

DOCUMENT TYPE  
PLACE  
TIME

External document  
University of Belgrade | Belgrade | SERBIA  
September 26-28, 2019



**FINAC**  
FINancial management,  
Accounting & Controlling  
in public administration

## Financial Management, Accounting & Controlling curricula development for capacity building of public administration

### FINAL CONFERENCE AT UNIVERSITY OF BELGRADE

## MEETING MINUTES

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**FINAC**  
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Co-funded by the  
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## MINUTES

### Introduction

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The Closing conference of FINAC project was hosted by project partner University of Belgrade, Belgrade, Serbia from 26<sup>st</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> May, 2019. The Study visit meetings were chaired by **Slađana BENKOVIĆ**, project coordinator.

The document had been provided to all project partners. The documents are included and referenced in these minutes and partners were notified about all matters discussed prior to the meetings.

### Agenda

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The Study visit had the following agenda:

- [1] Welcome note, moderation, and special greetings by the Vice Dean of the Faculty of Organisational Sciences, University of Belgrade - associate professor Sanja MARINKOVIĆ, PhD, state secretary of the Ministry for Public Administration and Local Self Government of Serbia – Ivan BOŠNJAK, the Director of the National Academy for Public Administration of Serbia - Dražen MARAVIĆ and project coordinator Slađana BENKOVIĆ
  - [2] Strengthening human resource in public administration reform – presented by Sanja PUTNIK and Blerjana BINO
  - [3] National planning system reforms: strengthening budget effectiveness, managerial accountability and internal control in regional countries – presented by Majda SEDEJ
  - [4] Achievements of FINAC ERASMUS+ project at a Serbian university (University of Belgrade) – presented by Slađana BENKOVIĆ
  - [5] Where we are after three years and future steps - presented by Slađana BENKOVIĆ, the project coordinator
  - [6] Achievements of FINAC ERASMUS+ project at Albanian universities - presented by Blerjana BINO and Elidiana BASHI
  - [7] Contribution of FINAC ERASMUS + project to development of the regional countries - presented by Dejan STANKOVIĆ
  - [8] Achievements of FINAC ERASMUS+ project at Serbian universities – presented by Miloš ERIĆ, Ernad KAHROVIĆ and Vladimir STANČIĆ
  - [9] Steering Committee - conducted by Slađana BENKOVIĆ, project coordinator and Aleksandar JOVIĆ, project secretary
  - [10] Report on Internal evaluation – 2nd part of project duration – presented by Marko ČULAR and Ivana BILIĆ
  - [11] Office hours related to the project documentation – conducted by Slađana BENKOVIĆ, project coordinator and Aleksandar JOVIĆ, project administrator.
  - [12] Financial issues and financial documentation - presented by Aleksandar JOVIĆ, project secretary
  - [13] Office hours regarding project documentation – conducted by Slađana BENKOVIĆ, project coordinator and Aleksandar JOVIĆ, project administrator
  - [14] Conclusions and FINAC Closing Remarks - conducted by Slađana BENKOVIĆ, project coordinator and Aleksandar JOVIĆ, project administrator
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## I Working Day

**Session 1: Welcome note, moderation, and special greetings by the Vice Dean of the Faculty of Organisational Sciences, University of Belgrade - associate professor Sanja MARINKOVIĆ, PhD, the state secretary of the Ministry for Public Administration and Local Self Government of Serbia – Ivan BOŠNJAK, the director of the National Academy for Public Administration of Serbia - Dražen MARAVIĆ and project coordinator Slađana BENKOVIĆ**

The first day of the Final conference was opened with the welcome note by the Vice Dean for international cooperation of Faculty of Organizational Sciences, associate professor **Sanja MARINKOVIĆ**, PhD. She stressed the importance of FINAC project for the internalization of the Faculty and networking with neighboring countries. Afterwards, the state secretary of the Ministry for Public Administration and Local Self Government Mr. **Ivan BOŠNJAK** addressed Conference participants and stressed out how FINAC project has contributed to the capacity building of employees in public administration. This was followed by the note from Mr. **Dražen MARAVIĆ**, who explained the perspective of the National Academy for Public Administration of Serbia. He explained the importance of FINAC projected for the strengthening of capacities in public administration and said that NAPA has already signed Strategic partnership agreement with Faculty of Organizational Sciences which is aimed at contributing to the sustainability of the Master program that is an important outcome of the FINAC project. Finally, project coordinator, professor **Slađana BENKOVIĆ** PhD. has addressed to all present conference participants with the welcome words.

**Session 2: Strengthening human resource in public administration reform – presented by Sanja PUTNIK and Blerjana BINO**

Assistant minister, **Sanja PUTNIK**, from the Ministry for Public Administration and Local Self Government of Serbia has pointed out some general objectives of the public administration reform of Serbia through:

- further enhancement of the PA operations in line with the principles of European Administrative Space
- high quality services for citizens and businesses
- economic stability and improved living standard of citizens

She also provided the details of the public administration reform strategy and action plan in the Republic of Serbia, with the particular action plan for the period 2018-2020.

The project leader at the European University of Tirana **Blerjana BINO**, PhD. has explained the progress of public administration reform in Albania from the policy making and legislation point of view. She also provided details about the organization and functions of public administration, human resource management and administrative procedures and monitoring. She also informed all present participants of Final conference about the objectives of public administration reforms in Albania and EU progress of integration.

**Session 3: National planning system reforms: strengthening budget effectiveness, managerial accountability and internal control in regional countries – presented by Majda SEDEJ**



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**Majda SEDEJ**, the expert of the World Bank gave a presentation about the national planning system reforms: strengthening budget effectiveness, managerial accountability and internal control in regional countries. She pointed out importance of budgetary and PIFC reforms on one hand, and planning proces which contributes to the implementation of the most effective measures, on the other.

Majda Sedej has also gave an overview of the importance of the implementation of the new planning sistem in Serbia, as well as in other countries in the region, such as Albania or Croatia.

#### Session 4: Achievements of FINAC ERASMUS+ project at Serbian university, University of Belgrade – presented by Sladjana BENKOVIC

Project coordinator, professor **Slađana BENKOVIĆ**, PhD, informed all participants of the final conference on the project achievements at the University of Belgrade - Faculty of Organizational Sciences. She shared the information that 18 out of 35 enrolled master students have completed their master theses at the Financial management, control and managerial accounting master program and defended them, until the end of September.

She explained that at this point the process of the enrollment of a new generation students for 2019/2020 academic year is ongoing. She added that a lot of undergraduate students have expressed their interest for the master program, which clearly builds the visibility and sustainability of the program.

#### Session 5: Where we are after three years and future steps - presented by Sladjana BENKOVIC, project coordinator

Project coordinator, **Slađana BENKOVIĆ**, presented the results of the project activities in the last 35 months and informed the participants about the progress of the work activities and work packages including the indicators of progress. Additionally, she emphasized that the implementation of project work packages was in line with the timeframe and posted general and specific goals.

#### Session 6: Achievements of FINAC ERASMUS+ project at Albanian universities - presented by Blerjana BINO and Elidiana BASHI

The first working day has concluded with the presentations of professor Eldiana **BASHI** and PhD. Blerjana **BINO**. Professor Eldiana **BASHI** presented the results of the enrollment of 38 students from public administration on a newly accredited master program at the University of Shkoder, Faculty of Economics. She shared the information that 28 out of 38 registered students started working on their diploma thesis during the second semester of the program, but 27 of them have actually finished and presented the diploma thesis until the end of September, while 5 students are expected to finish the diploma thesis and complete the program by the first week of October.

Presentation of results has been continued with presentation of PhD. Blerjana **BINO** who presented the results of the enrollment of students on a newly accredited master degree program at the European

University of Tirana. From a total of 42 students that have been enrolled in the programme, 24 students are employed in public administration. Prior to the end of September, 7 candidates have graduated and completed Master degree diploma, while the rest of them are expected to complete their theses during the first half of October 2019 and January 2020.

## II Working Day

### Session 7. : Contribution of FINAC ERASMUS + project to development of the regional countries - presented by Dejan STANKOVIĆ

**Dejan STANKOVIĆ**, the representative of CEP, presented the contributions of FINAC ERASMUS+ project to the development of regional countries. He started off with the explanation of the good governance, which was followed with the insights and situation in the public administration in Albania and Serbia. The results were structured in 8 reports (four reports by country). Reports are available at the FINAC website / link Results and Reports /WP.1. Mapping and reporting about current capacities in public administration employees in Albania and Serbia

### Session 8: Achievements of FINAC ERASMUS+ project at Serbian universities – presented by Miloš ERIĆ, Ernad KAHROVIĆ and Vladimir STANČIĆ

The second working day of the Final conference started off with the presentation of the achievements at Serbian universities.

Assistant professor from the Metropolitan University, **Miloš ERIĆ**, PhD. was the first presenter. He indicated that the Metropolitan University has modernized master degree program Economy, and that in academic 2018/2019 academic year they have enrolled 43 students, out of which 15 were from public administration. Before the end of September 2019, 11 of 15 students from the public administration have successfully submitted their Master theses and 2 out of them had successfully completed the Master program prior to October 14, 2019(until the end of the project).

Presentations were followed with the achievements from the State University of Novi Pazar and assistant professor **Ernad KAHROVIĆ**, PhD. presented the results. He mentioned that the State University of Novi Pazar has enrolled 10 students of which 8 are employed in the public administration. Prior to the end of the project (October 14, 2019), the defense of the master theses were scheduled for 8 students.

Assistant professor **Vladimir STANČIĆ** PhD. has presented the achievements of the University of Kragujevac - Faculty of Economy. He mentioned that from 30 students enrolled at the master program, 20 of them were employed in public administration. He emphasized that 28 of students have successfully submitted their master theses and 6 of them had already completed and defended them(prior to October 14, 2019). It was expected that additionally 20 students will defend their theses before October 20 students. That means that during October 25 students in total will complete the master program successfully.



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### Session 9: Steering Committee - conducted by Sladjana BENKOVIC, project coordinator and Aleksandar JOVIC, project secretary

The 8<sup>th</sup> Steering Committee Meeting was held during the Final conference at the premises of FINAC coordinator partner institution the **University of Belgrade, Belgrade, Serbia**, on September 27, 2019. The Steering Committee Meeting was chaired by **Slađana BENKOVIĆ**, project coordinator, and **Aleksandar JOVIĆ** project administrator. All the project representatives had received the Agenda and supporting documentation that had to be adopted five days in front of the SC meeting.

After the quorum was established, the adoption of Agenda and the minutes from 7<sup>th</sup> Steering Committee held at University of Split on May 24<sup>th</sup> 2019, the meeting has continued with the adoption of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Internal project evaluation report. All the members of the Steering Committee have received the document 10 days earlier and all of them had sufficient time to review the results presented in the Internal project evaluation report that is highly positive. The Internal project evaluation report was adopted without any active opposition.

The Steering committee meeting has continued with the presentation of the FINAC project administrator, **Aleksandar JOVIĆ**. He thanked all partners for submitting their Financial Statement for the period from 15/10/2016 to 01/09/2019 and providing supporting financial documentation before September 10<sup>th</sup>, 2019, as they were asked from project coordinating institution, University of Belgrade. Documentation has been successfully reviewed and all the partners were provided with the notes related to their documentation. He also noted that the transfer of funds to all partners has been successfully carried out and that the coordinator (University of Belgrade) is completely prepared for the final project review.

The members of the Steering Committee meeting had no complains or suggestions regarding the further steps in the project implementation.

### Session 10: Report on Internal evaluation – 2nd part of project duration – presented by Marko ČULAR and Ivana BILIĆ

Internal evaluation report on FINAC project for the second half of the project was presented by the representatives of the University of Split, assistant professor **Marko ČULAR**, PhD. and associate professor **Ivana BILIĆ**, PhD. who were in charge for the project control and monitoring. They analyzed the results achieved on all FINAC project work packages, on all progress indicators and concluded that the project has met the expectations, general goals and the specific goals set by the project application. In addition, the project provides additional values, which are seen in the savings related to the procurement of the equipment, more study visits than initially planned, and more trainings than initially planned in the project application. Last but not the least, in both regional countries higher than envisaged number of students have been enrolled to the newly accredited master studies of regional partner institutions, more hours of classes were delivered than it was initially planned, and greater number of newsletters were issued than planned.

They expressed their great satisfaction with participating in this project and mentioned that the members of the consortium will continue to cooperate in the future.

**Session 11: Office hours regarding project documentation – conducted by Sladjana BENKOVIĆ, project coordinator and Aleksandar JOVIĆ, project secretary**

The last session of the second day of the final conference was dedicated to consultations with some project partners regarding financial documentation that they have submitted or did not, yet. The session was chaired by project coordinator, professor **Sladjana BENKOVIĆ** PhD. and project secretary, **Aleksandar JOVIĆ**, PhD.

**III Working Day****Session 12: Financial issues and financial documentation - presented by Aleksandar JOVIĆ, project secretary**

Project secretary **Aleksandar JOVIĆ**, PhD. explained the 4<sup>th</sup> installment (the second installment of second pre-financing)– the coordinator transferred 20% of the beneficiary’s total Erasmus+ grant budget to the beneficiaries that had demonstrated expenditures covering at least 90% of the total amount of already transferred funds. This happened after the coordinator had received and approved the updated Financial Statements with necessary documentation and materials for the activities that have been done.

Final 10 % (final balance) of the budget partners, that show pre-financing (declare 10 % in Financial Statement and justify with supporting documents), will receive after EACEA accepts FINAC Final report and pays final balance to the University of Belgrade (probably at the beginning of 2020). The final amount of the grant has to be transferred to the beneficiary by the coordinator and will be defined only when the total Erasmus+ grant is confirmed by the Executive Agency after the end of the project. All outstanding payments to cover actual eligible expenditures (justified and declared in Financial Statement), that have not been received in previous installments, will be transferred to the beneficiary within 30 days after the final payment from the Executive Agency is received. Additionally, the beneficiary institution has to provide all necessary documents and materials in terms of all performed activities to the coordinator within the foreseen deadline (October 14<sup>th</sup>, 2019).

Also, it was pointed out that the coordinator forwarded two notes received from the EACEA: 1) Note on staff costs from 09/08/2019 and 2) Note on the participation of “Foundations” in CBHE projects from 14/06/2019. Once again, project secretary stressed out that attention should be directed on differences between “saved” and “unspent” money. “Unspent” money from some budget heading could be used for maximum eligible 10 % increase of some other budget heading (e.g. unspent funds from travel costs and costs of stay could be used for increment of staff costs for maximum 10 %). “Saved” money could not be used for this purpose.

Project administrator, **Aleksandar JOVIĆ**, also informed all the members of the Steering Committee that Audit was subcontracted in July 2019. It was envisaged for the auditing to start on September 16<sup>th</sup>, 2019, but due to problems with students’ blockade of the Rectorate building, audit will be performed from September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2019 till the end of November, 2019. All partners need to submit the final Financial Statements (for period from 15/10/2016 to 14/10/2019) for their institutions till November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2019



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with all supporting financial documentation. Please note that auditors can ask for additional financial documents both for actual and unit costs (e.g. proofs of payments for staff involved in the activities performed and official accounting books with reference to staff).

**Session 13: Office hours regarding project documentation – conducted by Sladjana BENKOVIĆ, project coordinator and Aleksandar JOVIĆ, project secretary**

The final two sections of the Final conference were dedicated to the financial issues and office hours for all partner representatives that need any advice or help in preparing their financial and project documentation. The session was chaired by the project coordinator, professor **Sladjana BENKOVIĆ** PhD. and the project administrator, **Aleksandar JOVIĆ**, PhD.

**Session 14: AOB (Any Other Business)**

As the wrap up of the Final conference, all the partners have expressed their great satisfaction with the organization and content of the FINAC project together with hospitality and friendships created throughout the project. The partners have expressed their interest for further cooperation in follow ups and additional projects.