

EUROPEAN UNION ACADEMIC PROJECT MANAGEMENT IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FOR UKRAINIAN STUDENTS¹

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The European Union (EU) provides great opportunities for academic institutions to participate in the world leading academic programmes, such as Erasmus+ and Horizon Europe. These programmes policies, terms and conditions give a perfect understanding of effective European Union project management approaches. The European Commission also developed PM² Methodology for effective management of EU funding projects. The Jean Monnet Module implemented at the National University of Food Technologies (NUFT), Kyiv under the support of Erasmus+ programme in 2022-2025, aims to educate Ukrainian students on effective EU management of academic projects in European sustainability. The main activity of the Module is the teaching course for PhD students at NUFT. The course covers key aspects of effective project management relevant to EU academic programmes, including general issues of effective project management, the EU academic programmes analysis, project proposal preparation, project team work, risk management, quality assurance and other relevant issues. Additional teaching activities of the Module include annual Jean Monnet winter and summer schools on EU academic project management for young university teachers and researchers. The main expected results of the Module are increased awareness of the learners on EU effective approaches in academic project management and developing relevant practical skills. The outputs of the Module will include sharing knowledge on world leading EU educational and research programmes, motivation of learners to participate actively in the EU funding projects. Positive feedback from the learners allows us to recommend this and similar teaching courses for other universities of Ukraine. *Key words:* academic project management, European academic culture, Erasmus+ programme, PhD programme, Ukrainian universities

Менеджмент академічних проєктів Європейського Союзу зі сталого розвитку для українських студентів. Якименко І.І., Маджд С.М., Салавор О.М., Ничик О.В., Шаповалов Є.Б., Грегирчак Н.М., Гиріч А.М.

Європейський Союз (ЄС) надає академічним установам чудові можливості для участі у провідних світових академічних програмах, таких як Erasmus+ та Horizon Europe. Політика, умови та положення цих програм дають чудове розуміння ефективних підходів Європейського Союзу до управління проєктами. Європейська Комісія також розробила методологію PM² для ефективного управління проєктами, що фінансуються ЄС. Модуль Жана Моне, що впроваджується в Національному університеті харчових технологій (НУХТ), Київ, за підтримки програми Erasmus+ у 2022-2025 роках, має на меті навчити українських студентів ефективному управлінню академічними проєктами Європейського Союзу в галузі європейської стійкості. Основним видом діяльності Модуля є навчальний курс для докторантів НУХТ. Курс охоплює ключові аспекти ефективного управління проєктами, що стосуються академічних програм ЄС, включаючи загальні питання ефективного управління проєктами, аналіз академічних програм ЄС, підготовку проєктних пропозицій, роботу в проєктній команді, управління ризиками, забезпечення якості та інші питання. Додаткова освітня активність Модуля включає щорічні зимові та літні школи Жана Моне з управління академічними проєктами ЄС для молодих викладачів та дослідників університетів. Основними очікуваними результатами Модуля є підвищення обізнаності слухачів про ефективні підходи ЄС до управління академічними проєктами та розвиток відповідних практичних навичок. Результати Модуля включатимуть обмін знаннями про провідні освітні та дослідницькі програми ЄС, мотивацію учнів до активної участі в проєктах фінансування ЄС. Позитивні відгуки слухачів дозволяють нам рекомендувати цей та аналогічні навчальні курси для інших університетів України. *Ключові слова:* управління академічними проєктами, європейська академічна культура, програма Erasmus+, PhD програма, українські університети

Problem statement. The European Union (EU) has a long-term successful experience in multinational and international academic programmes. Globally recognized EU academic programmes Erasmus+, including KA1, KA2 and Jean Monnet activities [1], and Horizon Europe [2] demonstrate EU world leading policies and practices in international academic collaboration. These

and other European programmes provide not only great opportunities for scientists and students to participate in its projects, but share valuable approaches on effective academic project management [3]. Studying policies, terms and conditions of EU academic programmes is especially valuable for young researchers and university teachers, who may apply this knowledge for participation in EU programmes and for effective management of other academic projects.

The Jean Monnet Module Project of Erasmus+ programme (2022-2025) at the National University of Food Technologies (NUFT) aims to promote EU policies and

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best practices in academic project management among Ukrainian PhD students, young university teachers and researchers, representatives of civil society and civil servants. In terms of the teaching course, PhD students of different specialties will get unique knowledge and insights on leading role of the EU in education and research through effective policies and management of EU funding academic programmes and projects. Annual Jean Monnet schools with involvement of civil society representatives and civil servants will spread knowledge on effective EU project management beyond academy and bring the EU closer to the public.

Needs analysis and specific objectives of the Module. Open and fair competition in terms of calls of educational and research programmes is a key feature of European academic culture. And studies on effective management of academic projects are an important part of many European universities curricular. This knowledge is urgently needed for Ukrainian young researchers and university teachers. Being artificially separated from European academic culture by decades of soviet history/occupation, Ukrainian researchers and professors are only starting to follow best European traditions of academic project management. And relevant education of Ukrainian PhD students and young researchers/teachers on effective EU policies and best practices of academic project management will put them closer to European Union academic culture and make them much more effective professionals in their fields. These skills and knowledge are also relevant for civil society representatives and civil servants due to their possible involvement into EU funding programmes and projects.

The Module covers all key aspects of EU academic project management. It includes university teaching course on 40 academic hours for PhD students at NUFT each year. Learners are motivated to carry out research and actively participate in teaching course delivery in terms of student-centered learning: some topics/case studies are delivered by students. And a few reports at International conferences are delivered by the learners on the European academic culture and project management each year (see, for example [4, 5]). Annual Jean Monnet winter and summer schools in terms of the project were planned to involve at least 50 young university teachers and researchers, but actually involved over 300 – 500 learners annually.

Complementarity of the Module with other actions. During the last decade, NUFT actively develops Eurointegration strategy as a roadmap for research and education. A few Jean Monnet projects on EU sustainability have been successfully implemented for Master students of different departments at the university under academic coordination of Prof. Igor Yakymenko [6]. It became clear that further involvement of the university staff and students into European Union projects needs more knowledge on EU academic culture, policies and project management. That is why during last five years teaching team of Prof. Igor Yakymenko provided train-

ings for university staff on different aspects of European Union academic projects in terms of a few summer schools. Moreover, a university teaching course on scientific project management was implemented for PhD students of different departments at NUFT. This teaching course had been already significantly related to EU academic culture and project management, and transforming it into the Module on European Union policies and best practices of academic project management was the logical step to deepen EU content of the course.

Importantly, potential learners of the Module are actively involved into research and teaching at different departments of the university. Their knowledge and skills on EU academic project management will have very direct positive impact on their career and their academic environment. In the nearest future, they may become active participants of EU academic programme calls and effective managers of EU funding academic projects. Even wider impact of the Module on the society will be provided through the annual Jean Monnet schools with involvement of Ukrainian civil society representatives and civil servants. The Module implies active involvement of EU colleagues into delivering invited lectures both for PhD students and for learners of Jean Monnet schools. We have close collaboration with our colleagues at Lund University, Sweden and Masaryk University, Czech Republic. And the Module team member Dr. Anatoli Giritch, Nomad Bioscience GmbH, Germany shares his first-hand experience and skills in European academic culture and project management. The direct contact of learners with EU partners is developing further collaboration between Ukrainian and European Union scientists and their institutions.

Concept and methodology of the Module. The Module comprises topical issues on EU academic culture and project management and implies different forms of teaching and research activities. Wide research background and teaching experience of the academic coordinator Prof. Igor Yakymenko and the teaching team members guarantees relevant teaching and research programmes of the Module through the teamwork on the syllabus of the university teaching course, agenda of Jean Monnet schools, and programmes of research activities, including PhD student projects. The teaching programmes are significantly based on official EU documents, e.g., academic programme guides, [7], and analytical reports [8-10], thus providing students/learners with official position of EU regulatory bodies.

The university teaching course covers all key aspects of effective management of EU funding academic projects. The course has been continuously developed during the project lifetime based on feedbacks from the students and due to critical analysis of the teaching team. The teaching methods vary from interactive lectures/presentations to practical seminars, including case studies and research project presentations. Practical seminars stimulate students to analyze official EU documents and analytical reports. Seminars involve students

into analysis of relevant scientific publications as well as peer review of each other reports and presentations. Case studies are used for studying the best practices in academic project management in the EU, and for assessment of students' own ideas and project proposals. The seminars are moderated by teaching team members and students. Thus, student-centered learning has been practicing in terms of the Module with active involving of students into the moderation of discussions, round tables and peer review practices.

Syllabus of the university course on EU academic project management includes such topics: General characteristics of academic project activities. Project life cycle. European academic and project culture; Programmes and grants of the European Union as a source of funding for academic projects. European standards and mechanisms for competitive selection of projects; European Union Erasmus + programme policies and best practices in support of educational projects; European Union policies and best practices to support research projects under the Horizon of Europe programme; Individual research and educational projects of students and young researchers in the framework of EU programmes Erasmus + and Horizons of Europe; Effective communication and teamwork in all stages of implementation of academic projects; Quality assurance of academic projects; Risk management in implementation of academic projects; Reporting on the implementation of European research and educational projects. Dissemination of project results and outcomes.

Involving PhD students into research in terms of the Module, including PhD project implementation, provides multidisciplinary synergy of knowledge obtained them during the teaching course of the Module and their professional knowledge and background.

The Jean Monnet school agenda is oriented to involve additional group of young teachers and researchers from other Ukrainian universities, but also representatives of civil society and civil servants. This typically includes topical lectures/presentations of the teaching team members and invited speakers from the EU, as well as discussions with active involving all participants of the events.

The further visibility of the Jean Monnet Module to professionals and representatives of civil society is achieved through the online activities, including posting of videos, presentations, EU documents, reports and relevant scientific publications on the website of the project and on social media (see, for example, <https://edsd.nuft.edu.ua>)

Quality assurance, monitoring and evaluation strategy. The Module has been implemented by experienced teaching team with relevant academic background. Academic coordinator Prof. Yakymenko has a few successfully implemented Jean Monnet projects, which provided him with relevant knowledge and skills for coordination of this Module. Detailed working plan and clear understanding the role of each team member ensured effective implementation of the Module. During

all stages of the project all team members are involved in critical self-assessment of effectiveness of the project implementation.

The Module teaching and research activities has been officially included into the curricula and the plan of activities of the Department of Ecology and Ecomanagement, NUFT. This automatically puts the project under the control of the university relevant officials, e.g., quality of the syllabus and the teaching course are under the control of the office of Vice-rector on Educational Work and Center for Quality Monitoring and Coordination of Educational Activities of the university; the research activities are under the control of Vice-rector on R&D office. General control on the Module implementation has been carried out by International Department of the university, and semi-annual reports are applied to the International Department of Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine.

At the end of each teaching course of the Module, anonymous survey of students on the quality, topicality and relevance of the teaching materials and methods is carried out and critically assessed by the teaching team of the project. Positive feedbacks from the graduates from the Module are typically over 95% of learners.

The important teaching activity for non-academic learners in terms of the Module is Jean Monnet summer schools for NGO representatives and civil servants. The Jean Monnet schools provide the representatives of national civil society and civil servants by topical information on EU approaches and strategies in academic programmes and project management.

Outcomes of research activities in term of the Module imply peer reviewed publications of the project team, and reports of the results at scientific conferences. Peer review process and public presentations of the research results give independent assessment of quality of project research outcomes.

Impact and ambition of the Module. There are three main target groups of the project: PhD students and young university teachers and researchers; civil society representatives; and civil servants.

For the first target group, in short-term perspective, the Module allows them to better manage their own PhD projects and other relevant project activities. In medium-term perspective new knowledge and skills will stimulate them actively participate in EU funding academic programme calls. In long-term perspective, the Module may result in formation of new generation of researchers and university professors with strong adherence to European academic culture.

The second target group, representatives of civil society, will benefit from the Module through the understanding of great opportunities of effective project management and EU funding programmes. In short-term perspective new knowledge helps them to manage their social projects and activities more effectively. In medium- and long-term perspective, the Module will stimulate them to use great opportunities of EU pro-

grammes for NGOs and the general public, collaborating with EU partners.

The third target group of the Module, civil servants benefits from the Module due to better understanding of effective project management and applying these new knowledge and skills to their professional activities. It will promote better management of national academic programmes, participation in EU programmes, and activate structural reforms in the fields of science and education in Ukraine.

Sustainability, long-term impact and continuation of the Module. During three year period of the Jean Monnet Module under the support of Erasmus+ programme, university teaching course for PhD students on European Union academic project management has been developed, delivered and implemented into PhD programmes at NUFT. This course is mandatory now for all PhD students of the first year at NUFT. Thus the teaching course will continue after the formal end of the project.

The annual Jean Monnet schools on European Union academic project management for the wide audience has been implemented during lifetime of the Module, but the key elements of the school agenda will be used further after the end of the Module during promotional and educational events of the Department of Ecology and Ecomanagement at NUFT.

The Module has good synergy with our previous Jean Monnet project – Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence on EU Circular and Green Economy at NUFT (academic coordinator Prof. Igor Yakymenko). For example, international conferences and academia-business forum of that project is a perfect platform for dissemination of

results of the Module, including delivering reports of the Module team and PhD students involved [4, 5, 11, 12].

The learners of the Module, PhD students and young researchers/university teachers will provide sustainability of the Module, implementing their new knowledge and skills into their professional activities.

Conclusions. Studying European Union programmes such as Erasmus+ and Horizon Europe terms and conditions gives a perfect understanding of effective EU academic project management approaches. The European Commission's PM2 Methodology for effective management of EU funding projects is another valuable source of practical recommendations on European academic project management. The Jean Monnet Module implemented at the National University of Food Technologies, Kyiv in 2022-2025 under the support of Erasmus+ programme, aims to educate Ukrainian students on effective EU academic project management. The main activity of the Module is the teaching course for PhD students at NUFT. The course covers key aspects of effective project management relevant to EU academic programmes and European sustainability. Additional teaching activities of the Module include annual Jean Monnet winter and summer schools on EU academic project management for young university teachers and researchers, and civil society and civil servants. The main results of the Module are increased awareness on EU effective approaches in academic project management and developing relevant practical skills of learners. Our positive experience in terms of this Module allows us to recommend implementation of this and similar university teaching courses to other Ukrainian universities.

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