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WATER DIPLOMACY
PROJECT ERASMUS +
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Coordination Meeting of EU Universities participating in the Erasmus+ HWCA project

25 July, 2023, Budapest

Representatives of partner universities of EU countries that participate in the Erasmus+ HWCA project held a coordination meeting in hybrid format on 25 July in Budapest. The objective of the meeting was to plan and agree upon activities under Work package I and discuss further joint work in the framework of the project.

Needs assessment missions

In light of the written and oral information on the curricula and capacity of 11 Central Asian universities (provided during the kick-off meeting of the project on 6 and 7 June in Bishkek), participants agreed to reorganize the needs assessment missions, including the composition of the teams and the itinerary of the missions. They agreed on the following arrangements for the three needs assessment missions:

Team 1.

Composition of the team: Marton Krasznai, DA MFA KR, project coordinator, Dr. Barbara Janusz-Pawletta, vice-rector of the Kazakh-German University, Bota Sharipova, PhD research assistant, IHE Delft, Cinzia Spinzi, University of Bergamo

Professor Chinara Adamkulova, the Rector of DA MFA KR and project manager may participate too.

Universities to visit:

Tashkent: Tashkent Institute of Irrigation and Agricultural Mechanization, and University of World Economy and Diplomacy, Dates: 9 and 10 October

Astana: Academy of Public Administration and Kazakh Agrotechnical University

Dates: 12 and 13 october

Team 2.

Composition: Dr. Jenniiver Sehring, IHE Delft, Professor Jean-Paul Deroin, University of Reims, Dr. Barbara Janusz-Pawlette, Kazakh-German University, Elena Bougleux and Larissa D'Angelo, University of Bergamo,

Professor Chinara Adamkulova, the Rector of DA MFA KR and project coordinator may participate too.

Universities to visit:

Almaty: Kazakh-German University

Bishkek: DA MFA KR, Kyrgyz National Agrarian University named after K. Skryabin

Taraz: Taraz Regional University named after M. Dulati

Proposed dates: between 16 and 27 October

Team 3

Composition: Professor Jean-Paul Deroin, University of Reims, Barbara Janusz-Pawletta, Kazakh-German University, Bota Sharipova, PhD research assistant, IHE Delft, Patrizia Anesa and Ornella Discacciati, University of Bergamo
A representative of DA MFA KR may participate too.

Universities to visit:

Ashgabat: Turkmen State University named after Magtymguly

Dashoguz: Turkmen Agrarian Institute

Dushanbe: Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, Shirinsho Shotemur Tajik Agrarian University

Proposed dates: 6 - 10 November

Participants agreed to circulate a questionnaire among Central Asian universities before the actual visits. When discussing the main objectives of the needs assessment missions, it was agreed that the teams should seek answers to the following questions:

- 1) Is it possible to update the present curricula of Central Asian universities with modules and subjects on water governance and/or water diplomacy?
- 2) Is it possible to augment, update the BA courses taught by Central Asian universities in order to prepare undergraduate students for studying the updated or newly developed MA curricula?
- 3) How to improve the capacity of teaching staff, so it is able to teach subjects in the updated or newly developed curricula?

- 4) What are the possibilities (legal, financial, organizational, etc.) to augment the capacity of teaching staff by employing new lecturers or inviting lecturers (e.g. in the framework of exchange programmes) from other Central Asian or EU universities?
- 5) The proportion of teaching staff able to deliver lectures in English
- 6) The proportion of students able to study subjects in English
- 7) Identifying teaching and research staff that are able to actively participate in the modernization of existing and the development of new curricula (it was agreed that primarily these persons should be invited to the two week training courses in Delft and Budapest).

Dissemination

The discussion on dissemination started with the presentation of a dissemination plan developed by experts of DA MFA KR. It was agreed to take advantage of the needs assessment missions to disseminate information about the project and discuss the distribution of tasks with representatives of Central Asian universities.

Updating existing and development of new curricula

An in-depth discussion took place on the challenges of updating existing or developing new curricula on water governance and water diplomacy. The following priorities were agreed upon:

- Central Asian universities should be strongly encouraged to take an active part in this work.
- Efforts should be made to develop harmonized curricula for all Central Asian universities in order to facilitate closer cooperation of experts (graduates of these courses) of various countries.
- It is not enough to update or develop new curricula: the most important measure of success will be whether universities succeed in creating the skills and conditions needed to teach the new curriculum successfully
- Since accreditation of new curriculum may take years, whenever possible, universities should choose to update existing curricula, e.g. by adding new modules or subjects.

Quality assurance plan

The quality assurance plan was presented by the coordinator. It was proposed to harmonize the denomination of various management and supervisory bodies to avoid confusion. The quality assurance plan was approved by participants of the meeting.

Organization of training courses

Participants presented and discussed ideas about the organization of the training courses in Delft (on water governance) and Budapest (on water diplomacy). It was agreed that these courses should play an important role in the updating of existing or development of new curricula. Brainstormings and drafting sessions should be included in the agenda.

Two options were considered for organizing the training courses: invitation of the same group of participants to both (water governance and water diplomacy) or invitation of two different groups of teaching staff and researchers to the two courses. After an in-depth discussion it was agreed that the second option would serve better the achievement of the objectives of the project. Inviting the same group of teaching staff to both courses may blur the difference between the work on water governance and water diplomacy. It would encourage universities (the ones that teach curricula that includes overwhelmingly subjects on irrigation, engineering, agriculture, mechanization) that lack the capacity to teach essential subjects to the standards expected and required, to venture into including courses on water diplomacy into their teaching programmes. Inviting the same group to both courses would drastically reduce the number of participants from each university (to maximum two persons). Inviting different groups to the two courses would allow each Central Asian university to nominate four persons to participate in the course whose subject is the same as the qualification it offers.

Annex I.

List of participants:

Márton Krasznai, DA MFA KR, project coordinator
Dr. Jenniver Sehring, IHE Delft
Bota Sharipova, IHE Delft
Professor Jean-Paul Deroin
Dr. Barbara Janusz-Pawletta, DKU
Cinzia Giacinta, UB

List of online participants:

Professor Chinara Adamkulova, DA MFA KR, project manager
Dr. Filippo Menga, UB
Elena Bougleux UB
Larissa D'Angelo UB
Patrizia Anesa UB
Ornella Discacciati UB

Annex II.

Agenda of the meeting

09.00 Opening statement by Professor Chinara Adamkulova, Project Manager,

09.05 Adoption of the agenda

09.10 Needs assessment missions to 5 Central Asian countries - introduction by Marton Krasznai

- Evaluation of the submissions / presentations of Central Asian universities
- Discussion and adoption of the objectives and methodology of the visits
- Defining stakeholders: government, private sector, regional and international organizations, academia, civil society
- Discussion and agreement on the dates and itinerary of the visits to Ashgabat, Dashoguz, Dushanbe, Bishkek (Agrarian University), Taraz, Astana, Tashkent

Ideally, teams of experts of EU universities should visit at least two countries to keep travel costs to the minimum. Questionnaires for universities and stakeholders could be circulated before the visits. Visits should be used for disseminating information about the HWCA project among students and teaching staff. A uniform reporting format should be agreed upon, so materials uploaded on the project website have the same structure.

11.00 Coffee break

11.15 Dissemination: tasks, opportunities - introduction by Chinara Adamkulova and Marton Krasznai

Dissemination activities should correspond to the actual phase of project implementation. During the first phase (till the end of 2023) emphasis should be on disseminating information on the project among students and teaching staff. As substantive work on the curricula on water governance and water diplomacy starts, dissemination activities should shift to informing students, teaching staff, stakeholders and potential partners about substantive work, progress with developing the curricula and opportunities for mobility.

11.45 Modernization of existing curricula, development of new curricula on water governance - approach, methodology, distribution of tasks, options

A preliminary discussion should stimulate joint thinking on the scope of this work and possible distribution of tasks.

13.00 Lunch break

14.00 Discussion and approval of the quality assurance plan

The quality assurance plan presented by the project management team can be finalized based on the experience of EU universities and other Erasmus+ projects in a working order.

The main stages and activities of the quality assurance plan are approved and adopted

15.00 Planning training courses for teaching staff of Central Asian universities

The tentative date for the two week training courses is July - August 2024. A preliminary discussion on substantive and logistic issues should help the organizers start preparations for the courses.

15.30 Summary of discussions, decisions

16.00 End of the meeting