

Attachment to the email:

Guidelines to the local institution for the organization of the visit

The visit should cover the following elements

I. The International Strategy and project management approach at the University level

For this part of the meeting representatives from the different department/services concerned should be involved and, if applicable, visits to some of these department/services (for instance the international relations or the finance departments) organised.

- I.a A short presentation of the University** covering in particular its internationalisation strategy and its participation in international cooperation (/mobility) programmes supported by the EU and other funding bodies.
- I.b A short description of the overall management of EU (/Tempus / Erasmus+) projects in the university**, for what concerns the strategic decisions (i.e. who decides on which funding proposal to present or to be involved in) as well as the on-going implementation, monitoring and dissemination of the projects. Aspects such as the nature, size and role of the different services involved (e.g. international Relations, Students, Quality Assurance, etc.) and the synergies (/communality of approaches) between the different projects will have to be addressed.
- I.c A presentation of the financial management of EU funds in the university** in terms of services involved (e.g. is there as special division for EU funds), shared responsibilities with the project teams, authorising bodies, etc.

II. Bilateral Meeting with the project team(s)

This part of the meeting will assess the implementation and management strategy followed by the project team(s) in order to reach the project's objectives, and the progress made in the project's implementation. The participation will include the coordinator and key actors in the project team as well as stakeholders and/or target groups if relevant (in particular for projects involving student/staff mobility and training)

The issues to be addressed will concern:

- II.a The organisation of the project team(s) within the partnership** in terms of decision making bodies (composition, periodicity of meetings, coverage of the partnership agreement), distribution and monitoring of tasks (responsibility for the different work packages), stability of the teams (/changes as compared to key actors in the application), communication methods, etc.
- II.b Presentation of the activities carried out** as compared the original application in terms of timing (has the original calendar been respected and if not, why and how will the delays be addressed), nature and quality of the outputs produced so far, involvement of (/awareness raising towards) the different stakeholders and target groups, project dissemination strategy and activities carried out so far (including a presentation of the project website), etc.
- II.c Usage of the grant** in terms of volume and nature of the expenditure carried out so far, payment modalities between the coordinating institution and the partners, relations with the central financial services (see I.c above)
- II.d Lessons learned:** main obstacles/problems encountered and remedial actions taken; key achievements and most positive aspects in the implementation so far, best practices.

III. Documents for the meeting

The coordinator should prepare a folder with key documentation related to project management, including (for instance):

- Meeting agenda with the list of participants
- Copy of the Partnership agreement(s) signed within the partnership?
- Organogram of the project organisation with the identification of the responsible bodies/persons for what concerns the project management and the implementation of the different work packages;
- Minutes of the last coordination meeting
- Copy of the most relevant pages of the project website and any other dissemination material/results (e.g. leaflet, poster, brochure, media coverage, etc.)
- Copy of the Quality Assurance / Evaluation reports produced so far (if any)
- Copies of the products/output produced so far

ANNEX II.3: Guiding questions

❖ General management

The monitor should look at the overall management structure, trying to understand whether a responsible centralised unit exists or project coordinators/project teams work more in isolation one from the other, the composition of project teams, their interactions, Tempus/CBHE related workload, the level of awareness/involvement of university administration, etc.

- Which are the main responsibilities of the central administration in the management of Tempus/CBHE projects?
- How many staff members are employed in Tempus/CBHE related tasks at central level? How are they financed? Which share of their working time is dedicated to Tempus projects?
- To which extent is the top management involved in projects and in the decision-making process? How is it aware of projects' results?
- Is there any harmonisation of procedures for Tempus/CBHE projects managed by the university? Or, in general, for EU funded projects managed by the university (any economy of scale)?
- Is there a horizontal supervision of project, i.e. a quality assurance body? If yes, which is the composition of this body? Are students involved? Is it only in charge of Tempus/CBHE or also of other EU funded projects (i.e. Erasmus Mundus, FP7, etc.)?
- How the single project team reports / interacts with this horizontal body (if any)?
- In case of problems in one project, is this horizontal body intervening? Are the problems and proposed solutions discussed and disseminated amongst other projects?
- Are there mechanisms for knowledge sharing and knowledge management amongst Tempus projects? And amongst EU funded projects in general?
- Is there any internal dissemination of project results in other departments not involved in the ongoing projects?
- Is there any external dissemination activity organised at other universities in the country?
- Does the university have a general strategy for its international cooperation activities, i.e. preferred field of intervention, geographical areas or funding sources? Are project ideas developed at the central level?
- Is there a sort of follow-up mechanism of past projects? How the past experience is capitalised for new projects?

❖ Financial Management

The responsible person (of the financial unit if the financial management is centralised/harmonised, or the project coordinator/administrative assistant if the financial management is decentralised) should be invited to give an overview of the procedures/systems used and people involved in the financial management of Tempus/CBHE projects, including any significant difficulties and any issues they wish to raise with the monitor. The monitor will focus in particular on the organisation of the workflow, the knowledge and implementation of main Tempus financial rules, the book-keeping, etc.

General financial management

- How is the financial management/accounting organised?
- Is there a centralised financial management system used for Tempus/CBHE projects? Have the projects been given its own identification number/account for the financial management?
- Who is authorised to accept/authorise expenses?
- How the follow-up of expenses is done (i.e. by excel sheets?)?

Financial arrangements between the beneficiary and co-beneficiaries

- Which are the agreed rules for budget management and disbursement of funds? Any formal internal document/agreement has been signed with the co-beneficiaries, i.e. partnership agreement?
- How often do the co-beneficiaries report their expenses? How and when are payments/reimbursements done to the co-beneficiaries?
- Are copies of receipts/invoices of co-beneficiaries kept? Who keeps justifications, how and when are justifications transmitted to the beneficiary?
- How are money transfers between the beneficiary and the co-beneficiaries recorded?
- On which basis are they done? Claim from co-beneficiaries?
- How the co-financing is managed/recorded? Which agreement has been set with the co-beneficiaries on co-financing?
- Has disbursement of funds been regular? How is the disbursement organised and monitored? What additional resources have been made available to support activities?

Revenues

- Do you receive funding from other EU programmes? If yes, which ones?

Follow-up of costs by budget headings

- Staff costs: Are there timesheets? How do the project managers follow up the worked hours? Please provide an example of timesheet.
- Travel costs: how per-diems are calculated/defined? Are the ceilings for per diem respected?
- Subcontracting: Is there any subcontracting planned in the budget? Do you have common guidelines for subcontracting procedures?
- How do you use indirect costs?
- What is the invoicing and payment practice?
- Are the costs incurred so far in line with the estimated budget? Is the foreseen splitting of the budget between headings in line with the estimated budget?

Additional questions for better understanding the financial rules:

- Do you have questions on specific rules, such as:
 - eligibility of costs
 - unit costs
 - exchange rates
 - transfers between headings
 - definition of subcontracting
 - interests on pre-financing

❖ Project content

The co-ordinator should be invited to give an overview of the progress of the project (key achievements and any significant difficulties) and any issue which the project team wishes to raise with you. The monitor should focus in particular on the management structure, the co-ordination & communication with partners, the division of roles amongst partners, etc.

Project management

- Describe the management structure and decision making process. Is there a project management group/board established? How often does it meet?
- Have there been changes in the staff involved in managing/delivering this project (including any additional recruitment)? If yes: how these changes impact on the project?
- Illustrate the definition and distribution of tasks and responsibilities amongst project partners.
- Are there named contact persons in every partner institution? How the teams have been established?
- How are communication pathways structured? Is the communication between the responsible persons in the partner countries and the project management satisfactory?
- Are timely and appropriate decisions being made to support effective implementation and problem resolution? Is there any conflict resolution system put in place?
- Is there an internal monitoring system in place, allowing cost-effective implementation of activities? Are activities monitored regularly by the project and corrective measures taken if required?
- In cases of large networks, how is the networking being managed? Has it proven difficult? What is the added value of a large network? In cases of small networks, is there sufficient expertise available to the project? In cases of structural measures projects, how is the Ministry actively involved in all steps of project implementation?
- For reporting, how do the co-beneficiaries contribute? If applicable, was the Intermediary/Final Report submitted on time? If not, why?
- Could you please show the documentation related to project management: e.g. progress report, quality assurance or internal monitoring report, minutes of the meetings, etc.

Progress in project implementation

- To what extent are activities implemented on schedule? Have all planned activities actually been undertaken? In case of delays or deviation compared to the work plan, how will those be rectified? Please show the work plan. Is the work plan still up to date? Is an updated work plan required?
- What is the quantity and quality of the results produced so far in comparison to the plans? Have all planned results been delivered to date/milestones achieved? Is there concrete evidence of the achieved results?
- Have all planned outcomes (as defined in the logical framework included in the proposal) been achieved to date? What is the quality of the outcomes/services available? How the assessment of outcomes is done?
- To what extent does the project management actively promote the use of and benefit from these results/services amongst stakeholders?
- Is there a resource schedule available and is it also used by the project management? Have there been any changes to the budgeted expenditure in relation to managing/delivering the project's activities/results?
- Are there any unplanned positive / negative effects on the target groups?
- Which are the main obstacles and problems encountered during project implementation?

If time allows, the project officer might also asks questions related to relevance, impact and sustainability. The guiding questions for each monitoring criterion - as listed in Part I. 4 can be used for easier reference.