



Erasmus Mobility Quality Tools

Progress Report

Public Part

Project information

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Executive Summary

This report is meant for the benefit of the Agency and the 20 EMQT partners, but also of all those who care for the quality of Erasmus mobility and for its inclusion as a main component in the HE cycles (so far mainly 1st and 2nd Bologna cycles), such as HEIs, LLP National Agencies and QA agencies (ANECA, the Spanish QAA, is one of the EMQT partners). More specifically, the EMQT consortium is aware of several initiatives in the same field which either have already been addressed through its dissemination activities or will be approached later on, since the preliminary related information makes their role/impact akin to our main objectives. The one-year ***Comparative study on European and national-level policies and practices on academic mobility*** to be carried out by ACA, together with NUFFIC and DAAD, may be taken as an example, since its results might fruitfully cross-fertilize the findings of our project. A significant group of beneficiaries from this report are mobile students, participating in the project through the Erasmus Student Network partner (ESN). ESN gave a crucial presentation at the 1st EMQT meeting (Brussels, December 2009), focussing on the still existing widespread difficulties in the academic recognition of studies successfully taken abroad, which is a key issue for the EMQT project. Another target group includes the wide area of projects which deal at present with university mapping and ranking (U-map, U-multirank), specifically in the field of HE internationalization (IMPI – *Indicators for Mapping & Profiling Internationalisation*). They can all rely on the Coimbra Group as partner (usually indirectly, as a testing partner). The EMQT project, stemmed from within the CG (12 of the 15 EMQT universities are CG members), is considered complementary to IMPI by the very IMPI coordinating team and as such is willing to offer its findings in order to improve the “common” methodology, which is based on a sound statistical approach, yet continuously needs to find a good balance between basic reflection on the project content and objectives on the one side and statistical tools/findings on the other side. Within this rather specialized context/audience, the CG is focusing on the need to outline final tools which are manageable and may concretely be useful to a large variety of European HEIs (not only universities).

In the first 11 months, attention was mostly devoted to develop/tune the EMQT methodological framework – the core of all our activities – through: 5 Managing Committees and 2 General meetings (and consequent debates); considerable self-reflection and work by the coordinating team, the methodological partner CHE Consult and the TFs’ (Task Forces) chairs; and online surveys for testing/validating purposes. This led to (i) comprehensive documentation on meetings, (ii) methodological working papers (mostly describing the main EMQT methodology, aimed at finding key indicators but also a parallel approach to investigate the academic quality of mobility and appropriate indicators), (iii) the EMQT Questionnaire and (iv) general strategy documents (dissemination and quality assessment). Information is available on the EMQT website (<http://www.emqt.org/>), consisting of a public part mainly aimed at dissemination plus an intranet part to be primarily used as a repository. The main methodology is based on six TF *Goals-Actions-Indicators* sequences, the EMQT Questionnaire and the analysis of its results coupled with group-reflection. The findings of the 6 TFs’ were integrated into a single Questionnaire, which will lead to overall EMQT Mapping Reports and Guidelines. These latter shall however be easily separated into the foreseen set of products for each TF. The main lessons learnt in these 11 month were: (a) a growing awareness about the need to link general methodological/statistical tools to specific parallel/previous reflection on all processes involved in mobility; (b) the difference between the quality/transparency of mobility procedures and the academic quality of involved learning. The future 13 months will hopefully bear the fruits of this methodological work: the 3rd General Meeting in Leuven (September 2010) will pinpoint the schedule for the internal & external testing of the Questionnaire and parallel initiatives to explore specific critical points so as to reach the 4th Meeting in Bologna (March 2011) – and thus entering the final phase (i.e. finalisation and launch of the EMQT Tools’ Box, including the Validation Conference) – with enough material for the foreseen mapping reports, guidelines and list of key indicators.

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1. Project Objectives

The project was conceived with the main aim of identifying high organisational standards in the field of organised exchange mobility by 1. *mapping the [present] situation and analysing the related processes* and by 2. *providing shared points of reference to re-design them in order to include quality requirements*.

More specific aims of the project were identified as:

- a) Enhancing autonomy and accountability for universities: the project foresees the **development of tools which will allow HEIs to self-certificate good practices** (e.g. in recognition, language preparation, etc.) to the main benefit of students and of their families;
- b) Implementing both internal and external quality assurance mechanisms: the **EMQT tools' box** will help HEIs to practice internal/external assessment in order to improve their own mobility organization;
- c) Improving staff management systems: the **Guidelines** will allow reciprocal institutional growth and the exchange of good practices among partners' staff members (in a well balanced composition of responsible academics and experienced technical-administrative staff).

NB: The actual participation of academics in the EMQT project was initially quite limited. A "balancing initiative" was thus started in July 2009, to promote/ensure the academic point of view in the Project outcomes, which led to draft a document aimed at reflecting upon this issue. The document which is still a working paper ("About the quality of academic outcomes of SMS-Erasmus Study Mobility") has been circulated among partners and is available online in the Intranet Section.

There are many target users who will benefit from the project.

The first, and quite obvious, category includes the project contact persons at partner (and associated partner) institutions, who run activities in the field of student exchange mobility. The mutual debate and the exchange of good practices will hopefully enable the related 15 universities to improve their policies, their administrative management and the students' participation in key decisions. Apart from the methodological partner (**CHE Consult**, Germany), there are other 4 non-university partners representing target groups who might adopt EMQT results or take them as a basis for further developments. More specifically:

- **ESN**, already actively involved in mobility issues (consider for example the PRIME project, which was presented to EMQT partners in the first EMQT General Meeting¹ by the then President of ESN, Ms. Marketa Tokova), can contribute to developing "new" guidelines for good recognition procedures, which will in the end benefit a large amount of moving students and support their institutions;
- **ANECA**, the Spanish QAA (Quality Assurance Agency), has so far provided precious suggestions on how to assess the academic dimension of mobility and might enrich its already consolidated set of evaluation tools in the final phase of the project, thanks to the new input coming from the EMQT experts' group, as well as contribute to spreading it among its sister QAAs;

¹ The presentation is again available for partners on the EMQT website, in the Intranet Section.

- **EuroPACE** is providing precious input to the EMQT Task Force on e-learning. On the other end, EMQT gives EuroPACE the opportunity to foster a qualified platform of universities in order widely to promote e-coaching tools for the daily practice of exchange mobility;
- The **Coimbra Group** (through its Office) will obtain fresh input for its ongoing efforts to monitor mobility in its member universities and for its commitment on mobility issues (see for example the draft “*Coimbra Group comments to the European Commission’s Green Paper on Learning Mobility of Young People*”, issued in December 2009 and available online at the following address <http://www.emqt.org/useful-informations--documents-.html>)

The EMQT consortium, however, expects that the ultimate project results will concern and potentially benefit several *wider* target groups. The main ones are listed as follows:

- a. HEIs involved in Erasmus: each partner university will disseminate the final deliverables among their mobility partners; on the basis of available numbers, we can reasonably outreach at least 1000 bilateral mobility partners over the whole Erasmus Area; in this context, the foreseen external testing (months 13 to 17) will offer a precious pilot experience;
- b. Students’ associations (*in primis* the above quoted ESN and its many branches) and students in the Governing Bodies of partner universities;
- c. LLP-Erasmus National Agencies: the EMQT consortium can easily have access to the LLP National Agencies of partners’ countries and, by doing so and/or through the Validation Conference, to all the other LLP National Agencies;
- d. European QA Agencies and possibly ENQA: they may appreciate the Quality Tools’ Box, since it might be useful in carrying out their institutional tasks (see also the potential specific benefits/tasks of the ANECA partner, the Spanish QAA, illustrated above);
- e. The European Commission and the EACEA, as they might deem EMQT results useful for subsequent mainstreaming actions;
- f. The ranking agencies, which will be provided with agreed indicators for exchange mobility, which constitutes one of the pillars of internationalization;
- g. The ICT centres of HEIs, which might implement ICT tools, as identified by the EMQT project, to streamline and ease the mobility management procedures and the academic proficiency of physically mobile students.

2. Project Approach

2.1. What the consortium planned

In order to favour the procedure of assessing and improving quality in exchange mobility at a given institution, EMQT partners committed themselves – in the approved EMQT Project application – to developing a two-phases process, which can be described as follows:

The first phase, **Phase 1 (first 19 months)**, would be aimed at developing the content of the foreseen deliverables or outcomes. Since the very beginning, as indicated in the application itself, EMQT identified *six broad areas of action or domains*, which cover the main aspects of Erasmus mobility, i.e.:

- a) General organizational models within HEIs;
- b) Language preparation issues;
- c) Information and orientation;
- d) Students' performances and recognition;
- e) Reception of host students;
- f) e-Coaching or ICT mobility tools.

For each of them, the EMQT project planned to establish a specific Task Force, entrusted with the task of producing the following set of deliverables or outcomes:

1. Source questionnaire,
2. Mapping report,
3. Guidelines for good practice,
4. List of relevant indicators and protocols.

In the second phase, **Phase 2 (last 6 months – month 18 to 24)**, EMQT partners will develop, on the basis of the results achieved in Phase 1, the following “products”:

- **“Guidelines for good practice in Erasmus Mobility”**: a manual based on the Task Forces' Guidelines and mapping reports.
- **“Quality Tools' Box”**: it consists in a “manual” aimed at describing key-indicators and their relative weight, possible Quality Patterns, Minimal Standards identification, Positioning Scale, guidelines to improve positioning of concerned HEIs and, to conclude, mechanisms and procedures of institutional accountability (e.g. self-certification) and of external validation/assessment.

2.2. What the consortium did

- **Main methodological path**

In the application, it was foreseen that the Task Forces, which play the key role in the 1st phase, should work in two shifts: three Task Forces would start from the very beginning (month 1) and the remaining three later on (starting on month 6). The original idea was to enable a better participation of partners' participants in the Task Force workshops. This initially planned division into two groups was revisited during the 1st General Meeting and – in

order to improve quality² by ensuring an homogeneous/uniform progression in all Task Forces' paths – the decision was taken that the entire group of the six Task Forces would all work in parallel. This implied a re-definition of the Task Force composition in terms of actual participants.³ It was also agreed, for the same reason of quality assurance, that a shared methodological framework and standardized meta-plan methods should be used by all Task Forces. In particular, all Task Forces were asked to go through a comparable process aimed at giving concrete answers and providing content to the following questions:

- a) What are the goals/targets pursued by HEIs with internationalisation and exchange mobility in particular?
- b) What are the actions needed to achieve these goals?
- c) How can these actions be measured (quantitatively or qualitatively) through appropriate indicators?

This approach, carried out through several subsequent steps (debate and reflection at the first two meetings in Brussels and Deusto, plus considerable self-reflection and home work by the coordinating team, the CHE Consult, the Task Forces' chairs and plus a number of online surveys for testing/validating purposes) led to:

- ✓ Identifying the **9 EMQT goals**, i.e. goals which an institution may pursue when committing itself to exchange mobility,
- ✓ Each Task Force building its own GAIN sequence, i.e. Goal-Action-INDicator sequence: six **GAIN sequences** as a whole, codified in the green part of the six **Task Forces Templates**, were obtained. Each sequence shows how:
 - a given action (as identified by the Task Force and meant to support mobility in the Task Force domain) contributes to one or more of the EMQT goals, by giving the appropriate⁴ linkages in an “action (rows) – goal (columns)” matrix;
 - a given indicator (meant to “measure” the success of the chosen action) hints at one or more of the actions detected by the Task Force, by identifying the appropriate linkages in an “indicator (rows) – action (columns)” matrix.
- ✓ Identifying the **strongest linkages** between:
 - Actions and goals;
 - Indicators and actions;

This latter identification was carried out via an online survey among the project partners (which was subsequently named “the QAS” – Quality Assurance Survey). As a result of this exercise, we can now define for each action its action environment in terms of both linkages and strongest linkages to Goals. Similarly, for each indicator we can define its indicator environment in terms of both linkages and strongest linkages to actions (and, in the far background, to goals through the involved actions).

- ✓ Identifying the items for the Questionnaire. The second part of the Task Forces' Templates (which is known as “white part” because of its white background) represents the main Questionnaire Source: it enabled the EMQT partners to translate the identified action and its relevant indicators into questions to be inserted in the final EMQT Questionnaire.

² A specific document was produced and circulated among partners in this respect “*Internal monitoring and evaluation strategy*” (march 2010).

³ Details are given in the minutes of the meetings in Brussels and Deusto and again in the document “*Internal monitoring and evaluation strategy*”, which have been circulated among partners.

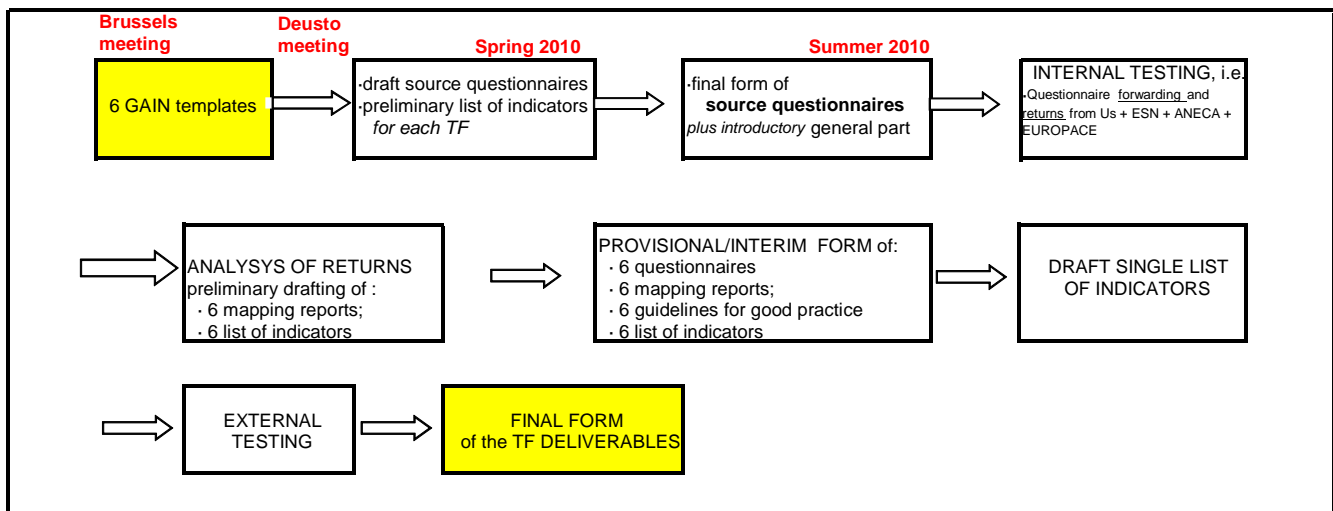
⁴ In this context, appropriate means “according to the respective Task Force members”.

As a matter of fact, the first Questionnaire version was drafted by the coordinating team in July 2010. It comprises the following parts: a “title” field, which includes the name of the answering institution plus general data (they are mainly mobility-related and may help in identifying the institutional profile), plus six sections, whose names reflect those of the Task Forces and which derive from the already mentioned white parts of the Task Forces Templates, acting as methodologically homogeneous sources for each section of the questionnaire. General consistency criteria, such as avoiding overlapping, repetitions, etc. were taken into consideration when drafting the questionnaire.

Considerations on the academic quality of SMS mobility (Students’ Mobility for Study), consequently led to the inclusion of a small number of additional questions if compared to what indicated by the Task Forces’ Templates. Finally, an EMQT glossary was prepared in order to provide respondents with an unambiguous and operational definition and interpretation of the specific terminology and the simplifying sets of initials utilised in the Questionnaire.

The first draft of the Questionnaire was subsequently sent to a restricted number of partner experts (Task Forces’ chairs and persons with expertise in the field of action of a specific Task Force), with the aim of obtaining their feedback in this respect. The draft version was then revised for the Questionnaire to be presented on the occasion the 3rd General Meeting (to be held in Leuven on 9th-10th September 2010) and finalized there.⁵

The following chart shows the initially expected workplan and deadlines for the Task Forces’ activities (months 2 to 19):



To conclude, if compared to the initial plan, two extra stages have hence been perceived as essential by partners in the light of a coherent, homogeneous and consistent methodological path ensuring the quality of the outcomes, i.e.:

1. “The QAS” – Quality Assurance Survey (early July 2010)
2. Validation of draft EMQT questionnaire by a restricted group of experts, after internal reflection launched by the coordinating team on the importance of including reference to the academic dimension of quality (also see next paragraph).

⁵ See Section 5 for details about future plans.

- **The Academic Quality Path**

Owing to the Task Forces composition – mainly composed of managers and administrators with responsibilities in this field – the Task Forces' Templates and the general methodology described above paid much attention to indicators which measure or characterize the extension and the intensiveness of the mobility phenomenon and to indicators regarding the quality of the process (i.e. transparency, reliability and accountability of involved procedures).

Little attention was however devoted to the academic quality of the mobile students' learning experience. It was hence deemed important to start a parallel path concerning this very aspect. A working paper "about the quality of academic outcomes of SMS (Erasmus Study Mobility)" was produced by the general coordinator in Padova (July 2010) and submitted for a first feedback to a restricted number of EMQT partners. An additional part to the paper concerning academic quality in joint degrees mobility is foreseen. Moreover, during the Leuven Meeting (September 2010), where the working paper is on agenda, further improvements/developments are expected.⁶

- **Other methodological paths**

Following inputs coming from a presentation during the 1st General Meeting (i.e. the presentation from the ESN partner concerning the results of the PRIME project⁷) and the analysis carried out by Task Force d – *Performance and Recognition* – while building its GAIN-sequence, it was felt that the present form of the Learning Agreement lends itself to heavy misunderstandings about how to plan studies abroad and about how to include recognized credits into the student's career. This point will be discussed in the Leuven General Meeting.⁸

Another parallel process which seems useful, while waiting for the external testing results, consists in writing draft guidelines for the issue of the e-coaching, which is truly transversal to all Task Forces. Since two of the EMQT partners, i.e. K.U. Leuven and EuroPACE, have wide expertise in this field, developments are expected again during the Leuven forthcoming meeting (3rd General Meeting, Leuven, September 2010).

- **Provisional Conclusion**

As a conclusion to this section, during the first 11 months we paid great attention to the methodological part of Phase 1. Some changes and amendments concerning the original workplan were thus required. We endeavoured to cover all known relevant aspects as much as possible. Since the EMQT university partners are mostly large universities, we feel that we might have missed some aspects, mainly with respect to small HEIs, yet this potential loss will be compensated for through the external testing phase (see Flow Chart above).

⁶ *Ibidem.*

⁷ See <http://esn.org/content/prime-letter>.

⁸ See Section 5 for details about future plans.

3. Project Outcomes & Results

EMQT project outcomes might be divided into different categories, according to their specific nature. They can hence be described as follows:

Events

The events are milestones which foster the progress of the project. The EMQT project has already held 2 General Meetings (respectively in Brussels and Deusto) and 5 Managing Committee meetings (1 preliminary meeting in October 2009 in Padova, plus 2 for each General Meeting). All meetings are documented by corresponding agendas, lists of participants, detailed minutes, final evaluation sheets and sheets' report. The meetings provide the EMQT partner platform with the occasion to debate and foster new ideas, carry out workshops aimed at specific purposes (see e.g. the Task Forces' reports and Templates), take decisions etc. Moreover, one keynote speaker took the floor on the occasion of the 1st General Meeting (Berndt Waechter from ACA) and several ppt presentations were given. All these documents and presentations are available on the EMQT website under <http://www.emqt.org/> in the Intranet Section.

Products

The following products are worthy to mention:

- Two **strategy documents**, *explicitly foreseen in the application as project products; whose aims are already explained in the title:*
 - Dissemination plan (January 2010);
 - Internal monitoring and evaluation strategy (March 2010).
- Templates for TF surveys and reports: these are the basic methodological products, from which the EMQT questionnaire stems:
 - Early version named **TF reports** (blue and light blue background, after 1st meeting);
 - Final version named **TF templates** (green part and white part, after 2nd meeting).
- EMQT Questionnaire: this is the main tool to obtain returns from which mapping, guidelines, good practices and key indicators shall be extracted:
 - version 1 (July 2010, sent out to a restricted number of partners for feedback)
 - version 2 (August 2010, to be finalized in the 3rd General Meeting in Leuven, September 2010)

NB: version 3 (September 2010) is the version finalized in the Leuven meeting⁹
- EMQT glossary (several versions, the most updated one is dated September 2010) to be attached to the EMQT Questionnaire as a tool of transparency and for a better understanding of the EMQT terminology.

⁹ See Section 5 for further details.

- Dissemination materials

- EMQT preliminary presentation (March 2010, already presented on several occasions by EMQT partners); a brief summary list is provided as follows:

Partners involved	Name of event	Date	Place
University of Padova, ITALY Coordinating Institution	1) National Seminar "Quality in Academic Mobility"	16/03/2010	Padova
	2) ETM TF of the CG General Assembly	10/06/2010	Iasi
	3) Closed Rectors' Meeting within the Coimbra Group Annual Conference	10/06/2010	Iasi
Abo Akademi University, FINLAND	1) Meeting of heads/directors of International offices at the universities (every second month)	26/04/2010	Helsinki
K.U.Leuven, BELGIUM	1) MOVE-IT Seminar within the Coimbra Group Annual Conference	10/06/2010	Iasi
EuroPACE, BELGIUM	1) Presentation of new EuroPACE projects during General Assembly meeting EuroPACE ivzw	19/11/2009	Heverlee, Belgium
Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, GREECE	1) ERASMUS Info day, in which a summary of the EMQT project was presented	17/12/2009	Royal Olympic Hotel, Athens
CHE Consult, GERMANY	1) "5. Jahrestagung der Gesellschaft für Hochschulforschung (GfHf) – Herausforderung Internationalisierung. Die Hochschulen auf dem Weg zum europäischen Hochschulraum - Stand und Perspektiven"	29-30/04/2010	Hannover
	2) Conference on "Quality assurance in the ERASMUS mobility scheme, Interim results of the EMQT project"	07/05/2010	Amsterdam
Erasmus Student Network, BELGIUM	2) EMQT presentation at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of ESN	8-11/04/2010	Istanbul

A brief description of the above mentioned events, with links to presentations provided on that occasion, is available online at the following address:

<http://www.emqt.org/events.html>

- Several dissemination publications/documents/articles, care of partners (several dates). A brief summary of published articles is illustrated in the following chart:

Partners involved	EMQT Presentations on the website	Dissemination level	Date
University of Padova, ITALY Coordinating Institution	English: http://www.unipd.it/en/area_news/emqt.htm , on page http://www.unipd.it/en/area_news/newsletter.htm Italian: - http://www.unipd.it/area_news/newsletter.htm ; news: http://www.unipd.it/area_news/EMQT.htm	PU	Since May 2010
University of Deusto, SPAIN	http://www.deusto-publicaciones.es/ud/revistasflash/ud107/107.html (Deusto magazine)	PU	July-September 2010
K.U.Leuven, BELGIUM	AVNet-K.U.Leuven website (in Dutch: http://www.avnet.kuleuven.be/expertise/toegepastonderzoek/toegepastonderzoek and in English: http://www.avnet.kuleuven.be/english/Expertise/Appliedresearch/)	PU	since March 2010
EuroPACE, BELGIUM	EuroPACE website (http://www.europace.org/rdemqt.php) Pacesetter (on EuroPACE website): http://www.europace.org/newsletters/pacesetterApril2010.pdf http://www.europace.org/newsletters/pacesetterJuly.pdf Move-IT project website: http://move-it.europace.org/links/emqt/ Article in EuroPACE annual report 2009, page 12	PU	Since March 2010 April 2010 July 2010 Since March 2010 July 2010
additional presentation activities:	http://www.elearningeuropa.info/directory/index.php?page=doc&doc_id=16903&doclng=6	PU	Since end August 2010
The elearningeuropa.info editorial team			

- **Website:** See <http://www.emqt.org/>. It consists of a public part, mainly aimed at dissemination, plus an intranet part to be mainly used as a repository. In September 2010 it counts more than 2250 hits.

Services

S1. *Methodological documents* have been so far edited (often in the form of working papers, to promote thinking and further ideas and to be finalized later on):

- *The EMQT methodology* (January-February 2010): this short paper describes the early stages of the GAIN methodology and it shows, in an Annex, the results about an on-line survey to identify the EMQT major goals;

- *The QAS exercise* (August 2010): this paper endeavours to summarize a wealth of data from an online survey about the strongest linkages action-to-goals, indicator to action, see section 2 above;
 - *About the quality of academic outcomes of SMS-Erasmus Study Mobility* (July 2010): a working paper aimed at raising awareness among partners about the importance of this issue and about how to pick up the right indicators.
- S2.** Online Surveys (they are explicitly mentioned in the application as methodological resources; so far we run 3 surveys, all of them within the partners)
- i. *EMQT Goals* (December 2009)
 - ii. *Revision of Templates* from all project participant persons (January-February 2010)
 - iii. *QAS – Quality Assurance Survey* on strongest linkages (July 2010)
- S3.** Project monitoring (continuously run since month 1).

In addition to the above quoted “tangible” outcomes, the experience of the first 11 months yielded several immaterial achievements. The main lessons learnt in these 11 month were:

1. A growing awareness about the need to link general methodological/statistical tools to specific parallel/previous reflection on all processes/aspects involved in mobility;
2. The constant concern with paying attention to the completeness of our analysis.
3. The difference between the quality/transparency of mobility procedures and the academic quality of involved learning, a difference which lies in the suggested differentiated approaches (see Section 2 and 5).

4. Partnerships

Since Erasmus is operated in 31 countries, an in depth analysis of its quality aspects, as envisaged in the first phase of the project, and the subsequent testing of benchmarking procedures and of possible key-sets of indicators require a European-wide cooperation. This is attained in the Project by 15 partner universities (most of them with a generalist profile) from 11 countries, plus 2 associated partner universities from another 2 countries, plus 5 non-university associations/agencies, which are transnational in nature or which operate in a transnational setting. In particular, these latter partners offer precious links to some of the most important target users (e.g. ESN with students and their associations; ANECA with the QAAs).

Furthermore, the sample of at least 150 HE institutions, which will fill in the EMQT Questionnaire (months 14-15) and yield precious data for mapping and extracting Guidelines, will be selected in the coming months according to common criteria to be agreed upon during the Leuven General Meeting (September 2010) and will definitely cover most Erasmus countries, relying on the great coverage of HEIs (up to about 600 for some project partners), which are linked to the project partners by Erasmus bilateral agreements.

A particular aspect of the project regards explaining, from an operational and an administrative point of view, basic and specific terms, which are used in mobility processes and which are already being collected in an EMQT glossary (supposed to be complementary to other existing glossaries and to be enriched progressively).

The EMQT consortium would like to take this opportunity to stress the great potential of our products/deliverables for extension to exchange mobility programmes other than Erasmus and/or relating to other geographical areas.

Finally, the dissemination action of this project will most probably cover numerous HEIs, agencies and associations located in all Erasmus countries.

To conclude, after the first 11 months, we may easily expect, on a concrete basis, to attain wide spreading, effectiveness and useful deliverables.

5. Plans for the Future

With the first eleven months of activities, mostly devoted to developing and tuning the project methodological framework,¹⁰ the basis was laid down for all future activities. The Leuven meeting (9th-10th September 2010) will be¹¹ the occasion to take resolutions on several issues, which are now mature for implementation, to carry out the validation of the previous phase, to define updated schedule and better to share the involved tasks.

In view of the Bologna General Meeting (March 2011) the further foreseen main steps are:

- Internal testing of the Questionnaire among EMQT partners (24th September – 15th October);
- Re-visitation of the Questionnaire and final version for the external testing;
- External testing (10th November – 10th December, with 150 partners as a whole, accurately chosen according to EMQT criteria, developed and agreed upon at the Leuven meeting).
- Mapping of the general situation with regard to different HEI policies, size, geographical context, etc. (whatever proves useful or sensible).
- Extraction of good practices and guidelines from the questionnaire results, from site interviews to academics at the partner universities on the academic quality of mobility and from independent reflection about some specific topics (guidelines for filling LA and its role at different times; guidelines for e-coaching).

With reference to the “academic quality path”, moreover, suggestions for the following two improvements/actions were advanced :

- After a suggestion from the ANECA partner, a set of quality-related questions concerning the structural inclusion of mobility in the learning path of a degree-course was identified.
- A short questionnaire concerning the academic quality of mobility (including the quality of learning during the stay abroad and the degree of development of a mobility culture in the concerned institution) will be prepared in order to be used at partner universities for a limited number of interviews with local professors.

A report will summarize the findings and hopefully contribute to the EMQT Guidelines and to the identification of the key indicators (see Phase 2).

Finally, as far as “other methodological paths” are concerned, a parallel process of writing Guidelines for the critical and crucial area of the Learning Agreement management, an area which closely interrelates academic decisions and administrative procedures was arranged. Within this same framework, K.U. Leuven and EuroPACE will start writing preliminary Guidelines for e-coaching, based as much as possible on concrete and easily feasible examples.

With the Bologna meeting (March 2011) we shall enter in Phase 2, which will lead to the final Tools’ Box for the quality assessment & improvement of mobility and to its validation.

10 Such a framework is summarised in a working paper named *The EMQT products* (September 2010): this paper collects several ideas, which became mature and were shared in the previous months; it is a methodological synthesis written just across the Leuven meeting.

¹¹ and it was indeed so! (footnote dated 25th September 2010).

6. Contribution to EU policies

The EMQT project addresses several objectives of the EU educational policies, both at general level and at the specific level of Erasmus mobility.

The primary aim of our project is to identify ways to improve the quality of Erasmus Exchange Mobility, via “Guidelines for Good practice” and an innovative multi-purpose “Quality Tools’ Box”, thus encouraging the best use of results, innovative products and processes and to exchange good practices in the fields covered by the Lifelong Learning Programme. The Guidelines and the Tools’ Box will hopefully help HEIs to improve their overall performance in Erasmus mobility and will enable students to recognize good practices.

The EMQT project also looks at technology-enhanced ways to support real mobility through a specific “e-coaching Task Force”. This Task Force is transversal to each of the other content-oriented Task Forces and is currently exploring (through the EMQT questionnaire and its specific guidelines) conditions and format under which e-coaching could offer innovative and concrete solutions.

Moreover, just by endeavouring to improve the overall quality of Erasmus mobility, the project makes mobility more attractive to young people, thus contributing to the general EU policies concerning the development of a mobility culture among academics, the increase of the volume of mobile students and a growing awareness, among young people, of being European citizens.

Finally, our project can play a positive role in favouring some EU priorities such as a better management of mobility in HEIs and the effective inclusion of learners with special needs in the mobility processes.

