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Sustainability of international cooperation projects in the field of higher education and vocational training

Case Studies



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Sustainability

A project is sustainable when it continues to deliver benefits to the project beneficiaries and/or other constituencies for an extended period after the Commission's financial assistance has been terminated.

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Case EU-CANADA No 1999 – 1286

EU-Canada Project No 1999-1286

International Master's Program in Health Technology Assessment and Management (‘Ulysses’ Project)

Description of the project

International Master's Program in Health Technology Assessment and Management (‘Ulysses’ project)

1999 – 2003

Total budget: €177483, of which €83993 is financed by EC (47%), €66900 financed by the partner institutions (37%) and €26590 by other sources (Italian and Canadian authorities) (15%).

Partners:

- University of Barcelona (leader), Spain, Department of Medicine
- University of Mc Gill (leader), Canada, Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics
- Other universities: Catholic University (Rome, Italy), University of Montreal (Canada), Ottawa University (Canada)
- 5 HTA Centres: Catalan Agency for Health Technology Assessment (CAHTA), Lazio Region Health Authority (DELRHA), National Agency for Regional Health Care Services Evaluation (NARHCSE), Quebec Health Technology Assessment Council (CETS), Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences in Ontario (ICES)

Objectives:

Health Technology Assessment and Management (HTA&M) plays an increasingly important role in decision and policy-making worldwide. Human resources trained specifically in HTA&M are needed in hospitals, health care planning and financing organisations, and university-based research groups. This project aims at exploiting together the best expertise available in Canada and Europe for the development, testing and fine-tuning of a Masters programme in HTA&M.

Activities:

Year 1: Designing the courses during partners' meetings and recruiting students

Year 2: Two first sessions of the courses

Year 3: Two last sessions of the courses, final evaluation of the students' satisfaction and planning of the future

Final assessment of the EC:

Final note: 6.8. The project has reached good results and the group wants to continue, even if financial sustainability is uncertain.

Persons contacted:

- Mrs Alicia Granados, MD PhD, Head of team Health Evidence Network in World Health Organization (Denmark), main coordinator of the Ulysses project
- M Gallo, Catalan Agency for Health Technology Assessment (Spain), European coordinator of the project
- M Diego Sammaritano, European Commission
- Me Lehoux, Professor, Université de Montréal, Canadian project manager

Documents consulted:

- Application form, 20 May 1999
- Final Report, 15 August 2003
- The Ulysses programme, Course Description, 2003-2005 and 2005-2007
- www.aetmis.gouv.qc.ca, presenting the Ulysses project
- www.hta-master.com, official website of the project

- Research Report: "International Master's Program in Health Technology Assessment and Management: Assessment of the first edition (2001-2003)", Pascale Lehoux et al., in International Journal of Technology Assessment in Health Care, USA, 21:1 (2005), 104-112.

We thank all the persons who have contributed to this case study.

Executive summary

- This was an ambitious project creating an International Masters programme on a cutting-edge domain: Health Technology Assessment and Management (HTA&M). A study on student and market needs was carried out and a consortium of 10 partners in Spain, Canada and Italy (universities + HTA&M agencies) was set up. Four 2-week courses with 23 students were built and organised during the project. This project was extremely successful and the partners were very motivated to continue the Masters programme.
- The second edition of the Masters programme was organised in 2003-2005 with 25 students of different nationalities and many applications were received for the third edition (2005-2007) even despite high travel expenses that were to be covered by the students. The Canadian partners are now leading the consortium as the European partner institutions lack financial resources. The project continues although financial sustainability is in question.
- The main sustainability factors are linked to the strong involvement of the actors and the success of the project from the point of view of the students, which shows that the programme responds to student and market needs.

An ambitious project

A project in a cutting-edge domain

Health Technology Assessment and Management (HTA&M)¹ has become a formal requirement in many countries; it consists of carrying out evidence based studies to facilitate decision making. HTA can be considered as a new field of research, which examines the impacts of medical practices and techniques through multidisciplinary skills. HTA studies are carried out in HTA Agencies (several exist in Canada and Europe) and within research teams. The International Association of HTA has about 1000 members worldwide.

This field seems to offer many jobs opportunities, but only two graduate programmes existed in 2000 (Birmingham and Santiago de Compostella Universities) and HTA teachers were dispersed around the world.

A project with need-oriented objectives

This project creating an international Masters programme in HTA was built to answer to the human resource needs mentioned above. The consortium (see below) designed the project after carrying out a deep and comprehensive need analysis, thus rendering the project highly need-oriented:

¹ "Technology" is defined in the application file as drugs, procedures, devices, organizational systems...

- The application form states: "Because such a Masters programme remains very specialised, an international strategy of student recruitment appears highly desirable".
- It was decided to involve two types of public in order to encourage interaction between them: evaluators in agencies, university hospitals and research groups on the one hand and decision makers in the health system and users of the HTA reports, on the other hand.
- It was decided to establish a high quality Masters programme for persons having at least 3 years of experience and representing different disciplines and institutions.
- As most of the participants were engaged in a professional activity, it was decided to offer four sessions of intensive 2-year courses with the opportunity to participate in an internship or write a thesis. This flexible scheme had already been experimented at Montreal University.
- As teachers and experts in the field were dispersed all over the world, it was decided to involve 5 universities and 5 HTA agencies in the establishment of the course in order to benefit from the expertise of all partners.

A large consortium involving three countries and ten partners

The consortium was designed by the Canadian coordinators, who had close contacts with the Spanish and Italian partners.

The large consortium involves 10 partners (5 Universities and 5 HTA agencies) in three different countries (2 Canadian Provinces, Italy and Spain).

In order to encourage participative management, a coordinating committee with representatives from all institutions was created and main decisions were taken during a conference call. Three subcommittees were also established. All partners participated in the project activities and a new partner (Canadian) has joined the consortium. The consortium has also established contacts with potential new partners (for instance the Universities of Toronto and Birmingham).

The project was co financed by the HRDC (Human Resources Development, Canada) and received additional funds for up to 15% of its total budget (from the Ministry of Research in Italy, the Canadian Foundation for Health Services Research, and the Catalan Institute of Health). The participating institutions contributed for up to 37 % to the project budget.

Activities spread over 3 years

The project activities were spread over 3 years as follows:

YEAR 1 (2000)

- Two workshops were organised to design the programme. Sustainability issues were discussed during the workshops.
- Creating a website and recruiting 25 students (although the original application form included a plan for 15 Canadian and 20 European students) – 2 of these abandoned shortly after the beginning of the course.

YEAR 2 (2001)

- First courses (40 hrs each) were held; language courses were provided in advance. Student exchanges and some e-debates concerning specific course-related topics were organised.
- Teacher exchanges were organised to teach the courses.

YEAR 3 (2002-03)

- Last course sessions (total of 8 x 40 hrs); 10 students completed their studies with an internship in a relevant work placement and the others prepared a thesis.
- A "strategic/formative" evaluation of the programme, based on a detailed list of objectives and result indicators (outputs, such as the number of new courses, and outcomes, such as student satisfaction), was carried out. The tools included a student questionnaire, 10 interviews with students over spring 2003 (open questions), interviews with internship supervisors and administrative documents (workshop reports etc.).
- A meeting was held in Rome (in October 2002) to plan future activities and a decision to recruit new students for the academic period 2003-2005 was made.

Travel expenses were reimbursed for 29 faculty members and 70 students in order for them to participate to the courses.

A successful project

The Final Report of the project confirms the success of the project from the point of view of the partners:

- All 23 students were successful in obtaining the Masters degree. Some of them were partly financed by their employees and two were subsequently recruited by an HTA agency (AETMIS, Québec). Many students said they would implement HTA in their work.
- The target audience (professionals with more than 3 years of experience representing different nationalities) was fully reached, and most of the students were over 30 years old and worked in different countries.
- The students appreciated the courses, but as weak points they mentioned lack of feedback during the courses and heavy course workload. There were some problems with the pedagogical approach, which was perhaps a little inconsistent.
- Ulysses is the only international Masters programme in HTA, out of the three Masters programmes in HTA that exist worldwide (information based on a specific survey, 2002).
- All the partners were involved in the organisation of the courses, each university being responsible for one course.
- There were some initial difficulties in harmonising the Masters programme between the different universities, but administrative solutions were found to solve the problems. Three universities created a new programme while the two others (Mc Gill and Ottawa) created a new option within an already existing Masters programme. Students can decide where they want to register, even if certain questions linked to harmonisation of credits and requirements between the universities still have to be clarified. Students also pay different fees for the same diploma.
- A paper by Pascale Lehoux (and comp.), entitled "International Master's Program in Health Technology Assessment and Management: Assessment of the first edition (2001-2003)", was published in the *International Journal of Technology Assessment in Health Care*, USA, 21:1 (2005), 104-112.
- One of the weak points of the evaluation system is the lack of follow-up regarding the students' professional life after the end of the Masters programme. It would be interesting to know how many of them found an employment corresponding to their specialisation in HTA.

Courses maintained despite financial problems

The courses were maintained and developed after the end of funding

According to the project reports, the project partners were extremely motivated to continue and develop the Masters programme. The Final Report (p 26) confirms that the consortium was convinced of the importance to continue the project, without, however,

forgetting the challenges ahead. According to the project coordinator, sustainability represents the most challenging objective of this type of project.

The recruitment of the second cohort began in early 2003 through a website, mailing lists, and a new brochure. When the Final Report was published, 31 candidates had been recruited, but most of them (European students) had to pay their own travel expenses. The Final Report stated that the search for additional sources was still in process (Final Report, I 27). In Canada, about 75% of the travel expenses of students were covered by a federal grant (from a Canadian HTA Agency). The session 2003-2005 was held in different countries (see programme on the website) with about 25 students of many nationalities.

The third session (2005-2007) started in October 2005 in Montreal. Again many applications were received, but financing the studies was a constraint for the European students. The Canadian students still received grants for the academic year 2005-2006. As for the second edition, the recruitment of students was extended to third countries such as Brazil and Mexico. Although according to the course website travel grants could have been available for students, in reality only Canadian participants could receive them, while European students had to finance their travel costs on their own or with the help of their employers.

For the third edition, two new universities (Toronto and Catalonia) and two HTA agencies joined the consortium, which according to the coordinator brought new impetus and motivated persons to the project. Getting new partners involved in the project seems to be easier in Canada than in Europe where obtaining funds is more difficult. Thus Canadian institutions seem more eager to join the consortium than European institutions.

The Ulysses students seem to have built strong links and are motivated to maintain contacts with one another. They can meet at the HTA association congress organised in the context of an association created for former Ulysses students.

An Internet-based course (www.onlinehta.org) was also offered in 2005 by AETMIS (Agence d'Evaluation des Technologies et des Modes d'Intervention en Santé, Québec). This course was complementary to the Masters programme, and dedicated to the students who could not participate to the two-week session abroad (due to financial or professional constraints). The course was built in Canada with new resources, while the European partners were frustrated because they could not afford to participate in it. However, the partners are not favourable towards building many web-based courses, because they think that the 2-week sessions are important for the students. According to a coordinator, a Swedish university has also tried to establish an online Masters programme on the same subject but is facing difficulties in recruiting students.

Also the third edition was a success and the students were extremely skilled. Financing, however, was yet again a problem as in Canada tuition fees are higher (due to the fact that the students have to complete additional courses to obtain the Masters degree) and some European students had difficulties in financing their travel costs (which amounted to about €6000).

Financial sustainability in question

The flexible format adopted seems to respond to students' needs but is relatively expensive. As stated in the Final Report, even if the courses were maintained, financial sustainability was uncertain: "The objectives of the Ulysses project were fully reached but financial sustainability is required [...] the programme can remain both pedagogically relevant and financially viable if €25 000 is available in funding." As the Final Report was being published, the second edition of the programme (2003-2005) was already designed and 30 students were waiting. The partners were hoping to obtain the necessary support to make this edition an even greater success.

No alternative financial solution was found, even through active fund raising, but the consortium then found that the project costs were not unbearable after all and decided, during a meeting in Rome in October 2002, to continue the project anyway. "A number of financial scenarios were examined, including changing the number of modules and the number of faculties, and introducing distance learning tools" (final report p 27). It was decided that a new cohort be recruited for October 2003 and the three modules be maintained in Canada, Spain and Italy, while the other modules would be delivered locally.

"There is, for the moment, no source of revenue other than tuition fees and the government financial support given to higher training institutions in some countries." The actual fees are low compared to MBA and MSc programmes, but they have increased slightly in Europe in 2005 (from ~ €5000 to ~ €6000). In Canada, fees are not charged for this specific programme.

The consortium was also interested in including private sources of funding, such as employers. "This is why we do not recommend covering a large part of the student mobility costs in the future (around 50%)". Some private financing was obtained from industries, while the partners remained careful to preserve their autonomy.

The European partners had to face some serious financial problems as a part of the funding (€30 000 according to the project coordinator) foreseen for the first session had not been provided by the European Commission following controversies regarding certain expenses. Requesting the funds turned out to be extremely problematic for the project partners, which could be explained by a high turnover of staff in Brussels, a lack of communication between the European Commission and the European partners, and the fact that the European coordinators both changed institutions.

In addition to financial problems, the European partners were faced with a lack of support from national authorities. Although Spain was of the pioneer countries, in Spain HTA suffers from a lack of institutional support. The Spanish partners, who made many efforts to approach local and national authorities through interviews and lobbying, expressed their disappointment regarding the lack of institutional support: "we have worked out a Masters programme which, I think, is very good but we don't have any local or national support in Europe!" Viewing the EU grants procedure as too burdensome and having

experienced problems in receiving the funds, the Spanish partners have decided not to apply for another EU grant.

The Canadian partners, on the other hand, received strong financial support from their government for the second and the third editions, something which reflects the emphasis put on HTA in Canada. As a consequence, the Canadian partners who have better financial resources are able to be more innovative and the consortium is hence misbalanced. Even in Canada, however, financial sustainability is uncertain as the federal grant is distributed on an annual basis.

Despite these difficulties, the consortium members continue their collaboration and meet annually at the conference of the International Association of HTA.

Three factors for sustainability: strong involvement of all partners, responding to student and market needs and sustainable financial solutions

Active and strong commitment of all partners

The first sustainability factor is without doubt the strong commitment of all partners, who are extremely motivated to continue this Masters programme. Sharing of roles between partners², previous international experience and knowledge of each other definitely helped in this respect. So much so, that one European coordinator was ready to cover their own travel expenses as no other sources of funding were found. However, having spent a lot of time and effort in the project, the coordinator is now "fed up" and "tired" of the lack of financial means and institutional support.

As stated in the final report, the consortium members strongly believe that international collaboration was a key component to the success of the project. Through this collaboration, the participating universities were able to offer a high-quality programme, which otherwise they could not have offered. The partnership with agencies was also important from the point of view of the students (in terms of career opportunities, field studies, etc.).

Motivation was also increased by the international professional background of the professors. As stated in the application form: "At present, there are frequent exchanges between evaluators from HTA agencies and faculty members from universities in each country. Moreover, several of the participating faculty members in Canada, Spain and Italy have already established important and fruitful collaborative links. Similarly, the five HTA agencies are collaborating on a variety of research projects."

² As stated in the final report: "the two most important principles governing the Ulysses project have been sharing of responsibility and reciprocity." For instance, each university was the leader of one course.

Responding to student and market needs

Sustainability of the project was further enhanced by the high quality of the Masters programme, which responded to real student and market needs. In order to offer high quality education to students, the consortium carries out formative evaluations in order to improve the programme while it is running. In the courses design, attention has been put on adaptation to both European and Canadian cultures.

Finally, good dissemination made the Masters programme viable. An active plan of communication was established including PDF documents and printed brochures, a website (www.hta-master.com), a call for applications for papers, mailing lists, etc. As stated in the final report: "The website (created in 2000) was updated in 2003 to advertise the Program's second edition and has been a key element in recruiting new students to the program", even from Hong Kong and other third countries.

The problem of financial support

Despite many lobbying activities and anticipation before the end of the project, the European consortium members had difficulties in ensuring the financial sustainability of the project.

The final report states that "several initiatives to find potential sources of funding (including private resources) were undertaken by both Canadian and European collaborators". However, certain funding programmes turned out to be too limited in scope or too focused on research. In addition, including private firms was too risky in terms of independence.

The support from Spanish universities was insufficient. It seems that they did not fully understand the potential of this international Masters programme, which the first of its kind to be created in Spain. To overcome this barrier, the partners had lobbied some of the nearby universities but concluded that: 'In most institutions this process proved to be cumbersome, bureaucratically lengthy and time-consuming' (final report).

What tools could help to reinforce the sustainability of such projects?

Firstly, it is important to build a project corresponding to real student and market needs. This can be ensured by carrying out a need evaluation before starting the project. Secondly, setting up a Coordinating Committee can facilitate the involvement of all partners. Finally, sustainability can be maintained by granting exchange scholarships to EC students.

Case EU-USA No 2000 – 699

EU-USA Project No 2000-699

Graduate Nursing Student Exchange Program in International Family-Focused Health Care

Description of project

Graduate Nursing Student Exchange Program in International Family-Focused Health Care

March 2000 – October 2004 (extension)

Total budget: €230 000, of which €130 000 is funded by the European Commission and €100 000 by the participating institutions.

Actors:

- *Leaders:* University of Tampere (Finland) and Capital University of Columbia (Ohio, USA)
- *Partners:* University of Rome (Italy), University of Witten/Herdecke (Germany), University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire (USA), Florida International University (USA)

Objectives:

The aim of the project was to provide students involved in a Masters programme in Nursing Science with internationally oriented health courses with a family focus.

Activities:

- Construction and uploading of online courses at end of the first year
- One-semester student exchanges between European and US universities over a three-year period
- Presentation of project at a health colloquia (papers, posters, etc.)

Final assessment of the Commission:

Score 7/9, good assessment, although sustainability was considered 'unclear'.

Persons contacted:

- Julita Sansoni, Professor, University of Rome (Italy), partner of the project
- Marie-Luise Friedemann, Professor, Florida International University (USA), partner of the project
- Rita Butchko Kerr, Professor, Capital University, Columbia, Ohio (USA), coordinator of the project
- Karl Markgraf, Director of the Center for International Education, evaluator of the project, Eau Claire (USA)

Documents consulted:

- Application File, 13 March 2000
- First Project Report, 13 December 2001
- Second Interim Report, 18 December 2002
- Final Report, 29 December 2004
- University websites

Thanks are due to the persons contacted for their collaboration and availability.

Executive summary

- The aim of the project was to develop a set of internationally oriented family nursing courses – an innovation for a Master's in Nursing Science (including online courses and one term abroad). For this purpose, three European and three American universities were involved, one of which abandoned the project in mid-stream for staffing reasons. Although the courses were started, there were fewer student exchanges than intended due to insufficient number of applicants, and some courses had to be cancelled owing to lack of students.
- The courses continue at most of the universities, although their sustainability is questionable because the number of students is still very low. Some universities are trying to attract students from third countries (outside the consortium). In the absence of scholarships, the student exchanges will be funded by the students with effect from 2005 for the United States and from the end of the project for the Europeans.
- The main factor affecting the sustainability of the project is the lack of student participation. One of the reasons for the lack on interest could be that the formula was devised too quickly without taking account of the actual constraints on the students. Another reason is the uncertain funding situation, resulting from the excessively formal bias of the universities involved.

An innovative curriculum – nevertheless less successful than intended

Aspiration: development of a new nursing science speciality

The project promoters noted from the outset in their application file that in the exercise of their profession, nurses are often isolated at local or national level. Therefore, they proposed to generate a new, internationally oriented approach. They wanted to introduce a new perspective, in which the family became the focus of public health management. The objective was 'to enable students to assume autonomous, team-based functions in multicultural interdisciplinary groups catering for family health needs'. Such an approach would help them to become aware of the difficulties experienced by governments in performing this function and would prepare them for the roles of educators, research workers and consultants for international firms.

These were the design foundations for the project creating an international family education module. The application file claims that it is 'unique', essentially because it is unusual for trainee nurses to be able to spend a term abroad, as provided for in this new curriculum, and because the concentration on family needs is relatively uncommon – while at the same time the teaching of nursing sciences is usually focused on national problems.

As the partner institution from Miami notes, the subject of family nursing is currently of worldwide interest. And what is original and interesting about this course is namely its international dimension.

Precise objectives

The project objective is to help student nurses to obtain certification for an international health speciality in the context of their Masters programme. Several two-week sessions (two intensive seminars and three courses for a total of 12 credits) are proposed. The courses are intended for MA students, as well as a small number of Ph.D. students with an interest in this field. The modules are as follows:

- Cultural immersion seminar: intensive language courses and discovery of the culture of the receiving country (cultural codes, values, etc.)
- Culture, communities and care: introduction to the receiving countries' health models, systems and policies: modules and visits to government agencies (online module)
- Public health in different cultures: the role of health team members in different cultures and family behaviour. Case discussions by email with international peers and health plans for selected families (online module)
- Theories on the family and transcultural action: observation of families and evaluation of their health (online module)
- After the exchange: three-week course to test the adaptation of a public health approach observed abroad for use in the student's own country

The courses, which are entirely new, are incorporated in existing curricula or constitute additional options. They therefore include material already in use at the universities (e.g. the Universities of Tampere and Wisconsin, which already have courses on family intervention theory). Each module is available to the other universities. All the universities must take part in the development/teaching of at least one module.

A balanced Europe-USA consortium

The consortium comprises three American nursing schools and three European schools, with a Finnish leader who set up the network (the Finnish coordinator was already very much involved in family nursing and assumed responsibility for the entire project administration). The University of Tampere (Finland) also covered the administrative costs and undertook in its application letter to maintain the sustainability of the project for a certain time.

One of the American partners, the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, gradually withdrew from the project after the death of the coordinator. The other members of the teaching staff did not regard the project as crucial and therefore abandoned it, in spite of the university's dynamism in terms of foreign exchanges (more than 450 students per year).

Fewer student exchanges than anticipated

The project activities proceeded as planned, except that some courses and exchanges were cancelled because there were too few students.

YEAR 1 (2001)

- Preparation of courses (a Finnish company was commissioned to provide the online courses), student exchanges and student recruitment
- 1st course (Family Theory): commenced in November 2001 in Finland with ten Finns, eight Italians and three Germans, two of whom spent the autumn in Florida
- 2nd course (Trans Culture): commenced in October 2001 in Germany: three German students, five Finns and one American took part
- 3rd course (Cultural Values in Care): commenced in autumn 2002 in Italy
- In 2001 the project was publicised at an international health colloquia with two posters

YEAR 2 (2002)

- 2nd course commenced in Finland in September 2002, with two Finns, three Germans and five Americans; one Finn was in the United States
- 2nd German course, in April-June 2002: five Germans, one Finn and two Americans
- 3rd course, in October-December 2002: two Germans and seven Americans; two Germans in the USA and three exchanges planned for 2003
- 1st Italian course in spring 2002 with 35 students (seven Finns, five Germans, 22 Italians and one American)
- Three posters or oral presentations at a health colloquia in 2002

All courses were accessible by distance learning in the second project year; the managers hail this as a success in PR2.

YEAR 3 (2003)

- The course in Finland was cancelled because there were not enough students: just one Finn went to the United States
- The German course was held in spring 2003 with seven Germans and four Americans; three Germans spent the autumn of 2003 in Florida
- The Italian course was not held in 2003; three Italians went to the USA
- One oral presentation at one conference in Italy

YEAR 4 (2004)

- May 2004: final meeting with all partners in Rome; discussions on lessons learned and follow-up
- No courses in 2004; just one (Italian) student went to the United States
- 26 October 2004: online discussion between partners about future plans – in particular, interest was expressed in the development of Ph. D. courses on the subject

The Commission's assessment of this project is quite good, with a score of 7 out of 9, with particular emphasis on the excellent cooperation between the partners (the group engaged actively in the organisation of meetings, travel and the creation of online courses): 'This project seems authentic and organised. They are active with exchanges and truly collaborative.'

The managers' personal commitment is an important factor in the project's success. Some discussions about scheduling took place during the construction of the courses, and some minor difficulties in implementation arose owing to the three-month discrepancy between the beginning of the university year in the United States, Italy and Finland.

However, not everything went according to the plans. Thirty transatlantic student exchanges were originally intended (at least five students from each university over the two-year period), and 30 to 60 students were expected to participate in distance-learning courses (five to ten students from each university took these distance-learning modules in their home towns).

In reality there were eight Europe/USA transatlantic exchanges instead of the intended 15 and fewer than half in the opposite direction. Furthermore, some courses were not held in the last year owing to lack of students.

Ongoing evaluation of courses

The evaluation of the first courses, carried out with students (PR2), showed that 'better integration into the Faculty's curriculum is needed'. Again, students may have difficulties in participating in the online courses (because English is not their first language, or for other reasons).

Sustainability still 'unclear' at the end of the project

In the Commission's final assessment of the project, its sustainability was deemed 'unclear' and no score was assigned for this element. It was noted that 'transatlantic mobility goals are not fully met'.

Yet sustainability seems to have been a constant concern for the project members. As already stated in the application file, the universities could continue the exchange programme after funding ceased on the basis of a 'pay here, go there' formula, as there were other potential sources of funding for the student exchanges.

Again, as already proposed in the application file, it was intended to retain the international certificate after funding ceased and to incorporate these courses into the conventional Masters programme. A plan for continuation of the project was to be established in each institution at the end of the third year.

It was also stated that each participating university undertook to maintain the viability of the programme as a part of the courses it offered in accordance with one of the following strategies:

- award of an international health certificate with these courses, together with student exchanges
- inclusion of the courses in the Master of Science in Nursing programme as an option or special course
- opening up the courses to other health students
- introduction of a post-baccalaureate certificate in international health

Uncertain long-term sustainability

Differences in course continuation from partner to partner

Continuation of the course modules constructed during the project differs widely from partner institution to partner institution:

- Courses are definitely to be continued at the Florida University (incorporation in a Masters programme and the online courses are continued) and the University of Rome (student exchanges are planned with Miami)
- Courses will be maintained at the Capital University (USA) and the University of Tampere (as an option in the Masters programme in Nursing Science) as well as in Germany
- Courses are not continued at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire (for the reasons stated above)

For example, the course is continuing at the Capital University modifying and incorporating it into a Masters programme curriculum, but it will not continue independently owing to lack of students. It is funded by the School of Nursing, which has had its grant extended so that student exchanges can continue, but after September 2005 students will have to fund their own exchanges.

However, continuation of the courses is questionable at some universities owing to difficulties regarding student recruitment during the project. There are also doubts about the motivation of the project actors if the project is on stand-by, as well as about the long-term willingness of the institutions to fund a course that attracts few students.

Finally, the publication projects have not brought results – owing to lack of time, according to the partners – but are nevertheless still alive.

Financial viability in question

Hence the financial viability of the project is questionable: a new application for funding student exchanges was made to the Commission. Even if the evaluations show that students benefit from these exchanges, the amount of the grant is insufficient for students who work (owing to expensive accommodation), while the language problem remains the main barrier.

The American students, meanwhile, have been assisted by the US Department of Education, but its programme ends in 2005.

Whereas the universities contributed some €100 000 to the operating costs during the course of the project, the support of the European universities is confined to the formal level. However, the Italian partner notes that it possesses a high degree of autonomy as regards the continuation of its project.

Support from the universities in the United States is more clear-cut. Indeed, other sources of funds are being sought, as in Miami, which has not only produced a certification programme funded by the University, but is also attempting to attract a global audience and to obtain other sources of funding (private sources, students' fees, etc.).

Ongoing cooperation

Contact with some of the American and European partners continues, but apparently on a dispersed or bilateral basis rather than in the framework of a wider network. Several partners have expressed their wish to develop cooperation in the field of research. The participants consulted ultimately regard the project as very valuable, in particular on account of the transatlantic relationships forged. A PhD. course is planned with Italy and Finland, and there is also a project for a Fulbright research grant in Finland for a member of the Florida teaching staff.

Sustainability called into question by lack of students and relative uncertainty of funding

Sustainability threatened by lack of students

The main problem experienced by the project members in continuing the courses remains the lack of students. There are several possible reasons for this:

- Differences in educational systems regarding academic year dates ('The relatively low number of students at the beginning of the programme is due to differences in educational systems and academic year dates' [PR1, p. 3]).
- Possible deficiencies in communication within schools ('The partners are seeking to intensify their marketing efforts so as to ensure that the courses are known' [PR1, p. 3]); Capital University was, for example, in the process of restructuring at the time of the project.
- Three months abroad is a long time and expensive for most students (especially adults following a training). As Mrs Butchko Kerr says, 'going abroad for a semester is difficult'. At Wisconsin-Eau Claire, for example, spending three months away penalises students in their study programme, which is very demanding.
- Lack of integration in the standard academic curriculum, as the project evaluation shows: 'If distance-learning courses are not sufficiently well integrated in the regular university curriculum, there is a lack of motivated students.'
- Furthermore, online courses are more time-consuming for students, as well as for teachers, who have more difficulty in managing students from different countries.
- Knowledge of the language of the receiving country is often insufficient; were the language courses offered too short (two weeks)?

A question could be raised whether the lack of students might be due to excessively fast 'academic' project design, in which not enough time was devoted to a comprehensive examination of student needs and constraints (in particular, those related to funding, time and languages). Was it a good idea to include an obligatory three-month stays abroad, given that some students work and/or have families?

Again, was a study made regarding employment opportunities for the graduates of these courses? The value in terms of student employability does not seem to have been demonstrated in the project reports.

Financial uncertainty due to insecure funding sources

Finally, even if the universities continue to offer certain courses, their long-term sustainability remains dependent on their own investment and/or the possibility of attracting other sources of funding. Support from some universities has, however, been confined to the formal level. The same problem arises in connection with the funding of student exchanges, which remains uncertain in 2005 on both sides of the Atlantic.

Possible tools for enhancing the sustainability of projects

Could the lack of students be mitigated by a more formalised study of their needs and constraints?

Case EU-USA No 2000 – 702

EU-USA Project No 2000-702

The TIRES (Transnationalism, International Migration, Race, Ethnocentrism and the State) Consortium Exchange and Advanced Training Project

Description of project

Project title: The TIRES (Transnationalism, International Migration, Race, Ethnocentrism and the State) Consortium Exchange and Advanced Training Project

Years: 2001-2004 (selection in 2000; PR4: 2004) – one-year extension

Budget: total project cost: €213 326, including European funding of €103 860

Actors:

- *European partners:* Europa-Universität Viadrina (EUV), Germany – *lead EU partner*; Universiteit van Amsterdam (UvA), Netherlands; Université de Liège (UdL), Belgium; Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Paris (IEP), France.
- *American partners:* Florida International University (FIU), Miami, FL – *lead US partner*; New York University (NYU), New York City, NY; University of Minnesota (UofM), Minneapolis and St. Paul, MN; University of Colorado (UofC), Boulder, CO

Objectives:

The project provides for a programme of undergraduate student exchanges, online learning and summer institutes for undergraduates and graduates.

Activities:

TIRES was a consortium of eight European and American universities with a collaborative project extending over three years and involving courses, transatlantic student exchanges, three-week summer institutes and online courses; publications were also proposed.

Final assessment by the Commission:

"This project appears to be extremely effective. It is well organised and strategic."
(Sustainability '7/9'; total '7/9')

Persons contacted:

- Professor Michael Minkenberg, Europa-Universität Viadrina (EUV), Germany – lead EU partner
- Mrs Sarah Mahler, Florida International University (FIU), Miami, FL – lead US partner
- Mr Meindert Fennema, Universiteit van Amsterdam (UvA), Netherlands, project partner
- Mr Marco Martiniello, Université de Liège (UdL), Belgium, project partner
- Maître Ariane D'Appollonia, Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Paris (IEP), France, project partner

Documents consulted:

- Application of the TIRES consortium
- Annual Progress Report (September 2000 - August 2002)
- Final report (by Prof. Minkenberg, Authorised Representative)
- Minutes of the TIRES consortium's Sustainability Conference (01/2005)
- <http://tires.euv-frankfurt-o.de/>
- <http://www.fiu.edu/~tcs/tires/>

Thanks are due to the persons contacted for their assistance and availability.

Executive summary

- The TIRES consortium involved the cooperation of four American and four European universities on a common subject in the field of political sociology. The project name ('Transnationalism, International Migration, Race, Ethnocentrism and the State') reflects the present-day problem of racism and the modern phenomenon of migration, as a research topic common to the universities. The three-year project covered several different types of activity: student exchanges, common courses using modern IT tools and summer institutes on specific topics.
- The project achieved its main objectives. However, student exchanges proved to be unbalanced in that there were fewer exchanges from the United States to Europe (these apparently being too expensive for the Americans). The application of the 'virtual seminar' tool was considered by some to be a success, whereas others did not adopt it. Although the summer institutes were met with unanimous praise, their sustainability is in question owing to their high cost. Finally, many links were forged between students from different universities and their teachers. The majority of intra-European links seem to be very firm and can be described as networks. The transatlantic links are more bilateral in nature. The general conclusion must be that lasting relationships seem to have been forged, even if there are difficulties in preserving the structure of the original consortium.
- The main sustainability factor was the interest of the teaching staff in this international programme, which enabled them to meet and work together with their counterparts in other countries. The students were clearly interested in the use of modern distance-learning tools, which enabled them to meet foreign students without difficulty. Finally, the project was facilitated by the international culture of some universities, even if it eventually has to assume different forms to encourage its sustainability.

A project that has made for a large number of student exchanges

A project arising from a common research topic

TIRES is a consortium of eight American and European universities engaged in a three-year academic cooperation project on a topic of current concern – 'Transnationalism, International Migration, Race, Ethnocentrism and the State' (TIRES). The main actors in the project are academics from the sphere of sociology and political science with an international reputation in the fields of immigration and racism. The project seems to have arisen from the researchers' aspiration to forge more extensive links and to initiate a dialogue among their students extending beyond national boundaries.

Wide range of activities

The project activities fall into three main categories: long-term transatlantic exchanges of students from the consortium's universities (principally undergraduates); the use of IT to create modern international teaching tools; and the three summer institutes with an active participation of graduate students from the consortium's various universities. In addition, common modules have been established for a common specialisation in the subject of TIRES.

The use of information technologies is reflected in the creation of virtual links between the different universities' courses and of a 'virtual seminar', intended to provide for the sharing of a range of courses and educational resources, which could thus be used by the teaching staff of the various universities. Other forms of interaction (such as Internet chat and specific exchanges on a course) were also contemplated. In addition, two websites (one European and one American) were intended to facilitate promotion of the project and to provide an information source for the students and academics involved.

Programme for the year 2000/01:

- Meeting of partners (11/2000, USA) – assignment of responsibilities
- Meeting of partners (04/2001, USA) – finalisation of partnership agreement
- Identification of common courses for the consortium
- Preparation of IT tools (websites, virtual seminar)

Programme for the year 2001/02:

- Meeting of partners (12/2001, USA) – preparation of 2002 summer institute
- Student exchanges
- Summer institute 2002 (USA)
- Establishment of IT tools

Programme for the year 2002/03:

- Meeting of partners (11/2002, USA) – preparation for year 2003
- Meeting of partners (07/2003, USA)
- Meeting of partners (07/2004, USA)
- Student exchanges
- Summer institute 2003 (EU)

A year's extension allowed the coordinators to meet in Miami for a conference on the form to be assumed by the consortium in the future.

A consortium of universities with an international orientation

The project originator is Professor Minkenberg, Vice-President of the German University and holder of its chair of political science. The function of US coordinator was assumed on a de facto basis by the University of Florida.

The European universities involved represented four different nationalities; they are all large universities with an international orientation.

The four American universities were from four different States: Florida International University (FIU), Miami, FL – lead US partner; New York University (NYU), New York City, NY; University of Minnesota (UofM), Minneapolis and St. Paul, MN; and University of Colorado (UofC), Boulder, CO. They too are well known for their international orientation, as confirmed by a large number of projects.

A project director was appointed by each consortium university. Each project director was assisted by an advisory committee of academics. Annual project directors' meetings were held.

Amsterdam, Minnesota and Colorado were involved in the initial consortium supported by the FIPSE³ (a North American mobility grant) and the European Commission (first consortium from 1993 to 1995 and another from 1995 to 2000). This project provided for undergraduate exchanges between the two American and four European universities. It also entailed the preparation of a common course, which was taught at all six universities. This first project was successful in every respect. It involved 18 American and 18 European students. All 36 were very satisfied, and four of them even went on to take part at doctoral level in international cooperation projects.

The extent of cooperation and the importance of the subject-matter led two further American universities (New York and Florida) to join the consortium. The specific research objectives of the various universities and staff turnover resulted in changes on the European side: two universities were replaced by the IEP (Paris) and the University of Liège.

Sustainability already anticipated at the project design stage

According to the application file, sustainability was assured from the commencement of the project.

³ Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education (US Department of Education).

There were several reasons for this confidence:

- The experience of the participating institutions in student exchanges (which continued after the cessation in 1995 of earlier financial assistance from the European Commission and the FIPSE; Minnesota and Amsterdam were co-leaders at the time).
- The growing interest in the issues covered by the consortium's subject-matter.
- Sound preparation of activities.

In addition, the project coordinators were fully aware of the sustainability aspect of the project. From the second year on, they proposed consulting the project directors and associated teaching staff with a view to devising possible follow-ups to the activities supported by EC/FIPSE funding. Decisions on the continuation of activities were to be made in 2003 at the final cooperation programme evaluation meeting.

The project activities were designed in such a way as to be sustainable once the funding from the European Commission and the FIPSE came to an end. For instance, the 'virtual seminar' is based on low-cost Internet technologies (the cost is in any case concentrated at the design stage). Again, the summer institutes could in the future potentially be substantially funded by registration fees (not provided for with the original project's summer institutes). Another possibility contemplated by the directors was to associate research projects with the organisation of these events. External aid could then cover part of the cost.

Activities carried out over a three-year period

Note that the project had already started prior to the European Commission's support: the first meetings between the project directors of the various consortium universities were funded by the FIPSE.

Student exchanges

Actual exchanges between students from the various consortium universities

	EU → US (actual)	US → EU (actual)	Total (actual)
2001/02	17	7	24
2002/03	14	3	17
2003/04	8	11	19
Total (actual)	39	21	60

In the United States, the Universities of Minnesota, Colorado and New York took a much less prominent part than Florida (New York sent only one student abroad).

Efforts to bring the exchanges into better balance resulted in 11 American students travelling to Europe, with eight students going in the opposite direction.

Apart from the effect of 11 September, the existence of exchange programmes with other consortium universities before the initiation of the project was an important determinant of the unbalance.

IT tools

The websites were used intensively, especially by exchange students prior to travelling. Once certain technical difficulties had been overcome, Internet chat also proved very popular. In this way, virtual exchanges were set up between students from the various universities.

The virtual seminar met with unanimous praise for its innovative dimension. However, its use has remained limited. Again, the teacher representing the Dutch university developed an online course of his own with a multimedia element, but this course was not placed on the TIRES site. It is, however, used by the consortium's Belgian university.

Summer institutes

Summer institutes were held each year. These proved very successful, both for the students, who took part intensively in the accompanying workshops, and for the teachers, who saw them as a good opportunity for exchanging ideas on the issues involved in the field and possible research partnerships. Finally, the summer institutes provided an opportunity for meetings between the project directors of the consortium's various universities, resulting in a considerable reduction in the project's overall budget.

Overall outcomes

Ultimately, 300 students and 35 academics were directly involved in the project. All activities were accomplished, even though a problem of US/EU balance arose in the student exchanges.

The students produced a book after the summer institutes, which is now on the market. The teaching staff, on the other hand, published joint research papers. Finally, TIRES courses were established at the various universities.

Activity evaluations with no impact

All the activity evaluations, based on the completion of questionnaires by participants, were very positive. However, the exchange students were difficult to contact on their

return. Even so, the questionnaires completed before their departure gave an indication of their expectations. The evaluations of the summer institutes were easier. Professor Mahler (Florida) drew attention to the difficulty of deriving anything really useful from these evaluations.

Unequal involvement of partners

The two contracting universities were very active. Thanks to one highly motivated teacher, the University of Liège also took an active part. The University of Amsterdam and the IEP (Paris), while involved to a lesser extent, nevertheless took part in all project phases. When the project began, the University of Amsterdam had had difficulties in finding an appropriate position for itself. Its coordinating team had been led by a teacher/research worker who was primarily interested in the research aspect, in relation to his own research interests. The problems arising out of this individual situation were overcome when a new coordinator was appointed, even though the University's involvement remains strongly research-oriented. Having been highly active when directing the American Political Science Center, the French partner dropped out during the project period and, in particular, has not been involved in student exchange activities since. However, contact has been maintained with the other consortium teachers. The TIRES political sciences director also points out that the programme budget did not provide for payment for the time devoted to the project by the consortium teaching staff; this is indicative of their high motivation level.

Project outcomes to persist in different forms

Ongoing cooperation, especially in research

The project was extended for a year. This extension was agreed to by the European Commission. Although some unused funds were carried over, the extension year was financed primarily from American sources. A small proportion was used to facilitate some student exchanges. However, the main aim of the extension year was the preparation of a meeting/conference between the various consortium members, during which the project partners were to decide on the future form of the consortium.

Some American universities are expected to receive European students next autumn. This exchange will be relatively limited owing to the lack of funds obtained for this activity (for instance, Florida will take only two European students under the consortium arrangements). Another factor is the desire of some consortium members to concentrate on research cooperation.

After the end of the project, the initial consortium structure broke down. However, de facto links between most of the university teachers were maintained. The exchange programmes have also continued bilaterally between some universities. Activities are being devised by several of the universities originally involved in the consortium.

The University of New York changed its approach so fundamentally that its future involvement in the consortium is questionable. The Dutch directors are convinced that the consortium will survive, but in a different form. In their view, new types of cooperation programmes will be established, but always with a bias towards research.

The three-week summer institutes allowed contacts to be forged between graduate students. These often subsequently take the form of 'junior scholar networks', which are incipient academic networks.

The relations between the teaching and research staff in charge of the project are very sound, often extremely friendly and hence permanent.

Exchanges continue despite uncertain funding

Sarah Mahler (Florida) points out that the University cannot provide additional funds for foreign student exchanges. Students wishing to spend time at a foreign university can do so if they can cover the expenses. However, at the Miami conference, the consortium universities decided to exempt these students from university fees. Again, from now on it is proposed that undergraduate exchanges will be organised on a bilateral basis. Professor Minkenberg says that there will still be regular student exchanges, but between European universities. However, the University of Florida has signed agreements with some European universities to continue a programme of transatlantic student exchanges.

The Dutch university decided to accept one or two exchange students, but the directors do not wish to devote particular energy to an exchange programme which they consider to be much less attractive than research-oriented cooperation. As for the IEP (Paris), it already had a well established exchange programme with several American universities, and the specific agreements decided on with them within the TIRES consortium have been incorporated in overall agreements. Some 250 students are still involved in exchanges between the IEP and American universities.

Graduate and faculty exchanges will be resourced from specific research funds currently being negotiated. Relevant agreements (three-year programmes) have been formalised between the German and Belgian universities and the University of Florida.

One partner pointed out that three years' funding was much too little. It was sufficient for establishing previously non-existent exchange programmes or for instituting cooperation programmes, in particular for universities that were relatively undeveloped on the international side and had limited resources, but it was only after three years that serious cooperation began, and then funds would no longer be available!

Continuation of courses and summer institutes

As during the project period, Marco Martiniello, of Liège, is continuing with online courses in partnership with other teachers (from New York, IEP Paris, Liège and Amsterdam). The

aim is unchanged: to hold simultaneous courses with students and teachers from other universities so as to encourage transnational exchanges, particularly among students.

The IEP (Paris) is to hold a summer institute in 2006. The consortium is looking at various sources of funding (some of these are listed in the Minutes of the 2005 TIRES Sustainability Conference). The idea of funding this activity from registration fees was finally abandoned. Two further options are contemplated: close cooperation between two universities to reduce the cost of organising a summer institute, and cutting this activity from three to two weeks. Otherwise, to return to the original principle of this activity, the consortium universities considered instituting online courses on a 'rotating responsibility' basis from 2006. The requirement is to have students from the different consortium universities and covering a precise subject over a relatively short period. Such activities are inexpensive and would therefore constitute a means of overcoming the financial obstacle faced by the summer institutes.

Starting from nothing, the consortium universities have succeeded in establishing a valuable training instrument that is now very well used. Under the supervision of the teaching staff, Internet chat has proved to be a very dynamic tool. It is pointed out that, in most cases, this instrument, which to some extent encourages interdisciplinary exchanges, was established by students and teachers from other specialities.

Student appreciation of the virtual seminars was high. This instrument held their attention and enabled them to concentrate on a precise subject. It also allowed them to make contact with each other and the faculty staff. A video conference between FIU and UFL enabled the seminar participants to 'see' their exchange counterparts.

This instrument is also inexpensive and can easily be used on a long-term basis.

However, the instrument was not used by all partners. The main obstacles are the time difference between Europe and the USA and the lack of basic computer skills of some teachers.

Sustainability depends on university support and on teacher and student involvement

Unequal support from the universities

Involvement of the contracting partners was facilitated by genuine support from their universities: administrative support was given to Michael Minkenberg (Germany) and Sarah Mahler (Florida) by their universities (one of the Professor Minkenberg's assistants in the consortium activities was promoted following the investment in the TIRES project, while EUV still allocates some funds to TIRES consortium activities). Again, for the preparation of certain activities, the partners mobilised a number of students specialising in subjects not originally covered by the project (for instance, the Florida website was

constructed by computer science students). Funding was also obtained from resources allocated to other projects. On the other hand, the absence of institutional support at the Universities of Colorado and Minnesota had repercussions on their involvement in the project.

New York is a particular case. Its experience in student exchange programmes and its highly developed structure (NYU is a very big university) greatly facilitated its consortium involvement in exchange programme activities. However, the involvement of NYU depended mainly on an individual commitment, as the present situation shows. This example demonstrates to some extent that, the smaller the structure, the more likely it is that university support will depend on the willingness of an individual member of the teaching staff to join an international project. Again, Professor Minkenberg points out that small structures are known to be more internationally inclined.

Finally, the Dutch university supported the project only to a limited extent, due to its lack of enthusiasm regarding student exchanges. Furthermore, the original intention was that one of Amsterdam's research institutes participates in the consortium, but the nature of this organisation was incompatible with the programme objectives.

High level of commitment by the project actors

According to Sarah Mahler (Florida), the main strength of the consortium lies in the personal commitment of the directors at the partner universities. The consortium originated in a network of university teachers specialising in the field, some of whom had already known each other for many years (e.g. NYU and EUV). The various coordinator meetings (especially the recent sustainability conference) demonstrated their motivation.

The motivation of Meindert Fennema, of the University of Amsterdam, was particularly high because the consortium enabled him to meet internationally renowned research workers engaged in the same field as him. He also contributed financially to the establishment of an online course with a multimedia element.

Difficulty of participation for American students

The apparent difficulty of achieving a balance in student exchanges was confirmed by those consulted to be a major obstacle to sustainability. The American universities did not find it easy to get their students to take part in such programmes.

This is explained firstly by the fact that American universities do not impose rules on their students regarding study periods abroad. Thus, unlike some European students, their American counterparts are not required to spend at least one period abroad as a part of their curriculum. Accordingly, Sarah Mahler notes that, while demand is substantial on the European side, it is hard to find motivated students in the United States.

According to the Dutch representative, however, the unbalance is the opposite in the case of the University of Amsterdam. He thinks that Dutch students are less inclined to go to the United States than their American counterparts are to come to Europe. The figures do indeed indicate a slight imbalance in that direction.

This reluctance is compounded by the cost of travelling abroad, which is a serious obstacle, in particular for American students. Their university or the consortium (and sometimes supporting institutions) meets part of the cost of exchanges (specifically, administrative expenses). Sarah Mahler (Florida) notes that students spending time abroad can obtain grants, but they still find it difficult to cover new expenses (for instance, rent in the case of many American students who live with their parents).

Finally, then, the consortium had great difficulty in balancing the transatlantic exchange programme. Apart from the cost of a stay abroad and the fear generated by the events of 9/11, the American students do not seem very interested in travelling to what they may see as unattractive parts of Europe, such as eastern Germany.

A question could also be raised whether it is mainly the academics concerned who are interested in the project's subject-matter, which is, after all, their field of research (Final Report, p. 5), rather than the students themselves.

Possible instruments for enhancing the sustainability of such projects

As this project shows, alternative approaches can be found for the continuation of student exchanges, especially in the institutions with a long tradition in this field.

Case Tempus CD-21051 (Tacis)

Tempus Project Tacis region CD-JEP No 21051

Curricula Development on Soil and Water Resources Protection Using Information and Communication Technologies (SWARP-ICT)

Description of the project

Title of the project: Curricula Development on Soil and Water Resources Protection Using Information and Communication Technologies (SWARP-ICT)

Date: 2001 – 2003 (Selection: 2000; PR4: 05/2004)

Budget: almost €500 000 (EU grant: 100%)

Partners involved:

17 at the beginning of the project:

- *Target Country:* Russia (RU): 3 Universities (2 in Moscow, 1 in Saratov), 1 centre of research (Moscow), public administrations
- *Consortium:* Austria (AT); Australia (AUS), initially involved; Germany (DE); France (FR); Netherlands (NL); Russia (RU); United States (USA), initially involved.

Objectives:

The development of a curricula that will teach MSc students to effectively use information and communication technologies, to gain a holistic approach to the sustainable development of soil and water resources in Russia and elsewhere and to create a training and teaching centre.

Quality Grade given in the Last Progress Report:

"Good", "The project achieved all planned outcomes. The study programme in "Soil and Water Resources Management" has been developed (with 14 new courses) and has been recognised by the Russian Ministry of Education. The Hydro-Informatics Centre was set up at the Moscow State University of Environmental Engineering and a branch of the Centre has been set up within the premises of the Saratov State Agrarian University".

People contacted:

- Ewa Wietsma, WU (NL), project partner
- A. Zeiliguer, MSUEE (RU), Russian coordinator of the project
- S. Ignar, Wars. U. (PL), project partner
- B. Tassin, ENPC (FR), project partner
- J-L Bonduri, ETF project manager
- Mrs O. Oleynikova, National Tempus Office Russia

Documentation used:

- Final Report (Apr. 2004)
- Progress Report 1 to 4
- Websites:
<http://www.msuee.ru/>
<http://www.hydro-web.org/>

We thank all those who have contributed to this case study.

Executive summary

- This CD project has been carried out by the Moscow State University of Environmental Engineering in cooperation with a Dutch university and several other partners. The aim of the project was to develop curricula on the theme of sustainable development of Soil and Water Resources with an in-depth use of modern IT tools. Environmental issues and the problem of modernisation of curricula in Russia turned out to be highly crucial. Beyond the development of the curricula through the development of modern learning materials, the project planned one major output: the development of a new training and teaching centre.
- The project has been unanimously considered as a success. The coordinating staff worked closely and very efficiently. Many Russian institutions (national organisations and other universities) have been involved in the project. The 3 curricula built have been recognised by the Ministries and the training centre is being fully used. New activities have been developed. The curricula and the centre seem very likely to be sustainable.
- One factor that fosters sustainability is the particular interest and support of the university to this project. The SWARP-ICT project, by its modern and international dimension, became an element of pride for the university. The project benefits from this by a feed-back process.
- The international network's sustainability has been reached thanks to the use of virtual tools: contact is maintained with European universities thanks to videoconferences; students are working on international Internet platforms.
- The language barrier hindered the involvement of some Russian staff members. Moreover the Russian coordinators were not sufficiently prepared for the linguistic aspect; for instance, carrying out some courses in English would have facilitated student exchanges.

A successful project

A project of HE cooperation in the field of Soil and Water Resources

The objective of the project was to develop curricula that will teach MSc students to effectively use information and communication technologies, to achieve a holistic approach to sustainable development of Soil and Water Resources in Russia and elsewhere.

Two needs have been highlighted: the need for highly trained specialists in the field of environment issues (expressed by various institutions and companies) and the need for general development of the Russian educational system (modernisation of the materials, upgrading of the courses, internationalisation).

The specific context of this project is highlighted in the application form: "The problem of environment protection of water, air and land resources resounding in the Moscow region. The impacts of modern society on the environment are especially pronounced in suburban areas, because the natural resources of these areas are increasingly used by the urban centres". Moreover it is noted in the application that "with still little alternative to ecological destruction and a natural resources consuming economy, the need for experts [...] is obvious".

To reach the objective of the project, 4 activities and outputs have been planned:

- New training and teaching centre (definition, creation, staff recruitment, staff training, equipment purchasing and development of website)
- Recognised curricula on Soil and Water Resources (training of teachers, development of syllabi, upgrading laboratories, teaching materials, realisation of courses, evaluation of courses, workshops, conference)
- New learning materials for Distance Education (learning materials, CD-Rom production, material development)
- Progress reviewed and future activities planned (project coordination, financial administration, dissemination activities).

Close links between coordinators with experience in international projects

The two main actors of the project were the MSUEE⁴ and the WU⁵, represented respectively by Anatoli Zeiliger and Ewa Wietsma. They benefit from the experience of Pr S. Ignar, a Polish expert who knows Pr. Zeiliger well, speaks Russian fluently and has a long experience of Tempus projects.

The webpage of Pr. Ignar (Agricultural University of Warsaw, Poland) provides the description of one of his numerous experiences in HE cooperation project: "The Environmental Information Systems Laboratory at the Agricultural University of Warsaw was funded by the Tempus S-JEP Polish Agricultural Universities Network for Sustainable Environmental Development (PANSED) project". It should be noted that the Wageningen University (NL) was the contractor of this project. As the ETF manager (who was in charge of the progress reports) underlined, the Dutch university has "well established methodology and experience" in cooperation projects with Tacis countries.

⁴ Moscow State University of Environmental Engineering. The MSUEE is an old and dynamic public school of Engineering with 2600 undergraduate and 150 postgraduate students and more than 322 teachers.

⁵ Wageningen University (Netherlands)

A very large panel of Russian partners

The participation of the "Saratov State Agrarian University" and the "State University on Land Management" has to be underlined as they have benefited directly of the project (especially for the development of curricula) and are still involved in the activities that are maintained. It is also to be noted that the relationship with Saratov University has been eased by the fact that Pr Zeiliger had several "good colleagues" in this university.

Other institutions have been involved: departments of Ministries like the State Agency of Water Resources, foreign universities like the Uzbek University of Tashkent (this university had already strong linkage with MSUEE because the rector of MSUEE was born in Tashkent).

Sustainability forecasted

The following is specified in the Tempus application form: "after the end of Tempus, MSUEE will support financially the SWARP-ICT Centre". It was also planned that the eight Russian organisations dealing with Soil and Water Resources Protection and management "will accept students for practical training and consult on a new developed study programme" in order to better prepare the students of the partner universities for "the actual labour market and its specific requirements in the area of Soil & Water Protection".

Realisation of the activities and results

The project turned out to be an overall success. The "Training and Teaching Centre" has been successfully set up. The various teaching materials have been correctly developed. Finally, the 3 curricula (Masters of Science) that were developed in the 3 Russian universities use fully the new technologies developed and have been recognised by the Ministries. 63 teachers and 14 students have been trained with the new teaching material.

As forecasted, various Russian partners ("State Enterprise", "Engineering Research Centre"...) were involved in the project, but their implication could be summed up to the delivering of advice about the "market need" of such curricula. They were not involved in the international cooperation and acted very locally. A member of these organisations also attended several free trainings. Pr Ignar was really surprised by the strong interest of professionals for the course he provided at MSUEE.

Finally the Australian and the American universities did not actively participate in the project (lack of funding in their own countries), but the other consortium partners were very motivated and participated enthusiastically in the project.

Indeed, each partner brought a specific support:

- Austria has expertise in the management of resources
- Germany has expertise in Information Technology

- Slovakia provided teaching material
- France provided specific courses and a visit to its own university organisation
- In Netherlands, beyond educational support, the Wageningen staff showed strong commitment and participation in the organisation of the whole project

Finally, new Information Technologies give the possibility to exchange quickly many type of information between universities all around the world. The "HydroWeb" platform (www.hydroweb.org) used in the new curricula is an example of such application: "The course HydroWeb: 'Web-based Collaborative Engineering in Hydrosience' is an international course, organised and performed in close cooperation with several partner universities from Germany, Hungary, France, The Netherlands, Russia, Latvia, Taiwan, USA and others. Students from the partner universities form small teams (about eight members) to solve a river engineering problem on a Web-based project platform."

Moreover, the Internet technology enables partners to keep contact with one another (mail and videoconference). However, the issue of Internet Security systems (firewalls not managed in some Eastern European institutions) has to be emphasized, as it has sometimes disabled or delayed videoconferences.

Sustainable curricula

Curricula and training centre maintained

The activities based on the educational material developed during the Tempus project are likely to be continued. The training and teaching centre works well. New activities have been started in this centre. For instance, 2 videoconferences were held with an American university after the Tempus project. Several teachers and students attended these conferences.

At least 6 students attend the specific courses of the new Masters programme in the Moscow State University each year and graduates have been hired by Ministries and companies involved in the project. Moreover, the curricula in the three universities (the "Moscow State University of Environment Engineering", the "Saratov State Agrarian University" and the "State University on Land Management") are regularly updated. There are exchanges of students and of teaching material between these universities, especially between the University of Saratov and the Moscow State University. The rectors of the different universities were invited to support the various activities that have been undertaken.

All these activities are financed by the resources of the universities themselves. Other activities have received the financial support of Russian Ministries. These activities are essentially research projects. For instance, the Ministry of Natural Resources financed entirely the research activities on hydrology.

In spite of this success, the East-West mobility activities have almost stopped due to a lack of funding. The very few exchange projects that are still running are maintained with special funds from the EU universities or from Erasmus Mundus. The French partner (ENPC) stopped its collaboration with the other universities after having completed the activities they were involved in (the professor involved planned to participate to a new project in Morocco with some of the initial partners, but he explained that the administration of its university had not been prompt enough to submit the proposal).

A new Tempus project with a similar set up

A new Tempus project has been set up by MSUEE and WU. It is entitled "Development for Water-Environment Lifelong Learning (IB_JEP-24170-2003)". The project focuses on the training of specialists, and has as a general objective "to develop new curricula by setting up flexible short-term programmes in order to enhance Institutional Building capacity for lifelong learning in water environment in Russia".

Universities involved: Wageningen University (NL), Moscow State University of Environmental Engineering (RF), University of Nice (FR). The same representatives of the previous partners will manage the project.

Pr Ignar underlined the fact that it is a new project that will help to fund the necessary evolution and development of the previous project. According to the Polish expert, it is not a question of repeating the same project under another title. Pr Zeiliger managed to identify new needs and to give a new dimension to the development of the courses he was in charge of.

A successful experience

A ministry member who attended a dissemination conference was very impressed by the success of the project and suggested that Pr Zeiliger be in charge of the management of a similar project within the ministry.

Pr Zeiliger made the curricula developed available to the Erasmus Mundus Programme (under the title Hydro-informatics). In the framework of this programme, he went with a group of students to Nice in May 2005. According to Pr Ignar, and as only carefully selected curricula can be taken into consideration in the context of Erasmus Mundus, it is a proof of the success of the initial Tempus project.

Sustainability ensured by strong university/ministry support and effective management

Strong university support

There has been strong support from the universities involved in the project. It has to be noted that the Rector of MSUEE is indeed Professor of Water Resources. Moreover he has a long international experience (in Africa and Cuba). These elements have been very important for the project. The invitation of the Rectors to the project's meetings from the very beginning fostered the support of the university.

Indeed, dissemination activities are good opportunities to involve decision makers in the project. Inviting decision makers to the meetings from the very beginning of the project is particularly positive. For instance, a continuous contact with members of Ministries from the start of the project is a good way to obtain accreditations and to facilitate eventual demands for facilities or other kind of support.

A weak point of the project may be the investment done in modern equipment, which university will soon have to renew. These costs have to be taken into account and should be anticipated.

Ministries support

For Pr Ignar, accreditations are very important. Once officially fixed by universities and then by the Ministries, courses are much more likely to last.

It has been said that the ministry level seems more reachable in some places: one of the partner noticed that it was easier to find financial support from Ministries in Uzbekistan, where the political level is not so far from the projects, than in Russia.

However, the National Tempus Office (NTO) coordinator disagreed with this point. Admittedly, the procedures for accreditation of new curricula are often quite difficult in Eastern Europe. But the best strategy for achieving accreditation is to use personal contacts with the highest members of a Ministry. Although the regional political level is not as distant, it must be admitted that a financial support of regional institutions is rather infrequent. It is, however, easy to reach the national level when persons in charge of specific subjects have been clearly identified by the Ministries. Moreover, universities have the freedom to give accreditation with the agreement of a regional government. The Russian universities do not need the recognition of the Ministry of Education when the new curricula belong to the category of "specialised studies" and they are developed in the framework of contents already identified in federal/national educational laws. This kind of freedom is less encountered in other Tacis countries.

There are also many reforms and Ministries are in permanent evolution (for instance, the Ministry of Nature Resources has been subdivided into several Federal Agencies). This lack of stability does not facilitate fundraising at Ministry level. The NTO coordinator noted that the project took place during a period of reforms when the situation was difficult, not comparable to the situation today.

The effective management of the project

Partners have noted the importance of managing competences: Pr Ignar pointed out the fact that Pr Zeiliger has successfully managed to bring out the best of each partner and to adapt these elements to correspond to his needs. According to Pr Ignar, the management skill of Pr Zeiliger is a positive factor for sustainability.

The participation of the Professor at the Warsaw Agricultural University in Poland as an expert ensured partly the success of the project. As a project expert, he participated in the Project Management Group and in evaluation, monitoring and dissemination activities. Thanks to his experience in cooperating with Eastern universities and his knowledge of the Tempus project, he became a good 'mediator' between the partners. Several of his Polish colleagues were working in Moscow during the Tempus project period, which fostered relations between him and the Russian manager. The partners' interviews showed that the expert contributed to the project on both scientific and managerial level.

Moreover, he played an important role in the communication between the EU and Russian universities. He had sound experience with Tempus projects. The Russian manager noted that the added value brought by an expert is comparable to that of the National Tempus Office that has been set up recently.

Pr Ignar underlined the difficulties that Tempus project coordinators faced in coping with the pressure from the university administrations. It often happens that some members of the administration think that Tempus projects are a good opportunity to get money to buy new state-of-art devices. Thus, during the project, Pr Ignar tried to push forward the educational aspect of Tempus projects.

Indeed, for several persons interviewed the factor of personal commitment is quite important. In particular, one interviewee highlighted the fact that the motivation of the coordinator should not be his own welfare (higher income) but a desire to improve the system for the new generations. As salaries in Tacis countries are not high, however, motivations tend to be easily linked to financial welfare. It is possible to determine the motivations behind a project proposal by evaluating the project's level of consistency and by establishing whether the proposal was motivated by a lack of funds.

What kind of tools can be used to reinforce sustainability?

An element of good practice present in this project was the use of an external mediator (the Polish expert) between Western and Eastern European universities, to facilitate mutual understanding.

The members of the Eastern European project team might require language training in the project language before the start of the project and during its implementation.

Case Tempus CD-21171 (Tacis)

Tempus Project Tacis region CD-JEP No 21171

Restructuring higher education environmental teaching & training at Tyumen State University

Description of project

Project title: Restructuring HE environmental teaching & training at Tyumen State University

Years: 2001 – 2003 (selection: 2000; PR4: 8/2004)

Budget: €c481 549 (information from TSU website); €202 436 (PR4)

Actors:

- *Partner country:* Russia (RU), University of Tyumen
- *Partners:* Albert-Ludwigs-Universität, Germany; Mikkeli Polytechnic, Finland; University of Wolverhampton (UW), United Kingdom

Objectives:

Development and internationalisation of environmental teaching programmes at the Ecology and Geography Faculty of the University of Tyumen (TSU)

Activities:

Student and university staff exchanges; development of a course centre (specialisation: environment)

Final assessment of the Commission:

'Very good', with a high degree of sustainability for the programmes established

Persons contacted:

- Mrs Anne Wheeler, University of Wolverhampton (UW), United Kingdom, project partner
- Galina Telegina, University of Tyumen (TSU), Russia
- Mrs O. Oleynikova, NTO Russia

Documents consulted:

- PR 1 to 4 Monitoring Content Project File
- PR 4 Full Progress Report
- Websites
TSU: <http://www.utmn.ru/english/projects.shtml>
UW: http://www.wlv.ac.uk/science/environment/env_tr_tyumen/

Thanks are due to the persons contacted for their cooperation.

Executive summary

- To help achieve the aim of restructuring and modernising university teaching and vocational training in the environmental field, the University of Tyumen (TSU) set up a specialised training centre. The project succeeded by virtue, in particular, of the support of a British university, with which TSU had already undertaken several cooperation projects. A Finnish university, a German university and to a lesser extent a Hungarian university also took part in the project, sharing their experience in the field and providing expert assistance for specific aspects.
- The Centre obtained official recognition in 2002 and a number of courses have been accredited. Russian academics have visited European universities. There have also been student exchanges. The Centre has in addition offered its resources to other TSU faculties. Finally, various forms of training have been organised for those working in the field. The overall assessment is highly positive and the outcomes can currently be deemed sustainable.
- The first sustainability factor is the Centre's effective response to a real need. This factor is underlined by the fact that commercial and industrial undertakings are involved in the Centre's activities. The training courses provided for these undertakings provide a firm source of funding favourable to the Centre's continued existence and development.
- Another important factor was the institutional support obtained. However, the position and contacts of the project director were not the only elements that facilitated securing this support; the fact that the decision-makers were invited to participate from the start of the project also contributed substantially in this respect.
- Finally, the project benefited significantly from prior experience with university cooperation projects (in particular, Tempus). These earlier projects were closely linked to the University's International Centre, which provides language training. The Centre contributed substantially not only to the project design but also to its implementation. On the one hand, the financial aspects of the project were entirely managed by the directors of the language centre, while on the other hand, the involvement of academics with a perfect grasp of European languages mitigated (and is still mitigating) the lack of international experience of the members of the University's Environment Department.

A project that mobilised a large number of local and international actors

A sector in need of development: the environment

The aim of the project was the restructuring of university teaching and vocational training in the environmental field within TSU⁶. In particular, the University wished to set up a centre specialising in environmental training – namely, the Ecology Education Centre (EEC), officially called the Environmental Training Unit (ETU), but still known as the Environmental Training Centre (ETC).

As the Russian NTO⁷ coordinator points out, environmental sciences in the broad sense of the term (management of natural resources and ecology) had remained relatively undeveloped in the past, even though this field has assumed crucial importance in Russia in the last few years. The issue is particularly important given that the university responsible for the project is located in a fairly remote region of Siberia (the Federal District of Siberia is situated between Lake Baikal and the Urals). The training centre developed is one of only two of its kind outside Moscow.

The project is substantially concerned with the management of natural resources and hence with the industries operating in this sector (gas and oil). The project was initially directed towards academic needs, but with an eventual orientation towards commercial and industrial undertakings, by providing vocational training and involving them in the identification of training needs.

The proposed objectives were as follows (as listed in the initial contract):

1. Development of a university specialisation
2. Training of teaching staff of the Faculty of Geography and Ecology (at TSU)
3. Development of Technology Supported Learning
4. Development of an Environmental Training Unit (ETU)
5. Exchange programme for students from the consortium universities
6. Dissemination of project outcomes

⁶ Tyumen State University.

⁷ National Tempus Office.

Activities specific to a curriculum development project

The following activities were undertaken:

- 1.1 Curriculum development workshops
- 1.2 Production of course material for the curriculum
- 1.3 Validation and accreditation of the curriculum

The following were also included:

- 2.1 Language preparation at TSU
- 2.2 TSU staff training by the European partners
- 2.3 Student mobility exchanges
- 2.4 Modernisation of the Faculty's teaching equipment
- 2.5 Introduction of environmental computing into the new curriculum
- 2.6 Establishment of an Environmental Training Unit within the Faculty

The activities thus fall into three main groups:

- Development of a new university specialisation
- Establishment of an Environmental Training Unit under the auspices of the Ecology and Geography Faculty
- Student exchanges

Tyumen University's determinedly international orientation

The initiative for the project came from the University of Tyumen (TSU). Dating from 1973, TSU is the only university in Tyumen District and has branches in 12 northern cities. In the throes of development, it has more than 15 000 students, mainly studying technological subjects, and has a tradition of engaging in cooperation projects. For instance, the TSU website states that over the last years the university has taken part in two Tacis European projects and six Tempus projects (four of which are initiated by the International linguistic centre and two by the International office). The website briefly describes these six Tempus projects, which were implemented after 1999. It demonstrates the dynamism that accrued from the first university cooperation project, which comprised the establishment of the 'International Linguistic Centre' (ILC). The introduction to the project under review states

that the application to the European Commission was made in partnership with the ILC. Again, the project objective was to establish a teaching unit (the Ecological Training Centre, or ETC) similar to the ILC.

As the following quotation from the TSU website shows, the University has an international orientation: 'The University began looking for international links after 1988. Since that time a lot has been achieved. The university takes part in Tempus and Tacis international programs of the European Union. It has partnerships with over twenty foreign Higher Education Institutions in science and education. At present there are six main partners: Lakehead University in Canada; Wolverhampton University in the United Kingdom; Laeneburg and Osnabrück Universities in Germany; Dalian University in China and the Institut d'Etudes Politiques in Rennes, France.'

With regard to the project under review, TSU staff asked the University of Wolverhampton (UW) whether its environmental training staff were prepared to devote themselves to a development project to be supported by the Tempus programme. It should be noted that three Tempus projects relating to the ILC have been implemented in partnership with the British university. It therefore seems that the two universities were well acquainted with each other before the commencement of the project. Through the ILC, TSU also had experience of partnership with Germany (the University of Essen).

The United Kingdom in charge

Hence the European university in charge of the project was UW (United Kingdom). It already had some years of experience of cooperation with TSU, in particular in Tempus projects (see above). Within the British team, one university teacher assumed the function of contractor. Members of UW also dealt with administration in the day-to-day implementation of the project. By virtue of its experience with international university cooperation and the specific field of the project, the British team also acted as Tempus coordinator.

However, a 'Tempus Steering Group' was established so as to involve the other countries. It comprised one member from each partner university (German, Finnish and British) and the representative of TSU. The TSU representative was the Dean of the Faculty of Ecology and Geography, who was assisted with the day-to-day management of the project by a colleague who provided vital linguistic support notwithstanding lack of familiarity with geography and ecology. The Dean also had valuable contacts with the Ministry of Education.

Finally, the University of Nyíregyháza (Hungary) provided a European expert on sustainable development in education and local government. This university had had close relations with the British university for many years. Its contribution to the project was funded from its own resources and centred on participation in workshops and certain conferences.

Anticipated sustainability in terms of project outcomes and effects

The issue of anticipated sustainability is addressed in the application file in terms of the project's long-term outcomes and effects rather than of the permanence of the relationships forged and of the activities undertaken during the period of the project.

One of the rare references to sustainability (proper) is as follows: 'In post-JEP years the ETU will be able to offer training courses at "full-cost" to industry and organisations in the region.'

A successful project

The overall assessment of the project's implementation is very positive. The participants and the organisers – in particular, the Steering Committee (including the European partners) – unanimously consider that the project has been a success, as this extract from the Last Progress Report shows: 'All of the activities connected with the project have been fulfilled and the objectives of the project overall have been achieved.'

The Centre obtained official Ministry recognition in 2002 and several of its courses have been accredited. The European students who spent time in Russia have obtained certification from their own universities: participants were awarded 7.5 ECTS points and a work placement certificate – a successful outcome indeed.

The project nevertheless had to be extended by two months for correct preparation of the finalisation phase. The British and Russian universities underwent an internal audit (by the quality assurance agency in the case of the British university) in the last year of the project, resulting in delays to the final activities proposed. The extension was accepted by the European Commission. It enabled the finalisation phase of the project to be continued and afforded a better view of the future of its activities, as well as providing a basis for contemplating other Tempus projects in related fields.

The British representative points out that the ETF manager assigned to the project was extremely supportive in a number of respects – in particular, financial matters (elements that could not be covered by the original budget were finally accepted) and issues concerning the relevance of certain aspects (a meeting was held with him about the dissemination conference at Irkutsk).

Active communication

Communication activity was pursued vigorously, resulting, in particular, in a good audience for the Russian Centre's courses. The local media took a particular interest in the project. A website set up by the British participants presented the results of the work carried out during the course of the project. Finally, conferences designed to generate awareness of the project provided an opportunity for other Russian universities (e.g. Irkutsk) to familiarise themselves with it.

Effective cooperation

According to the British coordinator, the Finnish and German universities performed their functions perfectly. They passed on the fruits of their experience in the field and took an active part in the workshops. There were no student trips to these two countries. However, some members of the Russian team were able to meet the teaching staff and visit the campuses of these universities. Finally, the project coordinators in these universities participated fully in the dissemination activities (in the city of Irkutsk).

Excellent participation by all actors at TSU

Note too that all members of the universities involved in the project displayed great motivation. On the Russian side, interest in the use of modern technology tools made for personal investment on the part of the various actors.

For instance, the ILC worked closely together with the Russian coordinator. The Linguistic Centre proved very useful: in addition to its experience in the management of Tempus projects, it provided language training for exchange programme participants, a translation service at conferences of the partner universities, translation of part of the training material developed, etc. In general terms, the Centre played an important part in communication between the British university and TSU. Finally, all equipment orders, and hence a major part of the financial aspect of the project, were managed by the ILC.

A Centre assured of continued existence

A sustainable Centre

The Last Progress Report had also taken a very positive view of the Centre's Sustainability: 'the sustainable future of the centre appears to be assured and is certainly very positive' – and this seemed to be borne out by our case study.

The general conclusion that can be drawn from our meetings is that the Rector is supporting the project in a very positive manner. The University has provided the resources necessary for the operation of the Training Centre. In particular, a full-time deputy director has been assigned to the Centre to supervise its operation, and it does not seem to be experiencing any particular financial difficulty.

Furthermore, the Centre has met with a very successful response from students. The number of certificates issued by the Centre is another positive indicator of its sustainability, rising from 130 in the last progress report to 720 in June 2005 – a true measure of the Centre's success with students.

Finally, the Centre offers a range of activities, which provide it with a certain degree of autonomy and good prospects of survival. For instance, its activities include university

training on environmental matters, the provision of training services for natural resources specialists in local commercial and industrial undertakings and the provision of various forms of information (environmental data, an introduction to possible training courses in the field, etc.). This comprehensive range of activities demonstrates the dynamism of the young institution.

Again, a number of commercial and industrial undertakings have approached the Centre for specific training needs. Many of these undertakings belong to the petroleum sector. For instance, TNK BP (Tyumen Oil Company) commissioned a seminar on natural resources, while the Siberian Oil Company sent 27 of its staff on a seminar on environmental risks and natural resources. A municipality in the south of Tyumen Region despatched 35 staff members for training in water-based management systems. Such training events are an important source of funding.

Ongoing cooperation at a number of levels

The Centre began by forging close links with commercial and industrial undertakings and local and national actors in the environmental field, as stated in the 'Report on the Activity of the TSU Ecology Education Centre': 'The Centre develops strong scientific links with international companies working in ecology and technology spheres. Within the framework of the international project Tempus in Aug. 2003 a coordinative meeting of project top managers from four countries (GB, DE, HU, FI) took place. The further development of the project in cooperation with Irkutsk University and Geography Institution of Russian Scientific Academy was discussed.'

With regard to the relations between the project universities, a TSU representative was invited by the British partner in July 2005 to discuss the initiation of a new project with the same partners as those of the project under review. It will probably concern new information and communication technologies (NICTs). Action is proposed on a wider organisational level ('institution-wide work'). Links are also maintained with the Finnish university, while the relationship with the German university concentrates on research. The teaching staff maintains good contacts with each other (e.g. through invitations to their respective conferences).

This project, then, has kindled a desire in the Russian coordinator to continue with international cooperation. For instance, TSU intends to institute a new project with the University of Avignon on a subject which, while still having a geographical and environmental element, will be predominantly touristic in nature. The Russian coordinator is very interested in this subject, but so far there have been only limited contacts.

To conclude, these relationships between universities (and not only between individuals) seem to be quite firmly established. For example, the Rector of TSU has invited the partner universities to join in the celebration of TSU's 75th anniversary next September.

Sustainability guaranteed by financial solutions based on local and university support

Good anticipation of funding...

UW's website includes the following comment, which illustrates the actors' awareness of the importance of alternative financial resources: 'Sustainable development of the ETC is fundamentally linked to the development of a business and financial plan, setting of targets and measuring outcomes. The ETC will continue to develop training courses (applied to regional needs) to run as fully or partly funded short courses and workshops for employees of the city and regional government, and commercial enterprises (including those related to the oil and gas industries).'

The Centre has thus taken full advantage of the resources from services offered to commercial and industrial undertakings (i.e. specific training courses), as the following extract from the report on the activity of TSU Ecology Education Centre shows: 'Being given a good account on the educational accommodation market, the Centre got 1,3M rubles from regional companies in 2003 (376 K rubles grant-in-aid budgetary).'

All this is indicative of the project managers' good provision for the post-Tempus period, in the context of a strategy that appears to be bearing fruit.

... bound up with the response to a real need, thus stimulating local support

This diversification of funding would probably not have come about without the support of local economic and public-sector actors, which shows that the project is satisfying local- or regional-level training needs.

The project, then, has obtained specific local political support. Local government members were invited to dissemination events from the beginning. Local government not only conferred official status on the training schemes developed but also gave a boost to the project when it began: a large number of officials of the regional administration were required to undergo the training provided under the project.

Commercial and industrial undertakings also played an important part by recognising the Centre as a high-quality training facility. This recognition took the form of participation in the training given by the Centre. These paid-for training courses made for significant development of the Centre.

This is confirmed by the following extract from the Last Progress Report: 'Probably the most satisfying aspect of the project has been the success of the ETU, which has been facilitated by the hard work and commitment of the centre staff, the support of the Rector and regional governor, and the demand in the region for environmental courses.' Another indication of the relevance of the response to the needs identifiable in the region is the interest shown by local undertakings and organisations.

Finally, the Centre appears fully to meet student expectations, as the increasing number of certificates issued shows.

Effective support from the University

In addition to the support of local economic and political actors, significant backing was forthcoming from Tyumen University itself. The project was well supported by both the University and its Rector. This was particularly important at the beginning of the project, when the Rector advised on the approach to be adopted.

Hence a positive element in the sustainability of the project was the invitation of senior university and political figures to the dissemination conferences. In particular, the involvement of the University Rector from the beginning of the project provided it with institutional influence which facilitated links with local government officials.

A final element was the profit derived by the Centre from the mutualisation of international experience at the Russian university based on prior experience of university cooperation projects (in particular, Tempus). These earlier projects were closely bound up with the University's International Centre, which provides language training. The International Centre also contributed substantially to the project under review, not only at the design stage but also during its implementation.

Possible tools for enhancing the sustainability of such projects

The diversification of resources of a training centre could be seen from the beginning of the project as an objective directed towards achieving a degree of sustainability. For instance, the project coordinator could contemplate the possibility of lobbying local firms and local administrative authorities, rather than just seeking students.

The efforts to involve other faculties of one and the same university in the provision of both administrative and linguistic assistance could perhaps be accorded best-practice status.

Case Tempus UM-22130 (Tacis)

Tempus Project

Tacis region

UM-JEP No 22130

Ural State University of Railway Transport (USURT) Career Resource Centre

Description of project

**Project title: Ural State University of Railway Transport (USURT)
Career Resource Centre**

Years: 2001/02 – 2003/04 (selection: 2001; PR3: 6/2004)

Budget: €c276 000 (€c47 000 partner funding)

Actors:

- *Target countries:* Russia (RU), Ural State University of Railway Transport
- *European partners:* United Kingdom, Wales Lampeter; Sweden, University of Lund

Objectives:

Meeting demand from local and international employers to facilitate student employment after graduation by providing students with job-seeking competence and developing their employability

Activities:

Establishment of a Career Resource Centre in two years, to help students and young graduates develop their employability:

- Setting of strategic and operational objectives for the Centre
- Training of Centre staff, organisation and opening

Final assessment of the Commission:

'Very good', sustainability 'promising'.

Persons contacted:

- Mrs Yelena Ershova, USURT
- Mr Boris Gotlib, USURT
- Mrs O. Oleynikova, NTO Russia
- Eva Ericsson, Lund University

Documents consulted:

- PR 1 to 3 Monitoring Content Project Sheet
- PR 3 Progress Report
- Websites
USURT site: <http://www.usurt.ru/>
Local BEST association site: <http://www.best.usart.ru/>

Thanks are due to the persons contacted for their cooperation.

Executive summary

- The overall objective of the USURT Career Resource Centre project was to provide students and young graduates with a modern vocational guidance and information centre. In collaboration with a British and a Swedish university and in partnership with other local universities, USURT sought to meet the urgent demand for preparing students for integration in the labour market, which is a particularly acute problem in the Urals.
- The Centre was opened in March 2003 and enjoys firm institutional support (from both the University and government). The Centre is well attended by students and its services are constantly developing. However, the long-term attractiveness of such a Centre to recruiting employers remains to be confirmed. Even so, the project already seems sustainable on several levels.
- To ensure the success of the project, which is almost unique in the region, its directors quickly succeeded in involving the institutional decision-makers at both university and political level. For this purpose, at the very beginning they invited the various decision-makers and impressed on them how valuable such a project would be for the region. Again, by offering paid-for services to the staff of various commercial and industrial undertakings or organisations, the Centre assured itself of a useful source of income while at the same time maintaining contact with potential employers. Another good practice was to involve students in the activities of the Centre by establishing an international student association.

Forging local partnerships as a primary aim of the project

Helping students to find jobs

The overall objective of the project was to establish a Career Resource Centre (CRC) for students in training and young graduates at USURT within two years. In addition to the initial design stage, the project fell into three phases: procurement of the equipment required to establish the Centre; training of Centre staff; and development of the Centre's own activities.

According to the application file, the Centre was to comprise a computer room, language learning facilities, a human resources centre, a business centre, a vocational guidance centre and a lecture room. These rooms and facilities were intended to facilitate the forging of links with local and international organisations, and the ultimate purpose of the Centre was to help young graduates find jobs.

The situation of young graduates in the Ekaterinburg region was a matter of concern in 2000. Only 50% of Ural State University graduates had an employment contract six months after graduation. Although 60% of graduates of the Ural State University of

Railway Transport (USURT) were engaged by the Russian Railways – the University had 11 000 students in 2000 – 40% were left to their own devices, in the absence of any vocational guidance structure to help them find jobs. The application file identifies three factors limiting the access of young graduates to the world of work. The first is the students' lack of experience in seeking work (presentation and drafting of CVs); the second is that many students lack the skills that would have made them immediately employable (language skills, familiarity with computing in an office environment, and so on). Finally, female students are manifestly at a disadvantage compared with their male counterparts.

The Centre thus aspires to help students to overcome these three obstacles where necessary, while interfacing with job providers to facilitate students' access to the world of work.

It is pointed out that the Centre was established in the middle of an extension programme for USURT, which planned a significant increase in size for 2006. Hence the allocation of resources to the Centre is closely bound up with this aspiration to grow.

A partnership of three universities only

The project was to be implemented by a consortium comprising a Russian team from USURT, specialists from the Employability Unit of the University of Wales Lampeter (UK) and, lastly, a team from the University of Halmstad (SE). After the project began, Halmstad withdrew from the project organisation group and was replaced by the University of Lund (SE). However, the university did receive a visit from a Russian delegation to its vocational guidance centre, and was invited to take part in the final dissemination conference.

According to the application file, the University of Wales Lampeter, which has an effective Employability Unit, was responsible for training and other aspects calling for specific expertise relevant to the establishment of the Centre. The particular function of the Swedish university was to develop international links.

As for USURT itself, it already had some experience of international contacts. It has had contacts with the International Civil Service since 1995 and with the United States Peace Corps since 1996 (Americans come to the University to teach English). There is also some contact with a Chinese university. In addition, USURT is in touch with the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland (UK). Lastly, it is the only Russian university to be a member of the Board of European Students of Technology (BEST). To support this student association, USURT has joined with the Ural State Technical University, with which it has close links. Cultural exchanges have been arranged through BEST with European Union students (in particular, from the Universities of Liège and Stockholm). Again, 20 European students took an intensive Russian course at USURT.

Promising sustainability

As this extract from PR1 shows, sustainability was promising from the beginning: 'This project contributes to the Youth Strategy of the Regional Government and its contribution is referred to in the recently published "Youth of Russia Federal Programme 2002-2006" document. First meetings with local authorities and support of the senior management of the university demonstrate the commitment and backing of the project [...]. There is a lot of interest locally and sustainability seems promising.'

Openness to the local and national environment

The Centre was officially opened in March 2003 and all intended project activities were implemented.

Particular attention was devoted to the involvement of Russian partners at various levels:

- During the course of the project, academics from the Omsk and Samara State Universities of Railway Transport were invited to take part in various events (training, seminars, dissemination conference, etc.).
- Senior figures from various institutions were invited to take part in meetings, training courses or dissemination conferences. They included representatives of the following: the Ministry of Foreign Economic Affairs and International Relations (Deputy Minister); the Ministry of Education; the Youth Affairs Department of Sverdlovsk Region (Director); the Youth Labour Exchange (Director, organisation and chairmanship at the workshop concerned with employment in the region, held on 19 September 2003); Sverdlovsk Railways; the Federal Department of Employment; and others.
- The participation of the Federal Department of Employment and its support for the project were particularly significant. In addition to visits to the various project events, Department specialists held training seminars and workshops on the subject-matter of the project. These events included 'organisation of students' job search', September 2003; participation with stands in the Career Days in November 2003; seminars on business ethics, employment technologies, writing résumés/covering letters, and a modern labour market review, in February-March 2004.

The Centre is holding its own and developing

Continuation and development of the Centre's activities

The main activity of the Centre is to provide courses (in particular, language courses) for various target groups (students, graduates and certain members of the teaching staff). The Centre was assisted by a Belgian expatriate teacher who taught French and English. An American is still currently teaching English and holding seminars on job-seeking (courses on CV drafting, etc.). The Centre is gratifyingly well used by students (500-700 a year).

The Centre also collects and disseminates information. A website with a job-seeking database has been established, and is frequently used by students seeking work and by some recruiting undertakings. The site also endeavours to maintain an alumni database.

Lastly, the Centre has developed a number of parallel activities:

- The Centre organises special training courses and helps students find summer jobs.
- In the last year of the project, the CRC contemplated establishing a system of continuing training. Short training courses for the staff of commercial and industrial undertakings are currently held at the Centre, in languages, computing and management.

Support from the University and some private funding

The Centre is reliably supported by the University and to our knowledge has no funding concerns. It is run by one full-time manager and one full-time technician; another manager and technician (both part-time); an American expatriate who provides language training and holds specific courses on job-seeking; and a very active student group (through the BEST association, which is accommodated within the Centre). There are four administrative employees, two of them full-time.

The Centre has some resources from the continuing training provided for private-sector staff.

Ongoing local cooperation

The project has helped USURT to establish new links and develop existing ones with other Russian universities, especially in the Urals. USURT has close relations with four other universities in Ekaterinburg (including Ural State Technical University). Senior staff of these universities holds meetings at approximately monthly intervals to discuss such matters as problems of international affairs and the employment of young graduates.

As stated above, academics from the Omsk and Samara State Universities of Railway Transport took part in various events during the course of the project. The outcome of this cooperation was a joint JEP Tempus project undertaken by the three universities entitled 'Mechatronics Curricula: Update and Implementation'. The project is currently at the selection stage.

The Centre has also provided the local representatives of BEST (the Board of European Students of Technology) with an office for the organisation of its activities (contacts with European universities, local-level event organisation and student exchanges). The local BEST association engages mainly in promoting the various forms of complementary training and BEST-organised student exchanges. However, much of its activity involves the organisation of events relating to the jobs market. This makes it all the more important for

the association to forge contacts with local commercial and industrial undertakings and to collate information on jobs at international level. The CRC thus considers: '[we] expect the BEST students to be among the key stakeholders beyond the project, sharing the responsibility for sustainability with the university administration' (Last PR).

Note that international cooperation is continuing through other projects (of the Tempus type), but that the survival of the Centre itself does not depend on this, as it is now operating independently.

A firm basis for sustainability

A number of factors suggest that the project is very likely to be sustainable. These include the contact established with the various institutions involved in the projects, the firm support of the University and the manifest demand in the relevant field.

More precisely, sustainability is especially probable at the initial level of the day-to-day functioning of the Centre that has been established. However, another level crucial to the project's sustainability must not be forgotten. This concerns the overall objective of the project – namely, the achievement of significant improvements to the recruitment process. The first results already appear positive. The University's strategy (forging contact with institutions, commercial and industrial undertakings, etc.) also seems favourable to sustainability in terms of succeeding with the initial objective of the Tempus project. To confirm this impression, we shall have to see whether this success is consolidated and indeed developed during the next few years. What future does the Centre have in regard to the development of lifelong learning?

Sustainability on the basis of institutional support, local networks and multiple sources of funding

Intended integration in a local network in response to the needs of students and economic actors

The first reason why the Centre is likely to be sustainable is that it is seen as useful by students and partners alike. It is attractive in terms of responding to the need for preparation for job-seeking at local level, as well as of generating an awareness of the criteria to be satisfied for an international orientation.

To ensure that commercial and industrial undertakings remain interested in the Centre, negotiations have been conducted with a number of such bodies ('Urals Optical-Mechanical Plant' State Unitary Enterprise; Open Joint-Stock Company PATRA Brewery; Open Joint-Stock Company 'Urals Civil Aviation Plant'; and Joint-Stock Company 'Promelektronika') on the possibility of training specialists in the fields most directly corresponding to their requirements.

The decision to involve commercial and industrial undertakings through continuing training (sometimes together with student training) also proved to be a good way of putting students in touch with these undertakings.

In search of strong institutional support

The particular support of the University was favoured by its aspiration to an international orientation. The BEST association contributed to maintaining this aspiration by demonstrating the benefits of exchanges with European universities.

The involvement of various institutions relevant to the project's field from its inception proved highly favourable to the continuation of the project (e.g. accreditation as a training centre, or individual support).

A major difficulty was to assemble all the senior figures necessary for this stage (government representatives in particular had a very full agenda). One way of making the various events attractive is to demonstrate the potential value of the project to the various actors in the field. For instance, senior academics and government representatives can draw on what they see and hear at these conferences and events (in relation to labour market issues) to formulate strategies for their university or political programmes.

In search of alternative sources of funding

Finally, the on-demand training services offered to commercial and industrial undertakings (in particular, at weekends and during university vacations) constitute an important source of funding for the Centre, ensuring that it remains viable and firmly rooted in local economic reality.

Possible tools for enhancing the sustainability of such projects

The strategies deployed for involving local actors and securing institutional support seem to have borne fruit, having promoted these actors' interest in the project for their own purposes.

The diversification of the Centre's funding is perhaps another sustainability factor that can be transposed to similar projects.

As a final point, the continuation of international cooperation does not appear crucial to projects of this type.

Case Tempus IB-22080 (Tacis)

Tempus Project Tacis region IB-JEP No 22080

Establishment of a national multidisciplinary
continuing training network

Description of project

Establishment of a national multidisciplinary continuing training network

2002-2004

Budget: €c130 090

Actors:

- ENISE (Ecole Nationale d'Ingénieurs de Saint-Etienne)
- UTM (Technical University of Moldova), Chişinău
- CESMECA (Centre d'Etudes Supérieures sur l'Enseignement de la Mécanique), Saint-Ouen
- University of Portsmouth

Objectives:

Development of continuing vocational training by establishing a computerised national network and by training trainers.

Three aspects are involved:

- Establishment of a physical distance-learning network for continuing adult training
- Training Moldovan trainers in continuing adult training (distance-learning and face-to-face)
- Training Moldovan trainers in modern techniques of business management, marketing and quality/certification

Activities:

Year 1: Determination of requirements, visits to sites earmarked for equipment, and installation of the computer hardware proposed for them. Adult-education trainers were also trained at the end of the first year in a three-week course in France. This session was itself preceded by six months' training in French at Chişinău

Year 2: Preparation and conduct of subject-related training for trainers and establishment of training modules for Moldovan undertakings. Holding of initial continuing training sessions for Moldovans working in the sector.

<p>Note: This Tempus project is of type IB (development of structures) but concerns trainer training and the design of continuing training modules (type CD). This was already pointed out in the application file.</p>

NOTE:

Persons contacted:

- Mr C. Pages, ENISE Saint-Etienne, French project coordinator
- Mr V. Arion, Coordinator of the National Tempus Office (NTO) Moldova
- Mrs V. Levcenko, UTM Chişinău, French teacher, member of the continuing training team
- Mr S. Ianciu, UTM Chişinău, Director

Documents consulted:

- Application Form, 1 March 2001
- Monitoring Content Project Sheet; Progress Reports (PR 1 – 26/09/2002, PR 2 – 9/10/2003, PR 3 – 25/10/2004)
- Final Report (30/06/2004)

Thanks are due to the persons contacted for their cooperation and availability.

Executive summary

- The basis of the project is the need to train managers and executives of commercial and industrial undertakings in modern management and industrial quality practices so as to facilitate the economic development of the country; its operational objective is to ensure full utilisation of the service established (IB project) after the Tempus project comes to an end.
- The aim was to use the various project activities to establish a continuing training service and a distance-learning network within the university, with commercial and industrial undertakings as their target group. The intended sustainability is reflected in the computer equipment for this network, for which UTM undertook to meet the installation and maintenance costs.
- The permanence of the continuing training service currently appears to be guaranteed by the work of a team around the Vice-Rector (who is in charge of the project), which is engaged on the operation of the distance-learning network and the development of new courses, as well as being involved in another project with the University of Nancy for the construction of new content.
- Nearly ten years of established contact between UTM and CESMECA has generated a relationship of trust between these partners and seems to have both encouraged the dedicated involvement of local actors and facilitated recognition by the academic authorities (one of whom is the project director) and government for a project important to the country's economic development.

An effectively structured project designed to meet the economic needs of the country

A project constituting a specific response to Moldova's economic development needs

In view of the country's need for development and adaptation of its industry and agriculture and to facilitate future exports of its products, Moldova must train its managers and executives in modern management and industrial quality practices.

In the absence of any system of continuing training (since independence from the Soviet system), this called for the establishment of a national continuing training network. For this reason, the Tempus project under review was intended to provide for the development of such a network, coordinated by the country's only technical university, UTM (Chişinău), together with the schools located in small Moldovan towns (equivalent to the French IUT technology schools).

Hence the main components of the project were the establishment of an organised continuing training structure within UTM, the provision of computer hardware usable for

distance-learning in this network, and the training of trainers (both academic and subject-related).

A project structured around four operational objectives

The Final Report gives details of the achievement of the following four operational objectives:

- Establishment of a modern operational computerised network for adult training and advanced training. The requirement was to provide a modern training infrastructure for adults linking UTM with the schools in the country's main towns. Four higher education establishments were equipped in this way.
- Training of Moldovan trainers-to-be in adult continuing training. This training was concerned with the establishment of training courses, and the use of new teaching methods and new technical media. Some 24 trainers underwent training in these fields over a three-week period in France in July 2003.
- Subject-related training of trainers-to-be in aspects of quality, marketing and industrial management, computing (use of the distance-learning platform) and establishment of training modules in these subjects for Moldovan undertakings. An initial session of these training courses was held before the end of the project in the presence of the consortium partners.
- Training of Moldovan trainers-to-be in the French language prior to the three-week trainers' training session at Saint-Etienne in July 2002, and continuation of cooperation in the future; the 24 trainers who came to France in July 2003 had received this prior training.

Success over and above the project objectives due to strictly controlled, effective management

A precise management system with a clear division of functions between three individuals (two Moldovans and one from ENICE) was established and culminated in outcomes that surpassed expectations.

Four permanent training centres were equipped, whereas the project had provided for only three. Again, 30 trainers were trained (24 of them spending three weeks in France), whereas the original project had provided for only 17.

By virtue of these project outcomes, the team of 20 trainers established in Moldova in a permanent continuing training structure was able to programme three-day training modules in the fields of industrial quality, industrial management, industrial marketing and computing for the year 2004/05 following the end of the Tempus project.

Generation of additional initiatives not provided for in the Tempus project

In addition to the planned elements of the Tempus project, the collaboration between the consortium members gave rise to a number of initiatives favourable to its enlargement and extension – namely:

- Collaboration between UTM, ENISE and Portsmouth University on co-tutored theses and advance training courses
- Proposal by the French Embassy's Cultural Counsellor for the funding of fresh activities in the field of continuing training
- Drafting of legislation on continuing training (in progress)

Ongoing promotion of the Tempus project and dissemination of its outcomes

The final project report describes various project communication initiatives undertaken between 2002 and 2004, involving the media, congresses (four colloquia or congresses are mentioned), meetings of academic bodies (the UTM Senate) and one-day French language events organised by the Alliance Française in 2004.

Establishment of a permanent continuing training service at the University based on a distance-learning network

The project ended with the holding of the first training sessions in the new modules, which were observed by the French and British partners on their last mission in Chişinău. This confirmed the satisfactory establishment of the computerised network, which was operational. Some of the training modules developed during the course of the project were complete and used in a training session, while others were still at the detailed planning stage.

Since the end of the project, email exchanges with the Moldovan partners have not indicated the extent to which training activities have continued.

The new Tempus project subsequently presented was not accepted, and the relationship between ENISE and the University of Chişinău seems after one year to have become looser. ENISE is currently concerned to establish co-tutored thesis projects for UTM students.

The continuing training service features on the UTM Chişinău website and gives contact information for five people, headed by Mr Amariei.

This service, which was established during the Tempus project, is currently operational and developing new courses.

The **computerised network** linking UTM with schools appears to be currently operational, except for two schools (Hîncești and Bălți) and the State University of Cahul, which do not yet have an Internet connection.

The **online courses** now available on the distance-learning network cover the following subjects: organisational management; marketing; quality systems; quality metrology; the ISO-9000 standards; how to become a manager; PHP-MYSQL; and AutoCAD.

Of the new courses mentioned, a written French language module prepared by a team of 26 French-speaking persons including UTM students, teachers and co-workers is to be made available to schoolchildren, students and teachers throughout the Republic.

This course on the distance-learning platform was presented during the one-day French language event in the Republic of Moldova on 28 March 2005.

The **draft law** on continuing training was forwarded by UTM's Vice-Rector, Mr Amariei, who is in charge of the project, to the Moldovan Ministry of Education, and has recently been adopted by Parliament.

The UTM continuing training service is also involved in a **new Tempus project** with the University of Nancy and Romania, for the development of new training module content. A seminar on this project was held recently in Romania.

For the academic year 2006/07, the Technical University proposes to join with three faculties in the development of an initial distance-learning training course for first-year students living in country areas.

Trust resulting from earlier cooperation projects with the French partner as a factor making for dedicated involvement of local actors and for official recognition

Prior acquaintance and mutual trust between the consortium partners as an element in the success of the project and its possible extensions

This Tempus project was established following earlier collaboration between UTM and its Vice-Rector, Mr Amariei, and CESMECA, and it was facilitated by funding from the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The collaboration allowed the French project director at ENISE to give lectures in Moldova. The CESMECA director was already known locally, as he had organised training for nearly 260 executives, engineers and technicians since 1993. The Moldovan project coordinator had previously visited him for a one-month study course on the French continuing training legislation, after which he submitted a report to the Moldovan Prime Minister.

A cooperation agreement was concluded on the UTM-CESMECA collaboration.

The prior familiarity with Moldova of the CESMECA director, who was appointed an Honorary Senator of UTM in 1999 at the beginning of the project, was a particular catalyst in the formulation of realistic project objectives, which were ultimately exceeded.

A project whose objectives included the establishment of sustainable structures based on UTM's local commitment

This Tempus project provided for the installation of a computer network as a platform for training on the basis of distance-learning, which remains operational even after funding has come to an end by virtue of the commitment of UTM and the training of its trainers:

- The equipment funded from Tempus resources was installed at various sites at UTM expense, UTM having in particular provided, as items not included in the Tempus budget, specific workrooms and, for example, the necessary security systems (alarms, etc.). UTM's commitment extended also to equipment maintenance.
- Under the trainer training programme, training was given to 30 people in the following three categories: schoolteachers, university teachers and industrial-sector personnel. These trainers committed themselves to providing training over a five-year period.

The establishment of an organisation structured around the UTM coordinator (the Vice-Rector) was another factor intended to ensure the sustainability of the new continuing training function. The provision of this permanent continuing training structure is stated in Progress Report 3 to be the project's most important outcome.

Involvement of the project's voluntary beneficiaries (trainers undergoing training), chosen mainly by the Moldovan coordinator

In the view of the French coordinator, the success of the project and its prospects of continuation are bound up in particular with the choice of immediate beneficiaries of the project – specifically, trainers undergoing training – most of whom were chosen by the project coordinator for their motivation (only four or five of those involved appear to have been 'not chosen'). Some 80% of participants were deemed highly involved – particularly the women, according to Mr Pages.

Recognition and national support from the authorities partly secured even before the project began

The project enjoyed the direct support of the staff of the University of Chişinău (for which the Moldovan project coordinator worked) and its Rector, who, as the Rector of the country's only university, had direct high-level links with the Moldovan State and Ministry of Education.

Following the recognition by the Moldovan Ministry of National Education of the work carried out during the project, ENISE was asked to act as the coordinator of a new Bologna Process Tempus project for the homogenisation of the higher education system in Europe with the consortium set up for the first Tempus. Owing to lack of experience in the compilation of Tempus files, the second project was not accepted because the wrong application forms were used.

Particular emphasis is placed on the commitment of the Moldovan institutions (the CCI, the Ministry of Industry and UTM) to the project as a factor in its success and sustainability.

Efforts to disseminate information about the project during its lifetime

The implementation of the various project components was accompanied by efforts to make contact with other local partners interested in its development; the Ministry of Industry and the CCI (one of whose members took part in the trainer training programme), in particular, were contacted and new projects were initiated with them (continuing training in a COCOP project with the Alliance Française, a UTM/ENISE co-tutored thesis project and a course at Portsmouth University with a British Council grant).

There was also an ongoing programme of dissemination of information about the project content during the two years of its lifetime.

In search of appropriate follow-up funding for the continuation of activities after the Tempus project

UTM's Continuing Training Department submitted in 2005 a project proposal entitled 'Support for continuing training in human resources management in the Republic of Moldova' to the Cultural and Technical Cooperation Service of the French Embassy in Moldova, as a project under the auspices of France's Cooperation, Guidance and Projects Committee (COCOP).

The proposal was not accepted because UTM's proposed contribution to the cost was insignificant (only €3000 out of a total of €18 000).

A new Tempus project, 'Establishment of an inter-university communication network', is being designed and will be submitted in September 2005.

In search of partnership with local economic entities

The search for local contacts for the project culminated, in particular, in a partnership agreement between UTM and the CCI, with the aim of allowing the CCI to use the new distance-learning computer system.

Possible tools for enhancing the sustainability of such projects

Allocation of funding for maintaining contacts after the end of the project

A post-Tempus project follow-up budget is essential to allow direct contacts to be maintained through exchanges of senior staff, as these contacts might otherwise be diluted in the absence of a fresh project following on immediately from the first.

Whereas the permanence of the activities established locally during the period of the Tempus project can be ensured from local resources, thus providing for the sustainability of the project, continuation of direct relations between the partners will be more difficult without specific funding.

Case Tempus CD⁸-15085 (CARDS)

Tempus Project CARDS region CD-JEP No 15085

Communicative Competence in Language Pluralistic Environment

Description of project

Communicative Competence in Language Pluralistic Environment

10/2001 – 11/2003

Budget: Tempus funding, €250 000

Actors:

19, as follows:

- Universities of Zagreb and Vienna (coordinators)
- Universities in Spain (Basque Country), Italy (Trieste and subsequently Sardinia), universities in Hungary (Szeged and Pécs), a university in Slovenia (Ljubljana), and two universities and ten primary schools in Croatia

Objectives:

To design a language course curriculum involving communicative competence for teachers and trainee teachers

⁸ This Tempus project was funded as a type CD project, although, since it was targeted at schoolteachers, it was more akin to a type UM project.

Activities:

- Examination of existing language courses
- Design of new courses and educational supporting material and publications
- Training workshops and dissemination of the new supporting material

Final assessment of the Commission:

'Very good'

Persons contacted:

- Mrs Rita Szettele, Tempus manager, ETF
- Mrs Melita Kovačević, Assistant Professor, project coordinator, Zagreb, Croatia
- Mr Jasone Cenoz, University of the Basque Country, Spain, project partner
- Professor Wolfgang Dressler, University of Vienna, project contractor
- Mrs Derenčinović, NTO Croatia

Documents consulted:

- Tempus Proposal
- Expert Assessment Sheet
- Progress Report 1
- Progress Report 2
- Last Progress Report

Thanks are due to the persons contacted for their cooperation and availability.

Executive summary

- This project mobilised a number of actors (19 partners) around a Croatian coordinator who in turn mobilised her local and international networks. In this way, primary schools (the end-users) were associated with the project, which concerns the modernisation of language teaching in Croatia. Activities continued for two years and yielded good-quality publications that have been widely disseminated.
- Even though activities are now at an end, their effect is ongoing, as the new tools seem to be relatively well used in schools. International and local cooperation has continued around the Croatian coordinator through a new Tempus project and research projects.
- The two main sustainability factors are the existence of official support, essentially in terms of communication and resulting from lobbying by the project actors, as well as the genuine involvement of the project actors, including the end-users (schools). This involvement is attributable to the motivation of the Croats, who are the driving force behind the project, and the familiarity of the actors with each other prior to the project.

Note: This Tempus project was funded as a type CD project, although, since it was targeted at schoolteachers, it was more akin to a type UM project.

A project that mobilised a large number of actors

The desire to modernise language teaching in Croatia

This ambitious project was directed towards the development and modernisation of language teaching methods in Croatia, a multicultural and multilingual country in which Croat (with many dialects), Slovene, Hungarian, Italian and German are spoken. Such projects are necessary on account of the difficulties experienced by primary school teachers in dealing with the pupils' various dialects and mother tongues, which do not always coincide with standard Croat as taught.

The Tempus application file states that language teaching in Croatia follows traditional methods, and is based essentially on grammar and literature, with little attention to communicative competence. The project was therefore intended to accompany thorough changes in language teaching at school. It is therefore difficult for the various dialects and idioms to be introduced in Croat teaching.

The project originated with the Croats, who even undertook their own selection of foreign partners on the basis of prior professional contacts.

A consortium with a very large number of partners

The first point to be noted is the exceptionally large size of the consortium, which comprised 19 institutions and a total of more than 60 members.

A second noteworthy feature is that the consortium included universities and primary schools located throughout the territory of Croatia, representing different dialects and particularities of language.

Lastly, in terms of the academics involved, the project was multidisciplinary, including as it did linguists, experts in the Croat language, psychologists and educationalists from a range of different countries (Croatia, Spain, Italy, Hungary and Slovenia) according to their skills.

The University of Split joined the consortium in August 2001 in order to achieve a national-scale impact, together with two other Croatian universities accustomed to working with minorities (Rijeka and the Hungarian and German-speaking minorities). The NTO in Croatia often invites several universities in the country to associate themselves with such projects so as not to restrict the progress achieved to Zagreb, which has a dynamic university.

One European partner changed during the second year, the University of Trieste being replaced by the University of Sassari, because 'the responsible contact person changed' and the University was no longer sufficiently involved.

Activity over a two-year period

YEAR 1

First few months: analysis of existing language teaching syllabuses and the need to improve them, as well as exchanges of teachers and experts. An Austrian Ph. D. student was in charge of the project administration, her post being partly funded by the project.

YEAR 2

A new communicative competence course was constructed and tested. The involvement of experts from accession countries (Hungary and Slovenia) was deemed very useful (PR2).

The first training seminars were held at the beginning of the second year (autumn 2002).

Information sheets, books and a dictionary were published and a final conference was held.

Some administrative difficulties experienced in implementation

A few difficulties were experienced with the implementation of the project, due to communication and harmonisation problems between faculties at the University of Zagreb, which enjoy a high degree of autonomy and are unaccustomed to working together (see below).

In addition, the coordinators were faced with certain administrative problems, some of which were solved (procedural mistakes, delays, etc., in project follow-up due to inexperience, but without serious consequences), while others were not (VAT problems due to differences between the rules applicable in Croatia and in the EU). The help of the ETF with these difficulties seems to have been appreciated, but the issue of VAT payment was not fully resolved and the coordinators are calling on Brussels to deal with it. Makeshift solutions seem to have been found in the current projects with Croatia.

Finally, mobility costs have been reduced (they initially accounted for half of total costs) and transferred to printing and publication costs in view of the trends that emerged in the project activities.

A wide-ranging project

The project ultimately achieved the intended results:

- A substantial number of new and existing teachers were trained (according to the Final Report, 200 at the workshops and meetings).
- An even larger number of teachers were informed about the project and its outcomes (workshops organised at local level, information sheets distributed at primary schools, etc.).
- Teaching material and books were published: teaching material (over 250 pages), two bilingual books⁹ and one dialect dictionary for children.

This material was widely disseminated at local and national level (on the websites of the Croatian Ministry of Education and Science and Ministry of European Integration) as well as at international level (by the experts). Three information sheets were also compiled and distributed in 2002 and 2003 (500 copies each).

- Some items were distributed to Croatian schools and the relevant institutions ('Komvis', approximately 20 pages each).

⁹ Communicative Competence in Language Pluralistic Environment 1: Reviews, Problems, Guidelines (204 pages), by Kovačević and Pavilčević (eds), Zagreb, 2002 (describing the project and its first results), and Volume II: Theoretical Considerations and Practice, 2003, 272 pages, dealing with the theoretical context and giving practical examples. The books are written in English and Croat.

As an example of this dissemination effort, the final project meeting was held at the University of Zagreb in the presence of representatives of Ministries, the EU, the press, television and the relevant professions. According to the final follow-up report, the material developed is at present widely used in schools in Croatia; although we have not been able to verify this, the Croatian NTO considers it to be plausible. Ultimately, the project products appear to be of very high quality.

Quality procedures seem, however, to have been the project's weak point. Only a small number of questionnaires were distributed, and their results were published with the books, but in the end they seem to have been little used (this was already considered a weakness by experts at the time of the application, as well as in the view of the ETF in the last PR).

It was also pointed out that Croatia is the main beneficiary of the project; the universities of the European countries benefited much less from the collaboration (although they devoted a great deal of time to it), apart from prestige in the field of research and an openness to international affairs and the Croatian situation. The educational material constructed is not used in Spain or Austria, except with the status of an example.

A project with a lasting impact

Impact on the Croatian educational system

The project activities are at an end, but its effects have persisted on a large scale. There are no more workshops, as the project aim was not to construct a regular curriculum but to continue the work of cooperation and the dissemination of tools.

In this way, the project conferred fresh impetus on educational linguistics at the University of Zagreb and the other universities, and seems to have influenced government education policy and the teaching methods used by teachers in Croatian schools in most regions. However, we were unable to verify this impact directly.

The published manuals are out of stock. Some schools told the Croatian project coordinator that they were using them, while others requested a new edition. A second edition of the dictionary is planned and funding is being sought for it.

To complement the reform of the education system, the Croatian coordinator suggested new courses on language pluralism in Zagreb, not only in the teacher training curriculum but also in language courses. She is waiting to hear whether these proposals have been accepted. Despite a change of government, the reforms are continuing, so the Croatian coordinator does not consider the project to be under threat as a result.

The impact in the other countries depends more on the personal influence exercised by the academics or experts associated with the project on the local educational fabric and on national-level reforms (the Hungarian expert, for example, is very well known and influential in political circles).

Ongoing cooperation projects

Another Tempus project (for a linguistics degree) was submitted by the Croatian coordinator in 2002, but was not selected because it was felt to be too vague and to allow insufficiently for the changes in the Croatian university system. A new project is in hand with Spain: construction of a new Masters programme in linguistics with a linguistic pluralism element.

Some aspects of the collaboration are persisting in other research or Tempus projects (e.g. Croatia-Spain), but the horizontal relationships between European partners appear not to have lasted. The Croatian protagonist really was the cornerstone of the network!

Cooperation is also continuing with some primary schools on a research basis.

Two main sustainability factors: official support and involvement of all actors

Active lobbying for national and institutional support

The University of Zagreb was involved most deeply, as might be expected as it is Croatia's largest university, with over 60 000 students, and is very active in languages and teaching, as well as having obtained a great deal of hardware. The teaching of the Croat language is another national priority, while a priority for Zagreb University is the 'promotion and enrichment of Croatian culture syllabuses (e.g. language and history)' (*Institutional Framework Development and Transformation Plan* – see application file).

However, according to the Final Report, the project was based primarily on 'individual commitment', because the support of the different universities was 'unequal' (Zagreb University was deeply involved, whereas the other universities' involvement was more formal in nature). The primary schools, on the other hand, participated in the project to a greater extent. The application file stated that sustainability would be facilitated by the support of those working in the field; this is borne out by the large number of schools that were active members of the consortium (only one had to be excluded from the consortium due to inactivity).

Contacts were forged from the beginning of the project with the Ministry of Education, while the National Office for the European Year of Languages (2001) recognised and published details of the project on its website. The question of accreditation was thus

anticipated as early as in the first year (PR1). The Ministry also recommended the local authorities responsible for primary schools to use the books accruing from the project as teaching material. However, its support was ultimately forthcoming only at a late stage, at the end of the project. The Ministries supported the project mainly during its final stage, in response to lobbying and communication by its managers. This support was not financial but comprised mainly communication facilities and official backing. As stated in PR2 under the heading of sustainability: 'Already participation of 2 key Ministries should foster the further support of the project. The project has already been published as flagship within the Ministries web sites.'

Notwithstanding these successes, the Final Report states that 'the greatest disappointment concerns the government institutions involved [...]. There is always a major problem of inertia, which slows down any serious change'. As regards the University of Zagreb, the project was innovative in that all funding was channelled through the Rector's office and on account of the collaboration involved between faculties. All the same, the project did not receive significant support from the faculties themselves, owing to lack of interest.

Genuine involvement of the project coordinators and actors

According to the Progress Reports, the partners immersed themselves thoroughly in the project even though there were so many of them. Administration was shared between Croats and Europeans, although the relevant experience of the Viennese was useful. Contacts were also forged with other Tempus projects at the University of Zagreb and another university at the beginning of the project in order to solve administrative problems. The project management was actually shared between Zagreb and Vienna, on a joint management basis, with large numbers of emails being exchanged. Significant assistance (in terms of time) was provided by the finance departments in Zagreb and Vienna in the solution of highly complex administrative and financial problems and to provide for double-checking of expenditure. Some problems were solved, while others remained (e.g. the non-payment of VAT).

The application file pointed out that the partners already knew each other well: 'This consortium is made on the basis of long lasting cooperation of different types among all members'. The Croats mobilised their networks on the basis of earlier cooperation projects, in research or on international projects (in addition, Vienna has a long tradition of cooperation with Croatia). The Croatian coordinator, who has been a driving force for the project, believes that: 'It helps to know people before collaborating' and 'good participation is really important for sustainability'.

A final essential factor in sustainability appears to be the successful involvement of the Croatian schools, the users of the project outcomes. Links with the University of Zagreb seem to be sustainable, especially in terms of cooperation on research.

Possible tools for enhancing the sustainability of such projects

We were told by our contacts that sustainability of the project could best be anticipated right from the application stage if due account was taken of the following:

- the existence or likelihood of support;
- meeting of local needs;
- the manner of integration of local partners and of lobbying of national authorities;
- existence of staff training arrangements;
- a willingness to promote the new courses by means of active dissemination measures

The project partners also suggested that rules be applied in a more flexible way so as to facilitate resource management between countries and to avoid bureaucracy and wasting time.

Case Tempus UM-16077 (CARDS)

Tempus Project CARDS region UM-JEP No 16077

Development and Implementation of a Computer-Based Administration at the Universities of Vlora, Gjirokastër and Prishtina

Description of project

Development and Implementation of a Computer-Based Administration at the Universities of Vlora, Gjirokastër and Prishtina

11/2002 - 07/2004

Total budget: €c281 535 (Tempus)

Actors:

- *Project coordinator:* University of Siegen, Germany
- *Partners:* University of Bonn (DE), Staffordshire University (UK), University of Roskilde (DK), Universities of Vlora and Gjirokastër (AL) and Prishtina (Kosovo)

Objectives:

Development and implementation of computer-based administration system at the Universities of Vlor, Gjirokastër and Prishtina (financial services, student registration, international relations and student information via websites).

Activities:

- Adaptation and updating of financial management and student management software
- Working sub-groups of staff of the various universities
- Training of staff and management in the new software in Europe and Albania
- Dissemination of outcomes

Assessment of application by experts:

Lack of precision as to the institutional context of the project and requirements; questions about the choice of partner universities. The dissemination activities are well described, but better anticipation of sustainability is desirable (e.g. system updating).

Final assessment of the Commission:

'Good', with one 'very good', depending on whether or not the sites are actually established (this could not be verified by the European Training Foundation [ETF] in the absence of a valid address).

Persons contacted:

- Mr Iraj Hashi, Reader in Economics, Staffordshire University (United Kingdom), project member
- Mrs Deirdre Lennan, ETF project manager
- Ludmilla Shkurti, International Relations Officer at the University of Vlora (Albania)
- Professor Münch, University of Siegen (Germany), project coordinator
- Mr Qano, coordinator, National Tempus Office (NTO), Albania
- Mr Kikina, Rector, University of Gjirokastër, Albania

Documents consulted:

- 1st Progress Report
- 2nd Progress Report
- Last Project Report

- Tempus Project Proposal
- Expert Assessment Sheets
- University of Vlora website: www.vlorauniv.tk
- University of Prishtina website: www.uni-pr.edu
- University of Gjirokastrë website: www.unigj.info

Thanks are due to the persons contacted for their cooperation and availability.

Executive summary

- The project involves the installation of computer-based financial management and student registration systems and the establishment of websites at three Albanian-language universities: Vloora and Gjirokastër (Albania) and Prishtina (Kosovo). The project was organised and controlled by the University of Siegen (Germany), which already had a substantial involvement in Albania and had been in charge of a similar project in Tirana. The project lasted for two years, and all computer systems were installed and the staff trained; the training was carried out mainly in Europe, which encouraged staff motivation.
- Sustainability of outcomes is in question: whereas the software systems seem to be still in use (although information on this point was difficult to obtain or verify), the high university staff turnover (due to low pay) is a negative factor. This problem is compounded by a lack of resources and defective telephone lines. Cooperation is evidently continuing with the German coordinator and between the persons responsible for international relations at the three Albanian-language universities.
- The two main determinants of sustainability or otherwise seem to be the high staff turnover in Albania on the one hand and, on the other, the intense involvement of the European actors, coupled with strong support from the universities, although this is inhibited by a lack of resources and a lack of support from the Ministry.

A project under the control of the European partners

Computerisation as the engine of development of the Albanian universities

Albania, one of the poorest countries in Europe and currently in the throes of an economic crisis, has been engaged in a process of democratisation and modernisation since 1992; the country implemented a reform of its higher education system in 1994. The universities obtained more independence, and are now experiencing the need to become fully professional notwithstanding a lack of resources.

At the end of the 1990s the Albanian universities lacked computerised student registration and financial management systems, this work being carried out manually. A number of Tempus projects were then instituted with a view to overcoming these difficulties. The first was implemented in 1997 and involved the University of Tirana, the Polytechnic University of Tirana and the University of Siegen in Germany. The project succeeded in constructing an Albanian-language computer system that met the relevant requirements.

Project UM 16077 came into being as a result of the German partner's wish to extend the benefit of its experience to other Albanian universities. The objective set at the time was to automate four elements – namely, student registration, finance, international relations, and construction of a website. The aim was to harmonise the procedures used by all

faculties within a given university, to make the system more reliable and to provide managers with relevant information. These projects were also intended to help the universities to develop better student services, in particular by the provision of information on websites.

The Albanian NTO emphasised the value of UM projects of this kind in Albania, which account for only a small proportion of Tempus projects (most are CD projects); the UM projects are useful from the point of view of harmonisation with the Bologna Process and development of the country's universities. Student information is thus an element that calls for improvement in Albania.

Proactive European partners; heterogeneous Albanian partners

The designer and director of the project was a professor from the University of Siegen, where he was head of the computing department, and had already directed the project with Tirana in 1997; he was seconded by an academic from the University of Staffordshire (UK). Both are deeply involved in Albania and have forged many contacts with Albanians (for instance, Albanian students have visited Siegen).

The University of Siegen had already undertaken a number of cooperation projects with Albania over a 12-year period, with resources from German and European funds (e.g. student and research exchanges). Three other Tempus projects dating back to 1995 had already been conducted, involving Portsmouth, Tirana and Siegen as well as other partners (Staffordshire, Marne-la-Vallée, etc.).

At that time the European partners set up a consortium with two Albanian universities and an Albanian-speaking university in Kosovo. These universities were chosen despite their heterogeneity because contacts had already been forged with project members.

The two Albanian universities are regional. Vloora University was established in 1994 and has some 1300 students (subjects: economics, marine engineering and medicine); the university is located on the south coast of the country. Vloora and Siegen were already accustomed to working together, having collaborated on a curriculum change project in 2000.

The University of Gjirokastër, too, is a regional university, which was established in 1971 and enlarged in 1994 (when it received the new name of Eqrem Cabej). It is a scientific university, specialising in languages and literature, education and financial management; with a total of 3000 students, it is located inland in the south of Albania. The educational sciences department has already been involved in Tempus projects with Greece, France, the United Kingdom and Denmark. Yet this university is the poorest of the three and its telephone line (and hence also its Internet connection) is very bad.

The University of Prishtina, in Kosovo, is larger. It comprises a number of traditionally autonomous faculties which have to link up around a central administration. Here too, the staff is relatively untrained and poorly paid, but the University has obtained more resources under the Stability Pact.

The two Albanian universities, then, are young and developing; they lack management experience and financial resources of their own. The University of Prishtina is larger and the important factor in its case is the centralisation of its various component parts. This diversity is one reason why the project was managed from Europe, principally by its German coordinator. Administrative and technical management were provided for by the European universities to ensure proper control and efficient use of resources.

Activities over a short period of time (two years)

Activities during the two years:

- Coordination meetings
- Establishment of software systems for the various departments concerned (with adaptation of existing systems, as in Tirana)
- Purchase of equipment for the Albanian universities (substantial equipment cost, exceeding €50 000)
- Training of senior and other staff in the use of the systems, in some cases in Europe (training of university heads in Germany under the International Relations section, with recommendations to rectors)
- Website programming and design

Sub-groups were set up (with university staff) under the aegis of European countries (e.g. the International Relations Officers [IRO] sub-group, which organised a conference).

Part-time funding for university secretaries was also provided for, while people from Tirana came to demonstrate their experience and advise the other universities when implementation difficulties arose.

Attention was also devoted to the organisation of international relations: the IROs worked together and staff was engaged. The German coordinator pointed out that there was very little cooperation between the Albanian universities, and that one of the concerns of the sub-groups was to provide for meetings between the staff of the various universities.

Language problems do not appear to have arisen, as the software was constructed in Albanian and Albanian students in Germany were able to help with translation into or from English.

A successful project despite certain implementation problems

The project succeeded in so far as all the proposed software systems were installed, staff was trained and two dissemination conferences were held in the hope of interesting other Albanian or Albanian-language universities (conferences were held in Tirana and Prishtina).

For instance, the financial management software was installed on a network in Prishtina, while being available for a single user in Vlora and Gjirokastër.

The European partners considered the project very useful for Albania owing to the extent of the country's needs in this field (given the lack of resources of the universities themselves). The trained staff was evidently highly motivated during the course of the project, in particular by the periods spent abroad and on account of the support of the rectors (who were themselves trained). The major change from manual to computerised working seems ultimately to have been quite well received by the Albanian staff.

However, some problems arose in the implementation of the project as a result of the rapid staff turnover at the Albanian universities. This was due to the very low pay rates, averaging \$100-400 a month: people left for the private sector at the first opportunity, and some of them even used their training as a means of moving on. So the Europeans then also had to train the newcomers. As the German coordinator says, 'You always have to start from the beginning.'

However, the dynamism of the project seems to have been mainly bound up with the investment of the Europeans, as the Albanian universities, which in addition faced their own specific situations, communicated hardly at all with each other, even if they were able to do so through the sub-groups.

Anticipated sustainability

The first Progress Report pointed out that the consortium did indeed anticipate some elements of sustainability on the basis of its past experience (JEP 12221), in particular through the inclusion of the university hierarchy in the training programmes. The main problem remains high staff turnover and the lack of staff trained in new technologies at the Albanian universities. Dissemination directed towards the Ministry was recommended, in the hope that this might allow new funds to be found, but the Ministry unfortunately did not support the project.

A final sustainability factor mentioned in the case of Prishtina (PR2) was the capacity to extend the central computer system to the various faculties; according to our sources, this was achieved.

Uncertain persistence of outcomes

Sustainability specifically in relation to the project outcomes

In a type UM project of this kind, sustainability relates not to the project activities – provision of software under the cooperation programme, etc. – but to persistence of the project outcomes. So the important questions are these: Are the software systems provided during the course of the project used and maintained at the three universities concerned? Are the websites updated? In this connection, the experts state in their evaluation of the application under the heading of sustainability that 'sustainability will be achieved only if the systems are accepted for routine use'. These are questions that we have tried to answer.

Software use uncertain in some respects

First, the software systems constructed during the project are apparently still more or less fully used by the three Albanian-language universities. The German coordinator states that the financial management system is used in all three universities, but does not know whether this is also the case with the student management system. The University of Prishtina, the wealthiest and the most developed of the three, succeeded in integrating these software systems in its procedures without excessive difficulty, while the greatest uncertainty was experienced in Gjirokastër owing to serious financial limitations (the German coordinator doubts whether staff trained in the use of computers will remain available on a continuous basis). This university is evidently still using the software systems installed, but according to Gjirokastër's Rector has no resources for maintaining them or for training new staff.

The financial management system, on the other hand, is relatively easy to update because it is also used in the private sector. Yet funds for updating the student management system are lacking, notwithstanding a request by the Prishtina Faculty of Medicine to incorporate the management of students' grades in the relevant program.

However, according to the European partners, the high staff turnover presents a considerable threat. Even so, the University of Prishtina has invested in international relations as a result of considerations emerging from the project: two posts were funded, while one part-time post was also funded at Vlora. Here again, Gjirokastër lacks resources.

Websites maintained in all three cases

As for the establishment and maintenance of websites, all three – those of the Universities of Vlora, Prishtina and Gjirokastër – still exist.

The website of the University of Vlora is operational (www.vlorauniv.tk), even if it is not 'official', as it is accommodated on a free server (with advertisements), appears somewhat amateurish and is not often updated. It is actually under the control of the University's

International Relations Officer (IRO), who has very little time to update it. It offers an introduction to the University in Albanian and English (with photographs), lists the five Tempus projects implemented (one in university management, three in curriculum development and one in training courses for institution building, relating to mathematics and language courses, and others with other European and Albanian universities), as well as giving details of conferences and some job vacancies. The IRO tells us that another site – in this case an official one – is still in operation, updated by a teacher specialising in computing. However, we were not given the address, and constant failures of the telephone line interfere with Internet access.

Prishtina University's site, by contrast, has a much more 'professional' interface; part of the site has been translated into English, and the user-friendly interface offers a wealth of information and a complete contact list (www.uni-pr.edu).

Lastly, the website of Gjirokastrë University is still operational (www.unigj.info), although the English pages have not been constructed.

Ongoing cooperation

Cooperation is continuing between European partners and with Albania and Kosovo (Tirana, Gjirokastrë, Prishtina, etc.) in other fields, such as staff training, under the auspices of the European universities. For instance, a new short-term (one-year) Tempus project is in hand for dissemination of the software systems and for devising arrangements for updating them. Rectors' meetings have been held in Germany in particular.

Close links have also been forged between the International Relations Officers of the three Albanian and Kosovan universities involved in the project.

Some dissemination might also have resulted from the fact that the University of Shkoder is reported by the German coordinator to have adopted the same financial management system, although this has not been confirmed by the Albanian NTO.

Involvement of the relevant actors and university support as the main factors in sustainability

Great influence due to actor involvement

Sustainability is not a matter of direct financial support, but is indirectly affected by high staff turnover in Albania caused by low salaries. For instance, the Albanian International Relations Officer changed twice during the project. In each case, all the accumulated know-how was lost.

The involvement of the Europeans thus seems to have been an important element for the success of the project, whereas the Albanians' participation is the only guarantee of sustainability, in the sense of commitment, staff retention, accumulation and handing down of skills, etc.

According to PR1, 'the projects managed by Siegen are generally good', these actors being familiar with the field and logic of a university management project, in particular by virtue of a similar JEP project implemented in 1997 with the University of Tirana. The importance of the commitment of the European coordinators, as the driving force behind the project, is evident.

Again, these actors have substantial experience and are well acquainted with the logic of the local situations. As the application file already noted, "the experience of the Universities of Siegen and Staffordshire in a project in Tirana showed that it is not enough to convince managerial staff of the usefulness of the new methods". It is also important for the executives in charge of administration to be included in the discussions, so as to motivate their staff to use the new system once it has been installed'. In this way, then, a project can capitalise on the experience of its predecessor.

Again, the German coordinator stresses his familiarity with Albania as a factor of trust and a means of exerting constant pressure on the actors to continue the process of change once the project comes to an end. 'If you just go there 2 years and then go, nothing really happens,' he says. He also pointed out in the final self-evaluation report that the Europeans must not forget that they were 'invited' to the partner countries and must behave accordingly. In his view, Tempus should select only Europeans who already have experience of at least one project with the partner country.

Finally, the European coordinators emphasised the fact of ETF aid but drew attention to the unavailability of the managers in Brussels as a negative factor in the management of Tempus projects.

Support from the universities but none from the Ministry

As already stated in the application file, the main risks have to do with the support of the universities and the availability of administrative staff and their desire to move on.

The universities, however, supported the project and the Rectors were involved in its implementation and established relationships of trust with Professor Münch and with one another. However, while additional resources were provided for during the project to fund the salary of a specialist in new technologies, this funding was unstable afterwards due to lack of resources. On the other hand, one website is maintained on the initiative of a member of the teaching staff. So while personal initiatives may provide an element of sustainability, permanence cannot always be guaranteed as far as the whole project is concerned.

The Final Report also states that the contractor had meetings with representatives of the Ministries in Albania and Kosovo but failed to obtain funding, ostensibly because of the universities' desire for greater autonomy.

Possible tools for enhancing the sustainability of such projects

It is important to bring the project actors in Albania together (e.g. in steering committees); which seems to have been done in this case.

It is also important for the coordinators to be thoroughly familiar with the country and to take an interest in continuing the project after funding comes to an end.

Flexibility is required in the use of training budgets owing to staff turnover.

Efforts should be made to secure commitment at rectoral and national level in order to create a strong political will and to encourage the relevant actors (or indeed to ensure that certain posts are maintained after funding ceases).

Case Tempus IB-15038 (CARDS)

Tempus Project CARDS region IB-JEP No 15038

Local Power and Civil Society in Albania

Description of project

Local Power and Civil Society in Albania

2000-2003

Budget: €46 980.94

Actors:

- University of Tirana, Albania, Social Sciences Faculty
- European University Viadrina, Frankfurt (Oder), Germany
- Municipality of Marseille, France, General Secretariat, European Private and Public Programmes Mission
- Municipality of Tirana, Albania
- Prefecture of Tirana, Albania

Objectives:

Development of the contribution of the University of Tirana to the improved functioning, consolidation and efficiency of local political institutions, for the purposes of democratic local government and to help solve community problems.

Requirements:

- Development of training modules for administrative staff of the municipality and prefecture of Tirana
- Incorporation of social issues in the research and curricula of Tirana University
- Establishing foundations for the development of interinstitutional cooperation

Activities:

Year 1: Establishment of project, staff training, study of examples of good local government practice.

Year 2: Examination of training needs of potential participants in training programmes for prefecture and municipality staff, and development of five training modules. Provision of training for the targeted persons.

Year 3: Study visit to the Municipality of Marseille by 13 representatives of Tirana's local government (municipality and prefecture). Development of cooperation initiatives between University actors and municipality and prefecture staff.

Final assessment of the Commission:

The project was deemed very good (a flagship project) and was recommended for specific evaluations. The final assessment laid particular emphasis on the potential of the University of Tirana, through the project, to become a partner of local institutions by virtue of its involvement in a large number of local initiatives; the assessment also states that the cooperation must continue locally in all cases, through a number of projects funded from other sources.

Persons contacted:

- Professor Illi Pango, University of Tirana, Social Sciences Faculty, Project Coordinator
- Professor Detlef Pollack, University Viadrina, Frankfurt (Oder)
- Mr Jean-Claude Aroumougom, Director, European Private and Public Programmes Mission, Municipality of Marseille
- Mrs Deirdre Lennan, ETF Project Manager

Documents consulted:

- Application Form, 20 February 2000
- Progress Report, (PR 1 – 16/07/2001, PR 2 – 15/04/2002, PR 3 – 15/04/2003, PR 4 – 15/04/2004)
- Final Report (24 March 2004)

Thanks are due to the persons contacted for their cooperation and availability.

Executive summary

- This Tempus project fitted in well with the general development trends of Albanian society and of the relations between the University and civil society, in particular as regards the objective of developing the University's role within civil society. Potential factors in the project's sustainability are its contribution to meeting real training needs for local government staff (the Municipality and Prefecture of Tirana) in a context of decentralisation, and precise determination of these needs during the course of the project. The conditions for sustainability are more directly bound up with the respective desire of each institution (University and government) to evolve by working together (this was more evident in the case of the municipality than in that of the prefecture).
- The logic of mutual benefit for all stakeholders (University and government), and the synergistic implementation of other projects involving the same partners, were other factors militating, by virtue of the dynamism thereby generated, in favour of the sustainability of the activities initiated during the Tempus project. This also contributed, in particular, to the emergence of new requirements to be satisfied in the cooperation between the University and local government institutions.
- The sustainability of Tempus activities is discernible in the project's inherent objectives of interinstitutional cooperation and training of local actors. This element in fact appears to be non-existent in terms of the international relations developed with the foreign partners through the project, notwithstanding the intimate nature of the partnership planned (two European partners).
- The sustainability of the specific activities involved in the Tempus project is reflected partly in the following:
 - the project for new training activities targeted at local government staff outside the capital;
 - incorporation of the resulting experience in the training of students in particular, through the inclusion of exercises on local government in textbooks.
- The sustainability of the project itself (involvement of the University in civil society) is reflected in the greater involvement of academics in new projects within the consultative bodies of the prefecture and municipality, and indeed in the political life of the country (the project coordinator became a Deputy in July 2005), and in the opportunity given to students to obtain practical experience in the administrations targeted by the project.
- Good project management, facilitating its adoption by the University, academic support for the project, and thorough involvement of the target bodies seem to have facilitated the sustainability of the project in terms of its 'internal' activities. Excessive local 'ownership' of the project, on the other hand, seems to have militated against post-Tempus continuation of the relations forged with the European partners.

A project that fits in well with the trend of relations between the University and Albanian society and augurs well for potential sustainable extensions

A project that aspires to bringing about long-term political transformation in a country in the throes of change

In the transitional period between the end of the Communist regime in Albania and the country's eventual membership of the European Union, this Tempus project, implemented under the auspices of Tirana University's Faculty of Social Sciences, formed part of a general trend for the Albanian universities to play an active part in the efforts to democratise the country's institutions.

Hence the aim of the project was to involve the University of Tirana in the training of staff of the municipality and prefecture of the Albanian capital, with a view to encouraging the development of more democratic and efficient local government practices so as to meet the needs of the population. This aim had its counterpart in that of incorporating the societal issues emerging from the academic contribution to local political institutions in the University's research. A final objective was thereby to develop interinstitutional cooperation.

Sustainability of the desired effects of change depends on the individual will of each project partner institution

As the authors of the evaluation reports note, these general and long-term effects will prove sustainable only if the University maintains its desire to involve itself in civil society and if the institutions genuinely wish to change their methods and practices permanently.

In these general terms, the evaluation of this Tempus project shows that the University wishes to continue its involvement in civil society through various projects that demonstrate this, while another element is the Municipality of Tirana's voluntary commitment to change. However, the evaluation also reveals that the Prefecture of Tirana has greater reservations about involvement in the project and its objectives of change.

A project conception based on logic of mutual benefits to the partners

The project was designed to meet two concerns. Firstly, each type of partner was to obtain its own specific kind of benefit: the training contribution of the University to the staff of the local institutions (prefecture and municipality), together with the other aspects of the project (discovery of 'best practice' in the Municipality of Marseille), was intended to encourage the development of a 'democratic competence' in these institutions for the management of local affairs and the solving of local problems.

Secondly, the University's contribution was intended, through the mobilisation of its teaching staff and students in the project, to provide material for the research of the Social Sciences Faculty (and of the other two faculties, Law and Economics), as well as for traditional courses (by the integration of the relevant subjects in curricula).

The University's contribution also facilitated the recognition of its key role in the process of democratisation of local government in Albania, as pointed out in monitoring report PR4. This recognition is stated to be a means of progressing towards a 'new conception of the role of the University in society at large'.

An important aspect of the project in this connection is the explicit objective of mutual benefit, whose achievement is recognised in the final evaluation.

A Tempus project bearing a synergistic relationship to other projects involving the University's Social Sciences Faculty, which, however, is felt to result in a dispersal of staff effort

In parallel with the Tempus project, some of the teaching staff of the Social Sciences Faculty, working together with an active NGO, developed a project with Tirana's secondary schools for 'education of young people in democratic citizenship', with the aim of providing social, psychological, information and advisory services in these schools on the various types of problems met with in society (drugs, sexuality, violence, etc.).

Another important project undertaken by the staff of the Social Sciences Faculty concerned the management of urban areas, and was funded by the World Bank and the Albanian Government. It involved a number of 'mini-municipalities' in Tirana and concentrated on the training of their staff in the new role of management of these new communities (which had come into being under local decentralisation legislation) and on the need to establish networks for collaborating with other communities and structures.

A third project, sponsored by the United Nations centre for disarmament and peace education, was implemented in parallel with the Tempus project. It was directed in particular to the local institutions associated with this educational project for young people.

The evaluation report mentions the value and complementarity of these various projects conducted by the staff of the Social Sciences Faculty, with particular regard to their contribution to:

- mobilising and securing cooperation between the Faculty's teaching staff and senior local government figures on the various projects;
- providing material for studies and training curricula, together with the young teaching staff of the Faculty, based on the drawing up of exercises on different aspects of local government and their inclusion in curricula.

In the view of Professor Pollack (Frankfurt [Oder]), the involvement of the Social Sciences Faculty in a large number of international projects resulted in a dispersal of effort that made it harder to find staff for the Tempus project. The difficulty of concentration during training was particularly emphasised. According to Professor Pollack, this situation is due to the economic necessity of multiple investments.

Close European partnership on the project

Three Albanian institutions (the University, the Prefecture and the Municipality of Tirana) and two foreign institutions (the University of Frankfurt [Oder] and the Municipality of Marseille) make up the consortium for this Tempus project.

This intimate partnership does not in itself appear to guarantee the permanence of the international relations between the University of Tirana and its foreign partners, who have in fact had little or no contact with the Albanian partner since the end of the project.

Emergence of new needs and projects from the cooperation between the University and local institutions

The evaluation report mentions that the University will in future face the new challenge of working together with the prefecture and the municipality to develop a mechanism for gathering information from the public so as to improve the system of political decision-making.

The Tempus project was succeeded by another, funded by the United States Embassy (Democracy Commission Small Grants), entitled 'Improvement of democratic skills and ethics of civil servants in local power in Albania', which was implemented by an NGO (the Albanian Institute of Social and Psychological Studies), made up of teaching staff of the Social Sciences Faculty and led by Professor Illi Pango, the coordinator of the Tempus project.

This project culminated in the publication of a book in Albanian on the programme subject.

Step-by-step implementation of the project's individual components

The implementation of the project seems to have progressed slowly, in accordance with the successive recommendations of the monitoring reports.

The first year was devoted to the laying down and clarification of the project's foundations between the partners, particularly as regards the budget allocation, which was less than requested. This element involved in particular a visit to the University and Municipality of Frankfurt (Oder) by teaching staff and members of the Albanian local government institutions.

The main achievements of the second year were as follows:

- training of University staff;
- training of the staff of the local government institutions involved (prefecture and municipality) in good working practices for decentralised services;
- evaluation of training needs in the relevant local administrations;
- commitment by the Municipality of Tirana to the objective of constructing a need-based decision-making system to replace the former political decision-making system;
- cooperation between the Social Sciences Faculty and the project's partner administrations, in particular through the student advisory and observation missions of the three faculties in the municipality;
- development of the intended five training modules (in sociology, psychology, public administration, politics and social problems, and legislation), which were incorporated in a database for future training of the staff of other municipalities and for the University's sociology students.

This exploratory year was thus used for preparation of the proposed teaching modules and for laying the foundations for the partners' institutional commitments.

The third year comprised:

- training of 'mini-municipality' staff (60 participants over six days in four groups), on the basis of a questionnaire-based needs study;
- development of cooperation between the Faculty and the partner administrations;
- visit to the Municipality of Marseille by a team of 31 persons from the Albanian project partner institutions;
- development of a more 'interactive' role for the University in the NGO (non-governmental organisation) sector, as a token of civil society directed initiatives in this third year;
- establishment of an international network of experts and institutions, in particular to work on World Bank projects (ASSA initiative);
- drawing up of exercises on the various aspects of local government, with a view to the development of action directed towards the lowest tiers of local government and to incorporation of these subjects in the Faculty's teaching.

Encouragement of dissemination by the monitoring process

Whereas dissemination was stated to be an important objective of the second year of the programme, it was considered to have been implemented to a limited extent only during that year, and the monitoring report recommended an expansion of this element in the third year. The final monitoring report deemed this recommendation to have been followed in the third year, describing as it does the dissemination of the project not only within the Municipality of Tirana but also in other towns. The recommendation to the prefecture that it too should be more active in this field was felt to have had little effect.

The main dissemination effects mentioned concern the improvement of working methods in the municipality. As many as 60 participants from the municipality received training from the University. In addition, a media conference was held, and a radio programme on the role of local democratic power was produced.

It is interesting to note, too, that the project's dissemination activity is partly due to the fact of its implementation by the University, in synergy with other projects (mentioned above) funded from other sources, whose specific results are described in the evaluation report together with the overall outcomes of the present Tempus project.

Likely sustainability of project objectives and activities

Reviewing the project on its conclusion, the evaluation report mentioned the establishment of an active, soundly based network of research workers, officials, teachers, NGOs and international experts, resulting from the synergy in the implementation of the various simultaneous projects (Tempus, United Nations/disarmament, World Bank/urban management, etc.). This network-based activity is stated to confirm the **sustainability of the general objectives** of the Tempus project, which is directed towards developing the role of the University as an actor in Albanian civil society.

The report draws attention to the various elements of this overall sustainability, such as the inclusion of the University in the setting up of the United Nations disarmament programme, or the negotiation of its involvement in a variety of community projects within the area of the City of Tirana.

The **sustainability of the specific activities** of the Tempus project is mentioned in particular in connection with the integration of best practice in the University's curricula and in the drawing up of training exercises on local government, which are incorporated in University curricula and certified by directors of studies and can also be used in local government staff training programmes.

PR4 concludes that sustainability is less a matter of guaranteed funding than of the attitude and involvement of society in institutions.

Continuation of direct activities – in particular, development of the University's involvement in civil society (the project's initial objective)

Training modules for prefecture and municipality staff

According to the ETF manager, courses continued after funding ceased, on the basis of training material drawn up in Albanian. The decentralisation process now in hand is creating a demand for continuing training of local officials.

The project for a manual on local power (not included in the Tempus project), focusing on the role of municipalities and prefectures, was subsequently implemented with a grant from the United States Embassy.

Integration of social issues in the training programmes

Professor Illi Pango confirms that the training material based on the subject-matter of the Tempus project has been incorporated in the University's curricula, with certification by the various faculties' directors of studies.

Provision of practical experience opportunities for students prior to their recruitment by municipalities

As a result of the dynamism of the Tempus project (and of the other projects implemented in synergy with it), two- to three-week practical lessons were arranged for the students of the three faculties concerned, enabling them to gain experience in the various departments of the Municipality of Tirana and its 'mini-municipalities'.

Involvement of the University in civil society

The overall objective of expanding the contribution of the University of Tirana to the development of Albanian society through more direct involvement in its projects is now surely one of the most prominent aspects of the post-Tempus period.

According to the final evaluation report, 'nearly all the teaching staff engaged on the Tempus project are now in charge of an NGO project'. 'Many senior representatives of the University of Tirana are members of important consultative bodies of the municipality and prefecture', and 'many university students are finding the project sites a valuable source of experience'.

In the view of Professor Pollack, the objective of involving the University in civil society has been achieved. However, he considers that the University of Tirana has not taken full advantage of the opportunities presented by the project so as to ensure its sustainability.

Relative lack of ongoing cooperation between universities (Tirana/Frankfurt)

A member of the staff of Tirana's Social Sciences Faculty belongs to the German research team, and her work is published by the Faculty.

The implementation of the university reforms under the Bologna Process is the greatest challenge facing the University of Tirana, which, according to the evaluation report, requires the support and continued cooperation of the University of Frankfurt (Oder).

Exchanges with the foreign partners and in particular with the co-contracting University of Frankfurt (Oder) have in fact been very limited. The involvement of a member of the Tirana teaching staff in the research team at the Frankfurt Social Sciences Faculty resulted only in the publication of some of her papers in Frankfurt.

This continuation of the original links under a Tempus IB project may be deemed less vital now that the local partners have become relatively autonomous.

Active involvement of project actors with the support of the academic and national authorities as an essential element of sustainability

Active involvement of actors

- Very good project management, reflected in particular in the effective support of the German university (Frankfurt [Oder])
- Observed development effects of the University's sense of ownership of the project
- Concentration of effort by coordinator and contractor on achievement of third-year objectives (ensuring the project's success)

The University's project coordinator succeeded in mobilising and involving the deans of the three faculties and the Municipality of Tirana in its implementation, resulting, in particular, in the development of other synergistic projects resulting from links between academics and senior staff of local government institutions.

Active participation of target groups

The interest and involvement of the target groups during the period of the project is regarded by Professor Pollack as a positive element. Following the visit of a delegation of officials from the municipality and prefecture of Tirana, however, the City of Marseille takes a less sanguine view of this aspect.

Ability to secure appropriate post-Tempus follow-up funding for the continuation of activities

The philosophy of the University of Tirana was to take advantage of the synergy of the local partners and various sources of project funding (Tempus, World Bank, etc.). A new initiative funded by the World Bank was in preparation (following the end of the Tempus programme), directed towards the development of cooperation between local government on the one hand and NGOs and the University on the other.

In addition, funding for another NGO-run project, which was managed by the former coordinator of the Tempus project and culminated in the publication of a manual on the exercise of local power, was obtained from the United States Embassy following the training programmes undertaken under the Tempus project.

The University's Social Sciences Faculty is also contemplating applying for a new Tempus project when tenders are invited for 2006.

Academic and institutional support

The efforts of the project coordinator, the Dean of the Social Sciences Faculty, to secure the involvement of his colleagues from other faculties in the development of other projects helped to mobilise their teachers and students and enabled the University to play a greater part in civil society; this was encouraged by the academic authorities, to which the project coordinator himself belongs.

National support

The successful involvement of the University in civil society through this project for the training of local administrators facilitated recognition by the Albanian Government, which decided to include experts from the universities in the implementation of its large-scale reform projects – in particular, the reform of government itself.

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