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**Support for Innovative Methodology, Approaches and Tools for  
Teaching through the Medium of English in order to improve Educational  
Yield, Sustainability and Internationalization [SMARTI]**

**Report**  
**SMARTI CBHE+**  
**Project Kick Off Meeting,**  
**March 30-April 01, 2021**

**Hybrid Format: Online for all partners, with parallel Russian  
Federation meeting in presence in Kazan (KFU)**

### Day 1, 30th March, 2021

The SMARTI start up meeting opened with the partner requested introductory address by TUD co-ordinator institution and Professor Prunitsch, Dean of the TUD Faculty of Languages and Culture, in which the innovative character of the SMARTI project was underlined. This was followed by further introductions by Gerry Cullen, CBHE TUD Project Coordinator, and NEO Coordinator officers Mrs Karlova from Armenia, and Prof. Oleynikova, NEO Coordinator of the Russian Federation. The joint ownership and thus co-operative character of the project by all was stressed, as well as the goal of the application of English as a Medium of Instruction in different subject fields, as well as the aspiration for possible joint degree master programmes. The important strategy of internationalisation is a common aim in all countries, and this project aims to facilitate this. Mrs Karlova underlined proper use of EACEA logo.

Following these introductions, EU programme country partners gave introductions of their institutions and roles. The EU partners Riga Technical University (RTU), Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU), Universidade Catolica Portuguesa (UCP-ESB) and TUD Dresden gave addresses in which their universities were introduced, and their respective roles in the provision of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) was presented.

Succinct partner country presentations from Russia were then given by the following partners from Russia:

- Ogarev Mordovia State University (MRSU)
- Irkutsk National Research Technical University (INTRU)
- Kazan Federal University (KFU)
- Petrozavodsk State University (PetrSU)
- Certification Association Russian Register (RR)

and there followed the introductory presentations by the partners from Armenia:

- Vanadzor State University after H. Toumanyanyan Foundation (VSU)
- Armenian National Agrarian University (ANAU)
- M. Nalbandyan State University of Shirak Foundation (SHSh)
- Goris State University (GSU)

- National Centre for Professional Education Quality Assurance (ANQUA)

as well as by Russian associate partner NATE Russia (National Association of English teachers in Russia).

After a break, the afternoon session dealt firstly with a review given by Armenian and Russian partners' reports on the NEO Online Monitoring and National Kick-off meetings held on 17th and 18th March, 2021. Here Professor Burenina (MRSU), highlighted the need for links from the EU regarding materials on educating students in English, and the possibility to of use for development in the project, as well as the incorporation of the Bologna process and regard for national peculiarities. The project website to provide links to all materials. It should be reported on how EU recommendations made can be incorporated and improved. The transfer of wider European skills and information regarding EU experience is to be taken as orientation. New learning tools in the area of digitization are aspired to.

For dissemination and sustainability, it was hoped that the project website could be operational as soon as possible. This is being worked on currently.

Gerry Cullen focussed on the need for proof of project impact. The use of international conferences for promoting the project was mentioned as a useful possibility regarding positive dissemination and sustainability options.

Professor Safonkina (MRSU) highlighted the need for focusing on deliverables, and readiness for monitoring; whilst Professsor Khechoyan (PAARA) stressed that new EMI degree progamme would enhance the employability for students, and should be recognisable for the EU area. A roadmap regarding the development of the 9 EMI pedagogical modules for pilotings was necessary.

The key areas to be focused on were:

- development of the 9 module curricula, for two pilotings.
- inter-university agreements between Russia and Armenian universities.
- the creation of the pedagogical handbook.
- the critical formation of the EMI centres, crucial for training of future teachers and also experienced staff for the EMI teaching process.
- The NAD events for impact and sustainability, promoting project achievements, with more than participating universities, and including other universities, and wider international impact

- support for student and teacher mobilities

Gerry Cullen (TUD) as well as Professor Khechoyan (PAARA) noted that the Armenian NEO Online Monitoring/ National KOM of 18th March had highlighted the wider links to projects of other universities, and that these wider international links were good for international dissemination. There could be the possibility of an international conference in Armenia in Smarti lifetime. Additionally, information sessions within partner country universities can be organised to inform about activities that have already taken place within SMARTI project. Gerry informed conference that Smarti project would be presented at ITMO International Conference on 8 and 9 April.

The idea of cluster meetings was mooted on the subject of entrepreneurial skills at universities, and the internationalisation of doctor programmes, as well as the sharing and exchange of teaching and learning methodologies with other projects.

The remainder of the afternoon session was given to separate Work Package team preparations activities in preparation for the final conference day presentations of WPs and their related deliverables. Three main breakout rooms were provided for this activity.

The separate team groups consisted of the following groupings:

For WP 1 Preparation and WP 2 Development:

UCP + PetrSU+ ANAU (+ LJMU+ MRSU+ PAARA +SUSh)

For WP 3 Quality Assurance:

RTU+ RR + ANQA

For WP 4 Impact and Dissemination:

UCP+ KFU+ VSU + GSU

## Day 2, 31st March, 2021

The second day of the SMARTI kick-off meeting was focused on project management and financial matters. Gerry Cullen, TUD Coordinator, gave an overview of the WP on Management and its focus areas. The EU expects results on project impact according to the logical framework matrix (LFM), the Workpackages, and the yearly workplans.

Hitherto the KOM in Brussels has taken place, and the EU expects focus on the above mentioned areas. Information from the Brussels meeting has already been forwarded to partners. Also national KOM meetings have taken place in Armenia and Russia in March 2021. Currently we are looking at the Quality Plan, the Management Plan and the Dissemination strategy as well as ongoing management procedures.

Further deliverables necessary are:

- annual steering group meetings
- the project interim conference
- preparation for the final conference
- the final conference, with EMI conference in parallel.

TUD has its academic oversight team, consisting of Professor Prunitsch, Gerry Cullen, and colleagues Mr Riddell and Mrs Erdmann.

The financial management is dealt with by the TUD European Project Centre and Mr Schrader and Mrs Spirow.

The overall project management structure was given, consisting of

- the EU Commission
- TUD coordinator
- Project steering group
- EU steering group
- Armenian and Russian steering groups

Apart from the work packages teams, there will be:

- EMI Training Centre Action Groups

with a representative from each partner institution's International Office, and one university teaching staff member; and from each action group one member is to be represented in Armenian and Russian steering group respectively.

- There will also be the Internal Evaluation Working Group consisting of representatives from the Armenian and Russian QA agencies.
  
- And additionally there will be Dissemination PC AIDA Action Groups, with one publicity officer from each PC HEI from Armenia and Russia respectively.

An overview of the matters dealt with on the first day of the meeting was also presented.

Ms Christina Spirow proceeded to give an overview of financial and budgetary matters concerning the SMARTI project.

The financial team were introduced, consisting of Mr Harald Schrader, Dr Franz Kapplusch and Ms Christina Spirow. Ms Spirow also elucidated the role of the European Project Centre.

A budgetary survey was given, as well as detailed breakdown of what steps were necessary for reporting under the categories of: Staff Costs and Travel Costs. Samples of forms, and how to complete them were shown in detail.

Detailed information was provided about who is responsible for signing the respective forms (Timesheets and Joint Declarations)

Similarly, detailed information was provided regarding claims for travel costs, and how to complete the relevant forms.

Furthermore, information regarding Subcontracting and Equipment costs was elucidated, and how to claim for these explained. A question was raised regarding the diverging amounts that can be claimed for between partner country institutions, but information about this had already been provided before the KOM.

The afternoon session concerned reporting periods and financial monitoring.

Ms Spirow provided information on when reporting was to take place, including deadlines. Some flexibility in reporting was possible. The deadline for forthcoming reporting period was end of January 2022 for the year 15th January to 31st December 2020.

The second reporting period is 01.January 2022 to 31st October 2022, with the deadline for reporting being 13th December, 2022.

The third reporting period is from October 2022 to May 2023. Deadline: June 2023

The final reporting period is June 2023 to 14th January 2024. Deadline : 14 March 2024.

Regarding Monitoring, information was given about Erasmus monitoring visits. (3 in all) A financial audit takes place at the final report stage. All documents must be kept for five years after project end.

Lastly, information was given regarding the payments that TUD will be making. Three will take place in all, two during and one after the project end.

The first payment will be 50% of the total, to be paid after signing of the partnership agreements.

The second payment takes place after the Technical Progress Report and the financial overview.

The current rulings require that 70 % of the first financing must have been spent before a second financing, and that the second financing of 40% of budget total will be reduced by the corresponding amount that was underspent of the 70% spending target of the first financing, if this 70% was not spent.

Finally, bank account details for payments have to be provided as original documents as soon as possible to Ms Spirow at the EPC.

For the last session of the second day, Gerry Cullen reviewed the requirements given in Part E1 of the project description, focussing on project activities and methodology, tangible results, Workplan, LFM and Impact and Sustainability.

He discussed the management plan draft and dissemination strategy as well as the accreditation plan in the work packages groups. A draft of the management plan has already been produced. The quality assurance strategy is being worked on by RTU with RR and ANQA. Regarding the website, feedback from Russia has been received concerning requirements. Other areas that need to be

focused on are listed, including the preparatory work for ESP and desk studies, an inventory of EMI terms and best practices, the 9 module development, with training by EU partners.

An area to be noted in particular is that of the requirements of tangible results, as for instance, ESP and EMI training, network of EMI centres, EMI students, the handbook production, the diverse reports necessary.

Regarding the LFM, the indicators of progress are important.

Regarding the yearly workplans, we are slightly delayed due to current COVID situation, and this may affect other dates given.

Section G of the project description focuses on Impact and Sustainability, and the short term and long term indicators. Deliberation and discussion is necessary on how to achieve the statistics given, for example, through Home Multiplier trainings. Regarding long term impacts, we must be aware also and keep in focus that these have to be achieved also after the project end.

Regarding dissemination, the website and online activities will be essential. The use of social media should be integrated in the project website, and partner institutions must also create their own project Facebook accounts, for example, so that each university has its own Facebook, Twitter and project link.

UCP asked regarding contact persons, for example publicity officers for dissemination purposes. Gerry Cullen mentioned that there will be one publicity officer from each partner country HEI being members of the respective dissemination PC AIDA (Awareness Interest Desire Action) action groups. A list of publicity officers with respective contact details will be made available.



### Day 3, 1st April, 2021

The main focus of Day 3 was on the presentation of the preparation, development, impact and dissemination, and quality assurance work packages.

First, **the Preparation Work Package** was presented by E. Cardoso highlighting the deliverables, areas of responsibility, milestones and how to deal with these activities, and dates.

A study of PC practices of EMI and student-centred learning will take place in Russia and Armenia; and a desk study of EU best practices in EMI and SCL will take place. An inventory of these will be created. The results will be presented in an online session. English for Specific Purposes Training, and ECTS modular tuning will take place for PCs; and preparation for EMI curriculum training of 9 modules by EU partners for PCs will take place, forming the basis for PC development of the 9 modules.

The coordinators of WP 1 are UCP, PetrSU and ANAU. A more detailed breakdown of responsibilities for the various tasks was presented.

- ▶ **UCP** will coordinate the first part of WP1. 1.1.1 Desk and field study of PC practices in EMI teacher enhancement approaches and student-centered methodologies. **Leading: Armenia (ANAU); RF (PetrSU)**

April to May 2021

- ▶ 1.1.2 Inventory of the best European EMI teaching methodologies. **Leading : UCP**

April to May 2021

- ▶ 1.1.3 Online Report presentation in EMI/ SCL methodologies **Leading : UCP and PetrSU**

June/July 2021

#### 1.2 Task Coordinator: **PetrSU**

- ▶ 1.2 QA English for Specific Purposes Training (vocabulary, language and soft skills) **Leading : PetrSU, LJMU, TUD**

Preparation: June-September 2021. Self-study online materials for September 21

▶ 1.2.2 ECTS/Tuning Modular training for PCs. **Leading: RTU, TUD**

Preparation; : June-September 2021. Self-study online materials for September 21

1.3 Task Coordinator: **ANAU**

▶ Preparation of EMI Curriculum training by PC partners. **Leading : LJM U**

Start: June 2021

The importance of the Desk and Field Study research activities was highlighted, as it is on the basis of the information gained that further training and module development can be achieved.

The dates given were provisional, and a meeting for after Easter was suggested by Gerry Cullen to fine-tune the activity details and times for them.

**Work Package 2** was presented next by A. Shore of LJM U.

Giving an overview outlining the sequence of activities, it was mentioned that the events from WP 1 would take place first. It was probable that the first physical event would be the QA ESP and ECTS training in the UK later this year, possibly in October or November. **At the same time, the EMI centres are planned to be set up earlier than originally planned, namely now by the end of 2021. This requires that the purchasing of equipment also has to take place by the end of 2021.** In general, WP2 can take place after the training events and the content development from WP 1.

The main training for EMI module development will take place in Riga at RTU. Thereafter, the development of the PC 9 modules can proceed. After this, the piloting can take place, with EU partners visiting the EMI training centres, with feedback and adjustment possible before a second piloting.

At the same time, the development of the EMI handbook will then proceed.

Regarding areas of responsibility, the details of assignment of responsibilities for the deliverables has still to be decided.

**Work Package 4 on Impact and Dissemination** was then presented by E. Cardoso of UCP.

Mr Cardoso stressed that dissemination activities are a joint effort and require the participation of all partners. The creation of the project website is a key milestone for the project dissemination. Key activities for dissemination are the project conferences. For WP 4 UCP, and KFU for RF and VSU and GSU for Armenia are the lead partners.

Regarding deliverable 4.1. TUD is responsible for organising the website set-up.

Gerry Cullen gave information on this. Russian and Armenia should organise a National Facebook account, and a national Twitter account. Russian colleagues had the idea of producing a project newsletter.

Furthermore, dissemination is possible at 3 levels: local regional, national and international. For national levels, associate partner NATE is a good opportunity for dissemination purposes, with similar organisations existing also in Armenia, which also has connections to the British Council.

UCP has already opened a googledrive link for WP 4, (and for WP 1), and TUD will open a googledrive account for TUD.

Deliverable 4.2: the online population for EMI of the platform. UCP is preparing, but newsletters for all partners to contribute. Publicity officers also to contribute here. TUD will provide a template list of website links, FB, Twitter, publicity officers' contacts.

Deliverable 4.3: regards National Conferences. Three one day national conferences on project status are to be held in Armenia and Russian, each year. (1 per year). There should be 1 EMI National Awareness Day conference in Russia plus final conference, plus two conferences in Armenia, making a total of three.

Deliverable 4.4 is concerned with the participation of the ongoing AIDA groups with task coordination of KFU, VSU and GSU. These groups should be participants in the project conferences.

Regarding deliverable 4.5, the following information is of relevance:

4.5.1 The dissemination plan should be produced as first version in May 2021

4.5.2 Sustainability and Exploitation plan production by KFU and GSU by 2023

4.5.3 as in WP 3 QA. (KFU and VSU) 2023

4.5.4 Organisation of final conference; KFU 2023

The PC AIDA action group for Russia consists of:

KFU, MRSU, NRTU, and PertrSU

The PC AIDA action group for Armenia consists of :

VSU, GSU, PAARA, ANAU, ShSU and ANAU

**Finally, Karlis Valtins, RTU , presented WP 3 information.**

WP 3 overview on basic methods of Quality Assurance.

- Outcome focused
- Working in tandem with project management
- Focused on value of project activity
- Acceptance of justified change
- Investigating justified anomalies

Two project teams exist for QA:

- The Internal Evaluation Working Group.
- External QA audit (which is subcontracted by the external quality control team in year 3)

The QA aims are:

- To assess coherence of planned activities
- To assess the correspondence of activities carried out with planned ones, and the on-time assessment of project results
- To assess the quality of project results.

The Quality Assurance Work Package leaders are:

RTU + RR + ANQA

The system used is based on Quality Assurance with internal and external QA, quality control, reporting, QA tools, and risk mitigation and contingency plan.

RTU will be responsible for:

- External procedures, external QA audit by external quality control team
- Provision of technical and administrative support (editing/ proof-reading)
- Will host QA seminar within external QA audit (Year 3)
- Will participate in QA monitoring visits by EU partners
- Evaluate first and second pilotings, reporting on same
- Development of improvement plan (seminar to take place during interim project conference at PAARA, Yerevan, Armenia)
- Responsibility of evaluation and editing of QA handbook

These are tasks in which IEWG - Certification Association Russian Register RR (Russia) and ANQA (Armenia) are also involved but they focus on overall internal quality control (outcome-oriented) and quality assurance (procedures/processes-oriented) combined to form the basis of the Quality Plan.

The IEWG (internal evaluation working group) will consist of 2 members above from the Armenian and Russian agencies, with parallel meetings taking place with project general meetings.

Externally, there will be a performance review of outputs, and produced by the IEWG plus the external quality control team, plus consortium steering group members.

IEWG meetings are foreseen to be held parallel with project general meetings.

### Quality Control

The following tools will be used for quality control:

SWOT analyses; peer reviews; satisfaction surveys; stakeholder surveys; reports.

Consortium steering groups will evaluate all possible issues and impacts on project activities. (delays, lack of resources, underestimated necessary efforts, other risks.) Solutions will be proposed to consortium steering group for conflict resolution.

Reporting will consist of 5 half yearly reports. Soon after the KOM a WP 3 evaluation document will be distributed.

During any WP there will be a short review regarding WP quality measures, to be drafted by the lead partner. This will be discussed in connection with steering group meetings.

After WP completion, the lead partner will draft a WP report, which will be discussed in quality meetings.

There will also be event evaluation reports, as well as WP evaluation reports.

#### Risk mitigation/ contingency plan.

This will be based on the LFM. Collaboration is with the consortium steering group and the IEWG, and the project management team.

The Quality Assurance Plan underpins the QA work package.

Here a focus is on the completion of annexes/appendices by partners.

#### Task deliverables for QA:

- 3.1 Internal Evaluation Working Group is selected from the QA agencies.  
All reports to be published online, and will be checked.
- 3.2 Evaluation of modules after development. They will not only be assessed, but also the interconnection with other parts of the project will be checked.
- 3.3 During monitoring visits, QA training will also take place. QA observation reports by EU partners will be distributed for feedback.
- 3.4 Evaluation of 1st piloting: Assessment of what adjustments may be necessary. With TUD, distribution of seminar and teaching loads to be determined.
- 3.5 2nd round of monitoring visits (as with first round)
- 3.6 Evaluation of the same
- 3.7 EMI pedagogical handbook evaluation and editing tasks.

- 3.8 Evaluation of the study visit where teams of students and teachers check on real EMI teaching (5 days at UCP)
- 3.9 QA external audit, with subcontracting of external experts.
- 3.10 Accreditation requires the involvement of all Russian and Armenian partners.

Gerry Cullen questioned about when the QA plan would be ready.

Mr Valtins replied that certain dates still need to be finalised, but that the draft of the QA plan had already been completed. Final survey forms from RR and ANQA need to be reviewed. RTU will send information with forms that need to be completed.

Gerry Cullen thanked partners for their efforts in producing the WP overviews. The draft of the Management Plan was shown, with the information regarding Deliverables to be completed after the WP overview templates are received.

All templates must be forwarded to TUD as the EU project officer will need to have an overview of project meeting outcomes. Furthermore, TUD has produced a template for meetings, that will be forwarded to all partners.

In conclusion of the day's proceedings, and of the overall SMARTI KOM,

TUD then briefly summarized the tasks completed over the three-day SMARTI kick-off meeting.

**Day 1** had started with the TUD welcome address by Professor Prunitsch, as well as strongly focused presentations from the Russian and Armenian NEOs. Similarly, partner institutions provided good introductory

presentations, and feedback on introductory KOM pre-sessions in Russia and Armenia on 17th and 18th March was provided. Day 1 was completed with Preparatory work and brainstorming sessions on work packages.

**Day 2:** The focus on this day was to introduce the TUD financial management team, and provide information regarding all financing and reporting tasks required in for the SMARTI project.

**Day 3:** The final day had been focused on the presentation of the work packages by WP team leaders and action plans.

**Participation had been high, with over 50 participants from all partners, and NEO officers from Russia and Armenia.**

The meeting was then concluded.

Meeting Minutes drafted by TUD

April 2021