



# Project Implementation Report

## COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Project Number:	<b>609675 2019 1944</b>
Project Title:	<b>Fostering Internationalization at Montenegrin HEIs through Efficient Strategic Planning - IESP</b>
Coordinating Institution:	<b>University of Montenegro</b>

### RELEVANCE

The relevance of the project is confirmed.

Due to the change of government in late 2020 and the new configuration of the Ministries in Montenegro, attention should be paid to confirm the same commitment in the project by the National Authorities.

### QUALITY OF THE PROJECT DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

We acknowledge that due to the COVID 19 pandemic the implementation of the project is registering a couple of months of delay and that a number of activities have been converted into on-line: meetings among partners, trainings to academic and administrative staff, workshops and more.

For the moment, we estimate that these factors are not jeopardising the timely realisation of the project, until 14 November 2021.

The report describes all important milestones that have been implemented during the first year, in particular: the development of "Guidelines for internationalization of Montenegrin universities", the trainings for academic and administrative staff, the decision for the establishment of the 'Language support centre for internationalization' at each of the Montenegrin universities involved in the project, the purchased of equipment, and more.

From the report and the various documents assessed, we acknowledge that the level of implementation of project activities at the three Montenegrin Universities is different. The University of Montenegro (UCG) is quite advanced and the report describes in great detail the achievements at UCG. For example, the 'Language support centre for internationalization' has been launched and started its activities; following the draft of the Internationalisation Strategy UCG has already developed the supporting documentation to internationalisation associated to the strategy (protocols, manuals, templates, etc.)

The same cannot be said for the University of Donja Gorica (UDG) and the Mediterranean University (UM). Therefore, we urge you to ensure the same level of implementation and activities realisation at the three Montenegrin Universities as described in the Annex I of the Grant Agreement.

Please note that based on ARTICLE I.18 of the Grant Agreement the Agency may reduce the grant for poor, partial or late implementation of the project activities.

The project website is complete and user-friendly. The English version of the three HEIs websites are available, but on the websites of UDG and UM no information was found about the IESP project, its developments and events. In particular, the Mediterranean University being responsible for dissemination activities, we would have expected to find reference to the various events/activities described in the Intermediate Report.

The Quality Assurance plan is complete and it considers both project results and internal procedures. Activities of the Quality Assurance Board are regular.

Concerning the visibility rules, we recommend to check all the various documents produced in the framework of the IESP project (internal and external dissemination) and ensure that the visibility rules are always respected: we spotted documents with wrong logo mentioning 'Funded by...' instead of 'Co-funded by ...'.

### **QUALITY OF THE PROJECT TEAM AND THE COOPERATION ARRANGEMENTS**

Management and cooperation run smoothly. Communication and coordination methodologies are accepted by all partners. Clear management methodologies, tools and relevant templates have been adopted since the very beginning of the project.

Due to COVID restrictions, meetings are mostly on-line and there are no disruptions in relation to the original plan.

Direct involvement of the National Authorities in project activities is paramount. New staff at the Ministry of Education and the new top management at the University of Montenegro (the Rector and his staff) need to be updated about the project goals, vision, and developments. Their full commitment is the precondition to the success of the project and its sustainability.

### **IMPACT AND DISSEMINATION**

The project has a great potential to be sustainable and to generate substantial impact at institutional and systemic level. This is due by the following factors: the consortium includes 3 out of 4 HEIs of the whole country; these 3 HEIs cover the 95% of student's population of the Country. Ministry of Education and Agency for Quality Assurance are included in the consortium with active role and the project results will be endorsed by the National Authorities and will be concretely reforming the HE sector.

At Intermediate Report stage, already some crucial documents/strategies have been adopted and project implementation runs smoothly. These are good preconditions, but concrete impact at systemic level is not yet visible.

We read with pleasure about the variety of dissemination activities, in particular we appreciate the use of local media to disseminate the realisation of activities and related results.

The active involvement of national authorities as well as local stakeholders in every project activity will certainly pave the way to the long-term sustainability of the results.