

Study of Impact: Report

Fostering Internationalization at Montenegrin HEIs through Efficient Strategic Planning – IESP

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1. Introduction.

The IESP project directly aimed at supporting modernization and improving internationalization of Montenegrin Higher Education. IESP directly targeted and envisaged the mechanisms that can help Montenegrin HEIs addressing the challenges they face in the Higher Education sector. The project is in line with the internationalization guidelines stipulated by Montenegrin Strategy of the Development of Higher Education (2016–2020) adopted by Ministry of Education,¹ the Strategy of Scientific/Research Activity (2017-2021)² and the Strategy of Innovation Activity (2016-2020)³ adopted by Ministry of Science. Hence, the project targeted at the core of internationalisation of the whole Montenegrin HE system for several reasons.

- Firstly, all public and private universities of Montenegro are partners of the project, along with the Ministries and organisms involved in HE: the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Science, and the Agency for Control and Quality Assurance in HE (ACQAHE). This will assure that the whole HE system will be targeted and involved, inducing a structural and, likely, a sustainable change.
- Secondly, the deliverables and outcomes expected from the project established a roadmap towards an increase of the international exposure by creating the appropriate tools in the framework of a strategic planning. The plan has been tailored to meet the specific needs and objectives of each Montenegrin HEI.
- The project addresses crucial aspects related to internationalisation that has lead to changes in governance, management and development of each HEI. The project does not focus only in the International Offices of each University or mobility, but in the HEI as a whole and involves all the different actors playing a role in the day-to-day life: students, administrative staff, teaching staff, administrators, governing boards and official organisms.

The knowledge and support Montenegrin HEIs can receive through the cooperation with the EU universities in this project is a corner stone of the project. Not only because the added value that benchmarking with different and successful strategies of internationalisation might provide, but also because the project itself creates a network of international cooperation between Montenegrin HEIs, their EU Erasmus

¹ <https://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/en/2016/strategy-development-higher-education-montenegro-2016-2020-6903> (last access in 12/21/2022).

² <https://www.gov.me/en/documents/20080ae6-11e9-45d6-9a4e-7f452cbb1ae4> (last access in 12/21/2022)

³ <https://www.gov.me/en/documents/7d84396e-3bc4-4ebe-be2e-f9f18c98243f> (last access in 12/21/2022)

partners and their corresponding partners. In this way, the international exposure and possibilities of new projects for Montenegro will increase.

Montenegrin HEIs are fully aware that it is necessary to boost their overall strategic thinking, not separating it from governance, management and development of institutional policies. IESP have addressed them through providing framework for better overall functioning and correspondence between and within different areas at the university level, and towards the environment. The deliverables and tasks achieved have boosted managerial, teaching, research and administrative capacities in different areas of internationalization. The creation of a dataset of strategic documents at each Montenegrin HEI and the implementing of their corresponding strategies of monitoring and evaluation also assures the highest standards of quality according to the European models.

Also, the recent creation in 2017 of the Agency for Control and Quality Assurance in HE (ACQAHE) and their participation in the Accreditation of the first two Summer Schools in English at the Ministry level opens a road to the accreditation of other educational projects, including whole BsC, MsC and PhD Degrees in English. This, undoubtedly, will boost the internationalisation of the degrees and will also enhance the cooperation in research from a bottom-up approach.

1.1. Background and Objectives.

Montenegro is clearly aiming to a full integration in the European Union. With this main objective in sight, Montenegro needs to address several reforms and adaptations in order to meet the EU standards. The Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR) is the commission of the EU in charge of follow-up the adaptations toward convergence with the EU standards. Among them, one important part is that regarding Education system and, more specifically in this case, the Higher Education System. This is the reason why the IESP project was classified as a national structural project under category #2 Improving management and operation of Higher Education Institutions. IESP fully corresponds to all national thematic priorities set by the Programme for Montenegro:

- Internationalization of higher education institutions, including recognition mechanisms and mobility, international relations capacities;
- Governance, strategic planning and management of higher education institutions, such as human resource and financial management;

- University services, such as support services for student mobility, student counselling and guidance, social services, academic affairs, libraries, etc.;
- Quality assurance processes and mechanisms, such as the development of mechanisms and benchmarks for quality assurance in different segments of higher education (academic contents and services).

The European Universities Association (EUA) conducted in 2018 an Institutional Evaluation Program (IEP) that clearly identified significant shortcomings and weakness in the field on internationalization.⁴ The conclusions highlighted significant shortcomings in the field of internationalization that set up the basis to write this project with the following specific objectives:

- Development of institutional strategies of internationalization with action plans
- Development of mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation of internationalization
- Enhancement of teaching and administrative staff knowledge and skills for participating in process of internationalization
- Enhancement of preconditions for increase of mobility

These objectives have been addressed through the different Working Packages and looking at the target groups: people (administration, staff, teaching staff) involved in university management at all levels; incoming and outgoing students, teaching staff, researchers and administrative staff; academic staff dealing with mobility; and, specifically, international offices' staff. Specific objectives will be addressed through realization of Working Packages of the IESP project as it follows:

- ✓ **WP1.** Identification of internationalization models and development of Guidelines for Effective and Efficient Internationalization model at Montenegrin HEIs. Main goal here is to identify appropriate model of internationalization for Montenegrin HEIs and to develop guidelines for its effective and efficient implementation.
- ✓ **WP2.** Capacity Building for Internationalization through staff training and equipment upgrade in order to enhance capacities related to internationalization at the Montenegrin HEIs.
- ✓ **WP3.** Development of Tools for Enhanced Internationalization to meet the lack of adequate tools found as a weakness in the previous analysis above mentioned.

⁴ <https://eua.eu/news/228:iep-publishes-the-montenegro-system-review-report.html>
(last access in 12/21/2022)

- ✓ **WP4.** Integration of Internationalization at Montenegrin HEIs. This WP is aimed at adoption, accreditation and implementation of activities within WP3.
- ✓ **WP5.** Quality Control and Monitoring. Quality control and monitoring are perceived as important support to management, planning and implementation of project activities, and, as such, they are given special attention within the project.
- ✓ **WP6.** Dissemination and Exploitation of Project Results.
- ✓ **WP7.** Project Management.

1.2. Situation at UOM before IESP.

Before the IESP project, internationalization activities at the University of Montenegro were conducted by the International Relations Office which coordinated the activities in the field of international cooperation at the level of the UOM, while these activities at the level of individual units were under the authority of Vice-deans. Even though the University of Montenegro had adopted an Internationalization Strategy for the period 2016-2020, an Action Plan or a set of indicators for measuring the success of its implementation did not accompany the document. Among the main threats detected, the following were identified as key aspects to be addressed and improved:

- ✓ Lack of skills and experience in the area of internationalisation strategic planning, especially taking into consideration the significance that internationalisation and everything it entails has for the overall strategic planning of any institution.
- ✓ Insufficient or not adequate support mechanisms and procedures for successful mobility, which made partner university students and staff reluctant to participate in the process. There was also a pressing need for improving the support services for incoming and outgoing students and staff.
- ✓ Academic staff involved in internationalization activities, notably, Vice-deans for international cooperation did not have at their disposal support procedures and guidelines and more thorough support of administrative staff at the level of the faculties.
- ✓ Administrative staff also lacked comprehensive manuals for internationalisation, and they often solved issues on case-by-case basis.
- ✓ Staff involved in implementation of international projects felt they did not receive sufficient support for preparation of project applications, project implementation; sometimes they even lacked information about the current calls for proposals.
- ✓ Lack of study programmes and only a small number of courses offered in English language, which is why the UoM was less attractive to incoming students and teachers.

- ✓ Related with the previous, the academic staff accustomed to doing research in English and presenting research results in this language lacked skills in providing teaching in this language.
- ✓ Researchers should benefit from was increasing their opportunities for participating in international research and innovation projects, both support and networking initiatives as well as `real` research and innovation projects.

Overall, there was a perception that internationalisation was a matter of central internationalisation offices at the universities. Due to the above mentioned facts there were huge discrepancies in the level of participation in international activities between individual university units, which called for a more strategic and global approach to internationalization.

1.3. Situation at UNIM before IESP.

In the period 2017-2020, the existing state of internationalization at UM was lower than satisfactory. The following weakness were detected:

- ✓ An imbalance between educational vs. research international projects, with the latest clearly disfavoured;
- ✓ mobility, both incoming and outgoing, was less than satisfactory;
- ✓ the teaching offering in English was scarce, with only one master's programme being offered in English
- ✓ which lead to a situation where many of the established co-operation agreements with other universities were lacking in concrete activity.

There were many key areas of activity that required improvement. In some ways, this had been a challenge involving leadership and resources. A clear and dedicated focus for international relations hadn't been established. The team of two staff to manage the various practical aspects of internationalization was not clearly enough.

At the beginning of IESP project, the university had 30 bilateral international agreements signed, but all of them were not active in terms of conferences, mobility agreements or educational workshops and seminars. Over recent years before 2020, the university has made significant efforts to increase student and staff mobility - both outgoing and incoming; however, data from academic years 2017/2018 – 2019/2020 lead to the conclusion that the level of outgoing activities regarding students, is not at a satisfactory level. Lack of success in this objective was partly due to a lack of interest of students for mobility, and lack of desire to learn about the various mobility schemes

available in the European Higher Education space. Interest across faculties was variable: some faculties had no interest for outgoing mobility. The situation with regard to staff mobility data was no different.

The analysis of data regarding the participation in international projects also showed that this was another field where possibilities of growth were clear, since the number of projects accomplished by faculties as well as the quality of projects and partnerships could be clearly improved. The profile of the projects was more in the field of educational - mostly Tempus, and Erasmus+ projects, rather than research activities. The possibility of growth in the number of research projects is clearly an opportunity.

Through the analysis of achievements of internationalization before 2020 and of the university's international strategy 2017-2020, many key weaknesses that required improvement could be detected: lack of appropriate budget for internationalization, lack of accredited study programmes at all levels and summer schools in International languages, deficit of research culture, focus on education only, limited resources for faculty and staff development, small number of courses in International languages offered for incoming students and internationalization at home, problem of International language skills of academic staff, administrative staff and students, limited capacities of international relations office, inadequate information system for internationalization, inadequate support system for international students and researchers, low level of incoming and outgoing mobility of students and staff, inadequate visibility of activities in regard of internationalization at the University as a whole.

Mobility is one of the most visible and fast-reacting indicators to any change in the policies of any University. Before IESP project, the numbers for mobilities were rather low, as it was previously stated; analysis of previous achievements and the strategy of by assessing the then-active strategy of internationalization, it was concluded that multiple factors could be the cause for such a situation: low student interest, weak student outreach by the IRO office, mobilities were not advertised enough and published on the University website and social networks. Indicators from the period after the IESP project started clearly show a marked improvement in the number of mobilities, with increases of over 100% in certain areas, which goes to show how important and useful this project was for Mediterranean University.

1.4. Situation at UDG before IESP.

University of Donja Gorica is aware of the importance of enhancing and strengthening its internationalisation. During recent years it has significantly intensified its efforts towards internationalisation, recognizing the opportunity and obligation to provide its academic and administrative staff, and above all to its students, with the opportunity to gain international experience and skills through cooperation, both with academic institutions and business sector. These experiences are of particular importance to graduate students who in greater number start their work abroad, and their job-hunting on the global market.

UDG has a good background in terms of courses and activities taught in English language. There are 23 study programs at BSc level, 40 at MSc level and 10 at PhD level. Among them, there is one programme carried out entirely in English language – International Hospitality and Management (VATEL) at the Faculty of Culture and Tourism, initiated within the franchise, in cooperation with Azmont Investment and VATEL International Business School, which is officially awarded Best Hospitality Management School in the World. For this reason, international students have individual classes with professors or mentors. However, most of the faculties offer up to 10 courses per study program in English to both international and domestic students (part of “internationalisation at home”) in the event when all domestic students in each class accept English as major language for that course.

Besides this, UDG is focused on the internationalization of some of its study programmes particularly:

- Undergraduate studies "International Hospitality and Management" at the Faculty of Culture and Tourism,
- Master studies in “European Masters in Official Statistics (EMOS)” at the Faculty of International Economics, Finance and Business started according to a standardized programme accredited by Eurostat;
- Master studies "Cyber Security" at Humanistic Studies have been enhanced within the Tempus project "Enhancement of cyber educational system of Montenegro - ECESM" funded by European Commission, and this programme is compatible with similar studies implemented by Royal Holloway University of London and Global Cyber Security Center (Italy), as well as with studies at Tallinn University of Technology (Estonia)
- Master studies "Health Management in Informatics" at the Faculty of International Economics, Finance and Business, within the Erasmus+ project

"Enhancement of study programs in Public Health Law, Health Management, Health Economics and Health Informatics in Montenegro" funded by the European Commission. This programme is compatible with the Joint Master Program Health Economics and Management implemented by University Innsbruck, Austria; Erasmus University Rotterdam, Netherlands; University of Bologna, Italy and the University of Oslo, Norway, and upon its accreditation it is expected to be further internationalized in the form of accession to the abovementioned program at EU level.

- Undergraduate studies "Chinese Studies" were Bologna accredited with 180 ECTS credits with undergraduate studies, which would last 3 years. "Chinese Studies" is organized as a separate study program within the Faculty for Culture and Tourism at UDG. Chinese Studies were organized in cooperation with a group of universities from China.

Internationalisation aspect of the above study programmes is expected to attract more international students in the future. Even though these programmes have a strong international component, other programmes also have potential for internationalisation as well, as the curricula of study programs is contemporary, and it focuses on capabilities rather than just knowledge of students. In this aspect, clear vision and strong leadership lead the University with commitment to quality.

In terms of mobility, students are actively encouraged to take opportunities for international mobilities, and the University is focused on creating a mind set and atmosphere at the university where this is regarded as highly desirable and advantageous for students. Students are provided with support when choosing courses on host institutions so that ECTS awarded there are recognized on their return, which has always been the practice.

The decision to have required English level B2.2 and another foreign language level A2.2 for all students in order to receive their diploma, regardless of the study program, speaks to this regard. On the other hand, language skills of majority of academic staff are at the level that they can easily hold their courses in English, which is a major strength towards having bilingual study programmes.

Academic and non-academic staffs are motivated to participate more actively in various interdisciplinary activities (study visits, projects, conferences, etc.), which is included in the criteria for the election of professors in academic positions.

In terms of internationalisation of research, there is a significant positive trend in the number of international research projects and the number of staff involved in those projects. However, small number of international staff employed at the University as well as the fact that academic staff is primarily focused on teaching with only part of the working hours dedicated to research, with no researchers who are employed exclusively for research, remains a challenge in improving this trend even further.

1.5. Brief description of ACQAH regarding IESP.

The Memorandum of Association established the Agency for control and Quality Assurance of Higher Education (ACQAHE) in November 2017.⁵ However, it started working at its full capacity in September 2018. In addition to taking over the processes of accreditation and reaccreditation, the Agency also assumed the duty to do research related to quality assurance. Nevertheless, quality assurance of higher education through accreditation processes began with Montenegrin accession to the European Higher Education Area in 2003 and the obligation to meet European standards and guidelines in 2010.⁶

Until the establishment of the Agency, the ministry in charge of education conducted the accreditation procedure, while the decisions on accreditation and reaccreditation used to be rendered by the Higher Education Council comprising reputable academic professionals.

The primary objective of ACQAHE is the quality improvement of higher education institutions in Montenegro and their study programmes and the guarantee of meeting the primary standards and criteria for their public validity. The Agency meets this objective through external evaluation (accreditation of study programmes, lifelong learning programmes and reaccreditation of higher education institutions) and the institutions do it through internal quality assurance. Special objectives are:

- ✓ Developing procedures for evaluating quality of work of the higher education institutions and their study programmes and lifelong learning programmes;
- ✓ Establish standards and criteria for an evaluation in order to convert the results of the work of institutions and study programmes into quality grades;
- ✓ Ensure objectivity of evaluations through independence in the decision-making, organization and results of work of the Agency;

⁵ <https://akokvo.me/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Articles-of-Association.pdf>

⁶ <https://akokvo.me/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/5.8.-Me%C4%91unarodni-propisi.pdf>

- ✓ Provide society with information of the quality of work of higher education institutions;
- ✓ Promote the internationalization of the evaluation process.

Strategic objectives of further development of higher education are:

- ✓ Improvement of the higher education system and creation of competitive staff,
- ✓ Harmonizing education with the labour market needs,
- ✓ Improvement of scientific-research work and increased level of participation in EU projects,
- ✓ Internationalization of higher education,
- ✓ Lifelong learning education,
- ✓ Setting up a sustainable model of financing.

IESP project objectives are in full accordance with most of the ACQHAE's objectives. The Agency has been fully involved in the development of the IESP project and, in fact, has been a keystone for the accreditation of the first two international summer schools in English. Moreover, IESP has also served as a testing ground for the developing of many of these procedures and an useful network to get in contact with other European Accreditation Agencies.

1.6. Results of the benchmarking analysis.

Each MNE University conducted a separate benchmarking analysis. Based on a previous survey on the three EU partners (Université de Côte d'Azur, University of Ljubljana and Universidad de Cádiz) as part of the previous work done on WP1, all of them chose the University of Ljubljana to conduct their analysis based on the similarity in cultural and geographical aspects, languages, and structure of studies, organization and, in some cases, size. Several dimensions were analysed: 1) institutional characteristics, (2) structure and policy, (3) internationalization at home, (4) social integration, (5) quality assurance and (6) support to international students. As a result of the benchmarking analysis, several key points were identified as important points to be addressed in the strategic planning that was going to be developed. These points can be summarized as follows:

- ✓ Structural changes, mainly regarding the staff manpower involved in internationalisation; the organization of internationalisation itself as a cross-unit duty; support systems for international students and researchers;

developing of a career centre to improve entrepreneurial culture among students and business incubators.

- ✓ Importance of foreign languages, specially regarding the existence of study programs or subjects in English.
- ✓ The increase of international students and mobility, with special emphasis in PhD students and research mobility.
- ✓ Internationalisation at home.
- ✓ Creation of summer and winter international schools.
- ✓ Improvement/increase of quality assurance protocols.
- ✓ Increase and improvement of international cooperation, with special emphasis in research funding.

2. Table of indicators and analysis.

In order to follow-up and measure at the end the real impact of the project in the short- and long-term on the internationalization of the HE system in Montenegro, IESP designed a set of indicators divided in two main groups. One set will measure the immediate impact after completion of the project (Table 1) and the other will try to envision whether the impact in the long-term will be sustainable and maintained (Table 2). Overall, 51 indicators will draw the picture of the impact of IESP on the internationalisation of the MNE HE system.

Table 1. List and description of indicators to assess the short-term impact of IESP on the Montenegrin HES.

Number	Indicator	Description
1.- IESP network established and maintained.		
I.1.1	At least 10 joint events (3 project meetings, trainings, dissemination).	Through the joint work done during the project, a steady and sustainable network that will continue with the international cooperation will be established and new projects are expected to come out.
I.1.2	1 Benchmark report.	
I.1.3	1 Impact analysis.	
I.1.4	2 External evaluation reports.	
I.1.5	2 Project reports.	
2.- Enhanced capacities for training strategic planning and university governance		
I.2.1	At least 2 types of trainings organised for management, teaching and administrative staff.	Measuring the knowledge transfer and the increase in staff skills and infrastructure.
I.2.2	At least 20 participants trained.	
I.2.3	At least 100 computers purchased.	
3.- Strategic framework for internationalisation enhanced.		
I.3.1	3 Strategic documents developed.	Measuring the capacity of strategic planning and its follow-up.
I.3.2	3 Action plans developed.	
I.3.3	3 Sets of supporting documents developed.	
I.3.4	3 Bodies for evaluation of the strategy implementation established.	
I.3.5	3 Evaluation reports adopted.	

Number	Indicator	Description
4.- Teaching in English improved.		
I.4.1	At least 250 courses available in English.	The offer in English language is a keystone for attraction of students and of international professors. Their implementation should have an immediate effect on mobility and exposure.
I.4.2	2 Summer Schools curricula developed and implemented.	
I.4.3	At least 78 hours of English course for teaching purposes held.	
5.- Capacities for internationalisation increased.		
I.5.1	3 Language support centres with 4 classrooms established and operational	The capacities on English language for Montenegrin students and professors will, undoubtedly, have a positive impact in mobility. Besides, the strength of the IROs by increasing the staff involved in internationalisation, their training and the developing of a set of basic documents for internationalisation management (mobility agreement models, MoU models, etc.) will also positively affect capacity building.
I.5.2	3 Sets of documents for internationalisation support developed and utilized.	
I.5.3	At least 4 types of trainings organised.	
I.5.4	At least 40 people trained.	
I.5.5	2 or 3 types of guides for incoming mobility developed.	
I.5.6	At least 78 hours of English course for teaching purpose held.	
I.5.7	3 International Relation Offices strengthened.	
I.5.8	Number of administrative staff involved in internationalisation increased by at least 100%.	
6.- Visibility for different modalities and competitiveness of HEIs increased.		
I.6.1	3 Institutional web pages in English redesigned/developed and maintained	Measuring the immediate impact on international exposure (webpage) and the competitiveness (incoming mobility) of Montenegrin HEIs.
I.6.2	Number of existing profiles at national portal, Naucna mreza, increased by 10%	
I.6.3	Number of profiles at free-of-charge global databases increased by 10%	
I.6.4	Increased number of incoming students.	
I.6.5	Increased number of incoming staff.	

A total number of 29 indicators will cover the influence and impact in the short-term period, just after completion of the project. The indicators were set to analyze direct increase on aspects such as international exposure -through mobility and summer schools, capacity building and skills transfer, and competitiveness of the staff and the curricula of Montenegrin HEIs at the international level.

Table 2. List and description of indicators to assess the long-term impact of IESP on the Montenegrin HES.

Number	Indicator	Description
7.- IESP network continued.		
I.7.1	At least 2 new joint proposals within different programs (projects should include at least two partners of IESP consortium).	Cooperation in the long-term will be measured through the capacity to establish long-term and sustainable relationships and through the capacity to attract funding for new projects.
I.7.2	At least 3 new cooperation protocols.	
8.- IESP strategies implementation continued and strategic planning process enhanced.		
I.8.1	At least 3 implementation and evaluation reports available, at least mid-term and final.	Implementation of a “culture of quality” and of strategic planning in each institution goes through the follow-up process of evaluation is basic
I.8.2	At least 3 drafts of renewed internationalisation strategies developed.	

Number	Indicator	Description
I.8.3	At least three new strategic documents drafted.	for a long-term impact. Also, the delivery of strategic plannings that will be monitored through their development will assure not only the long-term impact of the project, but also the sustainability of the changes induced in the system.
9.- Internationalisation at MNE HEIs additionally improved.		
I.9.1	Number of new international projects (education, collaborative research, technology transfer within the MNE region).	On the long-term, international projects are key for a sustainable internationalisation. It will, undoubtedly, have a positive effect on other internationalisation key indicators. To achieve such a goal, cooperation protocols must be followed-up.
I.9.2	Increased participation in mobility programmes by at least 30%.	
I.9.3	Increased number of cooperation protocols by 20%.	
10.- Quality of teaching process further improved.		
I.10.1	Courses in English as part of regular teaching process maintained.	To increase the attractiveness of MNE HEIs it is imperative that a strong and wide choice of courses offered in English is available.
I.10.2	Additional number of courses in English available (at least 15% more).	
I.10.3	At least three series of training in Montenegrin for foreign students held.	
I.10.4	At least 10 series of trainings of English for specific purposes organized.	
11.- Incoming mobility increased.		
I.11.1	At least 6 mobility network partnerships renewed/established.	The number of mobility network partnerships will assure a steady increase of mobility. The projection of the numbers of mobility in the future and the impact of the project can also be measured through the immediate increase in mobility.
I.11.2	Number of incoming students increased by 20%.	
I.11.3	Number of outgoing students increased by 30%.	
I.11.4	Number of incoming teachers/researchers increased by 15%.	
I.11.5	Number of outgoing researchers increased by 20%.	
12.- International visibility of Montenegrin HEIs increased.		
I.12.1	Number of inter-institutional cooperation protocols improved by 20%.	International cooperation protocols will assure a sustainable change in the exposure of MNE HEIs that will be reflected on how the HEIs rank at the international lists.
I.12.2	Number of profiles in national databases increased by another 10%.	
I.12.3	Number of profiles at international databases increased by another 10%.	
I.12.4	Ranking of MNE HEIs in international lists improved.	
I.12.5	Participation of MNE HEIs in international education and RTDI programmes increased.	

A total number of 22 indicators have been chosen to measure the potential influence and impact in the long-term period, after completion of the project. Evidently, these indicators will show the tendency, but the real impact of the project on the long-term period cannot be measured after, at least, the completion and evaluation of the respective strategic plans adopted by each MNE HEIs. However, the strategic plants of each MNE HEIs include quality plans for monitoring and adjusting the deployment.

Hence, it is first priority of each HEI to assess the development of their respective plans and take the measures needed if deviations or delays are detected, in the framework of a quality assurance methodology. Also, MoS, MoE and ACQAHE should have a key role in monitoring the deployment and development of the strategies.

3. Short-term impact analysis.

A scale to measure the accomplishment of each indicator has been set up in the following way: IESP project included for each indicator a goal value to be achieved by the end of its life-period; a value of 1 was set for reaching the value settled, 0 for non accomplishment and intermediate values lower or higher than 1 were obtained through normalization with the goal value. The values for each indicator are provided in Annex I table. Here in the normalized values are presented in tables and graphics and the analysis will be conducted based on them, with references to the absolute values when needed. Values were normalized taking as a reference the goal established for each indicator in the project.

3.1. Overall view.

The values of indicators for short-term impact are summarized in Table 3 and Figure 3. At a first glance, 21 out of 29 indicators have values equal or higher than “1”: 75,9 % of the indicators correspond to goals totally achieved or achieved to a degree higher than the initial expectations.

Table 3. Values of short-term impact indicators.

Short-term impact		Absolute value	Normalized value
Indicator	Description		
I.1.1	At least 10 joint events (3 project meetings, trainings, dissemination)	16	1,6
I.1.2	Benchmark report	3	3
I.1.3	1 impact analysis to be delivered (end of project)	1	1
I.1.4	2 external evaluation reports	2	2
I.1.5	2 project reports	7	3,5
I.2.1	At least 2 types of trainings organised for management, teaching and administrative staff	5	2,5
I.2.2	At least 20 participants trained	179	8,95
I.2.3	At least 100 computers purchased	100	1
I.3.1	Three strategic documents developed	5	1,67
I.3.2	Three action plans developed	3	1,00
I.3.3	Three sets of supporting documents developed	3	1,00

Short-term impact			
Indicator	Description	Absolute value	Normalized value
I.3.4	Three bodies for evaluation of the strategy implementation established	4	1,33
I.3.5	Three evaluation reports adopted	1	0,33
I.4.1	At least 250 courses available in English	377	1,51
I.4.2	Two summer school curricula developed and implemented	2	1,00
I.4.3	At least 78 hours of English course for teaching purposes held	9,5	0,12
I.5.1	Three Language support centres with 4 classrooms established and operational	2	0,67
I.5.2	Three sets of documents for internationalisation support developed and utilized	3	1,00
I.5.3	At least 4 types of trainings organised	6	1,50
I.5.4	At least 40 people trained	186	4,65
I.5.5	Two or three types of guides for incoming mobility developed	0	0,00
I.5.6	At least 78 hours of English course for teaching purpose held	9,5	0,12
I.5.7	Three international relations offices strengthened	3	1,00
I.5.8	Number of administrative staff involved in internationalisation issues increased by at least 10%	175	17,50
I.6.1	Three institutional web pages in English redesigned/developed and maintained	3	1,00
I.6.2	Number of existing profiles at national portal, Naucna mreza, increased by 10%	0,00	0,00
I.6.3	Number of profiles at free-of-charge global databases increased by 10%	0	0,00
I.6.4	Increased number of incoming students	89	4,43
I.6.5	Increased number of incoming staff	315	15,77

No. indicators >1 : 14

No. indicators = 1: 8

No indicators < 1: 7, of which two of them = "0"

Average value for the set : 2,9

3.2. Detailed analysis by sections.

The detailed analysis of the different sections also sheds light to the short-term impact of the project on different aspects of internationalisation of the MNE HEIs.

Section 1. IESP network established and maintained. The joint effort of the consortium through the lifetime of the project allowed establishing a network where teamwork has been key for success. Despite the difficulties caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the switch to virtual activities, the number of joint events (I.1.1) was greater than the goal settled. Not only that, but it is also important to highlight that all partners participated in the activities (see number of participants in the extended table at Annex I). All the indicators reached the goal of surpassed the expected values (normalized values equal or higher than 1).

The first external evaluation report –delivered on month 15, February 2021, also reached this conclusion, stating that *“IESP project realized all planned activities with a high quality standard and showed excellent cooperation, specially under COVID circumstances”* and giving the project a score of 98.3 points over 100. As it will be showed later in the long-term impact analysis, the IESP network is a well-established cooperation environment where new projects have already been born. Two of the EU partners (University of Cadiz and University of Ljubljana) are also members of two pilot European Universities projects: SEA-EU and EUTOPIA, respectively. This also opens a door to higher levels of interconnection and cooperation with one of the flagship projects of the new European HES: the European Universities.

Section 2. Enhanced capacities for training strategic planning and university governance. The number of trainings and, specially, the number of people trained has been far higher than the numbers expected. Manpower involved in internationalisation and improvement of their skills are a key aspect that was detected as a weakness/threat in the benchmarking analysis. The increase on both aspects have a immediate impact in the capacities of MNE HEIs to handle aspects of internationalisation related with strategic planning, making mobilities protocols easier to students and staff, and providing normalized documents according to the European standards, and increasing institutional support to international cooperation and research projects. More important, the staff trained during IESP project has increased their capacity and know-how transfer to be able to train other staff and maintain the knowledge and capacity process, thus assuring the sustainability of the results.

The purchase of computers to the different International Relation Offices (IROs) and units dealing with internationalisation have had also an immediate positive effect on the day-to-day work and will last for several years.

Section 3. Strategic framework for internationalisation enhanced. Strategic planning is key for any strategic framework. More important, strategic planning assures that the

short-term impact of any initiative will also have a long-lasting effect, thus assuring the sustainability of the results of the project. In this section, two parts can be differentiated: indicators I.3.1 to I.3.3 show that all MNE HEIs successfully delivered and deployed their strategic plans for the next five-year periods; indicators I.3.4 and I.3.5 –evaluation bodies and evaluation reports assure the correct follow-up of the internationalisation planning.

Indicators I.3.1 to I.3.4 indicate that all three MNE HEIs has set up a course of action for the next years in order to improve their international exposure and activities, and to follow-up the progress through the review of the implementation of the strategy and the subsequent reporting to Senate or other units. Indicator I.3.5 show that only one University reported the adoption on evaluation reports. This is a weak point that needs to be immediately addressed and improved if the short-term impact caused by the deployment of the strategic plans is to last in time.

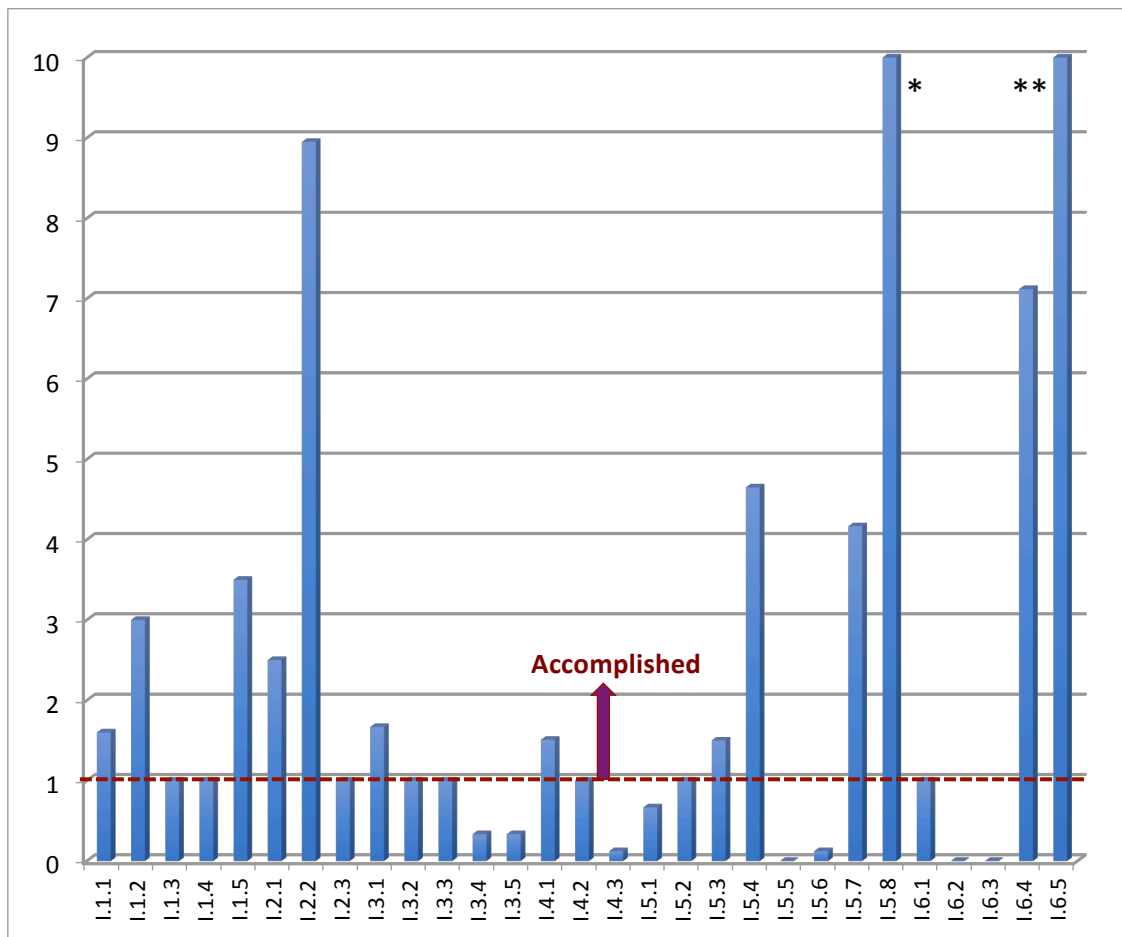


Figure 1. Level of accomplishment of the short-term indicators: indicator ≥ 1 : indicator accomplished; $0 \leq \text{indicator} < 1$: indicator below level or not accomplished. *: I.5.8 = 17,50; **: I.6.5 = 15,77.

Section 4. Teaching in English improved. English language is another corner stone of internationalisation of HEIs. An adequate offer of subjects in English accompanied by the increase in English skills for teaching purposed by professors of areas other than English language will have an immediate effect of aspects such as incoming mobility, but also for teaching staff incoming and outgoing mobility.

The increase of English capabilities by staff and by the institutions themselves will also have a positive effect at once in the process of internationalisation at home, which was detected in the benchmarking analysis as another aspect to be cared of by all three MNE Universities. A process/methodology (good practices) on how to develop English courses has been developed to facilitate its increase in the future years, making this process sustainable.

Indicators regarding the offer in English language also show a value higher than the initially value settled as an objective. All three Universities have included in their webpages their offer of subjects in English. The higher number corresponds to UoM, accordingly to their bigger size but all values can be considered a more than satisfactory starting point for the future and they will have undoubtedly an impact in mobility and internationalisation at home in short time.

Moreover, the extension of one year of the project granted by EACEA allowed the successfully accreditation (by ACQAHE) and implementation of the first face-to-face summer schools in English in Montenegro. Some changes on the legislation and the design of the protocols for accreditation in English language of courses opened the door to future courses and degrees in the future and, in fact, means an structural and sustainable change in the MNE HE system. This change will enhance the international exposure of the Universities and also will make of them a more attractive/interesting destination for students, staff and teaching staff, increasing the possibilities of international cooperation at all levels. In this section is key to highlight the role and the involvement of the government institutions, and very especially of the Agency for Control and Quality Assurance of Higher Education (ACQAHE). Despite their recent establishment (2017, see section 1.5), their involvement in the project has been key in the success of it.

The subjects addressed by the two summer schools are also of the highest importance to Montenegro economy and employment, as they deal with different aspects of the Tourism industry. Thus, the IESP project will have a multiplier effect in other areas and stakeholders in Montenegro outside the University system.

Section 5. Capacities for internationalisation increased.

The increase of capacities has been clearly increased over the targeted values in different key areas:

- ✓ Staff: the number of staff trained on internationalization-related skills has exceeded the goal set at 40 people trained. As a result of the different training courses and activities 186 people of different areas of all three MNE HEIs and of the Ministry of Science, Ministry of Education and ACQAHE has acquired new skills on strategic planning, design of courses in English, organization of international summer schools, etc. All of these enhanced skills will have an immediate and positive impact on different aspects of the organization of internationalization.
- ✓ Skills transfer and capacity building in internationalization: all the trainings planned has been performed; moreover, as a result of the different trainings, sets of supporting documents have been designed and developed according to the specific needs of each University.
- ✓ A methodology and guides (with the training resources) have been compiled and will be used by new staff in each university.
- ✓ Strengthening of administrative units related to internationalization: the capacities transferred have had a direct positive effect on the capabilities of all three international offices, providing them with a framework in the form of an strategic plan, the design of protocols and sets of supporting documents, and the number of staff trained. The number of administrative staff involved in internationalization issues has also exceeded the goal settled up to a 17.5%, which undoubtedly has a strong and positive impact whatsoever.
- ✓ Languages have been also strengthened (I.5.1), despite the fact that that the number of training hours devoted to design English courses has not reached the desired value (I.5.6). This low value has been compensated by the number of courses offered in English (I.4.1) and the design, accreditation and the start up of two International Summer Schools in English (I.4.2).

Section 6. Visibility for different modalities and competitiveness of HEIs increased.

Visibility is a key factor for internationalisation. A greater visibility has direct outcomes in different sides of the University day-to-day life: increases attractiveness, boosts incoming mobility and enhances international cooperation in research and education, just to mention a few easy-to-measure effects.

A good and updated institutional webpage in English is a requisite to gain international visibility. As a result of the project all three Universities updated or created a new version in English of their institutional webpages (I.6.1). The links for the webpages are provided in the Annex I. However, a quick visit to each one shows the description and useful facts of each University that might be of interest for international students, researchers and administrative staff. Moreover, each one have been designed in a friendly manner, so the essential info will be accessible within a maximum number or three clicks.

Not only MNE Universities has gained visibility. The support of IESP project on the internationalization process of ACQAHE and their international exposure and visibility could be seen within activities related to collaboration within QA agencies and higher education institutions in countries which were partners in IESP. Therefore, with the support of IESP colleagues, ACQAHE organized 2 study visits, first one to France including University Cote d'Azur, Nice and to High council for evaluation of research and higher education – HCERES, and the second study visit to Spain in QA agency ANECA and HE institution as well.

In line with this, through the IESP project, ACQAHE improved cooperation with the Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency - NAKVIS and signed a Memorandum of cooperation between those two agencies.

According to the advice of NAKVIS, ACQAHE has become a full member of the [Central and Eastern European Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education](#) (CEENQA) association. Cooperation through the exchange of knowledge and experiences, participation in projects and research, as well as direct communication with agencies that had a similar heritage of the higher education system is of great significance for the improvement of work and building capacities of ACQAHE. Therefore, again IESP project made a great impact in regards of becoming a member of CEENQA.

On May 28th 2022, the Agency for Control and Quality Assurance of Higher Education participated in the Fair of European Projects, which was organized during the celebration of the Month of Europe. Participation in this Fair was an opportunity for visitors to get informed about the projects implemented by institutions, as well as to talk to potential partners about the calls expected in the coming period. Besides the ACQAHE, over 40 exhibitors – users of EU funds – presented themselves at the fair. The participants of the Fair agreed that participation in the EU projects accelerates the integration process, helps in the transfer and implementation of valuable knowledge from developed countries and contributes to improving the quality of life of citizens.

Unfortunately, we could not gather data for indicators I.6.2 and I.6.3, related to the increment of profiles in different national and international databases. However, it is unlikely that the impact of IESP could produce direct effects in these indicators in such a short period of time after completion of the project. Consequently, we think this lack of data will not negatively affect the vision of the impact of the project presented in this report.

Last, but not least, mobility is a very sensitive indicator of internationalization. Indicators I.6.4 and I.6.5, dealing with incoming mobility, clearly shows that all the activities carried out by the IESP project has helped to gain international visibility and attractiveness. There is a significant increment of incoming students (77%) and staff (553 %) at the University of Montenegro. At the University Mediterranean, the most significant increment has occurred in staff mobility (77,8%). The increment in staff mobility is particularly important, as most of them are permanent positions at their home Universities and this type of mobility ensures the sustainability of the positive effect obtained through the IESP project.

3.3. Strengths acquired. Conclusions.

An overview of the indicators shows that an average value of 2.9 has been obtained for the whole set of short-term impact indicators. This clearly proves that the level of accomplishment of the objectives is higher than satisfactory. Data plainly shows that IESP project has had a deep impact on the MNE HEIs and the whole HE system at the structural level, with a transfer of capacities and skills from the EU partners and deep changes in their structure.

- ✓ There has been a transfer of skills and capacity building on administrative staff of all three Universities and in the Agency for Control and Quality Assurance of Higher Education (ACQAHE). The training provided will have an immediate effect on the different administrative procedures related with internationalisation, making easier for the incoming and outgoing students and staff their international mobility. Not only that, but it will also have permanent, sustainable effect on strengthening the different International Relations Offices.
- ✓ Equally, the training provided for administrative and teaching staff on the design of courses and teaching in English, the design and delivering of the English version of each University's web page and the creation of three Language support centres will also have at once a positive effect in the attractiveness of MNE HEIs incoming students and will increase awareness on

local students about the importance of Languages –named English, and, hence, in the internationalisation at home.

- ✓ The process of design and deployment of two international summer schools in English accredited by ACQAHE has a double impact:
 - Structurally, this is the first accreditation of a syllabus in English language approved by ACQAHE and the first two ones in Montenegro. Some structural and legislative adjustments have been necessary to be made. This opens the door to accreditation of other courses in the near future, both in summer schools and in courses within the different degrees (Bs.C., Ms.C and Ph.D programs).
 - Visibility. The choice of subjects –tourism and yachting, has increased the international exposure of the University of Montenegro, and within Montenegro itself. The School have also gathered attendants in these two schools from the professional areas and companies. This is of great importance, as it targets stakeholders and also increases the University-companies-business relations in a very important economic area.
- ✓ Last, but not least, ACQAHE as increased its international exposure and their ties and agreements with other national Quality Agencies of countries belonging to IESP project. For such a young agency, there is no doubt that they will built this very same agreements, but it is also very true that IESP has helped in accelerating this process.

4. Long-term impact analysis.

4.1. Overall view.

The values of indicators for long-term impact are summarized in Table 4 and Figure 2. At a first glance, 16 out of 22 indicators have values equal or higher than “1”: 72,7 % of the indicators correspond to goals totally achieved or achieved to a degree higher than the initial expectations; data for indicators I.12.4 and I.12.5 could not be collected; and four indicators fall below the desired level of achievement.

Some of these indicators are designed to measure the impact far later than the end of IESP project. Consequently, the data collected just after completion of the project will be only indicative, but the real impact should be measured during the deployment and follow-up of the different strategic plans established for each University. Despite this fact, **the average value of 2.0 obtained for the set of indicators proves that the IESP project has exceeded the initial goals and it will likely have an important and sustainable impact on the MNE HEIs in the long term**, as the different

internationalisation plans are deployed and the structural changes introduced make their full effect.

It is important to highlight also that almost 73 % of the indicators have reached or exceeded the values set as desirable goals. Regarding the other 6 indicators that did not reach this value some considerations should be made.

- ✓ Some indicators (i.e., I.10.2) need more time to evolve. The values obtained now show just the short-term impact at completion of the project. It is important that each HEI will follow-up the whole set of indicators during the development of their strategic plans and adopt corrective actions if needed, in case of non-satisfactory results.
- ✓ Some indicators have not been measured: I.12.4 and I.12.5. The reason, again, is that the time at completion of the project is too short to measure any significant changes. However, these are two key indicators that will measure the improvement in internationalisation and the sustainability of the effects of the IESP project. Consequently, they should be monitored by the respective evaluation bodies at each University.

Table 4. Values of long-term impact indicators.

Short-term impact		Absolute value	Normalized value
Indicator	Description		
I.7.1	At least 2 new joint proposals within different programs (projects should include at least two partners of IESP consortium).	4	2,0
I.7.2	At least 3 new cooperation protocols.	0	0,0
I.8.1	At least 3 implementation and evaluation reports available, at least mid-term and final.	9	3,0
I.8.2	At least 3 drafts of renewed internationalisation strategies developed.	1	0,3
I.8.3	At least three new strategic documents drafted.	5	1,7
I.9.1	Number of new international projects (education, collaborative research, technology transfer within the MNE region).	77	1 (*)
I.9.2	Increased participation in mobility programmes by at least 30%.	8	7,5
I.9.3	Increased number of cooperation protocols by 20%.	29	5,6
I.10.1	Courses in English as part of regular teaching process maintained.	377	1,0
I.10.2	Additional number of courses in English available (at least 15% more).	0	0,0

Short-term impact		Absolute value	Normalized value
Indicator	Description		
I.10.3	At least three series of training in Montenegrin for foreign students held.	2	0,7
I.10.4	At least 10 series of trainings of English for specific purposes organized.	3	1,0
I.11.1	At least 6 mobility network partnerships renewed/established.	57	9,5
I.11.2	Number of incoming students increased by 20%.	88,5	4,4
I.11.3	Number of outgoing students increased by 30%.	260,4	8,7
I.11.4	Number of incoming teachers/researchers increased by 15%.	284,4	19,0
I.11.5	Number of outgoing researchers increased by 20%.	182,6	9,1
I.12.1	Number of inter-institutional cooperation protocols improved by 20%.	91,2	4,6
I.12.2	Number of profiles in national databases increased by another 10%.	57,14	5,7
I.12.3	Number of profiles at international databases increased by another 10%.	67	6,7
I.12.4	Ranking of MNE HEIs in international lists improved.	No data	No data
I.12.5	Participation of MNE HEIs in international education and RTDI programmes increased.	No data	No data

No. indicators >1 : 13

No. indicators = 1: 3

No indicators < 1: 4

No data: 2 indicators

Average value for the set : 2,0

*: arbitrary set to 1.0

4.2. Detailed analysis by sections.

Section 7. IESP network continued.

This section goes hand-by-hand with Section 1, where the strength of the IESP network was measured during its establishment. Indicator I.7.1 shows that the number of joint proposals within the consortium has doubled the initial goal. Three of them are Erasmus+ CBHE projects that will maintain the cooperation of MNE HEIs with their Erasmus partners of France, Slovenia or Spain for a window frame that, at least three more years. Moreover, one of these projects deals with the design and implementation of an international master degree in coastal management that will be taught jointly among Albania, France, Montenegro, Slovenia and Spain. Once launched, the

cooperation in this strategic area in the Mediterranean coast will seed cooperation in research and teaching, as joint Master Dissertation projects will be needed, as well as coordination for the teaching, administrative coordination, etc.

The two other CBHE projects deal with entrepreneurship and digitalisation, which are two key areas to assure the engaging of the HE system and the needs of society. As far as these two areas are connected MNE society will benefit in the long term the international exposure of their Universities and a knowledge transfer from the HE system to society will likely take place.

There is a continuous cooperation between the Université de Côte d'Azur and the Balkan Institute for Science and Innovation (BISI) and negotiations are under way with the University of Cadiz to support the opening of a Spanish Language Department at UoM.

Regarding indicator I.7.2, the value obtained is 0 since there has been no time to implement new cooperation protocols since the end of the IESP project.

Section 8. IESP strategies implementation continued and strategic planning process enhanced.

The delivery of mid-term and final implementation and evaluation reports by all three HEIs sets up a course of action that will be easier to maintain in the future for the follow-up of the respective strategic plans. This continuous analysis in the future will assure also the long-term impact of the IESP project, at least until completion of each strategic plan. It will be highly desirable that each HEI and each evaluation body will take the endeavour, when time approaches, to design the following internationalisation strategy for another period of 4-5 years, once the previous ones have been evaluated. This will be, again, another structural change in the way to address the internationalisation process.

The low number scored by indicator I.8.2 is because, in fact, I.8.2 and I.8.3 are basically the same indicator and the new strategic documents and the drafts of renewed internationalisation strategies are counted together in indicator I.8.3.

Section 9. Internationalisation at MNE HEIs additionally improved.

The data shows clearly that the IESP project has had an impact that goes beyond its life-period. Even though not all the international projects included in indicator I.9.1 can

be directly attributed to IESP, there is no doubt that a “culture of internationalisation” is being rooted in all three Universities as an indirect effect of the strategic planning. Moreover, the increase in the number of cooperation protocols (I.9.3) by a 5.6 factor over the settled value -20 % increase will have a long-term impact in terms of international cooperation. It will undoubtedly facilitate new projects in the near future.

It is important to clarify that the initial definition of indicator I.9.1 did not set a value as a goal; since there has been a high number of new international projects obtained, a value of “1” has been arbitrarily assigned meaning that the goal has been achieved and the value of this indicator has been normalized.

With regard to future mobility, the participation in new mobility programmes (I.9.2) by a factor of 7.5 over the 30% established as an objective means that mobility of students, teachers and staff will likely continue the increasing trend observed in the short-term (I.6.4 and I.6.5) and long-term (I.11.1 - I.11.5)

Section 10. Quality of teaching process further improved.

Improving quality in teaching process is a corner stone for any long-term and sustainable effect. Language teaching is key to obtain such an effect. In this section, indicators aim not only to increase the teaching in English, but also to open the Montenegrin language to incoming students (I.10.3) as a way to allow their cultural and social integration while staying at their host Universities. Not only that, but negotiations with the University of Cadiz to support the opening of a Spanish Language Department will open the door to another of the most widespread and fast-growing languages in the world.

Indicator I.10.1 now has a value of 1 and I.10.2 has a value of zero, since there has been no time to let it evolve since the completion of IESP. This indicator will need to be closely followed-up in the subsequent revisions of the strategic plans to assure the long-term impact of the changes introduced by IESP in the strategy of all three Universities regarding the offer of subjects in English language. Again, the indicator will have a several structural impact in the MNE HE system: 1) Universities will need to maintain and improve their offer in English, which will become a normal and vertebral part of the teaching at MNE Universities; 2) ACQAHE and HEIs will need to keep on going developing the accreditation procedures in English language not only for summer schools, but also for specific subjects or whole degrees; 3) teaching staff will need to maintain and improve their skills in teaching in English language (I.10.4), which

will favour international cooperation not only in teaching, but also in research; 4) if the effects of IESP are to be maintained, a culture of quality assurance and evaluation with regard to internationalisation, with a close follow-up of indicators have to be implemented and deeply rooted in each HEI.

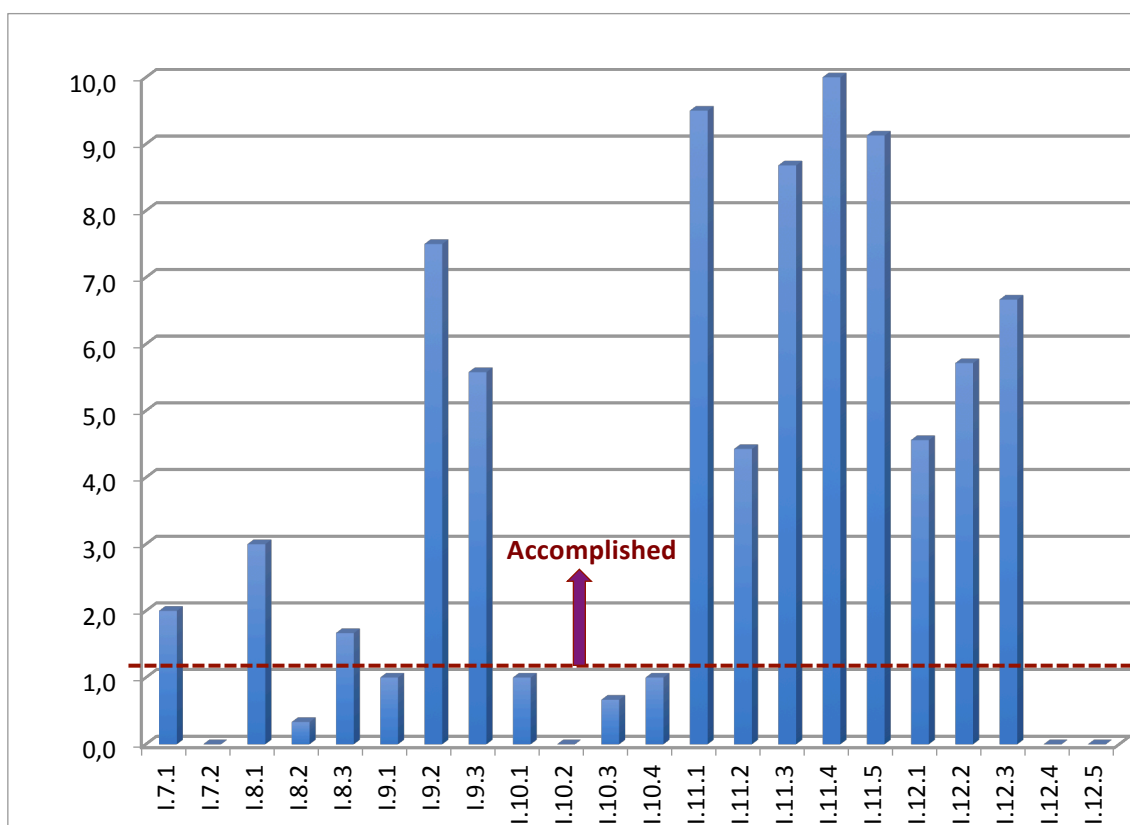


Figure 2. Level of accomplishment of the long-term indicators: indicator ≥ 1 : indicator accomplished; $0 \leq$ indicator < 1 : indicator below level or not accomplished. There is no data for indicators I.12.4 and I.12.5.

Section 11. Incoming mobility increased.

This is, probably, the area where changes are faster to occur and be detected. It is also the most sensitive to structural changes, both in a positive or negative way. The five indicators exceeded the values set as desirable by the end of the IESP project, with an average normalized value of 10.1. Outgoing students (I.11.3, increase of 260.4 %) and incoming teachers/staff (I.11.4, increase of 284.4 %), followed by outgoing researchers (I.11.5, increase of 182,6 %) are those with higher values. In any case, in some cases the starting values in 2019 were low, but there is no doubt that IESP has caused a deep and structural impact in the awareness of students, professors and staff in their view of internationalisation and their desire to explore international experiences of

cooperation and learning. If maintained, this fact can be defined as change of paradigm in the vision of internationalisation in the whole community of each HEI.

Section 12. International visibility of Montenegrin HEIs increased.

The perception of other HEIs and organisms outside Montenegro of the Montenegrin HEIs deeply affects and impact the possibilities of cooperation. This is true for every single University and HE system in the world. To write a good speech that makes attractive cooperation to others is key to success. Sections 4 and 6 directly addressed these aspects in the short-term impact section.

There has been no time to see any effect on international rankings or an increase in other projects measured by indicators I.12.4 and I.12.5. Data from indicators I.12.2 and I.12.3 regarding to number of profiles recorded at national and international database belong only to one HEI (UNIM), so the elaboration of any discussion on this data would be at least adventurous.

As for improvement of international cooperation protocols (I.10.1) it is worth to mention those signed by ACQAHE, and previously mentioned in the short-term impact section. The integration of the Montenegrin Control and Quality Assurance Agency with other similar agencies in Europe will not only enhance and improve its capacities, but also will give visibility to the whole MNE HE system.

5. Conclusions.

There is no doubt that the IESP project has had a deep impact in the Montenegrin Higher Education System, which has been supported by the joint action and cooperation of their Erasmus partners and the involvement of the Government through the Ministry of Science, the Ministry of Education, and the Agency for Control and Quality Assurance of Higher Education. The presence of representatives of the Ministries and the Agency in the different trainings and working sessions speaks by itself of the involvement at the highest level. It also assures that the ideas and problems to be solved arising through the different courses, training sessions and debates have reached the ears of those responsible of making possible structural changes in the HE system. Some of these changes are already happening, as shown by this analysis and the values of the indicators. Other will need of perseverance, a close follow-up and a continued culture of quality assurance.

Despite the fact that the main changes and effects have been extensively commented, it is worth to highlight here those more important from the structural and sustainable viewpoints.

- ✓ A culture and protocols of strategic planning of internationalisation, which includes quality assurance and accreditation as corner stones has been settled. This will assure that once this first strategic plan is over, others will come and will continue and enhance the effects of the previous ones. The vision of internationalisation as something that affects the whole University and goes beyond the Internationalisation Offices or the Vice-Chancellor in charge is crucial for an effective success in international cooperation. A growing awareness on the different units that internationalisation is a matter of all of them is key to success and the foundations for that has been settled.
- ✓ A transfer of capacities, knowledge and tools from the Erasmus partners to Montenegrin HEIs has been done. The three internationalisation offices have been strengthened, and so it has been ACQAHE through its interaction with the Slovenian, Spanish and European Accreditation Agencies. But along with this transfer, strong ties between the different Internationalisation Offices have been built. This will assure that the network built will continue blossoming with other projects, increasing mobility and projects.
- ✓ From the starting point in 2019, an increase in the offer of subjects in English courses has been settled. But not only that. Skills in teaching in English language have been transferred and a culture of teaching in other languages has been established. This is another structural change that has been manifested in the new two summer schools in English designed and implemented in the last year of the project.
- ✓ In order to perform the accreditation of the first two syllabuses in English, ACQAHE has been in need to design new protocols, adapt them to the legislation in Montenegro and implement some changes. These changes and protocols open the door to accreditation of other summer schools, but also individual subjects of different degrees and Bs.C., Ms.C or PhD degrees.
- ✓ The increase in visibility through the increase in cooperation protocols, participation in mobility programs, increase in the number of international projects, etc. will enhance not only the incoming mobility, but also the outgoing mobility. The concept of internationalisation at home is now present from the very beginning of strategic planning: from the benchmarking analysis to the implementation of the strategy. The vision of internationalisation will permeate the whole community at all levels: students, teachers, staff, and administrators.

Overall, it can be concluded that IESP project “Fostering Internationalisation at Montenegrin HEIs through Efficient Strategic Planning” has been successful in accomplishing its objectives and has had a deep, structural and sustainable, impact in the whole Higher Education System in Montenegro. The fruits of this project are already visible, but they likely will be greater as time passes by and the different strategic plans are deployed and developed.