Centralised Support to Higher Education Reform Experts (HERE)

SPHERE Initiative

HERE Study Visit

16 June 2023

An initiative implemented by the SPHERE Team:

OBREAL Global

eua EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY ASSOCIATION

The SPHERE Team

SPHERE - Centralised Support to Higher Education Reform Experts

Consortium of OBREAL Global (coordinator) and the European University Association:

- Team largely retained from SPHERE 2015-2021
- **Team Lead**: Michael Gaebel (EUA)
- **Academic Experts**: Elizabeth Colucci, Nicolas Patrici, Howard Davies
- **Lead Project Manager**: Nicole Font (OBREAL Global)
- **Project managers** (Georgraphic and Thematic): Lika Glonti (OBREAL Global) and Gohar Hovhannisyan (EUA)

- EU expert pool: Retained and expanding

SPHERE | Political Context

EU policy focus on Green Dimension in Higher Education (Teaching green disciplines, green skills, greening of universities)

Continued impact of the EHEA membership (new and old priorities) on the HERE countries

Emergence of the European Education Area and related initiatives

- European University Alliances and the European approach to microcredentials
- Shared experience of CBHE projects

Geopolitical context

- Affects eligibilty and operations of HERE Teams
- Propells discussion of new/renewed priorities: Migrants and refugees in higher education, HE in crisis situations, collaborative online integrated learning, values….

SPHERE activities | Overview (3 years)

- **6 Thematic Seminars (2 virtual)**
- **6 Study Visits (two virtual)**
- **3 international large-scale conferences (1st December 2023)**
- **5-6 Technical Assistance Missions for each of the 25 Partner Countries and follow-up activity for each (40% virtual/hybrid)**
- **Development and maintenance of a HERE Website**
- **Production of 3 publications**

SPHERE event descriptions and objectives

Seminars will be organised as international events tackling a HE reform theme, providing theoretical background and showcasing diverse approaches and examples

The study visit will be a more detailed, hands-on activity. It would offer an in-depth look at a specific institution in its context, and how it manages a theme or topic (such as inclusion in international mobility, student participation in governance, university research management, industry collaboration

Conference would be both a “recap” event, showcasing lessons learned from the year, TAM results and synergies with related E+ projects, as well as a forecasting event for the following year, and offer networking and peer learning opportunities.

Structure of SPHERE activities

What else is new? Approach

Environmental responsibility/exploiting technology and virtual/hybrid solutions

- 40% of events in a virtual or hybrid format
- Reducing a paper trail: Centralising TAM proposals, TAM reporting, Work Plan development, event surveys in the SPHERE website intranet

A supportive, overarching framework for national HERE Teams and their NEOs

- Networking between Teams (HERE Networking events, conferences, etc)
- Feedback mechanism for TAM, TAM follow-up activities, national Bologna events
- Encouraging regional dynamics and events

Collaborative and participatory approaches

- National work plan development starts early and feeds into annual SPHERE programming/theme
- HERE networking events as a feedback mechanism
- Systematic monitoring through reporting via the SPHERE Website
- Participatory approaches and peer learning in event design

Technical Assistance Missions (TAM)

A TAM provide targeted assistance to NEO and HERE teams. A TAM is the provision of an international expert for the period of 1.5 - 2 working days.

A flexible tool to meet national development needs

- Should be **part of the annual national work plan** or part of the planned higher education reform process underway in a specific country or region
- Must **provide a clear added value** with regards to national higher education reform objectives – Modernisation of HE
- The NEO is in charge of the logistics
- NEO and HERE Teams should also foresee a follow-up activity to maximise the impact of the TAM and to promote the HERE network.

- **It is a means of providing targeted, hands-on support and consultancy to the HERE and the academic community and government in their respective countries.**

NEW! Follow up activity: 1 per TAM

- NEO and HERE Teams should also foresee a follow up activity to maximise the impact of the TAM and to promote the HERE network
- It will depend on the nature of the TAM and the results obtained, as well as on the resources of the HERE Team
- Examples: Dissemination webinar, follow up meeting with national authorities, online event promoting a more extensive publication, etc.

Technical Assistance Missions (TAM) 2023 Call

Modalities

- Presential, virtual or hybrid (registration needed) | 40% Virtual
- *National:* Up to three proposals per country (regional/joint TAM applications are not counted in this quota)
- *Regional/joint:* Two or more participating countries (Max. 3 proposals per region)
- *Cross-regional*

Key documents (to be included under the SPHERE Virtual Platform)

- Guidelines for TAM
- 2023 Call for proposals and request form
- Templates:
  - Finalised programme for TAM to be delivered by the NEO to SPHERE prior to the event
  - Template for NEO Report on completed TAM
  - Template for Site Visit Report – Experts
  - Template for the TAM Follow-up activity

Technical Assistance Missions (TAM)

Evaluation procedure

Submission

- Evaluated by the SPHERE Team of academic experts
  - the context of each country, alignment with the national work plan and the country priorities.
  - relevance, impact and sustainability of expected results
  - definition of proposed learning outcomes

Pre-selected results / Feedback (to be included under the SPHERE Virtual Platform)

- Results approved by the SPHERE team of academic experts and the EACEA
- Types of results:
  - Accepted
  - Accepted pending modifications: one week to revise proposals based on expert's comments and re-submit them
  - Rejected: the SPHERE Team will explain the reasons
    - lack of requested information
    - focus on one university's needs only
    - Limited impact (proposals don't fulfil the objective of the modernisation of the higher education in the target countries)
    - Re-submission in the next call is a possibility
    - Request for more clarifications (one week after the receipt of the results)

The SPHERE Virtual Community

(Under development)

Thank you!

Any questions or doubt, please contact:

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