

University of Cologne
Professorship for Business and Economical Education
especially Curriculum Research
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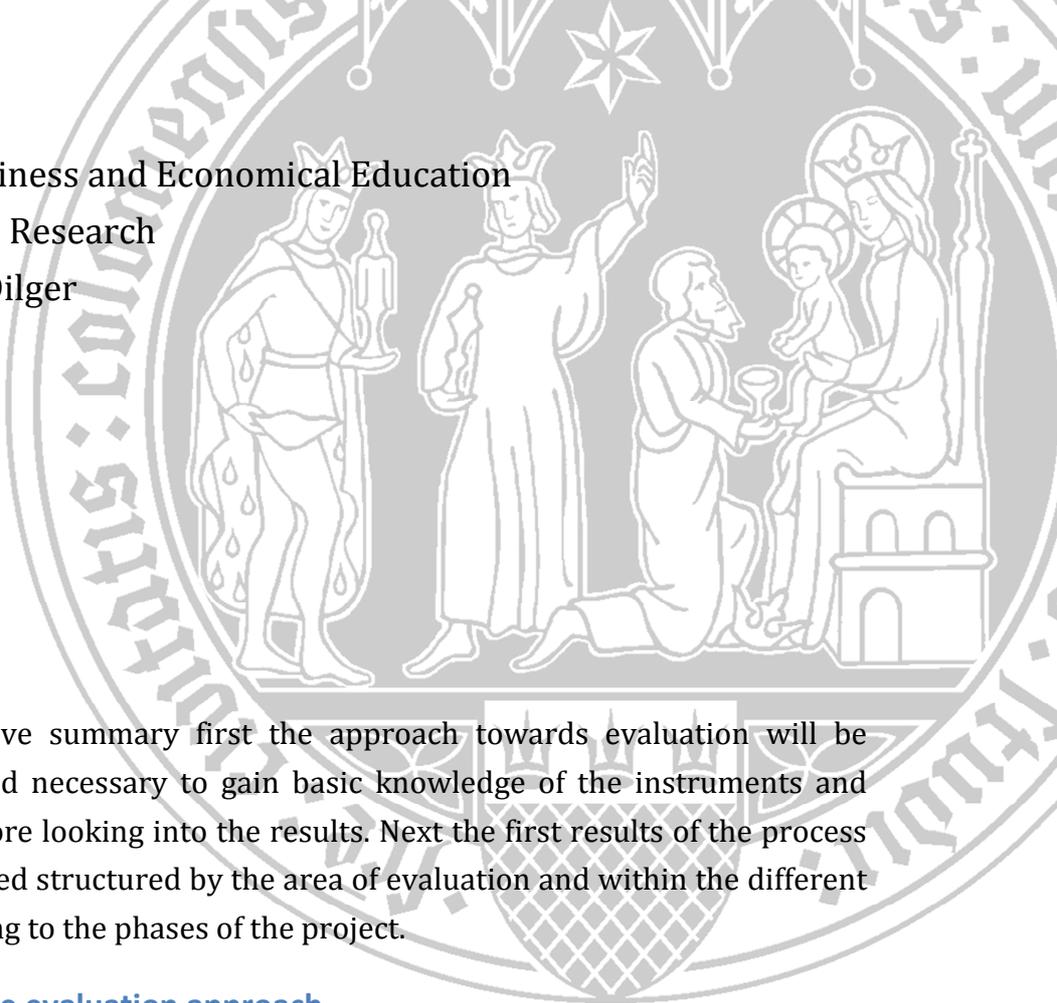
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Report on the evaluation of processes within EBBD-project

This report on the evaluation of processes within the EBBD-project was prepared for the project's update report and comprises the activities concerning process evaluation until August 31st of 2012.

The report consists of six parts: it begins with a short summary of the most important results, which is followed by a description of the basic assumptions behind the process evaluation of this project as well as a description of the evaluation design. Based on these conceptual foundations the instruments used in the process evaluation are described. In the fourth part of the report the first results regarding the evaluation of the project administration process will be provided. In the fifth part the corresponding results regarding the evaluation of the project's core processes – curriculum development, implementation and dissemination – are described. The report ends with a short outlook on the next steps of process evaluation.

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1. Executive summary

In the following executive summary first the approach towards evaluation will be described as it is deemed necessary to gain basic knowledge of the instruments and procedures involved before looking into the results. Next the first results of the process evaluation will be provided structured by the area of evaluation and within the different areas structured according to the phases of the project.

1.1. Description of the evaluation approach

In this report the process evaluation will be described, which was carried out in the EBBD project following a responsive approach. According to this approach not only the processes happening within the project will be explicated and reflected upon building on the perspectives and conditions of the stakeholders involved, but also suitable scientific concepts will be brought into the project. Process evaluation will deal with the processes of project administration on the one hand and the core processes of the project, namely curriculum development, implementation and dissemination, on the other hand. For evaluating the project's administration first an entry survey was developed. This survey aimed at getting information on the projects conditions at the different institutions as well as the expectations. Therefore the questions were phrased in an open way, which allowed for unexpected answers to appear. The second instrument employed was a standardised questionnaire, which is used to evaluate all partner meetings by the meeting's participants. This questionnaire consists of a fixed set of indicators on general satisfaction with the organisation of the meeting, on the one hand, and a specific set of indicators developed for each meeting based on its specific aims, on the other hand. In comparison the instruments (document analysis, interviews, group discussions) targeting the core processes are only half-standardised to ensure that the different contexts and priorities of the project's partners are adequately captured. The data gathered here was consequently analysed in an inductive and interpretative way. This approach was used as differences in the understandings and contexts of the partners were especially expected regarding the following aspects:

- Understanding the curriculum and the approach towards developing a curriculum,
- The conditions for implementation at the different institutions and the corresponding strategies for implementation as well
- The actors in the educational systems and the approaches towards dissemination.

A corner stone of the evaluation concept lies in a timely and direct feed of the information gained back to the project partners and especially to the project coordination. This aims at achieving continuous improvement of the project's processes to help it to be a learning project.

1.2. First results of the evaluation

To begin with, the key results of the evaluation of the project's administration will be described. Next a short summary of the evaluation's findings regarding the core processes will be provided.

As presented in the diagram below the evaluation demonstrates a high content regarding the organisational execution as well as the alignment and communication of the meetings' goals after the first three partner meetings. Furthermore based on the experiences made and the feedback provided the activities in these areas could be further improved resulting in even better evaluations.

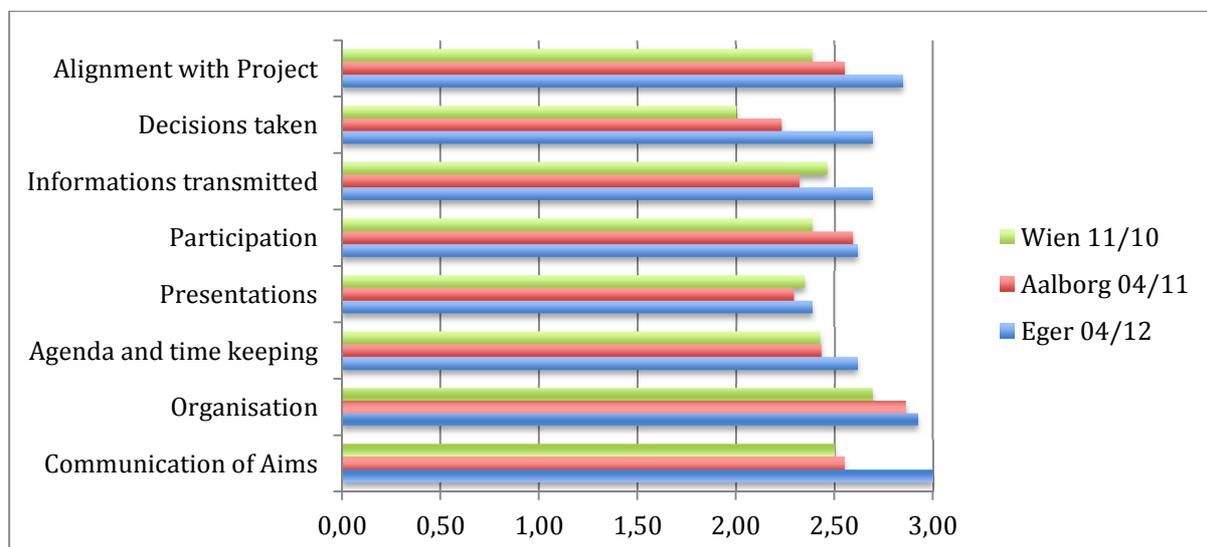


Diagram 1: Evaluation of the organisation of partner meetings

In particular improvements could be achieved concerning the communication of aims in advance of the meeting, the decisions made within the meeting and the involvement of participants during the meeting. Regarding the evaluation of specific goals the partner meeting in Vienna was intended to kick off the work on curriculum development in the

project as a whole as well as in the different working groups. Concerning these specific aims the Vienna meeting was evaluated very positive in the areas of establishing a network in between different partners as well as in the area of participation during the meeting. Room for improvement was seen in particular in the area of the conditions for individual preparation for the meeting. The partner meeting in Aalborg served to continue curriculum development and discuss implementation. In the Aalborg meeting evaluation showed doubts regarding the definition of competences, the areas of application of these competences and the interfaces to the other working packages. To support coordination and integration across working packages an additional editorial meeting was held in Bielefeld with representatives of all work packages of the project. The third and most recent partner meeting in Eger aimed at supporting the implementation of the curriculum at the local institutions. Therefore it was well received, that the information passed on about the first dissemination conference and the status quo of implementation as well as the plans regarding next steps were evaluated very positively. Some uncertainty was prevalent though regarding the measurement of competences as well as the individual next steps in implementation and dissemination activities.

With the entry survey, first, the relations in between project partners, which already existed at the beginning of the project could be identified. These connections were a result of previous projects done together and the information was used to determine nodes in the network of connections. Furthermore it became apparent, where a thorough attention on building trusting relationships was needed. Second, a first systematisation of the expectations towards the profile of the EBBD was developed, which could be used in further curriculum development. Through this systematisation it became evident, that linked to the three areas of activity 'working', 'studying' and 'living in Europe' the development of a set of overarching personal characteristics was a key goal for all project partners. Third, at this point of time the plans and estimations regarding the three core processes were collected. Concerning the curriculum development, which was focused upon at that point of time, clarity and unity prevailed, but concerning the national and institutional conditions for implementation and dissemination some questions and critical aspects arose. Through an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, the partners' confidence in the potential of the project to build on and leverage their institutional development was revealed. Furthermore great interest of various stakeholders in this activity, because of its international approach and the common certification, was attested. Nevertheless some difficulties regarding legal conditions for local implementation and the great importance of the marketing strategy for disseminating the EBBD in the national systems were also mentioned.

This last part of the entry survey already touched on the evaluation of the core processes. At this stage of the project a group discussion was conducted during the meeting in Vienna. Based on this group discussion key questions for the development of the profile of an EBBD graduate as well as for the approach taken towards developing the curriculum could be derived. Directing these questions back to the project's actors already during the meeting in Vienna helped to solve these issues early during the project. Additional questions were raised in the group discussion on the relation in between an overarching structure of the competence and the definition of specific competences for the different modules as well as questions regarding the level of detail needed in defining the competences and the degree of obligation in the implementation in national systems.

The draft of the curriculum as it was developed during the meeting in Vienna and the additional meeting in Bielefeld was evaluated against local requirements in a following series of phone interviews with the project partners. As perceived by the partners the main structural characteristic of the curriculum were the integration of the graduate profile with the definition of competences in the different learning areas. Concerning the content of the curriculum the European dimension of the competences in the different learning areas was mentioned. Furthermore the technical requirements of bilingual teaching and the international internships were stressed. Based on these interviews different strategies for implementation and different expectations towards the level of detail of the curriculum were found. Also differences in the local conditions and assumptions became apparent again that made it more difficult to work with the curriculum. Finally insecurities were encountered concerning the status of the curriculum as a draft and the implication of this status for implementation.

The last part of the evaluation, which has already been realised, were two interviews with project partners, who have already gathered first experiences in implementing the EBBD curriculum. Here the strategies for implementation could also be evaluated regarding their implications.

Project partner 1 from Germany introduced a new degree at the school, which focuses on business administration, Europe and languages and leads to a university entrance certificate. This degree on the one hand already includes most requirements of EBBD and on the other hand leaves significant room for shaping it according to the requirements. The introduction of this degree is closely linked to a strategic aim of the institution and hence enjoys a high importance in the overall school work. As an instrument and strategy for implementation tables were constructed, that allow a relation of EBBD competences to the national curriculum. To meet standards of the EBBD the focus within the national curriculum was set correspondingly and some

additional elements were introduced. One important factor in implementing the curriculum there, was the synergy created as many teachers responsible for implementing the EBBD also took part in the project's activities. One challenge, which still has to be met, rests in the adequate certification of the EBBD. In the operative preparations of lessons some teachers noticed a need for teaching material that also matches the European dimension required in EBBD.

The second school, which has already made first experiences in implementing the EBBD is project partner 7 from Romania. There the EBBD was integrated in an existing course, which leads to a vocationally oriented degree in the area of business administration that can be elected as an alternative to studying after passing a university entrance certificate. In this course different elements required for EBBD were added to the existing national standards. At the same time EBBD was also adapted to the local requirements. Key influences on the implementation process are the additional work involved for the teachers, the focus on talented students and the great importance of a common European framework for certification and recognition of the degree.

In continuing evaluation the team for process evaluation will use the existing instruments of the questionnaire to monitor the process of project administration. Additionally an exit survey will be conducted to evaluate goal achievement. For evaluating the core processes the interviews regarding the implementation of EBBD at different institutions will be completed and the on-going exploitation and dissemination activities will be monitored.