



Leading and Managing Change in Higher Education (La MANCHE)

3rd ONLINE STEERING COMMITTEE CONFERENCE

MINUTES

Date: 16th January 2014

Time: 1 pm CET

Venue: online session at oovoo.com

Attendees: Christina Armutlieva, IUC Bulgaria
Arsen Aprozian and Lilit Torchyan GSU, Armenia
Valentina Grigoryan, ANAU, Armenia
Filipp Kokosha and Hanna Valchkova, GSTU, Belarus
Tea Gergedava and Ekaterine Basilaia TSU, Georgia
Vadim Sirkeli, CSU, Moldova
Tetyana Shtanko and Yulia Poliakova, LAC, Ukraine
Anastasiya Makarenko, NTU KhPI, Ukraine
Pantelis Skayannis, UTH, Greece

1. Project progress

Christina Armutlieva welcomed the participants at the first online meeting of the newly set up Steering Committee (SC). She wished them a successful New Year as well as productive work in the La MANCHE project. In 2014 the project consortium looks forward to some major milestones such as the submission of the project intermediate report. Before the SC discusses the upcoming report, Christina suggested to focus on current project activities. She invited Anastasiya Makarenko, leader of WP5, to brief the SC members on the developments in WP5.

Anastasiya informed the partners that the schedule of the local trainings and public lectures had been completed and is already available at the project website. Christina thanked Anastasiya's for the persistent work in WP5 and added how important it is to provide Anastasiya with all evidence concerning the events in WP5. At the meeting in Portugal Anastasiya had spoke about the type of evidence the Partner Countries institutions are expected to collect in regard with the local trainings and the public lectures to be held in

WP5 at institutional level. Her presentation along with all other meeting materials is available at the project website. Christina informed the partners that it would be useful and helpful for the project to invite to the local trainings and project events the representatives of the NTOs in the five Partner Countries in the project. According to the project schedule, activities in WP5 are expected to be finalized in May which means that at the next project meeting in Armenia the partners would be able to report on having successfully completed WP5.

As far as WP4 is concerned where the activities are been carried out exclusively by the representatives of the EU institutions in the project, Christina reminded the SC members that the guidance materials in leadership and change management are already accessible through the partner login on the project website. The Handbook with Innovative Governance Practices will be also shortly uploaded on the project website.

Within WP6 the consultation section on the project website is already established and available for use along with the forum and the chat. The consultation section shall provide a platform for exchange of good practices, communication and networking with different external and internal stakeholders in higher education. The code of conduct and the rules and regulations for use will be validated by the project consortium at the next partner meeting in Armenia.

2. Project Intermediate Report

The general conclusion which could be drawn from the project developments overview is that the consortium progresses with the project activities very well and in line with the project initial design. This is thanks to all project partners and was also mentioned in earlier project monitoring feedbacks. IUC will extensively report on the project progress in the upcoming Intermediate Report to be submitted towards EACEA in early spring. In order to be able to submit a correct and detailed Intermediate Report IUC will need the support and collaboration of all project partners. It is highly important that each partner institution provides sufficient information and evidence on the activities completed so far. The Intermediate Report includes also a financial report on the costs incurred so far. Therefore Christina asked the partners to send all reporting documents for staff costs and travel and subsistence costs incurred at institutional level. The staff costs report shall cover the period since the beginning of the project and the travel costs would include the costs for the three partner meetings. After receiving project reporting documentation from each partner, IUC will calculate the total eligible costs incurred and the Tempus grant applicable at the institution in question, and where necessary, will proceed immediately to transferring the next instalment.

The Intermediate Report will include a financial report on the costs under the other budget headings as well including the equipment costs disbursed so far in the project. Christina informed the partners that the equipment purchase in the project has been completed in Armenia, Georgia and Moldova. In Belarus it has still not taken place but this will hopefully change soon. In Ukraine the partners have asked and received an authorization from EACEA to change the equipment in mid-December 2013. This means that a new procurement had to be submitted to the authorities in Ukraine. IUC has signed the updated procurement plan and posted it to EUNU in December 2013. EUNU is the Ukrainian institution taking care of the project registration and equipment purchase at national level.

3. Dissemination

Valentina Grigoryan, leader of WP9 dedicated to project dissemination reported on the recent developments in this WP. The 2nd project Information Bulletin had been prepared in December and

disseminated to all partners. Valentina had also asked the partners to disseminate the newsletter to different internal and external stakeholders as well and she had sent them a template of the reporting document to be filled out in this regard. Most of project partners had already provided her with data on the number of external and internal stakeholders the information bulletin had been distributed to. Valentina also mentioned how important it is to publish local press releases on the project developments. She pointed out that effective dissemination is always one of the themes to be discussed at evaluation meetings and monitoring visits. NTOs and the large audience at regional and national level need to be aware of the project activities. Valentina informed the SC that after the meeting in Braganca her institution organized a meeting with students to report on it and had invited to it also the coordinator of the NTO in Armenia. According to Valentina the meeting was very productive and successful and she suggested that other partners in the project also proceed in a similar way by organizing more dissemination meetings at institutional level and have the NTO representatives invited to these. To sum up Valentina said that currently the project partners are really active in the field of dissemination and that there is plenty of information collected waiting to be published in the next project bulletins as well.

Christina thanked Valentina for this report and for her work in WP9. She noted how important it is that the consortium will be able to provide extensive information on dissemination in the project Intermediate Report. Enhancing dissemination activities was one of the recommendations for improvement included in the monitoring feedbacks. In order to start disseminating to wider audience, the consortium was advised to publish project deliverables and results in open access journals, online libraries and websites. Christina asked the partners to share with her any information or experience they may have with publishing on open access websites where La MANCHE could publish too. In the monitoring feedbacks the partners were recommended to disseminate the External Assessment Report in WP2 to the Ministries of Education in the Partner Countries as well as to other national authorities operating in the field of education. Christina mentioned that in the feedback monitoring for Ukraine the partners were recommended to put more efforts also in internal dissemination. This means that the project teams at the institutions shall involve in the project developments and activities a wider circle of students and colleagues from different faculties and administrative units so that they could ensure that the project becomes an asset for all of them and not only for a small number of people. Last but not least, Christina drew the SC members' attention to the fact that more press releases and messages in local printed and electronic media shall be published.

In regard with the dissemination activities at TSU, Tea informed the partners that she and her team send away regularly information on the project to many people within the university. In addition, TSU informs also on a regular basis the Ministry of Education on the project progress and development. There is an upcoming meeting scheduled for the 6th February with the Vice Minister of Education where TSU will update the Ministry on all currently Tempus projects running at TSU. Christina thanked Tea for the update and for being so active in the project. She also wanted to know more about the dissemination activities carried out in Belarus.

Filipp Kokosha replied that at his institution the 2nd Information Bulletin had been translated into Russian and both versions of the newsletter had been uploaded on the university's website and so far a lot of positive feedback had been received at GSTU. In addition, the project team at GSTU had been active disseminating the project internally as well. Filipp also noted that in terms of publications in printed and electronic media at this stage this would be possible at local level at the institution and in the region of Gomel. Later on however he said publishing on the project in national printed media could be also possible. As far publishing in printed and electronic media in Ukraine is concerned, Anastasiya said that she could look into the options available and will get back to the SC re this.

4. Cross-country cooperation in the project and networking policy in the consortium

Along with improving the mechanisms for dissemination, the enhancement of the cross-country cooperation in the project was the other recommendation recurring in all three monitoring feedbacks. Christina stressed how important for the project success would be that the SC members share their ideas and input on the topic of cross-country cooperation in the project. She asked the partners to take part in a quick brainstorming on what actually the networking policy in the project would cover and how could it be applied in reality. Multinational projects could easily end up being separate independent initiatives in the different countries without benefiting from the opportunities for interaction and networking on international level. Tea suggested that this could be achieved through sharing more information among the partners in the consortium. In addition, inviting existing partners in the current project to other project consortia could also contribute to enhancing multinational cooperation in the project. This is something TSU has already done when initiating cooperation with EUNU and LAC in Erasmus Mundus projects. Pantelis Skayannis from UTH did confirm the importance of cooperating with La MANCHE partners outside the La MANCHE project. However, within the current project what could be done is raising questions and topics for discussion on the project website and asking the other partners to contribute by sharing their input and opinions. The questions could for instance concern a particular challenge in the field of higher education in one of the countries or at one of the institutions involved. Christina agreed that using the project website as a platform for exchange of ideas and good practices between the institutions from the different countries is a good point when it comes to cross-country cooperation. In fact, in the framework of WP7 the partners will have to cooperate mainly online through the consultation section on the website and to share information and ideas when shaping the common strategy for leading and managing change in higher education in the Partner Countries. The so called La MANCHE Strategy is a main outcome of the project. Christina thanked Tea and Pantelis for their valuable input re cross-country cooperation and suggested that the other partners in the SC also share their ideas and reflections after receiving the minutes of this meeting.

This would be a good example of peer-learning, something which was also raised in the monitoring feedbacks. In general, whenever a partner institution has a question re the project or faces a particular challenge related to university governance, this issue should be discussed not only between the institution in question and IUC, the project lead organization, but also among the other partner institutions as well as there is a good chance that those are able to suggest an alternative solution to the case. In the end, regarding cross-country cooperation Tea reported on a good practice TSU had experienced with another Tempus project. Towards the end of that project some of the institutions in the consortium including TSU agreed to consider each other priority partners and had a cooperation framework agreement signed. This initiative was welcomed by the project external evaluators. Christina supported Tea's idea mentioning that establishing a framework for prospective cooperation beyond the project life would also contribute to the project's sustainability.

Vadim Sirkeli apologized for joining the online session with a small delay and reported on the project developments in Moldova. He mentioned that the project monitoring in Moldova went really well. In addition, the partner institutions in Moldova had received their equipment purchased in the project. Activities at CSU within WP5 are progressing according to the initial plan. In terms of dissemination, following the consortium meeting in Portugal CSU and the other there institutions from Moldova have organized different project dissemination events at institutional level and had distributed the newsletter to different project stakeholders. Christina thanked Vadim for CSU's active work in the project.

5. Project long-term planning and activity route map

Along with improving the cross-country cooperation in the project and enhancing dissemination, the monitoring feedback from Belarus suggested that the project partners start implementing a long-term planning in the project. This should help them become aware not only of what is on the project agenda for the near future but also until the end of the project. Obviously all partners have the timetables and the lists of activities and deliverables in the project from the very beginning. However, in order to improve the long-term planning in the project Christina suggested the elaboration of an activity route map which will include all major activities, deliverables and project milestones until the end of the project in October 2015. The activity route map will be circulated in the consortium.

As far as the planning of the next online partner meeting is concerned, Christina informed the SC partners that it shall happen during the first week of April at the latest. In order to schedule the meeting, Christina will send away a doodle link for registration in the beginning of March. In the end the project coordinator asked the SC members to make a comment or remark and ask or add anything they would like to share with the other SC members. Filipp from GSTU wanted to know how the partners in Belarus shall proceed with the equipment purchase in the project in Belarus. Christina stressed the importance of being able to complete the equipment purchase as soon as possible. In September 2013 she sent a draft of the Supplier Agreement to be signed with the prospective supplier company to the colleagues from BTEU. Now that it would GSTU processing the equipment purchase, Christina will send to GSTU the same documentation for their observation. Christina suggested that GSTU and she discuss the equipment purchase including national legislation and transnational payments in Belarus in details in the framework of another online session at GSTU's earliest convenience.

The minutes of this meeting will be circulated as soon as possible so that the SC members could provide their feedback and reflections. After that the final version of the minutes will be published on the project website so that that these could be available for reading to the other project partners. In the end Christina thanked all SC members for their time and contribution and for having agreed to be part of the SC.

Due to technical problems the GSU representatives from Armenia in the SC could not express their opinion on the topics discussed during the oovoo session. Following its end they spoke with the project coordinator where Lilit suggested that the partners shall share among each other more actively information on their activities. GSU had concluded their activities in WP5. In terms of dissemination, she explained that the public lecture at GSU had been recorded by the local television.