



6th EU Framework Programme



June 2004- December 2006

AIM OF THE PROJECT

Background questions

Universities and institutions of higher education are key actors for a knowledge-based society in Europe. Knowledge production is also an essential issue for the strategic European agenda and for academic research.

The PRIME project of an « Observatory of the European University » is set at the intersection of three movements:

- The growing interest for « macro » studies on universities, allowing for large comparisons or providing general historical perspective;
- The development of focused studies on « excellence » in universities, based on scientometric benchmarking, patent analysis, and university-industry relations...;
- The emerging questions on the governance of universities regarding the organisation of research activities, the strategies of universities and related issues.

The overall objective for the creation and implementation of an « Observatory of the European University » is to provide universities with adequate tools for the governance of research activities.

This set of tools constitutes a methodological framework for:

- Data collection (alternative schemes and sources for data collection, reliability, meaning and comparability of data);
- Interpretation of data within positioning tables for an in-depth insight of research activities at various aggregated levels;
- Comparison of institutions profiles of research activities.

ACTIVITIES

The « Observatory of the European University » project capitalises on existing knowledge to develop (with the participating universities):

- A common framework for the characterisation of research activities undertaken in universities;
- An experiment in gathering data under different institutional conditions;
- Networking between PRIME and PRIME-related projects concerned with S&T indicators: ENIP, Aquameth and CHINC.

PROJECT RESULTS

Strategic Matrix

The OEU team has produced a «Strategic Matrix» addressing the key issues for research management activities of Higher Education Institutions (HEI).

This Matrix is used as a support for the data collection.

Dissemination of results

The OEU project has been largely disseminated both through:

- research conferences (i.e. ENIP workshop, Lisbon, September 2005)
- other conferences (i.e. EUA meeting, Uppsala, October 2005).

It is the aim of the Observatory to link University research managers, EU policy-makers and PRIME researchers.

OEU WORK PROGRAMME

The objective of the OEU project for 2006 is both to *collect data* at institutional level in order to assess the feasibility of the project, and to *stabilize the methodological framework* through a complete data collection exercise.

Moreover, in the domain of HEI indicators some work will be performed in cooperation with projects like ENIP, Aquameth and CHINC.

The five Thematic University Groups ((Funding, Human Resources, Academic Outcome, Third Mission and Governance) will produce first data sets in order to evaluate both feasibility and relevance of the Strategic Matrix.

This will contribute to focusing on some main issues university research managers are endowed to tackle within their own institution.

The OEU PRIME researchers are also participating in other PRIME projects, allowing cross-fertilization of methodologies regarding HEI.

In the context of both the European Research Area and the European Higher Education Area, a shared methodology is needed when studying HEI activities, if suited policies for research are to be elaborated.

MILESTONES

University Panel Sessions

The third University Panel Session (UPS) has been held in Budapest, December 1st and 2nd, 2005 and launched the second phase of the project, dealing with data handling and collection.

The next UPS will be held in June 2006. As a final conference for the OEU project, it will give a first opportunity to present the methodological guide to be published.

PRIME annual conference

The OEU researchers will participate in a workshop on output data gathering, at the level of the institution, along with the ENIP participants and CHINC-project members. The experience of the OEU will allow sharing methodological frameworks with other PRIME members.

Elaboration of a methodological guide

One of the main outcomes of the OEU project has been to tackle most of the research management issues relevant for higher education institutions.

While collecting the data in order to elaborate the characterisation profiles of universities participating in the project, the OEU members will produce a methodological guide summarising the main results of the project that should be disseminated in the university community as a tentative reference for the characterisation of research activities.

OEU PARTICIPANTS

Coordinators

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Project participants

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Participating universities

Ecole nationale des Ponts et Chaussées, Université de Marne-la-Vallée, Corvinus University of Budapest, University of Szeged, University of Bologna, Université de Bourgogne, Universidad de Granada, Università Ca' Foscari Venezia, Université Paris-Sud, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, Universidade de Aveiro, Université de Lausanne, Autonomous University of Madrid, Maastricht University

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