GERMAN-RUSSIAN TEMPUS
COOPERATION:
A VIEW FROM THE BOTH SIDES

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Koblenz-Landau University (UKOLD)

- originated from a collection of teachers training colleges in the late 1960s
- of which only two campuses are left, one in Koblenz, one in Landau (200 km to the south)
  - computer science faculty in Koblenz
  - psychology faculty in Landau
  - 3 teachers training faculties in each
    - Education
    - humanities
    - sciences
  - central administration in Mainz
Computer Science Faculty

- institutes:
  - computer science
  - software engineering
  - computational visualistics
  - information systems
  - management

- programs
  - computer science (“Diplom”) since 1978
  - computational visualistics (“Diplom”) since 1998
    - both are converted into BSc/MSc programmes in 2006
  - information management (BSc, MSc) since 2000
Institute of IS Research in Business and Public Administration

- information systems in business and public administration
  - corporate networks, mobile systems
  - computer-supported co-operative work
  - information management
  - e-government

- social aspects of computing

- computer assisted social research and theory building
  - data collection and analysis, data mining
  - simulation
Previous Tempus Projects

1996 – Pre-JEP ‘Teaching Simulation in Economics and Social Science’;
1997 – CP ‘Creation of Consultancy Center in Dnepropetrovsk State University’ (coordinator – University of Amsterdam);
1998 – JEP ‘Simulation and Internet Courses in Social Science’;
2003 – JEP on University Management ‘System Modernisation of University Management’ (with Russian Federation);
2007 – JEP on Institutional Building ‘Transcontinental Bridge: Regional Training Centers for Spreading Modern Information Technologies of Governing’;
Ongoing Projects

2010 – SM on Governance Reform ‘Development of Quality Assurance System in Turkmenistan on the Base of Bologna Standards’;

2010 – SM on Governance Reform ‘Development and Integration of University Self-Assessment Systems’

2010 – SM on Governance Reform ‘Promoting Internationalization and Comparability of Quality Assurance in Higher Education’ (coordinator - ASIIN e.V.)

All the projects are devoted to the same topic – quality assurance; and all of them are, unfortunately, without participation of Russian Federation…
Main Stages of Project Preparation

1. Study of national and regional priorities and preparation of a general scheme.
### NATIONAL PRIORITIES FOR STRUCTURAL MEASURES

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2. Negotiations with potential partners.

Main criterions:

a) correspondence to the project topic;

b) positive experience of previous cooperation or positive expectations of further one;

c) mutual trust;

d) natural geography.

Usually we start negotiations with little more potential partners, then we plan to have finally. ‘Natural selection’ of partners takes place. Partners, which provide the coordinator by necessary information and documents promptly, have more chances to be included in the final composition of the consortium.
UKOLD’s traditional Russian partners:

Moscow State Regional University;
People's Friendship University of Russia;
Moscow State University named after M.Lomonosov;
Moscow State Humanitarian University named after M.Sholokhov;
Tambov State University;
Samara State Technical University;
Kuban State University;
Adyge State University;
Kazan State Technical University; and some others.

We are always glad to have new partners.
3. Preparation of a ‘skeleton’ of the project.

‘Skeleton’s structure’ consists of workpackages and deliverables with corresponding budget.

The ‘project skeleton’ is coordinated with project’s final preparer.

The preparer is usually member of the Koblenz team, although sometime it is a representative of corresponding partner country’s university.

Main task of the preparer is to assemble all existing materials in the application form. Sometime there are two preparers for a project: one for the descriptive part; one for financial tables.
4. Filling the project forms.

5. Mutual checking the applications by projects’ preparers and project supervisor.

6. Submission of the projects.

Project authors can not influence on the next steps, connected with selection of the projects. They should be ready both to success and failure. Stochastic factor is very essential for this stage; selected project can be not the best within your applications from your point of view. Chances to be selected for each project are not so high, but if you did not submit an application, they equal to zero.
Project Realisation. Cultural differences as a factor

For sure, cultural difference between nations is an objective fact, although its importance becomes lower and lower.

Difference between nations can be exaggerated. Differences usually show themselves on upper layer of human behaviour; deeper (on levels of values and motivations) they are not so evident.

Three main sources of differences:

1. Different cultural background (not so important in the case)
2. Time lag
3. Lag of life standards
Time lag

Cultural difference between Slovak and Russian people is, probably, less than between Slovaks and Italians. More of this, difference between modern Germans and Germans of nineteen century can be in some aspects deeper, than between the latter and modern Russians. A *time lag*, as an explanation of the difference, can take place.

One of explanations of the time lag is based on geographical position of the Eastern European countries: in the border between European and Asian civilisations. Development of statehood in Eastern Europe created a “fortified wall” on the path of nomads. Permanent struggle against aggression from the steppe weakened these countries, retarded their development.
Social lag

In the time of globalisation the historical lag diminishes. But the place of the time lag is being completed by pure social lag.

One of well-known differences of mentalities is much more collectivistic stile of behaviour in the East. People are, in general, more opened and always looking for “spiritual” contact with people around. Probably, it is not a secret of “mysterious Russian soul”. Western person is more or less self-sufficient; because of good-ordered living space they can solve standard problems themselves. Social environment in the Eastern European countries is not so friendly; for living, a person permanently needs in help of another people.
Suggestions to Russian participants:

1. Be extremely polity, use conjunctive mood during discussion, if a coordinator said “no”, try to find other ways to find solution.

2. Very often a German coordinator has no any reasons to participate in the project, only moral satisfaction; be grateful to him/her for his/her cooperation.

3. By Tempus rules a coordinator is responsible for project progress and results, he/she has no strict obligations with respect to other participant, only to the Tempus programme; try to convince him/her of your needs, not demand.
Suggestions to German coordinators:

1. Tempus project objective is not to transform Russians to Germans; take into account local cultural features, if you want to achieve real project objectives.

Study of mentality should be a part of project human resources management. Joint project is not one-way traffic; cooperation with Russian partners can enrich EU partners by understanding other approaches to planning and caring out different kind of project activities.
2. Good project results are better than good project order; it is necessary to be flexible to reach project results.

Quite often conditions in the partner countries are not proper for normal EU style of management. But exactly because of this EU spends money for their improvement.

Main principle of management in such conditions is “looking for opportunities”. Project strategy can not be changed in principle. But we should be ready to revise our tactics very promptly, in accordance with changing current situation. Unfortunately, such changes are typical now for some EiP countries.
3. Because of objective situation in the country, Russian partners can not be always absolutely exact; be tolerant to rapid changes of local situation in partner universities.

Acceptation of a real situation can be considered as a form of tolerance. May be, style of business in the partner country is not so attractive for you. But you is not judge, you come to help.

EU manager have not feel himself as a missionary, who brings truth to barbarians. Tempus rules presuppose that cooperation within this programme should lead to improving higher education system in all, not only partner countries.
4. Russian mentality is oriented for more informal style of cooperation than EU ones; be more open and informal in relations with Russian partners.

Fixed strict rules for Eastern European collaborators can make opposite effect. They can sabotage them even on subconscious level.

Much more effective way is to establish with collaborators informal friendly relations. Management of East European people is much more effective if they consider their responsibilities not as a written law, but as moral duty.

Respect to all project participants, not stressing their division for “donors” and “recipients” produce good “team spirit”, leads to effective work of the consortium.
Thanks a lot for your attention!

Koblenz team are always open for cooperation with Russian partners.