C3QA Project's Coordination Meeting Minutes

Erasmus+ "Promoting internationalization of research through establishment and operationalization of Cycle 3 Quality Assurance System in line with the European Integration" (C3QA)

17th October, 2018, Astana, Khazakhstan

Dissemination Conference on Internal and External Quality Assurance Systems for Cycle 3 (Doctoral) programmes

**Present:**
All contact persons of 21 partner countries,
as well as all conference participants (up to 52 representatives)

The Coordination meeting in the framework of Astana dissemination conference under the Workpackage Dissemination and Exploitation of the Erasmus+ Project on "Promoting internationalization of research through establishment and operationalization of Cycle 3 Quality Assurance System in line with the European Integration (C3QA)" took place on 17th October, 2018 in Astana, Kazakhstan hosted by the project partner M. Narikbayev KAZGUU University.

The Coordination meeting was launched by the opening speech of Mr. Arayik Navoyan, Erasmus+ C3QA project coordinator, UFAR. Mr. Arayik Navoyan presented the outline of the Coordination meeting areas of discussion to be addressed, i.e.

1. Follow-up of recommendations of EACEA Implementation Report
2. Activities for the year of 2018
3. Activities for the year of 2019
4. State of project finances and day-to-day management
5. Issues regarding dissemination conference in Ulaanbaatar
6. Organization of site-visits and pilot accreditations
7. Project communication
8. Annex 1: Timeline of activities per the Workpackages

*1. Follow-up of recommendations of EACEA Implementation Report*

It was highlighted that the deadline of submitting follow-ups on the comments and recommendations provided by EACEA on the project's Implementation Report is October 29th, 2018. For that purpose the partners were asked to provide 1 page texts describing the activitites carried out and the results achieved so far that contribute to the sustainability of the project objectives for the partners. In order to provide precise and targeted feedbacks on the EACEA specific comments and recommendations, the result on the Implementation Report will be re-sent for the partner's ease of reference.

*2. Activities for the year of 2018*

Further, 1st part of the timeline of activities per the Workpackages for the year 2018 was presented, in particular:

| **October 31st, 2018** | - Finalization of propositions on regulatory frameworks for cycle 3 programs QA |
|---|---|
| **October 31st, 2018** | - Finalization of national level guidelines on EQA standards and procedures  for QA of cycle 3 programs |
| **October 31st, 2018** | - Finalization of IQA policy manuals for QA of Cycle 3 programs |
| **November 30th, 2018** | - Translation of guidelines, EQA standards/procedures and IQA policy manuals into national languages |

In fact, it was stated that several of the partners have already submitted their contributions on the propositions, guidelines, and manuals and the deadline is operative for further finalizations and submissions, in case not done so far.

In addition, the 2nd part of the timeline of activities per the Workpackages for the year 2018 referred to:

| **October 29th, 2018** | - Identification of Cycle 3 programs to be externally reviewed against the new EQA standards |
|---|---|
| **November 29th, 2018** | - Establishment of self-assessment groups at each HEI |
| **November 29th, 2018** | - Establishment of external panels of peer-reviewers |
| **January 31st, 2019** | - Development of self-assessment reports for 1 Cycle 3 program at each HEI |
| **December 17th, 2018** | - Reports per WPs |

3. *Activities for the year of 2019*

As part of the activities foreseen for the year of 2019 the partners will continue the outlined line of direction with the deadlines specified as follows:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **by February 28th, 2019** | - | After the preparation of self-assessment reports 1 month will be given to the partners for the desk-review of the reports so that the reports are finalized. |
| **March and April, 2019** | - | The site-visits to the 4 partner countries and corresponding HEIs would be launched lasting for 2 months. |
| **by May 17th, 2019** | - | The peer-review panels participating in the site-visits would produce final reports. |
| **June 10th, 2019** | - | The reports of the peer-review panels will be translated into the national languages of the project partners. |
| **September 26-27th, 2019** | - | Organization and delivery of project final conference in Yerevan |

*4. State of project finances and day-to-day management*

Afterwards, the state-of-affairs on the finances and day-to-day management were presented, in particular it was mentioned that:

- the staff costs would be transferred after the Astana conference,
- the boarding passes should be sent **by October 25th, 2018**,
- pay slips for the staff costs paid should be collected from the corresponding accounting departments and sent **by October 31st, 2018**,
- translations of the Training kit country cases will be reimbursed:
  - ✓ either 10% of amount from the subcontracting heading will be shifted to the staff costs heading and translation expenses will be paid as staff costs,
  - ✓ or contracts on external services will be prepared between the coordinator and the staff that translated the Training kit country cases.

Mr. Navoyan also noted that the Training kit will be finalized by the end of October once the 1st part of the contribution is elaborated by the assigned external expert Mr. Laureano Gonzalez Vega.

*N.b.* the comprehensive timeline of activities per the Workpackages is presented in Annex 1 to the Minutes on p. 7.

*5. Issues regarding the dissemination conference in Ulaanbaatar*

It was stressed by Mr. Navoyan that per the Workpackages it was foreseen that all the results and outcomes worked through will be subsequently presented in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia (June 26-27, 2019) in order to discuss the pilot results and ensure further dissemination of the project outcomes.

Nevertheless, taking into account that there is a significant difference between the actual ticket prices and the unit costs calculated per the distance calculator and considering the budget constraints to cover the exceedance of over-spending in the absence of co-financing by the partners it was suggested by Mr. Navoyan to withdraw the organization of the dissemination conference in Ulaanbaatar.

In fact, the Mongolian partners from NUM, OU, MNCEA and MoES Mongolia were well aware of the possible exceeding costs, therefore they had no objection on withdrawing the organization of the dissemination conference in Ulaanbaatar.

Furthermore, as Mr. Navoyan stated the destinations such as Kyiv or Kharkov could be also suggested, however considering the importance of pilot accreditation in order to achieve the project objectives and outcomes as well as to involve a large number of stakeholders from the HEIs through participation in the pilot accreditation it was suggested to concentrate the budget allocation to the effective implementation of site-visits and pilot accreditations.

As to the dissemination of pilot accreditation results, the partners would be able to circulate the corresponding outcomes to all the partners in the framework of the project's final conference in Yerevan, Armenia between 26-27th, September, 2019. As to the composition of the peer-review panels for the site-visits it was decided to increase the number of the peer-reviewers in the panels from the project and partner countries, for a better corresponding to the European best practices in international evaluation. Hence, the partners opted to allocate the budget foreseen for the Ulaanbaatar dissemination conference and mandated the project coordinator to request authorization from EACEA on increasing the number of peer-reviewers.

*6. Organization of site-visits and pilot accreditations*

As far as the state-of-affairs and directions for actions were majorly displayed for the partners the coordination meeting participants mostly agreed to the suggested actions, however there were a number of questions on the composition of the peer-review panels and the logistical details relating to the site-visits.

According to Mrs. Solange Pisarz from HCERES following their experience of implementing site-visits for the peer-review panels 1) experts from within the consortium are normally selected from outside, 2) the site-visits should be organized in close cooperation between the project coordinator, the HEIs and QA agencies, 3) the HEIs should be ready for the pilot accreditation having prepared all the guidelines and manuals and make available for the peer-review panels to have access to the relevant stakeholders of pilot accreditation.

In order to prepare the methodology for pilot accreditations under Workpackage 4, the national QA agencies under the professional expertise of HCERES and project coordinator will support the process starting from the identification of Cycle 3 programs till the pilot accreditation. In the absence of functioning QA national agency, for the case of KNUTE and KhNUE in Ukraine all the related activities will be carried out by HCERES.

As leading partners of the Workpackage 4 the national QA agencies will thus follow the internal regulations using the corresponding tools, including the self-assessment templates elaborated within the project by the agencies in order to implement evaluation and/or accreditation of the selected C3 program or provide suggestion on accreditation.

In this regard, Mr. Guillaume Rousset from UJM inquired whether all the participating QA agencies have the authorization of providing accreditation. Mrs. Orkhon Gantogtokh from MNCEA asserted that their agency can provide either temporary approval or pilot accreditation in the form of certain decree and present it to the Ministry's consideration.

Mrs. Gantogtokh also confirmed that the Mongolian partners understand the budget limitations regarding the organization of dissemination conference in Ulaanbaatar and therefore have no objection on its withdrawal.

Mrs. Amartivan from NUM also suggested organizing the dissemination conference online, however per the partners' responses the e-conference will be logistically difficult to organize due to time differences and technical constraints.

Afterwards, the partners again turned to the discussion on the organization and logistics of the site-visits and pilot accreditations. In particular, Mrs. Pisarz from HCERES noted that according their experience the review-panel consisted of as a minimum 1 student, 1 professional and 2 academics.

As Mr. Navoyan mentioned the travel and stay costs of the peer-review panel members will be reimbursed by the project and the students participating in the review process will be also reimbursed for their involvement.

The UAH team members suggested maintaining the local composition of the peer-review panels in order to use the local capacity to the maximum level.

Mr. Armen Budaghyan also came up with the YSU experience on pilot accreditation noting that they have involved 2 international experts (no matter in or out of the consortium), 2 local experts and 1 student.

Taking into account the intensive discussions on the composition of the peer-review panel Mr. Navoyan summed up that the peer-review panel would be composed in the following ratio: 1 local PhD student from the HEI other than the one being reviewed, 1 expert from EU specialized in the field of subject to be reviewed, 1 EU academic expert, 1 or 2 academic experts from partner countries, not from the partner country which is reviewed, 1 representative from the local industry, in case relevant, as well as 2 representatives from the local QA agencies accompanying the experts panel. Thus, the outlined composition aims to reflect all the suggestions of the partners to be presented to their feedback and approval in order to timely launch the pilot accreditations.

### 7. *Project Communication*

The Coordination meeting participants were also encouraged to regularly provide resources and information on the project-related activities at their institutions for further dissemination and distribution via the project website.

Mr. Navoyan also mentioned that the project EMT would collect all the relevant materials as well as prepare an information bulletin that would be provided to the Kazakh partners while participating in the Erasmus+ projects Fair in Astana.

8. *Annex 1: Timeline of activities per the Workpackages*a) Activities for the year of 2018

| | X | XI | XII | Deadline |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Finalization of propositions on regulatory frameworks for cycle 3 programs QA | ■ | | | October 31 |
| Finalisation of national level guidelines on EQA standards and procedures for QA of cycle 3 programs | ■ | ■ | | October 31 |
| Finalization of IQA policy manuals for QA of Cycle 3 programs | ■ | ■ | | October 31 |
| Translation of guidelines, EQA standards/procedures and IQA policy manuals into national languages | | ■ | ■ | November 30 |
| Identification of Cycle 3 programs to be externally reviewed against the new EQA standards | ■ | | | October 29 |
| Establishment of self-assessment groups at each HEI | ■ | | | October 29 |
| Establishment of external panels of peer-reviewers | ■ | | | October 31 |
| Development of self-assessment reports for 1 Cycle 3 program at each HEI | | ■ | ■ | January 31, 2019 |
| Reports per WPs | | ■ | ■ | December 17 |

b) Activities for the year of 2019

| | I | II | III | IV | Deadline |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Development of self-assessment reports for selected Cycle 3 program at each HEI | ■ | | | | January 31 |
| Desk-review of self-assessment reports | | ■ | | | February 28 |
| Site-visit to partner countries HEIs | | | ■ | ■ | April 15 |
| Production of final report of the peer-review panels | | | | | May 17 |

| | V | VI | VII | VIII | Deadline |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Translation of report of the peer-review panels into national languages | ■ | | | | June 10 |
| Organization and delivery of dissemination conference in Ulaanbaatar to discuss the pilot results | ■ | ■ | | | June 26-27 |
| Refinement of the developed tools and mechanisms | ■ | ■ | | | August 30 |
| | IX | X | XI | XII | Deadline |
| Adoption of national policies and procedures on Cycle 3 programs QA by respective governments | ■ | | | | September 30 |
| Adoption of IQA policies and procedures for Cycle 3 programs QA by respective Governing Boards of HEIs | ■ | ■ | | | September 30 |
| Organization and delivery of project final conference in Yerevan | | | ■ | ■ | |
| Production of project final report and conducting external audit fir fact funding | | ■ | ■ | ■ | December 23 |