

**Minutes from the Introductory meeting  
held on March 3, 2008**

Place of the meeting

Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava

Time

9:00 – 12:30 h

Participants

Ing. Juma M. Haydary, PhD., Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava, Slovakia  
Dr. M. Naim Assad, University of Herat, Afghanistan  
Prof. Dr. Mir Fakhruddin, Kabul Polytechnic University, Afghanistan  
Dipl. Ing. Jean-Philippe Thouard, Asian Institute of Technology, Thailand  
Dr. Oleg V. Shipin, Asian Institute of Technology, Thailand  
Dipl.-Ing. Peter Gabko, Vienna University of Technology, Austria  
Ing. Pavel Timar, Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava, Slovakia  
Zuzana Letkova (taking notes)

Agenda

1. Opening of the meeting, introduction of participants
2. Project objectives
3. Project activities
4. Responsibilities of the partner institutions
5. Financing and co-financing of the project
6. Partnership agreement

# **Euro-Asia Partnership for Development Human Resource Capacity of Engineering Education in Afghanistan**

Asia-Link Program of the European Commission  
Project Nr. 147-063

Meeting was opened by Dr. Juma M. Haydary, main coordinator of the project, who welcomed the participants and project partners and wished them pleasant and fruitful stay in Bratislava. Agenda of the meeting and Asia-Europe project was introduced and agreed by all participants.

Afghanistan is a country with destroyed infrastructure including education infrastructure. Majority of population is illiterate. Level of education is very low including university education. The project is focus of the improvement of engineering education in Afghanistan in two of main universities – Kabul Polytechnic University and University of Herat. The main goal of the project is to develop human capacities in the field of engineering education via long-term and short-term study stays in European and Asian partner/hosting institutions.

Main project objectives include:

- increasing of education quality level at the Kabul Polytechnic University and Technical Faculties of the Herat University,
- creation of partnerships between the Afghan technical higher education institutions and their counterparts in European and Asian countries,
- increasing the qualification level of young teachers from the Afghan universities,
- improvement of the knowledge and skill of Afghan university staff by short time stays at the European and Asian universities,
- improvement of the knowledge and skill of university staff by organizing seminars and conferences at the Afghan universities,
- identification of the potential for further cooperation in the areas of teaching and research between the European and Asian partners.

Within the project, there are two-year MSc. courses for 10 university employees and 15 short-term courses for young university staff from Kabul and Herat Universities planned.

Main coordinator of the project is Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava (SUT). Partner institutions are Asian Institute of Technology in Thailand (AIT) and Vienna University of Technology (VUT). Kabul Polytechnic University (KPU) and University of Herat (UH) are recipient partners.

The project activities are divided into 5 basic packages:

1. Organization of four workshops of partnership's management committee (PMC),
2. Preparation, coordination and realization of MSc. degree study of Afghan students at partner universities,
3. Preparation, coordination and realization of short-term training courses for Afghan university teachers.
4. Organization of three scientific seminars in Afghanistan on new trends in different engineering areas,
5. Monitoring and evaluation of project activities, results and outcomes and reporting.

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Dr. Haydary: The first package of activities will be discussed later. The second package, *Study stay of Afghan students at partner universities in Asia and Europe*, includes specification of the topics for long-term and short-term courses, preparation and realization of the MSc and short-term courses. Afghan partners should define and present their requirements in the field of engineering education in order to meet their demands. VUT will not provide MSc. study programs as of unclear conditions for long-term study stays, only short-term study stays are possible. SUT offers MSc. in the field of Architecture and Environmental and Chemical Engineering.

Dr. Assad: UH has enough experts in civil engineering, but there is a lack of teachers in the field of architecture (at least 2 persons are needed). There is also a need for laboratory staff (laboratory for testing construction materials established in UH within Slovakiaid project), which could be arrange in the framework of short-term courses.

Dr. Haydary: Acceptance of Bc degree from Afghanistan could be one of the problems in enrolment of Afghan students to MSc. programs in Slovakia. SUT can offer MSc. in 2, maximum 3 specializations in order to make the study effective. It is not possible to host 8 people in 8 different specializations. Also, considering the future project results and their impact, more specialists educated in the respective field can guarantee better sustainability and quality than individuals trained in many different topics.

Dr. Assad: Can people from both universities, e.g. Kabul as well as Herat, participate on the MSc. programs?

Dr. Haydary: Of course, however, we expect more participants from KPU as this university has 3 faculties, while in UH, there is only Civil Engineering Faculty. Therefore UH is not able to cover the expected number of participants within the project.

Dipl.-Ing. Gabko: What is the situation in university education in Afghanistan?

Dr. Haydary: The situation is bad, low quality, not enough capacities. Bc. degree study takes 4-5 years. KPU has approximately 2500 students, provides university education in the fields of Electro-mechanics, Construction, and Geology and Mining (see *Annex 2*). UH has 5000 students, majority in social sciences, medicine etc., only 450 students are in Civil Engineering Faculty. Official language at both universities is Dari, The language at Engineering faculty of HU English.

Dipl. Ing. Thouard: The language knowledge could be the main obstacle in long or short-term education for Afghan students. AIT can cover most of mentioned subjects, e.g. Industrial Engineering, Industrial Processes, Automatization, Civil Engineering, IT (programming, information management, geographical information systems, etc.). AIT provides no Chemical Engineering, however, they offer study in environmental field, food processing and biotechnology. Basic entry requirements for students include: Bc.

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degree (4 years), very good study performance, English language testing, and, possibly, interview. AIT also provides “bridging programs” – short-term programs (3-4 months) for students in order to support them in problematic subjects and improve their performance.

Dr. Haydary: In KPU, there are teachers with MSc. and PhD. degree but young people do not have the opportunities to gain this degree. Therefore, providing them with possibility of MSc. degree from one of the partner universities could be a big challenge for them. SUT has 7 faculties with about 25,000 students. Each faculty has 20-25 departments. SUT would like to concentrate to 2 areas of study for Afghan participants, for example Architecture and Chemical Engineering. Young teachers and students with the vision of academic career at the university are the main target group.

Dipl. Ing. Thouard: As one of the conclusions from this week, I expect selection of specific study areas. Representatives of Afghan Universities should define the more demanding areas.

Dr. Haydary: Afghan partners should be also responsible for selection of appropriate candidates, who will undergo the testing and selection process for the respective university. Participants of the MSc. programs should somehow guarantee that they will come back after study at the partner university and work for Afghan university for defined period of time. Without guaranty, Afghan universities could loose the high educated people and the project purpose will not be achieved. Afghan Ministry of Education should be involved in this in order to make it official.

Dr. Assad: At the UH, there is a practice, that every student going to the university abroad, has to sign a kind of declaration, that after completing the study, he wil come back and work for the university.

Dr. Haydary: What is the probability that such student comes back and stays at the university?

Dipl. Ing. Thouard: To entrust and guarantee this is very difficult, especially in case of any gold-opportunity. In Filipinas, the problem is solved via National Ministry, which requires a kind of declaration and explanation from the person who is not willing to keep his/her obligations towards university and payment of the financial penalty, e.g. reimbursement of the full costs, otherwise he/she can not get the passport fro traveling abroad.

Dr. Haydary: This could be one of the possible ways.

Prof. Fakhruddin: At KPU, students sign the declaration with domestic as well as hosting university, which contains obligation to come back.

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Dr. Assad: There is another possibility – engagement of parents. Parents could guarantee the student's obligations using their real estate (house, land, etc.).

Dr. Haydary: Problem of the guaranty is connected mainly to MSc. study, not to short-term study stays. People with long-term quality education should come back and develop their career at Afghan universities in order to achieve improvement of the education quality in Afghanistan.

Dr. Shipin: What is the legal aspect of penalties and declarations?

Dipl. Ing. Thouard: This is the reason for the Ministry involvement.

Dr. Haydary: There is also a problem with starting date of MSc. study program. Semester at SUT starts at the end of September, beginning of October. In order to keep the project time limits, we have to start with MSc. study this year. Therefore we have lack of time for selection and application process. Another problem is visa procedure, which takes about 3-3,5 months in Slovakia. Afghan partners have to start with advertisements, defining selection criteria and selection process as soon as possible. Other possibility could be an individual study program (all partners prefer normal study programs). The selection of participants for MSc. program must be done in transparent way and from bigger group of potential candidates in order to select the best participants and their required number, e.g. 8.

Dipl. Ing. Thouard: We need only 1-1,5 month for visa arrangement, however, we must start with selection procedure as soon as possible. AIT is opening an office at the Balkh University in Mazar-e-Sharif. This office can cover some of the services connected to selection process, e.g. personal interviews.

Dr. Assad: In order to arrange study abroad, we have to receive acceptance letter from hosting university.

This condition will be arranged by hosting universities.

Dr. Assad: Afghan university can arrange pre-selection process and then, successful candidates can pass official final selection process under the conditions defined by hosting universities.

Dipl. Ing. Thouard: Students interested in AIT have to fill the detailed application form, provide study results, ranking, performance at the faculty, performance as teachers, prove their language proficiency, and, possibly, pass the interview.

Dr. Shipin: it was said that majority of participants will be selected among university staff plus students with vision of academic career. What ration do you expect in staff/students?

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Dr. Haydary: Majority of participants will be university teachers. Among students we expect only top talents with clear academic vision.

Dipl.-Ing. Gabko: are there sufficient capacities at partner Afghan universities to cover expected MSc. students number? Who will stay and teach at the faculties if 8 staff members leave for 2 years?

Dr. Assad: We would prefer to send for MSc. study students who will later come back to faculty and develop their academic career.

Dr. Shipin: Students are less appropriate for MSc. study in comparison to academic staff. Full time university teachers demonstrated already their commitment in the academic environment (they are employed and work for university). Students are less reliable with whatever vision. Therefore university staff should be the main target group.

Dr. Haydary: Academic career in Afghanistan is less attractive in comparison to employment within international organizations. There are also some limitations relating to professional background and also capacities. If top university teachers will stay 2 years abroad, who will replace them and their duties?

Prof. Fakhruddin: Young teachers and assistant professors work closely with experienced teachers. Thus, their stay abroad is not a problem. We can also select people with the vision of academic career.

Coffee Break: 10:50 – 11:10 h

Dr. Haydary: Next package of activities relates to short-term study stays. This study stays are intended for young university teachers. SUT has an experience with 3 teachers from UH, who participated in specialized study stays during which they gained information on subjects, curricula, syllabi, teaching methods and education system. The knowledge gained in Bratislava they have used in their home university for improvement of study subjects. This experience could be used also in this project. Within this week we have to decide on the focus of short-term study stays and general coordination. The aim of these short-term stays is improvement of teaching subjects at Afghan universities and development of curricula via consultations, field trips and excursions of participants. Expected numbers of short-term students at partner universities are as follows: 8 participants at SUT, 4 at AIT and 3 in VUT. The courses should be organized during whole project period, e.g. within 3 years. Afghan partners have to specify the priorities and demands. Hosting universities have to provide information on possible areas and departments where the stays can be realized and on selection criteria. Afghan partners will be responsible for selection process and also have to decide on number of participants from KPU and UH.

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Prof. Fakhruddin: KPU possesses 13 various study areas. The potential candidates can come from any of them.

Dr. Assad: UH would like to send older university teachers, who have not had any opportunity for study stays in foreign universities and development of their skills (target should – teachers in middle career period).

Dr. Shipin: AIT provides a unique international environment, which could be a great experience for Afghan students.

Dr. Haydary: Within the project, 3 scientific seminars (conferences) should be organized in Afghanistan (one seminar per year). The aim of the seminars is transfer of knowledge and new trends in education to Afghan university professionals and students. Participants of the seminars should come from domestic and partner universities. We expect also international participants of Afghan origin. The project budget covers expenses for one person from each partner university, e.g. travel, accommodation and per diems costs. We have to try to find other financial resources for covering stay in Afghanistan for other participants. Travel expenses of international participants should be covered individually. The first seminar must be organized this year and proposed topic is “New trends in Civil Engineering and Architecture”.

Dipl. Ing. Thouard: The topic is too wide and should be more detailed.

Dr. Haydary: Each partner organization should send one expert with different focus in order to cover more areas.

Dr. Shipin: How fixed we have to be in the focus of the seminar? To what extent can we be flexible?

Dipl.-Ing. Gabko: The focus of the seminar should be more specified and narrowed.

Dr. Shipin: It would be better to link the focus of the seminar with faculty needs and areas of short-term and long-term study stays.

Dipl.-Ing. Gabko: As the goal is improvement of education, why not to focus on the education system itself instead of very special topics such as road constructions, etc.

All partners agreed that the major problem will be to get people willing to travel to Afghanistan.

Ing. Timar: Afghan partners should specify their needs and topics for scientific seminars.  
Prof. Fakhruddin: It is better to improve existing curricula than to develop new ones. One of the problems within Afghanistan is using of different standard systems. Therefore, the standards and/or curricula improvement could be one of possible seminar topics.

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Dr. Assad: curriculum is guaranteed by the Afghan Ministry of Education. However, there is another big challenge at Afghan universities – research. Possible seminar topic: research in general, starting research – assumptions and conditions, methodology, management and administration of the research.

Dipl.-Ing. Gabko: The key problem of the research is the financing, equipment and human capacities.

Dipl. Ing. Thouard: The research is very important especially for students. It can be one of possible areas covered within short-term courses - participant can “shadow” expert at hosting university and participate on research.

Dr. Haydary: All partners should send the list of proposed topics and lecturers willing to travel to Afghanistan. Based on this list, we can do a selection for the first seminar. Curricula development is quite difficult topic, as curriculum from foreign university not always can be modified and used at Afghan university (lack of equipment, lack of human capacity, etc.).

Dipl.-Ing. Gabko: What is duration of the seminar and its basic organization?

Dr. Haydary: The seminar should last 1 week and should contain an official part, presentations, seminar for students, etc. The aim of the seminar is not only sharing professional information but know-how in organizing such events as well. The first seminar has to be organized by end of September.

Participants agreed on Kabul as place of the first scientific seminar.

Dipl. Ing. Thouard: 5 days would be enough. 2 days of conference, one day for students tutorials and one day for focused experts’ discussions.

Dr. Haydary: This first, initial workshop is held in Bratislava. The other three should be organized at partner universities.

Partners agreed on organization of the second workshop in Thailand, within first two weeks of December 2008 and the third in Vienna in December 2009. The final workshop will be organized in 2010 in Afghanistan. The place and time will be agreed.

Dr. Haydary: The last package of activities is evaluation and monitoring, which should be done continuously within whole period of the project. Project partners are obliged to provide main coordinator with progress reports and all necessary supporting documents.

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**Conclusions**

All partners agreed on the program within the first week with some modifications needed in order to devote more time to discussions on financing and areas on MSc. and short-term education (see attached program in *Annex 1*).

The tasks to be completed by end of the week:

1. Hosting universities will provide:
  - information on application and visa procedure, requirements and selection criteria for MSc. study
  - information on application procedure, requirements and selection criteria for short-term study
  - possible areas for MSc. study and short-term study and number of students who can participate in these education programs
  
2. Recipient universities will provide:
  - Information on demands regarding study areas and human capacities development
  - Proposal of pre-selection criteria for MSc. as well as short-term study applicants
  - Proposal of the conditions for obligation of participants of MSc. programs that they come back and develop their academic career
  
3. All representatives of partner institutions will provide information on topics to be covered during scientific conferences in Afghanistan. Partners will agree also on preliminary program and duration of the conferences. Partners will provide main coordinator with the names of potential participants and lectures at the scientific conferences (deadline to be agreed).

Preliminary list of topics for scientific seminars:

- Topics in the field of civil engineering and architecture
- Curriculum development
- Research development
- Standards in practice
- Opportunities for cooperation with foreign universities within EU or other donors' projects

The minutes will be discussed and completed on Tuesday/Wednesday. Discussion on financing and co-financing and partnership agreement is moved to Wednesday morning.

Prepared by: Zuzana Letkova

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*Annex 1*

<b>Time</b>	<b>Program</b>
<b>Sunday 2.3.2008</b>	
10:00	Arrival at the Vienna airport
<b>Monday 3.3.2008</b>	
9:00	Official welcome
9:15-12:00	PMC meeting
12:00-14:00	Lunch
14:00-16:00	Visit of Faculty of Chemical Technology
16:00-18:00	Free program
18:00-20:00	Dinner
<b>Tuesday 4.3.2008</b>	
9:00-12:00	Meeting with Dean of the FCHT
12:00-14:00	Lunch
14:00-18:00	Historical centre of Bratislava
18:00-20:00	Dinner
<b>Wednesday 5.3.2008</b>	
9:00-12:00	Meeting regarding project financing
12:00-14:00	Lunch
14:00-18:00	Seminar PMC, Meeting with Rector of the SUT, presentations of partners' institutions, agreement signing
18:00-21:00	Raut
<b>Thursday 6.03.2008</b>	
9:00-16:00	Redstone Castle, field trip
16:00-18:00	Free program
18:00-20:00	Dinner
<b>Friday 7.03.2008</b>	
9:00-12:00	Final meeting of PMC
12:00-18:00	Free program
<b>Saturday 8. 03.2008</b>	
7:00	Departure

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***Annex 2***

**Polytechnical University of Kabul**

The Polytechnical University of Kabul offers three faculties with 19 sub-departments, including 11 professional and 8 general subject departments.

*Faculty of Construction*

Construction of Industrial and Civil Building  
Construction of Hydrotechnical Constructions  
Construction of Roads  
Architecture  
Drawing and Descriptive Geometry  
Islamic Culture

*Faculty of Electromechanics*

Power Electric Supply for Industrial Institutions, Cities and Villages  
Automobiles and Tractors  
Physics  
Theoretical and Applied Mechanics  
Higher Mathematics  
Foreign Languages

*Faculty of Geology and Mining*

Geology and Mining  
Geology and Exploration of Mines  
Geology and Exploration of Petroleum and Gas  
Chemical Technology  
Engineering Geodesy  
General Chemistry  
Sports

**University of Heart**

Faculty of Agriculture  
Faculty of Art  
Faculty of Computer Science  
Faculty of Economy  
Faculty of Education  
Faculty of Engineering  
Faculty of Law  
Faculty of Literature  
Faculty of Medicine  
Faculty of Science  
Faculty of Theology and Islamic Law

**Minutes from the meeting  
held on March 5, 2008**

Place of the meeting

Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava

Time

9:00 – 12:00 h

Participants

Ing. Juma M. Haydary, PhD., Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava, Slovakia  
Dr. M. Naim Assad, University of Herat, Afghanistan  
Prof. Dr. Mir Fakhruddin, Kabul Polytechnic University, Afghanistan  
Dipl. Ing. Jean-Philippe Thouard, Asian Institute of Technology, Thailand  
Dr. Oleg V. Shipin, Asian Institute of Technology, Thailand  
Dipl.-Ing. Peter Gabko, Vienna University of Technology, Austria

Agenda

1. Financing and co-financing of the project
2. Partnership Agreement

The meeting was opened by Mr. Haydary and devoted to the financing of the project. 75% of the project costs is going to be covered by European Commission, 5% from the SUT sources and sources for remaining 20% have to be find out.

Originally, the co-financing was intended from the sources of Slovak Official Development Assistance but the project was not approved for immediate financing. Other possibilities of financing: the budget of Kabul Polytechnic University and Herat University in the frame of World Bank Strengthening Higher Education Program (SHEP) or Ministry of Higher Education of Afghanistan.

Mr. Gabko asked for explanation of the respective items in the budget related to Vienna University of Technology. He also asked to specify indirect costs in the budget, which was accepted.

Mr. Haydary presented the proposal (Annex IV) and asked Afghan project partners to cover the sum in the proposal from the resources of SHEP. Afghan partners agreed with this proposal under the condition that the Agreement will contain the clause: the respective Agreement will be payable after the audit from Ministry of Higher Education of Afghanistan”.

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The representatives of KPU and HU have agreed that expenditures listed in Annex IV of the partnership agreement will be paid from the SHEP budget of their universities. These expenditures are as follows:

- 1- 8 times Travel costs from Afghanistan to Europe and back for MSC students
- 2- 2 times travel costs from Afghanistan to Thailand and back for MSC students
- 3- 11 times travel costs from Afghanistan to Europe and back for participants of short training courses
- 4- 4 times travel costs from Afghanistan to Thailand and back for participants of short training courses
- 5- 10 times scholarship (only costs for living of students) for 24 months 450 Euro/month

Participants also discussed alternative possibilities of co-financing. Finally they agreed to include to the Agreement the first alternative and discussion on other possibilities will be held only if agreed way of financing fails for whatever reason.

The next part of the meeting was devoted to modification of the Agreement. Several changes were proposed by Mr. Gabko and Mr. Thouard. The way of the project financing was discussed as well. It was agreed that the money will be distributed to the partners by SUT after receiving them from European Commission. The partners have to provide information on the bank account by filling the respective form.

The table with the list of activities and their deadlines will be filled on Friday's meeting, on March 07, 2008.

**Minutes from the seminar  
held on March 5, 2008**

Place of the meeting

Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava

Time

14:00 – 16:00 h

Participants

Prof. Ing. Vladimír Bálež, DrSc., Rector of the SUT in Bratislava, Slovakia  
Doc. Ing. Robert Redhamer, PhD., Vice-rector for S&R, SUT in Bratislava, Slovakia  
Ing. Juma M. Haydary, PhD., SUT in Bratislava, Slovakia  
Dr. M. Naim Assad, Rector of the University of Herat, Afghanistan  
Prof. Dr. Mir Fakhruddin, Rector of the Kabul Polytechnic University, Afghanistan  
Dipl. Ing. Jean-Philippe Thouard, Asian Institute of Technology, Thailand

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Dr. Oleg V. Shipin, Asian Institute of Technology, Thailand  
Dipl.-Ing. Peter Gabko, Vienna University of Technology, Austria  
Ing. Pavel Timar, PhD., SUT in Bratislava, Slovakia  
Representatives of the Faculties of the SUT in Bratislava, Slovakia  
Zuzana Letkova (taking notes and moderating)

Agenda

7. Invitation speech of the Rector of the SUT and presentation of the SUT in Bratislava
8. Presentation of the Asia-Europe Link project
9. Presentation of the partners' universities (Vienna University of Technology, Asian Institute of Technology, Kabul Polytechnic University, University of Herat)
10. Partnership Agreement signing
11. Reception

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The seminar was opened by Zuzana Letkova, who welcomed all participants and gave the floor to Rector of the Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava, prof. Ing. Vladimír Bálež, DrSc.

Rector of the SUT, prof. Bálež, welcomed participants of the seminar and expressed special thanks to foreign guests from partner institutions. He appreciated new contacts with project partner institutions and establishing the network for cooperation within new Asia-Europe Link project. Next part of the rector's speech was devoted to presentation of the Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava, its history, faculties, study programs, basic statistics and current projects research.

The second presentation was given by Ing. Haydary, PhD., main coordinator of the Asia-Europe Link project. Mr. Haydary thanked guests for their participation at the seminar and foreign partners for cooperation on the project *A Euro-Asia Partnership for Development Human Resource Capacity of Engineering Education in Afghanistan* financed by the European Commission in the framework of the Asia-Europe Programme.

The key points of his presentation included:

- Project objectives (Contribution to the improvement of engineering education in Afghanistan)
- Partnership structure
- List of partners
- Justification of the project focus
- Presentation of the activities
- Presentation of expected impacts and outputs
- Project duration (January 2008 – December 2010)
- Overall budget plan (total project costs: 650,925 €, amount requested from EU: 488,194€, contributions by partners/other resources: 162,730€).

Mr. Haydary expressed hope for stable security and political situation in Afghanistan. Stability and peace is necessary not only for development in the country but also for the success of the project. Current challenges in the field of education include development and improvement education, especially university education, which was abandoned during Taliban regime. Educated people are important for the country development and growth.

Next part of the seminar was focused on presentations of individual project partners and their institutions.

**1. Vienna University of Technology, Austria:**

The partner institution was presented by Mr. Gabko. The main points of his presentation consisted of:

- Outline of the history

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- The most famous alumni
- Organizational structure (8 faculties: Architecture and Planning, Civil Engineering, Electrical Engineering and Information Technology, Mechanical and Industrial Engineering, Technical Chemistry, Mathematics and Geoinformation, Physics, Informatics)
- Study programs
- Facts & Figures
- International relations and education
- International research
- University location, environment and cultural opportunities

## **2. Asian Institute of Technology, Thailand:**

The presentation was given by Mr. Thouard and Mr. Shipin. The main content of the presentation included:

- Vision, Mission and Characteristics
- Multicultural environment
- Core values and competitive advantages
- Academic areas and professional training
- Introduction of the schools (School of Engineering and Technology; School of Environment, Resources and Development; School of Management; non-degree training programs and consultancy services)
- Thematic knowledge area
- Sponsored and contracted projects
- Examples of research
- Graduates, staff and current students statistics
- Partners and Board of Trustees
- The Asian Institute of Technology is opening the office at the Balkh University in Afghanistan
- Mr. Shipin strengthened an international environment at the Institute (students as well as staff).

## **3. Kabul Polytechnic University, Afghanistan:**

The university was presented by the rector, prof. Fakhruddin. The presentation consisted of:

- University history and organization structure
- Basic statistics (students, staff)
- Cooperation of academic staff with state or private institutions
- Presentation of the individual faculties (Faculty of Construction, Faculty of Geology and Mining, Faculty of Electromechanics)
- Current problems, state and damages of the university buildings and premises after war period
- Main priorities and needs (achievement of autonomy and academic freedom, improvement of education quality, reforms of curricula reflecting

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current problems and modern approaches, improvement of education conditions for women, development of infrastructure, improvement of foreign languages education, recovery of the laboratories and premises for practical and experimental work)

- The key donors and partners of KPU (the main donor is the World Bank).

**4. University of Herat, Afghanistan:**

The presentation was given by Dr. Assad, rector of the University. The key points of his presentation can be summarized as follows:

- History of the University – young university, established only in 1982
- Taliban period
- Basic statistics and organizational structure
- Problems with education level and quality of the academic staff
- Strategic plan (increase quality of education, development of academic capacities, establishment of new partnerships with international organizations)
- Presentation of partnerships with various European organizations and universities
- Effort to increase quality of academic staff via international study stays and exchange stays of staff and students between University of Herat and European partner universities
- The main goal for the next period is to achieve higher quality of education and to become comparable with other universities
- Dr. Assad expressed his gratefulness for the project of Slovakiaid, within which the laboratory for testing construction materials was built.
- The University of Herat is the state university. 100% of the expenses are covered by the state.
- The rector expressed the hope for sustainable development and fruitful cooperation within international projects.

Within the last part of the seminar, the Academic Cooperation Agreement was signed by project partners from Slovakia and Afghanistan. The Agreement is going to be sent to Thailand and Austria for signing by statutory representatives of the AIT and VUT.

The seminar was concluded with small reception for all invited guests and participants.

**Minutes from Closing meeting  
held on March 7, 2008**

Place of the meeting

Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava

**Euro-Asia Partnership for Development Human Resource Capacity of Engineering  
Education in Afghanistan**

Asia-Link Program of the European Commission  
Project Nr. 147-063

Time

9:00 – 12:00 h

Participants

Ing. Juma M. Haydary, PhD., Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava, Slovakia

Dr. M. Naim Assad, University of Herat, Afghanistan

Prof. Dr. Mir Fakhruddin, Kabul Polytechnic University, Afghanistan

Dipl. Ing. Jean-Philippe Thouard, Asian Institute of Technology, Thailand

Dr. Oleg V. Shipin, Asian Institute of Technology, Thailand

Zuzana Letkova (taking notes)

Agenda

3. Approval of the working plan for the first year
4. Time schedule of the project activities and their financing
5. Distribution of participants of MSc study stays and short-term visits between Herat and Kabul universities
6. Conditions for selection of participants
7. Mechanism of payments

At the beginning of the meeting, Dr. Haydary welcomed participants and distributed materials for discussion.

The plan of activities (see *Annex 1*) and their time schedule were approved with a small modification: the Scientific Seminar planned for the autumn 2008 was proposed to be moved to the first quarter of 2009. Project coordinator should negotiate with EC possible shift of financial resources for Scientific Seminar from 2008 to 2009. The reason for this modification is to ensure active participation of Afghan trainees who will take part in short-term study stays at the partner universities in Slovakia and Thailand in autumn 2008 and allow them to present experience and gained knowledge at the Seminar. The rest of the working plan remains unchanged according to the project document.

In 2008, two trainees from Afghanistan should participate on short-term study stay at AIT, one trainee at VUT and 3 trainees at SUT. Selection process for short-term study stays will be done by Afghan partners, who will define the selection criteria and select appropriate candidates from their universities. Hosting universities have to be provided with CVs of selected candidates in order to deliver necessary information to study officers for official approval.

Number of trainees from Kabul and Herat universities for short-term study stays as well as for MSc study will be discussed later with both Afghan partners. KPU should send more participants than HU as HU has only one engineering faculty and it could be a problem to select sufficient number of participants with required level and quality of education.

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Afghan partners have to pay attention to selection process for MSc. studies in order to select the best participants and ensure their successful graduating. In principle, students with Bc. degree can continue in MSc. study but they will need strong support from faculty members. If students do not fulfill necessary conditions for MSc. studies in the respective hosting university, than it is better not to send them to abroad. Failures will not bring expected results and impacts and will negatively influence project implementation as well as students themselves.

Selection of students suitable for MSc. study must be done from bigger sample in order to secure transparency and the best quality of candidates. Hosting universities have to participate at the selection process. The conditions, recommendations and obstacles for the candidates of MSc. studies will be determined after selection and approval of specific study fields.

Study fields for short-term as well as long-term studies must be defined by Afghan partner as soon as possible. After that hosting universities can find overlapping areas and prepare specific offer for Afghan trainees in order to meet their demands. For short-term trainees the focus of their stay must be defined, e.g. research, curriculum development, etc. by Afghan partners. The proposals for study areas have to be delivered to hosting universities within next two weeks, final decision will be done by end of March 2008 in order to start selection process as soon as possible. Students of MSc. study at AIT have to be selected already at the beginning of June 2008 as the semester starts in August 2008.

In the next part of the meeting financial issues and mechanism were discussed. The first installment was already transferred to SUT, which represents 80% of the total amount requested from EC (requested amount is 488,194€). The same key is going to be applied for financing partners' activities. Partners have to fill the Financial Identification Form, bases on which SUT can transfer the first advanced payments to partners (AIT, VUT). The forms must be signed and stamped and send to SUT.

In the last part of the meeting the mechanism for covering field trips indirectly connected to the project was discussed. The budget allows some extent of flexibility but only activities directly connected to the project can be covered. Budget lines planned for the respective activities can not be exceeded.

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**Conclusions**

1. The plan of activities and their time schedule were approved
2. The first Scientific Seminar is moved to the first quarter of 2009. Project coordinator will negotiate possible shift of finances for the Seminar from 2008 to 2009.
3. In 2008, two trainees from Afghanistan will participate on short-term study stay at AIT, one trainee at VUT and 3 trainees at SUT.
4. Distribution of trainees and students between two Afghan universities will be discussed within March 2008.
5. Afghan partners are obliged to prepare proposal of study areas and focus within two weeks, for both short-term as well as MSc. studies.
6. Hosting universities will prepare an offer and final decision will be done by end of March 2008.
7. Afghan partners are responsible for selection process for short-term stays.
8. Hosting universities have to prepare selection conditions and criteria for MSc. candidates and will participate at selection process. Afghan partners have to secure sufficient number of candidates for selection process in order to ensure selection of the best candidates.
9. Partners' organizations, AIT and VUT have to send FIFs to SUT in order to make the first advanced payments to cover project activities.
10. The Agreements already signed by representatives of Afghan universities and SUT are going to be sent to Thailand for signature and later SUT will arrange signature of the representative of VUT and distribution of originals to all partners.