Erasmus+ Capacity Building in Higher Education Project

Engineering curricula modernization in renewable energy in Albanian Universities / **ENGINE**

619338-EPP-1-2020-1-AL-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP

MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION PLAN

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CONTENTS

1. COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

The 'ENGINE Management and Communication Plan' is meant to define common rules related to internal project communication strategies and tools, ENGINE budget management, financial aspects and reporting rules, partnership agreements.

1.1 Project Communication tools

The ENGINE Consortium has decided to set up and use the following tools in order to guarantee fluid internal communication, to promote active participation of staff, trainees and administrative people from partner institutions, to improve technical efficiency in the implementation of tasks, efficiency in the cost of all the scheduled activities, foster transparency in the technical and administrative reports:

• Language of communication: English;

• e-mail: the coordinators e-mail address is: aafezolli@upt.al;

• a project mailing list, containing the contacts listed in paragraph 1.2, is activated: it will be updated during the lifetime of the project in order to guarantee the communication with all partners also in case persons dealing with the ENGINE project will change during the implementation phase;

• internal communication area: it will be set up within the project website with restricted access. This area provides a set of tools useful to create an effective and traceable communication: document sharing; chat, discussion form, instant message, web mail;

• ENGINE Folder: (Google Drive) will be used to collect and share among ENGINE partners different types of documents, such as:

   a) financial reporting tools (timesheet, Convention for Staff Costs and Individual travel Report forms), additional financial supporting documents;
   b) ppt presentation and photos of each meeting and future activities;
   c) partnership agreements, including annexes;
   d) detailed partner's budget management control;

e) contact list including all partners;

• Web conferencing platform (Microsoft teams, Zoom, Webex) will be used for virtual meetings (steering committee's meetings, quality committee's meetings, bilateral meetings etc.), and all real-time conversations required to organize project activities. In case of some partner cannot attend project meetings due to force majeure, adobe connect have to be used.

• Ordinary mail: ordinary mail is the system allowing the transmission of original documents (partnership agreements, financial supporting documents, etc.).

1.2 Contacts

The following table lists the official contacts for each partner Institution: scientific and administrative contacts are detailed in order to set up a Consortium Assembly with different roles and expertise. Each partner is responsible to inform PUT about any contact change, modification, and replacement: the contact list will be keep updated during the whole ENGINE project's lifetime and the Consortium Assembly will be promptly informed.

Table 1. Official contacts for each partner Institution

ENGINE partner	Scientific contact(s) Name and surname	E-mail address	Administrative contact(s) Name and surname	E-mail address
P1.Polytechnic University of Tirana, Albania	Rajmonda Buhaljoti; Aida Spahiu	r_bualoti@yahoo.com aspahiu@upt.al	Alma Afezolli	aafezolli@upt.al
P2.Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium	Geert De Lepeleer; Simon Ravyts	geert.delepeleer@kuleuven.be; simon.ravyts@kuleuven.be;	Geert De Lepeleer; Simon Ravyts	geert.delepeleer@kuleuven.be; simon.ravyts@kuleuven.be;
P3.Technical University of Sofia, Bulgaria	Slavka Tzanova	slavka@ecad.tu-sofia.bg;	Slavka Tzanova	slavka@ecad.tu-sofia.bg;

P4.National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece	Aphrodite Ktena	apktena@uoa.gr; ktenaa@gmail.com;	Aphrodite Ktena	apktena@uoa.gr; ktenaa@gmail.com;
P5.Kadir Has University, Turkey	Meltem S. Ucal;	msengun@khas.edu.tr; meltem.sengun@gmail.com;	Meltem S. Ucal;	msengun@khas.edu.tr; meltem.sengun@gmail.com;
P6.European University of Tirana, Albania	Ines Troshani	ines.troshani@uet.edu.al;	Ketrina Çabiri Mijo; Ines Troshani	ketrina.cabiri@uet.edu.al; ines.troshani@uet.edu.al;
P7.Aleksander Moisiu' University of Durres, Albania	Osman Metalla	osman.metalla64@gmail.com osmanmetalla@uamd.edu.al	Osman Metalla Luçiana Toti	osmanmetalla@uamd.edu.al lucianatoti @uamd.edu.al
P8.Professional College of Tirana, Albania	Diana Biba	diana.biba@kpt.edu.al;	Diana Biba	diana.biba@kpt.edu.al;
P9.Albenecon, Albania	Alfred Bundo	albenecon@mail.com;	Andy Zhugli	albenecon@mail.com;
P10.Quality Assurance Agency in Higher Education, Albania	Xhiliola Bixheku	xhiliola.bixheku@ascal.al;	Xhiliola Bixheku	xhiliola.bixheku@ascal.al;
P11.Creative Thinking Development, Greece	Dimos Papakonstantinou; Michail Delagrammatikas	dpapakon7@yahoo.gr; mdelagram@yahoo.com;	Dimos Papakonstantinou; Michail Delagrammatikas	dpapakon7@yahoo.gr; mdelagram@yahoo.com;

1.3 Communication protocol

In order to improve communications management, a communication protocol will be set up to promptly and efficiently manage and organise project activities. Each partner will select a person who will be responsible for communicating with the appointees of the other project partners. Appointed people will be responsible to filter communications and to set them up within their working group. For each WP, communications will be started by the WP leader, in agreement with the co-leader.

2. MEETINGS

2.1 Project Meetings

The Consortium Assembly will meet 8 times during the lifetime of the project, with the aim to:

• monitor the implementation of the activities, the timeline and to evaluate the quality of results

• check the costs incurred by Partners for the project implementation and to discuss any change, modification or amendment of the budget

• take decisions about issues, weak management involving specific partners or how to face constraints that could affect the successful implementation of the planned activities.

The following project meetings are foreseen:

Table 2. Project meetings

Project Meetings	When	Where	Participants	Objectives
Management, Kick off meeting	09 Mars 2021	Tirana	All partners	
Preparation	First year	Istambul	40	
Development	Second year	Sofia	40	
Development	Second year	Durres	27	
Development	Second year	Athens	42	
Development	Third year	Gent	46	
Dissemination and exploitation	Third year	Tirana	22	
Management	Third year	Brussels	2	

The dates of the project meetings will be decided and announced at least 2 months before the meeting in order to guarantee the participation of members from all partner Institutions.

2.2 Guidelines for meetings

Hosting partners are in charge of setting up travel information (how to reach hotel from airport/station, location of hotels, meeting room etc.), organising partner's hotel accommodation, meeting rooms (including technical facilities), lunch/dinner places and social activities (if foreseen). Incoming partners will cover travel, accommodation and meals costs with the allocated budget for 'travel and costs of stay'. As an alternative, the coordinator might keep the costs of stay allocated to partners and use to cover directly those costs for all participants.

2.3 Agenda

The meeting agenda will be set up by the coordinator and forwarded to partners approximately 2 weeks in advance. This will allow partners to suggests changing and to have due time for preparing presentations/reports to be shared during the meeting.

2.4 Meeting documents

Documents used and produced during the meetings (like presentations, handouts, quality reports, financial reports, interim products etc.) will be available on the ENGINE Google Drive folder (depending on the level of dissemination) within the respective work package area. Copies during the meeting will be provided by the responsible partner.

2.5 Meeting minutes

Meeting minutes are an important instrument to note decisions made during the meeting as well as to outline next steps, deadlines and deliverables. They are considered as a record for: partners in attendance, presented agenda parts, discussions, decision made, next steps after the meeting, deadlines and deliverables. The minutes will be set up by the partner institution hosting the meeting, acting as secretary, and spread to all partners to gather their feedbacks within approximately 3 weeks after the meeting. Based on partners feedback the final meeting minutes will be set up by the coordinator and uploaded on the ENGINE Google Drive folder.

2.6 Guidelines for virtual meetings

Virtual meetings will be used for:

1. specific issues demanding actual confrontation

2. bilateral meetings for project activities' implementation

3. periodical assessment of the workflow

4. Steering committee meetings

5. Quality committee meetings

5. During project meetings, in case of some partner cannot attend project meetings due to force majeure

A minute of the web meeting will be set up by the partners involved and sent to the coordinator within two weeks from the meeting.

2.7 Steering Committee

The Steering Committee (SC) has been established during the KoM, with the aim to monitor and discuss the main managerial, scientific and financial aspects of the project.

Official SC meetings will be organized two/three times a year, according to the following calendar (Some will take place online, some will be physical meetings):

• 1 st year: M3 (during the KoM), M11 (virtual meeting);

• 2 nd year: M16, M20;

• 3 rd year: M27, M30.

In case of special needs, the SC will have additional (virtual) meetings in order to guarantee a sound implementation of the project activities. In case some partner doesn't contribute adequately to all project activities, the SC will empower bilateral contacts and develop specific strategy to guarantee the accomplishment of duties and responsibilities during all

implementation phases and activities. The Steering Committee is composed of a representative from each partner and led by the project coordinator, PUT.

The decisions are taken with the majority of votes. If there is a need expressed by the majority of the representatives, additional sessions will be arranged.

Here is the official list of members participating in the SC:

Table 3. List of members participating in the SC

PARTNER no	ENGINE PARTNER	SC MEMBER
P1	Polytechnic University of Tirana, Albania	Alma Afezolli
P2	Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium	Geert De Lepeleer Simon Ravyts
P3	Technical University of Sofia, Bulgaria	Slavka Tzanova
P4	National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece	Aphrodite Ktena
P5	Kadir Has University, Turkey	Meltem S. Ucal
P6	European University of Tirana, Albania	Ines Troshani
P7	Aleksander Moisiu' University of Durres, Albania	Kseanela Sotirofski
P8	Professional College of Tirana, Albania	Diana Biba
P9	Albenecon, Albania	Alfred Bundo
P10	Quality Assurance Agency in Higher Education, Albania	Xhiliola Bixheku
P11	Creative Thinking Development, Greece	Dimos Papakonstantinou Michail Delagrammatikas

Each partner is responsible to inform PUT about any contact change, modification and replacement: the SC member's list will be keep updated during the whole ENGINE project's lifetime and the Consortium Assembly will be promptly informed.

2.8 Quality Assurance Committee (QAC)

ENGINE project aims the highest level of quality at every stage of the project evaluation and monitoring processes. Decisions are taken with majority of votes. All partners will establish internal quality control mechanisms and their representatives will continuously check the output of its project team. The members of the QAC are key responsible persons in charge of quality on behalf of the partner institutions.

The role of QAC is to guarantee the quality and timeliness of the deliverables in ENGINE.

- The QAC is responsible to draft the Quality Assurance Plan which will contain the description of internal monitoring and evaluation procedures, methodology of evaluation, as well as a set of quality criteria against which the project will be evaluated.
- QAC will meet online once a month.
- All the meetings will be attended by all members or by their delegated representative.
- Each member of the QAC will carefully be responsible for the implementation of the tasks that will be agreed upon during the meetings.
- QAC is coordinated and cooperates with the Project Manager (PM) on general issues related to the level of quality of the project's deliverables.
- QAC is responsible for the Quality Assurance exercise of deliverables.
- QAC receives drafted deliverables and technical reports from the WP Leaders and provides feedback using the Quality Control Plan.
- Sends the Quality Control Report of deliverables to the WP/Task Leaders and to the PM.
- Verifies the satisfactory implementation of the recommendations included in the Quality Control Report of deliverables, in co-operation with the WP Leaders.
- Informs partners about Quality Control Plan amends or in case of updates.
- Sends the major deliverables for the approval of the Steering Committee which is the highest decision-making body of the ENGINE partnership.

3. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT & REPORTING

3.1 Grant Agreement (GA)

The Grant Agreement has been signed by EACEA and PUT on 12. 11. 2020 and the project implementation started on 15th November 2020 as foreseen. Partnership agreements will be signed maximum 6 months after the GA signature.

The total grant of ENGINE project corresponds to EUR 733,608.00.

According to the GA (ARTICLE I.5.1), PUT will receive the grant in 3 instalments:

• a first pre-financing payment, corresponding to the 50% of the grant, within 30 days from the signature of the GA;

• a second pre-financing payment, corresponding to the 40% of the grant, on the basis of the request for the second pre-financing payment to be done after the submission of the Interim Report (expected to be by July 2022) and under the condition that the 70% of the previous assignment has been used up.

• the payment of the balance, covering the remaining part of the eligible costs, which will be transferred to PUT after the submission of the Final Report (expected to be in November 2023).

3.2 Partnership Agreements (PA)

PUT, as project coordinator, will sign bilateral agreements with each of the Partner Institution, in order to regulate financial, technical and legal aspects related to the implementation of the project; provisions of the PA may be differentiated according to the special needs/requirements of each beneficiary, provided that transparency is ensured within the partnership. PUT, upon signing PA, will transfer to each partner institution a first instalment after receiving the pre-financing payment from EACEA; a second instalment will be transferred after the evaluation of the Interim Report and the reception of the second pre-financing payment from EACEA, the balance will be transferred after the final evaluation of the project implementation. The amounts will be transferred in the bank accounts indicated in the PA. According to the GA (ARTICLE I.4.6),

beneficiaries with general accounts in a currency other than euros must convert costs incurred, following the rules indicated in the GA. In order to receive the amounts, each partner undertake to provide the coordinator with the supporting documents requested by the E+ CBHE program and described below.

3.3 Reporting periods

The action is divided into the following reporting periods:

• Reporting period 1: from M1 to M18

• Reporting period 2: from M1 to M36

PUT, as coordinator, will submit the Interim Report by M18 and the request for the 2nd pre-financing payment (subject to the condition that at least the 70% of the first pre-financing paid has been used to cover costs of the action). In order to monitor the level of grant expenditure and to provide correct financial information, each partner will be requested to declare the costs incurred for each budget category: dedicated financial monitoring tools will be prepared by the coordinator and share with the partners.

3.4 Supporting documents for budget heading

Staff costs - supporting documents:

• Employment contract proving the existence of a formal contractual relationship between the employee and the employer (partner institution)

• A duly filled-in Joint Declaration for each person employed by the project. For staff performing different categories of tasks a separate declaration must be signed for each type of activity

• Time-sheets attached to each Joint Declaration, stating the number of days worked, the description of the tasks performed, the outputs produced under the related work packages

• Any material evidence allowing to verify that the declared workloads correspond to actual activities/outputs (e.g. attendance lists for lectures given, tangible outputs/products, etc.).

Upon request from EACEA or auditors, partner institutions committee to provide additional supporting documents allowing to justify the actual staff costs/rates declared and to prove the consistency between declared workloads and actual activities/outputs. (E.g., staff contracts).

Travel costs and costs of stay – supporting documents:

• A duly filled-in Individual Travel Report

• Supporting documentation attached to each Travel Report in order to demonstrate the fact that the travel and the activity actually took place (e.g., travel tickets, boarding passes, invoices, receipts, proof of attendance in meetings and/or events, agendas, minutes, tangible outputs/products.

Equipment costs – supporting documents:

• Invoices

• Bank statements

• Tendering procedures

• Proof that the equipment is recorded in the inventory of the institution

Subcontracting costs – supporting documents:

• Subcontracts

• Invoices

• Bank statements

• Tendering procedures

• Tangible outputs/products

The above-mentioned supporting documents (originals) will be kept by the beneficiaries, whereas readable copies will be submitted to the coordinator through the ENGINE folder in order to be annexed to the Final report and Financial statement when specifically requested.

The following table summarize which supporting documents must be collected and when must be provided to PUT, as project coordinator:

Table 4. Supporting documents

Supporting Document	How to manage	When	Notes
Individual travel report	collected by partners institutions (duly filled out, signed and stamped) and provided to PUT (Certified copy)	Provided to PUT in two steps: • By M18 (related to the first reporting period M1-M18) • By M36 (related to the whole reporting period M1-M36)	
Employment contracts	collected by partners institutions (duly filled out, signed and stamped) and provided to PUT (certified copy)	Provided to PUT in two steps: • By M18 (related to the first reporting period M1-M18) • By M36 (related to the whole reporting period M1-M36)	
Joint declaration	collected by partners institutions (duly filled out, signed and stamped) and provided to PUT (originals)	Provided to PUT in two steps: • By M18 (related to the first reporting period M1-M18) • By M36 (related to the whole reporting period M1-M36)	
Time-sheets	collected by partners institutions	Provided to PUT in two steps: • By M18 (related	

	(duly filled out, signed and stamped) and provided to PUT (Certified copy)	to the first reporting period M1-M18) • By M36 (related to the whole reporting period M1-M36)	
Travel supporting documents (travel tickets, boarding passes, Flight tickets' invoices, Hotel, meals receipts, reimbursement of travel costs made by the Institution to the person who travelled)	Originals will be kept by partners institutions	Readable scanned copies will be sent to PUT after each travel (deadline: 1 month after the end of the event)	In case of audit from EACEA, the originals might be requested: for this reason each partner commits to keep all original documents up to 5 years after the end of the project
Documents proving that the activities have actually been implemented (proof of attendance in meetings, agendas, tangible outputs/ products, minutes etc.)	Will be collected by PUT / EUT at the end of each project meeting or project activity		
Staff contracts	collected by partner Institutions	provided upon request from EACEA or auditors.	

Any material evidence allowing to verify that the declared workloads correspond to actual activities/outputs	collected by partner Institutions	provided upon request from EACEA or auditors.	
Equipment supporting documents (Invoices, Bank statements, Tendering procedures, Proof that the equipment is recorded in the inventory of the institution, Tangible outputs/products, etc.)	collected by partner Institutions or by the coordinator (depending who will manage the tendering procedure and will make expenses)	Provided to PUT in two steps: • By M18 (related to the first reporting period M1 - M18) • By M36 (related to the whole reporting period M1 - M36)	
Subcontracting supporting documents (Invoices, Bank statements, Tendering procedures, Tangible outputs/products, etc.)	collected by partner Institutions or by the coordinator (depending who will manage the tendering procedure and will make expenses)	Provided to PUT in two steps: • By M18 (related to the first reporting period M1 - M18) • By M36 (related to the whole reporting period M1 - M36)	

3.5 Co-financing

According to the E+ CBHE regulation, the implementation of ENGINE project may require expenditures not specifically included in the budget of the grant, that are supposed to be covered by co-financing. Typical costs could be additional staff workload, costs for dissemination, publishing, translation, overheads costs, bank fees etc. Even though no proofs of expenditure or

supporting documents are needed for co-financing, at final report stage it is required to detail the co-financing contribution provided by the partnership: to ENGINE this purpose, each partner will provide PUT with an indication on the level and source of co-financing made available for the implementation of the action.