

Management response to mid-term evaluation

IMPROVEMENT OF THE ECUADORIAN ACADEMIC CAPACITY ON BIODISCOVERY AND WATER RE-SOURCES MANAGEMENT: PHASE 2 - 2018

Programme level

General appreciation

The mid-term evaluation is carefully read and studied by all the network partners in the programme, it is an useful and important document, especially with 14 concrete recommendations to the NETWORK programme in Phase 2, which is used for PP-II proposal development to reach the target objectives of the programme. The evaluation report mentions numerous positive evolutions within the programme. On the other hands, it also shows the limited points and challenges of the NETWORK programme which need to be solved and overcome in the second phase.

Follow-up on recommendations

Recommendation 1:	Strengthening the application of RBL (research-based learning)	
Management Response (Agree, partially agree, disagree):	Agree	
If recommendation is rejected or partially accepted, report reasons:		
Actions Planned /Actions taken + timeframe (action finalised)	Implementation stage (not started, underway, completed)	
Develop plan for continuous training on RBL and virtual classroom by year 1 of phase 2	Underway (training sessions on RBL and virtual classrooms carried out on 4 consecutive years of phase 1)	
Implement monitoring tools to follow-up RBL and collect data on its application by year 2 of phase 2	Underway (This was initiated during phase 1 by Helen Camacho)	
Recommendation 2:	Lobby for a favourable environment for (joint) research-based master programmes	

Management Response (Agree, partially agree, disagree):	Agree
If recommendation is rejected or partially accepted, report reasons:	
Actions Planned /Actions taken + timeframe (action finalised)	Implementation stage (not started, underway, completed)
Lobby CES in different topics including the development of a regulatory framework that is in favour of RBL, implementation of itineraries, and connections with undergraduate programs. This will be done during the 4 years of the phase 2	Underway (Lobbying CES is done several times each year)
Lobby CES in the inclusion of distance learning for MSc students from other provinces. This will be done during the 4 years of the phase 2	Not started
Recommendation 3:	Invest in up-scaling of good practices
Management Response (Agree, partially agree, disagree):	Agree
If recommendation is rejected or partially accepted, report reasons:	
Actions Planned /Actions taken + timeframe (action finalised)	Implementation stage (not started, underway, completed)
Share Network practices with the Ecuadorian Universities (REDU Network) through workshops by year 3 of the 2 nd phase.	Not started
Continue lobby activities within each of the universities from the VLIR Network to adapt systems and procedures in order to accommodate the organization of MSc and PhD programs by year 2 of the 2 nd phase.	Underway (This was done during phase 1 and protocols were included in a MoU)
Develop an up-scaling strategy of the good practices (RBL in postgraduate programs) for each of the VLIR Network universities, taking into account institutional characteristics of each university by year 4 of the 2 nd phase.	Not started
Incorporate the thematic network on WRM and Biodiscovery within REDU by year 2	Not started
Stablish links with other universities to promote the MSc and PhD programs. This will be done during the 4 years of the phase 2	Not started
Recommendation 4:	Invest in establishing contacts with external stakeholders
Management Response (Agree, partially agree, disagree):	Agree
If recommendation is rejected or partially accepted, report reasons:	
Actions Planned /Actions taken + timeframe (action finalised)	Implementation stage (not started, underway, completed)
Develop a strategy to strengthen collaboration with external actors by year 1 of the phase 2 (curriculum revisions, identification of research	Not started

topics, offering internship for thesis students, organization of Network activities that are relevant for them, etc.)	
Continuously develop non-scientific material to inform external stakeholders on research results	Underway (Various leaflets were developed during phase 1)
Organize workshops, conferences, and training programs for external stakeholders to make the Network and the master courses known.	Underway (various workshops were done in phase 1)
Develop job markets for master students.	Underway (job markets already exist in Network universities)
Develop entrepreneurial, tech transfer, and managerial training courses for MSc and PhD students	Underway (courses offered in some of the Network universities)

Project 1: Enhancing national capacities in biodiscovery

Follow-up on recommendations

Recommendation 1:	Strengthening the application of RBL (research-based learning)	
Management Response (Agree, partially agree, disagree):	Agree	
If recommendation is rejected or partially accepted, report reasons:		
Actions Planned /Actions taken + timeframe (action finalised)		Implementation stage (not started, underway, completed)
Execute continuous training on RBL and virtual classroom to project members by year 1 of phase 2		Underway (training sessions on RBL and virtual classrooms carried out on 4 consecutive years of phase 1)
Collect data on the RBL implementation to allow monitoring by year 2 of phase 2		Underway (This was initiated during phase 1 by Helen Camancho)
Recommendation 2:	Lobby for a favourable environment for (joint) research-based master programmes	
Management Response (Agree, partially agree, disagree):	Agree	
If recommendation is rejected or partially accepted, report reasons:		
Actions Planned /Actions taken + timeframe (action finalised)		Implementation stage (not started, underway, completed)
Collaborate on Lobby activities including data collection and analysis on related programs and their benefits		Underway (Lobbying CES is done several times each year)
Develop an innovative proposal for a 5-years combined undergrad-MSc program and submit to CES for approval		Not started
Recommendation 3:	Invest in up-scaling of good practices	
Management Response (Agree, partially agree, disagree):	Agree	
If recommendation is rejected or partially accepted, report reasons:		
Actions Planned /Actions taken + timeframe (action finalised)		Implementation stage (not started, underway, completed)
Collaborate in the Sharing of the Network practices with the Ecuadorian Universities (REDU Network) through workshops by year 3 of the 2 nd phase.		Not started
Collaborate in lobby activities within each of the universities from the VLIR Network to adapt systems and procedures in order to accommodate the organization of MSc and PhD programs by year 2 of the 2 nd phase.		Underway (This was done during phase 1 and protocols were included in a MoU)

Collaborate in the development an up-scaling strategy of the good practices (RBL in postgraduate programs) for each of the VLIR Network universities, taking into account institutional characteristics of each university by year 4 of the 2 nd phase.	Not started	
Incorporate the thematic network on Biodiscovery within REDU by year 2	Not started	
Stablish links with other universities to promote the MSc and PhD programs. This will be done during the 4 years of the phase 2	Not started	
Recommendation 4:	Invest in establishing contacts with external stakeholders	
Management Response (Agree, partially agree, disagree):	Agree	
If recommendation is rejected or partially accepted, report reasons:		
Actions Planned /Actions taken + timeframe (action finalised)	Implementation stage (not started, underway, completed)	
Integrate professional trainings in the project activities. Develop outreach materials with research applications.	Underway (Various leaflets were developed during phase 1)	
Invite stakeholders to the MSc courses as lecturers and attendants. Integrate visits to stakeholders and thesis development at stakeholders' facilities in the MSc curricula	Not started	
Establish a solid permanent contact with stakeholders through valorization managers at each partner HEI	Not started	

Project 2: ENHANCING ECUADORIAN NATIONAL CAPACITIES ON WATER MANAGEMENT

Follow-up on recommendations

Recommendation 1:	Strengthening the application of RBL	
Management Response (Agree, partially agree, disagree):	Although several training workshops were offered to team members among the participant universities during the initial stage of Phase I, important changes on HEI's staff occurred due to changes in the Higher Education Law. Project members agree with the need to strengthen the application of the RBL in the second phase among network participants.	
If recommendation is rejected or partially accepted, report reasons:	NA	
Actions Planned /Actions taken + timeframe (action finalised)	Implementation stage (not started, underway, completed)	
A yearly training workshop on RBL will be offered to all lecturers.	Underway	
A virtual course on RBL and virtual classroom teaching will be developed for further adoption among participant institutions and other HEI's	Not started	

Follow-up tool-box will be developed and continuously used to monitor the proper implementation of the RBL methodology in program courses and trainings		Not started
Recommendation 2:	Lobby for a favourable environment for (joint) research-based master programmes	
Management Response (Agree, partially agree, disagree):	We agree with evaluator's comments. A lot a lobby has been done during phase I in favour of program aim. Nevertheless, additional changes are needed in HE legislation to fulfil the adoption and impacts of current trends in higher education (e.g. distance learning, dual-training).	
If recommendation is rejected or partially accepted, report reasons:	NA	
Actions Planned /Actions taken + timeframe (action finalised)	Implementation stage (not started, underway, completed)	
Opportunities to integrate distance learning in the master program will be explored during the last two years of the phase II.	Not started	
An amendment will be prepared for CES during the second year to integrate advanced undergrad last-year courses (itineraries) as program curricula for the approved master program. Current changes in discussion for new HE legislation seems in favour of this initiative.	Not started	
Strategies for a stronger knowledge transfer between master program and public and private water sector will be explored during the second year. Dual training and distance learning could open opportunities for advance training of their staff with a limited number of in-house classes.	Not started	
Recommendation 3:	Invest in up-scaling of good practices	
Management Response (Agree, partially agree, disagree):	The VLIR-network experience has been considered as a model to be replicated among other institutions. We agree that a catalyser is needed for this kind of collaboration. We agree with the opportunities that up-scaling the learned lessons can have on institutions and complementary initiatives (ej. water professional networks, training programs on water related topics).	
If recommendation is rejected or partially accepted, report reasons:	NA	
Actions Planned /Actions taken + timeframe (action finalised)	Implementation stage (not started, underway, completed)	
	Not started	
During phase II, the implementation/adoption of an international level association of water professionals will be explored. The presentation of the network as a candidate to organise an international event in the framework of IWA congress is considered as an opportunity for international linkage and the establishment of a country chapter.	Not started	
The IWRM network at REDU gives the opportunity for a wider impact of the master program. Associated partners among these institutions will be identified for research and academic activities, broadening the region of project implementation.	Not started	
Network marketing strategies will be discussed among participants and implemented along the four years of phase II. Lessons learned will be	Underway	

presented at national networks platforms (REDU, CEDIA, SENESCYT, CES) to promote the development of similar initiatives in other fields.	
Recommendation 4:	Invest in establishing contacts with external stakeholders
Management Response (Agree, partially agree, disagree):	We agree with evaluators that currently there are no real valorisation of our master graduates in the water labour sector. Actions will be implemented in phase II in order to increase the interaction on academic and scientific plans between the network and stakeholders.
If recommendation is rejected or partially accepted, report reasons:	NA
Actions Planned /Actions taken + timeframe (action finalised)	Implementation stage (not started, underway, completed)
Current HE legislation demands the participation of stakeholders on an advisory committee for the master programs. Nevertheless, its participation is limited to annual meetings and limited interaction occurs in the daily basis. Increased collaboration with stakeholders will be promoted through their participation on workshops for program curricula update, identification of thesis and internship training opportunities, as well as the yearly planning of training offers for water professionals and job opportunities. Partnership agreements with stakeholders are considered as one of the strategies that will be adopted for this aim.	Not started
During phase II training on the elaboration of policy advise papers (e.g. white papers) will be provided to lecturers and students. A better communication to the general public and decision makers will be vital for the adoption of current knowledge and proposed managements solutions in the water sector. Linkage with existing departments within participant institutions is seen as an strategy towards program impact in national policies (e.g. Public Policy Institute at ESPOL)	Not started
Program graduates have the opportunity to establish companies to offer products and services of high quality to the water sector. Nevertheless, no formal training is provided in program curricula towards relevant topics such as technology-transfer, intellectual property, business and administration. Complementary courses will be identified and implemented as complementary training for those students and lecturers interested to explore the establishment of new companies in the water sector.	Not started

Project 3: Enhancing national capacities in education and outreach innovation

Follow-up on recommendations

Recommendation 1:	Strengthening the application of RBL (research-based learning)
Management Response (Agree, partially agree, disagree):	Agree

If recommendation is rejected or partially accepted, report reasons:	
Actions Planned /Actions taken + timeframe (action finalised)	Implementation stage (not started, underway, completed)
Incorporate the development and implementation of a plan for continuous training on RBL and virtual classroom as a project IR by year 1 of phase 2	Underway. Project 3 is proposed and includes and IR for RBL training. Training sessions on RBL and virtual classrooms were carried out on 4 consecutive years of phase 1
Select the trainers and staff to be trained by year 1 of phase 2	Underway (This was initiated during phase 1)
Develop and implement follow up activities to assess in-class application of RBL	Underway (This was initiated during phase 1 by Helen Camacho)
Recommendation 2:	Lobby for a favourable environment for (joint) research-based master programmes
Management Response (Agree, partially agree, disagree):	Agree
If recommendation is rejected or partially accepted, report reasons:	
Actions Planned /Actions taken + timeframe (action finalised)	Implementation stage (not started, underway, completed)
Incorporate strategies and activities to Lobby CES, Senescyt and private stakeholders as an IR of this project. The activities will be implemented during the 4 years of the phase 2	Underway (Lobbying CES is done several times each year)
Lobby CES in the inclusion of distance learning for MSc students from other provinces. This will be done during the 4 years of the phase 2	Not started
Recommendation 3:	Invest in up-scaling of good practices
Management Response (Agree, partially agree, disagree):	Agree
If recommendation is rejected or partially accepted, report reasons:	
Actions Planned /Actions taken + timeframe (action finalised)	Implementation stage (not started, underway, completed)
Include strategy development of interactions with other universities as an IR of this project by year 1 of phase 2	Not started
Share Network practices with the Ecuadorian Universities (REDU Network) through workshops by year 3 of the 2 nd phase.	Not started
Continue lobby activities within each of the universities from the VLIR Network to adapt systems and procedures in order to accommodate the organization of MSc and PhD programs by year 2 of the 2 nd phase.	Underway (This was done during phase 1 and protocols were included in a MoU)

Develop an up-scaling strategy of the good practices (RBL in postgraduate programs) for each of the VLIR Network universities, taking into account institutional characteristics of each university by year 4 of the 2 nd phase.		Not started
Recommendation 4:	Invest in establishing contacts with external stakeholders	
Management Response (Agree, partially agree, disagree):	Agree	
If recommendation is rejected or partially accepted, report reasons:		
Actions Planned /Actions taken + timeframe (action finalised)		Implementation stage (not started, underway, completed)
Include strategy development of interactions with other universities as an IR of this project by year 1 of phase 2.		Not started
Provide training on commercialization and tech transfer to staff within the programme		Not started
Develop a platform for continuous interactions with stakeholders		Not started
Develop entrepreneurial, tech transfer, and managerial training courses for MSc and PhD students		Underway (courses offered in some of the Network universities)