

ANNEX IV.2: Template Report form for Cluster meetings organised by NEOs

REPORT ON CLUSTER MEETING

(FOR INTERNAL USE)

Purpose of report:

The report should give a good overview on the way and extent to which the participating projects have had (and/or will have) an impact in the Partner Country(/ies) for concerns the topic (/thematic area) addressed by the meeting.

The conclusion should sum up the main achievements (realised and/or expected) as well as the recommendations addressed to the projects, the national authorities and the European Commission for improving the Programme/projects impact on the thematic area/topic concerned.

*Depending the stage of the participating projects (closed or on-going) the report should give an assessment of the actual (or expected) sustainability of the products and on the impact of each project at individual, institutional and national level (for more guidance please consult the **table of Indicators/descriptors** on impact indicators (Annex I.13) and **guiding questions for impact** a(Annex I.9)*

I. Information on the meeting

Title of the Cluster meeting	Cluster meeting of CBHE projects focusing on the Curriculum Development
Specify the topic (/thematic area) of the meeting and if applicable its geographical coverage (for what concerns the Partner Countries)	Curriculum Development
Date of the meeting	29 th -30 th November 2018
City, Country	Podgorica, Montenegro
Projects invited (list of the projects with title and number)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. 585681-EPP-1-2017-1-EL-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP Electrical Energy Markets and Engineering Education2. 585927-EPP-1-2017-1-RS-EPPKA2-CBHEJP Strengthening Capacities for Higher Education of Pain Medicine in Western Balkan Countries3. 586304-EPP-1-2017-1-BA-EPPKA2-CBHEJP Western Balkans Urban Agriculture Initiative4. 574193-EPP-1-2016-1-RS-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP Strengthening Capacities for Tourism Changes in WB – Building Competences for Quality Management of Heritage and Cultural Tourism (CULTUWB)5. 573997-EPP-1-2016-1-ME-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP Enhancement of study programs in Public Health Law, Health Management, Health Economics and Health Informatics in Montenegro

	<p>6. 573866-EPP-1-2016-1-ME-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP Capacity Building of the Faculty of Law, University of Montenegro - curricula refreshment, boosting of international cooperation and improving human, technical and library resources</p> <p>7. 561592-EPP-1-2015-1-FR-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP Establishing Modern Master-level Studies in Information Systems (MASTIS)</p> <p>8. 543782-TEMPUS-1-2013-1-AL-TEMPUSJPCR Developing and Adapting Professional Programs for Energy Efficiency in the Western Balkans</p> <p>9. 544169-TEMPUS-1-2013-1-BE-TEMPUS-JPCR Competency Based Curriculum Reform in Nursing and Caring in Western Balkan Universities</p> <p>10. 544257-TEMPUS-1-2013-1-ME-TEMPUS-JPCR Modernizing and harmonizing maritime education in Montenegro and Albania</p> <p>11. 530440-TEMPUS-1-2012-1-ME-TEMPUS-JPCR Restructuring of Study Programme in Architecture to Long-cycle Integrated Master in line with EU standards</p> <p>12. 530766 – TEMPUS – 1-2012-1-ME-TEMPUS - SMHES Foundation of Study Programme for Inclusive Education in Montenegro</p> <p>13. 530423-TEMPUS-1-2012-1-UK-TEMPUS-JPCR Studies in Bioengineering and Medical Informatics</p> <p>14. 530194-TEMPUS-1-2012-1-RS-TEMPUS-JPCR Energy efficiency, renewable energy sources and environmental impacts-master study</p>
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II. Feedback and conclusions on the meeting

1. AGENDA OF THE MEETING (*ATTACHED*)

2. LIST OF PARTICIPANTS (*ATTACHED*)

Name, title/function, role (e.g. project representative, public authorities, media, external stakeholder, etc.) and employing organisation. If applicable, contact details (/email address)

3. BACKGROUND

Give a short summary of the background of the topic chosen

Explain the situation of the subject area /field in focus in the partner country and explain why it was chosen.

Present the meeting objectives

Curriculum Development (CD) projects are chosen purposely since these types of projects are of major interest for the country's higher education system, and are the most frequently used types of projects by Montenegrin higher education institutions (HEIs). This was a real necessity for HEIs, especially at the beginning of the higher education (HE) reforms. Changing and developing new curricula was the starting point in the overall HE reform process that gradually led to the overall improvement of the HE system in the country. So far about 35 Tempus projects have been realized and 11 Erasmus+ Capacity Building in Higher Education (CBHE) projects selected as curriculum development type.

The meeting aimed at examining the results of those type of projects, both Erasmus+ CBHE and Tempus, their impact at various levels – individual, faculty, university level, widening to the society level on the whole. By the same token, cluster meeting aimed at discussing the obstacles, or potential problems encountered during their implementation phase. But not only that, the idea was also to identify good practise examples, and enable sharing of local experiences among professors, local coordinators, with all relevant stakeholders, as well as discuss all relevant CD project related issues among other stakeholders as well, directly or indirectly linked to the projects themselves, such as Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, representatives of the business sector etc. Agency for Control and Quality of Study Programmes, recently established in Montenegro, among other things, in charge of accreditation procedures, was also invited, although not having participated in the projects so far. However, given the importance of accreditation in general, and especially in the current meeting context, their role was of extreme importance, both for them to get to know what kind of activities were/are being performed in Montenegro in CD field, and obstacles encountered which have been mostly related to the accreditation issue. Last but not the least, a special attention was paid to the sustainability of the projects as well as challenges during the projects' implementation.

Selection of the projects embraced all CD Erasmus+ CBHE projects (excluding 2018 call), as well as 7 Tempus projects, in order to have wider perspectives of the benefits, as well as different perspectives of the CD projects, through the eyes of coordinators, partners, different areas, different HEIs and different HE cycles.

4. MAIN CONCLUSIONS OF THE MEETING

I. Impact of the projects at different levels

Describe how the participating projects have led (/will lead) to behavioural, structural, pedagogical, etc. changes in the Partner country(/ies) for the topic (/thematic area) concerned

a) Impact at individual level

(for instance: new skills/competences acquired; improved information/awareness on the topic/thematic area; access to new tools/equipment; etc.).

b) Impact at the Higher Education Institutions

(for instance: new governance structures /strategies /methods; new services offered; increased transparency; delivery of new curriculum; improvement in the recruitment rates, teaching methods, students' performance; etc.)

c) Impact at national/regional level (on the society as a whole)

(for instance: changes in the relevant legal framework, in the practices of the HE sector, in the links between HE and society at large, ... ; increased awareness on and improved coverage of the topic/thematic area in the country(/ies); etc.)

d) Impact on international level

(for instance: increased/improved cooperation between partner country HEIs and HEIs from other regions in the topic/thematic area concerned; establishment of joint degrees with EU universities; international accreditation of study programmes; etc.)

Speaking in terms of benefits for the institutions, all of the CD projects subject to cluster meeting were extremely useful for raising the level of quality at the respective HEIs, and study programmes concerned. The improved quality could be reflected in the improved teaching methodologies, improved infrastructure, and better visibility and attractiveness of HEIs in question. In the context of Montenegrin system, a decade ago it was unimaginable that certain subject areas could be brought into connection (“*Studies in Bioengineering and Medical Informatics*” 530423-TEMPUS-1-2012-1-UK-TEMPUS-JPCR). Introduction of the new topics (“*Strengthening Capacities for Higher Education of Pain Medicine in Western Balkan Countries*” 585927-EPP-1-2017-1-RS-EPPKA2-CBHEJP , “*Developing and Adapting Professional Programs for Energy Efficiency in the Western Balkans*” 543782-TEMPUS-1-2013-1-AL-TEMPUSJPCR, “*Enhancement of study programs in Public Health Law, Health Management, Health Economics and Health Informatics in Montenegro*” 573997-EPP-1-2016-1-ME-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP) through new study programmes, and introduction of interdisciplinarity gave a new “flavour” to the already well established study programmes in Montenegro, making the study offer more diverse, more attractive, as well as more in line with the labour market needs. Introducing new programmes, and interdisciplinary approach opened some new prospective and new horizons in terms of diversity of topics (new electrical energy markets (“*Electrical Energy Markets and Engineering Education*”-585681-EPP-1-2017-1-EL-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP), environmental protection, (“*Energy efficiency, renewable energy sources and environmental impacts- master study*” - 530194-TEMPUS-1-2012-1-RS-TEMPUS-JPCR); efficient energy use (“*Developing and Adapting Professional Programs for Energy Efficiency in the Western Balkans*”- 543782-TEMPUS-1-2013-1-AL-TEMPUS-JPCR; mechatronics etc.). Not only that, through some of the projects, which is the case of project related to the introduction of MSc in inclusive education (“*Foundation of Study Programme for Inclusive Education in Montenegro*”- 530766 – TEMPUS – 1-2012-1-ME-TEMPUS – SMHES) , HEI brought to light an issue of societal importance, raising awareness of society and respective authorities of the special part of society – students with disabilities, students with special needs etc.

Students as direct, and sometimes indirect participants, or witnesses of these changes introduced through these CD projects were always positively tackled.

The projects indirectly underpinned better collaboration at the local level, both within Montenegrin academic community, as well as contributed to the collaboration with non-academic partners, and opened platform for closer communication and dialogue with the labour market, which is the case for the project in maritime studies, inclusive education, architecture etc. Indirectly, these projects contributed to better understanding of what should be done by both sides to make the projects more attractive and better recognized at the labour market, and contributing to higher employability of graduates.

CD projects also sometimes influenced changes at the legislative level, as is the case with *CB HE project on public health policy* 573997-EPP-1-2016-1-ME-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP

It also contributed to the EU integration process, which is the case with the architecture field, and its harmonization with the Directive on Regulated Professions EU/2013/55, thus fulfilling the strategic goals at the state level (530440-TEMPUS-1-2012-1-ME-TEMPUS-JPCR). This concrete project also contributed to the higher recognition of the study programme in architecture, and enabled higher mobility in this field, which was not the case before.

However, the word most frequently mentioned in terms of obstacles was accreditation – very demanding, and time-consuming exercise. This has quite often created problems during the implementation phase, thus delaying the projects` activities, or leaving it to the enthusiastic individuals to struggle with this challenge. Examples of this kind could be classified as examples of not so good practise, but still as a learning tool for the future projects. This is especially alert to the responsible authorities, to take over more responsibility, and ownership of the projects, and be flexible in terms of support they give to the HEIs submitting the applications.

Projects need to be institutionalized both from the HEI side, as well as supported by national authorities when projects are related to the priorities defined as such at the national level.

To sum up, the implementation of CD projects has brought great benefits to the higher education system in Montenegro with the most obvious results of which are:

- Establishment of new study programs;
- Existing study programs revised, adapted to the labour market needs;
- New topics of relevance tackled and introduced;
- Improved governance, quality and visibility;
- Quality of teaching and study programs offers raised;
- Possibilities for LLL courses created;
- Basis created for linking HE programs with the world of business;
- Established partnerships

The impact of the projects at the local, institutional, societal and the level of individuals could be summarized as follows:

- Introducing new study programs and courses;
- New programs following the HE framework (strategic framework);
- Direct and indirect contribution to European Integration prospects;
- Possibility for professional development of teaching staff and people from business sector;
- Increased mobility of individual and staff;
- Infrastructural resources;
- Networking of the team;
- Industrial and outside community: many of them finished training in such projects;
- NGOs started to do the job of education;
- Direct impact on curricula;
- Direct impact on research;
- Direct impact on future project developments,
- Direct impact on infrastructure equipment.

II. Sustainability (Capacity of the project(s) to continue and for their products/results to be used beyond the funding period and/or the partnership)

Describe how the projects and their results/products have achieved (/will achieve) the expected sustainability within and, if applicable, the partnership.

Describe the type and intensity of support received at national (i.e. public authorities or stakeholders from the private sector) /institutional level for reaching this sustainability

Present the specific factors /constraints/obstacles/problems that, according to the meeting participants, have affected the sustainability of the project results?

All of these projects have sustainability perspective, and this sustainability cannot be only measured through the continuation of the study programmes developed but also through the sustainability of partnerships developed with EU HEIs, as well as regional ones. Partnerships have continued in the form of other kinds of cooperation, such as international mobility schemes, and potential discussions

on creating basis for the introduction of study programmes in English, and taking part in joint programmes.

The expected sustainability of projects in Montenegro remains the ability to establish the link between university and labour market. However, achievement in this field could be better. For this purpose, QA Agency is planning to conduct a research in the country regarding study programs to assess whether labour market needs have been met, and where improvements are needed.

Curriculum Development projects have encountered many obstacles during the project implementation process. Two types of challenges are highlighted during the realization of the projects:

- Institutional challenges;
- National challenges.

As what concerns institutional challenges these are related to the challenges coming mainly from the university hierarchy while the national challenge is the employability issue and the link between university and industrial/business sector.

With respect to institutional challenges, projects, in the previous period, often lacked support in introducing the new study programs from their organizational units, faculties, university management and in the end from the Senate. There are bottom – up institutional challenges preceding the major challenge, which is the process of accreditation. Experiences from the past (mainly referring to the Tempus period) showed the following: before the study program is introduced to the Senate for accreditation, project local coordinators noticed the lack of interest from faculty and university management in implementing the project, even though their support and involvement is sometimes crucial for having a successful project outcome.

Political will from Ministry of Education is not always at the satisfactory level as well, especially when the project aims at introducing a new study program. Bureaucratic problems often contribute to delays in the achievement of the project goals. Local project coordinators appeal for a greater autonomy regarding projects. They point out National Erasmus+ office as an important link with policymakers of the Ministry of Education in order to reduce the barriers and increase their support.

According to the university management of UoM, the real needs of the university have to be taken into account in order to gain the expected support and provide the sustainability of the projects in the long run. It is only if the project fits the strategy of the needs of the university, that the projects` sustainability will be guaranteed. According to the representative of UoM management, CB HE projects have contributed to the quality and internationalization of the university, but still one should be careful when introducing new study programs.

Accreditation as the main challenge

In Montenegro, Agency for Control and Quality of Study Programmes is in charge for accreditation of the study programs. It was established last year, whose task is, among other things, formal recognition and accreditation. The Agency has formulated a set of rules for accreditation of study programs which have been sent to Ministry of Education, for further comments. After that, when the Agency receives the feedback from the Ministry, and once their comments are incorporated into the final version of rulebook for accreditation, these could be used as official document by HEIs. This process is still a pending issue. The Agency is waiting for the comments, in order to adopt the new rules and distribute them to HEIs. For that being so, the accreditation process is currently blocked.

However, till this process is finished, the old rules will be in force, which will facilitate the process of accreditation for the ongoing Erasmus + CBHE projects, which specially refers to the project on public health policy.

III. Other issues / aspects that affected the projects

Describe any other aspect referred to by the meeting participants, that may have affected (positively and/or negatively) the projects during and/or after its implementation period.

5. MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

Present the main recommendations *that should be addressed to the different parties concerned in order to improve the implementation and impact of future projects in the topic/thematic area concerned*

Recommendation to project partners (related for instance to the setting up of the partnership, the preparation of the proposal, the implementation of the project, the links with the target groups and stakeholders concerned, etc.)

Based on the findings during the cluster meeting, the following recommendations to the project partners, local coordinators and university management authorities could be made:

- The idea of the project has to be approached at all levels of the university, at the horizontal and vertical level of the university management in order to provide support from them;
- Pre-application dialogue among stakeholders, between university and applicants is necessary;
- A common platform that could help the pre-application dialogue should be provided;
- Management of faculty should be supportive or involved in the project activities;
- Involvement of various stakeholders should be needed;
- Participation should be more enhanced in structural projects, and projects addressing university governance reform;- It is necessary to introduce a communication or internal dissemination plan for steps and results at the project;

-Internal communication between local coordinators that should be introduced as a regular exercise at the level of academic community so as to enable exchange of good and bad practises in terms of the project management, financial management, dissemination strategies, thus enabling better follow up and efficiency and usefulness of the projects funded,

- The plan should be communicated to the local/internal unit (faculty, university) in order to gain support;
- Strategic framework of HEIs should be considered, as well as national priorities,
- Montenegrin HEIs should consider possibilities for other types of projects as well, not only Curriculum Development. Advantages on applying for other types of projects - the competition is less demanding;
- Mechanisms to track/measure employability success rates of graduates developed through Tempus and CB HE projects should be considered.

Recommendations to public authorities (at regional or national level) (related for instance to the steering of proposals, the monitoring, support, awareness raising and promotion of on-going projects, the revision of the legal/procedural frameworks concerned, etc.)

The role of national authorities is of pivotal importance in all the projects, be they structural ones in which their active participation is a must, or be they CD projects in which they may, or may not participate officially. Whatever the situation is in terms of national authorities' participation, their support is essential, since it is the national authorities that define, HE policy(ies) in the country, and create strategic framework steering the reform process. Taking into account the importance of EU funded projects, that are the most substantial support to Montenegrin HE reforms process, the role of national authorities, be it direct or indirect is irreplaceable. Taking all this into account, the following recommendations to the national authorities could be given:

-Pre-application dialogue between the national authorities and HEIs is needed, since national authorities are defining national priorities, and national strategic policies, this kind of liaising would be beneficial for both sides,

- Involvement of QA Agency in the projects would also be of importance;

- Higher involvement of Ministry, and constant liaison with HEIs is necessary, liaison with the Agency especially when it comes to the new study programmes,-

The currently blocked accreditation process should not prevent further applications for introducing new study programs;

-More thorough insight into the projects would enable national authorities create pool of expertise per different aspects of HE reform and different areas. Thus, national authorities could make use of these human resources, getting them involved into Ministry working groups, taking part in the revision of the legislative framework, as well as for future projects be it at national or international level,

- Liaison with national authorities from the WB region, because the majority of the projects are the ones involving WB partners. In that way, some potential problems could be jointly addressed, and jointly resolved in unanimous way,

- Ministry could try to establish linkage between projects financed, employability data, and the Governmental program on Professional training conducted in Montenegro. In that way, more in-depth information on the labour market needs could be found out.

Recommendations to the European Commission (related for instance to the design of the action, the implementation requirements, the funding, the support to on-going and/or closed projects, etc.

-Priorities should be more closely discussed with the national authorities, either to narrow them or leave them quite wide,

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-perhaps cluster meeting at the WB level, involving national authorities, could be one way to address the common problems in WB region in a joint manner;

-partners from the labour market should be obligatory for all CD projects, as is the case with Ministry participation in structural projects,

- Strategy on employability prospects should be necessary for all CD projects, to enable follow up of graduates employability in the future,

-mechanism should be thought of to give support to good practise examples, and use the good projects as tool for further promotion, and also use them as peer experience during the information promotion activities,

-more flexibility should be given as regards financial rules, and consider unit cost approach flexibility when it comes to certain destinations. This is one of limitation facts preventing Montenegro to cooperate with some far away countries, that cost much more.

Although we have different stakeholders in the projects, more or less active, more or less visible as such, still there are some recommendations that could be applied as universal recommendations to all of them, and are as follows: liaising at the national level, between HEIs, national authorities, other relevant stakeholders and EU Delegations in the country is necessary. Free and timely information flow is important in order to have as many relevant projects as possible, and have the projects best suited to the country needs, enable constant synergizing, thus making the maximum benefit from the financed projects.

6. BEST PRACTICES IDENTIFIED

Identify projects (or aspects of projects) that could be used for/by the NEO, the National or European authorities for further dissemination and for contributing to improving the HEI system in the country(/ies) and for the topic/thematic area concerned.

Tempus projects:

1. 544257-TEMPUS-1-2013-1-ME-TEMPUS-JPCR
Modernizing and harmonizing maritime education in Montenegro and Albania

The project in maritime studies has established programme in maritime studies that is in line with international standards, as stipulated by IMO's STCW Convention and its Manila amendments 2010, that ensures the competitiveness of maritime educational institutions and seafarers in the international market. It also introduced LLL courses that could serve better employability perspectives for future seafarers. The project is also example of good practise when it comes to the cooperation between academic and business sector that were very active participants in the process.

2. 530440-TEMPUS-1-2012-1-ME-TEMPUS-JPCR
Restructuring of Study Programme in Architecture to Long-cycle Integrated Master in line with EU standards

The project in the field of architecture could be also classified as best project example, since it enabled harmonization of the study programme in architecture in line with EU Directive on Regulated professions EC/2013/55, which is one of important requirements of Montenegrin accession to EU. It served as example to other regulated professions. It also gave way to higher mobility, since better comparability of this programme with the ones in EU is now enabled.

3. 530766 – TEMPUS – 1-2012-1-ME-TEMPUS - SMHES
Foundation of Study Programme for Inclusive Education in Montenegro

Foundation of study programme for inclusive education had impact not only at the level of HEI concerned, but at the societal level, since it enabled structural education of those working with pupils with various disadvantages, that has not existed before, but was spotted as a need in the overall education system.

Erasmus+ CBHE projects:

1. 585927-EPP-1-2017-1-RS-EPPKA2-CBHEJP
Strengthening Capacities for Higher Education of Pain Medicine in Western Balkan Countries

HEMP project has the potential to be classified as good practise example from various perspectives. In the first place, it launched an important programme in public health policy, of relevance for the society in general. High level involvement of academic and non-academic

partners is an asset of this project. In the future, centre for training of public health workers will be established, and will thus be a reference point for future further training of health workers. Link between HEIs and the world of work has been very prominent in this project, and it is following the priorities in the Montenegrin Health strategy.

2. 573866-EPP-1-2016-1-ME-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP

Capacity Building of the Faculty of Law, University of Montenegro - curricula refreshment, boosting of international cooperation and improving human, technical and library resources”

CABUFAL project has the potential to be classified as an example of good practise because of the very close link established between university and all relevant non-academic partners in the field of law. Involving partners such as Centre for Training in Judiciary and State Prosecution Service and Juridical Council is considered of significant importance for the quality of the project results in the long run. The project can also serve as a good example due to its' well institutionalisation and support from faculty level management and from the Rectorate.

All realized projects are completely sustainable in terms of the programmes introduced, as well as in terms of partnerships sustained.