



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



Project 561525-EPP-1-2015-1-LV-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP

“Improvement of master-level education in the field of physical sciences in Belarusian universities” (Physics)

MC8 and WS10: Workshops for curricula development. Communication and sustainability of the project results. Quality assurance.

September 26 - 27th 2018

University of Cyprus, KIOS Research Center, Nicosia
Address: KIOS Research Center, University Avenue 1, 2109 Aglantzia

Discussions and decisions

Welcome by UCY - was provided by Dr Stella Hadjistassou. Stella welcomed the participants in Cyprus, briefly mentioned the aims of KIOS Research and Innovation Center of Excellence, invited the participants for coffee and lunch during break time, and reminded consortium partners that the personnel of KIOS is ready to assist with anything the partners might be in need of.

Adoption of the agenda of the meeting. Project Progress

A. Zabašta introduced the agenda and the overview of the project. A deliverables schedule presentation was provided that highlighted the testing of the courses in the first year and testing during the second year that entails testing reports, external quality report, internal quality report, dissemination report, materials that need to be uploaded to Moodle, an updated project web, and final reports (activities/financial).

Decision: to accept the agenda of the meeting.

The topics of discussion were the following:

- Reports on new developed courses, teaching materials, and study programs and their accreditation in the universities
- Reports on testing of the courses, teaching materials, and study programs
- Implementation of curriculum, electronic books

- Dissemination and Exploitation of Results. Dissemination and Exploitation Plan
- Application of innovative teaching methods and electronic environments (WP3)
- Final Technical Report
- Quality assurance issues
- Project financial aspects and arrangements for the Final Financial reports

WP 2. Implementation of curriculum

Implementation of curriculum, eBook on Applied Physics, final version

The topics of discussion were the following:

- Reports on new developed courses, teaching materials, and study programmes and their accreditation in the universities
- Reports on testing of the courses, teaching materials, and study programmes
- Testing of new developed and modernised courses in the spring semester and accreditation of the course
- Feedback from industry representatives on curricula development.

A.Fedotov from BSU provided a presentation on the testing of new developed and modernised courses in the spring semester. There was overview of the WP2 tasks of the Belarusian consortium and participants were informed that testing, study programmes and guides for lab practice, lecture synopses, presentations, and other didactic materials have been completed. Curricula and study programmes were reviewed by Associate Partners.

N.Strekal from Yanka Kupala State University of Grodno presented the accreditation of a new specialty certificate, three new courses that have been tested.

A.Samofalov from Skorina Gomel State University reported on the progress of the e-books, introduced the curriculum and list of courses and study programmes.

K. Vishnevski from BSTU presented their progress in the project regarding course testing.

A. Zabašta informed the participants that 2nd version of the Testing report contains all necessary evidences provided by Belarusian universities.

Decision: to accept the 2nd version of the Testing reports.

Implementation of curriculum, eBook on Applied Informatics, final version. How to arrange the issue of electronic versions of the course books.

Decision: to take this information into account.

Implementation of curriculum, eBook on Functional Nanomaterials, and Photonics final version.

Anatolijs Zabasta asked for clarification regarding the editor of Functional Nanomaterials and Photonics. A. Fedotov, the editor, clarified that the two books are currently being cross checked, and they will shortly be submitted for publication. Participants brought up the issue of translating the books in Russian. All four books, except for Guidelines on Master Thesis in Applied Physics, have already been translated in Russian.

Decision: at least one month is needed to finalised the books. After that it will be possible to start to edit the books for preparation for electronic issue of them.

Book on Guidelines on Master Thesis in Applied Physics’.

Participants discussed about e-book ‘Book on Guidelines on Master Thesis in Applied Physics’. A question was raised about whether the book can be translated in Russian. A. Fedotov and N. Strecal offered to join effort in order to create a Russian version of this book.

Decision: to continue work on translation into Russian.

Dissemination and Exploitation of results. Dissemination and Exploitation plan (WP5). Implementation of curriculum.

Dr. Stella Hadjistassou presented on WP5 aims and objectives, tasks, deliverables, and invited discussion and suggestions. According to the overall dissemination activities report, the number of activities has escalated, indicating that participants have well reached their goals. All dissemination activities that should have been completed up to the 14th of October have been executed and any pending ones need to be reported in order to be listed in the final activities report.

Marie asked for clarifications in some of the activities and she informed the participants that they will be emailed about any missing or confusing information. It was decided that YouTube videos will be included in the report. The report needs to be ready by the end of October, but the deadline was set mid-October to give the participants time to revise and finalise it. Stella placed particular emphasis on social media and the need to acquire more followers. It was decided that all the plans beyond this project should be part of the Dissemination Report (sustainability).

Decision:

Invitations to follow the social media pages of the project will be sent to the participants.

It was decided that all the plans beyond this project should be part of the Dissemination Report (sustainability).

Application of innovative teaching methods & electronic environments (WP3). Progress.

Alexander Fedotov commented that the system of education at BSU will be radically altered the following academic year. Officials will cancel all previous specialties, remaining only with Physics and Applied Physics. It was mentioned that educators can use these books in future specialties but there are no definite curricula at the moment as the Ministry is responsible for developing them and no definite plans have been proposed. However, the materials that have been constructed in the Physics project are promising and A. Fedotov considers that they will be used extensively.

A. Zabašta arranged a discussion about usage of e-learning platform after the project end. Partners agreed that a formal agreement is needed to use the e-learning platform, because it is hosted at the Moodle of BSU. A. Fedotov promised to investigate this issue and to inform the project partners.

Decision: to take this information into account and come back of this issue at the next project meeting.

Arrangements to final technical (activities) report. Project sustainability's issues.

A.Zabašta presented the form and requirements of the Technical Report. Additionally, Belarusian NCP and EACEA recommendations have been recalled.

Decision:

- *to take this information into account*
- *A.Zabašta will send the form of the Technical report and the form of the courses table.*

Feedback on the Final conference in Minsk on September 12th

Dr Zabasta presented positive feedback on the Final conference for dissemination and photos from the conference were illustrated. Some participants commented that the use of videos engaged students in the learning process.

Quality assurance issues. Monitoring and evaluation by external expert.

A.Fedotov informed about internal quality student team, which monitor the quality of education process in BSU.

Decision: The suggestion was to prepare a report and presentation about arrangement of internal quality monitoring process at the next meeting.

Arrangements to the final Technical (activities) report

Dr Zabasta required that each partner country in the consortium should:

- a) List three main achievements/results of their project at institutional, national, and/or regional level
- b) Explain how the achievements/results are relevant to the policy area (national and/or regional)

Provide information and quantify the inter-institutional agreements or bilateral agreements signed/to be signed by partner country institutions to promote cooperation in the field of Physics.

-Describe and justify where and when equipment items have been installed and how they have been used in the project and will be used in the future

-Links with society: Explain how the project helped to strengthen the role of higher education institutions in society at large

- Involvement of partners and stakeholders: How partners will continue to cooperate in the future

In terms of sustainability and exploitation of results the consortium partners ought to:

- Explain the role, commitment and concrete measures taken by the partner country beneficiaries to guarantee the sustainability of the projects outcomes/results beyond the project's lifetime (specify the funding sources if known)

- Explain how they have achieved a multiplier effect of the project; how the results have been exploited beyond the immediate target group and transferred to other contexts (for example to the wider education system, local economy and society, other institutions, other regions, etc.)
- What measures have been taken to formalise/institutionalise links with local non-university partners?
- Provide explanation in case any measures have been put in place in order to enlarge the implementation of the project results/outcomes beyond consortium participants

Dr Zabasta presented previous recommendations and follow up regarding recommendations given by the Agency (assessment of technical report, feedback from monitoring visits and exchanges with the Agency, etc.). He noted that this should also be reflected in the final Dissemination report by noting that comments were taken into account and all recommendations were fulfilled.

In terms of ES Agency Recommendation on technical report, Dr Zabasta:

- Noted that a new version of Dissemination plan has been prepared by UCY and other partners
- Required the reports of all universities to demonstrate complementarity with the TEMPUS project
- Required the reports of all universities and explanation of the associated partners
- Required more information on the demonstration of project outputs at websites
- Requested that inter-institutional agreements are signed by partner country institutions

Finally, Dr Zabasta discussed the curriculum development and presented a newly created course at BSU and touched upon statistics and indicators.

Financial aspects. Final Financial report.

Linda Šterna presented financial aspects regarding the equipment project, including steps that need to be taken, such as compliance with procurement rules and eligibility of costs, documenting the tendering procedure, providing invoices and bank statements, and proof that the equipment is recorded in the inventory of the institution.

Common errors made by beneficiaries regarding equipment were presented to avoid repeating them. Cost calculation, salaries, as well as supporting documents for the financial report (a formal employment contract, signed timesheets, a duly filled in joint declaration, joint declaration, separate declaration) are required.

Linda Šterna noted that separate timesheets are needed for each different role within the project.

Several documents regarding instructions of an auditor on staff cost (employee status/activities/workload) and travel cost (travel tickets, boarding passes, etc.) were presented. Dr. Zabašta will provide the template of the final technical report so that partners can start working on it.

Exchange Rate: Linda cautioned participants to use the correct exchange rate (starting from January 2016 and starting from August 2017), the invoice date will be taken into account, and highlighted that VAT is not eligible unless there is proof it is not deductible

Co-financing: According to the EU, grants shall always involve co-financing. No proofs of expenditure or supporting documents. indication on the level and source of co-financing is required for statistical purposes.

Linda presented costs on reimbursement basis, actual costs and unit costs. Anatolijs mentioned that subcontracting is not relative for all the participants' finances.

In terms of documents, it was advised to keep all original copies, approved copies of everything, keep them well organized in one place, and keep all other documents and accounting records that might not be asked as the European officials might need further information.

Anatolijs suggested that is utterly important to keep electronic and paper copies and that printed copies will be checked by the auditor.

How the audit goes: Participants were reminded that the project ends on the 14th of October and that all reports and certified copies of supporting documents should be sent no later than the 28th of October. Until the 4th of November, supporting documents will be examined by Linda and the audit starts to check documents from the 29th of October.

The audit will start with RTU in order to save time in case some documents from partners are missing. The auditor finalises the audit on the 30th of November, 2018. Linda informed the participants that the auditor checks at least 70% of the declared sum. If the exceptions are more than 10% the auditor checks at least 85% of the sum.

Common financial errors of participants pertain to:

- Invoices are not detailed enough
- Deducted VAT is included in the invoice and charged as project expenditure
- Tendering procedure is not applied for the purchase of goods or services exceeding 25.000 euros
- Purchase of equipment is split into small contracts with individual amounts lower than the 25.000 euros' threshold
- Proof of expenditure is a pro-forma invoice, an offer, or a quotation instead of an invoice

Staff costs: Participants should provide enough proof of the implementation of activities, contracts, what the regulations are in each country, etc. In addition, declared working days per individual should not exceed 20 days per month or 240 days per year.

Exceptions should be highlighted: a) if no reasonable activity can be verified on the working days declared, b) if there is no reasonable assurance that the number of unit costs declared corresponds to the number of working days dedicated to the project in terms of workload and tangible outputs, c) if there are indications in the employment contract that the employee has been hired by a different legal entity, d) if the employment relation between the staff member and the employing organisation is questioned.

Travel costs and costs of stay: the auditor verifies the validity of journeys for project-related activities (Agendas, participants list), the distances have been applied correctly (ITR), the number of unit costs corresponds to the actual number of days of the activities (invoices, boarding passes, etc.)

Exceptions should be reported for shorter or longer travelling, travelling outside the partnership countries, students or staff not employed by the beneficiary organisation, missing supporting documents, and if there is no correspondence to the travelling and the related activities.

Linda reminded participants to go over all the rules and finalise and send the reports until the 28th of October. She cautioned that participants should send a report that states all of their costs (not a separate one for each period).

Decision:

- *to take this information into account and start implementing the recommendations in the Final Report.*

Conclusions, next steps.

A.Zabašta noted that the realisation of the project is being carried out without significant obstacles and requested participants to continue their activities according to the project timetable.

Belarusian partners offered to arrange a meeting in the beginning of October that should be devoted for curricula development, communication and sustainability issues and for consultation regarding preparation of the Final Financial report.

The next steps:

- *Courses e-books: finalizing*
- *Dissemination: press conferences, press releases, web and e-environment improvements, references to the project and its website, Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, publications at scientific conferences, final conference for dissemination*
- *Sustainability: all materials to be allocated at <https://dl.bsu.by> and on the website of partners (dissemination and sustainability plan)*
- *Bilateral agreements*
- *All materials to be allocated on Moodle and the websites of the partners*
- *5 e-books of English and Russian needs to be issues electronic form with an ISBN number*
- *6) Quality assurance: BSU will prepare a report and presentation about arrangement of internal quality monitoring process at the next meeting.*
- *7) Final reports: financing and technical (activities). It is recommended to start preparation of Technical and Financial reports in advance.*
- *8) to arrange a MC meeting and a workshop in Riga on 8-9th October. The partners will pick up documents for Financial report.*

Physics project Coordinator:



A. Zabašta