VMCOLAB – European Co-Laboratory for the Integration of Virtual Mobility in Higher Education Innovation and Modernisation Strategies

Progress Report   Public Part

Project information

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Executive Summary

Virtual Mobility stands for "a set of information and communications technology supported activities, organized at institutional level, that realize or facilitate international, collaborative experiences in a context of teaching and or learning".

The main objective of the VMCOLAB project is to contribute to the innovation and internationalisation of European Higher Education Institutions by exploiting the full potential of ICT and Virtual Mobility and broadening the access to an international learning experience for all European students. Concretely the project will result in support materials and services for those wanting to engage in virtual mobility experiences.

The project results are aimed at three main stakeholder groups which have an interest in engaging in virtual mobility experiences: higher education institutions (HEI leaders/executive staff as well as academic and administrative staff), students, and policy makers.

The VMCOLAB project brings together 10 partners from 7 different European countries. The consortium is composed of higher education institutions as well as European associations/networks of higher education institutions, which can ensure a wide distribution of project results among the above-mentioned target groups.

During its first year, the project established following results:

- A Quality Assurance handbook for Virtual Mobility

- A Virtual Mobility Integration Kit

- Two Virtual Mobility Awareness Seminars (with four more to come during the second project year)

- A Students' Guide to Virtual Mobility

- The "Virtual4Me" website: virtual4me.vmcolab.eu

- Piloting guidelines

- Start-up of three pilot projects: (1) a pilot on Water Management, led by KU Leuven; (2) a pilot on Open Educational Resources, led by Vytautas Magnus University; and (3) a pilot Career Service Staff Training, led by the University of Padova

Intermediary results of the project are available via the project website www.vmcolab.eu

The process of implementation, evaluation and fine-tuning of the intermediate results will be based on the feedback received in the course of the second project year, during the awareness and dissemination seminars and the experiences gained during the pilots. This will make sure the project results can be closely linked to the concrete needs of all stakeholders.

The findings from the research and (pilot) activities will culminate in the formulation of policy recommendations to be published at the end of the project. In addition, these will be presented during the final policy seminar.

Last but not least, in the end the project will result in the creation of the <u>VMCOLAB Co-Laboratory</u>, a collaborative laboratory in which newcomers to virtual mobility will find the support of more experienced people. This co-laboratory wants to generate, on the one hand, a policy level impact (reaching for key actors) and, on the other, also promote the creation of a community that will continue to exist and be used after the project end.

The <u>dissemination</u> activities of the project will further aim at promoting the concrete results, in particular the outcomes of the pilots and the VMCOLAB Co-Laboratory.

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1. Project Objectives

Virtual Mobility stands for "a set of information and communications technology supported activities, organized at institutional level, that realize or facilitate international, collaborative experiences in a context of teaching and or learning".

The aim of the VMCOLAB project is to contribute to the innovation and internationalisation of European Higher Education Institutions by exploiting the full potential of ICT and Virtual Mobility and broadening the access to international learning experience to all European students.

Therefore, the concrete project objectives are to:

- Develop a Quality Assurance approach for Virtual Mobility

- Develop institutional awareness of the potential of Virtual Mobility for academic institutional cooperation and students' access to international and multicultural learning

- Develop students' awareness on opportunities and concerns offered by ICT to develop intercultural study

- Develop mutual support services for HEIs willing to pilot Virual Mobility programmes

- Test a set of mutual support services for HEIs in developing and integrating Virtual Mobility

- Integrate Virtual Mobility potential and limitations issues into the mainstream modernisation discourse of the EHEA

- Enlarge the initial partnership to involve a significant number of HEIs and relevant associations/networks representatives of higher education stakeholders in the VMCOLAB Co-Laboratory

The project organizes and supports the convergence of the existing body of knowledge and expertise on VM towards a common initiative to help HEIs to identify and utilize the full potential of VM. The Co-Laboratory thereby intends to support intercultural development of European curriculum components. It wishes to generalize the practice of cooperation, based on mutual trust and specialization and aims at excellence in European higher education and, at the same time, broader equity and accessibility of study programmes worldwide.

The VMCOLAB project has three main target groups: higher education institutions (HEI leaders/executive staff as well as academic and administrative staff), students, and policy makers. In particular, the project is directed to HEI staff in charge of curriculum development, international relations and use of ICT to support teaching and learning; however the main final beneficiaries of the project are students, particularly those who cannot access international study experiences.

2. Project Approach

Integrated methodology

Integration is a key design principle and a concern that characterises the whole project development: guaranteeing coherence, interaction, focus on the project aim, and mutual adjustment between the different work packages, activities, instruments and support services is key to the immediate success and to the sustainability of VMCOLAB project results. That is why an effort was made to see beyond the articulation of the project proposal and to look at the project "as the users will see it". In the first work package a methodological framework was made which aims keeping the project team focused on the global project result while developing concrete activities and referring continuously to the products and services of VMCOLAB.

A first version of this methodological framework was drafted. However, given the complexity of the task to tackle all methodological challenges in an integrated way, partners agreed that there was a need to build more on the concrete experiences in the first group of pilot projects (that will run in the second project year) and create a more mature and elaborated version of the methodology towards the end of the project.

Quality and evaluation

A Quality and Evaluation plan was put into effect. The plan presents the quality principles related to the VMCOLAB project and the evaluation framework with the tools and it describes the organisation, the structure, the general rules and the standards to be maintained during the development of the project.

Focus is put on both the evaluation of the project itself (and its results) and the evaluation of the pilot projects.

The evaluation approach incorporates three main purposes:

♦ A *formative* and *operational* purpose. This implies that evaluation is carried out on a regular basis throughout the project development, so to provide involved staff evaluative information and feedback useful in improving the project (processes and practices);

♦ A *summative* purpose, related to *decision making*. This focuses on the level of achievement, efficacy and quality of project outcomes, by taking into account the stakeholders' opinions and feedback on them.

♦ An overarching *learning* purpose. This purpose stirs all the planned evaluation activities. Only by pursuing continuous improvement of processes and practices, based on feedback, it is possible to 'learn from mistakes' and start virtuous cycles of self-reflection, peer-to-peer discussion and focus groups.

Evaluation is thus accompanying the development of project activities and is assessing its outcomes and impact.

To allow also an outsiders point of view on the project results, an Advisory Board of 5 experts will be installed in the second project year. They will be involved in the evaluation of project results and deliverables.

Dissemination

Dissemination activities were undertaken following a dissemination plan which was developed at the beginning of the project. The plan was/is intended to identify the key messages which can be used to characterise the project's dissemination activities; to assist each partner in defining a dissemination plan for their own activities; to facilitate the coordination of joint dissemination activities between partners; to lay down protocols for monitoring, tracking and recording of dissemination activities and to contribute towards the definition of a sustainability strategy.

Dissemination materials produced include a project website (vmcolab.eu), a project logo, a poster and 'house style' (with templates for presentations, deliverables, etc.)

Communication/dissemination is done mainly in English, but local (institutional) communication is often also done in the local language.

During the first year, the project was disseminated via a number of different dissemination channels (e.g. newsletters, publications, web2.0, project partner websites, etc.) aiming at promoting the project (results) at a regional, national and international level.

Project information was distributed at a number of occasions (e.g. EDEN conference, EUCEN conference, SEFI conference, CareerCon conference, CATES conference; project meetings,…)

Project partners furthermore presented VMCOLAB during international conferences and workshop such as EFQUEL Innovation Forum (September 2013, Barcelona, Spain), EDULEARN (July 2013, Barcelona, Spain), Learning Week Spain (July 2013, Granada, Spain). The next planned events are the International Conference on Telecollaboration in University Foreign Language Education conference (February 2014, Leon, Spain), EAIE conference (September 2014, Prague, Czech Republic).

Where the dissemination activities were in first instance aimed at raising awareness, the focus has shifted to communication about the developed tools (e.g. quality handbook, integration kit, students' guide).

During the course of the second year six dissemination seminars will be organised in Belgium, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Romania and Lithuania. Next to the two institutional awareness seminars that were already organised in Portugal and Lithuania, four more awareness seminars are planned in Belgium, Romania, Spain and Italy. Last but not least a final event/policy seminar will be organised at the end of the project.

Exploitation

As for dissemination, exploitation of the project is taken on in a dedicated work package, which more in particular is focusing on the development of a Co-Laboratory of Virtual Mobility.

After almost 20 years from the conception of "Virtual Mobility" in Europe and its first experiments, the praxis of Virtual Mobility has not yet found an adequate level of consolidation. Cases of good practices are available and the conceptual development has progressed in line with increased cross-country academic cooperation and ICT evolution. However, an effective implementation of VM still needs to be strengthened by an easy accessibility to reliable expertise, adequate instruments, tailor-made support services and quality assurance mechanisms.

The opportunity to set up a Co-Laboratory of Virtual Mobility is very much of relevance by the emergence of the OER movement and massive on-line open courses (MOOCs), that challenge the current implemented academic models and provide students worldwide with access to learning contents and learning services originated in world-recognised universities.

The Co-Laboratory will be a collaborative laboratory in which newcomers can find the support of more experienced people, but keep full ownership of pedagogical choices, technologic and organisational approaches adopted in each specific study programme.

Although it is early to define a fully developed sustainability model for the VMCOLAB outcomes, and notably for the Co-Laboratory, some principles of action have been defined in the Co-Laboratory Development Plan and, subject to the piloting phase results and stakeholders reactions, they will be implemented at the end of the project:

3. Project Outcomes & Results

The following results have been realised so far:

Quality Assurance Handbook for Virtual Mobility

The Quality Assurance Handbook for Virtual Mobility aims to facilitate higher education institutions (HEI), teachers and institutional departments to get involved in virtual mobility (VM) planning and implementation. The handbook introduces the VM process through its five main phases and provides guidelines for VM preparation and implementation.

The handbook is based on former project experiences (for example on MOVINTER (quality criteria), TeaCamp,… projects) and scenarios for different VM modes that were identified by VMCOLAB consortium institutions and describes quality criteria and indicators, as well as VM elements. The most complex scenario is curriculum designing for VM involving multilateral teacher and student VM. These VM scenarios allowed the authors of the handbook to suggest necessary procedural steps and sequences for quality criteria attribution to VM phases and VM features.

The Quality Handbook is ready and available for download at the project website. In order to enhance the quality and usefulness of the handbook, the consortium has decided to organise an additional review process through an online open consultation for asking feedback on the Quality Assurance Handbook from different stakeholders. After this review process, a final version will be made available at the end of the project.

Virtual Mobility Integration Kit

One of the goals of VMCOLAB is to promote the potential of VM among Higher Education Institutions (project partner institutions as well as other institutions). The Integration kit for Virtual Mobility is a guide to increase institutional awareness and comprises a compilation of good practices, projects and tools that illustrate the potential and the successful use of Virtual Mobility in different contexts and that can be helpful for institutions that want to embrace Virtual Mobility. The document is organized around seven topics that were identified as being crucial areas for the modernization of Higher Education: (1) full exploitation of ICT potential for education, (2) internationalization of curricula and study programmes, (3) Research collaboration, (4) excellence building through networking, (5) complementing Erasmus and other mobility programmes with pre and post mobility activities, (6) assessment of learning outcomes and international examinations, (7) academic and professional accreditation and recognition.

The kit is already disseminated among 73 Portuguese higher education institutions. It is also available for download at the project website.

After all the six awareness seminars have taken place, a final update will be made of the kit in order to be able to take into account feedback received during the seminars.

VM Awareness Seminars

A series of six institutional awareness seminars are planned. Two of these seminars have already taken place. The first one took place 18 June 2013 in Kaunas, Lithuania where Vytautas Magnus University organised it in the framework of an Erasmus IP training course for 31 PHD students and 6 university teachers from different European universities. The second awareness seminar was organised on 18 July 2013 in Lisbon, Portugal during the CATES Conferência Internacional Avaliação e Tecnologias no Ensino Superior.

The other awareness seminars will be organised in the coming months in Belgium (planned in Mechelen, 12 December 2013), Spain, Romania and Italy.

Student's Guide to VM

The students' guide to virtual mobility is addressed to students interested in learning more about Virtual Mobility. The guide informs about what Virtual Mobility is and what types of virtual mobility exist, how students can benefit from it, how it can be integrated in the study programmes or courses, how to recognise, build and assess quality in Virtual Mobility Study Programmes, and a final section with practical guidance and information on how to find Virtual Mobility opportunities. The booklet aims to give students a better understanding of Virtual Mobility and how it can be beneficial to them in their academic and career planning.

The student's guide is available for download at the project website.

« Virtual4Me » website

Virtual4Me (http://virtual4me.vmcolab.eu/) is a meeting place for HE students who experienced or want to experience VM and want to express their satisfaction or concerns, tell their story of participation, report learning results and any other aspects of their experience.

On the website, a collection of tools are provided to help students get information about and improve their virtual mobility experiences. The website includes discussion boards; a FAQ section to learn the basics about virtual mobility, and to find out how VM experiences work in practice; alumni testimonials, to read or hear about the experiences of students who have already been virtually mobile, and find inspiration in their stories.

Pilot projects

Three pilot projects are currently being prepared in VMCOLAB:

- Pilot water management, led by KU Leuven and with partners University of Porto and University of Granada
- Pilot Open Educational Resources, led by Vytautas Magnus University and with partners University of Porto, University of Granada and the University of Pavia

- Pilot Career Service Staff Training, led by University of Padova with partners University of Granada, University of Porto, Coimbra Group and University of Iasi

Piloting guidelines

To support the organisation and implementation of the pilots, piloting guidelines have been drafted, presenting a synthesis of existing knowhow on different ways to implement VM programmes of different nature, ambition and duration. They have been drawn to support lecturers, researchers and study programme coordinators to get involved in Virtual Mobility planning and implementation: designing, implementing, evaluating study programmes developed following a Virtual Mobility approach.

In particular, these guidelines aim to support the organisation of the pilot study programmes included in the Co-Laboratory for Virtual Mobility. They are part of a set of instruments developed by the VMCOLAB Project to support the different categories of stakeholders which may get involved in VM.

The guidelines are intended to be operational and easy to use, not to prescribe but rather to suggest possible ways towards Virtual Mobility, stimulating the reader to think about new options in setting up teaching processes and learning opportunities. In the guidelines emphasis is given to the step-by-step process by which to develop a prototype of VM study programme.

A draft version of the piloting guidelines is currently ready but will be adapted during and after the pilot runs.

Prototype training course

A prototype pilot training workshop was organised on the 2nd of October 2013 in Granada, Spain (right before the 3rd VMCOLAB project partner meeting). 14 participants joined the workshop (face-to-face or virtually). The aim was on the one hand to present the VMCOLAB project, the results so far and the pilot projects to the participants and on the other hand to facilitate discussion and exchange of experiences between the different pilot participants.

This training workshop serves as "kick off" for the training and will be followed up by more tailor-made support for the pilot organisers and participants during the three pilot runs itself (November 2013 - June 2014).

Co-Laboratory

A development plan for the Co-Laboratory is ready. The following graph shows the articulation of the Co-Laboratory concept in three levels: a first category of users (the Study Programmes Teams) will be directly supported in their actions by the VMCOLAB project partners through methodological instruments, training sessions and resources, and ad hoc expertise to maximise the intercultural value of the

programmes. The second category of users will be able to join the community area of the Co-Laboratory and access best-practices in development, publications and other project outcomes designed for broad categories of users (e.g. students, institutional leaders, academics willing to start a collaborative study programme but not yet involved, Quality Assurance Agencies who may wish to understand quality approaches applicable to Virtual Mobility).
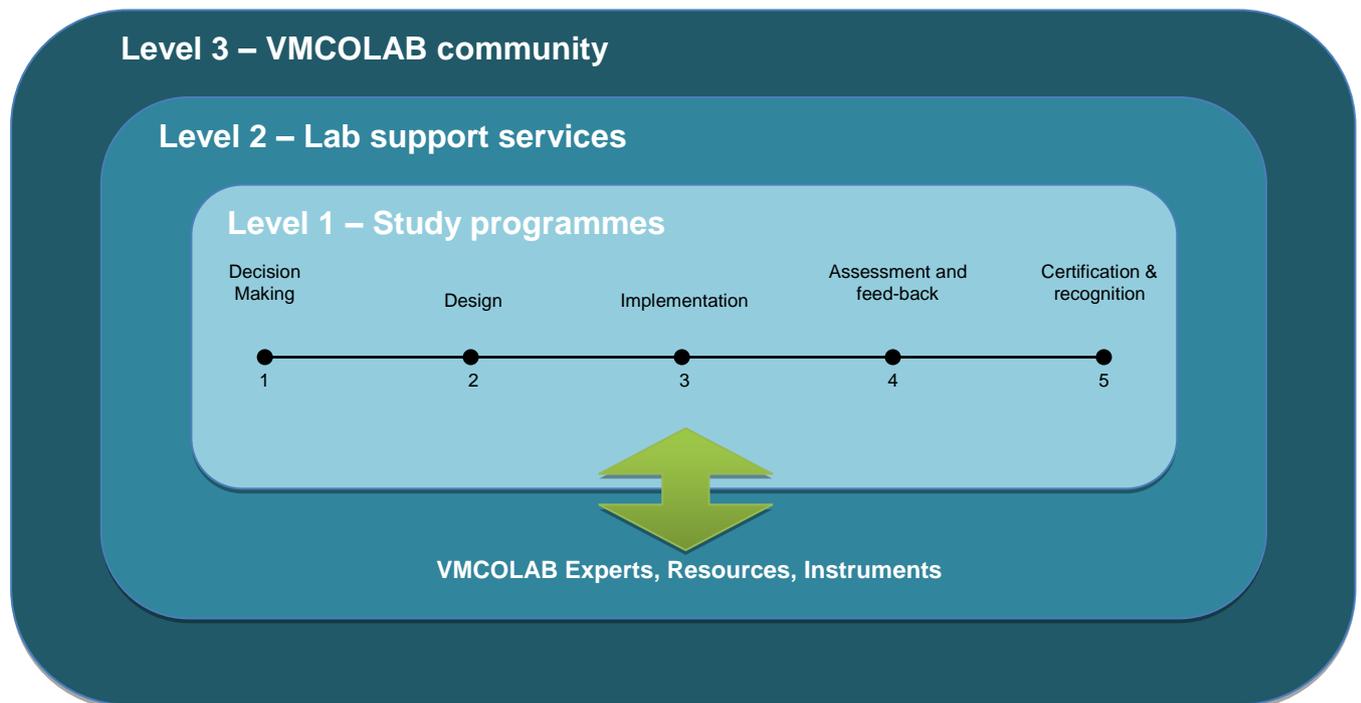
4. Partnerships

The VMCOLAB project brings together 10 partners from 7 different European countries. The consortium is composed of higher education institutions as well as European associations/networks of higher education institutions, which can ensure a wide distribution of project results among the target groups:

- Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (BE), applicant

- SCIENTER (IT), coordinator

- University of Granada (ES)

- United Nations University (DE)

- University of Padova (IT)

- University of Porto (PT)

- Vytautas Magnus University (LT)

- Coimbra Group (BE)

- EFQUEL (BE)

- University Politehnica of Bucharest (RO)

The added value of the European character of the partnership is directly related to the theme of the project, namely virtual mobility. It goes without saying that issues of interculturality and multilingualism that are important in this project can be better addressed in an international partnership. Also topics as accreditation and cross-border agreements need to be looked at in a European perspective, in order for this project to succeed.

Most partners have worked together in former European projects on Virtual Mobility. Therefore the project benefits from existing mutual trust and expertise in the field of virtual mobility activities.

The project partners also look outside of the consortium, in first instance to other European projects dealing with Virtual Mobility to see if cooperation and sharing of expertise is possible. VMCOLAB can for example build upon results of former projects such as MOVINTER, TeaCamp, VIRQUAL, REVE, EPICS, Move-IT, ….

VMCOLAB also tries to bring in an outsiders point of view in the project through on the one hand organising awareness, dissemination and policy seminars and by installing an Advisory Board, a group of 5 experts who will be evaluating project outcomes and results.

5. Plans for the Future

Currently, the VMCOLAB partnership is mainly focusing on the preparation and organization of the three pilot projects, which will be executed and evaluated between November 2013 and June 2014.

- Pilot water management, led by KU Leuven (February – June 2014)
- Pilot Open Educational Resources, led by Vytautas Magnus University (November - December 2013)
- Pilot Career Service Staff Training, led by University of Padova (early 2014 during 8 weeks)

A common start to this has already taken place during the "kick off" pilot training workshop in Granada 2nd of October 2013. This training will be followed-up through tailor-made support during the three pilot runs (November 2013 - June 2014). Mutual support services and final piloting guidelines will be defined and put into place by September 2014.

In parallel the consortium is at the moment working on the development of the Co-laboratory and integrating it on the project website.

Next to this following activities will be carried out during the second project year:

- An additional review process of the Quality Handbook is organised through an online open consultation for asking feedback from different stakeholders (October 2013 – June 2014)
- Two Institutional Awareness Seminars have already been organised in Lithuania and Portugal. Four more Awareness Seminars are planned for the second year in:
    - Belgium (Mechelen, 12 December 2013 – planned to be organised by KU Leuven (proposal has been submitted and accepted) during a Workshop on Good Practices in Internationalisation in higher education, organised by the umbrella organisations Flanders Knowledge Area vzw (the Agency for Mobility and Cooperation in Higher Education in Flanders (Belgium)) and Nuffic (the organisation for international cooperation in higher education in the Netherlands), in cooperation with NVAO (Dutch-Flemish Accreditation Organisation).
    - Spain (Badajoz, November 2013 – planned to be organised by UGR during the next Conference of Rectors of Spanish Universities, in which all Spanish Universities are represented (proposal has been submitted)
    - Romania (Bucharest, December 2013 – planned to be organized by UPB with the support of the Ministry of National Education and the Romanian National Students Association)
    - Italy (Padua, March 2014 – planned to be organized coinciding with the VMCOLAB 4th project partner meeting)
- A final update of the Virtual Mobility Integration Kit will be made, in order to take into account feedback received during the Awareness Seminars

- The Virtual4Me website will be continuously updated (e.g. by adding video interviews with experts on virtual mobility; making of interviews/testimonials with students that have participated in the pilots)
- Towards the end of the project, the consortium will come up policy recommendations on Virtual Mobility (to be submitted to a substantial consultation and reviewing process involving policy makers, European Educational Networks, institutional leaders and researchers in the field of HE innovation and internationalisation, and all other stakeholders).
- A final event/policy seminar will be organised (August/September 2014, Brussels, Belgium) alongside the 5th project meeting.
- Further dissemination activities will continue to include conference participations (e.g. the International Conference on Telecollaboration in University Foreign Language Education in February 2014) and publications, aiming at the different target groups and at the e-learning community at large. In particular, six dissemination seminars in Belgium, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Romania and Lithuania will be organised during the second project year.
- All these activities will of course be monitored by the project management that will continue to ensure that deadlines are met and deliverables produced in accordance with the project proposal, the timetable and the quality requirements. Two more face-to-face partner meetings will be organised (in March in Padova, Italy and in August/September in Brussels, Belgium). The meeting in Padova will coincide with the awareness seminar in Italy, the Brussels meeting with the policy seminar and final event.
- Evaluation of project progress and outcomes will continue to take place on a regular basis. During the second year also an Advisory Board will be installed, composed of about 5 experts on the topic of Virtual Mobility.

6. Contribution to EU policies

First of all, it can be mentioned that there is a substantial policy strand within the VMCOLAB project (work package 7) which will lead to concrete policy recommendations at the end of the project.

More in general, the project partners believe that the concept and topic of Virtual Mobility can contribute to a number of EU policies.

The Bologna declaration for example, which is aiming at the set-up of a European Higher Education Area has amongst others as main objectives to facilitate and promote interuniversity mobility and transborder co-operation amongst universities. Virtual mobility can contribute to these objectives since they can offer educational opportunities that are no longer location dependent and allow for collaboration among foreign students, teachers, institutions.

VMCOLAB also contributes to other EU policies and priorities:

Contribution to the Lifelong Learning Programme Objectives

Objective: to contribute to the development of quality lifelong learning, and to promote high performance, innovation and a European dimension in systems and practices in the field.

The VMCOLAB project contains a work package specifically addressing the collaborative development, testing and diffusion of a Quality Development and Quality Assurance framework applicable to Virtual Mobility and able to complement existing quality assurance frameworks for Higher Education and International Education. The European dimension is promoted through the focus on international, and even more important intercultural cross-border study programmes or courses.

Objective: to encourage the best use of results, innovative products and processes and to exchange good practice in the fields covered by the Lifelong Learning Programme, in order to improve the quality of education and training.

VMCOLAB takes into account experiences of former projects such as MOVINTER, TeaCamp, REVE, VIRQUAL, EPICS, Move-IT, VM-BASE… and aims to take it one step further by providing the necessary tools for higher education institutions to encourage them to make use of virtual mobility scenario's and make virtual mobility more mainstream. The tools and services as well as the recommendations will in their turn be disseminated on a wide scale, not only in the representative countries, but through the network partners on a European level.

Contribution to the Specific and Operational Objectives of Erasmus

Objective: To support the achievement of a European Area of Higher Education

Virtual Mobility can help to multiply the number of European students who can benefit from an international study experience. VMCOLAB will allow a substantial increase of

quality virtual mobility practices through the development of quality approaches and exemplary pilot programmes. Furthermore it will demonstrate the potential of virtual mobility to strengthen institutional cooperation among HEI of different countries.

Operational objectives of the Action

Objective: to improve the quality and to increase the volume of multilateral cooperation between higher education institutions in Europe.

Virtual Mobility development equipped with quality criteria defined by a broad joint effort and based on accumulated practices and analysis, represents a significant contribution to quality, volume and impact of multilateral cooperation amongst HEI. The co-laboratory will facilitate mutual comprehension and act a catalyst where HEIs representatives will be able to intensify cooperation at EU and international level.

Objective: to support the development of innovative ICT-based content, services, pedagogies and practice for lifelong learning.

VMCOLAB provides the necessary technical, pedagogical and organizational models and services for virtual mobility programme. Interaction and collaboration between HEIS is supported using the advantages of both established and the newest, most innovative ICT tools. The project specifically addresses the way ICT can contribute to the development of quality intercultural learning activities among students and teachers of different countries, maximizing the learning added value of competence analysis within European HE curricula. Moreover, several WPs develop ICT-based contents and services for a better use of VM and the enhancement of higher education and lifelong learning in Europe.

Priority

Policy: Mobility strategies and removal of barriers to mobility in higher education

VMCOLAB explores quality and methodological approaches for virtual mobility and implements virtual mobility tests to better found it as a qualified tool for expanding mobility. Moreover, as per the General Call for Proposals 2011-13, "This priority also caters for projects that support virtual mobility that are embedded in a global strategy for the effective integration of ICT in the participating higher education institutions", which is exactly what VMCOLAB develops with its support services for HEIs strategic development via virtual mobility.

Contribution to the Horizontal Policies of the Lifelong Learning Programme

Policy: promoting an awareness of the importance of cultural and linguistic diversity within Europe, as well as of the need to combat racism, prejudice and xenophobia.

International experiences awake cultural awareness and understanding and therefore contribute to the fight against racism and xenophobia. VMCOLAB strongly promotes transborder cooperation. Students engaging in an international study programme get access to an international community and hence to the wide linguistic and cultural

diversity within Europe. Throughout the duration of an international study experience, students and teachers are also presented with cross-cultural viewpoints and intercultural communication is stimulated. This helps to develop the habit of intercultural dialogue for learning and non-learning purposes, so raising tolerance and intercultural awareness and broadening or breaching cultural, social, and political boundaries.

Policy: making provision for learners with special needs, and in particular by helping to promote their integration into mainstream education and training.

By its very nature, Virtual Mobility is an effective way to allow an international study experience to students and teachers as it gives them the chance to participate in international programmes regardless of any physical disabilities, in particular those who may have difficulties travelling due to particular physical limitations or due to specific medical requirements.