

MEET-CINCH

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Interim Review Report of the End-users and Advisory Group

Lead Beneficiary: LUH

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Interim Review Report includes feedback received from the End-users and Advisory Group (EAG) members on realization of the MEET-CINCH project in the first 18 months.

Under the non-disclosure agreement, the advisors were given at their disposal for the purposes of interim evaluation and feedback a set of project materials, in particular the internal half-year work package reports and also the project proposal. Two of the advisors were present at all project meetings and, thus, could have also followed and commented on the path of the project activities continuously and in person.

The following experts provided their feedback in the EAG Interim Report:

- Dr. Jon Petter Omtvedt, University of Oslo
- Dr. Nick Evans, Nottingham Trent University
- MSc. Václav Hanus, Emeritus Head of the Temelin NPP Chemistry.

We would like to thank and express special appreciation to the EAG members for their precious comments, active inputs, ideas, experience, and expertise they have provided towards project activities.

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1 END-USERS AND ADVISORY GROUP

As described in the Project Handbook, the EAG has as its main objective to ensure the feed-back during the project and to contribute to information interchange with the major nuclear stakeholders' organisations („employers“), relevant existing European structures or the part of academia not represented in MEET-CINCH. EAG's main tasks are to advise “how” and direct/specify “what” thus ensuring that the MEET-CINCH activities aim at the target in the straightest and the most efficient way.

To ascertain ability to give fruitful input with respect to the MEET-CINCH goals, the EAG has been established with representatives of relevant academia at the kick-off meeting and reinforced during the project.

Meeting of the EAG is formally convened at any time at the request of the Coordinator. The EAG is consulted in any question relating to the practical relevance of the project work and outputs as well as possible routes to optimise the activities in a direction towards practical applicability and relevance. Always at least two representatives of the EAG are invited to project meetings.

This report is in response to the MEET-CINCH project's request for the external advisors to provide feedback on the project's progress and development at the half-way point (18 months into the 3-year project).

2 EAG INTERIM REVIEW REPORT

2.1 Introduction to the topic

From point of view of a specialist in nuclear power plants chemistry, the science of nuclear chemistry is essential. It is necessary for both to maintain adequate safety and the efficiency of nuclear facilities. Particularly during the decommissioning of nuclear power plants this field is indispensable. At present, it might seem that for Europe, thanks to the antinuclear movements and antinuclear programs of some governments, nuclear chemistry experts are not needed. The nuclear industry in Europe is stagnating and therefore requires fewer professionals than before. Thanks to the "green movement," everything that has to do with radiation has been given the "label" of something undesirable and extremely dangerous. It could be said that the "Ghost of radiation is walking around the Europe."

On the other hand, we have a very reasonable and dynamic development of the use of nuclear technology in Asia. The know-how gradually moves there. That's the situation today.

Since nuclear chemistry and related fields are very complex, it is almost impossible to maintain a high level of their teaching at one university, or even in one state. In a nutshell: A low interest in industry, bad reputation of the nuclear industry due to "green radio-phobia" in society, and thus the lack of students and support of the related fields of study at universities.

In this situation, cooperation between universities is the only way to maintain a high level of education. This field is not intended for extinction but for further development. The next energy crisis will make it clear. Therefore, it is necessary to preserve it and to overcome the current, unfavorable social climate.

Thus, the CINCH-project series, specifically the current MEET-CINCH project, can be considered to be crucial for achieving these aims. It needs to be supported and maintained and keep so the nuclear chemistry at a competitive level.

2.2 EAG Interim Review Report

The project contains four scientific work-packages (WPs) and an administrative one. In this feedback we will not go through each individual WP and WP sub-task, evaluating whether or not every single task is on track and on time. Such analysis is routinely followed up by the PIRs and WIRs and there is no indication that the project management and WP leaders are not keeping track of this in a conscientious and excellent manner. Instead we will comment on particular parts of the work which deviate (positively or negatively) from what could be expected based on the project description and plan.

In WP 1 - Nuclear Awareness – two big tasks are well under way and it must be said are developing in a very positive way, probably above expectations. They are the MOOC development, a task that has proved more time consuming than was initially thought, (Task 1.2) and the high-school teaching package (Task 1.3). In both cases the WP leaders have engaged dedicated personnel (Francesca Concia at POLIMI, who has no background in anything nuclear but has a very good grasp on how to produce a MOOC and Lucy Platts at NNL, who is an excellent radiochemist and engaging teacher). It is very important that these two tasks are so well executed, as they are central to the

Nuclear Awareness effort to recruit would-be students and encouraging students to select a career path in Nuclear and Radiochemistry. Much of the MEET-CINCH awareness goal and the project in general are hinged on the success of these two tasks.

In WP2 - Sustainability and Evolutionary Development of VET Tools – the main focus is on securing sustainability of teaching material and courses already developed, including the student management and e-learning platform CINCH-MOODLE. As part of this, a new "e-shop" is under development which aims to provide an easy to use portal to find available courses and training in Nuclear and Radiochemistry. As advisors we would like to point out that such portals will, in general, only become successful if: 1) they are meticulously maintained and updated and 2) are comprehensive and include most of the relevant training and courses that are available. Neither of these will be easy to achieve and will certainly demand a significant effort post MEET-CINCH. It would be useful if a way to ensure sustainability of the "e-shop" could be convincingly pointed out. Maybe a solution would be if a number of the major teaching institutions could join forces and hire dedicated help to ensure that the e-shop (and CINCH-MOODLE) stays updated and attractive. Typically, such institutions would be those that use the content on these platforms extensively.

Part of WP 2 is the continuation and further development of the RoboLab concept. The technical platform that the old RoboLab exercises depend on is in dire need of upgrade to enhance stability and accessibility. It is also clear that simulations are an attractive alternative, in particular for large groups of pupils or students – although not containing the same "coolness" factor. Upgrading the RoboLabs are however quite labour intensive and finding ways to strengthen this effort would be good.

In WP3 - Novel Education and Training Approaches – the main focus seems to be on producing videos suitable for use in "flipped classroom" teaching, e.g. the students obtain knowledge on a topic by viewing the videos (or in principle other media) and then engage in "active" learning tasks in the classroom and under teacher supervision. The production of video material is well under way and promises to be quite extensive. It might be a challenge to organise and provide material from different institutions in a coherent way. How should, for example, material that is overlapping and partly complementary be presented? It is also of paramount importance that not just the videos are provided, but also teacher and student guides on how to use the material. One should perhaps be careful about not producing too many videos and then end up without time and manpower to provide the carefully written and well thought out guides.

Most partners work enthusiastically, and hard, on delivering the content they have promised. However, one partner – CEA – seems to have some problems delivering content that was planned as a significant part of their contribution. We would advise that the project manager discuss this urgently and thoroughly with CEA and, if it turns out that they are not able to deliver all or some of the promised video and course content, a redistribution of funding should be performed to compensate in the best possible way and maintain the smooth running of MEET-CINCH.

As advisors, we have nothing to comment on WP 4 and 5. These WPs seems to be going smoothly and according to plan.

3 CONCLUSIONS

To sum up, in the feedback the advisors evaluated positively the benefits of the project activities towards the project goals in the nuclear community and broad public as well. Some crucial issues were raised or stressed to be treated with utmost care in order to secure sustainability of project activities and to prevent flood of project courses without interconnection, complementarity or due guidance on how to use them. The cooperation with the advisors will continue and their hints will be properly taken into account.