

Project Fiche – IPA Multi-beneficiary programmes / Component I

1 IDENTIFICATION

Project Title	Multi-Beneficiary Programme for Tempus under the IPA Transition Assistance and Institution Building Component for the year 2012
CRIS Decision number	SI2.615827
Project no.	1
MIPD Sector Code	<u>7. Social Development</u>
ELARG Statistical code	02.26 - Education and culture
DAC Sector code	11420
Total cost (VAT excluded)¹	EUR 16 555 553
EU contribution	EUR 14 900 000
Management mode	Centralised indirect
	The programme will be implemented by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA).
Implementing modality	Stand alone project
Type of aid	Project type interventions
Zone benefiting from the action(s)	Western Balkans: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia, as well as Kosovo*

2 RATIONALE

The Commission considers higher education as an important priority for its co-operation activities with the Beneficiaries and neighbouring countries. The Tempus programme, which is the longest-standing EU instrument in this sector and which has a strong focus on institutional co-operation, is in its fourth phase spanning the years 2007-2013. Since its inception in 1990, university cooperation under the Tempus programme has contributed successfully to institution building related to higher education in the Western Balkans and to sustainable university partnerships as well as to enhancing mutual understanding between the European Union and the Western Balkans.

¹ The total project cost should be net of VAT and/or of other taxes. Should this not be the case, clearly indicate the amount of VAT and the reasons why it is considered eligible.

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence

2.1 PROJECT CONTEXT: ISSUES TO BE TACKLED AND NEEDS ADDRESSED

The Commission considers higher education as an important priority for its co-operation activities with the Beneficiaries and neighbouring countries. The Tempus programme, which is the longest-standing EU instrument in this sector and which has a strong focus on institutional co-operation, is in its fourth phase spanning the years 2007-2013. Since its inception in 1990, university cooperation under the Tempus programme has contributed successfully to institution building related to higher education in the Western Balkans and to sustainable university partnerships as well as to enhancing mutual understanding between the European Union and the Western Balkans.

ALBANIA

The legislative reform in Albania started in 1994 with the first Law on Higher Education² which included numerous important elements with regard to the definition of status, mission, organization and governance of higher education institutions, financial relations, administration, etc. These elements were crucial to the structuring and functioning of universities.

In particular, the legislative reform programme in Higher Education focuses on the following aspects:

- Setting up systems of quality and accreditation assessment and recognition process;
- Definition of procedures for the election of governance bodies according to European standards;
- Increase of financial and institutional autonomy;
- Improvement of admission procedures in Higher Education.

The New Law on Higher Education³ reflected a number of important improvements, which significantly increased the institutional, financial and academic autonomy of higher schools, enabled the introduction of new qualitative mechanisms and up-to-date administration of universities. Amendments to the law are currently being discussed in order to adapt to the new developments of higher education in Albania.

One of the priorities for Higher Education in Albania has been the development of the Bologna three-cycle system, including in-service training and further qualifications. Different legislative decrees were elaborated to ensure its implementation.

During the last decade numerous private universities were established. In addition, a policy to reinforce university cooperation has been developed in particular regarding partnerships between universities and businesses ("University-Company") as well as universities and local authorities ("University-Local Authority").

The universities have started to define their own institutional development strategies, which not only stimulates institutions and their governing bodies to consider other aspects of education but provides also a strong basis for the conception and development of a better national higher education strategy.

Higher education reform in Albania continues on the basis of close cooperation between the Ministry of Education and Science and the universities.

The integration of Albanian higher education into the European higher education system as well as improvements in quality remains the main objectives of the higher education reform process. The Ministry of Education and Sciences and all universities seem to be committed to

² Law No.78120, dated 06.04.1994 "On Higher Education in the Republic of Albania"

³ Law No.9741, dated 21.05.2007

implementing the Bologna process. The introduction of the three-cycle system, curricular reform, application of the ECTS credits system and Diploma Supplement in higher education are supported and implemented in all university curricula. Within the framework of the Tempus programme, the Higher Education Reform Experts contribute also to this process.

Albania has also signed and ratified the Lisbon Convention regarding the recognition of university awards.

Finally, the Tempus programme remains the most important tool to implement the Bologna process and allow Albanian HE institutions joining the European Higher Education Area.

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Bosnia and Herzegovina commitments to the Bologna Process were regularly reported at the different Bologna Ministerial Conferences.

The process of integration of universities is ongoing but it has not been implemented equally all over the country. Currently, five out of eight public universities in BiH have been integrated, including the University of Tuzla, the University of Zenica, the University of Banja Luka, the University of East Sarajevo and the University in Bihac, while other three universities have not been integrated yet (the University of Sarajevo, the University of Mostar and the University 'Dzemal Bijedic' Mostar). The introduction of structured doctoral studies has started through Tempus projects.

The European Commission funded a feasibility study for reform of financing of higher education and the implementation of recommendations of the study started in 2010.

KOSOVO

In the post-war period, from June 1999 to March 2002, the Kosovan education system has been governed by the United Nations Interim Administration (UNMIK) and specifically the Department for Education and Science (DES). During this period considerable results have been achieved in stabilizing the education system in Kosovo.

The appointment of the first Kosovan post-war Government was followed by the formal hand-over of responsibilities to the newly established Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST).

The Law on Higher Education recently adopted by the Parliament (August 2011), aims to integrate the Kosovan education system within the European Area of higher education. The Statute of the University of Pristina drafted with international support and expertise in coordination with the Council of Europe and the European University Association (EUA) was ratified by the Kosovo Assembly in July 2004 and aims at the further implementation of the Bologna Process objectives and principles.

The University of Mitrovica, with Serbian as language of instruction and with more than eight thousand students enrolled, has also closely worked together with the European University Association in reforming the teaching and learning process in accordance with the Bologna Process and has been a member of this Association for three years now.

The MEST in cooperation with relevant local and international stakeholders developed the Kosovo Education Strategic Plan for the period leading to 2016, which was approved on 25 August 2011. In higher education, this strategy gives priority to the implementation of the Bologna process and also recognizes the importance of the Tempus programme as a major instrument for securing a real progress in HE reform.

In November 2008, the Law on National Qualification Frameworks was promulgated after being drafted by a broad group of Kosovo stakeholders (including representatives of the Ministry of Education, Assembly, civil society, experts, etc) with expertise of the European

Training Foundation. This Law includes the development of policies and guidelines for recognising prior learning including informal and non-formal learning.

The Kosovo Accreditation Agency became fully functional during 2008, and launched the accreditation process in Kosovo in line with the ENQA standards and guidelines. During this period MEST has also established NARIC and has appointed the National Commission for Recognition.

In 2009 The Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education, Science and Technology was established, including within its scope activities such as the FP7 national coordination and the CEEPUS national coordination.

The transformation of higher education is occurring during the transition phase of Kosovo and consequently the latter's agenda has determined, as the main goal of the reform, the modernisation and integration of the higher education system within the European Higher Education Area, respecting the social policy which creates equal opportunities and justice for all ethnic and marginalized groups.

The fundamental challenges in this field are related to the strengthening of human resources, the accomplishment of the higher education system in providing young people with the key competencies demanded in the labour market, and the encouraging of a new attitude towards teaching and learning processes.

MONTENEGRO

The 2003 Law on Higher Education⁴ gave higher education institutions in Montenegro maximal autonomy in academic activities with minimal mediation from the State, except when it is requested for the purpose of protecting the public interest. The higher education law also prescribes that the mission of the University should be the education of young people as qualified citizens in a democratic society and as a qualified workforce in the European labour market and that it should be delivered in compliance with European standards.

According to the 2003 Law, the Council for Higher Education was established, functioning as an accreditation body and conducting external evaluations through its commissions. Public and private higher education institutions are covered by this Law. The law was amended in June 2010 providing new provisions relating to the composition and tasks of the Council for Higher Education and promoting a better integration of private education.

With the support of an IPA project, a Quality Assurance Centre was established at the public University of Montenegro and is in charge with the development of quality at all university units. Being a newly established entity, its work and capacities should be further supported.

Reforms gave paths to developing new private institutions in Montenegro. Currently, there are eight individual private faculties and two private universities (the university "Mediterranean" established in 2006, and the university of Donja Gorica accredited in 2010)

The new law on Recognition and Validation of Foreign Certificates was adopted in the Parliament of Montenegro and the Law came into force in January 2008. The law prescribes recognition procedure for the purpose of employment, carried out in the Ministry of Education and Science.

The Tempus programme still remains the most important instrument to attain the Bologna objectives and ultimately to join the European Higher Education Area. It can also help higher education institutions to be better prepared for the future Life Long Learning Programme.

⁴ Law 01-1092/2 of 22/10/2003

SERBIA

Since the beginning of the reform of the higher education system in Serbia, a lot has already been achieved. However, this system is dynamic and certain important issues still need to be addressed in the near future to face the ongoing economic, societal, scientific and technological changes.

The ongoing reform of the higher education system has been supported through Tempus since 2001, especially in the area of curriculum development, university governance, quality assurance and cooperation with industry. Considerable progress was made especially in these areas.

However, substantial efforts need to be invested towards the development of an overall education strategy, the implementation of a national qualification framework, the introduction of external accreditation procedures, redesigning of learning outcomes and re-allocation of ECTS and towards a more effective participation of students in the educational process.

Initial analyses of the results achieved so far indicate that in many cases the reforms were implemented in a formal way without addressing sufficiently the core issue i.e. proceeding with a real student-centred reform. Furthermore, state funding in the higher education sector is limited and provides insufficient incentive to implement the reforms within the institutions. Student mobility within the context of the Bologna process should also be further encouraged and the proper recognition procedures established.

As a result, further improvement and preparation are necessary for Serbian higher education institutions before joining the Lifelong Learning Programme. The Tempus programme is still envisaged as the best way to achieve these objectives considering its already proven potential and efficiency. In addition, Serbian institutions showed readiness to coordinate themselves Tempus projects (an experience which is necessary for the successful participation in the Lifelong Learning Programme), but their expertise need to be disseminated wider to other stakeholders in the education system.

2.2 LINK WITH MIPD AND NATIONAL SECTOR STRATEGIES

The contribution to the participation in the Tempus Programme is foreseen within the national envelopes. To benefit from economies of scale, this programme is programmed within the realm of the IPA Multi-beneficiary programme. This priority area is reflected in the IPA Multi-beneficiary Multi-annual Indicative Planning Document (MIPD) 2011-2013 in which education is a priority under Section 3.7. Social Development.

ALBANIA

The implementation of the Tempus Programme in Albania is in line with the National Programmes on Higher Education in the country. The national priorities of Tempus IV for Albania are designed in close cooperation with the Ministry of Education of Albania, the EU Delegation in Tirana and the Albanian Tempus Office. Overall priorities of Tempus and regional priorities have been taken into consideration when setting up the Albanian priorities for Tempus IV.

Tempus IV will support the Albanian Higher Education institutions to implement the Albanian Higher Education Strategy for 2007 – 2013, especially to implement the vision, strategic priorities and goals for higher education, to draft policies related to strategic priorities, to develop differentiated university missions in terms of teaching, research, and innovation, to improve teaching and learning in higher education institutions and finally to assist in the implementation of the Bologna process in the Albanian higher education institutions.

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

In line with the priorities of the Framework Law on Higher Education, the Tempus programme in Bosnia and Herzegovina aims to support the following priorities:

- Restructure higher education in line with the Bologna Process and Lisbon Convention;
- Strategic development and reform of university governance, management and finance in line with the Bologna Process;
- Institution building to implement the obligations and requirements set out in the Stabilisation and Association Agreements.
- Definition and implementation of public and transparent mechanisms of quality assurance, including the procedures for periodic external assessment of universities.

KOSOVO

All legislation in the field of higher education in Kosovo makes clear reference to the goals set by the Bologna Process. The Strategy for the development of Higher Education 2005-2015 in Kosovo approved by the governmental authorities under UNSCR 1244/99 includes a line of actions in full accordance with the Bologna and Lisbon process. It demonstrates the willingness of the government and other relevant stakeholders in Kosovo as a democratic society to be integrated in the European Higher Education Area. The seven strategic objectives of this document support measures which adhere to the Bologna principles, such as: (i) Integration of the Kosovan Higher Education within the European development processes of higher education; (ii) Harmonization of the study programmes at all levels with the objectives of the Bologna Process; (iii) Full implementation of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS); (iv) Active participation in international cooperation process; (v) Support for the mobility of faculty and students; (vi) Establishment of a distance learning system and (vii) Establishment of the Kosovo Accreditation Agency.

Goals within the Higher Education Department of the Ministry of Education are to: (i) Provide a challenging and supportive environment in which staff and students can realize their potential and develop the skills and flexibility needed in a rapidly changing world; (ii) Improve access to Higher Education Institutions and stimulate research and teaching at the highest international standards according to Bologna Declaration; (iii) Ensure the quality assurance system for Higher Education Institutions; (iv) Provide higher education programs through distance learning and lifelong learning, to establish excellence in social and scientific research.

The needs to be taken care of by Tempus IV will be in particular the strengthening of the quality assurance system for Kosovan higher education institutions, the cooperation of the university with the labour market, as well as the development of life-long learning.

MONTENEGRO

The law on Higher Education creates a basis for the Montenegrin higher education reforms in accordance with the Bologna Declaration and is based on the following major principles: (i) Integrated university; (ii) Establishment of a Council of Higher Education, (iii) Introduction of quality assurance through internal and external evaluation; (iv) Introduction of a three-cycle (3+2+3) system; (v) Introduction of ECTS⁵; (vi) Diploma Supplement⁶.

⁵ ECTS : European Credit Transfer System

⁶ [The Diploma Supplement](#) is a European initiative which aims to describe a higher education qualification in an easily understandable way and relate it to the higher education system within which it was issued.

Joining the European Higher Education Area still remains the ultimate goal of the overall reform process, implying the improvement of a three-cycle system with easily readable and comparable degrees ECTS based, introduction of joint degrees, further improvement related to the recognition process, further development of quality assurance culture at higher education institutions in Montenegro, taking into account adopted European standards, increase of students' involvement in all aspects of higher education reforms, at institutional, national and also international level, higher students' and teachers' mobility.

The needs to be specifically addressed through Tempus IV in the forthcoming period are to: (i) create a higher education strategy; (ii) Support the development of higher education and training of experts of the Council of Higher Education (iii) Establish links between the European Higher Education Area and the European Research Area, (iv) work on the Life long learning strategy at the higher education institution, (v) further work on the improvement of quality, as well as better links between higher education bodies and the labour market.

SERBIA

The National Strategy of Serbia for EU Accession supports further revision and modernisation of education in Serbia. This includes in particular its contribution to technical, technological, social, economic and individual development. The first step in this process is to conceptualise education development and adapt the education system to the social and individual needs and capacities.

The ongoing reform of higher education system is part of a national development plan. The Ministry of Education formulated national priorities in line with the Bologna Process and the priority needs of the higher education system in Serbia.

2.3 LINK WITH ACCESSION PARTNERSHIP (AP) / EUROPEAN PARTNERSHIP (EP) / STABILISATION AND ASSOCIATION AGREEMENT (SAA) / ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

ALBANIA

The European Partnership 2008 with Albania indicates that the country needs to step up efforts to promote a better involvement in the Tempus programme as a short-term priority.

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

The European Partnership with Bosnia and Herzegovina indicates the following priorities regarding the Education Sector:

- Step up efforts to improve the education system, including primary education, and to create a modern vocational education and training system;
- Strengthen policy development and strategic planning to improve quality of education.

KOSOVO

The European Partnership for all candidates and potential candidates highlights as a short term priority the importance of developing action plans to implement the education strategies with increased dialogue and coordination at all levels and with all stakeholders. Furthermore, it is necessary to allocate sufficient resources, and to ensure a better involvement in the EU higher education programmes.

MONTENEGRO

- The European Partnership with Montenegro highlights as a short term priority the necessity to: Step up efforts to promote quality in the education system and life-long learning.
- Continue improving the quality, efficiency and relevance of the higher education system

and support its integration into the European Higher Education Area.

SERBIA

The European Partnership with Serbia mentions as a priority under "Economic Requirements" the necessity to step up efforts to improve the education system, and to create a modern vocational education and training system.

2.4 PROBLEM ANALYSIS

The Tempus programme, which is the longest-standing EU instrument in this sector and which has a strong focus on institutional co-operation, is in its fourth phase spanning the years 2007-2013. Since its inception in 1990, university cooperation under the Tempus programme has contributed successfully to institution building related to higher education in the Western Balkans and to sustainable university partnerships as well as to enhancing mutual understanding between the European Union and the Western Balkans.

2.5 LINKED ACTIVITIES AND DONOR COORDINATION

Erasmus Mundus programme 2009-2013 which includes the Joint Masters and Doctoral programme (so called Action 1) and the Erasmus Mundus Partnerships (so-called Action 2, formerly known as Erasmus Mundus External Cooperation Window). Erasmus Mundus Joint Masters and Doctoral programme (Action 1), is a world-wide programme which provides scholarships for students and scholars to more than 100 top level Erasmus Mundus Master Courses in Europe. The Erasmus Mundus Partnerships (Action 2) finances short term mobility for students from undergraduate level to postgraduate, academics and researchers organised in the framework of partnerships between higher education institutions from Europe and selected partner countries. While the Erasmus Mundus Actions, and in particular Erasmus Mundus Partnerships (Action 2) focuses on the individual mobility of students, professors and academic staff, Tempus will continue to promote institutional co-operation thereby concentrating on the reform and the modernisation of higher education systems in the Western Balkans. The programme provides only limited mobility opportunities within well defined project objectives.

The Beneficiaries in the Western Balkans have strongly benefited from the above cooperation instruments in order to open up and to modernise their higher education systems.

Donor coordination: All National and Regional/Interregional Indicative Programmes for the period 2011-13, which define the framework of the EU-funded activities in the IPA region take the activity plans of the other donors into account. To this end, all the indicative programmes and regional projects are approved by representatives of the EU Member States participating in the IPA Committee before being adopted by the European Commission.

EU Delegations and the National Tempus Offices established in the partner countries should facilitate networking between the different Tempus projects and coordination with other donors active in the area of higher education.

2.6 Lessons learned

The evaluation and studies carried out so far confirmed the relevance of the programme to support higher education reform and development as well as the validity of its intervention logic and management approaches. The final evaluation of the second phase of the Tempus programme (1994-2000) and the mid term evaluation of its third phase (2000-2006) were

carried out in 2002 and 2003. Both evaluations reported that Tempus has contributed successfully to support higher education reform and development in the partner countries.

The final evaluation of Tempus III (November 2009) confirms that the programme contributed to the overall development of higher education systems in the partner countries, including the introduction of the Bologna principles. Teachers and students benefited significantly from their involvement in Tempus III, notably through contacts with foreign colleagues, improved training, access to new learning materials/methods and mobility opportunities. Tempus III made an important contribution to making teaching more responsive to labour market needs (both public and private sectors). Many new curricula have been developed, often responding to highly specific and previously unmet labour market needs. Tempus III had a significant impact on establishing or rekindling regional co-operation among partner countries across all regions and made an important impact in terms of strengthening cooperation within individual partner countries.

The following main recommendations stemming from the final evaluation of Tempus III have already been taken into consideration in the design of Tempus IV. They continue to be highly relevant for the Tempus IV implementation:

- the strategic orientation of Tempus should be strengthened by making the strategic links between Tempus projects, national priorities and the national higher education reform agendas more explicit;
- the evaluation and monitoring procedures of Tempus, especially regarding the field monitoring, should be reinforced;
- the level of involvement of EU Delegations should be better defined and communicated;
- more emphasis should be given to best practices and information on linkages with the labour market and civil society;
- dissemination and use of project outcomes and results should be actively promoted.

A mid-term evaluation of Tempus IV was launched as of October 2011. Results are expected to be available beginning of 2012. This exercise will provide an updated analysis of the impact and functioning of the programme in the partner countries, taking into account the changes introduced in Tempus IV.

Apart from the external evaluation carried out in 2009, a series of additional major studies were concluded over the past years: best practices in university-enterprise cooperation (May 2006), sustainability of Tempus projects (November 2006), best practices in quality assurance (May 2008) and a thematic review of Tempus Structural Measures (September 2008). A study to identify best practices in university governance was finalised in 2009 and its results published and discussed in several regional conferences. The results of these studies equally underline the relevance of the programme and confirm its intervention logic.

Finally, the results of the field monitoring campaign carried out by the Executive Agency and National Tempus Offices in 2010 also confirm the high relevance, good efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of Tempus projects.

3 DESCRIPTION

3.1 OVERALL OBJECTIVE OF THE PROJECT

The overall objective of the programme is to contribute to the modernisation of higher education in the Western Balkans and to promote the voluntary convergence with EU developments in higher education such as the Bologna process.

3.2 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE(S) OF THE PROJECT

To contribute to improved quality, relevance, capacity and governance of higher education in the Western Balkans, in line with changing political, social and economic needs.

3.3 RESULTS

Results:

- Higher Education institutions prepared for successful participation in the Life Long Learning Programme including implementation of Bologna process;
- Increased synergy between higher education legislation and policy, and institutional reform
- Improved university management capacity; enhanced transparency and efficiency in decision making processes;
- Revised curricula and courses in line with changed social and economic needs.
- Improved skills of non-academic staff relevant for public administration reform and civil society development
- Trained teachers on modern education practices and methodologies;
- Enhanced modern teaching and learning methodologies and materials, with a special focus on the upgrading of text books;
- Closer co-operation and sharing of resources and experience between higher education institutions at regional and EU level.

Indicators:

Progress will be assessed taking into account the following measurable indicators:

- 80% of new and revised (harmonized with the three cycle system) university curricula successfully implemented by 2016;
- 75% of Tempus projects comply with the standards of the technical and academic evaluations;
- 75% of study programmes issue diploma supplement automatically and free of charge to students;
- More than 75% of participating institutions and programmes are using ECTS by 2016;
- Frequency of public discussions involving Higher Education Institutions and Public

Administration bodies;

- Frequency of meetings between Higher Education Institutions and the officials in charge of the labour market reform;
- 50% of participating institutions have developed internal quality assessment procedures by 2016;
- 50% of participating institutions exchange management best practices with other HEIs and other sectors by 2016;
- Number of measures of efficiency of internal administrative procedures;
- Number of measures for use of equipment purchased;
- At least 10 new curricula are developed and at least 200 students have followed newly developed or revised curricula by 2016;
- At least 50 new training courses are carried out by 2016;
- At least 400 trainees with different background (academic, administration, civil society) are trained by 2016;
- Mentoring and supervisory mechanisms are established for all newly developed programmes;
- At least 5% increase of the number of upgraded text books published by 2016;
- 100% of projects respect priority areas indicated in the Call for proposals for the Joint projects;
- 65% of regional projects over total.

3.4 MAIN ACTIVITIES

Based on experience acquired during the previous phase, this Tempus IV programme (2007-2013) provides for the three components listed below. These components are sufficiently flexible to be adapted to the needs and priorities of individual beneficiaries.

- **Component I: Joint Projects:** Joint Projects will be based on multilateral partnerships between higher education institutions in the EU and the Western Balkans. Joint Projects aim at transferring knowledge from EU universities to institutions in the Western Balkans and between partner institutions. Joint Projects can pursue the following objectives: (a) develop, promote and disseminate new curricula, teaching methods or materials; (b) to promote a quality assessment culture; (c) to modernise the management and governance of HEIs; (d) to strengthen the role of higher education institutions in society at large and to enhance their contribution to the development of lifelong learning; (e) to encourage links with the labour market, including the promotion of entrepreneurship and the creation of business start-ups and (f) to strengthen the links with research and between research and industry. Joint Projects can also include small scale and short duration mobility activities for post-graduate students, professors/teachers and university administrators provided they serve the above defined objectives. In particular, study periods of students at partner institutions must be academically recognised and credited by the home institutions. Projects may provide mobility also in the form practical placements in companies, industries and institutions for Partner Country teaching/administrative staff, students and trainees in the European Union or Partner Countries participating in the project.

Component II: Structural Projects: Structural Projects will seek to contribute to the development and reform of education systems in the Western Balkans, as well as to enhance their quality and increase their convergence with EU developments. Structural Projects may provide support to networks of HEIs and as much as possible they will include public administrations at national and/or local level so to develop institutional collaboration with universities. The eligible activities may include surveys and studies on specific reform issues (including the publication and dissemination of results), policy and expert advice, organisation of national, regional and thematic conferences, seminars, workshops, round tables (which should result in operational conclusions and recommendations), staff training on policy issues (which may include the production of training manuals and guidelines), awareness raising campaigns, dissemination and information activities, etc.

Component III: Accompanying Measures: Accompanying measures will comprise meetings of project co-ordinators and other stakeholders, dissemination activities as well as support to the National Tempus Offices in the partner countries. In addition, the EU can carry out other relevant activities like thematic conferences, studies on specific issues and activities aiming at the identification and dissemination of good practice.

3.5 ASSESSMENT OF PROJECT IMPACT, CATALYTIC EFFECT AND CROSS BORDER IMPACT (WHERE APPLICABLE)

In 2008 a Survey on the Impact of Tempus III⁷ was finalised and for the Western Balkans the study highlighted that Tempus has achieved notable progress in helping develop curricula in line with the Bologna principles. 81% of institutions state that over 50% of their curricula are now compliant with the Bologna criteria and 26% of respondents say this is due to Tempus.

Tempus has managed to achieve some very positive results in terms of encouraging reform and the process of modernisation in individual universities, faculties and departments and these positive changes have had knock-on effects and indirect benefits. The impact of exposure to an EU environment on university staff has been profound and far-reaching.

But while Tempus has achieved impressive results in its most immediate area of influence (universities), the impact study shows there is still some way to go in terms of providing positive benefits to the wider community, especially employers. Tempus has made a positive start in terms of building awareness and encouraging universities to start looking outwards to the wider community they serve. However, the more detailed findings on criteria such as relevant curricula and graduate employability, the structured dialogue with industry or having a coherent strategy on lifelong learning would seem to indicate that more could be done to put in place the mechanisms to support a more dynamic and lasting interaction between universities and their surroundings.

Tempus IV has taken on board these comments from the impact assessment of Tempus III and has included a component aiming at strengthening the links between the universities and the labour market.

⁷ "The Impact of the Tempus Programme on higher education development in the Tempus Partner Countries – A Survey" available on:
http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/tempus/doc/impact08_en.pdf

Evaluation activities, dissemination of good practices and impact assessment will be carried out jointly by the involved Commission services. The three instruments used in Tempus, preventive monitoring, desk monitoring and field monitoring, available throughout the project cycle, are described as follows:

The EACEA will regularly report to the European Commission (ELARG) on the use of committed funds and programme implementation and provide *ad hoc* information at ELARG request. The report on programme implementation shall also focus on project results, obstacles, lessons learnt and any information profitable for improving the programming and identification.

Through its monitoring and evaluation system, the Commission and the Executive Agency will ensure that Tempus impact is measured both at individual and institutional levels. Monitoring implies:

Preventive monitoring:

Through carefully planned activities, perceived or potential problem areas can be addressed.

Tools available:

- Guidelines for the Use of the Grant;
- Project Representatives' Meeting: this is the first and main opportunity to provide project grant-holders and partners of running projects with targeted training with a view to assisting with project implementation, preventing future difficulties, promoting networking, sharing of good practice and providing the Commission with valuable input into the design of information campaigns, further guidelines and information for practitioners;
- On-going guidance to projects ("helpdesk function"): provided regularly to projects through telephone conversations, e-mails and general correspondence. Information is also made available on the Tempus website if a particular issue is of concern to projects (FAQ, guidance for preparing reports, salary rates, etc.);

Projects starting also receive individual recommendation letters which are the result of the academic and technical assessment of the original proposal. These letters aim at highlighting some of the weaker elements of the proposals so that the project consortium can propose a strategy for addressing them.

1) Desk monitoring

Desk monitoring (principally correspondence and assessment of reports with written feedback) is the main instrument for administrative operations and is the primary instrument for following the progress of projects; it is the basis for carrying out payments to projects and provides input to both preventive and field monitoring as well as the basis for further feedback into the design of the programme as a whole.

Through desk monitoring the performance of projects is assessed in terms of progress/outcomes (content analysis), organisation/management (technical quality) and financial management (financial control) and constitutes the main tool for identifying and taking measures during the lifecycle, such as re-targeting an underachieving project, requesting a financial audit, suspending or stopping a project or requesting a reimbursement of funds (the monitoring 'status' of a project). It is also one of the instruments for identifying projects of particular interest which have particularly innovative features (Bologna, Lifelong learning etc).

Field monitoring

Field monitoring visits are a tool for monitoring the progress and achievements of Tempus projects in their real context, principally gathering facts to judge whether projects are

progressing according to plan and producing the expected benefits for the local institutions and learning about the life and the impact of a project in its surrounding environment. This assessment will focus on the content and on the quality of the outcomes achieved and which are not always apparent in the written reports (such as: “what is the quality of the teaching material developed?”, “are the local factors taken into account in the choice of methodologies?” etc.) Monitoring visits determine whether the objectives are turning out to be or were realistic, whether the project appears to be well managed, whether sustainability issues are being addressed and good practice principles of project cycle management are being applied and problems addressed. Monitoring visits go beyond the project and scrutinise the context in which the programme operates, highlighting the added value for the subject area, the university, innovative elements in the organisation of teaching and training and the links with policies in the Beneficiaries and in the EU.

Field monitoring is part of the project follow-up, and will be carried out by the Commission, the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency and the National Tempus Office.

The National Tempus Office will perform field monitoring visits on a regular basis.

Based on the past experience and on the new features of the Programme (increased number of regional projects, increased budget of projects, eligibility of Partner Countries' Higher Education Institutions as contractor), the Executive Agency has reinforced the field monitoring strategy as of the beginning of 2010. In particular:

- the coverage of the field monitoring was extended: each year 2/3 of the ongoing projects are visited;
- the results of the field monitoring visits are systematically transmitted to the beneficiaries in order to improve the quality of projects' implementation; in addition the results will be used to improve the design of the Programme in the future;
- the field monitoring also checks financial aspects;
- the field monitoring will continue to be a major task amongst the NTO activities and they will perform field monitoring visits on a regular basis.
- an annual report on the implementation of the field monitoring is elaborated by the Executive Agency.

3.6 SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability of the impact and outcomes are a priority objective of the Tempus programme. This notion is embedded in the programme itself since it is designed for capacity building and aims to have a structural and long term impact on the higher education systems in the countries concerned.

The key factors that impact on the likelihood of sustainability within Tempus include: ownership by beneficiaries, policy support/consistency, appropriate technology, environment, socio-cultural issues, gender equity, institutional management capacity, economic and financial viability.

In concrete terms, sustainability will be ensured by:

- The bottom-up approach promoted by the programme which favours ownership by institutions and individuals and staff motivation to take new initiatives.

- The priority given to capacity building activities addressing mid and long term needs of institutions and staff. One of the main objectives of the Tempus projects is to impact behaviours and structures.
- The institutional dimension of the projects which put the emphasis on the institutional commitment of the education institutions concerned (Universities are represented by their legal representatives).
- The priority given to structural measures targeted at the higher education systems rather than a limited number of institutions.
- The role given to the National Authorities in defining the annual priorities and being consulted during the evaluation process of the applications.
- The role played by the National Tempus Offices, notably in terms of monitoring of projects.
- The selection criteria used to identify the projects to be funded and which put the emphasis on the dissemination and sustainability issues. Applicants are supposed to define and propose an explicit strategy for sustainability, including the financial viability of the results.
- The requirement to co-fund at least 10% of the overall costs of the projects by the institutions themselves.
- The project monitoring policy implemented by the Executive Agency aiming at ensuring the best possible implementation of the projects.

3.7 ASSUMPTIONS AND PRE-CONDITIONS⁸

A continued governmental and other political support for reform process is maintained, particularly with regard to the provision of funds in the national budget for the Higher Education Reform. In addition, there is permanent interest of the academic community from the Beneficiaries and from the EU Member States to participate in the proposed activities.

4 IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES

The programme will be implemented by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA).

⁸ Assumptions are external factors that have the potential to influence (or even determine) the success of a project but lie outside the control of the implementation managers. Such factors are sometimes referred to as risks or assumptions but the Commission requires that all risks shall be expressed as assumptions. Pre-conditions are requirements that must be met before the sector support can start.

4.1 INDICATIVE BUDGET

Beneficiary	TOTAL COST	SOURCES OF FUNDING										
		EU CONTRIBUTION				NATIONAL PUBLIC CONTRIBUTION					PRIVATE	
		Total	% *	IB	INV	Total	% *	Central	Regional	IFIs	Total	% *
Albania	2 222 222	2 000 000	90	x							222 222	10
Bosnia and Herzegovina	2 666 666	2 400 000	90	x							266 666	10
Kosovo	3 000 000	2 700 000	90	x							300 000	10
Montenegro	888 888	800 000	90	x							88 888	10
Serbia	7 777 777	7 000 000	90	x							777 777	10
TOTAL	16 555 553	14 900 000	90								1 655 553	10

Amounts net of VAT

* expressed in % of the Total Cost

The financial contribution from the Commission cannot exceed 90% of the total eligible costs. A co-financing of a minimum of 10% of the total eligible cost will be asked to the consortia

The allocations are divided by beneficiary since the budget is coming from national allocations. It is not possible at this stage to indicate the exact amount per component. Over the past years, the pro-rata was 90-95% for Components I and II (one Call for Proposals) and 5-10% for Component III (which is implemented through calls for tender, framework contracts or through calls for expression of interest). These percentages are likely to remain the same for the proposed programme.

4.2 INDICATIVE IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE (PERIODS BROKEN DOWN BY QUARTER)

Contracts	Start of Tendering	Signature of contract	Project Completion
Call for Proposals (Components I, II)	2012 Q4	2013 Q3	2019 Q3
5 contracts following Calls for Tenders/ assignments under existing Framework contracts or Calls for expression of interest (Component III)	- 2012 Q4 – 2013 Q1	2013 Q2 – 2013 Q3	2014 Q4

4.3 CROSS CUTTING ISSUES

It is necessary to increase Community efforts to promote dialogue and understanding between cultures world-wide, bearing in mind the social dimension of higher education as well as the ideals of democracy and respect for human rights, including gender equality, especially as mobility fosters the discovery of new cultural and social environments and facilitates understanding thereof, thereby ensuring that no group of citizens or Western Balkans and Turkey nationals is excluded or put at a disadvantage.

4.3.1 *Equal Opportunities and non discrimination*

Over the past few decades there has been increasing attention paid to the gender dimension of poverty and development in transition economies, particularly in relation to the role of women in educational processes and the impact of higher education on equal opportunity policies.

Projects should integrate gender mainstreaming in their aims and activities, specifically in subject matters and areas of study where the presence of women in the economy has traditionally been very low (science and technology). Projects should promote gender balance and identify factors influencing gender discrimination. They should monitor and evaluate the transition from education and training to working life, recruitment and career development of potential female top managers.

Projects in the sphere of education and sciences should promote the change of gender roles and societal stereotypes, avoiding any sort of cultural prejudice in educational materials.

The principle of equal opportunities should be taken into account when evaluating the quality of all projects proposed under the three components. Specific attention will be paid to this dimension when determining the benefit of mobility activities.

While implementing the project activities and to the extent applicable, gender disaggregated data should be made available to carry out an analysis of the social and economic impact of the actions undertaken.

4.3.2 *Environment and climate change*

Due consideration should be given to the Government's development policy relating to environmental management and that such policy is embedded in all strategic policy documents they may draft, all training activities they may carry out and new study programmes and curricula they may design.

4.3.3 *Minorities and vulnerable groups*

Minorities and vulnerable groups should be taken into account when evaluating the quality of all projects proposed under the three components.

4.3.4 *Civil Society/Stakeholders involvement*

Other legal entities involved in higher education may participate as partners of the applicant institutions (i.e. associations, organisations or networks of higher education, rector, teacher or student organisations, non-governmental organisations, chambers of commerce, labour associations or other public or private professional, private or public enterprises, etc.). Public administrations (ministries, other national, regional and local administrations) or governmental organisations may also participate in the Tempus programme as partners but may not receive funding from the grant with the exception of per diems and travel costs.

ANNEXES

Documents to be annexed to the Project fiche

- 1. Log frame**
- 2. Indicative amounts (in EUR) contracted and disbursed by quarter for the project**
- 3. Description of Institutional Framework**
- 4. Reference to laws, regulations and strategic documents**
- 5. Details per EU funded contract**
- 6. Project visibility activities**

ANNEX 1: Logical framework matrix in standard format

LOGFRAME PLANNING MATRIX FOR PROJECT FICHE:	Programme name and number: SI2.615827 - Multi-Beneficiary Programme for Tempus	
	Contracting period expires: 3 years following the date of conclusion of the Financing Agreements	Disbursement period expires 1 year following the end date for execution of contract(s).
	Total budget: EUR 16 555 553	IPA budget: EUR 14 900 000

Overall objective	Objectively verifiable indicators	Sources of Verification
To contribute to social and economic development (applying equal opportunities aspects) and the strengthening of civil society.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Public investment in higher education in absolute terms and per student; - Higher education, research and development share in the GNP. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reports of international professional organisations - Central Bureau of Statistics

Project purpose	Objectively verifiable indicators	Sources of Verification	Assumptions
Facilitate the reform of higher education institutions, in view of upgrading the quality and management of academic institutions, in line with changing political, social and economic needs, through benchmarking with EU Member States.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implementation of the principles of the Bologna Declaration - Number of curricula harmonized with the new three cycle system (nr. of programs accredited/ implemented) - Number of students having followed new curricula - Reports on diploma and course recognition - Number of graduates vs. number of students (student persistence rate) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Progress reports - Publications - Ministries of Education and Sciences, and other governmental and non-governmental sources - Official statistics 	Continued preparedness by the Ministries of Education and Sciences, to make resources available for support and assist in programme activities and to implement recommendations, especially for the implementation of harmonized undergraduate programs
Results	Objectively verifiable indicators	Sources of Verification	Assumptions
1. Higher Education institutions prepared for successful participation in the Life Long Learning Programme including implementation of Bologna process;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 80% of new and revised (harmonized with the three cycle system) university curricula successfully implemented by 2016; - 75% of Tempus projects comply to the standards of the technical and academic evaluations; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EACEA reports - Progress reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continued Governmental and other political support for reform process, particularly the provision of funds in the national budget for the HE reform - Permanent support of the academic community for the reform

<p>2. Increased synergy between higher education legislation and policy, and institutional reform</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 75% of study programmes issue diploma supplement automatically and free of charge to students; - More than 75% of participating institutions and programmes are using ECTS by 2016; - Frequency of public discussions involving Higher Education Institutions and Public Administration bodies; - Frequency of meetings between Higher Education Institutions and the officials in charge of the labour market reform; - 50% of participating institution have developed internal quality assessment procedures by 2016; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Publications - Ministry of Education and Sciences - Other governmental and non-governmental sources - Education journals - Media sources 	
<p>3. Improved university management capacity; enhanced transparency and efficiency in decision making processes;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 50% of participating institution exchange management best practices with other HEIs and other sectors by 2016. - Number of measures of efficiency of internal administrative procedures - Number of measures for use of equipment purchased - At least 10 new curricula are 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agency for Accreditation for Higher Education (responsible for the accreditation of new study programs) 	

<p>4. Revised curricula and courses in line with changed social and economic needs.</p> <p>5. Improved skills of non-academic staff relevant for public administration reform and civil society development</p> <p>6. Trained teachers on modern education practices and methodologies;</p> <p>7. Enhanced modern teaching and learning methodologies and materials, with a special focus on the upgrading of text books;</p> <p>8. Closer co-operation and sharing of resources and experience between higher education institutions at regional and EU level.</p>	<p>developed by 2013; - At least 200 students have followed newly developed or revised curricula by 2016;</p> <p>- At least 50 new training courses are carried out by 2016;</p> <p>- At least 400 trainees with different background (academic, administration, civil society) are trained by 2016;</p> <p>- mentoring and supervisory mechanisms are established for all newly developed programmes;</p> <p>- At least 5% increase of the number of upgraded text books published by 2016;</p> <p>- 100% of projects respect priority areas indicated in the Call for proposals for the Joint projects</p> <p>- 65% of regional projects over total</p>		
Activities	Means	Costs	Assumptions
<p>- Workshops on successful elaboration of a Tempus project proposal</p> <p>- Retraining of academic and non-academic staff</p>	<p>Grant agreements signed with the universities, and the academic institutions under Components I and II</p>	<p>EUR 14 900 000</p>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction of systems and policy development - Dissemination of results of past projects - Introduction of library and management information systems - Reform of university governance, administration and finance - Development and revision of curricula - Provision of new teaching materials - Introduction of new teaching methodologies - Enhancing capacity of international relations offices - Short cycle training courses for staff from non-academic institutions such as local, regional and other authorities in the Beneficiaries and social partners - Introduction of the European Credit Transfer System - Introduction of mentoring and quality assurance mechanisms 	<p>Specific contracts under a Framework Contract, service contracts for studies and grant agreements for the National Tempus Offices under Component III</p>		
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Annex 2: Indicative amounts (in EUR) contracted and disbursed by quarter for the project

Contracted	4th 2012	4th 2013	4th 2014	4th 2015		
Tempus	0	14 900 000				
Cumulated	0	14 900 000				
Disbursed	4th 2012	4th 2013	4th 2014	4th 2015	4th 2016	4th 2019
Tempus	0	8 940 000		4 470 000		1 490 000
Cumulated	0	8 940 000		13 410 000		14 900 000

The indicative schedule for disbursements is mainly based on the cycle of the projects (Component I):

- First pre-financings (60% of the total grants) in 2013 (after contractualisation);
- Second pre-financings (30% of the total grants) in 2015 (approximately one year and a half after start of the projects);
- Payment of the balance (10% of the total grants) in 2019 (after completion of the projects).

Annex 3: Description of Institutional Framework

Implementation tasks are delegated under Article 54(2)(a) of the Financial Regulation to the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency, which was created by Commission Decision 2005/56/EC of 14 January 2005. With its decision C(2008)5582 adopted on 9 October 2008, the Commission entrusted the Executive Agency with the management of the Tempus III and Tempus IV programme. Commission Decision C(2008)5888 of 14 October 2008 delegating powers to the Executive Agency specifies that, under both programme phases, the Agency shall be responsible for managing support to projects and for the implementation of accompanying measures, including the support to National Tempus Offices in the partner countries.

According to Article 12 (3) of the Council Regulation No (EC) 58/2003 of 19 December 2002 laying down the statute for executive agencies to be entrusted with certain tasks in the management of Community programmes⁹, any programme delegated to an executive agency has to contribute to the financing of the administrative budget of the agency.

The Education, Audiovisual and Culture Agency Executive Agency (EACEA) is responsible for the management of all actions of Tempus IV under the supervision of DG ELARG. As contracting authority, the EACEA will be responsible for the selection/evaluation/award procedure.¹⁰ DG ELARG will participate as voting member in the selection/evaluation committee chaired by the EACEA and relevant EU Delegations will be also involved in the selection process. DG EAC will be involved in the selection and valorisation process.

National Tempus Offices (NTOs) in the partner countries, in close coordination with the EU Delegations, will assist the Commission and the Executive Agency in the following tasks: promotion of the programme, assistance to potential applicants and project beneficiaries, support to EACEA in monitoring project implementation, support to higher education reform experts within their country and provision of information on the implementation of reforms. National Tempus Offices are bodies designated through the ministries of education of the partner countries. Prior Approval by the EU Delegation in the country concerned will be necessary. For all these reasons, for National Tempus Offices, direct award is foreseen according to Article 168(f) of the Implementing Rules and full financing will be given on the basis of Article 253.1(e) of the Implementing Rules. In cases of non approval of the proposals made by the national authorities, National Tempus Offices could be appointed by the Commission following a competitive procedure.

The Agency will continue to invite National Contact Points in the EU Member States and National Tempus Offices in the Beneficiaries to networking meetings.

European Union Delegations in the partner countries will be closely involved in the various stages of the programme's implementation: consultation of ministries of education on national priorities consultation on the eligibility of HEIs and the relevance of the project proposals to the targeted countries; support with the promotion of the programme.

At the national level, here are the authorities in charge of the Higher Education Sector:

- Albania: Ministry of Education and Sciences

⁹ OJ L11, 16.1.2003, p. 1.

¹⁰ Call for tenders in the case of service contracts and call for proposals in the case of grants.

- Bosnia and Herzegovina: Ministry of Civil Affairs- Sector for Education
- Kosovo: Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
- Montenegro: Ministry of Education and Science
- Serbia: Ministry of Education and Science

Annex 4: Reference to laws, regulations and strategic documents

- Council Decision of 18 February 2008 (2008/210/EC) on the principles, priorities and conditions contained in the European Partnership with Albania and repealing Decision 2006/54/EC
- Council Decision of 18 February 2008 (2008/211/EC) on the principles, priorities and conditions contained in the European Partnership with Bosnia and Herzegovina and repealing Decision 2006/55/EC
- Council Decision of 22 January 2007 (2007/49/EC) on the principles, priorities and conditions contained in the European Partnership with Montenegro.
- Council Decision of 18 February 2008 (2008/213/EC) on the principles, priorities and conditions contained in the European Partnership with Serbia including Kosovo as defined by United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 of 10 June 1999 and repealing Decision 2006/56/EC
- Multi-Beneficiary Multi-annual Indicative Planning Document (2009/2011)

Annex 5: Details per EU funded contract

All contracts implementing the action must be awarded and implemented in accordance with the procedures and standard documents laid down and published by the Commission, in force at the time of the launch of the procedure in question. Participation in the award of contracts for the present action shall be open to all natural and legal persons covered by the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (Council Regulation (EC) No 1085/2006 establishing an Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance, 17 July 2006).

The essential selection and award criteria for the award of grants are laid down in the in Title VI of Part I 'Grants' of the Financial Regulation, complemented by Chapter 4 'Grants' of Title IV 'External Actions' of Part II 'Special Provisions' of the same Regulation.

The maximum possible rate of co-financing for grants is 90%. This co-financing amount is justified by the fact that Tempus is a demand-driven programme in the region. It is one of the longstanding EU funded programmes supporting cooperation and sustainable capacity building in the field of higher education in the Western Balkans, and therefore it has been clearly identified as a successful initiative. Tempus IV will continue to ensure the impact and the visibility of this EU action.

For grants awarded to National Tempus Offices under Component III (Accompanying Measures), full financing will be applied based on Article 253.1(e) of the Commission Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 2342/2002 of 23 December 2002 laying down detailed rules for the implementation of the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Union.

For **programme components I "Joint Projects"** and **component II "Structural Projects"**, project proposals will be submitted in reply to annual calls for proposals in Q4 2012 published in the Official Journal and on the programme's website. In order to focus the programme's interventions and to maximise its impact, regional and national priorities will be defined. Projects under both components can be proposed by consortia of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) from the EU and the partner countries. Public administrations (ministries, other national, regional and local administrations) or governmental organisations may also participate in the Tempus programme as partners but may not receive funding from the grant with the exception of per diem and travel costs.

For **programme component III, "Accompanying Measures"**, will be implemented through calls for tender, specific assignments under existing framework contracts and contracts with experts drawn from a call for expression of interest. In particular, meetings of project co-ordinators and other stakeholders will be organised through the appropriate framework contract. Dissemination can be organised through various activities such as thematic seminars (implemented through a framework contract) or studies (implemented through calls for tender or calls for expression of interest).

Annex 6: Project visibility activities

The EACEA promotes the programme and its Calls for Proposals on its website and via numerous publications, which are available both as paper versions and in electronic format. Information is broadly disseminated in the participating countries, in particular via information sessions organised by National Contact Points in the Member States and National Tempus Offices in the partner countries. EU Delegations are also involved in disseminating information about the programme.

In the implementation of projects, special attention is paid to visibility, dissemination and exploitation of results. Each partnership is required to provide a solid communication strategy (a) to promote the programme and disseminate project results, trying to reach a maximum number of institutions and (b) to ensure the visibility of the programme in all reports, publications and events linked to the project activities.