



Reports of the MOLAN Evaluation Board

Year One Report

1. The MOLAN project began in December 2007 with the goal to further the exchange of information about good practices that have enhanced the motivation of young people to learn languages. Three stages were envisaged for the project – Stage One: preparation, collection and analysis of case studies; Stage Two: preparation of a handbook and of a web-based system for targeted information retrieval; Stage Three: dissemination of project findings etc. This report is about Stage One.
2. Over 80 case studies were prepared and collected, more or less equally divided between the University sector (RES 1) and the School sector (RES 2). While the number of case studies may appear small, it is actually satisfactory since the goal was not to collect statistically significant information about what is going on in the countries covered by the project, but to collect examples of successful initiatives and to identify success factors liable to be replicated in different contexts.
3. The case studies were published on the MOLAN website, an easily accessible and informative facility that was inaugurated some months after the launch of the project. For the time being the publication is for internal use only. The case studies will become universally accessible when the revision process is finished. The revision is made necessary by inadequacies in presentation style, unclear identification of and lack of distinction between success factors and success indicators, insufficient emphasis on motivation. Revision needs appear to be more significant in the RES 2 case studies.
4. Analysis of the case studies has begun for RES 1 whereas for RES 2 there seems to be a delay in this respect. Since analysis is a crucial step towards Stage Two, it should be completed as rapidly as possible. Analysis of both RES 1 and RES 2 cases should preferably be carried out by a small team including members of RES 1 and RES 2 in order to ensure consistency.
5. Work on Stage Two has already begun. Categories to be used in the handbook and the website have been identified and there is reason to believe that the schedule envisaged will be respected. Particularly satisfactory is the fact that categories refer to motivation strategies that apply both to HE and to the school sector.
6. The financial aspects are perfectly in line with the expenditure plan.

7. In the light of the above, given that the envisaged goals have been achieved or are in the process of being achieved, the Evaluation Board gives a positive assessment of the activity carried out in Stage One.

8. However, the Evaluation Board regards the role played by a crucial partner like European Schoolnet as not entirely satisfactory.
In particular it deplores the lack of continuity in representation and, indeed, the under-representation of European Schoolnet at meetings which led to a lack of interaction between RES 1 and RES 2 with subsequent differences in the preparation of case studies and delays in achieving the goals of Stage One.

9. Fully recognizing the value of European Schoolnet's potential contribution, the Evaluation Board looks forward to the timely resolution of the above-mentioned problems in the best interest of all parties.

Year Two Report

1. Year Two of the MOLAN project ended with a meeting held in Thessaloniki. The meeting was impeccably organised and was devoted to a presentation of the activities carried out in Year Two and a discussion of the activities to be carried out in Year Three.
2. The Evaluation Board appreciates the fact that the guidelines issued at the Vienna meeting (May 2009) have been duly followed.
3. Year Two envisaged the completion of the Handbook and the launch of the Online Information System. While the original deadline (20 November 2009) was not met, work on the two products is at a very advanced stage and the new deadline (1 May 2010) seems very realistic.
4. Work still to be done on the Handbook includes the revision of some Executive Summaries and the drafting of the Introduction. The revision work began during the Thessaloniki meeting.
5. The Evaluation Board regrets the withdrawal from the project of the Handbook coordinator whose work had been excellent.
6. The Evaluation Board appreciates the decision to translate the Introduction as a means to improve the Handbook's impact. The decision is to be welcomed as a great leap forward in the name of multilingualism.
7. Three of the four chapters of the Handbook cover both the School sector and the Higher Education sector, whereas the fourth is exclusively devoted to the latter. The Evaluation Board deems it advisable to expand it to include the Schools as well.
8. Work done on the Online Information System has led to an excellent product of professional quality.
9. The Evaluation Board appreciates its being an open system to which new case studies may be constantly added.
10. The Evaluation Board also appreciates the fact that the System will continue to be operational after the end of the project, thus guaranteeing a follow-up to the activities carried out during the project life.
11. Sustainability of the Online Information System, however, depends on availability of adequate human and financial resources. The Evaluation Board feels that some planning in this respect might be in order.

12. The Evaluation Board deplores the continued absence of the deputy coordinator in spite of all efforts made by the project coordinator. This lack of commitment and the subsequent weaker input from the School sector is a major flaw in a project that so far has been carried out in a very satisfactory manner.

Year Three/Final Report

The MOLAN Network project ended on 28 February 2011, after an extension had been asked for and granted towards the end of Year Three.

All the goals envisaged for the three years of the project have been achieved, namely the collection and analysis of case studies in the university and school sectors with identification of success factors and success indicators; the creation of an online information retrieval system; the preparation of impact reports; the production of a handbook; the organization of a dissemination conference followed by a Declaration.

While there have been a few difficulties, successfully tackled by the project coordinator and his staff, and while the involvement of the school sector has occasionally been slightly below expectations, the project may definitely be regarded as successful.

The quality of the case studies is rather good as are their accessibility and readability. Significantly, most of them attach great importance to the notion of context as a crucial element in the facts reported. A wide range of initiatives have been shown to be successful in a variety of contexts, countries and languages.

The quality of the handbook is also rather good and the decision to disseminate it mainly online, with the printed version limited to 1000 copies including just a summary of the content available online, is reasonable and commendable.

The MOLAN website is excellent as was the idea to start a blog. The project has produced a sustainable open system that may be regularly updated and that offers visibility for people, initiatives and institutions, which is in itself a motivating tool.

The meetings held during the three years were impeccably organized. The same is true for the Final Conference held in Brussels on 27-28 January.



On account of the above, the Evaluation Board gives a very positive assessment of the MOLAN project and of the activities carried out in its framework over the past three years.

The Evaluation Board also recommends that appropriate dissemination activities be carried out, by creating links and relay points and through actions carried out by EUA, EUN and the EU Institutions.