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MINUTES №1
First meeting of the Steering Committee of the Erasmus+ project
"Human Capacity Development for the Water Sector Central of Asia the
Strengthen Resilience to Climate Change and Support Sustainable
Development, Peace and Security" HWCA
organized by the
Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kyrgyz
Republic named after Kazy Dikambaev

July 7, 2023

Chairpersons: Professor Chinara Adamkulova, project manager and Marton Krasznoi, project coordinator

Secretary: Farizat Abdyldaeva

Present:

1. Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
2. Corvinus University of Budapest (associated partner) - M. Krasznoi,
3. Delft Institute for Water Education, Netherlands
4. University of Bergamo
5. University of Reims Champagne - Ardennes
6. Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan
7. Kazakh Agricultural Research University named after S. Seifullin
8. Taraz Regional University named after M. Dulati
9. University of World Economy and Diplomacy
10. Tashkent Institute of Irrigation and Agricultural Mechanization Engineers
11. Shirinsho Shotemur Tajik Agrarian University

Absent:

1. Kyrgyz National Agrarian University named after K. Skryabin
2. Kazakh-German University
3. Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan
4. Turkmen State University named after Magtymguly
5. Turkmen Agrarian Institute

DRAFT AGENDA:

1. Discussion and approval of the tasks, operating procedures and decision making rules of the Steering Committee
2. Upcoming events: European Partners meeting and Supervisory Board meeting
3. REVIEW OF FINANCIAL MATTERS - PROCUREMENT
4. CONSIDERATION OF FINANCIAL ISSUES
5. Approval of the dissemination plan of the project. Presentation the project website
6. Approval of the independent quality reviewer

The agenda was approved by consensus.

Agenda item 1. Tasks, operating procedures and decision making rules of the Steering Committee

The Coordinator reminded participants that the draft operating rules (including decision making rules) had been circulated a week before the meeting. He offered participants to walk them through the document and answer questions.

The Steering Committee was established on 1 July 2023, upon receipt of nominations of members by every partner university participating in the consortium. The Steering Committee consists of one representative of each member university, except the associated partner, which can participate in meetings of the Committee without the right to vote. The Steering Committee meets quarterly (online) and it takes decisions with consensus. The Steering Committee is chaired by two co-chairs: The Project Manager, Professor Chinara Adamkulova, Rector of the Diplomatic Academy of the MFA of KR and the Project Coordinator, Marton Krasznai, Visiting professor of DA MFA KR

The tasks of the Steering Committee include the provision of overall guidance to the Project Management Team, the adoption of decisions on substantive issues of the implementation of the HWCA project, in particular:

- Regular exchange of information on all matters related to project implementation.
- Discussion of quarterly reports on project implementation by the Project Management Team.
- Discussion of quarterly reports on project implementation by partner universities, members of the consortium.
- Financial issues: receiving and discussing quarterly reports by the Project Management Team on financial management of the project and adopting decisions on financial matters.
- Legal issues: receiving and discussing quarterly reports by the legal adviser of the Project Management Team and providing guidance to the Project Management Team on legal matters and adopting decisions on legal issues, as necessary.
- Discussion and adoption of quarterly reports by the expert / expert team on quality assurance.

- Supervision of regular reporting through the project website to the European Commission-
- Any other issue relevant for efficient project implementation.

The Project Management Team provides quarterly reports to the Steering Committee on its work and prepares the agenda and draft decisions of the Committee. The quarterly reports, agenda and draft decisions are circulated among members of the Steering Committee two weeks before the next meeting. The Project Management team prepares a summary of discussions and list of decisions that had been taken at meetings of the Steering Committee and circulates them within a week after each meeting of the Steering Committee.

The Supervisory Board provides strategic guidance to the Steering Committee. The Co-Chairs of the Steering Committee provide quarterly reports to the Board on meetings of and decisions by the Steering Committee. They provide reports to members of the Steering Committee on the outcomes of the meeting (both online and face to face) of the Supervisory Board.

Meetings of the Steering Committee are convened and chaired by its Co-Chairs. If one of the Co-Chairs is unable to participate in a meeting, one Co-Chair can convene and chair the upcoming meeting. All relevant information concerning project implementation are made available to members of the Steering Committee through a shared dropbox. Information of particular importance or urgency can be shared through email. The agenda of the meetings of the Steering Committee are drafted by the two Co-Chairs and approved by the Steering Committee with consensus at the beginning of each meeting. Every member of the Steering Committee can propose items to be placed on the agenda of the upcoming meeting. The Co-Chairs invite members of the Steering Committee to circulate written reports on project implementation activities of their university before every meeting of the Committee and deliver oral reports during Steering Committee meetings.

Decisions by the Steering Committee are taken by consensus. Members of the Steering Committee are responsible for disseminating information on the outcome of meetings and decisions taken by the Committee among members of the project management team of their university. Members of the Steering Committee are expected to play an active role in outreach, dissemination and coordination with other projects and programmes. They are expected to participate in relevant workshops, seminars and conferences to report on the achievements of the project and explore possibilities for synergies, coordination and cooperation with partners.

Agenda item 2. Upcoming events: European Partners meeting and Supervisory Board meeting

In order to ensure quality, the project manager has taken measures to ensure professional quality control. This issue will become more relevant in the second phase of the project when the work on updating existing and developing new curricula will start.

EU universities will hold a coordination meeting on July 25 in Budapest. The main objective of the meeting is to agree on the distribution of tasks and to plan and agree on the itineraries of the needs assessment missions in the five Central Asian countries. The meeting will also agree on the methodology for the visits and the list of stakeholders to be consulted. The list of stakeholders should include the Ministries of Water Resources, Foreign Affairs, Economy, Environment, the private sector, civil society, the development community and relevant research institutions. The Project's Supervisory Board will hold its first meeting on September 29 in Budapest. The Chairman of the Supervisory Board is Prof. Danilo Turk, former President of Slovenia, former UN Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs and Chairman of the Global Observatory for Water and Peace. The Vice-Chair of the Observatory is Dr. Marc Zeitoun, Director of the Geneva Water Hub. The Supervisory Board will provide strategic guidance for the project implementation and assess the efficiency and professionalism of its implementation.

Agenda item 3. REVIEW OF FINANCIAL MATTERS - PROCUREMENT

The issue of harmonization and coordination of procurement was discussed during the kick-off meeting of the project on 6 and 7 June in Bishkek. It was agreed that the University of Bergamo would review submissions of partner universities on their existing technical equipment and software and provide advice and guidance concerning procurement of new equipment and software. The objective of such a procedure is to ensure that the equipment and software purchased by members of the consortium are compatible, so they can participate in online events and use compatible e-learning platforms. The Chairperson warned participants that they should not jump the gun: they should not start procurement before they receive guidance and advice from the University of Bergamo.

As to quality assurance, the Project Manager has made arrangements for the provision of professional quality assurance. This issue will become more important during the second phase of project implementation when work on updating existing curricula and development of new curricula starts.

EU universities will hold a coordination meeting on 25 July in Budapest. The main objective of the meeting was to agree on the distribution of tasks and plan and coordinate itineraries for the needs assessment missions to five Central Asian countries. The meeting will also agree on the methodology of the visits and the list of stakeholders to view. The list of stakeholders should include ministries of water resources, foreign affairs, economy, environment, the private sector, the civil society, the development community and relevant research institutes.

The Supervisory Board of the project will hold its inaugural meeting on 29 September in Budapest. The Supervisory Board is chaired by Professor Danilo Turk, former president of Slovenia, former UN Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs and the Chairman of the Global Observatory for Water and Peace. The deputy chair of the Supervisory Board is Dr. Mark Zeitoun, Director of the Geneva Water Hub. The Supervisory Board will provide strategic guidance for project implementation and evaluate the effectiveness and professionalism of project implementation.

Filippo Menga- University of Bergamo asked participants to send the list of their

existing equipment and software as soon as possible: so far only two universities had provided this list. University of Bergamo will need to review the list of existing equipment and software (Teams, Zoom, Google Workspace, etc,) to come up with recommendations for all partner universities.

The Chairperson asked participating universities to send the list of their equipment and software as soon as possible and to step up project implementation from September 1. According to the original plans, project implementation should have started at the beginning of the first semester of 2023. Since for administrative and legal reasons implementation started on 1 May only, many activities planned for the first semester of 2023 will be postponed till September 2023, the beginning of the second semester. It is important that with joint efforts, members of the consortium make up for the lost time.

Agenda item 4: CONSIDERATION OF FINANCIAL ISSUES

Presentation by Ch. Adamkulova DAMFA KR:

The DA MFA KR has shared information on the approved budget with all partner universities. Partnership agreements are in the process of signature. Two universities from Turkmenistan and one university from Tajikistan have not yet signed the partnership agreement. DA MFA KR will ask assistance from the local Tampus or Erasmus offices.

Several participants asked about the delay in project implementation. The deadlines included in the original project document are very tight, in some cases it might not be possible to keep them.

The Coordinator suggested that consultations with the Project Officer of the European Commission about rescheduling certain activities might be necessary. The late start of project implementation upended the original implementation road map in several cases. Originally, project plans included “intensive” periods during the first and second semester of each year and less intensive periods during summer and winter holidays.

Ch. Adamkulova DAMFA KR informed that the Academy and Taras University had made a special arrangement under which the Diplomatic Academy would purchase equipment for Taras University through reliable vendors. Other universities have received their budgets and can make their purchases individually.

Bota Sharipova IHE Delft complained that they had not been able to print documents from the dropbox of the project. The project Manager informed Ms. Sharipova that documents in a new, printable format had been placed in the dropbox during the last two days.

Agenda item 5: Approval of the dissemination plan of the project

Presentation by Zh.Aitbayev

Zhorobay Aitbayev began by describing the purpose of the project's dissemination plan. He presented the dissemination plan and explained to participants how they could participate in the implementation of the dissemination plan. He also shared information

about where and how all project participants can add, edit and change information about the project. Particular attention was paid to explaining the functionality and features of the HWCA project website.

The Coordinator

The Coordinator congratulated the expert team of DA MFA KR on the excellent dissemination plan and website created just two months after the beginning of project implementation. He asked participants to keep in mind when implementing the dissemination plan that this work can be divided into two phases: during the first phase which will last till the end of 2023 the main objective is to spread information to the broadest possible group of students and teaching staff, so they know about the project and may decide to participate in relevant activities. Partner universities may wish to organize information meetings and round table discussions with the participation of students and teaching staff during the needs assessment missions of experts of EU universities. The second phase of dissemination starts when substantive work on the modernization of existing curricula and development of new curricula starts. During the second phase dissemination activities should focus on sharing information with the broadest possible group of students, teaching staff, partners and stakeholders about the concrete results of this work.

Decisions: the Steering Committee approved the operational procedures, the dissemination plan, the guidance on procurement and the report on financial issues.

The Steering Committee expressed its appreciation of the work of the Project Management Team and in particular the expert team of DA MFA KR for the highly professional work on the dissemination plan and the project website.

Agenda item 6: Approval of the independent quality reviewer

Presentation by Ch.Adamkulova

Professor Chinara Adamkulova announced the next item on the meeting agenda: Approval of the independent quality assessment expert:

Professor noted the need to engage an independent expert to conduct quality assessment of the project implementation. Professor Chinara Adamkulova presented a list of potential experts with their credentials and experience in similar projects.

After a comprehensive discussion, the committee members unanimously approved the appointment of **Omuralieva Venera** as an independent expert to assess the quality of project implementation.

Discussion and decision on the role of the expert:

The committee discussed the scope of work and responsibilities of the independent expert.

The Committee decided to establish a clear channel of communication between the project team and the independent expert to facilitate information exchange and ensure smooth cooperation throughout the evaluation process.

The next meeting of the Steering Committee is planned in early October 2023.

Chairpersons:

Professor Chinara Adamkulova

Marton Krasznai

Secretary:

F. Abdyldaeva