

VALERU
ВАЛЕРУ

*Validation of
Non-Formal/Informal Learning
in Russian Higher Education*



Quality Control

WP 4 REPORT

PETER BAUMGARTNER, ISABELL GRUNDSCHÖBER, SILVIA GROSSGASTEIGER

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document provides an overview about the quality assurance processes, measures and instruments used by the VALERU project consortium. At the beginning the VALERU project and its objectives are described shortly. The main objectives are to deepen the understanding and reinforce procedures of validation of non-formal and informal learning (VNIL) in Russian Higher Education (VALERU). The project is organised in workpackages. Workpackage 4 includes all aspects relevant to quality assurance. It is outlined and the responsibilities of the consortium are specified. Originally OPORA RUSSIA was assigned the role of workpackage leader but this was changed during a coordinator visit of the project coordinator at MIIGAiK, the local Russian coordinator on March 17th 2015. Danube University Krems (DUK) as the project coordinator is now mainly responsible for coordinating related activities. For this purpose DUK has designed this quality plan and presented it to the steering committee meeting at 7th April 2015 where the consortium accepted it and intends to follow its outline.

The quality plan describes the quality approach to be used for monitoring the project activities. It is based on a balanced score card (BSC) approach with a focus on objectives, benchmarks, indicators and measures. The quality assurance processes follow three levels: the internal level for assessing the coordination and organization of work activities; the summative assessment of the impact on the target group; and the evaluation of the project processes and outcomes. On each quality level, the plan defines certain quality objectives and related benchmarks. Further, indicators for measuring the project performance on each level are specified and instruments (e.g. questionnaires, checklists) provided to support the monitoring processes.

It has to be added that the main success criteria for VALERU have to be seen on the long run, after the project has ended. Therefore it is a question of sustainability.

This document uses as template for guidance in order to address the most important questions of a quality assurance plan a similar workpackage from the EU project SESTEM – Supporting Equality in Science Technology and Mathematics related choices of careers (505437-LLP-1-2009-GR-KA1-KA1SCR).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

One of the most significant global developments in higher education in the post-war period has been the incorporation of learning gained by students from outside the academy into a formally accredited programme of study. Practices have developed in many countries using a variety of terms but in the last decade international bodies such as UNESCO, the OECD and the European Union have adopted the term 'Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning (VNIL).

For a better understanding of the notion of non-formal and informal learning one has to contrast it to the definition of formal learning (Youthpass, 2015):

- **Formal learning** is purposive learning that takes place in a distinct and institutionalised environment specifically designed for teaching/training and learning, which is staffed by learning facilitators who are specifically qualified for the sector, level and subject concerned and which usually serves a specified category of learners (defined by age, level and specialism). Learning aims are almost always externally set, learning progress is usually monitored and assessed, and learning outcomes are usually recognised by certificates or diplomas. Much formal learning provision is compulsory (school education).
 - One example would be to study Russian at the Institute of Translation Studies at the University of Innsbruck to become an official certified Russian translator. Another example is to attend a state-run Higher Engineering School and pass the final examinations to become a state certified technician.
- **Non-formal learning** is purposive but voluntary learning that takes place in a diverse range of environments and situations for which teaching/training and learning is not necessarily their sole or main activity. These environments and situations may be temporarily, and the activities or courses that take place may be staffed by professional learning facilitators (such as youth trainers) or by volunteers (such as youth leaders). The activities and courses are planned, but are seldom structured by conventional rhythms or curriculum subjects. They usually address specific target groups, but rarely document or assess learning outcomes or achievements in conventionally visible ways.
 - An example would be to attend Russian classes at an adult education centre. Another example would be to

attend a maintenance course of an electroencephalographic apparatus organised by the supplier of the machine.

- **Informal learning** is – from the learner's standpoint at least – non-purposive learning which takes place in everyday life contexts in the family, at work, during leisure and in the community. It does have learning outcomes, but these are seldom recorded, virtually never certified and are typically neither immediately visible for the learner nor do they count in themselves for education, training or employment purposes. – An example would be to stay on holiday in a Russian country and learn through everyday communication some phrases. Another example would be to work for several years as a repairman in a hospital to maintain different medical devices and get especially skilled at the new electroencephalographic apparatus owned by the hospital.

As non-formal and informal learning is a form of learning that exists outside the official national educational system, it is not formally recognised and it is therefore difficult to judge its value. Here comes validation into play: Validation is the process of translating non-formal and informal learning into recognised qualification.

As a result of the Bologna process a set of practices and procedures were developed to ensure that students' prior non-formal and informal learning can be assessed and turned into academically recognised learning outcomes. Even though Russian HE is strongly involved in the Bologna process, the issue of prior learning and in particular of validation of non-formal and informal learning (VNIL) is not very much explored and advanced at Russian universities. It is the central motive of VALERU to change this situation so that the Russian HE system develops and incorporates recognition procedures in line with Bologna and the EU 2020 strategy.

WORKPACKAGE 4: QUALITY CONTROL

The processes and instruments to be applied for quality control are described in this workpackage. The Quality Plan guides the project's evaluative tasks throughout its entire lifecycle and engages all partners in its execution. In specific, the plan is to define the process and the criteria under which VALERU will be considered as having met its milestones and successfully achieved its objectives. The plan will define criteria on impact and project implementation. It will further be equipped with instruments for assessment. It has to be added that the main success

criteria for VALERU have to be seen on the long run, after the project has ended. Therefore it is a question of sustainability.

This Quality Plan will be applicable to all deliverables. All project partners will have to implement the quality processes as outlined in this document. The procedures as outlined in this document will come into effect after it has been approved by the steering committee and communicated to all partners of the project consortium.

Responsibilities for Project Management & Quality Assurance

All project partners of VALERU are committed to the quality assurance procedures as outlined in this Quality Plan. Project members of VALERU hold the following responsibilities as set in the project application form and agreed at the kick-off meeting in Moscow, Russian Federation, in February 2014. The following lists might be updated in the case of change.

Project Coordination and Management

The project coordinator is Danube University Krems (DUK). DUK coordinates and manages the project. This includes to

- provide the copy of the signed Grant Agreement for the partner;
- keep the partner informed on a regular basis about all relevant communication between the coordinator and the Executive Agency and make all relevant documents provided by the Executive Agency available to the partner;
- inform the partner about all essential issues connected to the project implementation without any delay;
- be responsible for the verification that the expenditure declared by the partner has been incurred only for the purpose of implementing the project and corresponds to the activities agreed between the partners in the frame of the submitted Application Form;
- submit the Intermediate Report and the Final Report to the Executive Agency within the deadline given in the Grant Agreement and its annexes, based on the partner reports and supporting documentation;
- provide an external audit report together with the Final Report at the end of the project;
- transfer funds to the partner as set out in Article 3 of this Agreement;

- establish a virtual workspace in order to support an efficient and transparent management and communication among the partners as laid out in Article 5 of this Agreement, and ensure its functioning throughout the duration of the project;
- establish together with the partner measures to ensure security of personal data in line with Article II.6 of the Grant Agreement;
- monitor the implementation plan and adjust it as per evaluation requirements;
- assist lead partners in setting up their workpackages;
- oversee that work is conducted and to secure the proper fulfilment of the obligations as set out in the Partner Agreement;
- admonish partners if they did not fulfil their obligations and to set them a reasonable additional time to fulfil their tasks;
- represent the project in events and (scientific) meetings.

Project Steering Committee (PSC)

At the start of the project the PSC had two features:

1. It was very large as it was based on the following principle for its composition: "It shall include the perspective of the coordinator and the local coordinator as well as of all workpackage leaders. Furthermore, the perspectives of the different countries (in Russia: regions) involved as well as the perspective of the Ministry of Science and Education of the Russian Federation shall be represented in the Steering committee." (Partnership agreement, p.4).
2. Its meetings take place only twice a year.

After one year of the project's lifetime it became clear, that this setup was not appropriate: To be up-to-date on all the important steering issues and to speed up the decision process the project needs a more effective group. At the coordinator meeting in Moscow, March 2015 a smaller group was decided. The new, smaller PSC consists of one member of each main EU training partner (DUK, DUW and Chester) and the Russian coordinator (MIIGAiK) and is chaired by the project coordinator (DUK), which – in case of an undecided discussion – has the decisive vote.

Next to at least two face-to-face meetings twice a year, meetings are also held online on demand in order to ensure that the project activities are within the scope of objectives defined in the Application Form and that these are conducted in time and in a professional manner. The PSC decides on the process to be followed in giving visibility of project results. It further resolves any conflicts that might arise within the consortium and between the project and other agencies. The PSC also approves all project outputs and methodologies applied for project implementation.

Project Management Team (PMT)

The project has set up a three member Project Management Board (PMB). The management team is composed by staff members involved in management and administrative issues of all partner institutions and operates first of all on a local level (EU, RU). It is monitored for the general level of coordination by the project coordinator (DUK). Virtual meetings of the management team are organized on demand and at least twice a year under the responsibility of the local coordinators. In addition, meetings in person on management issues are organized twice a year and combined with meetings on other activities planned in the project. If necessary, mixed sessions can be scheduled. In order to ensure good integration, management team members of the coordinator being the local coordinator of the EU partners and the Russian local coordinator are in close contact and define jointly the agendas for all meetings on management issues at the local level. Minutes of these meetings are in the responsibility of the local coordinators and shall be made available in due time via the virtual workspace management section.

Internal Communication

For the management of the Action the consortium has developed a working structure and internal communication plan (overview Annex 3). The basis for the management of the project is the differentiation between the general coordination as set out in the Grant agreement (DUK) and the local coordination (EU by DUK, RU by MIIGAIK) in order to ensure efficient communication among a large consortium.

Table 1: Working structure and Internal Communication Plan

WHO: Roles or bodies	WHY & WHAT: Purpose and content of communication	WHEN	HOW : Communication lines & media
Coordinator DUK	As defined in the GA: communication of all relevant issues like legal changes, financial issues, reporting, deviations in the workplan etc. between EACEA and the consortium. Local coordination EU partners. Responsible for consultation EU partner on involvement / task distribution in the WPs in close collaboration with WP leader and local coordinator.	on demand	<u>for consultation: e-mail, skype, phone</u> DUK ↔ MIIGAIK MIIGAIK ↔ partner RU DUK ↔ partner EU
Local coordinator RU MIIGAIK	Main contact for RU partners on project management and administration. Responsible for consultation with Russian partners on their involvement / task distribution in the WPs, in close collaboration with coordinator and WP leader.		<u>official requests: in writing</u> EU partner – DUK RU partner – MIIGAIK cc DUK MIIGAIK – DUK
Contact person partner institution <i>as given in the application; if changes necessary: written confirmation to the coordinator and local coordinator</i>	Information on involved staff members in the project (academic/non-academic) towards the coordinator and the local coordinator; consultation on partner institutions involvement / task distribution with the coordinator or the local coordinator coordination of involved staff members within the partner institution and representative of the project at the partner institution		MIIGAIK: interedu@miigaik.ru DUK: valeru@donau-uni.ac.at <u>Documentation of important documents</u> via eMail/VALERU-platform
Project Steering Committee (PSC) coordinator (chair) + local coordinator RU, + main provider for training (DE, UK)	discuss project progress based on input from WP leaders, decision on strategic questions	on demand, at least twice a year	Meetings of the PSC (face-to-face, online via email, skype, phone) Preparation of meeting agendas, meeting minutes available for all partners via email/the VALERU platform.
Project Management Team (PMT) Staff members involved in management at each partner institution or, if not available: assign a deputy	project administrative issues (preparing, checking and delivering documents for reporting, financial management internally and towards coordinator/local coordinator, organizational support for the preparation of the meetings)	on demand, at least twice a year	Management meeting (face to face, email, skype, phone) Report submission & document storage via eMail/VALERU platform.
Working groups along the WPs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 headed by WP leader	Realization of the respective WPs. Specific task of the WP leader in collaboration with the coordinator and the local coordinator: development of workplan for the WP, monitoring of progress	on demand	Face-to-face, skype, email, VALERU platform, progress report: during PSC meetings
<i>Etiquette Avoid delayed communication - Keep in touch with your local coordinator. In case of critical issues or conflicts: open communication. Copy in DUK+MIIGAIK and partner(s) involved. Respectful + trustful.</i>			

Work Package Leaders

For each workpackage (WP) there is a leader responsible for the management and coordination of the tasks comprising the workpackage (see table 2). The workpackage Leaders coordinate the work tasks pertaining to the WP and are responsible for the timely delivery of project outputs. This includes ensuring that outputs are developed under the processes and criteria set in the Quality Plan (this document).

WP	Title	WP Leader
WP1	<i>NIL validation methodology</i>	<i>DUW</i>
WP2	<i>Development of NIL platform</i>	<i>MIIGAiK</i>
WP3	<i>Training of Qualified Experts</i>	<i>UOC</i>
WP4	<i>Quality Control</i>	<i>DUK</i>
WP5	<i>Dissemination</i>	<i>EUCEN</i>
WP6	<i>Exploitation</i>	<i>OPORA/MIIGAiK</i>
WP7	<i>Management</i>	<i>DUK</i>

Table 2: Overview of workpackage leaders.

Specific obligations of partners

The partner shall respect all rules and obligations set forth in the Grant Agreement and its Annexes. In addition the partner shall:

- commit themselves to do everything in its power to carry out the activities as specified in the work plan and foster the implementation of the project;
- provide the staff, facilities, equipment and material necessary to perform the project activities;
- support the coordinator and the local Russian coordinator to fulfill its tasks according to the Grant Agreement and its Annexes;
- ensure adequate communication with the coordinator and the local Russian coordinator;
- ensure that interaction with other partners takes place in continuous and smooth way;
- provide the coordinator and the local Russian coordinator without any delay with any information needed to draw up the Interim Report and the Final Report, to react on any request by the Executive Agency, or provide with any further information needed by the coordinator and the local Russian coordinator;

- inform the coordinator and the local Russian coordinator immediately in writing about any delay in the performance of the activities or any circumstance that could lead to a temporary or final discontinuation of the project;
- inform the coordinator and the local Russian coordinator about any change in personnel, tasks or procedures of its project team;
- maintain either a separate accounting system or an adequate accounting code for all transactions relating to the project;
- inform the coordinator on the details of the account where the part of the Executive Agency contribution shall be transferred by the coordinator;
- complete the activities foreseen for each reporting period of the project implementation and as agreed with the local Russian coordinator;
- have the expenditures incurred and paid in the given reporting period defined in Article 9 of this Agreement and submit the supporting documents on validation of expenditure to the coordinator as it is set out in the same article. The expenditure of the partner not covered by supporting documents on validation of expenditure in the given reporting period and within the set deadlines will not be included in the interim and final report of the coordinator to be submitted to the Executive Agency and thus, cannot be claimed by the partner.
- comply with Tempus and national rules, including rules on public procurement, state aid, publicity and equal opportunities;
- be responsible for the sound financial management of the funds allocated to the project partner;
- agree with the partners of the project before submission of any request for amendment of the Grant Agreement to the Executive Agency.
- comply with the internal working structures and communication plan of the consortium as laid out generally in Article 5, in more detail, in Annex 3 of this Agreement, in order to ensure efficient and transparent management and communication;
- establish together with the coordinator measures to ensure security of personal data in line with Article II.6 of the Grant Agreement.

EVALUATION DESIGN & BALANCED SCORE CARD

The VALERU evaluation processes are embedded in a Balanced Score Card (BSC) approach. *The BSC* tries to translate a company's or project's vision and strategy into a coherent set of performance measures. Instead to give the financial measure the central value the BSC distributes the evaluation and monitoring process to four different perspectives:

- Financial measures,
- Customer satisfaction,
- Internal business processes,
- Learning growth and competence development.

Normally financial measures are values of past development and do not give necessarily information decisive for the future development. The BSC-approach offers a balance between short-term and long-term objectives, between outcomes desired and performance drivers of those outcomes, and between hard objective measures and softer, more subjective measures (Kaplan & Norton, 1996).

These perspectives summarised are:

- Finances: the overall aim of a company would be to maximize financial profits and ensure continuous subsistence of the company. Applied for a scientific or EU projects we could say that financial investments should help to establish developments to foster European leadership at the competitive global market and at the same time to ensure European ethical standards. For VALERU this could be translated into the monetization of non-formal and informal learning for the development of the national workforce.
- Customers: it is also necessary to consider the customers' perspective and increase their satisfactions e.g. their benefit for the projects outputs according to their needs. For VALERU we would have to distinguish three different kinds of customer groups:
 - One is inside the Higher Educational systems and consists of academic decision bodies and academic and service staff members.
 - The second one is the student himself or herself as VALERU helps academic bodies to recognise acquired competences from non-formal and informal learning.

- The third one is business or the society at large as all acquired knowledge – whatever its source may be – could be made functional for corporative and social developments.
- Internal processes: by analysing and controlling working processes it is possible to maximize output and benefit for customers, also from a quality assurance perspective.
- Learning and development: a company or project should be able to develop knowledge relevant for future market needs, based on human resource development and related processes.

With these adaptations strategic objectives, benchmarks and indicators, and related measures for improving a company's performance are deduced in order to measure the performance and controlling of working processes in all four perspectives.

The VALERU evaluation design can be mapped onto these BSC perspectives. The VALERU quality assurance approach covers several evaluation levels from formative and summative perspectives. These levels are:

- Internal project evaluation (formative and on-going)
- Evaluation of project processes and outcomes
- Summative assessment of impact on the target groups

As you can also see at the table below, these evaluation levels and can be considered as central elements that need to be assessed and controlled.

BSC Perspective	VALERU Evaluation Level
Financial perspective	Internal project evaluation (incl. assessment of the investment of time, resources and allocated budget)
Customer perspective	Summative assessment of impact on the target groups (e.g. participants for trainings of validation experts, academic staff as represented by member of the project consortium, staff of university service offices of the consortium, selected students as beneficiaries of VNIL-procedures)
Internal processes	Internal project evaluation (incl. the assessment of work activities, project management and implementation)
Learning and development	Evaluation of project processes and outcomes (incl. self-reflection and summative evaluation of all work package activities and deliverables).

Table 3: Overview of the Balanced Score Card and the different VALERU evaluation levels

The BSC approach requires to focus on objectives (e.g. the aim of an activity), benchmarks (e.g. requirements of a workpackage or decisions taken by consortium), indicators (e.g. outcomes that indicate the successful fulfilment of requirements, measured by the quality assurance instruments), and measures (e.g. actions for improving the project's progress on the basis of evaluation results) on each evaluation level.

QUALITY ASSURANCE OBJECTIVES AND BENCHMARKS

Eight aspects of the project need to be considered for the purpose of overall quality assurance:

1. relevance,
2. work programme,
3. innovative character,
4. consortium,
5. European added value,
6. cost-benefit-ratio,
7. project impact,
8. and valorisation activities.

First, an overview of the eight aspects is given, taken from the TEMPUS IV – Application Form. A structured overview of quality objectives and related indicators of the VALERU project follows the short summary of the overall objectives.

1. Relevance of the VALERU Project

VALERU addresses the validating of non-formal and informal learning (VNIL), which is recognised as a key approach for supporting lifelong learning. The focus on validating prior learning relates to national qualification frameworks and includes work-based learning (WBL). The main aim is to reinforce the implementation of validation methodology into the Russian Higher Educational system, including the training of experts and building of an expert pool in joint cooperation between Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) from EU & RU and partner from the Russian economy.

2. Quality of the Work Programme

VALERU aims to support Russian HE in establishing mechanisms and human resources for the validation of non-formal/informal learning (VNIL) in Russian Higher Education in order to ensure sustainable development of Russian HE. VALERU creates a methodological basis for validation of VNIL in Russian HE, based on European approaches. Thus VALERU is based on a strong cooperation between European and Russian HEIs & HE networks leading in the field of VNIL networks of SME and professional associations.

This aim is well reflected in the work plan: Based on the different European VNIL procedures, e.g. the “credit assignment model” (UBO) and the “competence development model” (UoC), the project focuses mainly on a train-the-trainer approach by developing training material and seminars for Russian academic faculty and Russian university (international) service officers. Besides building a certified pool of Russian experts for VNIL procedures a web-based platform is developed as a main gate to access relevant information and training material. The platform also provides information on the institutional and legal framework of VNIL in Russia and can be used as a networking-space.

It has to be underlined that the main success criteria for VALERU have to be seen on the long run, after the project has ended. Therefore it is a question of sustainability.

3. Innovative Character

VALERU will enhance and foster capacities for the recognition of NIL in Russian HE and therefore not only provides benefits to individuals but also to their employers and to education and training institutions. The project facilitates the entry to and an accelerated progress through subjects and modules provided by education and training institutions. It reduces duplication of effort by individuals and is considered as a sound educational practice. RPL might improve the quality by protecting or clarifying the standards of assessment in courses. It increases the efficiency by removing duplication of learning. RPL assures the equity due to access policies that recognizes the students' knowledge and understanding. VALERU promotes more flexible pathways and mobility between the vocational education and training system and HE as well as mobility within the same sector but also within the international network of HEIs.

In order to ensure that VALERU offers something new and relevant to the existing situation, the work programme is based on consultation with the Russian Ministry of Education, as well as the National Tempus Office and draws conclusion of the analysis of current trends in Russian HE policy and development (document analysis), including the challenges the country faces in terms of providing highly trained HR. If looking at other Tempus projects so far, the validation of NIL – even though central in current developments – has not been addressed so far.

4. Quality of the Consortium

The present consortium consists of an initiative group of HEIs in RU and EU, dedicated to the topic of lifelong learning (LLL), recognition of prior learning (RPL) and work based learning (WBL). The further development of the consortium was based on contacts and cross-linked approaches of each partner, trying to bring together expertise and perspectives relevant for the topic of VALERU.

As to the Russian partners, an important point of reference for the quality of the consortium is a group of Russian Higher Educational Research Experts (HERE) involved in academic reform and motivated to bring Russian HE in line with best EU practices. The participation in a number of workshops for HERE has unified these experts with a joint idea to enhance the capacity of their Alma Mater universities and disseminate it further across the Russian HEIs.

5. European Added Value

Unquestionably there is European added value in VALERU which brings together aims of the Bologna process such as the learning outcomes approach and the development of practices related to the recognition of prior learning (RPL) with the structure and the development of Russian HE. VALERU brings the issue of prior learning and in particular of NIL not only into higher attention and raises the awareness of Russian universities but also creates a pool of certified Russian experts as stakeholder for the development and implementation of VNIL procedures within the Russian HE system.

VALERU is based on the already existing Russian political commitment and the understanding of the importance of VNIL procedures. It supports Russian stakeholders for VNIL procedures as it transfers practical applications developed in a variety of European universities. VALERU intends

to raise awareness and provide essential knowledge to a pool of Russian validation experts. These experts are chosen to take the role of change agents, as they will elaborate a Russian way of implementing the recognition of NIL in Russian HE. Therefore they will also bring the Bologna and the EU 2020 strategy in line with the development of the Russian HE system.

6. The Cost-Benefit-Ratio

Using a train-the-trainer approach is very effective as it transfers the knowledge and competences to a committed group of people. The future core group of certified VNIL experts are a special qualified group established and authorized within Russian HE. This group is therefore in an excellent position to function as a change agent promoting the dissemination and establishment of VNIL procedures into the Russian HE system.

The cost benefit ratio is high in VALERU as the project consortium is an experienced promoter of innovation in the area of VNIL procedures, capable to address challenging and complex issues assessing learning outcomes and recognition of prior learning whatever were their source whether worked based learning (WBL) or other forms of experiential learning. The consortium's network of institutions facilitates access to various resources for validation procedures worked out in nationwide initiatives or projects and/or institutional admission policies and strategies.

7. Impact of the Project

The project's impact can be rather high as it makes a direct contribution

- a) to a network of leading Russian universities which are a part of the Bologna Club association in Russia (BC),
- b) to a prominent network of other Russian universities well adapted and experienced with TEMPUS projects and highly motivated in the implementation of VNIL practices,
- c) to a core group of approximately 100 certified VNIL experts inside the RU HE system in order to sustain developments beyond the lifetime of the project, and
- d) to provide a web-based platform, as an imported web-based resource to promote and foster awareness and the implementation of VNIL procedures in Russia.

8. Quality of the Valorisation Plan

The quality of the valorisation plan is determined by the quality of dissemination and exploitation processes of project results. Promotion and dissemination of relevant NIL validation matters are done via virtual strategies and tools such as the VNIL-Platform, electronic newsletters and tweets. Dissemination activities will include the use of methodological seminars to explain and disseminate the results of the project, attendance and presentations at relevant meetings and conferences to disseminate key findings of the project.

Most important however is the valorisation through the pools of Russian validation experts that will work not only as change agents but also as future train-the-trainer group who will disseminate the project outcome via training sessions held in Russian language to Russian academic and administrative university staff.

The translation of the most important outcomes into the Russian language is key to the sustainability of the project. The hosting of the VNIL-platform and the ease of writing and translating text for the platform into Russian is another key factor of the valorisation plan.

QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESSES, INSTRUMENTS & INDICATORS

Structured overview of quality objectives, indicators, assumptions and risks

On the basis of the above described eight project aspects – relevance, work programme, innovative character, consortium, European added value, cost-benefit-ratio, project impact, and valorisation activities – the following quality assurance objectives and indicators were identified in the Logical Framework Matrix (LFM).

Table 4: Logical Framework Matrix (LFM), page 1/2

<p>Wider Objective: <i>What is the overall broader objective, to which the project will contribute?</i> To ensure sustainable development of Russian higher education through enabling validation of non-formal and informal learning system in line with Bologna and EU 2020 strategic objectives.</p>	<p>Indicators of progress: <i>What are the key indicators related to the wider objective?</i> Implementation of a validation of non-formal and informal learning (NIL) system and comprising recognition criteria.</p>	<p>How indicators will be measured: <i>What are the sources of information on these indicators?</i> 1. Validation system is recognized by academic community in RF and EU. 2. Annual statistic reports of partner universities</p>	
<p>Specific Project Objective/s: <i>What are the specific objectives, which the project shall achieve?</i> 1. To establish a national procedure for validation of non-formal and informal learning harmonized with European best practice, shared with EUCEN. 2. To establish independent validation web-space (NIL-platform) based at The Bologna Club. 3. To train an expert (tutor) pool competent and capable for validation of non-formal and informal learning outcomes. 4. To pilot validation procedure.</p>	<p>Indicators of progress: <i>What are the quantitative and qualitative indicators showing whether and to what extent the project's specific objectives are achieved?</i> 1. Methodological materials for validation of non-formal and informal learning approved and available 2. Independent validation web-space (NIL-platform) is launched. 3. Validation reference tools and supporting instruments elaborated and implemented. 4. Experts are trained and operating. 5. Enhanced attractiveness of the higher education.</p>	<p>How indicators will be measured: <i>What are the sources of information that exist and can be collected? What are the methods required to get this information?</i> 1. Number of materials published; 2. Validation seal is recognized by HEIs and Ministry of education and science 3. Manuals for 4. Resource books and Reference tools published</p>	<p>Assumptions & risks: <i>What are the factors and conditions not under the direct control of the project, which are necessary to achieve these objectives? What risks have to be considered?</i> <u>1. Assumptions:</u> strong motivation of universities for active involvement in the Bologna Process 1. <u>Risks:</u> rigidity of the HE system 2. <u>Assumptions:</u> Institutional support 2. <u>Risks:</u> validation procedure won't be recognized and accredited by universities 3. <u>Assumptions:</u> Sufficient interest of universities for recognition of non-formal and informal learning 3. <u>Risks:</u> lack of involvement of the universities</p>
<p>Outputs (tangible) and Outcomes (intangible): • Please provide the list of concrete DELIVERABLES - outputs/outcomes (<u>grouped in Workpackages</u>), leading to the specific objective/s.: (DEV)WP1. Developed NIL validation methodology. (DEV)WP2. Developed validation web-space (NIL-platform). (DEV)WP3. Qualified experts (tutors) have been trained. (QPLN)WP4. Quality control (DISS)WP5. Dissemination via The Bologna Club and NIL-platform pilot run (EXP)WP6. Exploitation (MNGT) WP7. Management of the project</p>	<p>Indicators of progress: <i>What are the indicators to measure whether and to what extent the project achieves the envisaged results and effects?</i> (DEV)WP1. 1.1 NIL validation methodology implemented. 1.2 Number of meetings, conferences, workshops held on schedule. ((DEV) WP2. 2.1 NIL-platform is launched and supported by the authorities (DEV)WP3. 3.1. Number of courses at EU Universities for RU representatives 3.2. Number of Qualified tutors trained and retrained (QPLN)WP4. 4.1. Indicators of quality assessment and monitoring installed (DISS)WP5. 5.1. Leaflets and promotional materials disseminated 5.2. Non-formal learning outcomes submitted for validation 5.3 NIL promoted by The Bologna Club supported financially and institutionally 5.4 Number of validation applications (EXP)WP6 6.1. NIL status strengthened (MNGT) WP7. 7.1. Distribution tasks among partners 7.2. Coordination meetings held on schedule.</p>	<p>How indicators will be measured: <i>What are the sources of information on these indicators?</i> 1.1 Validation applications. 1.2 Events reports and minutes of the meetings 2.1 Legal documents for NIL-platform 3.1 Staff mobility evaluation reports 3.2 Number of validation expert certificates 4.1 Reports on project activities 5.1. Number of leaflets and promotional materials disseminated 5.2. Applications submitted for validation. 6.1. Number of candidates to validate non-formal and informal learning 7.1. Work schedule approved by partners 7.2. Protocols of coordination meetings</p>	<p>Assumptions & risks: <i>What external factors and conditions must be realised to obtain the expected outcomes and results on schedule?</i> <u>Assumptions:</u> 1. Universities response to flexible and changing educational market 2. Efficient resources management 3 Universities and NIL 4. Ministries provide accreditation and support. 5. Increasing usage of information and net systems for institutional communication <u>Risks</u> 1. Limitations in educational legislation 2. NIL platform do not receive official recognition of RF Ministry of Education and Science 3. Inappropriate stakeholders attitude</p>

Table 4: Logical Framework Matrix (LFM) – Continuation, page 2/2

<p>Activities: <i>What are the key activities to be carried out (grouped in Workpackages) and in what sequence in order to produce the expected results?</i></p> <p>(DEV)WP 1. NIL validation methodology. 1.1 Elaboration of NIL validation methodology based on results of complex analysis 1.2 Comparative analysis of NIL validation system</p> <p>(DEV)WP 2. Development of Programme Evaluation platform. 2.1 Research into the ideal conceptual designed of the NIL-platform 2.2 Development of NIL-Platform 2.3 Launching of NIL-Platform</p> <p>(DEV)WP 3. Training of Qualified experts (tutors). 3.1 Identifying competences of experts 3.2 Development of programs for training 3.3 Methodological seminar in Bologna club 3.4 Training of experts 3.5 Accreditation of experts</p> <p>(QPLN)WP 4. Quality control. 4.1 Quality control by project coordinator and steering committee 4.2 Quality control by local coordinator 4.3 Monitoring visits 4.4 Web-conference of manager team (webinars)</p> <p>(DISS)WP 5. Dissemination. 5.1 Dissemination conference 5.2 Attraction of visitors to NIL-Platform 5.3 Advertising and promotion company 5.4 Dissemination of project results via The Bologna Club</p> <p>(EXP)WP 6. Exploitation. 6.1 Financial and institutional support of NIL-platform by partner universities of The Bologna Club 6.2 Promotion of the developed NIL-platform through media 6.3 Experts trained train new tutors</p> <p>(MNGT) WP 7. Management. 7.1 Kick-off meeting 7.2 Steering committee meetings 7.3 Meetings of the management team 7.4 Conflict issues resolving 7.5 Project management by project coordinator and local coordinator</p>	<p>Inputs: <i>What inputs are required to implement these activities, e.g. staff time, equipment, mobilities, publications etc.?</i></p> <p>(DEV)WP 1. Staff costs: 31363€. Equipment costs: 18000€.</p> <p>(DEV)WP 2. Staff costs: 19796€. Equipment costs: 4000€. Printing and publishing costs: 22500€.</p> <p>(DEV)WP 3. Staff costs: 102280€. Travel costs and costs of stay: 201146€. Other costs: 19000€.</p> <p>(QPLN)WP 4. Staff costs: 18690€.</p> <p>(DISS)WP 5. Staff costs: 15240€. Travel costs and costs of stay: 26222€. Printing and publishing costs: 7000€. Other costs: 5000€.</p> <p>(EXP)WP 6. Printing and publishing costs: 8400€.</p> <p>(MNGT) WP 7. Staff costs: 73985€. Travel costs and costs of stay: 28090€. Equipment costs: 51700€. Other costs: 8000€.</p>		<p>Assumptions, risks and pre-conditions: <i>What pre-conditions are required before the project starts? What conditions outside the project's direct control have to be present for the implementation of the planned activities?</i></p> <p>Assumptions: 1. Executive authorities of Russia give priority to develop validation system. 2. All the consortium members are interested and actively participate in the project 3. Close collaboration with Ministry of Education and Science. 4. Dissemination of the project results to wide audience. 5. Sufficient time is available for development of the methodology, NIL-platform, installation of the equipment for NIL-platform.</p> <p>Risks: 1. Less interaction of the consortium members. 2. Lack of support of the project by RU government. 3. Ineffectiveness of the project management. 4. Risk of a competition with other groups suggesting plans of similar reforms.</p>
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The objectives refer to certain project activities, processes and outcomes that determine the successful completion of the VALERU project as defined in the VALERU Application Form (2012). The benchmarks specify – on a general level – certain milestones and outcomes that need to be completed in this respect and will be considered for the development of the quality assurance instruments. It has to be added that the main success criteria for VALERU have to be seen long-term. The aspect of sustainability is vital for the success of the project and therefore sustainability has to be taken into consideration for all activities, which are performed while the project's lifetime.

Internal Project Evaluation (IPE)

The internal project evaluation aims at monitoring the working activities performed by the coordinators and consortium members. An internal evaluation questionnaire is provided for this purpose (see annex 1). The questionnaire is based on an instrument successfully used by another EU project consortium. It has been adapted to the specific requirements of the VALERU project. The indicators used in the internal evaluation questionnaire are:

- Work activity (e.g. work performance, problems and obstacles).
- Co-ordination of the work (e.g. communication, information flow, use of resources)
- Implementation of the project, required modifications and dissemination (e.g. project objectives and outcomes, related methodologies, dissemination activities)

The internal project evaluation will be undertaken in three rounds (see table 5). After each evaluation round, DUK provides a short report of the results (given that the consortium returned the questionnaires by the suggested date). The results will be discussed and reflected by the Project Steering Committee and will be communicated to the consortium during project meetings.

External Project Evaluation (EPE)

As further measures of quality control also external project evaluation as in peer review is planned. The HERE-group and/or an associate partner of the project are in discussion to conduct a peer review, e.g. at the methodological seminar.

Round	IPE Questionnaire sent to consortium	IPE Questionnaire returned by consortium	Reporting by DUK
1	April 29, 2015	May 8, 2015	May 31, 2015 (Interim report)
2	April 1, 2016	April 15, 2016	May 18, 2016
3	December 1, 2016	December 15, 2016	January 31, 2017 (Final report)

Table 5: Timeline of internal project evaluation

Checklist for Finishing Reports as Deliverables

The evaluation of the project processes and outcomes foresees the monitoring of the progress of the seven workpackages and the assessment of the quality of the project outcomes (deliverables). For finishing the reports as deliverables a checklist for each workpackage is provided (see annex 2).

Evaluation of Impact on Target Group

The evaluation of the impact on the target group will be performed by a questionnaire survey with all project actors participating in meetings of the consortiums and participants for the training sessions to become certified validations experts. For each of both target groups and each of the different meetings two questionnaires are provided (see annex 3 and 4).

Evaluation Reports & Improvement Actions (Measures)

Two evaluation reports will be produced during the project runtime and discussed within the project steering committee (PSC).

The questionnaire for the training session will be evaluated immediately after the training and will be used to improve the next training session (=formative evaluation).

The final report will integrate results of the different evaluation rounds and will present and discuss the results of the opinions of the participants of the training program.

Annex

(1) INTERNAL PROJECT EVALUATION

(2) CHECKLIST FOR FINISHING REPORTS AS DELIVERABLES

(3) TRAINING EVALUATION FORM

(4) PROJECT MEETING EVALUATION FORM

Please find the documents attached.

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