

598465-EPP-1-2018-1-ME-EPPKA2-CBHE-SP

1st Year Quality Control Report, 15.11.2018 – 15.11.2019

Project title: Reforming doctoral studies in Montenegro and Albania - good practice paradigm

Project acronym: MARDS

Project reference number: 598465-EPP-1-2018-1-ME-EPPKA2-CBHE-SP

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1. Monitored Meetings

According to the Quality Plan of MARDS Erasmus+ project the following meetings were held:

- Kick off meeting of MARDS Erasmus+ Project held in Podgorica from 20.2. to 23.2. 2019 N=25
- MARDS Erasmus+ Project Conference held in Kotor from 3.6. to 5.6. 2019 N=14
- Bilateral meeting between Coordinator (University of Montenegro) and Partners from Albania of MARDS Erasmus+ Project held in Tirana from 22.9. to 23.9. 2019 N=15

Figure 1 shows the results of the Meetings evaluation in Y1. According to the results, the following areas might be improved (high evaluations, however within these high grades these were graded lowest, still good):

- 85% | Communication amongst partners was effective | PG_Feb_19_Kick
- 77% | Presentations from policy makers, Ministries from Albania and Montenegro provided important content | Kotor_Jun_19

Other results for specific categories are:

- 92% | How would you rate the session of Curricula preparation for joint programs? | Tirana_Sep_19
- 92% | How would you rate the session on the equipment purchasing? | Tirana_Sep_19
- 92% | Do you know what is required of you for the next phase of the project (up to the next project meeting)? | Tirana_Sep_19

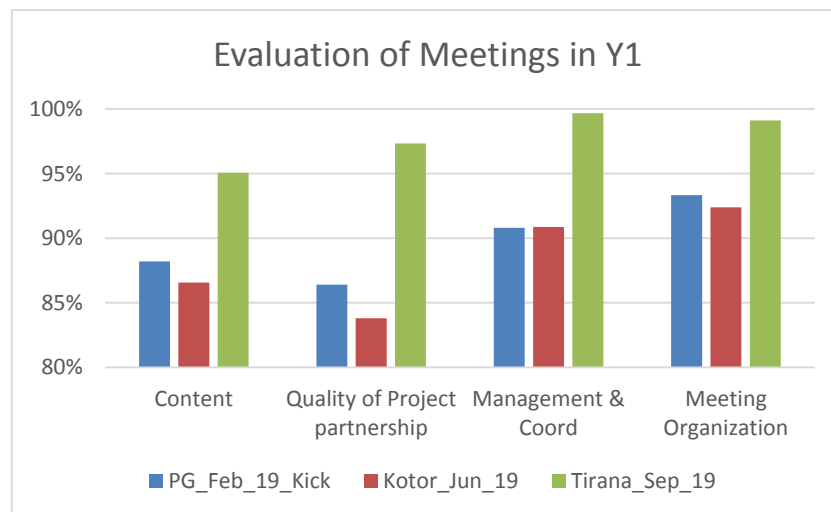


Figure 1: Evaluation of Meetings in Y1

a) Ideas for improvement from PG_Feb_19_Kickoff

Participants contributed the following ideas that could improve the kick-off meeting quality which was held in Podgorica in February 2019:

- Participation of the representative(s) of the Ministry of Education of Montenegro

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- Each partner should be informed clearly about the tasks and what they have to present and not to be changed or informed at the very last minute.
- To make a common and shareable Google document, which is evident to all and in which we can see what is the next step together with deadlines.
- Presence of all non-academic partners
- Some rules for the reimbursement of travel and accommodation should explained before the meeting and also the list of the documents to be delivered to the coordinator for the occurred expenses.
- Some activities were not clear enough but that was explained during the meeting
- There seemed to be lack of commitment or enthusiasm shown from all participants from Montenegro and Albania - not much discussion, limited interest shown during the discussions. In addition, the most ambitious part of the project will be connected to accreditation of new joint doctoral programmes/ schools, which is totally depended on relevant ministries. It was also clear that the institutions that are going to establish new joint doctoral programmes/ schools do not have many clear ideas about the challenges and obstacles how to create such programmes/ schools. Lots of work needs to be done in order to clarify these steps and to fulfill the project objectives.

b) Ideas for improvements from Kotor meeting

In the next section the ideas from the Kotor meeting are gathered:

- No participation from Ministry of Montenegro. The representative from Education Ministry of Albania is not in charge for doctoral education so her contribution is weak. Some unneeded disputes between some partners.
- Rather low commitment from some partners (many did not participate at all), not a very good communication and organisation in advance; no involvement of the Ministry of Edu/ research in Montenegro - this creates a risk for the project success
- Not enough info about Tender Procedures
- Some partners stay completely silent; some were not at all present

c) Ideas for improvements from Tirana meeting

In the next section the ideas from the Kotor meeting are gathered:

- Curricula is not prepared yet.
- budget of the partners still not resolved, legal foundation of the programme
- Lack of experts in Phd program application procedures. 2. Lack of time to deeply discuss the topic of the agenda.
- Focusing only on engineering

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2. Monitored Trainings/Workshops

The following trainings / workshops have been held within the 1st year from 15.11.2018 – 15.11.2019:

- MARDS Erasmus+ Training in Vienna on „Professional Management of Doctoral Studies“ from 25.6.2019 to 28.6. 2019 N=15
- MARDS Erasmus+ Workshop in Dubrovnik on "Professionalization of Ph.D. supervision" from 5.9.2019 to 6.9. 2019 N=15
- MARDS Erasmus+ „Training of academic and professional staff on EU practices of doctoral education: Collaborative Doctoral Programmes“ in Banska Bystrica from 2.10.2019 to 5.10. 2019 N=11
- MARDS Erasmus+ „Quality Assurance of Doctoral Studies“ Training Workshop in Maribor from 6.11.2019 to 8.11. 2019 N=19

Figure 2 shows the aggregate results for trainings and workshops.

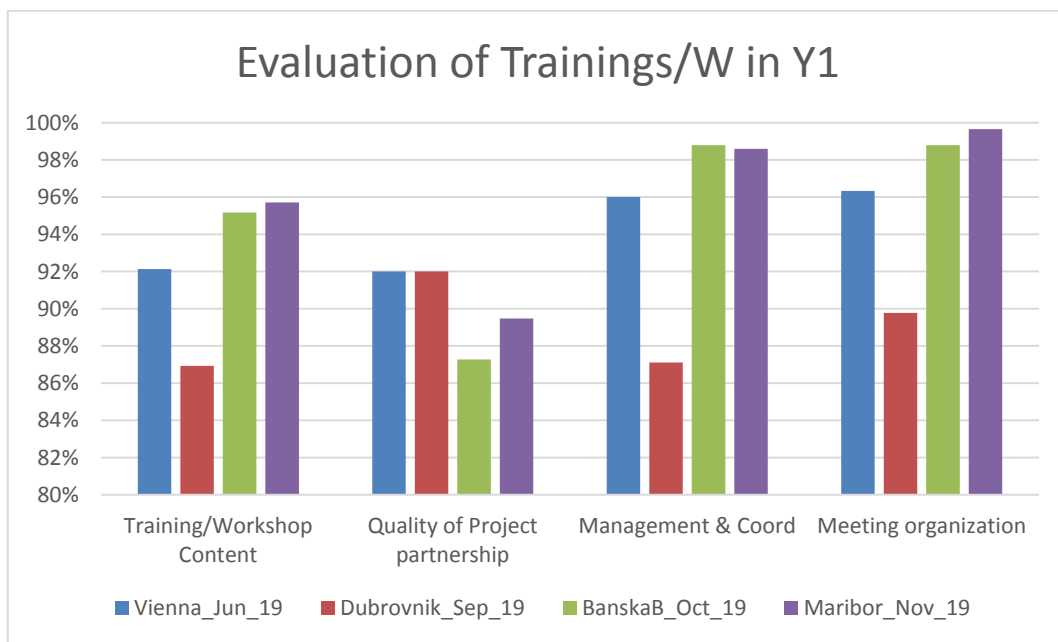


Figure 2: Results on trainings and Workshops

Things that might be improved (high evaluations, however within these high grades these were graded lowest, still good):

- 79% | Individually arranged meetings with cooperating partners at various faculties in different universities in Vienna were successful | Vienna_Jun_19
- 76% | The information (on tasks, materials for the workshop etc.) received before the meeting from the coordinator| Dubrovnik_Sep_19
- 85% | Communication amongst partners was effective | BanskaB_Oct_19
- 88% | Development of teamwork and positive attitudes was evident | Maribor_Nov_19

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a) Ideas for improvement from Vienna_Jun_19

Participants contributed the following ideas for the improvement of Training/Workshop in Vienna:

- The training should be attended by students who are in the PhD process from all participating universities to talk about the difficulties they face, compiling a concrete doctorate curriculum
- to achieve a positive result, the participating team should not change from training to training
- Training should focus on curricula preparation of doctoral study program.
- More administrative staff to be involved into trainings and meeting people from the same work environment from other universities

b) Ideas for improvement from Dubrovnik_Sep_19

One of the ideas from the Dubrovnik Training/Workshop regarding the existing programmes:

- During the presentations a set of possible issues were introduced and discussed but most of the time we missed possible solution adopted by well established institutions. I am aware that there are no formulas in such cases but common practices and success stories could be shared.

c) Ideas for improvement from BanskaB_Oct_19:

Participants contributed the following ideas for the improvement of Training/Workshop in Banska Bystrica:

- Bad communication between some partners and 2) lack of willingness from some partners to be more active during discussion part
- Cooperation between Albanian and Montenegro partners, lack of legal information
- Lack of teamwork and mutual comprehension.

d) Ideas for improvement from Maribor_Nov_19

Participants contributed the following ideas for the improvement of Training/Workshop in Maribor:

- more practical work missing 2.one day more as practical work in groups missing
- First day lasted too long up to 17.00 - No evening event as MARDS team

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3 Results on Cooperation and Collaboration

Figure 3 shows the preliminary results, the data should be gathered from most of participants. Indicated communication and partners' contribution to the project

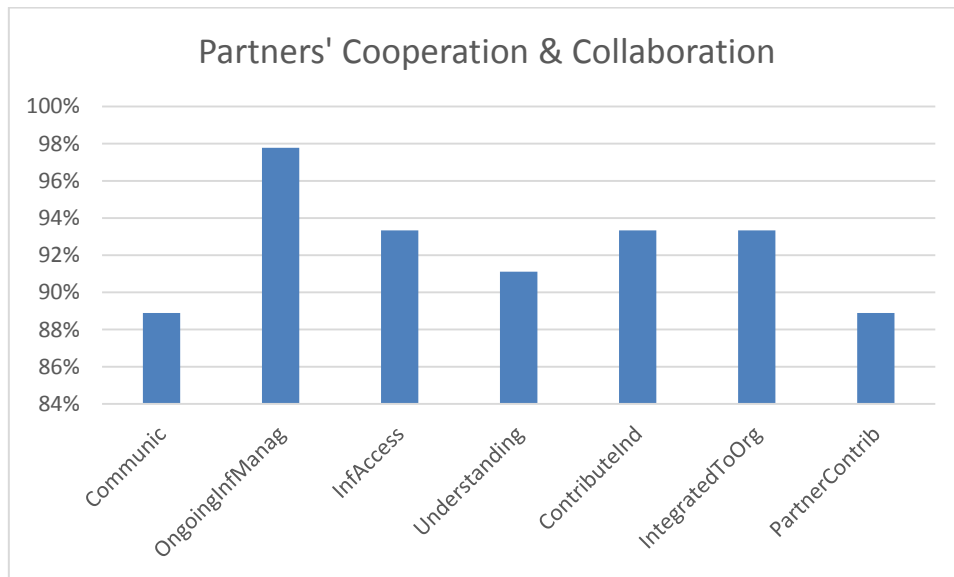


Figure 3: Partners' Cooperation & Collaboration

The following suggestions were contributed by the participants regarding the cooperation and collaboration:

- Communication between partners need to be better. Especially between Albanian partners.
- Maybe we can organize meeting to work together on concrete task. For example, UDG and UDG must sit together, all team, to prepare for accreditation PHd and national dissemination.
- Continuous and efficient communication among partners takes place with support of appropriate tools.
- We (me and, if applicable, my colleagues in my organization) can actively contribute to all relevant project processes.
- Sometimes colleagues at my organization don't have idea of the project. They are figurative sometimes.
- Having regularly TC meetings
- Coordination and partner cooperation is really good. Sometimes maybe we need some bilateral meeting between partners who is in charge with some tasks.
- Based on transparency and communication.

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4 Results on Impact and Sustainability

Preliminary results on impact and sustainability are shown in Figure 4. The data should be gathered from most of the participants in further monitoring procedure.

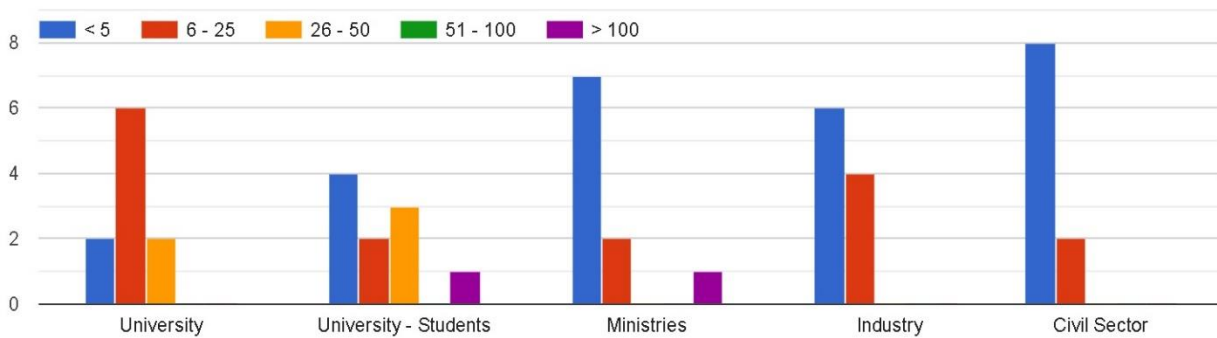


Figure 4: Preliminary results on impact and sustainability

From the gained results, one can indicate the low engagement from:

- Ministries
- Industry
- Civil Sector

5 Results on Impact and Sustainability

Figure 5 shows the preliminary results of the stakeholders engagement. The participants were asked the following question: “How many individuals from the following target groups did you involve into the project activities implemented in the evaluated project period?” One can observe, that in more that 70% of the cases between 6 to 25 people were engaged.

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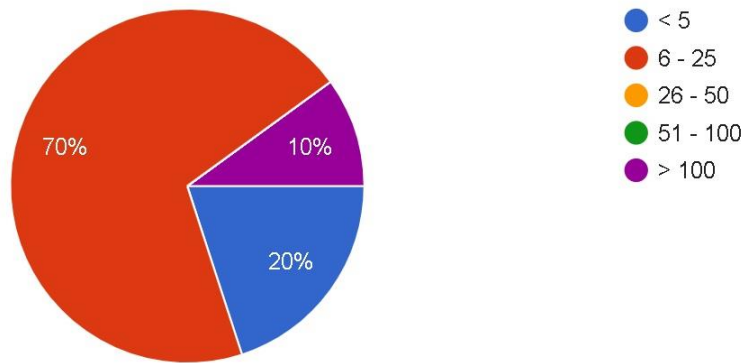


Figure 5: Results on Impact and Sustainability

Nevertheless, in 10% of cases over 100 people were engaged.

Regarding the engagement of the individuals from target groups the participants expressed the following opinions:

- We have invited academic staff, students and tourism businesses in our MARDS Meetings and promotion activities.
- In next phase second year of the project, based on project plan, it will be involved more persons from business, NGO, Phd candidate.
- It is our first experience in this field.

Regarding the spreading of the information about the project, its aims, activities and results, the participants mentioned, that they used PRIDE network to disseminate results. However, some participants stated, that the next year will be more intense regarding the information spread. Some participants stated, that the project is their first experience in the field.

When asking the participants “Were project results available so far have been of use as an added value to your own organization?” the following responses were gathered amongst others:

- Only few of my colleagues are interested.
- We have organized several meetings with colleagues and one meeting with senate members.
- More than ten member of the UDG team, on the level of coordinator, dean, general manager participate in activities in this project.
- Staff based and group based

When asking the participants “Have you been able to connect project results and information to your organizations' regular activities?” the following responses were gathered amongst others:

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- Yes we have created synergies from other projects that are ongoing at our Faculty.
- For example WP5 - According to the prepared Internal Quality plan by EU partners – University of Maribor and University of Vienna as well according to the presented experience at meeting in Dubrovnik, UDG has done revision of standards on PhD studies within PhD program which has been in process of accreditation “Information Technologies”. Having in mind that this PhD program has been in process of accreditation by Agency for Control and Quality Assurance of Higher Education (ACQAHE) in Montenegro, UDG team had chance to implement some suggestions and recommendations presented by EU partners, such as Standards, EU practice of preparation surveys for evaluations etc. Program has been successfully evaluated.
- Working in groups and informing the staff members.

When asked “Do you identify actions/strategies to further use, develop and disseminate project's results beyond the project framework?” the following answers amongst others can be highlighted:

- Two reports prepared by Zagreb University and Vienna University can be used for further improvement in our University.
- Yes, especially in further activities and cooperation with Ministries of science and their program of stipend of Phd study, business community and etc.
- Based on ART programs, newspapers, activities in university with staff and students.

Participants provided the following general ideas and proposals on how to improve partners' impact and sustainability:

- Much more pressure should be done to Ministries to perform their tasks in the frame of this project.
- Maybe we can organize some concrete team working on concrete MARDS output, during the working meeting . Example, team sit together one day, share idea, make consultation, about proposal for improvement of PhD studies in Montenegro.
- Based on transparency and communication.

Gathered results from the participants provide quantitative as well as qualitative orientation about the project's partner proposals. Opinions of the participants provide the inner view on the project performance as well as guidelines for improvements.

6 Dissemination Activities

- Dissemination activities of the UM team in the first year period, 15.11.2018 – 15.11.2019 were the following:
- Creation of the UM web page – March 2019 (facts about the project)
- Publication in the UM News- April 2019 (presentation of the project)
- Presentation at the Career fair – April 2019 (presentation of the project)

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- UM News – November 2019 (press release about the MARDS training on Doctoral Studies)