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LMPI – ITALY_P3_CESIE

INTERIM TECHNICAL REPORT



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Quality Assurance

LMPI is a complex project, in terms of the type and quantity of activities to be implemented in a set of culturally different countries. Quality assurance therefore takes a prominent role in the project, responding to the need of monitoring and evaluating the progress of the activities as well as the quality of the results.

Quality Assurance and its activities are outlined in WP9, which is a transversal work package running permanently throughout the project duration.

A draft quality assurance plan was presented at the first project meeting, in Lyon, in March 2017, and finalised in early July 2017. It is updated as needed. The Plan includes:

- A summary of the main elements of the LMPI project, i.e. objectives, Consortium, roles of partners, short description of the work packages, the expected results;
- The quality standards to be applied in the analysis of the project results;
- The management process of the quality assurance and evaluation activities, including methods, work plan and key performance indicators (KPI) for the progress and performance of the project;
- Conclusions and initial recommendations for the project.

Quality Assurance in LMPI is organised from a double perspective: on one side, CESIE (P3) is responsible of the internal evaluation of the project; in parallel, one external evaluator in each of the action countries is in charge of the external evaluation for the work carried out locally in Moldova, Kazakhstan and Vietnam.



The Internal Evaluation

The internal evaluation of the LMPI project is carried out by CESIE (P3), through its experienced staff, and specifically:

- Ms. Noemi De Luca, Coordinator of the Rights and Justice Unit, project manager, trainer and researcher at CESIE, acts as the main internal evaluator in the project and contact person for project partners;
- Ms. Jelena Mazaj, Coordinator of the Higher Education and Research Unit at CESIE and project manager, and Ms. Dorothea Urban, project manager, support the internal evaluation of the project and carry out part of the missions of Quality Assurance in the project countries, to ensure continuity of the activities of Quality Assurance carried out by CESIE.

The main internal evaluator (and in all cases CESIE) collects the information and data necessary for the evaluation of the project and for its quality assurance, and does so through a set of activities that are further detailed below.

The internal evaluator communicates directly and indirectly with the project partners, the lead EU universities of reference for the three action countries, and with the Scientific and Technical Coordinators.

Moreover, CESIE as leader of the project evaluation supports the Inter-Regional Managing Group (GPI) and the Regional Managing Groups (GPR) in their roles, especially concerning assuring that the national and European regulations of accreditation are respected when developing the main project outputs.

Finally, CESIE supervises the contributions of the external evaluators to the evaluation of the project.

The collection of information for the project evaluation is organised on different levels, according to the goal of the activity.

In particular, CESIE:

- Collects data and information about the level of involvement and of satisfaction of the target groups of the project (students, professors, businesses, professionals) through interviews and surveys;
- Evaluates the project activities and their progress through evaluation questionnaires for project partners following project meetings, through individual interviews with partners about the project progress, and through the analysis of the minutes of project meetings and missions;
- Evaluates the results of the project against the main performance indicators identified for the project, specifically through the analysis of the outputs developed, the questionnaires for external evaluators, and the interviews with students, professors, businesses and professionals in the three countries.

Part of the data collection process for quality assurance and evaluation is carried out in the three action countries of the project (Moldova, Kazakhstan and Vietnam) during Quality Assurance missions in the countries, which are organised in connection with the delivery of main project outputs or with the completion of main project activities. Next Quality Assurance missions in the three countries will be organised between September and October 2018, following the beginning of the delivery of the new degree courses in Cybersecurity.



Following the data collection, CESIE drafts an annual (or bi-annual, as needed) evaluation report and presents its findings and recommendations at the Inter-Regional Managing Group meetings.

The list of activities carried out in the framework of the Quality Assurance and Evaluation of the Project can be found below:

- Development of the Quality Assurance Plan – Electronic document, French language – version 1: July 2017; version 2: November 2017, 54 pages.
- Presentation of the Quality Assurance Plan at the First Consortium Meeting (GPI 1 – Lyon);
- Translation of the Quality Assurance Plan – Electronic document, Vietnamese language, Romanian language.
- Evaluation questionnaire of the First Consortium Meeting (GPI 1) held in Lyon in March 2017;
- First set of Quality Assurance missions held in the three action countries:
 - o Moldova (Chisinau and Balti): 04-08/12/2017 (Evaluator: Noemi De Luca)
 - o Kazakhstan: 11-15/12/2017 (Evaluator: Dorothea Urban)
 - o Vietnam : 29/01-02/02/2018 (Evaluator: Noemi De Luca)
- Presentation at Second Consortium Meeting (GPI 2 – Rome) of the initial findings of the Quality Assurance activities held in the first project period;
- Evaluation questionnaire of the Second Consortium Meeting (GPI 2) held in Rome in March 2018;
- Drafting of the first Quality Assurance Report, ongoing in April 2018.

Summary of main findings and recommendations from Quality Assurance activities

Findings about the project implementation

- Communication amongst partners: communication is deemed as generally good between the partner universities within each country, as well as with the Coordinators (both GIP-FIPAG and UNINETTUNO). There is an excellent flow of information between the universities in Moldova and in Vietnam with their universities of reference in the EU (respectively, the University of West Attica – previously Technological Educational Institute of Piraeus – and the University of Vigo). Communication between the Kazakh universities partners in the project and their EU university of reference, Universitet Po Bibliotekoznanie i Informacionni Tehnologii from Bulgaria, needs to be improved especially in terms of contact persons for the project in Sofia.
- Cooperation amongst partners: LMPI universities are generally satisfied with the way they cooperate with other partner universities in their own country for the implementation of the project activities. Cooperation with the Scientific Coordinator and the Project Coordinator are satisfying for all project partners. In relation to the cooperation with the EU universities of reference, partners in Moldova and in Vietnam and partners in Greece and Spain are mutually satisfied of the way the shared work is organised. Less than optimal cooperation is recorded for the partners in Kazakhstan and the partner in Bulgaria.
- Management: against a background of general delay of project activities, which started about four months later than planned due to bureaucratic issues, the financial and scientific coordination of the project is so far satisfying for all project



partners. Compliance with management procedures, especially financial, is at times less than ideal from the part of some partners, as noted by the Project Coordinator.

- Meetings, missions and seminars: the regional and international events, as well as the seminars are well received by all partners. However, external evaluators have not yet taken part in such events, and in general information about the content of the events would need to be circulated more in advance.

Recommendations

- Communication and cooperation could benefit from a better flow of information, especially in the case of some partners. Also, representatives of all project partners should be able to take part in international seminars, in order to support the flow of information and shared work;
- While the project has generally been well received in all partner countries, and it was met by strategies and plans in favour to the development of the new programmes in cybersecurity envisaged by LMPI, as well as by the support of the Ministries of Education, a more structured feedback process should be set up to involve students and professionals more in the development of the new degree programmes;
- The opportunity for creating a set of common or at least comparable new programmes should be sought in order to pave the way for double degrees and to support the sustainability of the project result;
- Attention should be placed to creating up-to-date or better forward-looking courses for the new degree programmes, as well as practical ones, in order to contrast the fast-paced changes that occur in the field of ICT, and at the same time to support the competitiveness of the new degree programmes offered. It should also be noted that forward-looking courses require the updating of the capacity and skills of the professors who would be teaching them. Cooperation between the universities and with the Project Coordinator can support the reaching of this goal.



The External Evaluation

Besides the internal project evaluation, LMPI also envisages an external aspect of evaluation of the progress of the project and of the quality of its outputs.

The external evaluation is organised locally, in each of the three action countries of the project, and is carried out by one external evaluator per country.

The external evaluators are in direct contact with the leading university in each country, who is in charge of selecting them, and with the internal evaluator/CESIE.

For the external evaluation of the project in Moldova, Mr. Valeriu Cernei was appointed by UTM (P9) in June 2017. Mr. Cernei is Lead Auditor at Moore Stephens KSC (Chisinau), with industry expertise ranging from banking to telecommunications.

The Kazakh lead university, Gumilyov National Eurasian University from Astana (P22), appointed Mr. Gabit Shuitenov as external evaluator for Kazakhstan. Mr. Shuitenov is a PhD candidate in pedagogical sciences and dean of the Faculty of Online Learning of the Kazakh University of Economic Sciences, Finance and International Commerce. He was Associate Professor in the ICT Systems Department of the Gumilyov National Eurasian University until 2016.

Finally, Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology (P19), LMPI lead university in Vietnam, has recently appointed the external evaluator, once the initial selection was not deemed adequate by the Coordinators and internal evaluator. The new external evaluator for Vietnam is Mr. Tan Dai Nguyen, who has a PhD in Education and a Master's degree in ICT for education and vocational training, and is currently employed by the « Agence universitaire de la Francophonie » in Ho Chi Minh City, where he is responsible for the French Digital Campus.

The selection of the external evaluators was carried out by the lead university in each of the three countries, and its result was submitted to the Coordinators. CESIE provided the documents related to the selection process, and the forms and declaration to be provided by the universities.

The criteria applied for the selection of the external evaluators in the three countries are the following :

- Availability to perform the role of external evaluator until the end of the project implementation period (14/10/2019) ;
- Previous experience in evaluation activities for EU-funded projects (preferred) or in general ;
- Knowledge of the language of the country and of English or French language ;
- Knowledge of the IT security sector.

When assessing the candidates, the information provided by them about how they meet the requirements of the project was assessed, as well as their proposal on how they would implement monitoring and evaluation activities for the project.

The main task of the external evaluators is checking the quality of the main results of the project developed in the country they are in charge of. Aspects of progress monitoring are also integrated in their role.



External evaluators are invited to check the quality of the results against a set of indicators selected for the project, and specifically:

Indicator Code	Indicators
IQ1	Indicators of the Common European Framework of Reference for the guarantee of quality in teaching and professional trainings.
IQ2	Respect of national accreditation regulations.
IQ3	The 14 points of the « Tuning » control methodology.
IQ4	Conformity with the implementation of the specifications of the project, human means and materials, targeted groups.
IQ5	General timeline and progress of activities.
IQ6	Relevance of methodologies and samplings used for surveys.
IQ7	Participation rate of student and target groups.
IQ8	Existence of results and their quality.
IQ9	The enrollment in an education program of 270 students per country with mentoring projects and block release training course for the new degrees, 150 people trained to life-along learning.
IQ10	Efficiency of the chosen dissemination channels.
IQ11	Launch of the new offer of degrees in other universities.
IQ12	Quality of the website and its use.
IQ13	Awareness campaigns on job opportunities in the cyber security sector.
IQ14	Implementation of 3 excellence and attractiveness centers and the performance of the created web platforms.
IQ15	Implementation of the offer of life-along learning and its adaptation to companies' needs.
IQ16	The functioning of the digital work space and its attractiveness.
IQ17	The improvement of the employability of students and increase of entrepreneurship projects.
IQ18	Pooling of the results at a regional and inter-regional level on GPI.

The role of the external evaluators envisages their participation in the GPR (Regional Meetings) taking place in the country, as well as the Consortium meetings (GPI) held in their country, as well as the analysis of the main project results developed by the universities of the country, and the observation of the general project progress to draft recommendations for the universities in the country and for the project in general. Their role is especially important for the measurement of the indicator IQ2 « Respect of national accreditation regulations ».

During the first year of the project, they received a questionnaire from CESIE that guided them in the first external evaluation activity. Based on the information they provided through the questionnaire, they were then asked to draft an external evaluation report. The activity is carried out ideally twice per year, and in connection with the project milestones and with the Quality Assurance reporting periods by CESIE.

During the internal evaluator's missions in each of the three countries, the external evaluators meet with her to take stock of any findings and results, and in general about the quality assurance activities taking place in the country.



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During the first Quality Assurance mission in each of the country, the internal evaluator from CESIE met with each of the external evaluators (between December 2017 and early February 2018).

To date, the Moldovan external evaluator sent his filled in questionnaire, but no external evaluation report was provided yet.

The newly appointed external evaluator in Vietnam will provide a report as soon as possible. The questionnaire and report from the external evaluator for Kazakhstan are still pending.

Once the external evaluation reports are made available by the external evaluators, CESIE will integrate their main findings and recommendations as separate points in the Quality Assurance report for the first period of the project.