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BESTSDI – Western Balkans Academic Education Evolution
and Professional's Sustainable Training for Spatial Data
Infrastructures

With the support of the Erasmus+ program:
Higher Education – International Capacity Building
N° 574150-EPP-1-2016-1-HR-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP

BESTSDI Project Status Report

Deliverable: D5.4-1

Version 1

Author(s) / Organisation(s):

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Work Package / Task:

WP 5 Management

Task 5.2: Project Coordination, Administration and Monitoring

References:

Description of the project (Annex I to the Grant Agreement)

Project Management Plan

Short Description:

The Deliverable provides the Project status for first half year of its lifetime: 15.10.2016 – 15.04.2017. in all its main elements describing legal status, managerial, financial and communication issues, project execution, results achieved and problems occurred.

Keywords:

Project status, Management, Reporting



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Revision	Date	Author(s)	Status	Description
V0.1	10-08-2017	Željko Bačić	Working draft	Document structured and initially filed with data
V1.0	31-08-2017	Željko Bačić, Vesna Poslončec Petrić	Final report	Full document

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1. Introduction

Project proposal for “Western Balkans academic education Evolution and professional's sustainable training for spatial data infrastructures – BESTSDI” project has been proposed by project consortium led by University of Zagreb, Faculty of Geodesy for Erasmus+ Key Action 2 – Capacity Building in field of Higher Education call for year 2016 and accepted for execution.

The wider objectives of the BESTSDI project is to improve the quality of higher education in Geographical Science and Technology field, SDI and geodesy, enhance its relevance for the labour market and society and to improve the level of competences and skills in HEI's by developing new and innovative education programmes within the field of SDI.

The specific project objectives are to develop, test and adapt new curricula, courses, learning material and tools within the field of SDI. In doing so, existing undergraduate and graduate geodesy and geoinformatics curricula's in the academic institutions in the Western Balkans region will be lifted to higher levels, recognising the of spatial data for modern society and its development. By the incorporation of SDI concept and other modern concepts based on spatial data and information, the students of the new courses will be able provide efficiently spatial data and services to SDI users. In parallel, the project also introduces SDI and related concepts in undergraduate and graduate study programs on academic institutions which profiles are well recognized as SDI users, raising awareness among the students and professionals about the relevancy of SDI and advantages of well-organized spatial data.

In this context, the specific objective of the project is to develop appropriate curricula, courses and their content for both target groups (SDI providers and SDI users) of academic institutions. This includes the development of SDI compulsory and elective courses, modules or parts of courses as well as development of sustainable training courses (life-long education) of broad scope of professionals.

An additional project objective is to disseminate the project experiences and results to create additional value and multiply the impact of the results.

A third objective is to establish the necessary foundation for the participation of partner universities in the European academic SDI arena.

The introduction of modernized curricula will provide new kind of professionals equipped with broader cognition, knowledge and skills about SDI and other modern spatial data related concepts. The new students will be able to foster development at all levels of SDI's in their countries and therefore adopt EU directives faster and more efficient. In practice this should also result in growth of a SDI based spatial data market.

According to the Grant Agreement between the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency of European Union and University of Zagreb (Project coordinator) for execution of project a grant in size od 978.166,66 Euro's has been approved. The action (project) shall run for 36 months, from 15th October 2016 till 14th October 2019.

BESTSDI project has been successfully launched at the kick-off meeting held in Zagreb between November 14th and 16th 2016.

Document scope

The scope of this document is to provide in brief status of project execution on semi-annual basis to all partners and interested parties (EACEA, National Erasmus Offices (NEO’s), etc. covering six areas:

- Legal status,
- Organization & Management status,
- Project execution,
- Financial status,
- Deliverables and
- Evaluation and Quality Assurance.

With each area of reporting in the summary, internal project risks have been evaluated.

This is the first Project Status Report for the first half year of BESTSDI project execution covering period from 15th October 2016 till 14th April 2017.

2. Legal status

The Grant Agreement between EACEA and University of Zagreb has been signed on 31st October 2106. The individual Partnership Agreements between University of Zagreb and each partner institution (in total 15 agreements) have been prepared, agreed and successfully signed in the period between 27th January and 13th April 2017. All Partnership Agreements have been signed in deadline foreseen by the Grant Agreement and delivered to EACEA on 14th April 2017.

Procurement procedures and contracts with subcontractors (LANTMATERIET, NOVOGIT, financial revision company) have not been prepared or signed during this reporting period.

There were no other legal status issues or changes which could influence legal status of the BESTSDI project.

Legal status quantification & internal risk evaluation:

Action	Expected no.	Executed no.	Rate of execution	Risk evaluation
Grant Agreement	1	1	100%	No threat
Partnership Agreement	15	15	100%	No threat
Subcontracting	3	0	0%	No threat

3. Organization and management status

3.1. Organization

In accordance to Project description and Guidelines for the Use of the Grant for Grants awarded in 2016 under Call EAC/A04/2015, version 01: 08 December 2016 (released by EACEA) at the Kick-off meeting held at University in Zagreb, in Zagreb, Croatia on November 14th – 16th 2016 decisions have been adopted about the organization of the Project and in accordance to them respective formal documents (FD’s) issued.

Following project bodies have been established and positions posted:

- Project Coordinator
- Project Office
- Project Management Board
- Project Steering Committee
- Project Advisory Committee

and

- Partner project managers and contact persons (15 + 15 persons)
- Work Package Leaders and Work Package Deputy Leaders for all six project packages
- Task Group Leaders and Task Group Deputy Leaders for 25 groups (25 + 21)

Organization quantification & internal risk evaluation:

Action	Expected no.	Executed no.	Rate of execution	Risk evaluation
Project bodies establishment	5	5	100%	No threat
Project positions appointed	15	15	100%	No threat
WP leaders and deputies appointed	12	12	100%	No threat
TG leaders and deputies appointed	46	46	100%	No threat

3.2. Management

For successful management of the Project, web-page (<http://www.beststdi.eu>) has been released on the Kick-off meeting, together with Moodle platform (<http://science.geof.unizg.hr/moodle/>) which will serve as overall ICT platform for project execution and management. During the first half year both

ICT tools have been maintained and upgraded with information and capabilities in accordance to needs of the Project.

Management issues (together with financial ones) have been object of continuous activity of the Project Coordinator, Project Office and managers of Project Partners. There were problems in communication, which all were not removed during first half year of the Project! This apply especially on response time for several partners.

Targeting improvement of communication and management respectively, Project Office launched internal monthly e-newsletter BESTSDI-Info. This e-newsletter is distributed on 220 e-mail addresses (all project team members, EACEA, NEO’s, International affairs offices at partner universities, etc.). First issue has been released 12th January 2017. In the reporting period 4 issues have been published.

Management quantification & internal risk evaluation:

Action	Expected no.	Executed no.	Rate of execution	Risk evaluation
ICT support established	2	2	100%	No threat
BESTSDI Info published	4	4	100%	No threat

4. Project execution

4.1. Events

According to the Project Workplan during whole project life time it is foreseen to organize minimally one (in three occasions two) project events per quarter of year. During reporting period, three project workshops have been organized:

- Q1: Kick-off meeting held at University in Zagreb, Zagreb, Croatia on 14th – 16th November 2016, 44 participants and 12 guests
- Q2-User group: Workshop held at University of Novi Sad, Faculty of Civil Engineering in Subotica, Subotica, Serbia on 13th – 15th March 2017, 36 participants
- Q2-Provider group: Workshop held at University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius, Faculty of Civil Engineering in Skopje, Skopje, FRYO Macedonia on 27th – 29th March 2017, 30 participants.

Events quantification & internal risk evaluation:

Action	No. of participants attending event		Rate of attendance	Risk evaluation
	Foreseen	Present*		
Kick-off workshop Zagreb	46	41	89%	No threat
Q1-User workshop Subotica	40	34	85%	No threat
Q2-Provider workshop Skopje	24	21	88%	No threat

* Number of present participants corresponds to number of those who should attend the event. The real number of present participants can differ, and is given with the facts about the event!

4.2. Work Packages & Task Groups work

During reporting period work of all Work Packages has been initiated and launched. Emphasis was on WP1 – Preparation and WP5 Management, while in WP2A – Development of Curriculum, WP3 – Quality Plan and WP4 – Dissemination and exploitation some Task Groups have been erected and started to work. During first half year of project execution following Task groups have started working:

- TG1.1 – Current curriculum status (at partner country universities)
- TG1.2 – Current learning material status (at program country universities)
- TG1.3 – Requirement analysis
- TG1.4 – Specification of project curriculum
- TG2.3 – Equipment purchase / installation
- TG3.1 – Development of Quality plan
- TG4.1 – Communication plan
- TG5.1 – Project management structure establishment
- TG5.2 – Project coordination, administration and monitoring
- TG5.3 – National stakeholder coordination

In accordance to project Workplan, TG1.1, TG1.2 and TG1.3 finished their work with the end of the reporting period (to the level of the final draft document). TG5.1 finished one out of two tasks.

WP & TG work quantification & internal risk evaluation:

Action	Expected no.	Executed no.	Rate of execution	Risk evaluation
TG formally established	25	10	40%	No threat
TG performed and task finished in foreseen time	5	3	60%	No threat
TG performed and task finished with delay	2	0	0%	No threat Not in reporting period
TG did not fulfil task	-	-	-	-

5. Financial status

EACEA transferred to the University of Zagreb, in accordance to Grant Agreement, in advance 50% of Grant awarded (489.098.33 Euro) on 15th November 2016.

Following the signing of Partnership Agreements and readiness of partners to accept funds for them, University of Zagreb, as Project Coordinator, has during this reporting period manage to transfer funds to seven partners on February 22nd, 2017. The partners who received funding in this money transfer were: KU Leuven, HBO, UNIMO, UNITZ, UBT, UCG, UNIPZ. At that occasion, respective amounts have also transferred from University of Zagreb to Faculty of Geodesy in Zagreb and Faculty of Geotechnical Engineering in Varaždin. Total amount of transferred money was 232.369,50 Euro.

With other eight partners, activities on preparation and signature of Partnership Agreements, and creating financial preconditions for money transfer have continued. This concerns especially the issue of opening special bank accounts for the project partners, what has somewhere, due to complex national procedures, taken much more time than anticipated. Following partners faced such situations severely: PUT, AUT and UNIBL.

During this reporting period spending was reported only by UNIZG FOG in amount of 4.165 Euro (0,43% of total Grant amount).

Regarding co-financing of the project activities, what relates primarily with organization of project events – workshops, three partners: UNIZG FOG, UNS FCE and UKIM did it. The exact figures of co-financing were not ready for this report.

At the workshops in Subotica and Skopje, special attendance has been given to financial management of the project and project planning instrument has been introduced – Project Partner Annual Plan (PPAP).

Financial management quantification & internal risk evaluation:

Action	Expected no.	Executed no.	Rate of execution	Risk evaluation
Transfer of funding	16	8	50%	Threat (comment 1)
Expenditure	978.166,66	4.165,00	0,43%	No threat
PPAP draft delivery on time (15 th April 2017)	15	10	67%	Threat (comment 2)
Quarterly financial reporting	-	-	-	-

Comment 1: Delayed transfer of funds and complications in organization of financial management in some partner institution may cause problems for partners to attend the events.

Action undertaken: Project office intensifies communication with partners and provided support (documents and models) to solve the problems.

Comment 2: The PPAP has been introduced at Subotica and Skopje workshops and delivery requested in short period. Still, one third of partners did not fulfil this task on time.

Action undertaken: Project office provided support in drafting the PPAP and at the same time urged delivery.

6. Deliverables

According to Project description and workplan, following deliverables were foreseen for delivery during the reporting period (bold marked deliverables have been delivered):

- **T1.1 – Status Analysis at the Partner Universities Report (M6)**
- **T1.2 – Learning Resources at Program Universities and other external Repositories Report (M6)**
- **T1.3 – Requirement Analysis Report (M6)**
- T3.1 – Quality Assurance Plan (QAS)
- T3.2 – Evaluation Plan (EP)
- **T4.3 – Dissemination Plan (first part web-site, Moodle platform, internal e-newsletter) (M1)**
- **T5.1 – Kick-off meeting decisions (M1)**
- T5.2 – Project Management Plan (M1/11)



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Deliverables quantification & internal risk evaluation:

Action	Expected no.	Executed no.	Rate of execution	Risk evaluation
Deliverables (final draft)	8	5	62,5%	Threat (comment 3)
Deliverables (adopted)	-	-	-	-
Deliverables (published)	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-

Comment 3: Delayed delivery of QAS and EP reflects on management and execution of project. Delay was caused by several reasons (initial reshuffle of TG3.1 responsible partner and later Project Coordinator health problems).

Action undertaken: Additional effort by TG3.1, TG5.1 and Project Office is foreseen for second semi-annual period to deliver documents in redefined deadline.

In Zagreb, 31st August 2017.

Project Coordinator:

Prof. dr. sc. Željko Bačić