Environmental Protection in Central Asia (EPCA):

Disaster Risk Management with spatial methods

Athens, Greece, 21 –24 May 2018

Monday, 21 May 2018

Participants: all partners according to the List

- Welcome by host university (NTUA)
- Project coordinator stated the aim of the meeting: **design the three online courses**
- Participants introduced themselves to the rest of the group
- Needs Analysis Results Presentation (the partnership had already been informed by e-mail a week before the meeting)
    1. Needs analysis results for **Uzbekistan (CA regional coordinator).** Main points follow:
        - Different organizations were questioned
        - Drought/landslides/flooding are the main natural disasters
        - Topics of interest: soil salinization/desertification/air pollution/land cover monitoring/others (e.g. solid waste management/erosion/drinking water/water use/Aral sea)
        - Skills most desired: spatial analysis/land cover monitoring/ data acquisition and storage
        - 28% of the interviewed organizations do not use GIS at all!
        - 72% organizations use Remote Sensing MORE THAN 10% in daily activities
        - Different kind of maps available at different scales not all for free use ("secret" data), most hard copies (not digital)
        - Functionalities of iMSEP are defined.
        - Most of the interviewed parties know how to digitize but cannot perform spatial analysis.
        - Most of the interviewed parties are not GIS specialists; these are mainly hired in academia.
        - 100% willingness to take distant learning courses
    2. Needs analysis results for **Kyrgyzstan (CA regional coordinator).** Main points follow:
        - 28 organizations were questioned
        - Natural disasters: landslide/ earthquake/ pollution/ avalanches/ drought/ flooding/ desertification
        - Topics of interest: glaciers/ water pollution/ air pollution/ ecosystem monitoring/…
        - Skills most desired: spatial analysis/ data acquisition and storage/ ecologically threatened areas monitoring
        - iMSEP desired functionalities: digitizing maps/ storing attributes/ uploading data
        - 93% willingness to take distant learning courses
    3. Karakalpak State University:

- Courses should be linked to real-life problems
- There are differences in the students' background
- Provide a term thesaurus in three languages (Uzbek, Kirgiz, and Karakalpak)

After presentation the rest of the group posed questions to both presenters:

- **Remark**: Different topics/natural disasters/environmental issues in each country.
- What about GIS usage? – For Kyrgyzstan a new specification for GIS is needed/ expected
- For Kyrgyzstan what type of aerial imagery? How (if at all) do they perform photogrammetry/ aerial photography?
- What type of knowledge is provided for university students related to GIS and RS?
    - Uzbekistan: introduction to GIS and Special topics (different applications)/ GIS for surveying engineers mostly.
    - Kyrgyzstan: more or less the same. In technical universities GIS is taught in high level, but not in humanities. GIS mostly considered a mapping tool not as an analytical or decision-making one.
- Data and map use constrains in CA, EPCA will overcome this by focusing on providing methodological tools instead.
- Decisions taken:
    - Harmonizing students backgrounds is a need and this will guide the course design; provide them with a solid base.
    - GIS and RS core modules will be common for all courses because students may select only one course
    - The courses target group is university students
    - The prerequisites (if any) will given by CA universities
    - There will be introductory parts in all courses
    - We cannot develop courses for all GIS and RS applications. The aim is to teach the main techniques and how these can be applied to indicative case studies.
- Open issue
    - How much theoretical? How much application-related?
- Plan for the following day: 3 different WGs will be formed to design the 3 courses. The approach is working for 1-1:30 hour and reporting and continuing like this.

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Tuesday, 22 May 2018

Participants: all partners according to the List

- Main task of the day: **Course development (including outline, syllabus, learning outcomes, etc)**
- Formation of 3 WGs, one for each course (each University will be represented in each WP with one participant)
- **General instructions**:
  - 7 weeks each course full time: 280 hours (40 hours per week)
  - Video lectures are ideal BUT should not be too long (Youtube videos can also be used)
  - Instructions for the exercises with data (CA regions-related) should be provided
  - Open source GIS software
  - Use the template provided the Project Coordinator before the meeting (received a week before the meeting)
- **Outcomes**:
  - Courses outlines for all three courses (with three quite different perspectives and visions).
  - A core part has been identified in all courses: theoretical/ introductory modules related to GIS and RS. This will be more or less common to all courses, and the partner responsible for developing any part of it will be the same for all courses.
  - For the core part: mostly exercises and project-related activities will vary according to context of the course.
  - Exercises and project-related activities for the three courses vary in intensity as designed/decided by WGs. For instance, course 2 (GIS and RS for disaster risk management) will not include a large-scale project during the last week(s). However, for 5 weeks students will have to conduct small-scale activities/exercises that will increase in complexity as the course progresses.
  - All of the above have resulted in different allocation/ distribution of hours for the different study methods.

Wednesday, 23 May 2018

Participants: all partners according to the List

- **Steering Committee Meeting** (all)
- Agenda:
    - Buying equipment for CA partners
    - Website
    - Review the plans for the upcoming meetings and the scheduling of the courses development
    - Financial/ administrative implementation issues

- **Equipment**
    - Project Coordinator stressed the need to buy it a.s.a.p. for two reasons:
        1. launch the courses for validation soon as they are prepared and
        2. receive the second payment because we have to spend 70% of the first to request and receive the second.
    - CA regional coordinator: Tendering process ongoing, the purchase can be done from any company in the world.
    - Project Coordinator: The purchase must be made by the CA partners, NOT by Lund University (the coordinator), according to regulations. CA partners should check with their National Agencies to reach a decision (an eligible one).
    - CA regional coordinator: Can the allocation of the money for different items of equipment change?
    - Coordinator: As long as the total amount of the equipment budget (limit) is respected, it is probable that equipment expenses more or less can be allocated differently than originally foreseen. In any case, we should check with the Agency (Brussels) first, to get the green light.
    - NTUA: it sounds reasonable to be able to make allocations, however before any purchase, be aware of the VAT (included or not) not to exceed the overall budget.

- **Website**
    - VGTU was responsible for implementing and launching the project's website
    - EPCA website: http://eu-epca.eu/
    - **Note**: Need for a project logo
    - Regarding content
        1. Add team members
        2. Make corrections to content in different languages (each partner)
        3. Lind the dissemination tab with the dissemination WP
    - **Decisions**:
        1. No need to have a private (non-visible) part of the website (just for the partners). Keep everything in the open.
        2. All participants gave their consent to have photos portraying them published on the website.
        3. It is a good idea to generate links to the website from the partners' websites, to maximize outreach.
        4. Use the ftp server for uploading finalized documents and photos, but for sharing documents related to course development and in other occasions of collaborative work, we should use Google drive instead.

- **Travel Plans (to accommodate the course development process)**

    - Course development phase starts after Athens meeting (from this point onwards).
    - According to the Work Plan, the 1st version should be ready until Braga meeting and the 2nd (final version) during the Vilnius meeting

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- Due to the delay of the project's initiation, we may have to push the development phase 2-3 months later on.
- **Decision**: So keep the meeting in Portugal as initially planned (3-5 September 2018), push the Vilnius meeting later on. Early March 2019 to finalize the courses in **Vilnius meeting**.
- Moreover, description of work mentions course translations in May 2019.
- **Decision: launch the courses in September 2019** (for 3 semesters to achieve the indicator mentioned in the proposal; 600 students enrolled in the courses until completion of the project)
- Translations issues discussed. CA partners should agree among them how the GIS and RS terms should be translated.
- **Final version of courses at the meeting in Vilnius: 4-7 March 2019**

- **Course Design**
    - **Distribution of responsibility among the three coordinating universities for the core common part of the 3 courses.** This means that each coordinating university takes the responsibility for developing a part of the courses' common core and contacts the other partners for their contribution, input, and help by setting deadlines, means of communication, forming teams etc.
    - **Decision**: Prepare the first draft of the course design based on the template in the upcoming week (each European university for each course they are coordinating), **Monday or Tuesday 29th of May (at the latest)**
    - **Decision:** Course coordinators communicate with their group and finalize the course design by latest **June 15**. The final versions have to be on the project website by **June 15**.
    - **Decision**: Provide the distribution of tasks among partners by **June 22** and start the development of courses from that date.
    - **Decision**: Because all three courses are data-demanding, course coordinators should send **a data requirements list to CA partners** to start collecting data and see where we stand.