SWARM

Strengthening of master curricula in water resources management for the Western Balkans HEIs and stakeholders (SWARM)

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SWARM newsletter, Issue 4/November 2020

Welcome to the SWARM newsletter!

This bulletin provides information on the latest SWARM project activities.

Enjoy your reading and visit the SWARM website (www.swarm.ni.ac.rs) to find more information.

With the best regards,

SWARM project team

COVID-19 OUTBREAK AND ITS INFLUENCE ON SWARM PROJECT

Dear colleagues,

I hope that you are all well and healthy.

The Covid-19 pandemic is around us affecting whole human population and all our activities, including also the SWARM project. Nevertheless, after initial shock and time necessary to introduce modifications to project work, we switched to on-line working mode.
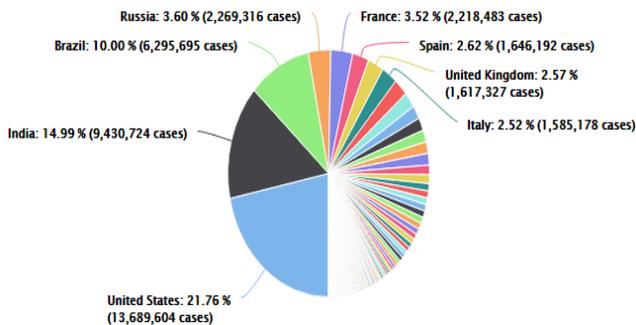
Distribution of cases (Source: Worldmeter – www.worldmeters.info)

After successfully physically conducted six trainings for the Western Balkan teaching staff, we have intensified project coordination activities and number of task meetings in an on-line mode.

The Covid-19 outbreak created threat to produce delay in realization of ongoing or planned project activities and bring project execution in some serious situation. Due to the recognition of this situation and Steering Committee reaction, combined with increased engagement of the partners this threat has not occurred and I am pleased to be in position to tell that project reduced delays and delivered number of foreseen deliverables presented in this newsletter.

More information on how coronavirus is affecting Erasmus+ activities, what changes are taking place, and what help is available on the following link https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/resources/coronavirus-impact_en.

Also, I take this opportunity and kindly invite all partners and stakeholders to submit contributions, invitation and all information relevant to project partners to e-address: swarmuni@gmail.com.

Milan Gocić, project coordinator

MODERNIZED CURRICULA IN LINE WITH EU TRENDS

Four master curricula and one bachelor study programme were modernized in line with the EU trends and previously developed at the following Western Balkan partner higher education institutions: University of Novi Sad, University of Sarajevo, Dzemal Bijedic University of Mostar, University of Montenegro, University of Pristina in Kosovska Mitrovica. Also, totally new developed bachelor and master study program at the University of Niš and one specialized study program at the Technical College of Applied Sciences Urosevac with temporary seat in Leposavic have been in a procedure for accreditation and we belive that the new student generation will be enrolled during the third project year.

The SWARM curricula are competency-based curricula emphasizing development of students' competences which means - knowledge, understanding, skills, abilities and attitudes. They were designed around a set of generic, engineering and water resources management competencies. Competences involved in the Catalogue of competences were obtained based on the required competences by the labor market in the Western Balkan partner countries i.e. researching the existing water sector competence models and job profiles. This is in line with the Bologna Process i.e. "*With labour markets increasingly relying on higher skill levels and transversal competences, higher education should equip students with the advanced knowledge, skills and competences they need through their professional lives*".

The main reason the SWARM project team has selected competence-based approach was the reduction of the gap between the labor market i.e. water-related companies that will employ the SWARM students and the current WB curricula in the field of water resources management.

Developed SWARM curricula involve the application of new technology tools, delivery platforms and pedagogy. Students will be able to use and manage technology tools and devices that use scientific data to prove or achieve objectives and to draw evidence-based conclusions and to be able to discuss and justify conclusions. They can search for, collect, process and apply the information critically and systematically and use ICT tools for critical thinking, creativity and innovation.

INTER-PROJECT COACHING

In order to improve water resources management and meet the water management goals outlined in Sustainable Development Goal 6, science community and water-related institutions should apply for using national or multilateral climate finance intended to water projects. Also, sustainable water solutions should be based on the most up-to-date scientific knowledge and anchored in long-term strategies and action plans.

The purposes of the meeting were to:

➢ share projects' outcomes and future ideas,
➢ focuse on knowledge exchanges with partners.

The inter-project coaching is an effort of different scientific groups from the water sector that aims to further discuss water resources management issues met through various implemented or on-going projects. It involved 18 panelists from different universities and companies.

The meeting highlighted innovation in teaching and learning methods as well as achieved synergy with a non-academic sector.

The inter-project coaching meeting presented different interdisciplinary research experiences, in order to create a dialogue to

point up solutions and synergies related to sustainable and fair water resources management, highlighting strengths, potentialities, and critical issues.
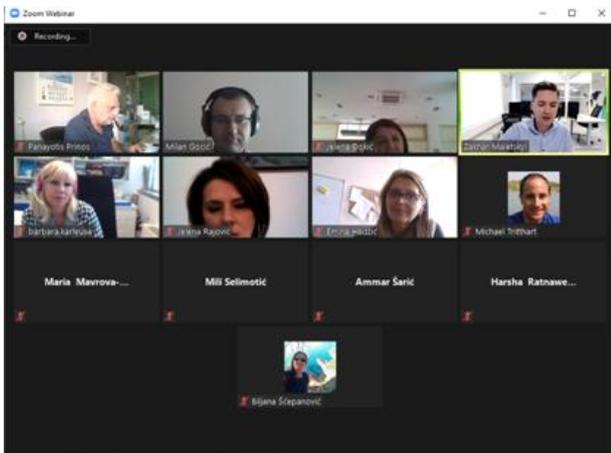
In total 72 participants registered, 57 attended from 16 countries (Norway, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Greece, Austria, Croatia, Netherlands, Ukraine, India, Kenya, Uganda, Bulgaria, Montenegro, Portugal, Kazakhstan, Kosovo*) or 79.17% attendance rate.
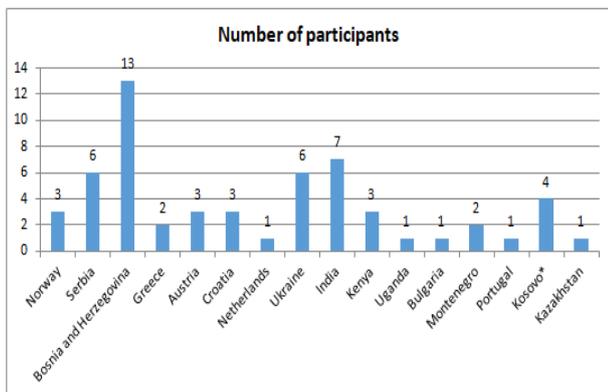
The participants were from different specialties i.e. water and wastewater treatment, water resources management, water and wastewater transport and from different professions i.e. academia, utilities, consultants, policy makers.

This meeting helped us to identify good practices, synergies, challenges in the implementation of the participating projects. The inter-project coaching meeting was a good

initiative for the monitoring and quality assurance of the project.

The complete report of the event is available on the project official website and on the following link:

http://www.swarm.ni.ac.rs/activities?id=60

PROMOTION OF THE SWARM CURRICULA

Due to the Covid-19 pandemia, four promotions of the SWARM curricula and student enrollment have been organized at the University of Sarajevo, University of Montenegro and University of Pristina in Kosovska Mitrovica by using developed promotional material.

University of Sarajevo

University of Pristina in Kosovska Mitrovica

University of Montenegro
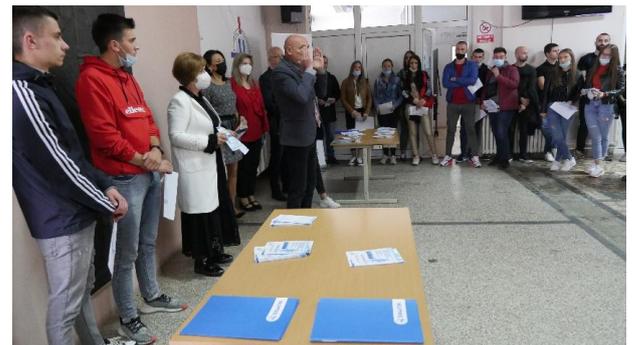
More details are available on the project official website and on the following link:

http://www.swarm.ni.ac.rs/activities?id=58

For further information about the project please refer to the website www.swarm.ni.ac.rs, and feel free to get in touch with us also via swarmuni@gmail.com or on one of our other social media channels.