



MINUTES OF THE FOURTH QAC MEETING

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University of Nis



**Strengthening of master curricula in water resources management
for the Western Balkans HEIs and stakeholders**

PROJECT INFO

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Author(s)	Milan Gocic, Maria Manuela Portela
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1. Introduction

This document reports the fourth QAC meeting of the Erasmus+ Capacity Building in the Field of Higher Education project „Strengthening of master curricula in water resources management for the Western Balkans HEIs and stakeholders“ (SWARM), held on-line as the second on-line meeting using Zoom platform as a tool for the meeting, on the 15th of September 2020. The meeting was chaired by Milan Goci (UNI).

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss quality plan and activities of the QAC team in more details. UL and PWMCVV representatives didn't take part into this meeting.

The meeting agenda was adopted without changes.

2. Quality Assurance Committee meeting

Speaker:

Milan Goci , University of Nis (UNI)

Summary:

Meeting started at 10:00 after the SC on-line meeting.

Milan Goci presented EACEA and external reviewer recommendations. The EACEA recommendations and some responses:

- Ø We strongly encourage the project to ensure that the **accreditation of new courses is done in time in all partner countries**. Please send us updated information on the status of accreditation.

Created documentation for accreditation of new master curricula was submitted to the National Entity for Accreditation and Quality Assurance in Higher Education. As far as I am informed, the Erasmus+ projects have a priority in making decisions. After summer vacation, I will try to get more information regarding current status of submitted new curricula.

- Ø With regard to the **inter-project coaching meeting**, in case a face-to-face meeting will not be possible in the next months, please **explore alternative options to organise it on-line**.

The inter-project meeting will be organized using some of ICT tools i.e. on-line. For now, there is no possibility to organize a face-to-face meeting.

Unfortunately, I need to inform you that the third management meeting planned to be held in Sofia in April than in July and the fourth meeting planned to be organized in Podgorica in September 2020 must be postponed.

In the meantime, we organized an on-line management meeting on 15th April 2020 with participation of all project partners. Also, the webinar titled Frontiers in Water Resources Management related to the promotion of SWARM project was organised on 5th May 2020 with

participation of 75 attendees from 28 countries around the world (<http://www.swarm.ni.ac.rs/activities?id=55>).

- Ø Concerning the **cooperation with the business sector**, we would like to know if there are concrete outcomes from the meetings with the water companies that would benefit the study programmes and the graduates, like the **possibility of internships, lectures of the industry sector**, etc. Please provide us with this information.

We started the cooperation with the water sector companies during the realization of the activity A3.2 Analyse of water sector needs for LLL courses in WB. Unfortunately, the dialogue i.e. face-to-face meetings were interrupted by the existing COVID-19 pandemic. We are planning to organize 7 roundtables with a non-academic sector in WB countries in autumn. However, their realization as a face-to-face meeting is questionable because of current situation in WB countries caused by the COVID-19. In this case, Plan B i.e. a webinar or videoconferencing will be used to realize this activity.

In general, companies are interested in providing internships. They need students who possess not only theoretical but also practical knowledge that can be achieved through the internships.

- Ø Finally, some information on the **project's sustainability plan** is still outstanding. Please provide us with this information.

Developed/modernized master curricula will have further financial support by universities and WB ministries of education after finishing the process of accreditation. Achieved connections with the companies in water sector will enable future student progress through providing internship positions.

Installed and activated laboratory equipment will support further strengthening skills of the future enrolled students through the realization of laboratory exercises in the field of water resources management.

Developed courses for professionals in water sector will be used and implemented at the LLL centers at WB universities after the project realization.

The external reviewer recommendations:

- Ø Within the WP3 there is **no specific action that plans realization of LLL courses in WB**, although the state-of-the-art in EU is well documented, needs for WB are analysed and training material developed. I would encourage additional activities outside the project scope to organize such courses. This would be a great add on value to the project to cover the third specific objective of the project.
- Ø I recommend **raising the awareness level at wider community, including other WB countries, by inviting them on dissemination or training events**. This will improve the regional cooperation and overall visibility of the project results and outcomes.
- Ø The **project outputs need to be disseminated to non-academic persons and business partners**, including those that were contacted for analysis of the needs within WP.2.
- Ø This project should also **raise awareness about skills and competences that will be achieved by the prospective master students**, and influence governmental institutions about

competent staff for future WRM on national and local levels. These governmental institutions and relevant business sector may **support realization of new curricula by introducing possibility of scholarships and internships or provision of lectures and courses for relevant staff.**

- Ø I recommend the Universities to **plan adding subjects on resource management of other environmental resources, including renewable energy resources or waste management** within the scope of the studies as electives or branches of currently defined studies.
- Ø I recommend **adding knowledge and skills of modelling and simulation within WRM.**
- Ø Relevance can also be confirmed by a **relatively high number of participants, quality of presentations and evaluation reports of these events.**
- Ø I recommend that the event organizer and project coordinators also to **report on the selection criteria for all participants on realized activities, in order to ensure that the main target audience is communicated.**
- Ø I strongly encourage at the **last report to include comparison of the situation prior to project start and the situation after finishing the project**, such as number of experts in WRM, number of job positions, number of held LLL courses and improvement of competences of existing employees in WRM. This would give sufficient answer on the project impact and quality of project results.
- Ø I would encourage the project coordinator to **explain the strategy or methodology how the target group was selected for participation on the events, trainings or mentoring**, giving details if all relevant target audience is communicated.
- Ø Are the **benefits of the project and exploitation of the results going to be extended** also after the project lifetime/financing period?
- Ø I would suggest more efforts to be set in **enabling work positions for prospective students**, as this will be motivator for students to study the proposed master curricula. This can be achieved by **initiating a development strategy on a national or local level** that will organize administration or institutional support of WRM.
- Ø **Financial sustainability** needs to be supported by **action plans or decisions** in addition to the adopted University strategic documents in order to ensure that the University will continue to finance and organize the new master curricula and organize trainings after project termination.
- Ø The strategy for identification of the current state should be documented and explained why only the selected criteria are analysed for a specific topic. For example, policy and strategic planning is not sufficient, I recommend to include action plans and monitoring of their realization in the report since the annexes reference them.
- Ø Although a comprehensive analysis of the state-of-the-art is provided in WP.1 only the needed equipment was reported to upgrade the HEIs in the project context. **The report does not contain a summary of missing skills and knowledge topics that are essential for development**

of **curricula**. Note that the fifth activity (WP.1.5) includes the presentation of challenges and barriers, and a relevant summary will increase the quality of the WP 1 results.

- Ø The competences in WP.2 should follow the summary of the **skills and knowledge requirements identified in WP.1**. Therefore, these requirements are missing, although there is a comprehensive list of generic and specific competences expected within the new curricula.
- Ø The WP.2.1 report needs a **clear distinction of WRM competences from competences for other sciences or engineering topics**.
- Ø The potential links in the report of WP.2.1 is obsolete since it is presented in details for each University in the report of WP.2.2.
- Ø Some of the generic competences are neither covered by mandatory nor by elective subjects, and they need to be specified, or relevant clarification where these competences will be achieved.
- Ø Although a comprehensive strategy for implementation of course innovation is developed and specified in the report WP.2.3, still the report targets details on the developed curricula and does not present what is the innovation achieved. The document should more clearly specify what is new (method of achieving competences, the program itself) and what is the benefit of the invention in order to justify the innovation, instead of presenting just the study program details. This needs to be updated, also, with a possible list of social, technology development, environment or other benefits.
- Ø No need to present the links between the competences and subjects in WP.2.3 since they were elaborated in WP.2.2.
- Ø Details on study programs should be enlisted as annex to the report. Also a description of a study subject needs to be accompanied by recommended and optional literature and the methods how will be the course delivered (weekly hours of lectures, tutorials, practical assignments etc.)
- Ø The register of companies for WRM in WB countries is developed, but no competences and responsibilities are associated for each company.
- Ø The developed training (learning) material should be mapped to skills, knowledge and competences specified in the LLL program.
- Ø Dissemination activities should include raising awareness of general population and government officials about the importance of competent staff for WRM.
- Ø Elaboration of selecting the participants in the project activities needs to be extended with explanation why those participants have been included in the events.
- Ø There is no report how many handbooks were printed or distributed, and/or promoted to relevant staff working in governmental institutions from WRM.
- Ø Four WB countries are included in the project. I strongly recommend including also North Macedonia and Albania, at least in the dissemination phase.

- Ø Although not directly planned, I strongly recommend to organize LLL courses within developed curricula and training material.

It is decided that during October or November new QAC team meetings should be organized in order to define and write the response on reviewer's recommendations.

Instead of Maria Manuela Portela, Milan Goci presented **Report on the project management assessment**.

The next meeting is planned to be organised in June 2021.

The QAC meeting finished at 11:00h.

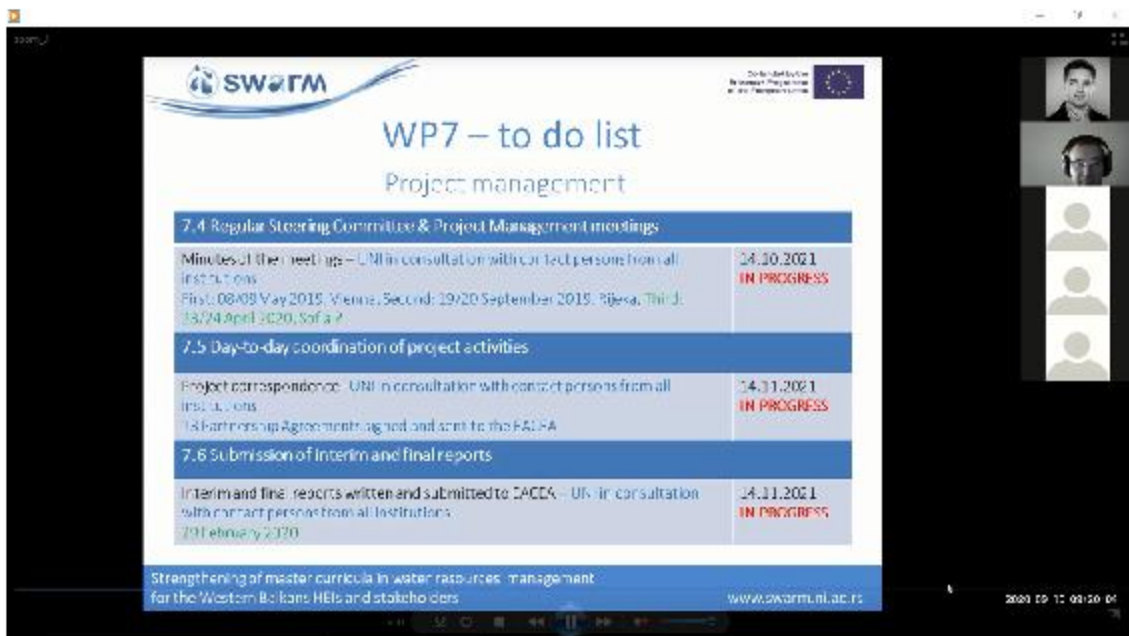
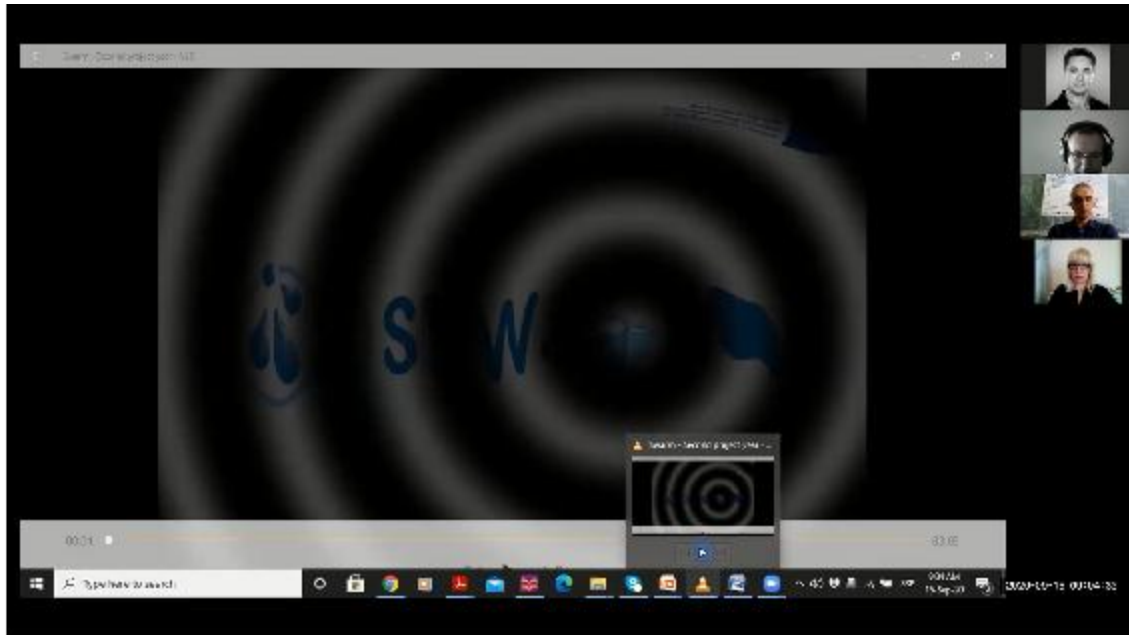
ANNEX I – Fourth QAC meeting agenda

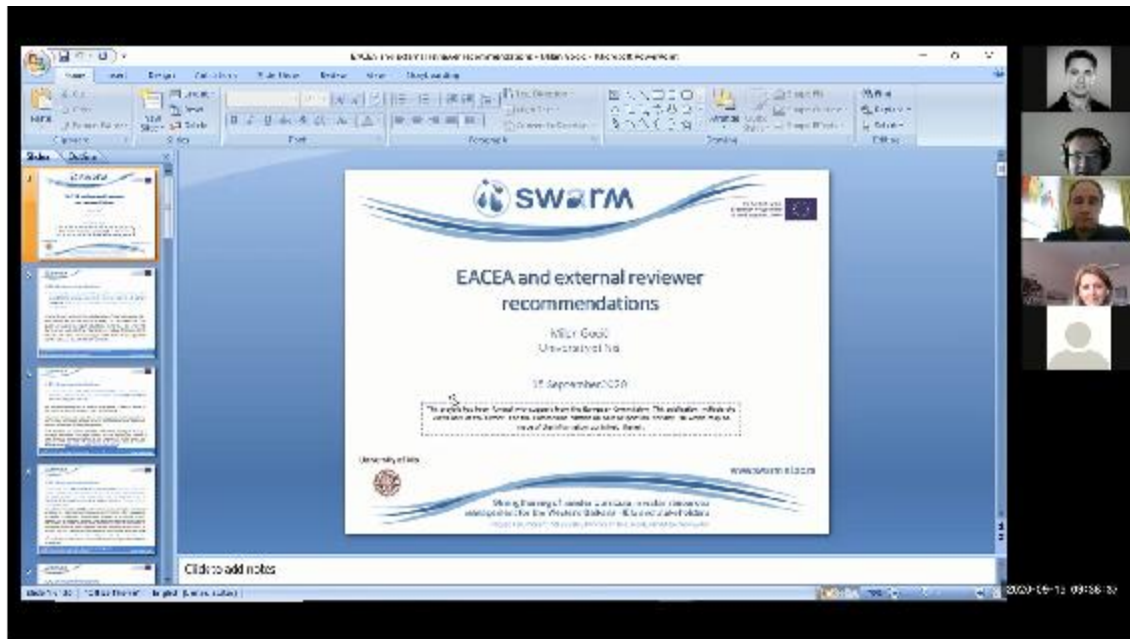
Tuesday, 15 th September 2020		
Second on-line meeting		
Fourth Quality Assurance Committee meeting		
10:00-10:20	Analysis of received feedback (EACEA comments and recommendations on the progress report, external evaluation report)	Maria Manuela Portela, UL Milan Goci , UNI
10:20-10:40	Quality of realized SWARM activities	Maria Manuela Portela, UL Milan Goci , UNI
10:40-11:00	General discussion	Maria Manuela Portela, UL Milan Goci , UNI

ANNEX II – Attendance list

No.	Name	Institution acronym
1	Milan Goci	P1-UNI
2	Mladen Milanovi	P1-UNI
3	Slaviša Tajkovi	P1-UNI
4	Ljiljana Jevremovi	P1-UNI
5	Michael Tritthart	P2-BOKU
6	Daniel Wildt	P2-BOKU
7	Zakhar Maletskyi	P3-NMBU
8	Harsha Ratnaweera	P3-NMBU
9	Skoulikaris Charalampos	P4-AUTh
10	Petar Filkov	P5-UACEG
11	Maria Mavrova-Guirginova	P5-UACEG
12	Barbara Karleuša	P6-UNIRIFCE
13	Maja Petrovi	P8-UNS
14	Igor Peško	P8-UNS
15	Slobodan Kolakovi	P8-UNS
16	Emina Hadži	P9-UNSA
17	Ammar Sari	P9-UNSA
18	Mili Selimoti	P10-UNMO
19	Merima Šahinagi -Isovi	P10-UNMO
20	Marko e ez	P10-UNMO
21	Jelena oki	P11-UPKM
22	Aleksandra Petrovi	P11-UPKM
23	Jelena Rajovi	P12-TCASU
24	Goran Sekuli	P13-UoM
25	Biljana Š epanovi	P13-UoM

ANNEX III – Accompanying photos

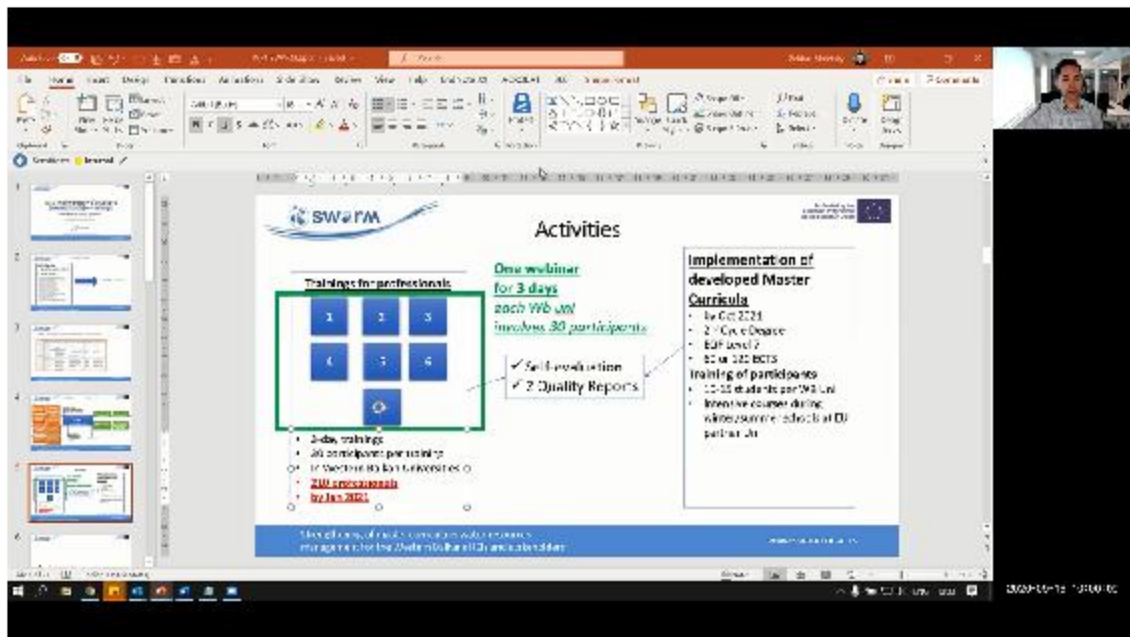




The screenshot shows a presentation slide with the following content:

- SWARM** logo at the top.
- EACEA and external reviewer recommendations**
- NER-Guid University of Jyväskylä
- 17 September 2020
- A text box containing: "The project has been found to be supported by the European Commission. The evaluation indicates a positive impact on the external reviewer's opinion on the project in the area of justification activities, items."
- University of Jyväskylä logo at the bottom left.
- www.swarm.fi/logo at the bottom right.
- Footer text: "SWARM Training 1 module can be used as a modular course or as a part of the Master's Degree. It is a part of the SWARM project funded by the European Commission."

On the right side of the slide, there is a vertical column of five small video thumbnails showing participants in a meeting.

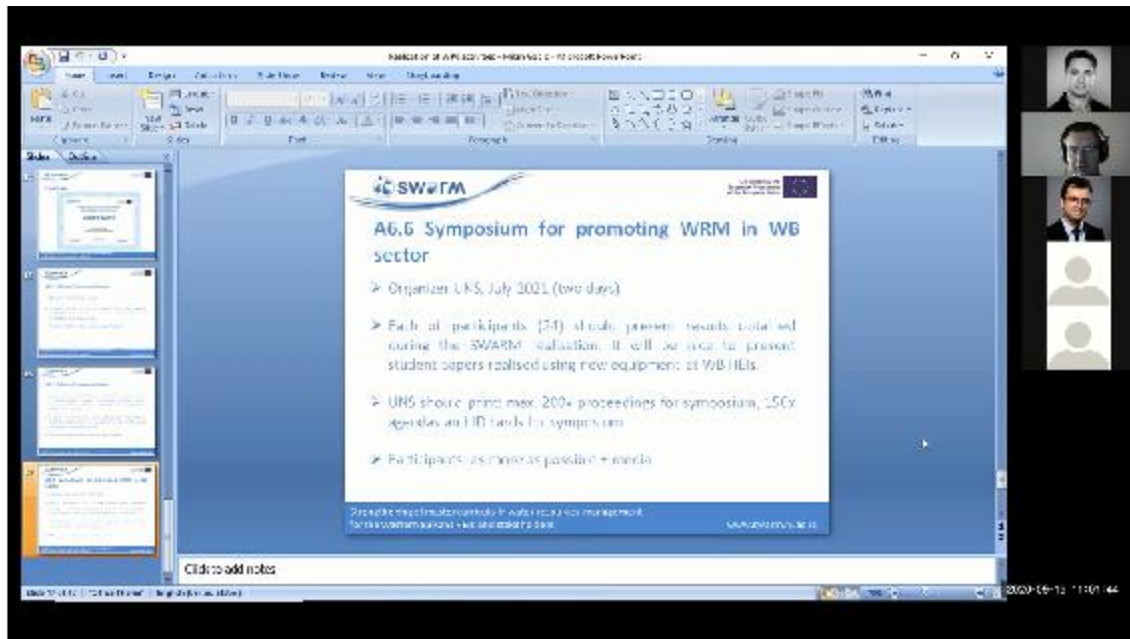


The screenshot shows a presentation slide titled "Activities" with the following content:

- SWARM** logo at the top.
- Activities** title.
- Trainings for professionals** section:
 - 2-day trainings
 - 30 participants per training
 - 17 Universities for Universities O
 - 200 professionals by Jan 2021
- One webinar for 3 days** section:
 - each WB unit involves 30 participants
 - ✓ Self-evaluation
 - ✓ 2 Quality Reports
- Implementation of developed Master Curricula** section:
 - by Oct 2021
 - 2 - Cycle Degree
 - EDP level 2
 - 20 in 2021
 - training of participants
 - 10-15 students per WB Unit
 - Intensive courses during winter/summer school at EU partner UJ

At the bottom of the slide, there is a small text box: "The development of the SWARM curriculum will be managed by the Jyväskylä University and the University of Jyväskylä."

On the right side of the slide, there is a vertical column of video thumbnails showing participants in a meeting.



The screenshot shows a Zoom meeting window with a presentation slide. The slide is titled "A6.6 Symposium for promoting WRM in WB sector" and lists several key points:

- Organizer: UKS, July 2021 (two days)
- Each of participants (24) should present results realized during the SWARM education. It will be nice to present student papers realized using new equipment at WB HLLs.
- URS should print max. 200+ proceedings for symposium, 150+ agendas and FB cards for symposium.
- Participants as more as possible members.

At the bottom of the slide, it says: "Presenting the results of the work realized in the area of water management for the Water Management - WRM and WRM 2021".

On the right side of the Zoom window, there is a vertical strip of participant video thumbnails. The top three show individual participants, and the bottom two are greyed out, indicating they are not active.