



EUROPEAN EDUCATION AND CULTURE
EXECUTIVE AGENCY

EACEA.A - Erasmus+, EU Solidarity Corps
EACEA.A.4 - International Capacity Building

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Subject: Pre-information letter Final Report 586136-EPP-1-2017-1-EL-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP

Dear Prof. Angelopoulos,

Please find below the result of the assessment of the Final Technical Implementation Report and the Financial Statement of the above-mentioned Capacity Building in the field of Higher Education (CBHE) project.

As result of this assessment, and in accordance with the Grant Agreement and with the Guidelines for the Use of the Grant, your project implementation has been qualified as **‘GOOD’** (please refer to the Categories of qualification at the end of this letter). The comments below provide more detailed feedback on the content and financial outcome of the project.

1. Final Technical Implementation Report

The ABioNet project confirms its Relevance as it addressed specific priorities and target groups needs in Armenia. The project achieved the majority of the objectives and constitutes an adequate contribution to filling the gap between education, entrepreneurship and innovation in the specific sector of bio products science and technology. The project also developed the level of competences and skills of this sector and provided students with business related skills. It has helped bridging the gap between education and entrepreneurship to improve students' employment prospects. We acknowledge that the results obtained are relevant to the policy area and to the priorities of the partner institutions.

The report provides a list of the activities carried out as well as web links to the main outputs, in particular the programmes, trainings, reports, workshops and documents. The quality of the project outputs and activities are adequate, evidenced by key achievements such as the developed Master programmes or updated modules at the four Armenian universities and the established Network of Excellence in Bio-Products Technology and Science.

Regarding the piloting and evaluation of the new Master curricula, the report highlights that the satisfaction level of students was measured and the supporting documents include the

programmes evaluation forms. However, as requested in the mid-term report recommendations, the Agency would have liked the final report to go into details about how the evaluations were used to add value to the programmes and how the outcomes of the testing experience were integrated in the project.

We are very glad to see that the consortium implemented activities – such as the AbioNet Startups Online Demo day – aimed at fostering the development of the entrepreneurial skills of the students. We take note that, according to the initial project description, AbioNet partners started to design the scheme of a Joint Master Programme. We understand that the implementation of this programme requires some steps and approvals to be performed beyond the lifetime of the AbioNet project. We ask your consortium to perform these steps promptly in order to bring the designed programme to reality.

We take note that, due to force majeure issues (Covid-19), some meetings and short-term trainings moved to an online format. Moreover, due to the pandemic and to the travel restrictions associated to it, an important part of the Special Mobility Strand (SMS) could not be implemented. However, the two Armenian staff members who benefitted from the SMS conducted useful activities in the laboratories of Teramo University. These mobility periods seemed to have been beneficial for them to improve their learning of new methods and to develop their capacities in food science and technology and in food quality analysis.

Regarding equipment, we take note that, despite the late purchase, the equipment was installed in the already existing laboratories of the relevant Faculties/Departments and used during the project lifetime. However, we would have liked to receive more details about the use of the purchased equipment in project activities. In general, the report confirms the coherence of the costs with the implemented activities. However, we spotted one ineligible amount in the category Staff cost, due to the application of the wrong staff category.

The project was well managed with a suitable distribution of tasks among the partners. The consortium has established good cooperation among all partners, combining the skills and expertise of EU partners with the specific needs of Armenian partners. Indeed, the cooperation among partners appears to have been balanced. However, as underlined also at progress report stage, the Agency would have liked the final report to include more details on the contribution to the project of the Armenian Ministry of Education and Science and of the non-academic associated partners.

Dissemination was implemented to reach the relevant target groups by adequate communication channels. The project website is well structured and updated with relevant documents and information related to the activities and deliverables. Concerning the sustainability of the developed curricula/modules, the prospects are good as these are included in the academic offers of the universities. We strongly invite the consortium to ensure the sustainability not only of the individual Master programmes but also of the planned Joint Master once this will be operational. We also encourage partners to further extend the created Network in terms both of memberships and of activities and to ensure the sustainability of the Network in the long run.

1. Financial Assessment

Please note that the Agency's financial analysis is based exclusively on the documents that were submitted to the Agency. If after having considered our comments carefully you wish to contest the final amount of the grant, the amounts contested by you must be *identified individually*.

In order to be accepted for further review, your observations - presented as indicated above - must be **signed by the legal representative** of your institution and be sent by post or by email at the latest **within 30 calendar days following the dispatch of this letter** to the following address:

European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA)

Department A: Erasmus+, EU Solidarity Corps

Unit A4 - Erasmus+: Higher Education - International Capacity Building

Mr Ralf RAHDERS (Head of Unit A4) - J59 - 06/033 – 1, Avenue du Bourget - BE 1049 Brussels

EACEA-EPLUS-CBHE-PROJECTS@ec.europa.eu

Following the Agency's analyses of your observations a second and final letter will be sent to you, finalising the assessment exercise. Further observations will **not** be accepted.

We will consider that the absence of any observations from you within the above-mentioned deadline of **30 days** is equivalent to your formal, unconditional and irrevocable agreement to the amounts mentioned in the Agency's assessment below.

Please find below the deductions and comments concerning the financial evaluation of your report:

Staff Costs

The total ineligible amount under the "Staff Costs" budget heading is € **1.001,00**. This amount corresponds to the total amount of € **1.001,00** declared ineligible in *Annex I* for this budget heading.

Summary

On the basis of the above analyses, the total eligible costs have been calculated as follows:

BUDGET HEADINGS	AWARDED BUDGET (in €)	DECLARED EXPENSES (in €)	CONFIRMED EXPENSES (in €)	INELIGIBLE (in €)	ELIGIBLE (in €)
Staff Costs	345.118,00	379.612,00	379.612,00	1.001,00	378.611,00
Travel Costs	65.385,00	23.110,00	23.110,00	0,00	23.110,00
Costs of Stay	133.980,00	50.520,00	50.520,00	0,00	50.520,00
Equipment Costs	254.840,00	223.813,16	223.813,16	0,00	223.813,16
Subcontracting Costs	81.500,00	42.206,40	42.206,40	0,00	42.206,40
Special Mobility Strand	93.502,00	8.266,00	8.266,00	0,00	8.266,00
TOTAL	974.325,00	727.527,56	727.527,56	1.001,00	726.526,56

Declared co-financing: € **67.484,27**

According to Article I.3 of the Grant Agreement, the Executive Agency shall reimburse **100%** of the eligible actual costs and eligible unit costs. Therefore, the amount of the final grant is € **726.526,56**.

Consequently, as the project has already received pre-financing payments for a total of € **876.892,50**, the amount of € **150.365,94** (amount already paid of € **876.892,50** - amount of final grant of € **726.526,56**) needs to be reimbursed to the European Commission.

Upon receipt of your agreement on the amount you have to reimburse or in case no observations have been submitted within the above deadline, we will send you a debit note specifying the terms and the date for reimbursement.

According to Article II.26.5 of the General Conditions, bank charges incurred in connection with the recovery of the sums owed to the Agency and/or the Commission shall be borne by the beneficiary concerned except where Directive 2007/64/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 November 2007 on payment services in the internal market amending Directives 97/7/EC, 2002/65/EC, 2005/60/EC and 2006/48/EC and repealing Directive 97/5/EC applies.

The European Commission reserves the right to recover any amounts through: offsetting against amounts of any kind owed to you; use of any bank guarantee in existence; or forced recovery.

Yours faithfully,

Ralf RAHDERS
Head of Unit

Cc (by email): Prof. Thomas Thomidis, project coordinator, thomidis@cp.teithe.gr

Very good (at least 75 pts out of 100): The consortium has achieved its objectives and delivered the expected results in full, as outlined in the Grant agreement. All the results and outputs are of very good quality. No major concerns or areas of weakness have been identified during the project implementation phase. Impact on partner countries institutions and/or Higher education systems, sustainability and exploitation of results are fully addressed.

Good (between 74 and 60 pts out of 100): To a large extent, the consortium has fulfilled its objectives and delivered (most of) its expected results as outlined in the Grant agreement. Most of the results and outputs are of good quality. Some concerns or areas of weaknesses may have been identified in the project implementation and/or its final results. Impact on partner countries institutions and/or Higher education systems, sustainability and exploitation of results are satisfactorily addressed.

Fair (between 59 and 50 pts): The consortium has fulfilled some of its objectives and delivered some of its expected results outlined in the Grant agreement. The quality of some results and outputs are acceptable. Weaknesses and concerns have been identified in the project's implementation and/or delivering of its final results. Impact on partner countries institutions and/or Higher education systems, sustainability and exploitation of results are not satisfactorily addressed.

Weak (less than 50 pts out of 100): The consortium has not fulfilled its objectives in terms of project implementation and/or delivery of expected results as outlined in the Grant agreement. This may apply to the low quality of most of the results and outputs, serious weaknesses in the project's implementation, lack of impact on partner countries institutions and/or Higher education systems, and /or sustainability and exploitation of results not addressed.

ANNEX I – INELIGIBLE COSTS

Work Package	Partner N°	Name of Partner	Country	Name of Staff Member	Staff category	Short description of tasks	From (dd/mm/yy)	To (dd/mm/yy)	Number of days	Unit cost per day (EUR)	Total Declared (EUR)	Ineligible (EUR)	Comments Ineligible
Dissemination & Exploitation	P2	Yerevan State University	Armenia	Vachagan Aslanyan	Teacher/Trainer /Researcher	Preparing ABIONET's website together with the IHU staff members, design of the website coponents and tructure adaptotation of the Armenian version and uploaded, continously updateting infomraiton	1/05/19	1/11/19	91	33,00	3.003,00	1.001,00	<p>The decription of tasks does not correspond to the staff category Teacher/Trainer/Researcher (TTR). The tasks done in the working days all relate to various aspects of the project website development, management and website updates. These tasks belong to the category Technical staff and not to the category Teacher/Trainer/Reseacher, which is to carry out academic activities related to curriculum, development and adaptation of teaching material or preparation and teaching of courses or trainings. Therefore, the difference between the TTR category and the Technical staff one is considered ineligible.</p> <p>We remind you that staff costs should be claimed according to the tasks implemented for the project and not according to the staff position of the person within the institution.</p>

