

MINUTES

Date: November 24th – 25th 2011
Location: Kerkrade, The Netherlands
Participants: see end of this document

After its foundation in 2010 in Graz this event represented the first Annual Meeting of the COPERNICUS Alliance network. The two-day-program included a workshop on University Appraisal and Assessment for Sustainable Development jointly co-organised by the COPERNICUS Alliance and the United Nations University Institute of Advanced Studies (UNU-IAS) on November 24th. Therefore the minutes are divided into two parts accordingly. The COPERNICUS Alliance Annual Meeting 2011 took place right after the 6th Global RCE Conference (November 21st – 23rd) at the same location.

You can download the presentations held during the meeting on the COPERNICUS Alliance website at: www.copernicus-alliance.org



Impressions from the meeting (more photos at www.copernicus-alliance.org)

COPERNICUS Alliance Management Meeting (Nov. 24th)

Activity & Financial Report 2010/11

Friedrich Zimmermann, president of the COPERNICUS Alliance, opened the meeting and explained the Agenda. He reported on the current member status and the working groups, as well as the activities since 2010 [for more detailed information on these issues see “COPERNICUS Alliance looking back & planning ahead”].

The financial report was positively accepted by the attending members.

Rietje van Dam-Mieras, member of the Scientific Board, gave a summary of the historic development of the COPERNICUS Alliance. Currently several members of the COPERNICUS Alliance are active within a Regional Centre of Expertise as well. The relation between RCEs and the COPERNICUS Alliance was discussed, pointing out that there should be no competition (especially for funding) but a use of synergies between the two initiatives. The willingness from COPERNICUS Alliance members to cooperate and being open was emphasized. Therefore it is important to promote the network during multiple events and bring in the COPERNICUS Alliance at any possibility.

Adaptation of Scientific Board

As one member of the Scientific Board left the board app. 1,5 years ago, a new member for the term 2009 – 2012 was proposed with *Philipp Schöffmann*. After a presentation by himself he was accepted as new scientific board member (student representative).

Elections of Board 2012/13

On behalf of all members *Maik Adomssent* thanked *Friedrich Zimmermann* for his work during the current president period. He proposed *Daniella Tilbury* as president and *Clemens Mader* as vice-president for the term of 2012 and 2013 to the Scientific Board that is obliged to vote on the president board. *Daniella Tilbury* gave a presentation via Skype, addressing status quo, strategic pathways and priority actions for 2012/13 [for more detailed information on these issues see “COPERNICUS Alliance looking back & planning ahead”].

The proposed president board was elected by the attending members of the scientific board and the other members via email. As a consequence the COPERNICUS Alliance secretariat will move from University of Graz to University of Gloucestershire as of January 1st 2012.

COPERNICUS Alliance looking back & planning ahead (Nov. 25th)

[see download on website: [“CA_AM_111125_looking back and planning ahead”](#)]

COPERNICUS Alliance Activity Report

In this first session on the second day *Maik Adomssent* and *Clemens Mader* gave an overview on the current member status and the working groups, as well as the past activities of the COPERNICUS Alliance.

- Members: There are 19 COPERNICUS Alliance member institutions at the moment. The network aims for further expansion, especially in countries that do not have member institutions yet. It was pointed out that the topic of sustainable development is treated differently due to different political systems, mentalities as

well as languages which can be a reason for barriers. Through personal contacts in certain countries these barriers might be overcome.

Furthermore benefits of a membership in the COPERNICUS Alliance are to be communicated clearer.

- Working groups: There have been 7 working groups showing different levels of activity. The new communication platform (see below) should bring an improvement to this respect, enabling easier communication among members and working groups. It was decided to reduce the working groups to 5: "Implementation of Sustainability in Universities", "Innovative Teaching & Learning", "European Interdisciplinary Research on Sustainability", "Policy Lobbying" and "Outreach". If there is a need for new working groups they can be easily created on the communication platform by the users.

David Clemson gave a report on latest activities as speaker of the group on "Innovative Teaching and Learning".

Maik Adomssent (speaker "Policy Lobbying") pointed out to seek contact to the European University Association (EUA), being the biggest university network in Europe for the possibility of funding and cooperation.

Philipp Schöffmann (student representative) will address students and student organizations to engage within the COPERNICUS Alliance.

- Activities: *Clemens Mader* reported on the events since 2010 that were either organized by COPERNICUS Alliance members or that were attended by members. Furthermore there have been two publications (GUNI World Report on Higher Education 2011; ESD Journal – 2011/5/1, Launching the COPERNICUS Alliance) and an application for an ERASMUS Multilateral Project ("European Quality Framework on Higher Education for Sustainable Development"). This application has been rejected by the European Union in the first attempt and is now open for members to join and re-apply.

New Website and Communication Platform "COPERNICUS elgg"

Mario Diethart introduced the participants to the new communication platform based on the Open Source Social Software "elgg". This platform now replaces the former website at www.copernicus-alliance.org and offers a variety of possibilities to provide effective communication among members and working groups. It includes tools to send messages, emails, share files and pictures, discuss in group pages, post news and events and more. The website is divided into a public and a member area which requires registration. Basically access to the whole content on the website is free; to participate actively and comment pages a registration is required. Furthermore every contribution that is made can be chosen to be visible to all members, only certain working group members or to the public.

Presentation of future strategies

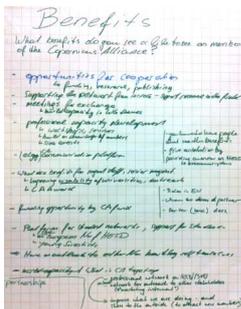
Clemens Mader gave a presentation (developed jointly with *Daniella Tilbury*) addressing the status quo, strategic pathways and priority actions for 2012/13.

Based on the presentation the position of the COPERNICUS Alliance was discussed. It was made clear that the network is the only one in the field of Higher Education for Sustainable Development in Europe. However, other institutions or networks also touch the issue (e.g. GUNI); therefore the COPERNICUS Alliance should define its position and objectives more clearly.

Working Group Session (World Café) (Nov. 25th)

This session was held in the World Café method at three tables: 1) benefits, 2) COPERNICUS Alliance & RCEs and a third table with multiple issues. The pictures show the flip-charts that were produced during the session.

1st table: Benefits



Benefits of a membership in the COPERNICUS Alliance that were mentioned refer to opportunities for cooperation in terms of funding (by the internal fund and for joint applications), research (in working groups) and publishing. The target audience includes management staff, senior management, young scientists and students.

The research within the working groups is considered to be a benefit, supported by the new communication platform. Both offer a possibility to communicate research results to a broad audience and increase their outreach, while a membership in the network improves the visibility of universities as a whole.

More content from the flip-chart:

- supporting the network from inside – support research in the field
- meetings for exchange – build capacity in working group themes
- professional capacity development (workshops, seminar, side-events, build on knowledge of members)
- improving visibility of universities, outreach
- platform for student networks – support for young scientists and students
- have an outlook to other networks how they sell themselves
- open access publication possibilities
- partnerships

2nd table: COPERNICUS Alliance & RCEs

Several COPERNICUS Alliance members are connected or part of an RCE. Therefore synergies should be used. There are both differences and overlapping issues in the activities and aims of both initiatives. RCEs act on a regional level, while the COPERNICUS Alliance focuses more specific on the institutional level in Higher Education (in Europe). Both look for transformation in ESD, though they should not be seen as competitors.

The below image drawn during the session symbolizes the relation between RCEs, University and the COPERNICUS Alliance. The COPERNICUS Alliance has its focus on peers, whereas the RCEs concentrate on their stakeholders. RCEs exchange with ESD practitioners in the region and applied science, whereas the COPERNICUS Alliance exchanges with universities at an international level.

More content from the flip-chart:

- look for opportunities but don't limit it to RCEs
- RCEs can deliver research fields for the CA

Workshop on University Appraisal and Assessment for Sustainable Development (Nov. 24th)

Key Note: Value assessment in work of higher education (*Arthur Lyon Dahl*)

[see download on website: ["CA_AM_111124_Dahl_value assessment"](#)]



Arthur Lyon Dahl outlined the challenges of university assessment and highlighted the role of values that contribute to sustainable development in higher education. He pointed out that SD is an ethical concept and introduced the ESDinds Project, a research project for Civil Society Organizations. In this project 166 indicators were defined for certain values (Unity in diversity, Trust/Trustworthiness, Justice, Empowerment, Integrity, Respect for the community of life (the environment)). For one value several indicators may be used. These indicators can help to assess SD, however, it has to be considered that they are culturally different.

Session 1: Problematization, scoping and major challenges to redefine quality of higher education

After an input statement by *Clemens Mader*, mentioning major challenges in sustainability assessment especially in regards to higher education, participants discussed in an interactive session on the current situation of university appraisal and assessment for sustainable development. The results on the following pages are taken from the flip-charts.

Quality in higher education – What do “we” understand?

- opening to problems of the world/“everyday life” relevance, social problems
- intersectoral, interdisciplinary, holistic
- education that is inter... etc.
- critical of short term pressures of political leaders
- critical of dominant discourse and posing alternatives
- principles/ethics; quality is a value judgment
- student involvement, participation driven
- quality of inputs or quality of outputs?
- quality as “fitness of purpose” different from “quality for purpose”
- competence orientation – outcome driven
- open to new technologies
- outreach obsolescence engagement outside of HE to community
- Is HE political? If yes we need to engage!
- responsible citizenship – not jobs only

Scoping – What areas for assessment in higher education need to be considered?

- theory to practice
- academics seen as practitioners and vice versa
- social learning across university planned activities
- research/problem orientation
- integration of real world problems

Major challenges – What are major challenges in development and promotion of university appraisal and assessment for sustainable development?

- to make these approaches learning ones – HEs learn by assessment
- limited conception of what “assessment” means and how to do it
- developing inclusive approach, student voice, academic voice, management attitudes/support
- to address both: complexity and practicability
- comparability of different approaches most often not possible
- Is our approach to assessing SD accessible? Who could/should understand it?
- Why the appraisal and assessment? For whom and for what?
- harmonizing the indicators with that of the outside world
- universities are not drivers, they are driven!
- Do we really need promotion of univ. appraisal and assessment for ESD?
- how to get university staff into the boat
- How to deal with the narrow scope of ICT-rankings?
- poor understanding of how to make change work and failure of senior leaders to support

Session 2: Tools and Approaches for Higher Education Appraisal and Assessment for Sustainable Development

In this session five speakers showed tools and approaches from different areas around the world for assessing higher education for sustainable development.

LiFE Sustainability Index (UK) (*Jimmy Brannigan*)

[see download on website: [“CA_AM_111124_Brannigan_LiFE”](#)]



Jimmy Brannigan pointed out that in the last years sustainability was measured with indicators that are easy to measure (CO₂, water consumption etc.). SD is unique at every university, although there are certain values that might be the same. It is an ongoing process and e.g. policy and strategy at one institution are assessed, while at the same time single actions (without a concrete strategy) are taken into account as well. The LiFE Index is carried out in three cycles per year

by an external team of expert assessors.

University Appraisal for Sustainable Development (Asia-Pacific) (Zinaida Fadeeva)

[see download on website: ["CA_AM_111124_Fadeeva_AUA"](#)]



Zinaida Fadeeva introduced ProSPER.Net (Network for the Promotion of Sustainability in Postgraduate Education and Research), a network of 22 Higher Education Institutions in Asia and the Pacific Region committed to integrate Sustainable Development into postgraduate courses and curricula.

There is an inter-university project supervised by the UNU-IAS and UNU-IIST that combines six partners working on several assessment tools at the same time.

These are:

- Self-Awareness Tool:
 - 22 questions covering governance, education, research and outreach
 - Developed and being refined upon pilot-testing with project members
- Benchmarking:
 - Ongoing development of indicators for governance, education, research and outreach
 - Part of a major project being undertaken by UNU-IIST: the Global Research Benchmarking System (GRBS)
- Consultation and Dialogue:
 - Model is being developed upon pilot-testing of the Self-Awareness Tool

University appraisal & assessment of EfS – the University of Western Sydney approach (Australia) (Geoff Scott)

[see download on website: ["CA_AM_111124_Scott_UWS"](#)]



Geoff Scott presented the “UWS Academic Standards and Assessment Framework For Learning and Teaching” that is used as a model that can prove and improve quality of university activities. Results at University of Western City show that the model influences its performance positively.

The model is based on four factors: 1) Design, 2) Support, 3) Delivery, 4) Impact

RCE Makana and Rural Eastern Cape (Rob O'Donoghue)

[see download on website: ["CA_AM_111124_ODonoghue_Makana"](#)]



Rob O'Donoghue gave an overview on several tools used in the region of RCE Makana (South Africa), that partly are jointly organized with partners:

- Climate change/ecosystem services in the context of human well-being
- Handprints heritage knowledge practices and learning to change
- Sustainability Commons indicators with story reporting from audit to change-practices
- E-3S Framework for CAPS Teacher Education Initiative
- Some orientating tools for the development of situated and open-ended knowledge-practice learning pathways
- A realist framing tool for constituting and assessing open processes of situated learning to change

GMID – Graz Model for Integrative Development (Clemens Mader)

[see download on website: ["CA_AM_111124_Mader_GMID"](#)]



Clemens Mader introduced the Graz Model for Integrative Development that is designed to assess multiple sustainability processes. As he explained it is appropriate for the assessment at both an individual and an overall level of the RCE network. Currently it is implemented at the RCE Reporting Portal.

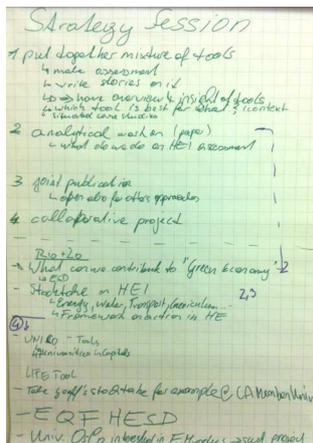
The key for development processes towards sustainability is the integrative incorporation of five principles:

- 1) Leadership & Vision, 2) Social Network, 3) Participation, 4) Education & Learning, 5) Research Integration

The model addresses the following issues:

- how RCEs contribute to sustainable development
- gain overview on the RCE including strengths & weaknesses
- identify risks and potential conflicts at a sufficiently early stage
- improve participation of actors in the development and assessment of the RCE
- make improvements to the RCE in areas of management, sustainability etc.
- explain and justify the project & funding and the decision taken

Session 3: Discussion on common strategy



Based on the session before a common strategy towards a global application of sustainability appraisal and assessment systems was discussed.

Four ideas were elaborated:

- 1) Common paper investigating a mixture of tools for sustainability appraisal and assessment to have an overview on which tool is best for which purpose.
- 2) Analytical work on a paper on sustainability appraisal and assessment:
 - Rio +20: What can we contribute to "Green Economy"?
 - Stock take on HEI: energy, water, curriculum etc.; framework on action in HE
- 3) Joint publication, open also for other approaches
 - Stock take on HEI: energy, water, curriculum etc.; framework on action in HE
- 4) Joint initiatives involving different universities and RCEs were suggested.
 - ERASMUS Multilateral Project "European Quality Framework on Higher Education for Sustainable Development", that was rejected by the European Union in the first attempt and might be applied once again. University of Oslo stated their interest for cooperation.
 - UNICA-tools (47 universities in capitals)
 - LiFE tool

Participants

Name	Institution	Country
Maik Adomssent	Leuphana Universität Lüneburg	Germany
Karen Adshead	London South Bank University	UK
Ali Bukar Ahmad	RCE Kano	Nigeria
Jimmy Brannigan	The Environmental Association for Universities and Colleges	UK
Maria Mercedes Callejas Restrepo	RCE Bogota	Colombia
Javier Carbajal-Mendoza	Inst. Peruano del Pensamiento Complejo Edgar Morin-IPCEM, Universidad Ricardo Palma	Peru
Kiran Banga Chhokar	Centre for Environment Education	India
Jane Claricoates	Swansea University	UK
David Clemson	London South Bank University	UK
Pierre Cocheril	RCE Candidate	France
Arthur Lyon Dahl	University of Brighton	UK
Margaret Fleming	RCE East Midlands	UK
Joop de Kraker	Open Universiteit	The Netherlands
Mario Diethart	RCE Graz-Styria/COPERNICUS Alliance	Austria
Jiri Dlouhy	Charles University Environment Center	Czech Republic
Zinaida Fadeeva	UNU-IAS	Japan
Maryam Faghihmani	University of Oslo	Norway
Eric Garcia Velandria	RCE Northern Mindanao (NorMin)	Philippines
Stefan Gindl	MODUL University Vienna	Austria
Jean Hugé	Vrije Universiteit Brussel/Universiteit Antwerpen	Belgium
Nadine Jauk	Universities Austria	Austria
Francoise Laveuve	RCE Candidate	France
Detlev Lindau-Bank	University of Vechta	Germany
Clemens Mader	RCE Graz-Styria/COPERNICUS Alliance	Austria
Marlene Mader	RCE Graz-Styria	Austria
Ingrid Mula	University of Gloucestershire	UK
Rob O'Donoghue	Rhodes University	South Africa
Asyrah Abdul Rahim	RCE Penang	Malaysia
Marco Rieckmann	Leuphana Universität Lüneburg	Germany
Jos Rikers	Open Universiteit	The Netherlands
Eduardo Sacayon	RCE Guatemala	Guatemala
Philipp Schöffmann	RCE Vienna/WU Vienna University of Economics and Business	Austria
Geoff Scott	University of Western Sydney	Australia
Kerstin Sonesson	Malmö University, Faculty Education and Society	Sweden
Kazuhiko Takemoto	UNU-IAS	Japan
Tsuneo Takeuchi	RCE Chubu	Japan
Daniella Tilbury [via Skype]	University of Gloucestershire	UK
Tom Waas	University of Antwerp/Free University of Brussels	Belgium
Friedrich Zimmermann	University of Graz/COPERNICUS Alliance	Austria