

Newsletter



MAGNET

MANAGERIAL AND GOVERNANCE ENHANCEMENT THROUGH TEACHING



BALKANETUP

BALKAN NETWORK FOR UNIVERSITY PEDAGOGY

Project coordinator: Prof. Katerina Kedraka, Democritus University of Thrace

Newsletter editor: Assist. Prof. Lydia Mitits, Democritus University of Thrace

The content of the newsletter is composed by the members of the consortium established by HEIs from EU, ERASMUS+ associated countries and partner countries of the West Balkans.

Consortium members

Democritus University of Thrace
University of Patras
University of Arts in Belgrade
University of Banja Luka
Logos University College
University of Donja Gorica

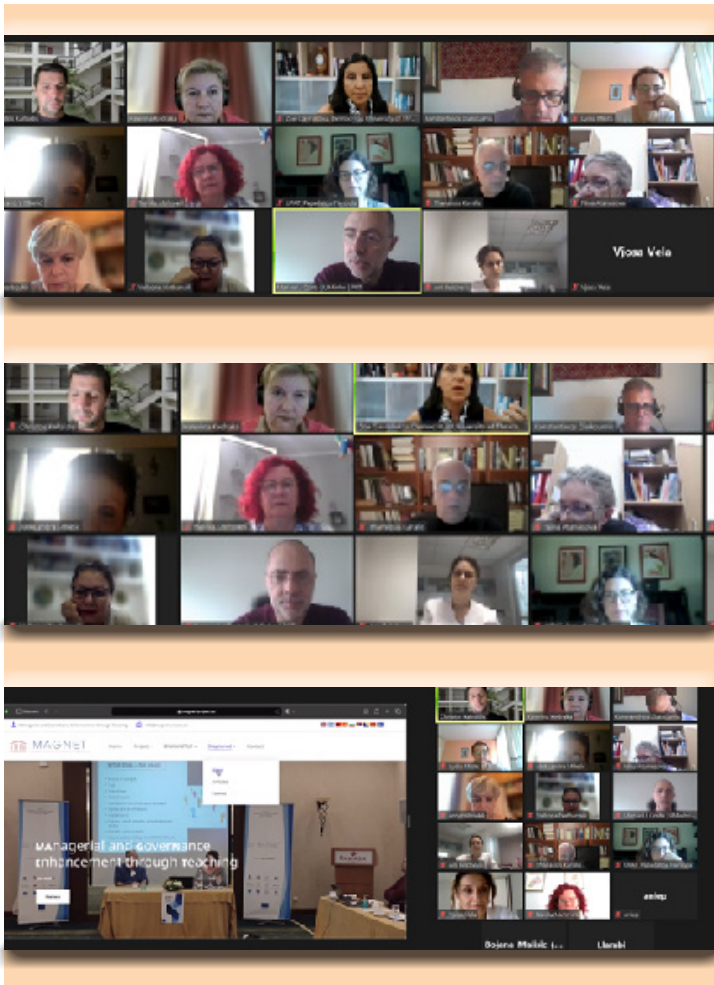
University of Sarajevo
Medical University Plovdiv
South East European University
International Business College Mitrovica
University of Prishtina
Aleksandër Moisiu University in Durës

Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



Democritus University of Thrace

Development and strategic benefits of learning and teaching centres



In the context of European higher education, learning and teaching centres are generally located within an institution, with their primary mission being to support the development of the institution’s learning and teaching. This report presents the findings of the 2023 EUA Learning & Teaching Thematic Peer Group “Development and strategic benefits of learning and teaching centres” beginning with a presentation of the centres represented in the group and proceeding by presenting a virtuous cycle model for the continuous advancement of centres. Recommendations accompany each of the model’s elements and where possible are illustrated through real-world practices.

Development and strategic benefits of learning and teaching centres

2024 EUA TPG Report - Development and strategic benefits of learning and teaching centres

Report editors: Manuel João Costa and Helene Peterbauer

[Download](#) 



LEARNING & TEACHING PAPER #23
Development and strategic benefits of learning and teaching centres
Thematic Peer Group Report

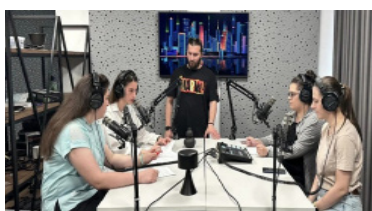
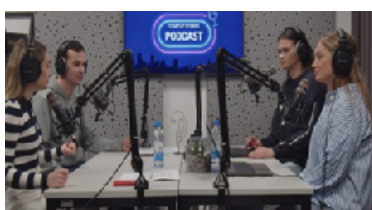
Chair: Manuel João Costa
University of Minho, Portugal
EUA Coordinator: Helene Peterbauer
March 2024

South East European University



Engaging HE Courses for Gen Z: Innovative Approaches Inspired from CTL Seminar

During the summer semester, our Language Center teachers embraced a Project-Based Learning (PBL) approach after attending a transformative seminar in January. Organized by SEEU's Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) and selected by MAGNET project staff, this seminar focused on using technology and multimedia tools in the classroom. It provided our educators with the essential tools and strategies to effectively prepare and implement this innovative teaching method. It was truly exciting to witness the LC staff bringing these new approaches to life, and the results have been incredibly successful, as detailed below.



English for Specific Purposes: Bridging Technology and Creativity with Podcasts

Our English for Specific Purposes courses embraced PBL by focusing on the creation of podcasts. While producing podcasts was a side project, it helped students synthesize and apply what they learned throughout the course. During class, students were introduced to the concept and types of podcasts. Teachers monitored their progress in writing podcast scripts, providing guidance and feedback. The podcasts were then produced at our Future Learning Center, equipped with advanced technology to support this task. This hands-on project not only reinforced course content but also offered numerous benefits. Students developed critical thinking, creativity, and communication skills, gaining real-world experience in a growing digital medium. The end result was a series of professional-quality podcasts that showcased their learning and creativity.

Engaged and Motivated Students

Students greatly enjoyed this experience and were highly motivated to learn and do their best, as technology is an integral part of their lives. The use of podcasts and multimedia tools made learning more interactive and relevant, inspiring students to fully engage with the material and take pride in their work.

This initiative highlights the benefits of Project-Based Learning, providing students with practical skills and real-life experiences. The seminar's focus on technology and multimedia tools has also been incorporated into our MOOC course for the MAGNET project, offering a step-by-step guide on how to use these tools for other courses as well. We are proud of the progress our students have made and look forward to continuing to innovate and enhance our teaching methods to provide the best educational experience for our students.

Stay tuned for more updates as we continue to implement innovative teaching methods inspired by the SEEU CTL-MAGNET project seminars!

University of Arts in Belgrade (UAB)

THE FIRST MOOC OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ARTS IN BELGRADE IS ON AIR

Belgrade, 11th March 2024

In the past period, the University of Arts in Belgrade (UAB) was particularly focused on the development and implementation of the Massive Open Online Course - MOOC within the MAGNET project. Dr. Marija Karan, assistant professor of the Faculty of Music, created and implemented the MOOC entitled *Strengthening of critical thinking and criteria by boosting the skills of decoding mass media messages among pedagogues*. The course is intended for pedagogues and research students who want to improve their skills in decoding mass media messages, develop mass media and digital literacy, learn about the postulates and effects of mass media and audience theory as key factors in the formation of critical thinking and criteria for pedagogues. The course consists of videos, presentations and questions, and encompasses four thematic units: 1) Introduction and overview of the course, 2) Radio, 3) Television and 4) Internet.

Having in mind the importance of visibility of the project results, the course was promoted both through social networks and within the academic community. Also, all project activities were discussed at the management meetings and presented to the bodies of UAB.



Democritus University of Thrace



17-19/4/2024. Presentation of the MAGNET project by Professor Fotios Maris, Rector of Democritus University of Thrace and Professor Katerina Kedraka, Coordinator of the project at the 105th Assembly of The Greek HEI Rectors, Alexandroupolis-Greece.



13/3/2024. Contribution of DUTH's CTL to one Learning Cycle (online) for Faculty organized by the Mediterranean University of Krete (78 participants).



“Aleksandër Moisiu” University in Durrës

Equality and Diversity Training Session



Within the framework of the MAGNET project, the Center for Teaching and Learning, in collaboration with the Center for Research, Development, and Excellence, conducted a training session on March 27, 2024, for academic staff on the topic of “Equality and Diversity”. This training aimed to increase awareness and understanding among staff regarding equality and diversity.

On May 31st, a training session titled “Internal Institutional Organization, Statute, and Regulations of UAMD” was held. The focus of the training was to familiarize participants with the institutional organization, which is a primary responsibility of academic staff. Understanding administrative procedures will facilitate the staff in carrying out their administrative duties effectively.

CTL continues to develop training sessions for academic staff at the University, following the prepared calendar for the academic year 2023-2024.

Additionally, the Center for Teaching and Learning closely monitored the preparation process of MOOCs by two PhD lecturers, Olta Qevanaj and Ornedë Gega. The working group, along with the two lecturers, participated in an online meeting held on February 9th. During this meeting, representatives from UAMD discussed and addressed all issues observed during the preparation of the MOOCs. Both prepared MOOCs have been uploaded to the MAGNET website.

On May 24th, the Faculty of Education at UAMD organized the 7th International Conference “Innovations and Perspectives of Contemporary Education” in collaboration with Constantine - The Philosopher University in Nitra, La Sapienza-Università di Roma, University of Richmond Virginia, and Università Telematica Pegaso. The aim of the conference was to enhance collaboration in implementing new, contemporary, and transformative strategies in Higher Education Institutions. Academic staff from CTL participated with papers in various conference sessions including Digitalization in Higher Education, Contemporary Teaching Methodology, Society, Culture Diversity and Education, Inclusive Education, etc.

Furthermore, UAMD participated in the Second General Meeting on May 31st – June 1st in Mitrovica. All these activities have been reflected on the Aleksandër Moisiu University of Durrës website.



Democritus University of Thrace

1st General Meeting of the Scientific Consulting Committee of the BALKANETUP



The 1st General Meeting of the Scientific Consulting Committee of the BALKANETUP with all the MAGNET partners, as part of the MAGNET Erasmus + Project was held via Zoom on Friday, 28th June 2024. It was a milestone in the collaborative journey of our partners and the members of the Scientific Consulting Committee. Three members of the Scientific Consulting Committee introduced themselves, shared their experience and offered advice. Manuel Joao Costa, the Pro-Rector for Educational Innovation and Student Affairs, at the University of Minho said that sharing is the best way to learn (<https://eua.eu/resources/publications/1112:development-and-strategic-benefits-of-learning-and-teaching-centres.html>).

Zoe Gavriilidou, Professor of Linguistics at Democritus University of Thrace and Visiting Professor at the University of Chicago, expressed her interest

in how to incorporate new technologies in the teaching and learning process, while Anna Tsiboukli, Assistant Professor of Lifelong learning, group dynamics and Adult Education at the Department of Pedagogy and Primary Education, School of Education, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, raised the question of how to engage students in the learning process.

Chaired by the Project coordinator, Professor Katerina Kedraka, who informed the committee about the progress of the project, the meeting marked a promising start to our collective efforts in advancing scientific consulting in the Balkan region. It provided a valuable opportunity for partners to introduce themselves, share their expertise, and establish rapport with one another. Building these personal connections is essential for fostering a strong and collaborative network. Establishing effective communication channels is key to ensuring seamless collaboration and information sharing.



International Business College Mitrovica

MAGNET Second General Meeting

IBC-M hosted the MAGNET Second General Meeting the 31st of May and 1st of June 2024. During this gathering, partners delved into the significant progress made by MAGNET thus far. Key topics of focus include the updates on MOOC development within partner higher education institutions. Partners also dedicated time to monitor the progress achieved in the project's various work packages as well as to discuss and plan subsequent actions.

The meeting was opened by professor Medina Braha, who is the MAGNET coordinator for IBC-M. Welcome notes were also made by IBC-M rector, professor Mihone Kerolli.



MAGNET (Managerial and Governance Enhancement through Teaching) is a consortium of 12 HEI partner institutions from 8 WB countries. University Pedagogy, mostly enhanced through the operation of Centers for Teaching and Learning (CTL), is a main pillar for the implementation of the European Higher Education Area. MAGNET aims to develop a network for University Pedagogy in the Western Balkans states, through know-how transfer from countries that have CTLs under operation to all partner countries. Main objectives include the know-how transfer, the establishment of CTLs, the production of educational material and the creation of a sustainable network BALKANETUP (Balkan Network for University Pedagogy).

The Public International Business College Mitrovica (IBC-M), as a partner of this consortium, is set to establish a CTL and be an active member of the BALKANETUP.



LOGOS University College

Guest Lecture by Dr. Khalil Ghassan at LOGOS University College on “The Role of Academia in Promoting Child Rights”

Tirana, Albania – June 26, 2024

LOGOS University College hosted a thought-provoking guest-lecture by Dr. Khalil Ghassan, the current UNICEF representative in Greece, titled “The Role of Academia in Promoting Child Rights.” The event took place on Wednesday, June 26, 2024, from 09:30 to 11:30, drawing a large audience of students, faculty, and members of the public.



Dr. Ghassan Khalil, with over 25 years of experience in advocating for children’s rights, women’s rights, and human rights, delivered an insightful and inspiring lecture. He highlighted the critical role that higher education institutions play in fostering social values, principles, and norms that support democracy, human rights, and active citizenship. Dr. Ghassan emphasized the importance of universities in disseminating knowledge about child rights, fostering partnerships with various societal sectors, and contributing to evidence-based policy-making.

The audience engaged actively in the discussion with thoughtful questions, exploring ways in which universities can further promote and protect child rights through education, research, and community engagement. Dr. Ghassan shared valuable insights from his extensive experience with UNICEF and other organizations, offering practical recommendations for integrating child rights advocacy into academic curricula and institutional practices.

“The theme of this guest-lecture touches core values of our mission; hence, we are delighted with the success of this event and the valuable insights shared by Dr. Ghassan Khalil,” said Assoc. Prof. Konstantinos Giakoumis, Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Linguistic Communication at LOGOS University College. “His lecture has inspired us to further strengthen our commitment to promoting social justice and human rights through our educational programmes, methods of teaching and learning, as well community initiatives.”



University of Sarajevo

TALKING TO AN EXPERT

Elizabeth Hanlis



Elizabeth Hanlis has over 25 years of experience in education, training, and e-learning across the private and public sectors. She spent nearly six years at the University of Alberta as an e-learning specialist, pioneering faculty transitions to online learning and working on global e-learning projects in China, Uganda, and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In 2006, Ms. Hanlis launched her own firm, partnering with diverse organizations to craft strategic learning plans, drive digital transformation, and create tailored learning solutions. Ms. Hanlis has collaborated with post-secondary institutions in Canada and internationally, conducting needs assessments and developing strategic learning plans. She has developed over 70 online courses for post-secondary students and developed comprehensive training programs to enhance the pedagogical and digital skills of faculty members. Ms. Hanlis has delivered workshops to hundreds of educators to improve teaching and learning. More recently, she created 10 online courses for the DigiEdu project at the University of Sarajevo, followed by the delivery of in-person workshops to over 150 instructors.

In your opinion, what is the role of Centers for Teaching and Learning - CTLs in the modern university?

Centers for Teaching and Learning (CTLs) are essential in enhancing the quality of education in today's universities, and contribute significantly to modern universities in the following ways:

1. Empowering Instructors: CTLs provide comprehensive training, workshops, and resources to empower and help faculty improve their teaching skills. They address cru-

cial needs by providing centralized training and support that individual faculties may struggle to meet on their own due to a lack of resources, budget, expertise, and connections. The collaboration between eHanlis Inc., the University of Sarajevo, UNICEF, and USAID to develop a series of micro-online modules to build pedagogical and digital competence, benefited over 1,000 instructors. For more information see: <https://digi.edu.unsa.ba>.

2. Fostering Innovation: CTLs support and encourage faculty to explore new teaching methods and technologies, enhancing student learning and contributing to educational research.

3. Empowering Students: Through coaching and workshops on effective learning strategies, like time management and study habits, CTLs directly benefit students.

4. Develop Standards of Teaching and Learning: CTLs establish and maintain teaching and learning standards, fostering consistent education quality. It is imperative that the CTLs work with the university to follow up, revise, and evaluate these standards,

How can faculty members benefit from the operation and networking of CTLs in universities?

Faculty members have expertise in their field of knowledge, but in most cases, have limited if any formal education on how to teach adult learners effectively and engagingly using best practices and innovative technologies. Faculty would benefit from CTLs in the following ways.

- 1. Receive Foundational Training.** Even if specific faculties have teaching and learning staff or a team within a faculty, centralized CTLs can provide foundational training and support a minimum standard of teaching across the entire university, similar to the TRAIN program that the University of Sarajevo offers.
- 2. Receive Resources and Support:** Faculty can tap into CTL resources, including instructional design and multimedia support, whether this support is in the form of consultative meetings or to develop an entire online course.
- 3. Build Connections.** CTLs facilitate cross-faculty and inter-university networking, promoting multidisciplinary research and partnerships that individual faculties might struggle to establish independently.

What is the importance of networking of institutions, academics, and social partners on issues of teaching and learning in universities?

It is critical that institutions, academics, and social partners network on issues of teaching and learning in universities. This will ensure that each institution is not reinventing the wheel, but instead is building on the knowledge, expertise, and resources that already exist to fuel innovation and best practices. There is strength in numbers, increasing the impact of initiatives and ensuring long-term sustainability.

How is the implementation of active learning approaches in teaching connected to the quality improvement/ evaluation of universities? Can we assume teachers have enough competencies to engage students, more precisely, how important is the education of teachers?

Decades of research have demonstrated that active learning improves student achievement, persistence, attitudes, motivation, long-term retention, conceptual thinking, and problem-solving skills. Despite the benefits of active learning, it is unrealistic for universities to expect faculty to know how to effectively implement active learning in the classroom without providing training and support. CTLs play a crucial role in providing this training and support, along with setting standards and conducting evaluations to ensure effective teaching practices.



MAGNET

MANAGERIAL AND GOVERNANCE ENHANCEMENT THROUGH TEACHING



BALKANETUP

BALKAN NETWORK FOR UNIVERSITY PEDAGOGY

University of Donja Gorica

MAGNET PROJECT PRESENTED WITHIN HORIZON OF POSSIBILITIES – INFO DAYS AT UDG



University of Donja Gorica (UDG) organized the 'Horizon of Possibilities – Info Days at UDG' event on 27th and 28th April with more than 2,000 visitors in attendance. UDG invited all those interested to visit, talk with our professors and students.

MAGNET project was presented within the exhibit space, and it had its own stand where visitors were able to talk to our MAGNET project team and learn more about project activities and results.



The event was marked by discussions, conversations, ideas, initiatives, but also by an extremely positive atmosphere. Professors, associates, researchers and students were part of the host teams at UDG, which made every effort to make every visitor feel welcome.

The visitors had the opportunity to see a certain number of modern laboratories (used at UDG, such as the 3D laboratory, Laboratory for Food Technology, Food Safety and Ecolo-



Powered by
Arizona State University



gy, Entrepreneurial Nest, supercomputing, virtual reality, driving simulator, etc.) as well as a special set of modern technologies and their application in higher education, experiments, but also to discuss some future forms of cooperation, trends in education, professions, knowledge and skills.

MAGNET WORKSHOP AND TRAINING WITHIN THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR TEACHERS AT UDG

The University of Donja Gorica host scientific research summits as part of the International Entrepreneurial Weekend from February 10-11 2024. The event gathered teachers from the region, as well as representatives of the academic, innovative, and business sectors in Podgorica, Montenegro. The main focus was on educational challenges. The weekend included a conference for regional teachers, and training for teachers from Montenegro for implementation of “student company” program.

MAGNET project, activities and BALKANETUP Network was presented within the Conference and MAGNET team organized team-building sessions and regional workshop for teachers. The event gathered around 40 teachers and young associates not only from Montenegro but also from several countries in the region and Europe at UDG. Teachers from Montenegro, Croatia, Serbia, North Macedonia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. This educational event aimed to network and encourage high school teachers to discuss current challenges in education and training with university teachers and young associates.

The goal was to create initiatives for improving the educational system, applying innovative and internationally recognized youth education models, and enhancing the position of teachers in the education system and the overall social and professional community. Furthermore, teachers has been invited to join BALKANETUP Network and be active participants within Center for



Teaching and Learning at University of Donja Gorica. The conference aimed to find models and create initiatives for adapting to challenges in education through constructive dialogue among relevant institutions, universities, student and high school organizations.

University of Prishtina

The MAGNET project (Improving Management and Governance through Teaching) has reached the third package of activities. To report on the development of activities, the third meeting was held within the MAGNET Project “Second General Meeting 31 May – 1 June 2024” at the higher educational institution “Public International Business College Mitrovica” (IBC-M) Mitrovica, Kosovo. The meeting was attended by prof. Donika Koliqi, in which she presented the progress achieved in the various work packages of the project, as well as planned follow-up actions.



As part of the MAGNET project, on June 21, 2024, a panel discussion was held at the Faculty of Education in Prishtina with the title “Challenges of teaching music in higher education”, as part of the MAGNET project. Part of this meeting were several representatives from several institutions of higher education, including the Department of Musical Arts at the University of Prishtina, the Faculty of Arts at “Haxhi Zeka” University in Pejë, the Faculty of Musicology at AAB College and the Faculty of Modern Music at UBT College.

Discussions focused on the challenges and opportunities of teaching music in higher education, addressing topics such as challenges for music professionals and teachers, study options for students, lack of employment opportunities, adapting study programs to trends and needs current, as well as the continuous connection of studies from primary school to the highest levels of education. During the discussion, the causes and consequences of the low number of students in this field and the lack of professional music texts in the Albanian language were discussed. At

the end of the activity, it was proposed to summarize and address the suggestions and requests arising from the discussions, and expressed the desire to organize similar meetings in the future. The discussion table as an activity is also promoted on the main page of the Faculty of Education in Prishtina.

During the months of February-June 2024, prof. Naser Zabeli and prof. Donika Koliqi held several meetings to discuss the planning of the next activities of the MAGNET project. As a result of these meetings, the decision was made to provide the opportunity for the academic staff to hold trainings, organize discussion tables, attend scientific papers, etc.

Also, a meeting was held with the leader of the Center for Excellence in Teaching (CPM) prof. Blerta Mustafa, in which the organization of a discussion table with the coaches of this center is planned.

As part of the activities, it was designed by prof. dr Naser Zabeli a scientific paper in Albanian and English entitled “From routine teaching to world-class teaching”.



University of Patras

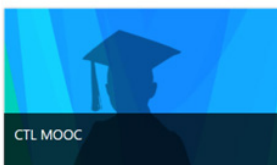


Organization of seminars by the CTL of the University of Patras

Course categories

Ενότητες ηλεκτρονικής μάθησης (2)

Available courses



During the spring semester of the academic year 2023-2024 three seminars were organized by the CTL of the University of Patras. The first of these was the introductory training of the new assistant professors recently appointed at the University of Patras. The second one was for members of the teaching staff (mainly post-doc students) teaching for the first time after the completion of their PhD studies. In both of these seminars the main topics included: Introduction to Higher Education Pedagogy, Teaching Methods, Student’s characteristics, Emerging Adulthood, Methods for the development of critical thinking. A special module in both of these programmes was a brief description of the MAGNET project and the BALKANETUP network. Another major category of CTL activities this semester was a MOOC course which

was offered to freshmen mainly but also to students from other years. This course aims to help students cope with the difficulties they face during their studies. The main modules of this course were: Guidelines for effective study, Academic writing style, Avoiding plagiarism, Preparing for exams, Study plan. These seminars were attended by more than 300 students of the University of Patras.

Democritus University of Thrace



BIP participants learn about MAGNET and BALKANETUP

On 24 May 2024, in Komotini at Democritus University of Thrace in Greece, colleagues from Kauno kolegija Higher Education Institution in Lithuania, Wood Technology School Maribor in Slovenia, Higher Vocational College in Slovenia, University of Social and Medical Sciences in Lublin in Poland, University of Belgrade, and Singidunum University in Serbia participated in a Blended Intensive Program (BIP) titled “Building Bilingualism Bridges – Becoming an Ambassador of Bilingualism”, organized by Assistant Professor Lydia Mitits, a member of the MAGNET project. During this program, they had the opportunity to learn about MAGNET, including its goals and the importance of establishing CTLs at universities. All participants acknowledged the significant role these centers play in promoting university pedagogy on a global scale. Furthermore, participants from Serbian universities, representing the Western Balkans region, were introduced to the mission and vision of BALKANETUP and were invited to join this initiative in the future. They expressed a strong interest in potential collaboration within the network.