



**Project Title: ENIC Capacity Building**  
Grant Agreement: 2008\_11256

Final Report



## Project information

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# Project Summary

## Project Objectives (envisaged objectives, target groups, needs addressed)

The principal aims of this project were :

- To identify key opportunities for the development of a more coherent approach to recognition in emerging ENICs.
- To provide the participating centres with the tools and knowledge to implement/improve assessment criteria and procedures.

Following initial desk-based research, face-to-face discussions focussing on current recognition criteria/processes in the participating ENICs at a meeting in Belgrade, and information provided via email, UK NARIC drew up a list of needs that could be addressed in the workshops. The issues that were identified are as follows:

- Recognition procedures are currently time-consuming and very bureaucratic. The associated appeals procedure compounds this situation.
- All documents required by the ENIC, except for the curriculum, must be stamped and certified by a legal representative.
- No centralised database of recognition decisions exists, either at the ENIC or between the HEIs
- ENIC website is currently out of date
- For a time, there was no contact at the ENIC office
- Recognition procedures are very administration-heavy, at both the faculty and ENIC levels
- Recognition of inter-disciplinary programmes is currently unusual, as modular programmes are yet to be fully introduced in to HE provision
- HEIs are very autonomous and do not follow one specific recognition procedure
- Size of ENIC prevents development of processes and increased information provision service
- ENIC does not currently offer any evaluation decisions, nor does it have the capacity to do so at its current size
- A centralised system is required, which could list all accredited HEIs, historical names and associated diplomas. This would prevent duplication of work by HEIs and the ENIC.
- Greater systemisation of working practices, processes and co-operation with HEIs would benefit the recognition situation and increase mobility. A common process for HEIs to follow would be a great improvement.

- A database that includes data similar to that stored in UK NARIC's 'International Comparisons' would assist in the evaluation process, provide greater consistency and avoid duplicating work
- Recognition procedures are currently time-consuming and very bureaucratic. It usually takes a year and a half.

Following the identification of current needs, UK NARIC re-worked existing materials and developed new content in order to create bespoke sessions for the participating ENICs and associated stakeholders. The content of this training course was based on the findings of the analysis phase and covered the following main areas:

- Credential evaluation (including fraud)
- Researching and storing information
- The Bologna Process - Its Applications and Implications
- Country-specific information

The main target group of this project was the participating ENICs in South-East Europe, with potential for expanding this remit to other neighbouring states, or further afield as required. HEIs and other stakeholders in the participating countries also represented a target group, as they are heavily involved in the recognition procedures in the countries involved although may not be employing the same procedures as the ENIC centre, or other national institutions. The whole ENIC-NARIC network should also have benefitted from the increased transparency and sharing of information that has been key to the project's success.

**Project Outcomes and Undertaken Activities** (including information on the involvement of partners, if applicable and the dissemination and exploitation strategy)

The main outcome of this project was an adaptable training course and accompanying materials that was delivered to emerging ENIC/NARIC centres in South East Europe. These materials could potentially be adapted to the needs of centres in a similar position (both developmentally and geographically) to provide a solid foundation of knowledge and understanding on which to base future recognition processes.

The bespoke sessions that were designed for this project were delivered at a two-day session in Durrës, Albania to an audience of around 20 people, which included two ENICs, as well as representatives from the Ministry of Higher Education and a number of universities in Albania and Serbia. The content of these sessions can be found in the previous section.

Following the workshops, UK NARIC distributed an online survey, to gain feedback on the content and delivery of the sessions, as well as requesting ideas for improvements to the current format in terms of additions, changes in mode of delivery, etc. This feedback proved to be very positive, but also included constructive feedback for developing the sessions in a positive way such as extending the 'development of the databank' section. Examples of general feedback can be found below:

*"It was [a] very useful and interactive course."*

*"A good one to learn the basics in recognition, open-minded"*

The results of this survey, as well as copies of presentations and other training materials can be obtained by contacting Katja Durkin [katja.durkin@naric.org.uk](mailto:katja.durkin@naric.org.uk).

The project was particularly relevant to the participating ENICs, as they are currently facing a number of key issues in the field of recognition but are not eligible for funding directly under the NARIC Network in order to address them. Furthermore the results of the project may be shared with neighbouring ENICs, thus contributing towards a more joined-up approach to training as well as recognition.

Possibilities for extending or repeating this project have been identified through the dissemination activities, notably at the annual ENIC-NARIC Network meeting in June this year. Interest in participating in a similar exercise has already been demonstrated by several ENICs, which is very encouraging.

Finally, the participating individuals will be able to disseminate the knowledge and understanding gained in the training sessions to other colleagues within their own ENIC office and to external stakeholders.

## **Contribution to EU Policies and Impact**

This project has contributed towards the improvement (i.e. bringing more in to line with the Lisbon Recognition Convention) of recognition criteria and procedures in emerging ENIC centres. In addition, up-to-date information relating to the education systems and procedures of the participating countries can now be disseminated across the network, leading to improved recognition of their qualifications and a clearer understanding of the latest HE developments.

This project has addressed the first objective of the NARIC Invitation 2008, by contributing towards greater coherence in recognition practices and offering opportunities for sharing information and best practices. By including centres that have not previously been eligible to participate, this project could lead the way in promoting more inclusive practices and encourage other NARICs to look beyond their usual project partners.

The project addressed objectives 2 to 6 of the NARIC Network Mandate Objectives, namely:

- Assisting in the development of recognition criteria and processes, with a view to creating a more coherent approach
- Disseminating information and outcomes through the wider network
- Discussing and analysing current recognition practices, through meetings and other correspondence
- Ensuring a regional approach is adopted, which in turn could be fed into other networks and steering groups

Furthermore, the project also addressed the following priorities, by improving recognition processes with centres that thus far have not had such an opportunity for development:

- To further develop the use of learning outcomes in credential evaluation with a view to improving the recognition of formal, non-formal and informal learning and in line with the existing and emerging qualification frameworks
- To support networking among NARIC centres also in view of improving recognition of third country qualifications

In addition, the London Communiqué of May 2007 states that:

*“There has been progress in the implementation of the Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC), ECTS and diploma supplements, but the range of national and institutional approaches to recognition needs to be more coherent. To improve recognition practices, we therefore ask the Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG) to arrange for the ENIC/NARIC networks to analyse our national action plans and spread good practice.”*

As this project has sought to improve the coherence and understanding of recognition practices in a specific region of Europe, it has directly addressed the recommendations put forward in the abovementioned Communiqué. By focussing on a recognition methodology based closely on the LRC, it has also contributed to the spreading of good practice.

In the short-term, this project has improved the knowledge based in the target audience and has given a lot of food for thought vis-à-vis current criteria and procedures. It has also helped to spread good practice amongst centres and their key stakeholders. In the longer term, it is hoped that recognition policy will be developed to be more in line with the LRC, thus contributing to the intended transparency and coherency across the wider network.