



**ACTIVE LEARNING IN ENGINEERING
EDUCATION**

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KICK-OFF MEETING EVALUATION REPORT

20TH-22ND JUNE 2018

VOLOS, GREECE

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1. INTRODUCTION

This report evaluates the Kick-off Meeting of the ALIEN project, held between the 20th and 22nd June 2018 in Volos, Greece. This evaluation is based on the feedback from 14 participants that attended the meeting and answered a standardized questionnaire assessing the specific components of the meeting, as well as its strengths and weaknesses. The survey was conducted online via Google Forms.

2. MEETING EVALUATION

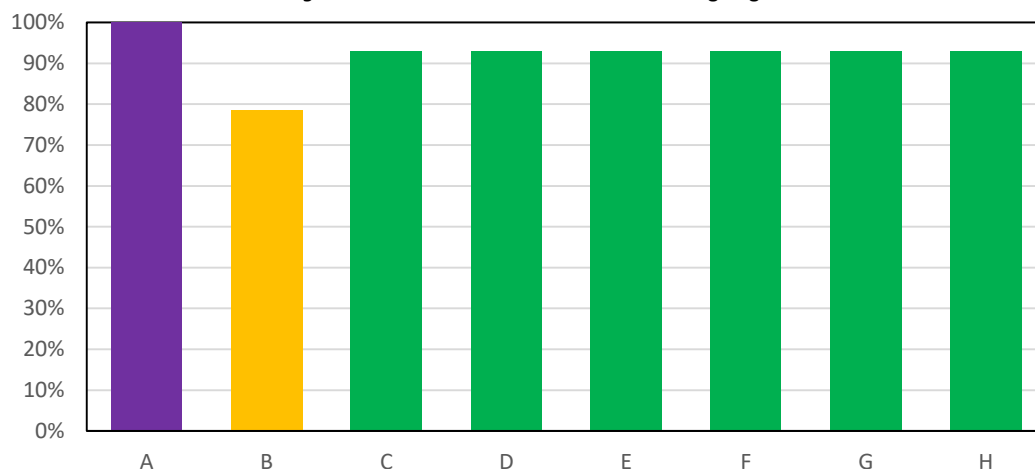
The overall perceived quality of the meeting seems to be positive, even if with some occasional deviations in a couple of questions, with some answers reporting a negative or neutral attitude towards that aspect. That being said, no single question had a systematic negative response, with always at least 70% of the participants having a positive response (that is, answering with agree or fully agree).

2.1. MEETING ORGANIZATION

Overall, the level of satisfaction with the meeting organization seems to be positive, with almost all questions receiving an approval rating of 90% or more, excluding the second question.

The schedule and agenda of the meeting were prepared in due course - all the partners considered that they had received all the information about the meeting in a timely manner, having been given sufficient advance notice of the schedule and location of the meeting (question A). Regarding the meeting venue (question B), general responses were more mixed. While most participants agreed that the access to the meeting venue was easy (42.9% agree and 35.7% fully agree), 21.4% have a neutral (2 people) or negative (1 person) assessment in this regard. Regarding the facilities and catering (questions C-D), the response also seems to be generally positive, with almost all (92%) the participants having a positive view, with 64.3% (9 partners) giving the second highest rating, and only 1 partner in each question having a negative/neutral assessment.

Figure 1 General Assessment of the Meeting Organization



- A) Information about the meeting was received on time;
- B) Access to the meeting venue was easy;
- C) The conference room and its facilities facilitated the work during the meeting;
- D) Catering and Meals were adequate;
- E) The agenda of the meeting was balanced, focusing on the key aspects of the project;
- F) The timetable was respected;
- G) The presentations by the partners were clear and understandable;
- H) The meeting was well planned and managed.

Regarding the way the meeting was conducted (questions E-G), the overall assessment was also positive, with 93% (13 partners) giving a positive response to each question, mostly the second highest rating – thus, most partners considered that the agenda as well balanced, that the timetable was, in general, respected, that the presentations by the partners were clear and understandable. In sum, regarding the planning and management of the meeting (question H), most partners agree (64.3%) or fully agree (28.6%), with only 1 partner having a neutral assessment in this regard.

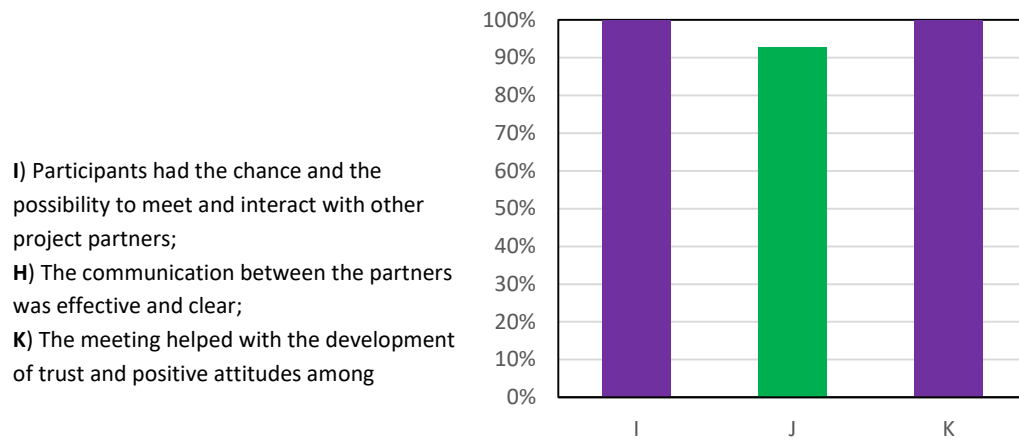
2.2. PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATION

Given the size of the partnership and the different countries/continents involved in the project, it is important to ensure that the partners can effectively communicate with each other and that the activities are well coordinated.

Regarding this aspect, the overall assessment was equally positive. All partners agreed that they had the chance to interact with the other project partners and

that the meeting had helped with the development of trust and positive attitudes among each other (questions I and K), with more than half (57.1%) fully agreeing.

Figure 2 General Assessment of the Partnership and Collaboration



In the question regarding the effectiveness of the communication (question J), the response was also positive, but with most people (57.1%) giving the second highest ranking instead of fully agreeing and 1 person gave a neutral answer.

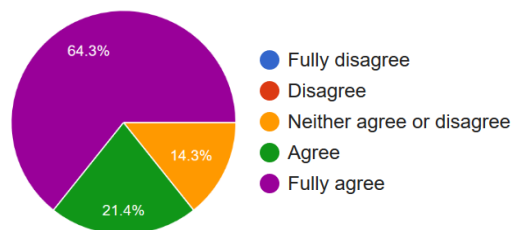
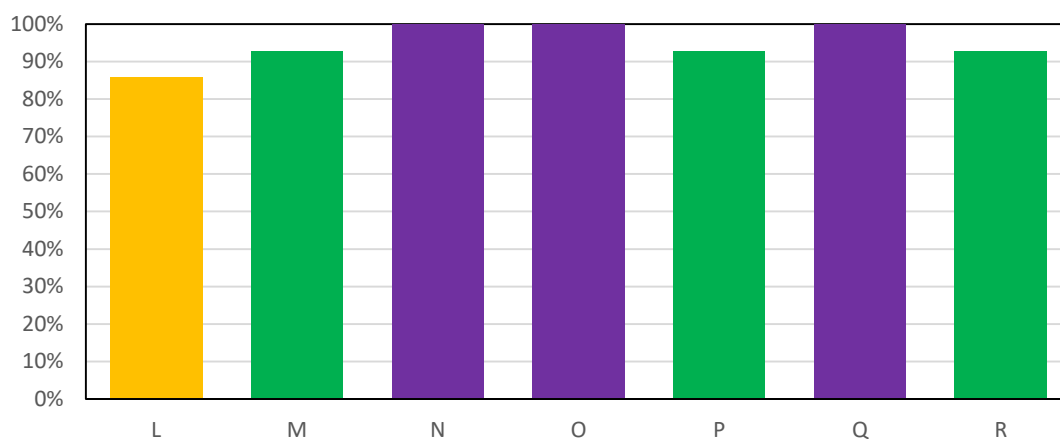


Figure 3 Assessment of the Project Partnership and its Coordination

Following the meeting, most partners (85.7) agreed that the project was built on a strong partnership with an efficient administrative and financial coordination (Figure 3), with most people (9 people in total) fully agreeing. There were, however, 2 people who gave a neutral answer in this regard.

2.3. PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Figure 4 General Assessment of the Project Management



- L)** I have a clear view of the project aims and objectives;
- M)** I understand clearly the administrative structure and procedures of the project;
- N)** The information given as to the financial management facilitated my understanding of those issues;
- O)** The information given helped me to better understand the tasks and activities of the project;
- P)** I understand clearly the role of my institution/organization in this project and what is expected from me for the project;
- Q)** I understand clearly the framework and deadlines to be respected by all partners;
- R)** I think that the timescales proposed are realistic and feasible.

In general, the assessment of the way the project was being managed is good, but with some doubts. Regarding the project aims and objectives (question L), the majority gave a positive assessment (85.7%), with 71.4% giving the second highest ranking in this regard. However, 1 person considered they didn't have a clear view of the project aims and objectives, and another person was neutral.

Regarding the information provided during the meeting (questions M-O), the assessment was also positive, with 64.3% giving the second highest ranking in the three questions, and only 1 person being neutral in what regards the administrative structure and procedures. In regard to the financial management and the tasks and activities of the project, 100% agree that the information given during the meeting improved their understanding.

Regarding the role of each institution/organization in the project (question P), overall, most partners thought this was made clear during the meeting (71.4% agree and 21.4% fully agree), but there was 1 person that expressed a neutral opinion.

Lastly, regarding the framework and deadlines (questions Q-R), 100% of the partners have a clear understanding of the framework and deadlines (78.6% gave the second highest rating) and most (93%) believe that the timescales are realistic and feasible, with only 1 person expressing a neutral opinion.

Namely, the meeting enabled the participants to clear up questions respective to: project outcomes and methodology; financial reporting; objectives and logistics; partner's roles, background and contribution; budget; products to be developed during the project; and the specific role of each organization.

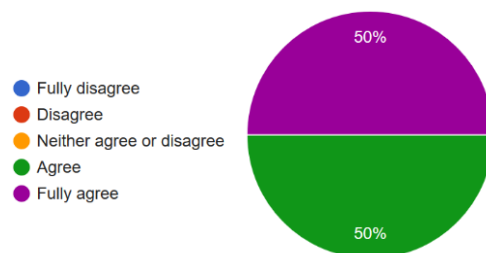


Figure 5 Assessment of the (positive) impact of the meeting on the project

Overall, all partners agreed that the meeting had a positive impact on the progress of the project.

3. PERCEIVED WEAKNESSES & OPPORTUNITIES/THREATS

Through the questionnaire sent to the partners, it was possible to ascertain the perceived strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the project.

Regarding the **opportunities** that the project presents to each partner organization, the following aspects were pointed out:

- Establish an international network of contacts;
- Knowledge on how to better implement educational approaches based on active learning and PBL methodologies in Engineering/STEM courses;
- The set-up of the Active Learning Lab;
- Learning from different case studies;
- The creation of Research Publications.

However, some concerns, that may present some **challenges** that the partnership has to work on:

- Cultural differences due to the different countries/continents involved;
- Coordination and collaboration in a large consortium with diverse partners;
- Communication between the partners on a regular basis between meetings;
- Knowledge transfer among partners.

Some **suggestions** were made in order to tackle the issue of the communication, namely to increase the frequency of the online meetings in order to discuss the progress of the projects.

Lastly, regarding the potential outside **threats**, it was mentioned the following:

- Different needs across countries in what regards the software platform that was planned
- Local constraints in what regards the university bureaucracy.

4. CONCLUSION

The overall evaluation indicates that the reaction to the meeting was positive and that it served to better define the project outcomes, the most pressing deadline and tasks, as well as the role of each partner in these, with 100% of the partners considering that the meeting had a positive impact on the project (Figure 5).

The partners seem to have a positive assessment of the outcomes of the project, even if they have some concerns in regard to the coordination, financial aspects, and cultural differences concerning approaches and needs.