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FINAC
FINancial management,
Accounting & Controlling
in public administration

**Financial Management, Accounting & Controlling curricula
development for capacity building of public administration
STUDY VISIT TO MATEJ BEL UNIVERSITY IN BANSKA BYSTRICA**

MEETING MINUTES

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MINUTES

Introduction

The third FINAC study visit was hosted by project partner Matej Bel University in Banska Bystrica, Slovakia, from 3th to 7th December, 2017. The Study visit meetings were chaired by Sladjana BENKOVIĆ, project coordinator, and Maria Murray SVIDRONOVA, partner institution coordinator.

All project partners received the documents included and referenced in these minutes and were notified about all matters discussed prior to the meetings.

Agenda

The Study visit had the following agenda:

- [1] Welcome note, moderation, and special greetings by project leader, project coordinators, and Dean of Faculty of Economics, MBU
- [2] Where we are after last three months?
- [3] Steering Committee meeting
- [4] Management of Civil Service Reform in Central Europe - presented by Katarina Staronova
- [5] Evaluation of Public Administration Reforms in Central and Eastern Europe EU Member States - presented by Juraj Nemeč
- [6] Active Participation and Citizen Engagement in Good Governance - presented by Jozef Petras
- [7] Project Management in Public Services - presented by Marian Holubek
- [8] Participatory Budgeting as a Tool for Effective Public Service Provision - presented by Miroslav Šimkovič
- [9] SOLIDUS project presentation and round table (discussion on projects in public administration) - presented by Maria Murray Svidornova
- [10] Future steps in the next three months - project coordinator Sladjana Benković
- [11] AOB (Any other business)

I Working Day

Session 1: Welcome note, moderation, and special greetings by project leader, project coordinators, and Dean of Faculty of Economics, MBU

The first day of the visit was opened with the welcome note by the Dean of Faculty of Economics, MBU, doc. Ing. Peter Krištofik, PhD. He wished the pleasant stay to the participants and pointed out the benefits of being a consortia member of the project FINAC and encouraged the participants to use the advantage of networking and further deepening of professional relations on both individual and



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institutional level.

Project leader for MBU, Maria Murray Svidronova, PhD. welcomed the participants to MBU and provided a short insight into the study visit organization details.

Session 2: Where we are after last three months?

Project coordinator, Sladjana Benković, expressed her gratitude to the hosts from MBU and wished a pleasant and productive stay to the participants. She presented the project's most important activities and results in the last three months.

- 2 reports with overview of current level of knowledge of employees in public administration,
- 2 reports with overview of current level of qualification structure of employees in public administration,
- 2 reports with recommendations regarding harmonization with EU directives knowledge and qualifications,
- 2 reports with overview of current level of knowledge and expertise on public financial management and controlling teaching staff at the regional universities.

- Project coordinator informed the audience that Project Newsletter no. 4 was published. Also, regional meeting was held in Belgrade on November 4, 2017.
- Public procurement for independent expert (WP.6.3.) was completed. Ivana Bilić explained that three competent and eligible professionals were contacted to express their interest to take the position of external independent evaluator. Istvan Hoffman, associate professor at Eötvös Loránd University, Faculty of Law, Department of Administrative Law (Budapest) has been chosen as FINAC external independent evaluator.
- Internal reallocation of budget between BMU and UET was completed.
- Public procurement for equipment and books had been launched. The procedure in Serbia is almost completed. Partners from Albania are facing certain administrative obstacles in public procurement procedure, and the completion date is postponed to February 2018.
- Trainings for employees in public administration in Serbia were designed and will be held by the end of 2017.
- Quality control and Monitoring plan has been improved with significant efforts of UNIST project team. Ivana Bilić invited consortia members to express their suggestions for further improvements in these documents.

Session 3: Steering Committee meeting

The quorum for Steering Committee no. 3 had been provided. During this meeting, FINAC Steering Committee members adopted all documents and reports proposed in the Agenda.

Session 4: Management of Civil Service Reform in Central Europe - presented by Katarina Staronova

Doc. Katarina Staronova, PhD. from Institute of Public Policy, Faculty of Social and Economic Sciences, Comenius University held the lecture on management of civil service reform in Central Europe. The lecture gave a deeper insight into civil servants' performance appraisal and performance measurement



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on individual level. She introduced the audience to latest findings in performance appraisal failures, stressing out the importance of special relations between managers and employees in organizations. The participants have been familiarized with the results of Performance Appraisal Survey in EU countries and Norway, Serbia and Switzerland. The presentation was concluded with recommendations for proper implementation of accountability mechanisms and statistical analysis of current situation in abovementioned countries. Doc. Staronova pointed out that one of the main challenges in the performance appraisal is its quality and openness so that both civil servants and managers truly believe in the benefits that the PA system can bring.

Session 5: Evaluation of Public Administration Reforms in Central and Eastern Europe EU Member States - presented by Juraj Nemec

The participants had an opportunity to hear the lecture by NISPA CEE president, Prof. Juraj Nemec from Matej Bel University and Masaryk University on evaluation of public administration reforms in Central and Eastern Europe EU member states, who presented and explained the latest data about this hot topic for both practitioners and researchers. Prof. Nemec presented the most important characteristics of EU public administrations and key results of EUPACK project. His vivid lecture showed quantitative evidence on current state of public administration reforms in EU countries, focusing on topics such as size, scope and structure of government, civil service system, societal context of public administration and government capacity and performance.

II Working Day

Session 6: Active Participation and Citizen Engagement in Good Governance - presented by Jozef Petras

The second working day of this study visit began with presentation of Jozef Petraš, member of the Group of Experts in UN for Anti-corruption Measures in Public Administration. As an advisor in international organizations such as UNDP, OSCE, Committee of the Regions EU, CIVEX, Transparency International, Toward Transparency Vietnam, IRI and OSCAC, Mr. Petraš talked about active participation and citizen engagement in good governance, he showed concrete examples of active citizenship that could help to combat corruption, e.g. projects Transparent city, Transparent politicians, Open Elections, etc.

Session 7: Project Management in Public Services - presented by Marian Holubek

Ing. Marian Holubek held presentation on his experience in project management in public service that he gained managing project in programmes like MUNSEFF (Municipal Sustainable Energy Finance Facility) SERPENTE (Surpassing Energy Target through Efficient Public Buildings), PERMANENT (Performance Risk Management for Energy Efficient Projects through Training. Mr. Holubek contributed to the third study visit with his extensive experience in managing projects in public sectors. He introduced the audience to very interesting and specific case studies and shared valuable advices and recommendations how to face and solve the most common issues in project management in public services.



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Session 8: Participatory Budgeting as a Tool for Effective Public Service Provision - presented by Miroslav Šimkovič

Miroslav Šimkovič, president of non-governmental organization Via Altera talked about participatory budgeting as a tool for effective public service provision. Mr. Šimkovič briefly described the meaning and importance of public participation as engagement by the citizens in public decision making. He stressed out that participatory budgeting allows citizens to identify, discuss, and prioritize public spending projects. Later on he presented his own experience in participatory budgeting in Banska Bystrica. The participants found this case study presentation very valuable, since it offered them the insight in practical step-by-step application of participatory budgeting in one municipality.

III Working Day

Session 09: SOLIDUS project presentation and round table (discussion on projects in public administration) - presented by Maria Murray Svidronova

During the third working day, representatives of partner institutions had an opportunity to learn more about research on social innovations and solidarity acts in presentation of Doc. Ing Maria Murray Svidronova. She talked about project LIPSE (Learning from Innovation in Public Sector Environments). This project was funded by the EU's FP7 framework and identifies drivers and barriers to successful social innovation in the public sector in 11 EU countries. Through presentation of this project, the participants found more about social innovation as a tool for shaping the public service following the needs of its consumers – citizens. Doc. Svidronova also presented project SOLIDUS (Solidarity in European societies: empowerment, social justice and citizenship) funded by Horizon 2020 call “European societies after the crisis“. Within the SOLIDUS project, one analyzed case study was presented, called School of Family Finance. This programme has brought positive change into lives of many participants by increasing their financial literacy. The participants from various communities (including marginalized and risk groups, e.g. seniors, orphans, Roma) learnt how to make better decisions about their finance which help them to prevent indebtng. This session brought new impact on knowledge sharing and exchange of experiences among participants.

Session 10: Future steps in the next three months - project coordinator Sladjana Benković

Project coordinator Sladjana Benković introduce the participants to the key steps in the next three months of FINAC project implementation.

- WP.2: To finish activities of purchasing of equipment and literature at regional universities & Study visits at MU
- WP.3: To finish activities of designing Master degree programmes according inner university capacities and project goals and start with activities of accreditation
- WP.5: To finish activities of delivering trainings in Serbia – BMU and to finish activities of



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designing and delivering trainings in Albania - UET

- WP.6: To prepare Report about internal evaluation of FINAC project & To prepare Report about external evaluation of FINAC project by independent expert
- WP.7: Issuing 1 more Newsletter to boost project progress; 5th issue of Newsletter dedicated to results of Study visit at Matej Bel University; Country reports dissemination of WP.1.
- WP.8: Project management activities.

Fourth Study visit will be held at Masaryk University in Brno, Czech Republic, February 11-15, 2018.

Session 11: AOB (Any Other Business)

At the end of the third Study visit at Matej Bel University, all partners have expressed great satisfaction with organization and content of the study visit. It was concluded that project activities have to keep such a high level and quality presented during three study visits so far.