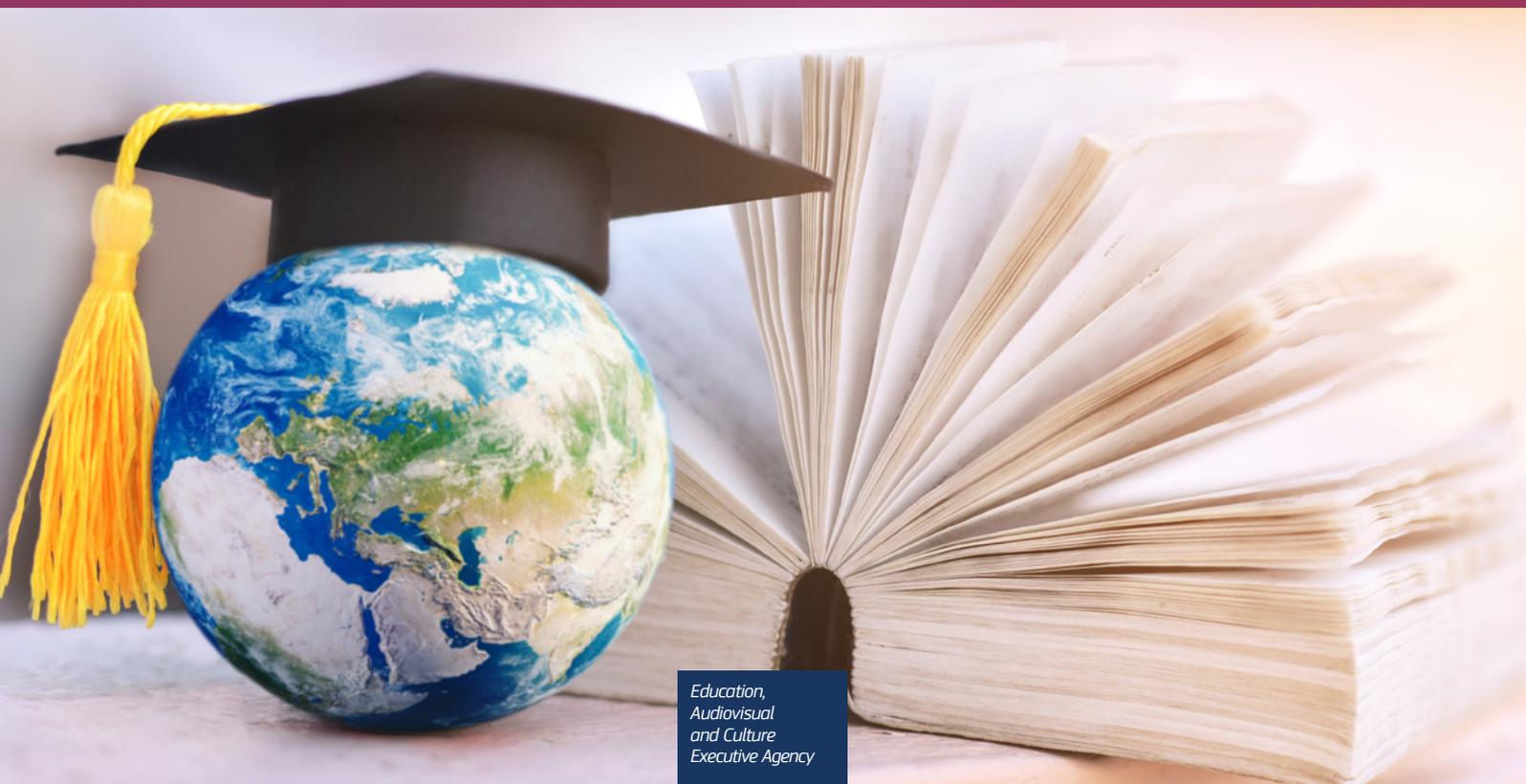




Erasmus+

Capacity Building in Higher Education (CBHE) action

Regional Report Russian Federation



More information on the European Union is available on the Internet (<http://europa.eu>).

Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2020

PDF ISBN: 978-92-9484-370-8

doi: 10.2797/74542

EC-02-20-943-EN-N

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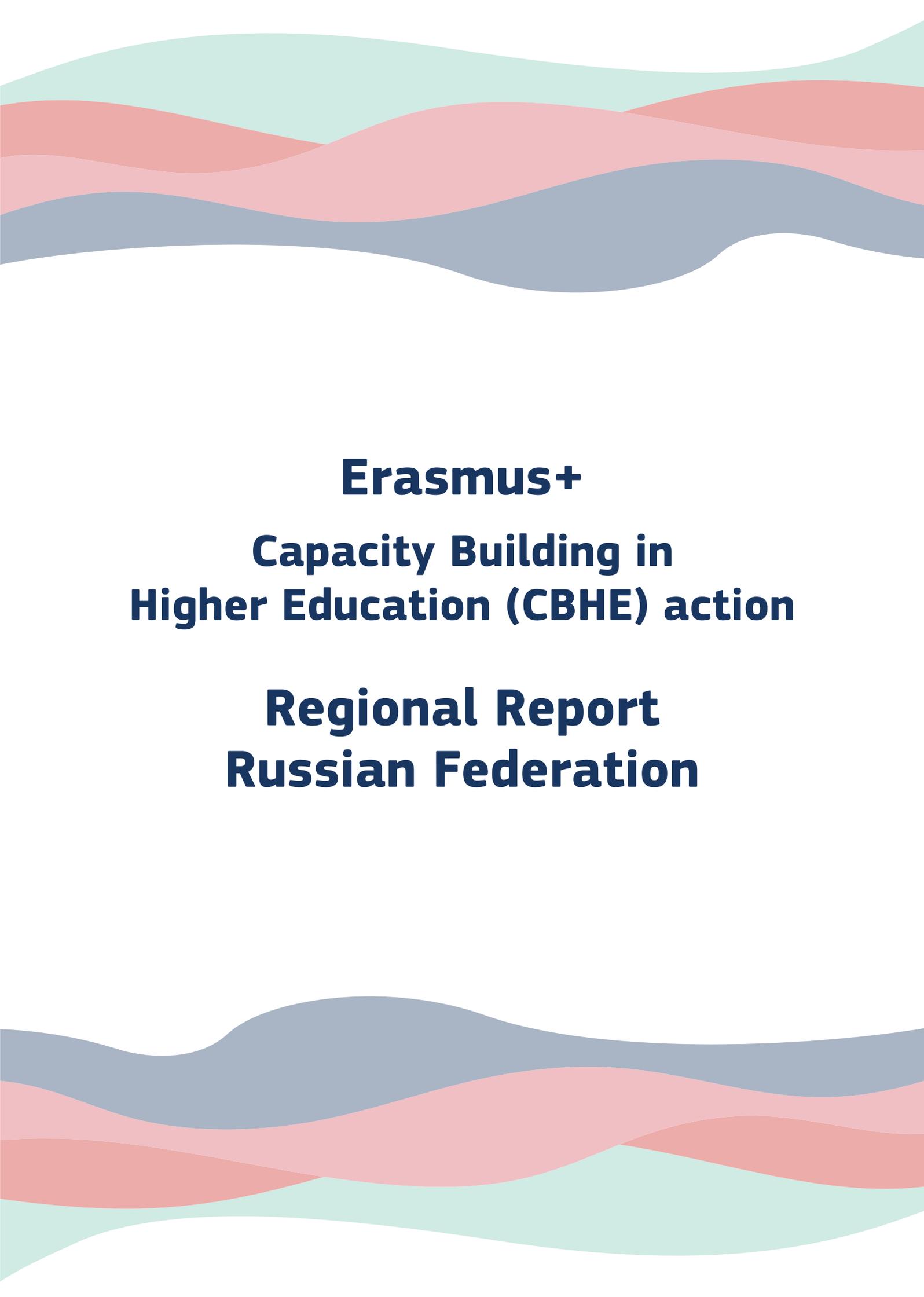
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Erasmus+
**Capacity Building in
Higher Education (CBHE) action**

**Regional Report
Russian Federation**



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1. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE REPORT

This report is based on the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency's evaluation of the first final project reports of the first generation of CBHE projects selected for funding in 2015. Altogether 138 projects were funded in 2015¹ and 88 finalised projects have submitted their final reports in 2019, among which 13 were implemented in the Russian Federation (RF).

The report's results are therefore based on a relatively small sample of finalised CBHE projects² and are to be considered as preliminary and to be reviewed at a later stage. The analyses takes also into account the institutional monitoring visits and cluster meetings that were organised by the Agency as part of its monitoring strategy.

The report is analysing the role of the CBHE action as regards **the impact and sustainability of the funded projects** together with their **inclusiveness** (participants with disadvantaged backgrounds and fewer opportunities compared to their peers). More specifically, the report will look into the institutional development of HEIs (HEI), their modernisation of study programmes and their teaching and learning methodologies, structural reforms and the strengthening of HEI's technical capacities. It will zoom into the **opportunities created for individuals** (students, academic and administrative staff) and third parties like enterprises, associations and NGOs.

The report will also examine how the EU projects have influenced **national policy developments in the education sector**. Finally, the analyses will be used to identify challenges and provide a **set of recommendations** for future reference.

1 CBHE projects are funded between EUR 500,000 and 1 million and normally last three years, although a small number of projects have a duration of two years. Around 30% of the projects tend to ask for a contract extension to catch up with implementation delays and will last between 3-4 years.
2 There are about 700 active projects following five annual calls, starting from 2014.

2. INTRODUCTION

The CBHE action of the Erasmus+ Programme supports the modernisation and development of HEIs and the educational systems in the Partner Countries. Capacity Building projects are expected to have a long-term structural impact and their direct influence is on institutions and educational systems rather than on individuals.

International consortia of HEIs (including private businesses) strengthen the quality of Higher Education in the Partner Countries by providing students with new and upgraded skills needed in the labour market, introduce innovative approaches in teaching and learning and provide entrepreneurial skills.

The Russian Federation participated in the CBHE action from the very beginning of the E+ programme in 2014. The country represents a Region on its own ('Region 4' in the Erasmus + Programme Guide). Due to EU sanctions imposed on Russia in 2014, participating organisations from the Russian Federation cannot act as applicants. Consequently, projects including partner institutions from Region 4 must involve at least two Partner institutions from another Region. All CBHE projects with Russia are therefore cross-regional projects.

The majority of projects implemented in Russia are '**Joint Projects**' (11 out of 13 projects in 2015), which aim at the development of HEIs (e.g. curriculum development, governance of institutions, etc.), whereas '**Structural Projects**' (two projects in 2015) address important challenges for the educational systems of the Partner Countries (accreditation, quality assurance in Education, PhD education, etc.). The complete list of 2015 CBHE projects including the scores of the technical final report evaluation is annexed at the end of this study.

Both project types address one of the following **three pillars**

1. Curricula Reform
2. Modernising university governance and management
3. Strengthening of relations between HEIs and the wider economic and social environment

based on pre-established national³ and/or regional priorities.



³ For the ex-Tempus countries defined by the Ministries of Educations of the Partner Countries.

3. CBHE IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY

Following four years of preparations, Russia became a full-fledged member of the Bologna Process in 2003, two years ahead of Ukraine, seven years ahead of Kazakhstan, and 12 years ahead of Belarus. CBHE projects (and the previous TEMPUS programme) are particularly focused on measures in the area of Bologna reforms, learning and teaching methodologies as well as on internationalisation. The projects have contributed to the consolidation of the European higher education area (EHEA), have enhanced the competences of the university academics and administrators, including those of project management, and have promoted subject specific competences in selected academic areas, like engineering education.

Each project has created its unique local education space. Through networking and interaction, these local education spaces have consolidated the **quality** of the national education space as part of the EHEA. The CBHE projects have established resource centres of competences; they have contributed to the transfer of technologies and have provided access to new resources, concepts and methods of teaching and learning and enhanced student and staff mobility. The strengthened multidimensional networking between participants of CBHE projects has reached out to universities outside the network, as each university is in communication with other universities within a certain occupation/subject area and new experiences and learning content were shared. This has also enhanced relations within the national system of higher education, reinforced the **internationalisation and competitiveness** of the universities and the system at large. The participating universities have acquired a growing degree of visibility in the EU. Bridges have been built for intra-national, regional or cross-regional cooperation which were not so likely to occur due to the cultural, political and sometimes academic disconnection between Europe and the Russian Federation.

The CBHE projects have specifically contributed to an effective introduction in the universities of the concept, the terminologies, the instruments and methods of the **Bologna Process**, such as the standards and guidelines for quality insurance in the EHEA (ESG), the European credit transfer system (ECTS), and the recognition of learning outcomes acquired outside the home university. The projects have also contributed to enhancing of students' rights to quality higher education through

the introduction of best European practices offered during mobilities to the EU, and to improved transparency and accountability of administrative processes at universities for the benefit of students.



3.1. Institutional Development

3.1.1. Curricula Reform

One of the main objectives of the CBHE action is curricula reform. Partner Country HEIs work together in high quality international consortia to revise study programmes or to develop new ones, to engage in new learning and teaching methods and to prepare students with new and better skills for a changing job market and a developing economy.

- ▶ 38% (5 out of 13) of the CBHE projects selected for funding in 2015 (in Region 4) deal with curriculum reform. Based on the information available in the final reports, 143 courses were newly developed/updated. Out of five curriculum development projects of the 2015 generation, three have developed courses taught in a foreign language (English).

The modernisation and launching of new study programmes and the introduction of innovative learning and teaching methods (not previously available in the Russian Federation) have changed the landscape of the university sector. Curricula reform projects are highly sustainable, when newly created study programmes at graduate and postgraduate level become an integral part of regular degree programs taught at the HEIs.

Development and Implementation of the Master Programme – Green Logistics Management (561937-EPP-1-2015-1-IT-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP)

Thanks to the project a new discipline “Innovations” has been officially approved as part of the master programme. A high demand for this programme in “Logistics of innovational production” has been observed in Russia (for the period 2017-2019, 40 students graduated including foreign students). The programme is also popular with fee-paying students, around ten students are enrolled at each partner institution annually. The teaching and learning package for the master programme has a strong focus on student-centred learning (SCL), active methods and work-based learning. One course has been developed in English. The enrollment of foreign students has increased by 7%.

In recognition of the project’s achievements, the University of Kazan has been awarded the title of Federal Innovations Centre. The partner universities have started collaborating with new industry partners.

In Russia, the collaboration with European universities on curricula development implies the application of the **Bologna process methodology**. Hence, when developing new curricula and considering student mobility opportunities, ECTS was introduced, student-centred learning approaches (learning outcomes) and a (3+2) year degree system used. Many HEIs have embraced the Bologna Process as a means of supporting mobility among European HEIs. In some countries, nationwide working groups on the Bologna process were created to promote the use of the methodology.

Specific remarks

Although many institutions in the country have introduced higher education laws and strategies for the adoption of the Bologna principles, certain disciplines like law and medicine tend to continue utilising the old Russian higher education model. Unlike the Bologna process model, Russian higher education was traditionally not divided into undergraduate (Bachelor's) and graduate (Master's) levels. Instead, tertiary education was undertaken in a single stage, typically five or six years in duration, which resulted in a **specialist diploma**. Specialist diplomas were perceived equal to MSc/MA qualification. The concern remains that the Bologna process is not applied strictly to allow **profound reforms** of **teaching practices** and **curricula**. Challenges exist in particular in the areas of transparency, transferability, recognition and quality of teaching.

3.1.2. Technological Upgrade

The provision of funds to improve the technical structure of Partner Country HEIs is one major element of CBHE and constitutes up to one third of the total grant. The provision of **equipment** plays an important role, in particular in the smaller, more scarcely government funded universities in the decentralised regions of Russia, which often lack modern and labour market orientated training facilities.

- ▶ Approximately EUR 1.8 Million were invested in equipment for the 13 projects implemented during the period 2015-2017 in the Russian Federation.

Adequate provision of equipment in laboratories and centres is vital for supporting practical coursework, especially in the natural and hard sciences. Provision of equipment also allows the establishment of facilities like career advice centres, innovation and start-up centres. The new facilities are frequently used to train private or public employees, who otherwise would not have access to these types of support structures. Sometimes this even happens on a fee-paying basis, thus contributing to the project's impact and financial sustainability:

Establishment of Centres for Competences and Employability Development (561603-EPP-1-2015-1-DE-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP)

The centres have become recognised regional actors, providing courses based on the identified demand to diversify user target groups. They cooperate effectively with the regional employment services and social support organizations. Hence, the project has contributed to enhancing of universities' role in society.

The strengthening of HEI technical capacities by opening new laboratories for teaching are a frequently seen measure in CBHE projects. Additionally these labs are often utilised to conduct research and thus to create a vital bridge between teaching and research.

CBHE projects have also strengthened the digitalisation of education by using various IT tools in the teaching process and by creating online learning platforms, e-learning resources, centres of competences and transfer of technologies.

Adaptive Learning Environment for Competence in Economic and Societal Impacts of Local Weather, Air quality and Climate (561975-EPP-1-2015-1-FI-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP)

The added value and key impact of the project – which created the concept of a personalised learning environment (PLE) based on specialised software for competency in economic and societal impacts of local weather, air quality and climate – is in its pioneer character in addressing challenges related to the fourth industrial revolution and the internet of things.

Another impact is the development of students' interdisciplinary skills while planning and implementing lab assignments following the concept of the PLE. Students can now acquire new IT tools (3D printing, working with Arduino technology, etc.) and use the most up-to-date online information and training systems, such as CALMet online.

The PLE features custom-tailored learning materials, “smart” weather observation instruments, and learning management software, all integrated into a single system. Its outputs are used in the context of lifelong learning (LLL) and for fostering links with business partners.

3.1.3. Governance and Management Reform

Russian universities' governance structures still require institutional reinforcement to be able to compete with European and worldwide universities; in particular those not located in major cities like Moscow, St. Petersburg, Novosibirsk, Kazan and Rostov-on-Don. HEIs in the Partner Countries need to improve the efficiency of their governance processes and structures to have them grow internationally and offer study programmes of high quality, which attract the interest of academics, students and society at large. This implies among other things, sustainable strategies and regulations, efficient international relations offices, quality assurance units endorsing international and European standards, financial autonomy, structures for collaborating with the labour market and strong alumni associations.

CBHE projects have clearly contributed to the creation or reinforcement of university bodies and changes at institutional level. Examples include the reinforcement of quality assurance units, the strengthening of international relation offices or creating alumni associations.

3.1.4. HEI International strategies

The internationalisation of higher education in the Russian Federation is high on the political agenda of governments and HEIs. CBHE projects have contributed to the adoption of the national project “Export of Education” and to honing the policies relating to the internationalisation of higher education. A number of **strategic and procedural documents were created and adopted** like guidelines for learning outcomes at HEIs, strategies for university internationalisation, systems for monitoring the quality of the education process, adoption of protocols and procedures, which help improving the service provided by the international relations offices.

Development of Approaches to Harmonisation of Comprehensive Internationalisation Strategies in Higher Education, Research and Innovation in EU and Partner Countries (561561-EPP-1-2015-1-ES-EPPKA2-CBHE-SP)

The project has established a model internationalisation strategy that is currently used by Russian Federation universities to modernize their own internationalisation strategies.

The CBHE projects have **increased the visibility** of the HEIs involved, through their strong outward orientation and focus on international cooperation. The performance of HEIs is also favourably measured on the basis of their research output and quality. Opening HEIs up to global standards and benchmarks has motivated them to work on the continuous improvement of their systems and processes.

Some shortcomings can be observed with universities in the remote regions, namely weak international relations offices (IROs), an insufficient number of courses offered in foreign languages, relatively poor foreign language skills among students and academics and weak support for finding and managing research funding. The issues are gradually addressed through these types of CBHE projects.

A small number of CBHE projects focus on third mission improvements, which are already rather strongly developed in Russian Universities. Where existing, these projects are commonly successful and cover a wide range of stakeholders.

Establishment of Centres for Competence and Employability Development (561603- EPP-1-2015-1-DE-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP)

The aim of the project was to develop an individual competence model and definition of employability in each participating HEI in Russia and Kazakhstan. This served as a basis for the creation of centres for competences and employability development, offering trainings and tools for different target groups.

3.2. Broadening Horizons for Individuals

3.2.1. Academic staff

CBHE projects are a driver of motivation for teachers, students and staff members. The action has given professors from EU Partner Countries the opportunities to meet their peers in different countries. By working together in international consortia, professors have become aware of different perspectives, gained new insights into their academic field and have been exposed to international quality standards in education. The CBHE projects have allowed them to collaborate with experts in their area leading to a direct peer-to-peer knowledge transfer from Europe to the Partner Countries. The projects have also been conducive to the acquisition by staff of cross-cultural communication skills; team-building and leadership skills; enhancing project management skills and quality assurance procedures.

- ▶ Across the 13 projects involving the Russian Federation, **1011 instances of training of academic staff** were reported, which mostly took place at Programme Country institutions. The new skills and knowledge also strengthen the home HEIs and improve education standards.

CBHE projects have supported the institutions to adopt a more multidisciplinary approach to curricula development in line with the Bologna principles. These **multidisciplinary projects** have helped to promote innovation and cooperation between departments and broaden the institutions' way of thinking.

- ▶ For the 2015 generation of projects implemented in the Russian Federation, out of five Curriculum Development CBHE projects, four cover interdisciplinary study programmes.

Bridging Innovations, Health and Societies: Educational Capacity Building in the European Neighbouring Areas (561726-EPP-1-2015-1-NL-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP)

This innovative project developed a multidisciplinary master curriculum through the enhancement of up-to-date teaching and learning methods adapted to the learning needs of different target groups from the sphere of health services, local administration, and education engaged in the process of lifelong learning. The project saw a development of new forms of interaction with stakeholders and regional and federal administration.

3.2.2. Students

One of the main drivers of internationalisation has been the need for universities to attract better students and professors to raise the level of education offered and to become more competitive in the global education market. The CBHE action has helped HEIs to set up high-level study programmes, which increased the visibility and appeal of the HEI in the national context.

- ▶ Within the 13 CBHE projects, 842 students were enrolled in new or upgraded courses and 837 students received training or took part in a mobility exercise.

The impact of the CBHE projects on students has been multiple. They have been beneficiaries of modernised or new study programmes and have been exposed to innovative teaching and learning methods and a student-centred approach. Student involvement in governing bodies has been enhanced as well as student self-awareness and more academic freedom. Their work with new or improved equipment, interchanging with foreign academics, use of new methodologies and short and long-term mobility (available to all three cycles) has enhanced both the academic and practical competences of students.

There are numerous examples of **Joint Research projects and joint publications** initiated after successful cooperation within CBHE projects. In fact, this research work takes place in parallel to the CBHE project. The mobility of staff and students has allowed the **supervision of doctoral candidates by staff from international partners**, improving the quality of research and enhancing the reputation of the associated HEI.

The CBHE action **strongly encourages cooperation of HEIs with the labour market**. In a number of projects, private sector representatives are involved in designing new curricula that are

more appealing and relevant for the business world. Professors who internalise this entrepreneurial and long-term perspective have been the main exponents of this cooperation, which has translated into internships for students and, in some cases, job offers after graduation. Evidence shows that curriculum development projects that work closely with private sector partners and include internships within university education have a higher graduate employability rate and are therefore much more attractive to national and international students.

- ▶ Overall, **46%** of the 2015 generation of CBHE projects include placements and internships for students. Thanks to CBHE projects, many students established their first contacts with the private sector and this interaction increased their employability.

Master Degree in Innovative Technologies in Energy Efficient Buildings for Russian and Armenian Universities and Stakeholders (561890-EPP-1-2015-1-IT-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP)

The project has contributed to the widespread dissemination of the practice-oriented approach and enhancement of university-enterprise links in terms of providing work-based learning opportunities, jobs for master students, involvements in teaching and learning (T&L) material development and skills anticipation. This practice-orientated multidisciplinary programme is enjoying high demand (2 enrollments of average 9 to 35 students per university). A curriculum handbook and five manuals were produced and have received official approval of the RF Construction Ministry and the Association of Architecture and Construction, therewith acquiring an official status for all RF universities.

3.2.3. Administrative staff

CBHE projects also have an impact on administrative staff. This relates particularly to staff from the **offices for international affairs and staff responsible for project financial management**, who have to be well acquainted with the regulations and procedures relating to project implementation.

Although administrative and financial staff are key people in international cooperation, their role is not always very visible in project activities. Regular communication with their counterparts in other countries has given them insights into best practice in financial and grant management. Sometimes, they have been able to **introduce new practices in their own HEI systems**. Dealing with international projects, they have to work in English and in this way, their language skills tend to considerably improve.

- ▶ In total, 136 administrative staff members from Russian universities were trained within the 13 CBHE projects.

3.2.4. Entrepreneurs/Employers

Most of the Russian companies that participate as partners in CBHE projects are small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). CBHE projects have given them access to experts in specific fields, as well as to research laboratories and specialised equipment. Businesses have benefitted from this partnership to develop new products and to find students for working on new processes and equipment.

HEIs are a rich recruitment ground for businesses, which use internships to test potential future staff. In a number of CBHE projects, businesses are part of review panels and participate directly in the curriculum design process.

However, this is not always the case and most curriculum development projects carry out industry surveys to establish the precise needs of the labour market. It is important to note that the labour market includes not only the private sector, but also NGOs and in particular professional associations. The Association for Engineering Education of Russia (AEER), the Technical Universities Association and the Regional Intercollegiate Association were involved in the curricula development and independent certification of engineering curricula to EUR-ACE standards.

- ▶ Overall 224 individuals active in the private sector, including NGO and civil servants, were trained in the framework of the 13 CBHE projects.

Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development (561969-EPP-1-2015-1-DE-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP)

The new master programme is enjoying high demand and has been implemented in the cities of Michurinsk, Buryatia, and Omsk. The project outputs have been used for the Federal Programme “Sustainable rural development until 2020”. Modules from the programmes are used for staff training/ professional development of labour market players. The project has consolidated interaction among diverse stakeholder categories (employers, local administration, etc.).



4. REGIONAL COOPERATION AND NATIONAL POLICY DEVELOPMENT

4.1. Regional Cooperation

Since National Projects are not allowed in Region 4, all 57 projects selected so far across the five Calls for proposals are cross-regional projects. Among these 57 projects, 90% are Joint Projects and 10% are Structural Projects, showing that multi-country projects tend to focus on HEIs, whose weaknesses are easier to address than those of the education system as a whole.

Russian partners tend to cooperate predominantly with institutions from the former Soviet Union, like Central Asia and in particular Kazakhstan, which is also a Bologna member. Further Regions for privileged cooperation with Russia are the Eastern Neighbourhood and the Western Balkans, and to a lesser extent, Asia. More rarely represented are cross-regional projects with Regions 3, 9 and 10.

A number of academic subject areas lend themselves to a cross-regional dimension such as agriculture, engineering and environmental studies. Some consortia selected the more demanding option of setting up a joint degree programme.

Joint Programmes and Framework for Doctoral Education in Software Engineering (561577-EPPA-1-2015-1-FI-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP)

In this project a pool of content and methodologies for PhD programmes in software engineering was developed, including a manual on fundamental approaches to software engineering, guidelines for developing a PhD programme, an analytic report on constructing activities to ensure different learning paths for PhD students, and models of dual supervision of PhD dissertations.

Recommendations have been submitted to the RF Ministry of Science and Education on the modernisation of doctoral higher education standards, on the development of joint doctoral programmes, and proposals for opening new programmes in software engineering that would address issues, which were not included in the software engineering programmes in Russia.

Changes have taken place not only at national level, but - equally important - within the Russian Federation, given the size of the country and its higher education system. The fact that projects have facilitated and promoted intra-Russian collaboration and networking is seen as a valuable asset.

4.2. National Education Reforms

Structural projects are of particular importance for triggering and supporting developments and reforms of the national education systems in the Partner Countries. Since the participation of Ministries of Education in Structural Projects is obligatory the CBHE action promotes strongly the cooperation between HEIs and national/regional authorities. The Structural Project 'Development of Approaches to Harmonisation of Comprehensive Internationalisation Strategies in Higher Education, Research and Innovation in EU and Partner Countries' (561561-EPP-1-2015-1-ES-

EPPKA2-CBHE-SP) mentioned on page 6 developed a model Internationalisation strategy that is currently used by RF universities.

The following structural project helped in setting up a sector qualifications framework in tourism:

**European dimension in qualifications for the tourist sector
(561832-EPP-1-2015-1-LV-EPPKA2-CBHE-SP)**

A sector qualifications framework (SQF) has been developed and presented to the National Qualifications Council and now this SQF underpins development of education programmes to train and upskill specialists of different qualifications levels for the tourism sector.

Some of the Joint Projects also contribute to **policy and legislative reforms**. For example, the above mentioned project “Joint programmes and framework for doctoral education in software engineering” (EPPA-1-2015-1-FI-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP) went hand in hand with the recommendation № AK-2563/05 on joint degrees and academic mobility issued by the Ministry of Education and Science on 28/7/2015.

In terms of long-term impact, CBHE (and previously TEMPUS) projects directly and indirectly contributed to the following reform measures out outputs:

- in 2016, updated ministerial documents on the use of ECTS have been adopted and a new report on the Bologna process implementation in RF was drafted. Aspects of internationalisation are included in the self-assessment of universities and in the annual monitoring of universities performed by the Ministry of Education and Science.
- in 2017, mechanisms for linking occupational standards (benchmark requirement to graduates as viewed by employers) to higher education standards and curricula were updated. All curricula are endorsed by employers’ sector skills councils, which are affiliated to the National Qualifications Council established by the president of the Russian Federation. The priority programme “Development of the export capacity of Russia’s higher education” was launched to enhance the operation of university international departments and to attract larger numbers of full-time foreign students in Russian HEIs.
- in 2018, there was a 17% increase in the number of applications for the recognition of foreign qualifications with the goal of enrolling in Russian Federation universities as compared to the previous year. The number of joint programmes implemented involved both foreign and RF universities increased, as well as the number of programmes delivered in English.



5. INCLUSIVENESS

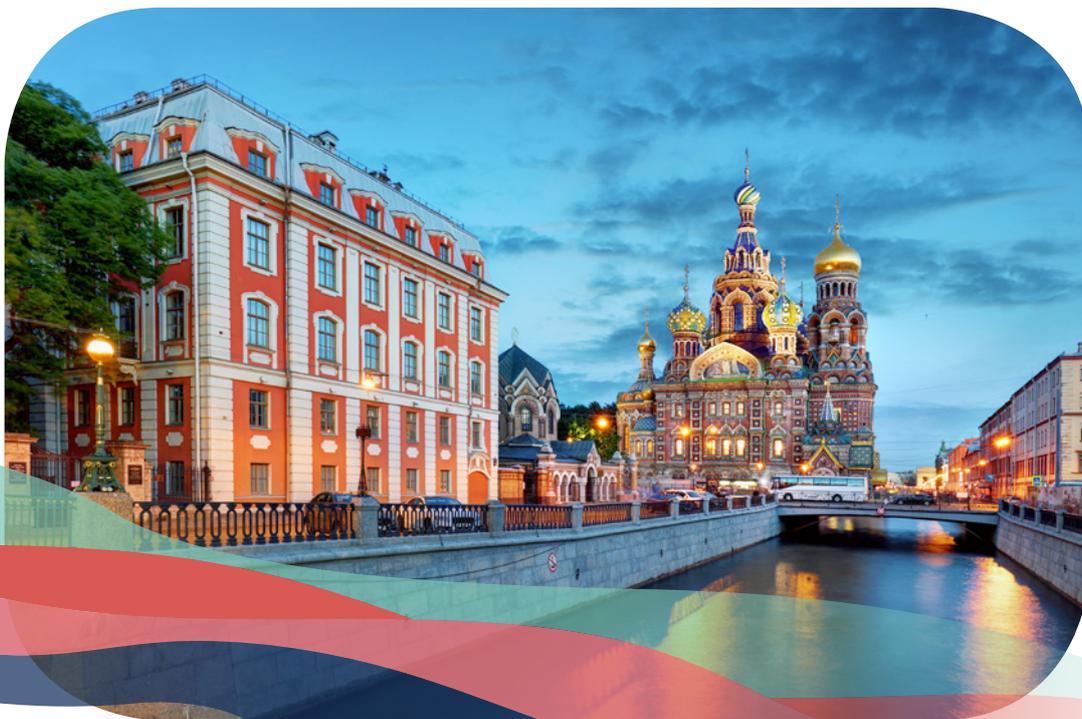
5.1. People with Fewer Opportunities

In the Russian Federation, a national strategy for social inclusion is in place. Special attention is paid to the support of under-represented groups (students with disabilities, mature students, disadvantaged students) as is stipulated in the RF Federal Law “On Education in the Russian Federation” establishing the priority right of disabled children and adults to enrol, within the established quotas, in government-funded bachelor and specialist programmes. It also establishes minimum enrolment quotas for the above target groups to government-funded bachelor and specialist programmes.

- ▶ 15% (2 out of 13) of the 2015 CBHE projects implemented in the Russian Federation involve people with fewer opportunities. The projects, without exclusively addressing these groups, include students with disabilities (visual disability, hearing disability, physical disability).

5.2. Institutions Located in less developed regions

In the Russian Federation, two thirds of the project partners are situated in the main university cities in the western and central part of Russia, where the majority of the population lives: Moscow, Saint Petersburg, Rostov-on-Don, Voronezh, Perm, Kazan, etc. Although there is a certain number of recurrent beneficiaries, the CBHE action increasingly reaches out to HEIs located throughout the territory like Yekaterinburg, Tyumen, Vladivostok, Novosibirsk, Yakutsk, Omsk and Tomsk.



6. CONCLUSIONS

At the institutional level, CBHE projects have contributed to institutional development and capacity building by establishing new programmes and methodologies, enhancing university-enterprise cooperation and the position of the university in society at large. The collaboration with employers has helped to promote and enhance learning outcomes, key competences and work based learning. The projects have also contributed to reinforcement of university infrastructure via the new laboratories and centres, including up-to-date co-working centres, business incubators, etc.

CBHE projects contribute actively to the **internationalisation of Russian universities**. Innovations in internationalisation can be seen in the following elements: the use of Bologna tools, the increased number of programmes delivered in English, the greater number of students and staff participating in mobility exercises, and the larger enrolment of foreign students.

More specifically, the following factors have contributed to the institutional impact:

- sustainable multi-disciplinary bachelor's and master's degrees as well as PhD programmes, including double degrees, new modules on research and entrepreneurship integrated into certain programmes, new continuing education programmes including those in the blended learning format;
- new courses based on the use of Bologna tools allowing international/European comparability and compatibility of qualifications;
- self-sustained summer and winter schools that will continue after the project's completion;
- a growing number of curricula accredited by international bodies such as ABET, ASIIN, EUR-ACE, Washington Accord, and the International Engineering Alliance;
- enhanced quality assurance systems at the universities;
- enhanced work-based learning component in engineering programmes;
- introduction of ICT in the curricula implementation; introduction of student-centred approaches, of project-based learning (PBL) and of new methods of teaching and learning;
- establishment of centres including student-support centres, quality assurance centres;
- laboratories to support the academic process, e-learning centres, open education platforms and resources, and centres for competences and employability;
- administrative innovations (new regulatory documents; enhanced systemic communication within university departments and across the higher education system; extended network of university partners/stakeholders).

At the national/regional level, due to enhanced links with the industry sector throughout the country, the universities are acquiring a stronger regional standing. Conditioned by a cumulative impact of the projects, the main outputs are:

- improved sector-specific quality of training specialists in the project subject areas;
- enhanced cooperation with private sector enterprises;
- new and modernized federal education standards and programmes of higher education;
- increased networking opportunities;
- enhanced involvement and role of associations in the process of curricula development and independent certification of curricula.
- enhanced standing of the universities in society.

However, the impact of the CBHE action could be further improved by looking at the challenges that were identified through the sample of final project reports and the monitoring activities (desk monitoring, monitoring missions, cluster meetings) conducted by the Agency. Some of the challenges refer to the CBHE action as a whole, others specifically to the Russian Federation.

6.1. Challenges

CBHE action as a whole

- The CBHE action has a number of **recurrent beneficiaries**, both institutions and individuals. In the long-term, this leads to a **lack of innovative and creative project ideas** (and few new collaborations) and diminishes the impact of the CBHE action in the Region.
- The large maximum grant amount of EUR 1 Million often leads to ‘inflated’ project budgets and lowers cost efficiency of project activities. In terms of staff costs, it was observed that individuals (professors/consultants) worked on several CBHE projects simultaneously, thus incurring high staff costs. This kind of ‘monopolisation’ of projects by individual persons is not desirable and leads to projects that are thematically repetitive, and to sub-optimal project results.
- The **cross-regional projects** face various administrative and management challenges due to different rules and regulations applicable in different countries. This causes delays in the tendering procedures and sometimes equipment will only be available towards the end of a project’s duration.
- The creation of **key project management documents** for quality assurance, management processes, promotion and disseminations often does not always meet expected quality standards (lack of indicators, milestones, responsibilities, and timelines) for a well-managed project.
- The ability to **reach out beyond the initial partnership** needs to be further developed and should become a key priority for the projects. Intensive dissemination of project outcomes and results during and after the project funding period plays an important role. Excellent results should be more highly valued and shared with other HEIs working in the same field and facing the same challenges.

- For a number of CBHE projects, appropriate **institutional endorsement** by the HEI administration is not or only partially in place. HEIs must invest more in using CBHE projects for strategic development and providing adequate support via international offices and financial departments. A lack of effective cooperation between different CBHE projects and with other funded Erasmus+ initiatives within the same institution has been observed in a number of projects.
- The **sustainability of project results** is often not sufficiently addressed by the consortia.

The Russian Federation

- The **cross-regional co-operation** between the project partners is not implemented at its full potential. The participating countries tend to carry out their project at the national level without seeking synergies with the project partners of the other countries.
- The Russian and European academic systems co-exist and both apply, depending on the disciplines. However, when the **Bologna approach** was chosen to be applied in curriculum development projects, it has often been case that the study programmes developed were not sufficiently in line with the Bologna principles (i.e. measurable learning outcomes aligned to level 7 of the Dublin Descriptors and European qualifications framework (EQF), student-centred organisation of the learning and teaching process, innovative teaching and learning packages complete with assignments, etc.);
- There is an insufficient use of **social media** to disseminate the project outcomes and outputs and to enhance the projects' impact at the national and regional level.

6.2. Recommendations

The analysis of the 2015 CBHE projects, together with the challenges identified, gives rise to the following recommendations for changes and improvements:

- The **CBHE Projects** should be better integrated and brought in line with the national priorities of Partner Countries for the development of their educational systems. The Russian Federation is a member of the EHEA but still needs to come **closer to EU standards as regards the education sectors**. The national and federal Ministries of Education play a critical role for the exploitation, upscaling and mainstreaming of CBHE project results and adequate measures should be set up to better link them to the projects.
- More HEIs must adopt a **strategic approach** and focus their participation in the CBHE action on projects that are in line with their medium and long-term priorities and development goals. This 'strategic interest' orientation will then lead to better support of the CBHE projects (e.g. by the international office and finance department), the exploitation of synergies between projects implemented at the same HEI and above all to the sustainability of the projects after the end of their funding period.
- The **diversity of HEIs** and individuals in the CBHE action needs to increase. The CBHE action focuses on high value projects and this favours experienced (often recurrent) and large HEIs. The 'entry barriers' for smaller institutions and newcomers are high. One way to counterbalance this challenge would be to dedicate a share of the budget to smaller projects covering certain types of activities only (i.e. staff training activities, university professor exchanges, module updates, summer schools, etc.). However, such an approach is more labour-intensive to manage from

EACEA, and would require the introduction of simplified funding modalities (e.g. lump sums) and simplified or external monitoring of project activities.

- The **involvement of some professors in several parallel projects** (as coordinators and/or partners) allows them benefitting from generous salary multiplications. This should be reviewed as it undermines the quality of project outputs.
- Project co-ordinators need to address more actively the co-operation between project partners from different regions/countries to avoid managing two or more separate national projects in parallel. Cooperation between the project teams has to be channelled more actively across the boundaries through an integrative project management.
- In curriculum development projects, the developed courses require improvement in terms of **measurability and alignment to the BA or MA level qualification descriptors** (EQF or Dublin descriptors). In an updated course template, the following elements need to be in place: the structure and composition of the teaching and learning packages and a quality assurance package per module.
- Social media should be utilised more extensively to **disseminate the project outcomes** and outputs and to enhance the projects' impact at the national and regional level.
- Project management needs to be improved by **enhancing the quality assurance plans** through qualitative criteria (against which the project progress can be assessed) and by rethinking the role and functions of external assessors.

ANNEX

List of 2015 CBHE projects involving the Russian Federation

13 CBHE projects with Russian partners were selected in 2015 and closed in 2019. The scores of the technical final report evaluation provide an indication on the quality of the implementation; the results differ however depending on the institutions involved. The average score of the 13 projects is 71/100 points, which corresponds to the category of qualification⁴, “Good”.

Joint Projects

1. 561577-EPPA-1-2015-1-FI-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP. “Joint programmes and framework for doctoral education in software engineering”.
Final report score: 80/100
2. 561603-EPP-1-2015-1-DE-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP. “Establishment of Centres for Competences and Employability Development”.
Final report score: 67/100
3. 561726-EPP-1-2015-1-NL-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP. “Bridging Innovations, Health and Societies: Educational capacity-building in the European Neighbouring Areas”.
Final report score: 65/100
4. 561732-EPP-1-2015-1-FR-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP. “Bachelor programmes and open and distance learning in the field of ensuring energy efficiency and environmental safety in buildings in RF, China and Azerbaijan”.
Final report score: 73/100
5. 561775-EPP-1-2015-1-DE-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP. “Trans-Regional Environmental Awareness for Sustainable Usage of Water Resources /TREASURE-WATER”.
Final report score: 67/100
6. 561869-EPP-1-2015-1-IT-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP. “Open Innovation Platform for University–Enterprise Collaboration: new product, business and human capital development/OIPEC”.
Final report score: 74/100
7. 561890-EPP-1-2015-1-IT-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP. “Master Degree in Innovative Technologies in Energy Efficient Buildings for Russian and Armenian universities and stakeholders”.
Final report score: 53/100
8. 561969-EPP-1-2015-1-DE-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP. “Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development”.
Final report score: 62/100
9. 561975-EPP-1-2015-1-FI-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP. “Adaptive leaning environment for competence in economic and societal impacts of local weather, air quality and climate”.
Final report score: 71/100
10. 561989-EPP-1-2015-1-UK-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP. “Flight safety and airworthiness – a master programme”.
Final report score: 78/100

⁴ Categories of qualification: Very good (at least 75 pts out of 100), Good (between 74 and 60 pts out of 100), Fair (between 59 and 50 pts), Weak (less than 50 pts out of 100)

11. 561937-EPP-1-2015-1-DE-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP “Development and Implementation of the Master Programme - “Green Logistics Management”

Final report score: 73/100

Structural Projects

12. 561561-EPP-1-2015-1-ES-EPPKA2-CBHE-SP. “Development of approaches to harmonisation of comprehensive internationalization strategies in higher education, research and innovation in EU and partner countries”

Final report score: 74/100

13. 561832-EPP-1-2015-1-LV-EPPKA2-CBHE-SP. “European dimension in qualifications for the tourist sector”.

Final report score: 85/100





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Erasmus+

Capacity Building in Higher Education (CBHE) action

Regional Report Russian Federation

Resume

This report is based on the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency's evaluation of the first final project reports of the first generation of CBHE projects selected for funding in 2015. Altogether 138 projects were funded in 2015 and 88 finalised projects have submitted their final reports in 2019, among which 13 were implemented in the Russian Federation (RF).