

IBAR Meeting 7th March 2011¹

9.15 – 10.30. Information about the project – current state, guidelines from Brussels, issues to resolve

- Presentations will be put on the project website & sent by email.
- Those that have not yet done it - send to **Helena** the requested information on bank account so that 40% can be transferred as soon as possible.
- 2nd installment will follow if 70% of 1st installment has been spent and this fact will be supported by evidence (relevant financial documents and filled working sheets). The EACEA (Agency) will need 90 days to administrate and process the request for 2nd installment. All project partners will also have to provide Brussels with evidence that they have spent 25% of their own money.
- Important - it is not required that each item in contract under each heading is co-financed by 25%. But if it is necessary for clarity of your accounting, just do it. Don't leave the co-financing for the end of the year otherwise it can get complicated. Each 3rd month CZ will ask the partners on details regarding their work for the purpose of regular evaluation report (including co-financing). The co-financed activities have to belong to the eligible costs. The eligible costs are prescribed in detail in the contract and in the Handbook - it is easy to see what can be paid, what not.
- The expenses for different items among project partners may be modified accordingly (up to 10%), but only in the case that the ceiling given by the Agency is not exceeded.
- It is expected that the shift of money between the seminars (less expensive seminar would support the one that is more expensive (e.g. travel costs, per diem) but the final approval of the Agency is needed).
- The Agency recovers interest (real interest, but not the notional) yielded from the total amount of money. Therefore it is useful to have special bank account solely for the project purposes, so that the interest rate is easily seen. However, charges for opening special bank account are not eligible costs. In case anybody would like to check whether notional interest is paid, he/she should formulate the question to Helena in written form.
- Partners should be open for the Agency's visit any time.
- The Agency would appreciate if partners would invite their members to the coordinating seminars.
- The ceiling of wages should not be exceeded, otherwise the amount exceeding the ceiling will not be considered as eligible. The EU's ceilings are valid for countries that don't have own national and institutional rules regarding wages of the employees. If institutional or national rules exist, they have to be taken in consideration and the researchers, managers, administrators, technical workers have to be paid within the national ceiling.
- There is no problem to add people to the research team, but the **CZ** would need a formal letter with people's names and categories. So that **CZ** anytime can answer the Agency who is the person paid from the project and what he /she has been doing. It is not possible that team members are not employees of the institution that signed the contract.
- There is a timesheet template available on the website of agency, but **CZ** would like to develop one that is more convenient for our project within the following days. Each partner will be able to comment on it. Each month CZ needs the timesheet template with workloads and salaries paid, as well as a kind of work done-short description.
- We will start our real work [on WP's] from the date of Riga's seminar. The report on the first 2 months [January, February] focus on the Prague seminar and mostly on preparatory work done during this time period. The days spent on developing communication and developing theoretical framework can be put to January, February or shifted to March. For each WP, there is certain number of researchers and administrators and managers (see

¹ Thank You Catherine for Your contribution to the minutes!!! :)

project proposal) and their workloads should be distributed evenly over 5 months (duration of one WP). The timesheets should be sent to **Zuzana** [as well as other accounting documents].

- The timesheets have to be filled more or less according to actual working days.
- There are 5 months of work planned for each WP. At the end of 3rd month the national report should be ready as the background for the comparative work and for possible audits. At the end of 5th month the comparative report should be ready for the next coordinating seminar when the draft should be discussed.
- If somebody would leave the project for a short time, and the other does the work instead, there is no problem about not informing **CZ**. In case the leave is longer and it is necessary to pay the salary to somebody else then it should be done in the formal way. The information should reach **CZ** and it will be discussed with the Agency.
- The participation in the seminar is eligible costs for the timesheet (2 persons can be paid from the project budget).
- National rules regarding the per diems, travel costs and salaries should follow the national rules; whatever is valid in partner's country is valid for the Agency. In case something is unclear, please notify **CZ** by short information what national legislation is, and the info will be put in the evaluation report and sometime in April we will see what the Agency says.
- Similarly, if we economize money, the Agency will be open for the discussion how to use the saved money for the project.
- Several project partners are well below the salary ceiling – it is expected that those partners can use more people working on project or increase the working days of particular categories. This strategy has to be within national regulations and approved by the Agency. By the end of WP5 it will be clear how much money is saved and whether that issue is worth discussing with the Agency.
- Project partners cannot shift work until fall as spoken about in Prague. All partners have to keep the timing of WPs as stated in the project proposal. **Helena** will do in details the time schedule of all deadlines at least for this year-first three WPs.
- Suggestion regarding the format of seminars: some of the partners would rather use more time on Sunday than Monday for the coordinating seminars.
- Deadline for WP5 is 5 months. By the end of July we should have all the national studies and the comparative study. The deadline for national studies for WP5 is the end of May, so that in one week prior to the Glasgow seminar **Alberts** can see what there is and prepare a preliminary review.

12.00-13.00 Presentation and discussion on theoretical background for WPs

- A short presentation on the conceptual framework for work-package data collection (see IBAR webpage).
- Questions to consider:
 - Where are the barriers found?
 - Which elements of the ESG are at stake at the barriers?
 - What guides the behaviour of actors at the barriers?
 - What are the research questions per work-package?
- There is a need to look at academic, administrative *and* national stakeholder views of the implementation staircase.
- What guides the behaviour of actors at the barriers? A PhD study could conceptualise all of the drivers, but the project may struggle to cover a complete theoretical framework. Internal politics and conceptual misunderstandings are common factors.
- The definition of “quality” remains contested, but there is a general agreement that “quality” has to be about doing something for students and stakeholders and that the university is increasingly perceived as a link in a chain of education/employment relationships with

multiple stakeholders.

- **Jan** and **Amelia** will elaborate the current version of the paper and **Don** will re-structure the paper, but in the main there is an agreement that the paper in its current form is enough to check the validity of the work-package questions.

Research questions per work-package:

- When redrafting the research questions we have to make sure the ESG is covered by the set of WPs. At the same time we try to take account of developments in near future and add some aspects (e.g. access) taking care that the project remains manageable. The guidelines for finalizing the WP questions are as follows:
 - Do we address all the barriers?
 - Do we address all ESG Part 1 standards (and guidelines)?
 - Do we address all relevant actors?
 - Can we delete unnecessary questions, not just related to the barriers and standards?
 - Do respondents have examples of good practice?
- It is suggested to change the question on “good practice examples” to “have you made any interesting changes and why?”
- There may be two common barriers in policy implementation studies:
 - Non-engagement;
 - Engagement in dysfunctional/inappropriate ways.
- There is a need to carefully consider what types of software will be used across the project to manage documents and to analyse quantitative and qualitative data. This raises the question of how analysis is managed locally. For example, if specialised software is required, then national groups must have access and training to use this software to create analyses. There is an expectation that much of the data created will be useful in its raw form only at local level (e.g interviews are likely to be in local languages). However, all reported results will need to be presented in English. We need to create a protocol for the sharing of data across the project.
- Qualitative data should be handled locally and translated into English for sharing across the project.
- There needs to be an agreement on standards for handling quantitative data, including software requirements.

14.00 --15.00. WP5 questions and discussion

Discussion on: **Work-package 5 (Latvia)**

- There is an expectation that each beneficiary will spend 40 or 50 full days work on this work-package.
- Work-package materials should be delivered to the Latvian team by the end of May.
- The agreement was made at the Prague meeting that the fieldwork associated with WP5 is not needed. However, the partners are free to do fieldwork for WP5, depending on availability of relevant, up-to-date data. (e.g. making sure that the correct version of the institution's quality assurance document is available).
- Each project partner has to contact partner institutions in the home country to ensure agreement on project participation, which may offer the opportunity to ask some supplementary questions to create a richer set of data.
- There is an agreement that not every section of the template can/or should be fully completed for each question.
- “Source or origin” might be a better term than “actors”.

13.00 – 14.00. Lunch

Work-package 5 Questions:

1. **Is there an institutional quality assurance policy in place?** If not, why? Does the policy at national level prescribe the creation of internal quality assurance system? Is the institutional QA policy a separate policy? What is it based upon (learning outcomes, qualification of staff, equipment)? Is there an explicit reference to ESG? To what degree it is accessible publicly? In what major EU languages is it available?
2. **How does the policy involve the organisation of the quality assurance system?** If yes, please describe. Who is the person responsible?
3. **How does the policy involve the responsibilities of departments, faculties and other organisational units?**
4. **How does the policy address the involvement of students?** If not, why? Is there a requirement for students to be involved in the preparation of self-evaluation reports? If yes, in what status (observer, expert, member of a governing body?) Is there a requirement for students to be involved in decision-making as an outcome of evaluation? Who selects and appoints the representatives of students?
5. **How does the policy involve specification of the relationship between teaching and research?** To what extent is research considered as a quality criterion of the institution and its structural units/employees/students? Are there specific incentives (e.g. financial) to promote the importance of teaching/research quality of staff and structural units?
6. **What are the ways of policy implementation, monitoring and revision?** Is the implementation mainly top-down or bottom-up? Is it monitored continuously or sporadically (e.g. as part of an external evaluation)?
7. **How does the policy involve the statement regarding the collaboration with the secondary education sector?** Are there any activities directed to schools and pupils and aimed to enhance quality of secondary education? Please give examples of activities.
8. ~~**How would chairs of secondary education institutions know about this policy and what is the policy impact on secondary education institutions?** Do you have any data to indicate the impact on quality of secondary education? Do you have any data on increase of graduates of the secondary education to institutions/faculties having such a policy?~~
[MOVED to WP 12]

General commentary on these questions:

We should answer the main questions (in bold) but use the supplementary questions as guidelines (not obligatory) for creating those answers. The guiding principle is that we are looking for statements, almost certainly supported by quotes from policy documents, and not for implications or data about implementation effects. Reports should include an introduction on data collection methodology/activities.

Question 1 commentary:

- “Separate” policy means whether the policy is discrete or part of a bigger set of policy requirements.
- The question about whether the policy document is available in different European languages is assumed to be useful for Erasmus students and to support pan-European scrutiny. This might also be a useful piece of information for the project.

Question 5 commentary:

- This is very likely to be interpreted in many different ways in different countries. For example, in the UK this will be perceived as “research-teaching linkages”. There is a real difficulty in defining what we mean by “research” in this context. What does the ESG say about this area? It states that the policy document in institutions “should state what the

relationship is between research and teaching”. Could it be extremely revealing to consider very different national definitions of “research” in the context of education quality? This is a survey of internal quality arrangements based on documents and we should quote the relevant statements that support (or do not support) alignment with the ESG.

15.30 – 16.00. WP6 – WP12 questions and discussion

Discussion on: **Work-package 6 (United Kingdom)**

1. What is the institutional policy on access? To what extent does your institutional policy align with national policy? How is information made available to the secondary sector?
2. What data do you collect on offers/enrollments/non-completion/graduates? Within the student profile of your institution, can you disaggregate this data to provide information on different cohorts (e.g. mature learners, learners with disabilities, different ethnic groups)?
3. What is done to support the admission and progression of distinct cohorts of students? How does this vary by academic programme? Distinct cohorts might include:
 - Lower socio-economic groups
 - From ethnic minorities
 - Non-native language speakers
 - Mature students
 - Students with disabilities
4. How has the pattern of enrollments changed in the last decade (by academic programme/cohort)? What are perceived to be the main drivers of change?
5. Have any of these developments altered the approach to the way that your university manages quality?
6. Where does responsibility lie for ensuring and monitoring access?
7. Are there any problematic issues surrounding access and quality in your system?

General commentary on these questions:

Some countries have different types of secondary education and this is an important defining characteristic of different cohorts and access “issues”. How recent is the data available? Do we just want the answer to the question “is there data?” or do we want the actual data? We are asking about how institutions manage and use data, not for the data itself. The word access is not part of the ESG.. What was the motivation for the inclusion of this work-package? Because “access” was perceived as a key component of quality. The social dimension of Bologna is becoming increasingly important. Does the institution collect data at all? How is the data analysed and how is it used? Is it used at all? A quality regime should know what the risks are, where there may be problems, and use data to identify and mitigate risks. Access to what exactly? Programmes? If so, at which cycle (first cycle, second cycle, third cycle)? Addressing all the cycles would be extremely complex and we do not have the resources to consider all the cycles. However, the second and third cycle are the locus of many of the quality issues and challenges that are most complex at the moment. Should we consider putting in another project proposal that considers postgraduate education? What about dealing with the diverse nature of institutions/programmes? We can't create a complete dataset and so we must be explicit about the limitations in our research methodology. We have agreed to consider only the first cycle and to report to the Agency that cycle two and three can be considered in the future (with additional funding available). From a methodological perspective, this work-package is probably relatively straightforward and will include discussions with two or three key actors in the institution (e.g. head of registry, head of quality etc.)

Question 1 commentary:

Add a supplementary question about the secondary sector.

Question 2 commentary:

We should change this question to be more explicit about the profile of students at the institution.

Question 4 commentary:

What are the drivers of change? We may be especially interested in how the Bologna has worked as a driver.

Question 6 commentary:

Essentially about responsibility. In the UK “fairness” is the responsibility of the institution, but in other countries (e.g. Portugal) this is perceived more as the responsibility of the state. We agreed to excise “fair” from this question. This question might be problematic because institutions don't necessarily have responsibility, instead access can be defined by law in some countries.

Question 6 commentary:

This question needs to consider national systems rather than just institutions.

16.00 – 16.30. Coffee break

16.30 – 17.15. WP6 – WP12 questions and discussion

Discussion on: **Work-package 7 (Czech Republic)**

Questions:

1. What is the institutional policy on student assessment and feedback?
2. How are student assessment procedures appropriate for their purpose (diagnostic, formative, summative) and for measuring the intended learning outcomes?
3. How are student assessments made according to the rules by qualified personnel? To what extent are the assessments dependent on the judgement of a single examiner?
4. Do student assessment procedures have clear criteria for:
 - Marking?
 - Informing students on the type, method and criteria for assessment?
 - Student absence or illness?
 - Student class participation?
 - Exam enrolment?
5. How are student assessment procedures subject to administrative verification checks?
6. How do assessment procedures reflect student's knowledge and skills gained at the secondary education level?
7. How are the requirements of HEIs for HE entrance examinations/procedures reflected by secondary education institutions? If so, how?
8. What are the ways of student involvement in institutional quality assessment processes in general (e.g. in assessing quality of tuition, services, infrastructure)?
9. Are there any examples of good practice, or on the other hand, especially problematic issues concerning quality and students in your institution?

General commentary on these questions:

In the ESG Part 1, association between students and institutional quality assurance is made through student assessment procedures. This is why the phrase “student assessment procedures” is used repeatedly in wording the questions. However, student involvement in institutional quality assurance processes is much wider, also oriented on provision of feedback. Hence, the question no. 8 was incorporated. The question no. 9 needs to be modified to remove its bias. The focus should be primarily on the first cycle. Should the questions be intended for staff or for students? Students can be unreliable respondents. This looks at present like two sets of discrete questions – student assessment and student evaluation. Should these be disaggregated? Agreement: WP7 should be firmly focused on student assessment. For this reason, the question no. 7 should be moved to WP 12 and question no. 8 to WP 8.

17.15 – 17.30. Introductory meeting for the writers of the book

- The book will be published with Sense publishers. The working title: “Barriers to achieving quality in HE”. The length of the book is 70 000 to 75 000 words. Each chapter – approx. 15 pages and 5 pages of references. April 2013 should be the final date for the chapters to come in. The book should be finalized by December 2013.
- There should be one author/contact person from a country; so far have agreed to contribute- Don, Jan, Helena, Alberto, Ray, Catherine, Ewa, somebody from Latvia and possibly from Slovakia. **Heather** needs to know the contact person per country. It is possible to have several authors of the chapter.
- **Heather** will make sure the chapters that are not written by native English speakers are in decent English and will be the only editor of the book.
- The book should rather continue interesting chapters than be a dry reflection of project’ s reports. **Don** might be writing about the nature of barriers. **Ray** suggests that the book consists of 3 sections, 1) conceptual framework, 2) thematic, 3) illustrative case studies. This still has to be discussed.
- **Heather** needs people to send her over the next month working titles with authors named, probably with a short overview on the contents of the chapter. The book will be probably discussed in June at the meeting in Glasgow.

Cont. March 8, 9.00

9.00 – 11.00. WP6 – WP12 questions and discussion

- Within two weeks **Jan** will send the extended theory material on the conceptual framework along with the extended typology of policy instruments to Don and everybody else.
- During discussions there is a misunderstanding when spoken about instruments. The policy instruments refer to the policy one wants to implement; those could be incentives, senate decisions etc. Methodology instruments are used to collect information, they are basically research instruments; it is suggested to speak of methods when spoken about the research methodology.
- There is a difference between informal and formal organization, therefore snowball sampling can be useful.
- In about 1 month’ s time we start preparing the list of persons we plan to question for WPs 7, 8, 9. At the end of April we should have a clearer idea about the time frame we will need for the interviews.
- The partners should aim at having all the questions ready after June, as this will limit the visits to the HEIs.
- We should keep in mind that we should involve in project information dissemination measures. There are several conferences which could be used for informal informing of people about our project (no publications). The people in brackets might do the dissemination (for now by informal means):
 - Annual ENQA Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) Seminar, 16-17 June 2011, Helsinki, Finland (Alberto);
 - The 2011 CHER annual conference: ”What are the prospects for higher education in the 21st century? Ideas, research and policy”, Reykjavik, 23-25 June 2011;
 - 36th International Conference „Improving University Teaching”, July 19-22,2011, Bielefeld, Germany (Ray);
 - EAIR 33rd Annual Forum 2011; “Bridging cultures, promoting diversity: higher education in search of an equilibrium”, Warsaw, Poland, 28-31 August 2011 (Ewa);
 - Heather is invited to go to Brussels in summer to exchange the experience with EUA that works on improving the ESG.

11.00-11.30. Conclusion of the seminar

- The seminar in Glasgow is planned to start at 17:00 on Sunday. Unlike previous seminars, for this one we should have some working questions covered already on Sunday.
- The partners are suggested to look for flight connections with Edinburgh, as it is only some 50 km from Glasgow. Note to the **Portuguese** partners - Ryanair spoke of opening up a connection with Porto and Edinburgh/Glasgow in June- this information would be useful to check.
- It is not so far feasible to skip working on Tuesdays, as Tuesdays are useful for picking up some ideas.
- Please let the **UK** team know as soon as possible of the possible travel connections so that in case of need the Glasgow meeting can be arranged on another day.