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A RISK MITIGATION STRATEGY IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT "CENTERS OF TEACHERS' CERTIFICATION: APPROACHES TO TEACHING EXCELLENCE" (UTTERLY)

1. GENERAL PROVISIONS

1.1. The UTTERLY Project Risk Reduction Strategy (hereinafter the Strategy) is the development which defines the main directions of objective risks prevention, ensures compliance with the principles of their management, application of methods of the project' risks analysis and substantiation of methods of their reduction.

1.2. The strategy is designed to identify the risks of UTTERLY project implementation and to outline ways of minimizing them. This is due to the challenges caused by the Covid pandemic and the war in Ukraine, which cause difficulties in the implementation of the project program by domestic partners and hinders the cooperation with European partners. Further guidance is the idea of further internationalization of higher education in Ukraine, introduction of the best world practices in the educational process of the higher educational establishment, modernization of approaches to teaching in higher school.

1.3. The conceptual framework of UTTERLY Project Risk Reduction Strategy is to provide conditions for systematic improvement of the quality of national higher education, ensuring the variability and alternativeness of teaching process, expanding opportunities for integration into the world educational and scientific space.

2. UTTERLY PROJECT STRATEGIC GOAL AND TASKS IN MODERN CONDITIONS

2.1. The goal of the project in the conditions of war in Ukraine and another wave of Covid pandemics remains unchanged, namely, to promote modernization of the system of national higher education, introduction of excellence training centers on the basis of universities for implementing European educational innovations through professional certification of teachers of the HEE.

2.2. The objectives of the project in modern conditions are:

- Modernization of the system of professional development and certification of university teachers in Ukraine by creating a network of centers of excellence in teaching (hereinafter referred to as CET) on the territory of the country.

- implementation of the program of professional certification of university teachers on the basis of the best European practices and educational innovations to ensure teaching excellence;

- development and preparation of a new program of teaching excellence taking into account the needs of the academic environment in Ukraine, which will help to improve the quality of professional development of university teachers.

3.3 Project expected results are as follows:

- Establishment of 9 independent centers of excellence, with their further integration into a whole network;

- Development by every institution of higher education, on the premises of which the Center is located, strategies and models of teaching skills will be created on the basis of general approaches, best experience of partners at the educational area-defined, national and international levels;

- Development of professional standards for university teachers;

- Improvement of the provisions on the certification of university teachers;

- Development of programs of HEE teachers' certification.

3.4. Fulfilling the objectives of the project, realizing the set goal and achieving the expected results in the conditions of uncertainty associated with arranging the educational process in the conditions of martial law, may be

prevented by certain risks. Under such circumstances, the problem of their definition, evaluation and substantiation of methods of risk analysis, reduction and prevention is actualized.

3. POSSIBLE RISKS AND THEIR MANAGEMENT

3.1. Unfavorable conditions that arise in the process of project implementation, objectively impede the fulfillment of the tasks and delay the achievement of the result for a certain time. Minimizing the delayed implementation of the planned activities is seen in monitoring possible risks – forecasting their occurrence during the entire project cycle. Qualitative monitoring allows to manage the information and make effective decisions before the occurrence of risk events.

3.2. The risk characteristic of UTTERLY project is the threat or danger of failure in the activity aimed at creation of centers of teaching excellence on the basis of domestic partner-universities due to changes in the external environment. This danger is minimized by a thorough analysis of changes in the external environment (some of which could be a reduction of resources planned for the opening of the Center, unstable financial and economic situation in the country, fluctuations in market conditions, prices, exchange rates, general instability in the country, etc.). And changes in the internal environment (namely, the delay of the date of realization of the project due to impossibility or difficulty for members of the domestic working groups to participate in joint activities with foreign partners, the delay of supply of equipment to the Center or its use (interruptions in electricity supply, destruction of material and technical base as a result of shelling infrastructure objects), possible inconsistent actions of partners, Dangerous situation for the life and work of the participants of the project in Ukraine, etc.).

3.3. One important step should be to define the characteristics of the probable risks of the project implementation, which includes the following:

- *the essence of the risks envisaged* is the possibility of deviation from the course aimed at achieving the project objective; losing confidence in its realization; adverse consequences, such as the impossibility of opening the planned

number of Centers at the beginning of the project; incorrectly chosen alternative for the goal and task of the project, which have been initially outlined;

- *the level of risk* – high, medium, low; quantitative and qualitative degree of probability, account for and expected;

- *risk prices* are the probability of under-provision of funds (equipment) from the organization – grant provider, or damage of the equipment in the conditions of martial law, in which HEE- project partners live; financial inconsistency due to currency exchange rate fluctuations in Ukraine, etc.;

- *uncertainty* – the prospect of losing the goals of the object's realization under changing conditions; the presence of unknown circumstances that prevent the achievement of the expected results;

- *certainty* – correct assessment of the current situation; conditions for the development and adoption of adequate managerial decisions;

- *risks acceptability* – their “eco-friendliness” in terms of the project, the measure of minimum harm to its realization;

- *the impact degree of sources of risk* – events measuring which is within the range of values from the upper to the lower limits of probability;

- *the result of realization of the object in probable risk situations* – the amount of the predicted loss or, on the contrary, the expected positive result in the pre-determined range.

3.4. The members of Ukrainian partners team should be subject and psychologically ready to the possible risks, which can be seen in the following:

- *Stereotypical approach*, when the results of previous similar decisions, within the framework of projects with uniform goals ("Higher education excellence program" (2019 – 2023), "Formation of the experts network to ensure quality of higher education" (2018–2019), etc.), were outlined and implemented in undefined terms; and at the same time *topicality of creative, productive approach* to the solution of problem situations arising in the process of realization of the project program;

- *the ability to reflect on failures* that are likely to catch up with the target group and induce the choice of a cautious policy;

- *motivation for success and achievement* within the project, which is reproduced in terms of each member of the project group for achieving the expected results, increasing interest in the project as such and in the process of its realization, striving to make their own contribution to the achievement of the common goal, belief in expediency and utility of the project for higher education excellence in Ukraine;

- *attitude to possible risks* – as opportunities in difficult conditions, while finding optimal ways of realizing project goals, to develop ability to resist unexpected challenges, demonstrate productivity in thinking and rethinking of the process project changes, consider them from the point of view of the factors of improving the abilities and skills for realizing project activity;

- *the professional component*, which consists in the ability of the members of the project team at the operational level to carry out the actions necessary for realization of the objectives of the project – those based on previous experience and intuition, do not require time and energy costs;

- *ability to work effectively in a tense situation* where psychoemotional stability, qualities of will power, i.e. purposefulness, persistence, organization, initiative, moral features of responsibility, valuable attitude of members of the project group to their participation in the project.

3.5. Within the framework of UTTERLY project realization, risk prevention and control are determined primarily by an effective organization of project activity, when its participants are given the opportunity to effectively influence risk factors and thus reduce the possibility of adverse situations and their consequences. The emphasis is on professional, creative approach of project participants to introduction of the certification program for universities teachers of Ukraine, with orientation on best practices in the European system of higher education.

3.6. The strategy and tactics of the project's tasks should be taken collectively. Based on the results of the *system analysis of possible adverse situations*, an *algorithm* should be developed:

- systematic cooperative discussion of current action plans and decision-making;
- systematic analysis of intermediate results of the project;
- analysis and forecasting of possible underperformance of project members or financial problems;
- formulation of intermediate goals of the object, taking into account current changes;
- correction of the main purpose and tasks of the project.

4. METHODS OF ANALYSING POSSIBLE RISKS AND THEIR PREVENTION

4.1. Fulfillment of the objectives of the project is possible due to implementation of the complex of measures initiated by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine on the stage of attracting digital resources on a free basis from international partners. Cloud-oriented technologies for improvement of professional activity of teachers, mastering services of cloud platforms Coursera, Udemy and edX is topical. With regard to digital tools, Google and Zoom offers to access their own license tools enable you to get free and expanded access to Google Workspace for Education's Teaching and Learning Upgrade and Zoom Meeting for Education software.

4.2. Further management of UTTERLY project should be carried out in view of the identification of potential risks in the process of evaluating the feasibility of making appropriate work decisions. To this end, the organization of risk analysis activities should be carried out in the following sequence:

- 1) selection of experts who have been involved in similar projects once and have experience in preventing or counteracting to object risks;
- 2) preparation of information on the problems of realization of the object as of the current moment;

3) establishment of factors (external and internal) of possible risks and their significance in terms of achieving or non-achieving the project's purpose;

4) creation of the risks impact model;

5) establishing relationships between possible risks and the cumulative effect of their actions;

6) distribution of risks among the participants of the project - domestic partners;

7) the predicted result of the analysis of possible risks.

4.3. The *quantitative and qualitative* analysis of possible risks of the project is envisaged. Quantitative analysis allows to determine the extent of certain risks and risks of the project as a whole. Qualitative analysis determines factors, limits and peculiarities of risks. In particular, the process of development and preparation of a new program of teaching excellence in the national institutions of higher education should be a risk of being impeded in view of the difficulty to take into account the needs of the entire academic environment in Ukraine in the conditions of war.

4.4. In order to prevent risks of realization of the object it is expedient to use methods of analogy, expert estimates, calculated-analytical and statistical methods. The method of analogies involves the use of data similar to tasks of objects, which are already executed. The expert method can be implemented by studying the opinions of experienced leaders and executors of programs of other projects in the part of avoiding problem moments in the course of the process of realization of the project program and avoiding controversial situations. The calculation-analytical method is based on theoretical assumptions about possible risks and is applied as a safety device. The statistical method allows to analyze and evaluate different ways of execution of the object, thus determining an additional alternative in case of impossibility to realize one of them.

5. FINAL POSITION

5.1. The strategy of reducing risks of implementation of the project "Centers of Teachers' Certification: Approaches to Teaching Excellence" (UTTERLY) is a

document that defines the policy of further fulfillment of the project objectives in the changing conditions of the modern reality in Ukraine.

5.2. The internal indicators of the current state of the Strategy implementation are the results of monitoring the implementation of the objectives of the project by domestic partners.

5.3. The main external indicators of the current state of implementation of the Strategy are the assessment of the implementation of the project program by foreign beneficiaries and Erasmus office.