

## Dear Colleagues in the AU-NEPAD Network of Water Centres of Excellence

In the context of the extremely challenging and highly disturbing global situation, which is affecting us, we in the joint coordination of UNESCO and the DG Joint Research Centre (JRC) want to express our support and share our sincere thoughts and concerns to you and your team, hoping that they are all well and safe. UNESCO is globally adapting its response on a daily basis to the evolving and complex situation concerning the COVID-19 virus and the actions to be taken including teleworking and small up to quite large group meetings via social media channels.

**Concerning the ACEWATER II project**, it is clear at this stage that increasing restrictions on movement, and the difficulty in bringing people together, will impact on the current design of the Human Capacity Development component of this project.

In our current phase of activities, **this refers specifically to the presenting of pilot courses at universities and other training institutions, the movement of staff and students required for exchanges**. Controls on movement may limit the possibilities of staff and students to attend trainings and/or create restrictions on the implementation of fieldwork. If lockdown measures become more rigorous, staff from universities and training institutions may be required to work from home, meaning that the institution is effectively closed for normal training and classes. On a country-by-country basis, these measures are often accompanied by restrictions and complete ban on travel between countries, except for returning citizens. This is already the case for some of our Partners in Africa, UNESCO offices in Paris HQ and Brussels, and all offices of the European Commission including the JRC.

This challenge will call upon a clear reflection on necessary courses of action from all of us in order to not only protect our colleagues, and ourselves but, look for ways to advance with our common endeavors. **In light of this situation, we will perform a risk mapping and analysis with all CoE Partners concerning your current and expected future situation (challenges, restrictions) for implementing Pilot Courses, Trainings and Staff and Student Exchanges**. This will include you to provide us with information relating to the following questions:

- Are you experiencing **current challenges** managing / presenting courses
  - Due to required presence of students and / or staff?
  - Linked to increasing absence of students?
  - Due to partial or complete closure of school facilities and infrastructure?
  - Due to initial Workplan not fitting to the current challenges?
  - Other?
- Are there **other challenges** being experienced
  - By yourselves?
  - By your students?
  - By your institutions (university, faculty...)
  - Other?
- Do you see potential **mitigation** activities or **solutions** from your side such as:
  - Decentralized courses (e.g. provided outside of a main or centralized venue)?
  - Distance, digital and e-learning or training for courses?
  - Distance modules, seminars or webinars between CoEs instead of physical exchanges?
  - Adjusted timelines or Workplans to fit your current situations?
  - Adapting curricula to address the current outbreak / public health crisis?
  - Other?

- What is your **existing capacity** and/or limitations to implement the above options? If you require **support**, can you describe what kind of support you may need and what for, such as:
  - Program support (HR, coaching)?
  - Adapted training materials?
  - For digital and distance learning; hardware and/or software?
  - Other?

The results and analysis of this exercise will contribute to a program review of current activities and to opening pathways to future alternatives and put in place a document on lessons learned among the different CoE institutions that can be profitable for all of us at short-medium term. As Partners, your feedback will be essential for us to identify ways forward and to integrate this into our current planning. The information gathered can also be used to show how the CoEs are coping with the current situation, what challenges you are facing and the gaps that will be at the base of a future proposal. We look forward to hearing from you and thank you in advance for your collaboration.