



Date: JULY 2ND, 2018

Place: Ohrid, FYR Macedonia

Knowledge FOR Resilient soCiEty

**CONSORTIUM MEETING, STUDY VISIT AND TRAINING
Ss. Cyril and Methodius University of Skopje**

IR REPORT & FEEDBACK

University of Novi Sad

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We would like to inform you and your project partners that we have carried out the assessment of your Technical Implementation Report submitted on 13 April and we are pleased to inform you that it has been approved.

Our assessment looks at the partnership's performance as regards the efficient implementation of the project. It takes into account the Technical Implementation Report but also the desk monitoring conducted by the EACEA since the start of the eligibility period and the field monitoring visits carried out so far. The project implementation should not only respect the CBHE requirements but it should also be in line with the original proposal included under Annex I of the Grant Agreement.

In this context and in accordance with the Grant Agreement and with the Guidelines for the Use of the Grant, your project implementation has been qualified as "**GOOD**" (please refer to the Categories of qualification below). The Comments and recommendations sheet in Annex of the letter provides more detailed feedback.



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Categories of qualification:

Very good (at least 75 pts out of 100): the project is implemented in accordance with its original work programme and timetable; the report provides all the information and evidence needed and there are no particular concerns or areas of weakness.

Good (between 74 and 60 pts out of 100): the project progresses in accordance with its original work programme and timetable but some improvements could be made; the report gives clear information on all or nearly all of the evidence needed.

Fair (between 59 and 50 pts): there are weaknesses and concerns in the project implementation; although the report gives some relevant information, details are lacking and/or the information is unclear; there are several areas in the implementation that must be improved during the second half of the project.

Weak (less than 50 pts out of 100): the project is not respecting its original work plan/timetable and/or is not fulfilling the CBHE requirements; the report fails to address important aspects of the project implementation that cannot be judged due to missing or incomplete information; in accordance with article 1.10.6 of the Grant Agreement and section 3.5.2.2 of the Guidelines for the Use of the Grant, the maximum grant will be reduced at final report stage if no substantial improvements are observed during the second half of the project.





K-Force project is **progressing towards its objective** of contributing to building a sustainable education foundation in the field of Disaster Risk Management and Fire Safety Engineering (DRM&FSE) in the Western Balkan Countries (WBCs) and ensuring national professional resources and regional capacity for resilient society.

The report states that the K-Force subject area maintains the **relevance to the national and regional context of Partner Countries** involved, for which regional resilience to hazards and capability for regional cooperation in risk prevention and response is of primary importance.

However, we would like to know more precisely if national strategies and initiatives have been adopted in the countries concerned to promote the aims of the project. Please provide us with further information in your final report, underlying how the project can have an impact on the objectives of these strategies and initiatives.

The project responds to EU policies and to the following specific objectives:



The project responds to EU policies and strategies in the field of Disaster Risk Management and Fire Safety Engineering (DRM&FSE). In this line, EU partners' input in the curricula may secure that K-Force modernised or new degrees are recognised and comparable in the EHEA. The consortium is working towards curricula presented in terms of ECTS credits, syllabi and common learning outcomes aligned with NQF/EQF and educational ICT based labs at WBC HEIs established.

The report explains that K-Force liaises with **other projects working in a similar subject area or having similar objectives**. This is the case regarding the CBHE project, Nastrisk. However, information is missing on the added value and avoidance of duplications of K-Force with respect to these projects. Please provide us with this information in your final report.



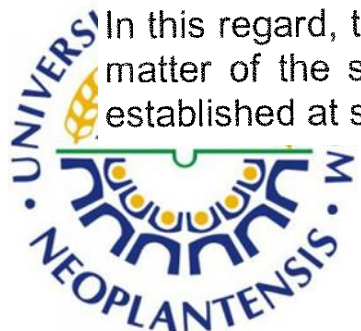
The specific **objectives** of K-Force are:

- **Modernization of an existing MP (P1) and development and implementation of new MPs/modules (P2-P6) in WBC partners HEIs.**
- **Development and implementation of a Doctoral study programme (P1).**
- **Continuous professional development in WBC through creation and implementation of certified LLL courses.**

Taking into account the number and scope of these objectives as well as the size of the consortium (14 partners), the project is an ambitious and complex to manage undertaking. Partner Universities are aware of the ambitious nature of K-Force as reflected in the Intermediate Quality Control Report produced in the framework of the consortium's internal quality assurance.

Given the complexity of the project, it is positive that the consortium has adopted a **risk plan** from the beginning, where some of the risks/obstacles of the project have been identified. Legal obstacles are on the list, for instance in terms of accreditation of the programmes or regarding the taxation of the scholarships of the Special Mobility Strand.

In this regard, the scheme of the SMS seems adequate and we acknowledge your efforts to solve the matter of the scholarship taxation. Please keep us informed on the progress of the working group established at state level to address the scholarship taxation.



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The consortium's **Interim Quality Control Report (IQCR)** also provides a clear picture of the challenges that the project is facing. This Report mentions that LLL courses face some difficulties in terms of their implementation in Albania. We take note that the consortium is consulting relevant authorities to address this issue. Moreover, we consider that the recommendation in your IQCR that HEIs should issue the LLL certificates with ECTS is a reasonable objective to pursue.

In spite of obstacles, the project **so far is progressing according to the planned activities** with some delays, which have no major impact in the development of the project.

However, the consortium still needs to make strong efforts to achieve the project objectives, namely the accreditation and implementation of 6 MsC programmes, accreditation and implementation of 1 PhD Programme and recognition and implementation of LLL courses.



Based on the information of your report, we note that the state of play of the WPs is as follows:

WP 1 Define directions for development of Master Programmes

We take note that the actions of this WP are mostly completed.

Concerning the **equipment**, the report informs that compared to the proposal minor changes have occurred. Changes are done in terms of the quantity of each type of product, with inclusion and exclusion of some items, respecting the budgetary ceilings, eligibility of items and with a view to achieve project objectives.

However, there is a delay in equipment procurement in Albania and BiH. The equipment should be installed until June 2018. Please provide us with an update on this information as soon as the activities related to equipment have been completed.



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WP 2 Define directions for development of PhD programme.

Activity 2.5 (compiling a list of research PhD themes, according to disaster trends in WB) is still ongoing.

WP 3 Improve teaching methodologies and embed the ICT leaning material.

This activity is still ongoing. The teaching methodology is based on best practices and previous projects as well as the experience from the European partners. Many information is provided in the report on blended learning methods (i.e. classroom time learning combined with online learning), but nothing is mentioned on additional teaching methodologies based on student centred learning and practical oriented teaching. We would be interested to know more about this in your final report.





WP 4 Implementation of 6 MPs in 3 WBC (including accreditation, enrolment of Master students, activation of the flexible ICT learning platform, lectures and evaluation of 1st cohort).

The report provides reassuring information concerning the accreditation of the MPs in P1 and P2. For

P3 and P6, we take note that the consortium formed teams for accreditation of their study programmes according to national specifics Laws and rules of accreditation and implementation. The activity includes preparation of accreditation material and process resulting with programmes' implementation.

The accreditation of your study programmes is a very important aspect for the successful implementation of your project. Let me remind you that, according to the Grant Agreement, financial penalties can be applied in case of poor, partial or late implementation of the action. As the state of play of the accreditation will be addressed in you meeting of 1 July, we would be interested in having your feedback on this by 1 September, 2018.

The first generation of students (24) have enrolled at the modernised Master Programme at P1 (UNS). We would also be interested in knowing the feedback of this first cohort as soon as you have gathered it.



WP 5 Implementation PhD

We take note that the accreditation material is ready, but the National Accreditation body is not formed yet. Please follow up this issue closely so that this outcome can be successfully completed.

WP 6 Implementation LLL courses

We expect that the indicator established at application (namely, 3 LLL courses/WB HEI to deliver to at least 400 professionals in total) can be achieved in spite of the obstacles indicated above.





We take note that the necessary tools and mechanisms have been established for the **WP 7 Project Quality Control, WP 8 Dissemination and Exploitation of Activities, WP 9 Management.**

Regarding **Quality Assurance and monitoring**, we observe that the consortium has developed a comprehensive quality assurance plan, including the quality assurance and monitoring of the implementation, deliverables, events and project management. The bodies responsible for quality assurance are set up. One of the products of the internal monitoring is the above mentioned **intermediate quality control report**, which presents a clear picture of the project state of play with useful recommendations.

Regarding the external evaluation, the consortium nominated an external evaluator. Detailed information on the dates and methodology of this evaluation is missing. Please provide us with this information by 1 September, 2018.

In principle, the **task distribution** is balanced in this large consortium. Project and partner countries have instrumental roles in the development of the project. It is positive that the consortium includes not only higher education institutions but also relevant non-academic partners active in the target area.



However, the consortium's intermediate quality control report has identified some problems related to the information and communication flow with the Macedonian Partner, Directorate for Protection and Rescue (MDPR) and its lack of activity. Moreover, according to this report, due to sporadic involvement of programme countries partners in project activities, communication with program countries may need to be improved. We would like to have further information regarding the measures the consortium is taking in this respect by 1 September, 2018.

The **management procedures and structure** have been established. Overall, the documents produced for the management and monitoring of the project are of good quality. NEOs already highlighted the Project Management Plan and Reporting Guide as good practice example that supports the partner universities in dealing with the rules, financial management and reporting procedures and documentation.





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The consortium has adopted a **dissemination and exploitation plan**. The consortium's intermediate quality control report has listed some areas of improvement and/or action which could maximise the impact of the project by further expanding the dissemination of the outcomes to other WB countries. We would appreciate that you keep us informed on your progress on this.

The consortium has presented reasonable arguments to demonstrate that project outcomes will be sustainable after the completion of the project. However, they are generic and applicable to any curriculum development project. Therefore, it is advisable that the project continues working on a more detailed **sustainability strategy**.





NEXT MEETING IN NOVI SAD 26-29 SEPTEMBER

1ST INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM S-FORCE 2018

- PLEASE SEND THE PAPER TITLES AND AUTHORS ASAP

Papers following manuscript requirements are to be submitted by August 15, 2018. The length of final paper should not exceed 10 pages including figures, tables, references and appendices.

The Symposium Editorial Board will review the papers. Papers will be presented at the Symposium as stand-up or poster presentation and published in the Book of proceedings.

The first part of Symposium (September 29) is reserved for presentation of students' papers, to provide students of master or PhD studies to present their thesis and research work, as well as to get acquainted with research methods and the system of education in different countries.

The second part of Symposium (September 30) will be organized in the line of methodology of European Youth Parliament, by EYP Serbia.





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Thank you
for your attention

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