MENVIPRO

Modernization of Environment Protection Studies

Programmes for Armenia and Georgia

(598232-EPP-1-2018-1-IT-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP)

Kick Off Meeting

14-15 January 2019

Yerevan

Meeting dates: 14-15 January 2019
Location: Center for Ecological-Noosphere Studies National
                Academy of Sciences, RA (CENS)

Attendance: according to the signed attendance sheet

Day I: January 14th, 2019

Welcome speech by the local host Professor Armen Saghatelyan.
Welcome speech by the project Coordinator Professor Nicolò Merendino.
Partner presentation: Project partners presented themselves and their institutions.

The session of the kick-off meeting continued Dr. Andrey Girenko who welcomed all the participants and wished them successful work.

Dr. Girenko prepared the overview of upcoming work, with administrative planning of activities which will be done during project realisation. He gave some introductory information about project main aims and started his speech with brief information related to EU Erasmus + capacity building programme implemented around the world. He also presented general topics for the abovementioned programme and explained the importance and priority in choosing topic on environmental protection especially for Armenia and Georgia.

Dr. Girenko's presentation overview

1. **The goals of the project:** overall objective is to significantly improve the quality of post-graduated education in the field of environmental protection in Armenia and Georgia. This is planned to implement by borrowing the best European practices, choosing 14 Master courses suitable for accreditation applicable in the education system.

2. **Timeline of the project:** Project will run for 3 years and it is planned to finish it in November 2021.

Question (N. Merendino) - *When will project members receive the payment to buy laboratory equipment?*

- Project members will receive 50% of the budget, after 1 year they should submitted financial report and of the end of 2 years they will receive almost 90% of the budget.

3. **WP1 - Best practice study and SWOT analysis.** *The goal is to generalise the best practice. All members have to have clear list of recommendations for good implementation of curricula. Expected activities*: organisation of visits with workshops, deliver 2 reports- visits and set of recommendations.

4. **WP2 - Curriculum development.** The goal is to develop 5 new courses and update 9 exiting courses according EU partner agreements.

   Note (D.Pipoyan, C.Glaesser) - *For credit recognition it will be very interested to merge some close materials in one big subject, it will be easier for student credit recognition.*

   Question (F. Piedade Carvalho) - *Is there any statistical assurance suggesting choosing cources?*

   - Those courses were checked according both national and regional priorities of Erasmus and education system peculiarities and state strategy of 2 countries.

   Question (F. Piedade Carvalho) - *When you mention accreditation of curricula and body university, what is the ISO for that accreditation?*

   - For that we have national standards and 10 national qualification criteria.

   Question (E.Soghomonyan) - *Are there any electives for chosen courses and if yes, what is the percentage of those electives during courses?*

   - It will depend on topics chosen by students, the decision will be done based on specific courses.

5. **WP3 – Innovation learning, teaching, research and learning.** This part of the project aimed to let laboratory environment support the education system for infrastructure improvement. There is a challenge to design 2 summer schools in summer 2020/2021.

6. **WP4-Evaluation Trial.** This part of the project consists of implementing developed curriculum in the last academic year, as well as implement summer schools: 1 in Armenia and 1 in Georgia.

After Dr. Girenko presentation the representative of the National Erasmus office of Armenia (NEO Armenia) **Ms. L. Karlova** gave an overview of the monitoring and what they will be looking for.

She summarized the main questions on project assessment details. First of all, she talked about how to produce and set up the Web platform, which will be used by students, the staff and institutions. Issues of concern were:

- Who will be responsible for web platform running?
- Who will be attached to it?
- What will be the content of the curriculum in the platform?

Then she turned to project relevance.

- What is the need for courses developing?
- What is the need of the main stockholders of the area?
- What is the quality of the partnership?
- How the responsibilities will be done?

Ms. L. Karlova gave some advice noting that all participants will face many risks and it will be widespread responsibilities. The monitoring has to be done with students and researchers who are the main targets of the project. All members have to concentrate their attention to understand how to achieve the best results and how to cover as many students as they can and as a result, reduce the risks, that will be assessed by Erasmus+ office.

Edith Soghomonyan (NEO Armenia) added some technical things: general information on the visual identity of the Erasmus+, the logo, the official website. She informed that Erasmus+ staff overseeing project results and can support in any possible way to share any information related MENVIPRO project.

Day II: January 15th, 2019

The second session of the kick-off meeting was opened by the project manager, **Dr. Angela Fattoretti**. She started her speech by giving a detailed explanation of partnership agreements, tasks and responsibilities of partner countries during project realization. She summarized the main content of project work packages (WP) and tasks:

WP1- *Best practice study and SWOT analysis, Tasks-SWOT methodology, informational study visit, recommendation for post-graduate programs;*

WP2-*Curriculum development, Tasks-curriculum reforms design, curriculum documentation development and accreditation preparation;*

WP3- *Innovation learning, teaching, research and learning, Tasks-University industry linkage, scientists school design, technical capacity building;*

WP4- *Evaluation Trial, Tasks- evaluation trial and summer school;*

WP5- *Quality control measure, Tasks- quality control framework, quality control visit;*

WP6- *Awareness, excellence, and sustainability, Task- dissemination plan, Website development, materials promotion, workshop dissemination, community building;*

WP7 - *Project coordination and management, Tasks-project management, monitoring.*

During Dr. Fattoretti's speech, Dr. Girenko explained overall content of WP-2 related to the responsibility of partners, WP-5 tasks, including QC improvement procedures and reasonable management of available resources and WP-6 tasks, including dissemination overall plan and website creation details, responsible person activities. According to WP-7, Dr. Girenko explained that first of all, there is a need to choose the necessary software for project management, develop systems for better structuring of information.

Discussion

<u>Question</u> (E. Soghomonyan) - *Whether the quality plan is developed? Participants need not only control deliverables but also they should think about quality ahead.*

- It is planned to create a document with all QC details and procedure design.

<u>Question</u> *(C. Glaesser) – We need to specify the language of the documents and texts in the official web site, they will be only in Armenian and Georgian or only in English?*

- We need to discuss this question with all project members, to evaluate all detailed related to concrete examples.

After WP discussion, Dr. Fattoretti attracted everyone's attention on project budget details and with Dr. Girenko expounded some payment terms, travel costs and percentage distribution of the budget for each country. Participants found out the dates and the most successful travel destinations.

Question (O.Belyaeva) - *What we expected from these meetings, the main idea of meetings?*

- European colleagues should share their best practices, carried out t joint SWOT analysis and solve quality control (QC) problems, implementing overall QC measurement.

Question (F. Piedade Carvalho) - *Can we try to satisfy our needs to project coordination and, take advantage of QC visits to let meet people with specific interests?*

- It is possible to organize visits according to the participant's specific interests and professional preferences.

Question (C. Glaesser) - *How many staff must organize the hosted university, how long should be the visit and what must be the main conversation themes during meetings and roundtables?*

- It depends on curriculum development. Expected detailed presentations from all participant countries containing the all necessary information.

Question (O. Belayeva) - *In which field we have to prepare our courses, more or less for the best practices they should have some similarity.*

- Everyone agreed that there should be at least structural similarities.

The next topic was about the planning of dates and places of 2020 events, including joint workshops, technical capacity building events, an annual workshop for dissemination and annual coordination meeting, summer school, as well as QC visits.

Question (F. Piedade Carvalho) - *What a basic idea and expectation from summer school? How should be organized student travel and accommodation, and how should organizers figure out curriculum design of summer school?*

- Summer school will be a pilot version and it should serve as a prototype for further summer schools. Students must pay for summer school participation, however, there will also be travel grants.

The Last topic was about QC tours, the project activities and the special role that each partner should play in this regard. According to the discussion, a preliminary list of the QC and SWOT analysis responsible persons were created.

Annex 1 – Agenda of the meeting
Annex 2 – Signed Attendance Sheet