



European Commission  
**TEMPUS**

**SINC@HE**

**Support and Inclusion of students with disabilities  
at higher education institutions in Montenegro**

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**1<sup>st</sup> External Evaluation Report**

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## Table of Contents

List of Abbreviations.....	3
Executive Summary .....	4
External Evaluation Objective .....	5
External Evaluation Methodology .....	5
Project Description.....	5
External Evaluation Findings .....	9
Corrective actions according to Evaluation.....	13
Indicators of progress.....	14
Final Remarks and Recommendations .....	15

## List of Abbreviations

<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>HEI</b>	Higher Educational Institution
<b>ICT</b>	Information and Communication Technologies
<b>M</b>	Month
<b>ME</b>	Montenegro
<b>QCM</b>	Quality Control Management
<b>TEMPUS</b>	The trans-European mobility scheme for university studies
<b>WP</b>	Work Package

## Executive Summary

The main goal of this External Evaluation report is to assess whether the objectives of the SINC@HE project for the first year period of its execution (M1-M12), described in the project proposal, have been achieved through the means proposed. After providing the external evaluation methodology and the project description, the external evaluation findings are presented together with the deliverables achieved. Moreover, the corrective actions according to the evaluation are given along with the indicators of progress defined in the Logical Framework of the project. The majority of the activities of the SINC@HE project have been realized according to project plan, are in line with its aims and objectives outlined in the original application, the deliverables are in due course and the small delays occurred had not negative impact on the project results. Recommendations are provided aiming to the improvement of the deliverables.

## External Evaluation Objective

The main goal of this External Evaluation report is to assess whether the objectives of the SINC@HE project for the first year period of its execution (M1-M12), described in the project proposal, have been achieved through the means proposed. Specifically it will evaluate the extent the project's activities and deliverables are in line with the aims and objectives, as well as with regards to expected results and planned activities, outlined in the original application. Linked to that this evaluation seeks to assess as to whether all project activities have been realized according in due course and to certify that no delays have occurred with a negative impact on the project results. Finally, this External Evaluation report aims to conclude with a feedback on the deliverables and recommendations on potential improvements.

## External Evaluation Methodology

In order to carry out the External Evaluation the author was given full access to all relevant external and internal documents and on the contents of the project's website <http://sinche.uom.gr/>. Documentation comprises above all relevant documents including the original project proposal, as part of the official grant agreement, progress reports and deliverables. Several telephone, e-mail and teleconference communication contacts were realized with the project manager Dr Lefkothea Kartasidou. The author visited the coordinating Institution University of Macedonia in Thessaloniki on 27-29 August 2012 and had the opportunity to meet and discuss on the SINC@HE project with a number of partners during a project meeting (Working Visit 7.1, Internal Quality Control and Monitoring).

To provide a context for reporting the evaluation findings, first the SINC@HE project aims and approach will be summarized, along with a list of its WPs, activities and deliverables.

## Project Description

Project SINC@HE: **“Support and Inclusion of students with disabilities at higher education institutions in Montenegro”** has been designed to improve the quality and relevance of support and inclusion of students with disabilities in Montenegro. The main objective of the project is to create the conditions and standards that will assimilate the quality of inclusion of students with disabilities in EU HEIs and will be harmonized according to EU practices and policies. Developed standards would be incorporated into existing legal and sublegal acts at the national levels and at the HE institutional levels. A long term objective of the outcomes will be to strengthen the open society values regarding the inclusion of students with disabilities in HEIs. In order to provide a solid base for the implementation of newly developed inclusive standards the SINC@HE project will build necessary capacities through establishing of a framework for improving the support, inclusion and quality assurance at HEIs.

This framework will be incorporated in HEI regulatory documents. HEIs have to keep the academic and non academic staff well informed and trained on the needs of students with disabilities. Thus, the SINC@HE project will provide extensive training for all levels of staff involved in support and inclusion of students with disabilities in HEIs.

The specific objectives of the project are:

- To improve university regulatory frameworks, guidelines and recommendations to allow full support for disabled students in ME higher education institutions.
- To improve institutional capacities through providing special equipment, support services and staff training for teaching students with disabilities.
- To establish Student Advisory Offices at each partner university for counseling, guidance, tutoring, relationships and psychological support.
- To raise awareness and motivation on inclusive education and to increase the number of prospective students with disability.

The SINC@HE project is coordinated by the University of Macedonia (Thessaloniki, Greece) along with the following 10 partners: University of Warsaw (Warsaw, Poland), University Macerata (Macerata, Italy), Arcola Research LLP (London, United Kingdom), the Slovenian Association of Disabled Students (Ljubljana, Slovenia), University of Donja Gorica (Podgorica, Montenegro), University Mediterranean (Podgorica, Montenegro), Institute for Education and Rehabilitation of persons with hearing and speech disorders (Kotor, Montenegro), Association of youth with disabilities of Montenegro (Podgorica, Montenegro), Ministry of information society and Telecommunications (Podgorica, Montenegro), Institute of Information Technology (Podgorica, Montenegro) and the Faculty for Management Herceg Novi (Igalo, Montenegro).

The content of the SINC@HE project is organized in ten WPs that follow a logical development of the main idea of support and inclusion of students with disabilities in HEIs. The WPs are classified in five types: development, quality control, dissemination, exploitation and management. Table 1 presents the titles, duration and the type of each WP.

The data in Table 1 indicate that only eight WPs are active in the reference period (M1-M12) of this External Evaluation Report. Thus, WP5 and WP6 will be excluded from the further discussion in this report. The three workpackages WP1, WP2 and WP3 have been planned to be completed in the reference period.

Table 1  
WorkPackages of the SINC@HE project

WP	Title	Duration	Type of WP
1	Background analysis for inclusion of students with disabilities in HE	M1-M4	Development
2	Improvement of institutional frameworks for inclusion of students with disabilities	M4-M10	Development
3	Definition of support services for students with disabilities at HEIs	M4-M6	Development
4	Establishing support services and capacity building for university students with disabilities	M6-M18	Development
5	<i>Training of university staff for working with disabled students</i>	<i>M13-M23</i>	<i>Development</i>
6	<i>Piloting and evaluation at partner universities</i>	<i>M24-M36</i>	<i>Development</i>
7	Quality control and monitoring	M1-M36	Quality Control
8	Dissemination and raising awareness	M3-M36	Dissemination
9	Exploitation of results	M1-M36	Exploitation
10	Management of the Project	M1-M36	Management

The WPs of the SINC@HE project are further analyzed in a number of activities. Each activity corresponds to at least one deliverable with the same title. The deliverables are classified in five types: report, methodology, learning resources, events and other products. Table 2 presents the titles, duration, expected delivery date and type of the deliverables for the reference period M1-M12.

Table 2  
Deliverables/activities of the SINC@HE project for the period M1-M12

Reference number	Title of Delivery / Activity	Duration (weeks)	Expected Delivery Date	Type
1.1	Review and analyze EU practices and policies for inclusion in HE	12	M4	Report
1.2	Analysis of national practices and policies for HE inclusion	10	M4	Report
1.3	Comparative analysis of National/EU policies for inclusion of disabled students	10	M4	Report
2.1	Analysis of legislative framework and human resources at partner institutions	15	M7	Report
2.2	Defining institutional structure to support inclusion of students with disabilities	15	M8	Methodology
2.3	Development of university regulatory documents for the support of students with disabilities	12	M10	Other products
3.1	Analysis of needs and identification of support services in partners' institutions	6	M7	Report
3.2	Design of services: ICT support, peers' support, guidance and counseling	12	M10	Other products
3.3	Planning for the implementation of services at institutional level	6	M10	Methodology
4.2	Providing special equipment and teaching aids for students with disabilities	15	M12	Learning Resources
7.2	External quality monitoring and control	12	M8	Report
8.3	Media promotion of new university capacities for education of disabled students	6	M3	Other products
8.4	Dissemination conference with stakeholders	3	M9	Events
10.2	Project coordination meetings	6	M1, M6	Report

The duration of the SINC@HE project is 36 months. This External Evaluation Report refers to the first 12 months of its execution. Two more External Evaluations Reports are expected for the next two years of the project.



## External Evaluation Findings

Table 3 presents the achieved deliverables of the SINC@HE project for the first year of its execution. Based on the information one can obtain from the reports themselves, the following data for each deliverable is shown: actual delivery date, version, number of pages and partner(s) involved in the authoring of the deliverable.

In total 18 deliverables have been produced (including the current report), out of the 18 expected, but:

- Deliverables 3.3 (M10) and 10.2 (M6) have not been produced yet.
- Deliverables 4.1 (M18), 4.3 (M18), 7.1 (M36), 8.1 (M36) and 8.2 (M36), although not expected for the reference period (M1-M12), are already available. The produced version of these five deliverables is considered as preliminary (or interim), although such an indication is not given by the authors.

Most of the manuscripts of the deliverables do not provide information on: a) the actual delivery date (13 cases), b) the version (17 cases) or even c) the partners participating in the production (7 cases). All these cases are indicated in Table 3 by the question mark (?) symbol. Furthermore, the documents of the deliverables do not follow a unique template.

In some cases, there was a delay of about 2-4 months in the production of the deliverables. But, this delay is considered logical and does not introduce any serious implication to the whole schedule of the project or had any negative impact on the project results.

The content of the produced deliverables is sufficient and in line with the aims and objectives of the SINC@HE project. But, deliverables 2.3 and 8.3 provide minimum content and could be enlarged by including more information. The available documents of the deliverables are not provided in a full accessible electronic format. The value of all the deliverables would be strengthening if they include a section with references to the literature or the information resources.

The website <http://sinche.uom.gr> provides detailed and in depth information on the SINC@HE project. Its main menu include: a) project overview, b) project objectives, background, description and dissemination, c) the list of the participants along with their profiles and contacts, d) the activities of the project (workpackages and deliverables), and e) the three year workplan. Moreover it includes a calendar, photo gallery from the meetings, download area, links and site map. It has been design to provide accessibility options, but unfortunately it does not follow the ISO/IEC 40500:2012 standard Web Content Accessibility Guidelines Ver. 2 (WCAG2).

Table 3

Deliverables achieved for the period M1-M12

Ref. No	Delivery Title	Expected Delivery Date	Actual Delivery Date	Version	Pages	Delivered by the partner(s)	Type
1.1	Review and analyze EU practices and policies for inclusion in HE	M4	April 2012	Final	63	P4 Arcola Research LLP	Report
1.2	Analysis of national practices and policies for HE inclusion	M4	May 2012	Final	14	P7 University Mediterranean, P6 University of Donja Gorica	Report
1.3	Comparative analysis of National/EU policies for inclusion of disabled students	M4	June 2012	Final	32	P4 Arcola Research LLP	Report
2.1	Analysis of legislative framework and human resources at partner institutions	M7	September 2012	Final	20	P6 University of Donja Gorica, P7 University Mediterranean	Report
2.2	Defining institutional structure to support inclusion of students with disabilities	M8	October 2012	Final	12	P6 University of Donja Gorica, P7 University Mediterranean	Methodology
2.3	Development of university regulatory documents for the support of students with disabilities	M10	November 2012	Final	8	P6 University of Donja Gorica, P7 University Mediterranean	Other products
3.1	Analysis of needs and identification of support services in partners' institutions	M7	15 Jan. 2013	Final	19	P2 University of Warsaw	Report
3.2	Design of services: ICT support, peers' support, guidance and counseling	M10	15 Jan. 2013	Final	16	P2 University of Warsaw	Other products
3.3	Planning for the implementation of services at institutional level	M10	5 Feb. 2013	Final	17	P2 University of Warsaw	Methodology

4.1	Development of ICT support services for student with disabilities	M18	27 Jan. 2013	Final	5	P7 University Mediterranean	Learning Resources
4.2	Providing special equipment and teaching aids for students with disabilities	M12	27 Jan. 2013	Final	13	P7 University Mediterranean	Learning Resources
4.3	Establishment of the network of Student advisory offices at each partner	M18	27 Jan. 2013	Final	4	P7 University Mediterranean	Other products
7.1	Internal quality monitoring and control	M36	November 2012	Interim	30	ME partners and EU Partners	Report
7.2	External quality monitoring and control	M8	30 Jan. 2013	Final	16	G. Kouroupetroglou	Report
8.1	Creation of the project website	M36	30 Apr. 2012	Interim	4	P1 University of Macedonia	Other products
8.2	Raising awareness and motivation among current and prospective disabled students	M36	12 Oct. 2012	Interim	6	P6 University of Donja Gorica P7 University Mediterranean P8 Institute for Education and Rehabilitation of persons with hearing and speech disorders P9 Association of youth with disabilities of Montenegro	Events
8.3	Media promotion of new university capacities for education of disabled students	M3	12 Oct. 2012	Interim	5	P6 University of Donja Gorica P7 University Mediterranean P8 Institute for Education and Rehabilitation of persons with hearing and speech disorders P9 Association of youth with disabilities of Montenegro	Other products

8.4	Dissemination conference with stakeholders	M9	10 Dec. 2012	Interim	11	P6 University of Donja Gorica P7 University Mediterranean P8 Institute for Education and Rehabilitation of persons with hearing and speech disorders P9 Association of youth with disabilities of Montenegro	Events
10.2	Project coordination meetings	M1, M6	12 Jan. 2012 11 Dec. 2012	Interim	4	P1 University of Macedonia P6 University of Donja Gorica	Minutes

The mobility of the staff was very extensive. In total 87 individuals from the consortium partners participated in the working visits for the development of the project. All these visits took place according to the original plan.

The management of the project by the coordinator partner was very effective and successful. Also, the internal QCM team was very efficient.

## Corrective actions according to Evaluation

It is important to mention that the consortium together with the Project Management Board, direct from the beginning, took into consideration the Evaluation from EACEA and has proceeded with the proposed actions' revisions (see Table 4).

Table 4: Corrective actions

Evaluation remarks	Corrective actions
Ensure the measures and mechanisms for efficient communication and cooperation between consortium partners and teams	(a) Efficient project web site that also supports disability access is developed for communication and dissemination purposes ( <a href="http://sinche.uom.gr">http://sinche.uom.gr</a> ). Besides, SINC@HE facebook page and twitter accounts are activated towards wider information purposes. (b) Internal QCM team and Project Management Board have agreed on the common mechanisms for efficient communication and synchronization between consortium partners and teams. For each project activity within specific work package, a person in charge from each of involved partners will be determined and denoted in WPs briefing paper. WP leader will communicate directly to the person in charge and would also keep contact persons informed on each step performed during specific activity. The WPs leaders are also responsible for synchronization between teams inside WP and project coordinator is responsible for synchronization between WPs. If any problems arise, the PMB needs to be informed and provide adequate feedback.
Clearly define the measures towards improving physical access for disabled people to the existing university facilities	The DEV 3.3 Report: <i>Plan of establishing of services</i> will define strategy and plan for short and long term adaptation of physical environment for students with disabilities: in university buildings and in university surroundings for University Mediterranean, University Donja Gorica and the Faculty of management in Herceg Novi
Clearly define the measures towards improving physical access for disabled people to the existing university facilities	Disability specialist/coordinator will be designated at each HE institution, as part of Student Advisory Office. He/she together with AYDM will be responsible for continuous monitoring on how specific institutional improvements are reflecting on the teaching/learning process
Ensure the proper mechanisms of planning and selection criteria for the staff to be trained	The precise selection criteria for the staff that will be trained must be defined in the DEV 5.1 Report on needs and plans for staff training. Report should also include the foreseen number of each staff category from all three HE institutions
Reconsider the project duration time in connection with planned inputs and outputs, eg. Number of staff trained, target group, etc	The first project coordination meeting held at University of Macedonia in Thessaloniki on 12 January 2012, has reconsidered the project duration time in connection with planned inputs and outputs, and consortium agreed that two years would not be enough for qualitative implementation, so project activities will develop according to the original plan. <a href="http://sinche.uom.gr/sites/default/files/minutes_1st_coordination_meeting_1.pdf">http://sinche.uom.gr/sites/default/files/minutes_1st_coordination_meeting_1.pdf</a>
Precisely determine the procedures for possible adjustments in case the project is not implemented as planned	The Internal QCM team and Project Management Board have the task to precisely determine the procedures for possible adjustments in case the project is not implemented as planned, and define them at the first meeting of the PMB.
Ensure the involvement of	The correction measure is in progress. Students are involved in all activities so

students in all analytic activities during the project lifetime	far, and are going to be the mandatory structure in all project activities and events
Develop the concrete dissemination plan with involvement of all stakeholders. Ministry of Information Society and Telecommunications should take active part in dissemination of project results	(a) Detailed dissemination and raising awareness plan is developed by AYDM, and it envisages the involvement of all stakeholders. Ministry of Information Society and Telecommunications is given the major mission for dissemination on the state level. <a href="http://sinche.uom.gr/sites/default/files/briefing_paper_diss8_0.pdf">http://sinche.uom.gr/sites/default/files/briefing_paper_diss8_0.pdf</a> (b) Ministry of Education and State University of Montenegro were invited to participate in the Dissemination Conference
Ensure the multiplier effect for the training of the university staff	(a) The DEV 5.1 Report on needs and plans for staff training must elaborate the precise plan for training the trainers in order to ensure the multiplier effect for the training of the university staff. (b) State University of Montenegro was invited to participate in the training as a non consortium member. This action will influence the Nr of trainees involved and will ensure a large number of multipliers of achieved actions
Ensure the best possible mechanisms for sustainability of the project results	The correction measure is in progress. The most suitable mechanisms for sustainability of the project results are defined in the EXP9 sustainability briefing paper <a href="http://sinche.uom.gr/sites/default/files/exp9_briefing_paper.pdf">http://sinche.uom.gr/sites/default/files/exp9_briefing_paper.pdf</a> (b) State University of Montenegro and Ministry of Education will be invited to participate in project activities in order to ensure sustainability in a larger scale

## Indicators of progress

According to the Logical Framework Matrix indicators such as increased number of students with disabilities enrolled in university by 2014 have to be taken into consideration in order to evaluate to what extent the project objectives have been achieved. Thus, it must be marked that during the first project year in different activities nine students with disabilities from EU and ME Institutions were involved (see Table 5).

Table 5  
Involvement of individuals with disabilities

Working visit 1.1 (UOM)	1 Master Student & 1 Ph D student with visual impairment
Working visit 1.1 (UW)	1 student with physical disability
Working visit 1.2 (UNIM)	2 students with physical disability (AYDM)
Working visit 2.1 (UNIMC)	Mr. Daniele Regolo with hearing impairment, graduated at University of Macerata getting a degree in Political Science. He works in his own society "Jobdisabili.it" developed to promote the access to the work world for people with disabilities.
Working Visit 3.1 (DSIS)	Involvement of two (2) students with disability (health problems, physical disability) (b) one (1) Professor with Hearing impairment

Moreover, six individuals with disabilities (academic or research staff) were involved in the activities of the consortium (see Table 6).

Table 6

	<b>Art of disability (3 categories of disability)</b>
1. UW	Visual impairment
2. FMHN	Mobility impairment
3. IERK	Hearing impairment
4. DSIS	Mobility impairment
5. DSIS	Visual impairment
6. DSIS	Hearing impairment

Most impressive is also the involvement of Non Consortium Members due to their experience in the field of supporting students with disabilities in HEIs'. In total 9 non consortium partners have participated in different activities during working visits: three from Greece, three from UK, and two from ME and one from Italy (see Table 7). This shows that the project is focusing on sharing as much knowledge as possible in order to ensure exploitation and sustainability.

Table7

## Non consortium partners

1. AUTH Aristoteles University of Thessaloniki Social Policy Committee, Greece
2. AVIR Association of Visual Impairment Research, Greece
3. University of Athens, UOA Accessibility Unit, Greece
4. Institute of Education, University of London, London, UK
5. School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, UK
6. Student Disability Services University College London, London, UK
7. Ministry of Education of Montenegro
8. State University of Montenegro
9. Mr. Daniele Regolo with hearing impairment, works in his own society "Jobdisabili.it" developed to promote the access to the work world for people with disabilities.

In that direction it is necessary to point out that there is a transfer of knowledge in other levels too. Since the educational system is very different among all partners, ME partners requested to visit, during planned working visits, other educational settings i.e. special primary or secondary schools in Greece and in Poland.

## Final Remarks and Recommendations

In conclusion, the majority of the activities of the SINC@HE project have been realized according to project plan, are in line with its aims and objectives outlined in the original application, the deliverables are in due course and the small delays occurred had not negative impact on the project results.

Finally, the following recommendations are given aiming to the improvement of the deliverables.

**Recommendations:**

- Provide a delivery date in the first page of each report.
- Indicate the type of the report: final, intermediate, preliminary, etc. or alternatively its version.
- Provide the names of the author(s) of each deliverable as well as the corresponding affiliation.
- Use a unique template for the manuscript of all reports.
- Include a section with References and other literature resources at the end of each report.
- For the website of the project follow the WCAG V2, to reach at least level AA of accessibility.
- Provide the document of each deliverable in a full accessible electronic format.