

# ODL Quality in Russian Federation, Delphi II input.

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Based on the success of Delphi I, the European Commission and the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation decided to create a 3-year successor project, Delphi II, with the overall aim being to bring the supply of education and training closer to the societal demand by developing continuing training and pursuing quality in, and access to, the Russian educational system, notably in the fields of VET, management training and Open and Distance Learning (ODL).

At the beginning of the project there were two main objectives for ODL in ToR:

- The 5 previously established Regional Resource Centers (RRCs) for ODL become a resource for widened access to continuing training and methodological development;
- The Ministry of Education has elaborated and approved a quality system for ODL.

Over the last few years, the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) of the Russian Federation had paid considerable attention to the setting up and development of an Open Learning system. This is reflected in the Law on Education, Program Papers, and in the funding of a number of projects at federal and sectoral level. However, the legal basis for ODL in Russia is still being developed, including ways to ensure the quality of products and services, licensing and ODL providers' accreditation, and the certification of ODL specialists.

ODL Component had a plan to elaborate methodological recommendations on the creation of a certification system for products and educational services with the regard for clients' needs at various educational levels, including business education and professional education and training (taking account of the possibility of integration and reciprocal recognition of certificates in the modern international systems).

So we had a plan to focus on the following issues while creating the system of ODL quality assessment:

1. Human resources, their performance appraisal and certification
2. Products and services, their certification
3. Providers, their licensing and accreditation

This involved:

- Creation of the prototype testing system of ODL specialists' evaluation and certification in line with occupational profiles and competencies;
- Creation of the prototype of a certification system for ODL programs;
- Formulation of approaches for the accreditation of ODL providers (both designers and educational institutions);
- Developing advice to the MoES on the protection of Intellectual Property Rights, such an important issue in today's marketplace of ideas.

The set of objectives implemented primarily by ODL RRCs with the active involvement of leading European and Russian experts, with support from regional administrations. Upon completion of Delphi II the RRCs had to become approved providers of quality ODL resources in their respective regions.

But during component implementation the leaders of the project and component had seen some challenges and restrictions. The most important were the following:

- Education and training policies have a direct impact on the social and economic welfare of the community. With this in mind, Delphi II's challenge was to discover how ODL can best be embedded into the federal and regional education and training strategies and approaches to help bring about regional development. Under what conditions? Why? How? With what stakeholders? Complementing the modernization efforts by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation the ODL Component worked on the regional level with regional stakeholders to discover possible policy and regulatory actions that can underpin a new regional approach and recognition of ODL and advance regional development.
- As practice and reality showed that the results expected of the ODL Component were very ambitious. We had not time, budget and human resources to realize the following:
  - A. An all-round marketing and quality approach in each RRC.
  - B. Improvement of the strategic, developmental and methodological capacity of the RRCs.
  - C. RRCs' dissemination to one institute/centre in another region.
  - D. Competency-based job profiles for ODL specialists.
  - E. Certification system for ODL providers.
  - F. Advice to policy makers on competence systems for ODL specialists.
  - G. Advice to policy makers on protection of Intellectual Property Rights.

The project/component leaders kept a long and difficult work for making ToR relevant concerning the start situation. According to the Terms of Reference the goals of the ODL Component were the following:

1. Building sustainable resource centres in the regions
  - a) Development of marketing plans by the 5 ODL RRCs that would address individual needs of the RRC and demonstrate sustainable development of the RRC network after the Delphi II project is completed.
  - b) Strengthening strategic, developmental, methodological, technological and human resources capacity of the RRCs so that they could be recognised as state-of-art ODL institutions in their regions and beyond.

## 2. Dissemination

- a) Beside the horizontal dissemination activities the two new training institutions/ centres (one in each new region) will be involved in more in-depth dissemination of the Delphi know-how and developments.
- b) Completion of the competence-based profiling of ODL specialists started under the Delphi I according to internationally comparable criteria and, if necessary, dissemination of this information among wider audience of stakeholders.
- c) Building links with other relevant ODL and e-learning initiatives to ensure the Delphi experience is integrated into other projects and built upon.

## 3. Policy Advice

- a) Policy advice on protection of intellectual property rights for federal level.

Thus we did not need to build an ODL Quality System, but the most important fragments of it.

### Strategic priorities of the ODL component, methods and tools for achieving results:

- Improving strategic, developmental, methodological, technological and human resources capacity of the ODL RRCs so that they could be recognised as state-of-art ODL institutions in their regions and beyond
- Supporting and developing the ODL RRCs to ensure their sustainability; providing recommendations for further network development in post-Delphi environment
- Development of the system of profiles and competencies of ODL specialists and policy recommendations for federal/ regional level
- Delivery of advice for policy-makers at the federal level to support with solving the issues of protection of intellectual property rights
- Dissemination of the Delphi I and Delphi II results, including the 2 new regions

There was the most important for us to transfer knowledge and understanding how to become sustainable. We used methodology and expertise by UOC (Open University of Catalonia), DLC MIEM (Distance Learning Centre of MIEM) and local experts.

We organised two steps of technological audit for the “old” 5 RRC.

The first step was in the very early beginning of the project. Main objective was to know the situation in the RRC after Delphi I.

The second step needed to help RRC to self assessment and find the solution for future sustainability. There had been developed the Delphi II Sustainability Analysis document by leadership of the ODL component.

### Delphi II Sustainability Analysis document

This document describes a proposed methodology to be applied by the Delphi II ODL Component during the evaluation phase of Regional Resource Centre sustainability.

This Delphi II project activity aims to develop sustainability analysis tools for allowing Regional Resource Centres to move from units within a university to functioning centres of excellence in their respective markets.

The document is sub divided into two sections. The first section explains the methodology used, and the second section describes the questionnaire, including the benchmarking indicators and measurements.

### **The Delphi 2 indicators and measurements**

There are eight core “meta-indicators” used in the Delphi II benchmarking system. These are:

- Learner Services
- Learning Delivery
- Learning Development
- Teaching Capability
- Evaluation
- Accessibility
- Technical Capability
- Institutional Capability

Example: RRC Services

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Examples of Possible RRC Implementation</b>
Learner Support Services	Intranet d e-mail accounts Original LMS/LCMS Professional LMS/LCMS (Lotus Learning Space, for example) Bulletin Boards
Learning Delivery Services	Instructions and calendars On-line or phone Help Desk Self-evaluation tools On-line or paper questionnaire Forum and chat rooms Learner behaviour tracking
Learning Development	Case studies and simulations ODL Services unit Searchable documentation On-line guidelines
Teaching Capability	Support guidelines (needs analysis and ODL career paths) Job profiles and competency map

	Training opportunities Training evaluation questionnaires
Evaluation	Quality systems Evaluation (conferences/workshops/questionnaires) Accreditation system
Accessibility	Statistical data tracking system Subsidies for disadvantaged or difficult-to-access learners
Technical Capability	IMS/IEEE standards HTML/PDF/XML/JPEG Open source tools
Institutional Capability	Networking via alumni and/or with regional support Marketing section Contracts with regional actors

#### Component events, methods and tools of network cooperation

The ODL component worked in the following 7 regions: Komi republic, Novosibirsk, Samara, Sverdlovsk, Volgograd and Voronezh regions and St. Petersburg.

The ODL Component was implemented by 7 EU and 20 RF experts.

Geographical disintegration of the regions, the need for efficient use of the component resources, high technological capacity of the ODL RRCs required applying a wide range of methods and networking tools, including virtual ones.

Face-to-face events: Seminar meetings of the ODL RRCs Directors, Workshops for managers and key staff of the ODL RRCs, Round tables, Group work, Presentations at All-Russian and international, Study Tour to the UK, Expert Missions, internal and external expert reviews, consultancy, Final regional conferences of the Delphi II project (in the events over 2000 people in total participated).

Virtual tools of cooperation:

- Web-sites - Delphi II project (<http://www.delphi-project.ru>) – information, news, announcements, materials, results, Moscow State Institute of Electronics and Mathematics, Distance Learning Centre portal (<http://www.odl.ru>) – materials of the Delphi I components, databases of the Delphi II VET and ODL components, networking tools: virtual work groups, e-mail, chats, forums, boards, news mailing, distributed application services, tools for organization of multipoint video conferences.
- Virtual working groups: Research, micro-project work, consultancy and expert review were implemented by cross-regional expert teams and other virtual space specialists in the form of expanded and structured discussion forums moderated by the chairs appointed by the Component managers.
- Unique events - 2 international multipoint videoconferences.

The objectives were the following:

- Testing modern technological e-learning solutions, comparing different technological and software solutions, testing channels, giving recommendations on improving technologies;
- Demonstrating high capacity and professional competencies of the RRC teams;

- Discussing issues related to: building the repository of resources of the ODL RRCs network based on the common metadata compatible with international standards, creating business processes of the ODL RRCs network on its base, summing up the results of the ODL RRCs work, identifying the areas of cooperation between the Delphi II ODL RRCs and other ODL centres and universities in the Russian Federation.

#### ODL Component results/ products

1. Teaching materials on the training programme “Strategic Management and Marketing in ODL” for managers and staff of the ODL RRCs.
2. Marketing plans for 5 ODL RRCs; expert review of the marketing plans.
3. Collection of materials following the UK Study Tour.
4. Results of the research activities conducted by cross-regional expert groups:
  - ✓ ODL Quality Assurance in the RF.
  - ✓ Human Resources and Qualification Upgrade of the ODL Specialists in the RF.
  - ✓ Using ICT to Enrich Learning Process in the RF.
  - ✓ ODL and Stakeholders’ Expectations.
  - ✓ Benchmarking Mechanism for Sustainable Development of the ODL Centres: Quality Management Approach.
5. Publication of the 6 microprojects implemented by cross-regional virtual expert groups:
  - Microproject No 1. “Recommendations for Post-Delphi II ODL RRC Network Sustainability”.
  - Microproject No 2. “Competency-based Job Profiles of ODL Specialists – Policy Recommendations”.
  - Microproject No 3 “Policy Recommendations on Protecting Intellectual Property Rights”.
  - Microproject No 4 “ODL RRC Network Repository
  - Microproject No 5 “Recommendations on Electronic Libraries Management”.
  - Microproject No 6 “ODL Technologies for Diverse Audiences”.
6. Collection of materials following the implementation of the Component activities in the regions:
  - ODL Quality: research, practices.
  - Complex Solutions for Sustainability of the ODL RRC Network.
  - Digital Collection of the ODL Component Materials - “The selected materials of the ODL Component” on a CD.
  - Component work materials – over 150 resources is available on the site <http://www.odl.ru>.

## Brief summary of the Component key papers by microprojects

**Microproject No 1.** I.V. Zimina, O.V. Kazanskaya, M.I. Nezhurina, D.A. Beliaev, T.Y. Dubovitskikh, K.I. Kremer. "Recommendations for Post-Delphi II Network Sustainability". / Edited by M.I. Nezhurina. Cameron Publishing, Moscow 2005. 32 pages.

This paper focuses on the ODL RRC network sustainability after the Delphi project, identifying the key factors of the network sustainability and describing how strategic sustainability can be ensured. This paper also includes a best practice report (with a number of interesting results in the marketing plans that have practical value) and missions of the ODL RRCs.

**Microproject No 2.** N. S. Nikitina, O. V. Kazanskaya, M. I. Nezhurina, I. V. Zimina, V.N. Babeshko, M.A. Bovtenko. "Competency-Based Job Profiles of Open and Distance Learning Specialists". / Scientific editing by M.I. Nezhurina. Cameron Publishing, Moscow 2005. 80 pages.

This paper focuses on development of the system of competencies of ODL specialists. The 7 job profiles developed by the authors are offered for discussion, including an ODL/e-learning tutor, a content developer, a project development adviser, a technical support administrator, a marketing manager, a specialist in quality control and staff development, and a student support service administrator. This paper describes some methods to develop a training course for ODL/e-learning specialists and recommendations for federal policy-makers.

**Microproject No 3.** M.I. Nezhurina, D.A. Saveliev, P.U. Kuznetsov. "Policy Recommendations on Protecting Intellectual Property Rights". / Scientific editing by M.I. Nezhurina. Cameron Publishing, Moscow 2005. 64 pages.

This paper focuses on development of policy and practice advice on protection of intellectual property rights to digital resources in an environment where information is readily available, and a cyberspace is emerging. The authors examine the challenges posed by the legal regulation of the use of intellectual assets in education, and assess applicable legislation on the subject. The authors suggest practical solutions for a broad range of problems. The intended audience for this document are government bodies and educational institutions, as well as individual authors and groups of authors involved in developing online learning resources.

**Microproject No 4.** V.A. Ustinov, N.G. Prokhorova, I.V. Kuteneva, N.E. Lozovnaya, M.I. Nezhurina, V.I. Guzhov, V.E. Vasiliev, V.N. Babeshko. "Network Repository for the Regional ODL Resource Centres". / Edited by M.I. Nezhurina. Cameron Publishing, Moscow 2005. 96 pages.

This paper focuses on developing the agreed approaches towards building shared repositories of the learning objects for joint use in the network of the ODL RRCs. This paper gives a review of the key concepts, introduces the problems associated with digital repositories, analyzes the existing repositories of the learning objects and metadata in terms of their possible use by the Delphi II ODL RRC network, which could help to ensure the Centres' efficient performance and share educational resources developed by the Centres. It also contains the agreed template for describing metadata of electronic resources of the ODL RRCs.

**Microproject No 5.** V.E. Vasiliev, T.S. Lander. "Recommendations on Electronic Libraries Management". / Edited by M.I. Nezhurina. Cameron Publishing, Moscow 2005. 44 pages.

This paper focuses on organization and management of electronic libraries, including technological standards of the development of the catalogues of electronic resources and best practice examples.

**Microproject No 6.** A.V. Solovov, M.I. Nezhurina, P. Fenton. "Technologies of Open and Distance Learning for Diverse Audiences (By example of Samara region)". / Edited by M.I. Nezhurina. Cameron Publishing, Moscow 2005. 32 pages.

This paper focuses on the applicability of distance learning technologies for different target groups by the example of Samara region. It gives analysis of social and economic background for using ODL technologies in the region, classification of potential customers and their specific features, as well as comparative features of the modern ODL technologies. It also provides a detailed description of the target groups and key methods used.

Interim and final results of the microprojects are available on the site <http://odl.ru>, which supporting by the Distance Learning Centre of MIEM on initiative base.

Future prospects of the ODL RRC network – Integration and Cooperation.

Board of Directors of the ODL RRC Network.

Setting up a Board which is a public body for managing the RRC network was initiated by the Directors of the ODL RRCs in June 2004.

The forms of interaction developed between the Centres (sharing resources, technologies, expert review and others) as well as Russian and international experience acquired in ODL/ e-learning gave an opportunity to build a cross-region network community of ODL professionals with common methodological background, common approaches towards development of legal and regulative frameworks, training human resources for ODL, building common repositories of educational electronic resources, complying with intellectual property regulations, etc. All this required establishing such a body as Board of Directors of the ODL RRCs that could consolidate their efforts in this area.

Mission: Board of Directors is designed to unite efforts aimed at building Russian ODL resource base, support further development of legal and regulative frameworks of the system of open education, improve performance of organizations and quality of the ODL services delivered in Russia.

#### Goals of the Board:

- Writing proposals on the development of the Russian ODL system for the Ministry of Education and Science of the RF and other authorities;
- Building and developing a cross-region network of the RRCs, the distributed/shared resource and information support of the RRC community;
- Providing legal background for consultancy mechanisms and sharing resources on the mutually beneficial conditions for the RRCs;
- Providing expert review of the methodology materials, ODL products and services;
- Delivering workshops and consultancy according to the RRC specialization;
- Organizing regional events for disseminating best experience important for ODL development;
- Supporting the implementation of the regional e-learning programmes;
- Developing common policy regarding international innovation projects;
- Preparing and implementing joint federal and international ODL projects;
- Dissemination activities following the international projects, including the Delphi I and II;
- Developing cooperation with international ODL institutions.

For more information about the ODL Component of the Delphi I and II and Russian Federal initiatives in ODL you could turn to Marina Nezhurina via email: **min@dlc.miem.edu.ru**