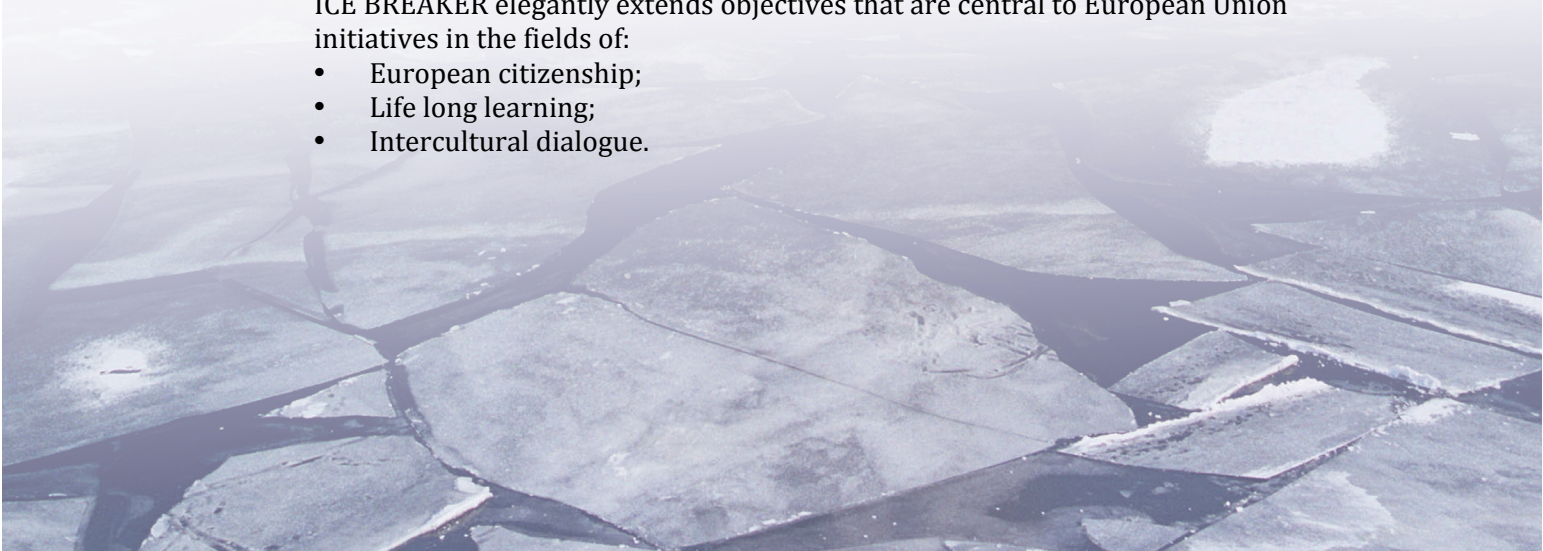
Should you wish to discuss how ICE BREAKER can increase international mobility of your (future) employees, and increase the effectiveness of their stay abroad - please [contact us!](#)

### Corporate Social Responsibility

ICE BREAKER promotes and incites cross-cultural consciousness, understanding and empathy. It helps turn cultural differences from challenges into assets, reducing the impact of xenophobia, suppression of minorities and cultural conflicts, promoting good citizenship and benefitting society as a whole.

ICE BREAKER elegantly extends objectives that are central to European Union initiatives in the fields of:

- European citizenship;
- Life long learning;
- Intercultural dialogue.





## Publishing and Distribution partners

ICE BREAKER will be distributed free-of-charge, which means that publishers can add the game to their portfolios at no cost! Enrich your proposition and be among the first to reach your prospective and existing customers with a novel tool that will make them eager for more interactive learning methods.

## Ambassadors

ICE BREAKER strongly welcomes words of recommendation by internationally recognised promoters of cross-cultural understanding. Please forward your enthusiasm straight into our mailbox via [info@photologix.nl](mailto:info@photologix.nl)!

## Contact details

The ICE BREAKER team will be happy to personally explain why and how participating in the development of ICE BREAKER will add value to your company or institution.

Please contact us with your queries!

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