

Communication and Coordination Plan

WP1 / Task 1.3. / v1

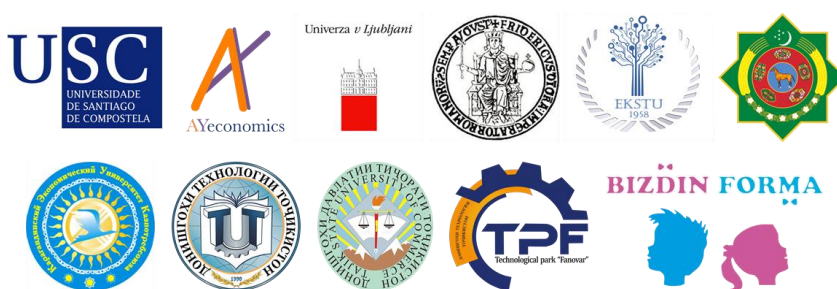
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DEVELOPMENT OF A MASTER PROGRAMME IN THE MANAGEMENT OF INDUSTRIAL
ENTREPRENEURSHIP FOR TRANSITION COUNTRIES

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Partners :



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Table of Contents

1. Regulatory Framework.....	2
1.1. Grant Agreement.....	2
1.1.1. Amendments to the Grant Agreement.....	2
1.2. Erasmus+ Program Guide	3
1.3. Mandates.....	3
1.4. Project Application	4
1.5. Partnership Agreement	4
2. Distributed project management	4
2.1. Meetings, operation and decision making.....	5
3. Conflict Resolution	6
4. Internal communication.....	6
4.1. Email	7
4.2. Instant messaging and collaborative work (Slack)	7
4.3. Virtual meetings	7
4.4. Project repository	8
5. Communication with the EACEA.....	8

1. Regulatory Framework

All aspects of the project implementation must be compliant with 4 levels of regulations. First of all, all the Partners must follow the European Commission and more specifically the **Erasmus+ regulations** for all aspects of the project implementation. This includes mainly the Erasmus+ Program Guide and the Grant Agreement. In the same framework, the Mandates and the project application are binding. All the project member shall also abide by the **internal agreements** formalized between the Partners, namely the Partnership Agreement. Finally, each Partners muse ensure compliancy with its own **national legislation** and **institutional regulations**.

1.1. Grant Agreement

Our Partnership is bound by a multi-beneficiary Grant Agreement, signed the Executive Agency and USC as Coordinator of the project on behalf of the Consortium (20/12/2019), and this is the main framework for the development of our project. It details all the general obligations and roles of the Beneficiaries as well as the conditions and rules for the use of the Grant.

1.1.1. Amendments to the Grant Agreement

The rules for amendments of grants are set out in the Article II.13 of the Grant Agreement signed with the Agency.

An amendment is an act modifying the Grant conditions initially agreed and established in the Grant Agreement. The amendment procedure is initiated via a modification request which most frequently originates from the Beneficiary. However, it is not excluded that a modification is made at the initiative of the Agency.

The Grant Agreement may be amended only in writing. Oral arrangements for modifications cannot legally bind the parties. The Beneficiaries should try to limit, as far as possible, the number of requests for amendments and only submit such requests when necessary. Amendments should always be requested before any changes are implemented, and not retroactively.

In order to be admissible, the amendment requests must be submitted at least one month before the end of the eligibility period as detailed in the Grant Agreement.

Any amendment, including those aiming at adding or removing a Beneficiary, shall not have the purpose or the effect of putting in question the Grant award decision (including the eligibility criteria) and/or be contrary to the equal treatment of applicants.

The following changes require an Amendment:

Change of/in	Amendment Request via
1. The legal status of the coordinating institution and/or Beneficiaries	Participant Portal
2. The legal name of the coordinating institution and/or Beneficiaries	Participant Portal

3. The address of the coordinating institution	Participant Portal
4. The address of a Beneficiary (that is not the coordinating institution)	Participant Portal
5. The contact person of the coordinating institution	Email
6. The deadline for submission of reports	Email
7. Contact details of the legal representative of the coordinating institution or of the contact person of the Beneficiaries	Email
8. The coordinating institution	Exchange of formal letters
9. The eligibility period	Exchange of formal letters
10. The budget breakdown	Exchange of formal letters
11. The Partnership composition	Exchange of formal letters
12. The legal representative of the coordinating institution	Exchange of formal letters
13. The bank account of the coordinating institution	Exchange of formal letters
14. Major changes to the work programme	Exchange of formal letters

1.2. Erasmus+ Program Guide

The Erasmus+ Program guide offers a general overview of the Programme. It gives information about the objectives, priorities and main features of the Programme, the Programme Countries and the implementing structures.

It provides specific information about the Actions of the Programme, namely Key Action 2 CBHE, giving detailed information on procedures for grant application and selection of projects, as well as the financial and administrative provisions linked to the award of an Erasmus+ grant.

1.3. Mandates

The signed mandates submitted with the application bind all Beneficiaries to the legal provisions of the Grant Agreement and give authority to the Coordinator to sign and act on their behalf.

In practice, the mandate means that:

- Beneficiaries have jointly full financial responsibility for the project (including in the case of recovery);
- the project accounts are maintained by the Coordinator, drawing on the accounts of the Beneficiaries;
- Beneficiaries agree to supply in due time the necessary information and supporting documents;

- the total EU contribution is managed by the Coordinator, but expenditure made by the Beneficiaries is eligible, insofar as it respects the Grant Agreement rules on the eligibility of costs;
- direct audits can be carried out at the Coordinator and/or any of the Beneficiaries.

1.4. Project Application

Forms part of the Grant Agreement and it's the basis of our Partnership and our cooperation. Its implementation has to be compliant with the three levels of external rules / regulations (EC regulations, national legislation and institutional rules).

1.5. Partnership Agreement

The Partnership Agreement is a compulsory commitment that must be agreed and signed by each Beneficiary organisation and should be consistent with the provisions as laid out in the Grant Agreement (and its annexes).

A signed scanned copy of the Partnership Agreement will have to be provided by e-mail to the Agency within 6 months of the signature of the Grant Agreement.

Detailed implementation modalities of the project must be agreed upon by the Beneficiaries and formalised in a Partnership Agreement to be signed by the legal representative of each of the Beneficiary organisation. The Partnership Agreement will be bilateral (i.e. a different Agreement signed between the Coordinator and each Beneficiary organisation) and will be drafted in the working communication language of the Partnership (English). The provisions of the Partnership Agreement(s) may be differentiated according to the special needs/requirements of each Beneficiary, provided that transparency is ensured within the Partnership.

2. Distributed project management

The Partnership will set up dedicated management groups (task 2.7.) with the aim to support the project coordination, to efficiently address the specific objectives via a clear distribution of tasks and authorities and to achieve an effective administrative management.

The following will be established:

Management Board (MB): will be composed of one representative of each Partner organization. It should be the person directly in charge of the management/coordination of the project at each institution and chaired by the Project Coordinator. It will constitute the **highest decision board** and its main task will be project governance. It will have the overall responsibility of all support, coordination, financial, legal, administrative, ethical and impact issues of the project. It will monitor and assess the project's progress and make amendments, where necessary.

Academic Board (AB): will be composed of one representative per Partner (except Technoparks, P12, P13 and P14) who should be a professor/researcher or a person with the appropriate academic knowledge and it will be chaired by the Academic Coordinator (P1). It will act as an

advisory and decision making body ensuring the academic quality of the project and it will be responsible for planning, executing and controlling of all academic aspects of the project.

Dissemination Board (DB): will be composed of one representative per Partner, namely the dedicated Dissemination Manager (DM) of each institution and it will be chaired by P6. It will be responsible to raise public awareness and ensure wide communication of the project results and for the project results dissemination, the clustering and promotional activities.

Entrepreneurship Centre Manager (ECM): will be composed by one representative for each Central Asian HEI and each Technopark. It will be chaired by P9. It will be in charge of creation, development, monitoring of established Entrepreneurship Centers.

Task Core Groups (TCG): are joint working unities that will assist to coordinate the implementation Work Packages. Each TCG will be chaired by the respective WP or task leaders and will be made up of all the Partners involved in each specific task. Of special relevance will be the TCG for Sustainability (chaired by P11).

These bodies will ensure the engagement of all the Partners in the project management and will attend the following overall functions:

- Distributed project management
- Decision making on key aspects of the project
- Resolution of problems and issues that may arise
- Insight on long-term strategies
- Monitor the status of the project
- Help balance conflicting priorities and resources
- Check adherence of project activities to standards of best practice
- Foster positive communication regarding the project's progress and outcomes
- Fulfil the Quality assurance issues attributed to them
- Ensure the project's outputs are achieved

2.1. Meetings, operation and decision making

The management bodies will meet as frequently as necessary (by video conference) and will use the established communication channels (email, Slack, virtual meetings, etc.).

All the management bodies (AB, DB, ECM and TCGs) will operate under the control of the Management Board and in compliance with its decisions.

The decision-making procedure of the Management Board will be as follows:

- Each representative can cast a vote (1 vote per Partner).
- Decision will be made by qualified majority (8 favourable votes out of 14 possible).
- No vote/response from a representative in a requested period of time will be considered as an agreement with the majority.
- Two-thirds of the members shall constitute a quorum (at least 9 representatives must actively cast a vote). If this threshold isn't met, voting will not be valid.

- The means for voting (email, online form/e-voting, virtual meeting...) will be determined by the Coordinator.
- The representatives designated for the MB can temporarily appoint a deputy/delegate.

It is the obligation of MB members to consult relevant decisions with the appropriate hierarchy at their institution.

In the event that the Coordinator (or any Partner) has profound objections concerning the compliance of a decision taken by the Management Board with the Grant Agreement, the legal basis of the ERASMUS + programme, or any applicable regulation/legislation, the decision shall be frozen until the Coordinator is able to clarify the matter with the EACEA.

3. Conflict Resolution

In case of conflict between the project Partners in relation to the project implementation, activities or Agreements, the parties involved shall make the effort to come to an amicable arrangement rapidly and in the spirit of good cooperation.

If an agreement can't be reached, the following steps must be taken:

1. The parties in disagreement shall contact the Coordinator without delay explaining the issues/conflict.
2. The Coordinator will try to mediate and give guidelines on how the parties involved should try to find the best practical solution in order to ensure that the conflict does not negatively affect the implementation of the project. If the Coordinator is one of the parties involved in the dispute this the process would jump directly to the next step.
3. If after the mediation of the Coordinator the conflict remains unresolved, a virtual meeting of the Management Board will be called. The issue/conflict will be presented and MB members will vote (following the procedure described above). The decision reached will be considered final.

4. Internal communication

All Partners must strive to maintain fluent and regular communication and collaboration with other project Partners and with the project teams at each respective institution in order to adequately implement the project activities and achieve the objectives.

Efforts should also be directed towards the communication with internal stakeholders (institutional hierarchy/management, relevant departments, staff, students, etc.) to guarantee the sustainability and relevance of the project implementation.

With the exception of three management meetings (and other face-to-face activities such as trainings and promotional events), most of the communication among project Partners will take place online. In this sense, the Partnership will make use of different web-based tools to ensure effective information flow.



4.1. Email

Electronic mail will be the main avenue for **formal communications** among Partners. For instance, email should be used to communicate relevant changes to the project Coordinator (changes of contact person, of team members, of contact details, etc.), to formalize agreements, to forward notifications or important documents (final versions of deliverables, financial documents), to call meetings, to inform about decisions taken or about arising/foreseen issues, etc.

A mailing list has been created with the main contacts provided by each Partner (this list is available on the project repository). Additional mailing lists can be created for different according to arising needs.

The email subject should always contain the acronym of the project (MIETC) so that they are easily traceable. The project Coordinator should be carbon copied in all email exchanges where sensitive/important matters are discussed.

4.2. Instant messaging and collaborative work (Slack)

A workspace has been set up in Slack (mietccbhe.slack.com) to enhance **real-time collaboration and communication** amongst the teams involved in each task (i.e., quick questions and feedback, brainstorming, getting someone's attention when needed quickly, impromptu chats, quick poll/voting, maintaining fluent and synchronous communication, etc.).

Several channels have been created to streamline group communication while direct messaging is also possible. The platform is available through desktop, mobile and web apps.

The workspace has been integrated with the project repository so that documents can be shared and viewed directly from Slack.

4.3. Virtual meetings

Due to the limited number of face-to-face events, the role of virtual meetings and synchronous communication will be crucial to have group discussions, make joint decisions, coordinate the work, brainstorm, etc.

Virtual meetings will be held according to the needs of the Partnership. Overall Consortium meetings will be called by the Coordinator and can be requested by any Partner at any time. Multilateral or bilateral virtual meetings should also be held whenever necessary and can be called by any of the parties involved.

When possible, the main points to be discussed on the virtual meetings will be circulated in advance amongst the concerned Partners so that those involved can be adequately prepared.

In order to achieve a flexible management of virtual meetings, the platform(s) used shall depend on its convenience and availability (Skype, Zoom, Google Hangouts, etc.). To avoid the exchange of usernames and creation of accounts the person or Partner calling the meeting will preferably create a room/ group chat and share the invite with the rest of participants.

Minutes shall be produced if the meeting is in any way consequential and won't be necessary if the meeting is casual/impromptu (i.e. a meeting held to coordinate or collaborate on a specific task).

4.4. Project repository

For an easy and convenient access to project related information, documents and files, a shared cloud-based repository will be set up using Google cloud services (namely Google Drive). This will ensure constant access to project documents and outputs. This repository can host up to 15GB of information and will enable the use of the features such as an online office suite, forms/surveys, access control, activity logs, automatic back-up, etc. This repository will also be integrated with Slack.

The use of this shared repository will allow for improved partner collaboration, increased efficiency and flexibility.

For convenient organization of the workflow and the project deliverables, a folder has been created for each Work Package, with subfolders for each task. Each file should be uploaded to the appropriate folder and named indicating the task number, the document name and the version/date (for example: Task 1.1. Kick-off meeting minutes v2 26.03.2020). Additional folders have been created for project application documents, financial management, Agreements and communications with the EACEA. The structure of the repository will remain flexible to accommodate future needs.

5. Communication with the EACEA

Each CBHE project will be supervised by the Agency throughout its contractual period and even beyond it.

In order to implement this supervision and to provide the necessary assistance to the projects, a Project Officer (PO) in the Agency has been assigned to each CBHE project. This PO will be the primary contact person of the project in the EACEA.

All contacts with the Agency must take place through the Coordinating institution who represents the whole Partnership; except under exceptional and/or duly justified circumstances, the Agency will not enter into correspondence with other Beneficiaries.

Only written contacts (through letters or emails) may be taken into account for contract management purposes; this applies to amendment and/or special authorisation requests introduced by the project, as well as to the response given to them by the Agency.