

## WP8 Interim Report 1

July 2021

MIUN Coordinating Team

### Introduction

The SECRA interim reports are envisioned to be tools to ensure monitoring of activities— a kind of early warning mechanism, picking up issues that may amplify and cause disturbances within the project at a later stage. Additionally, these reports aim to capture the development of the consortium as a network, specifically geared towards bolstering quality cooperation among the partners. This is a way for the project to function as a good practice example for the university-industry collaborations it touts as salient.

For this reason, these reports do not follow an a priori format. Rather, they consist of important project updates as operations progress, drawing from material presented at working meetings and steering committee meetings.

### A Social Network Analysis of the Consortium

The project started during the pandemic and for the first 18 months our activities built on contingencies. We asked ourselves: what does it mean to build capacity in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in a collaborative way? How can we, if not measure, at least visualize collaboration? During the kickoff, we deployed a practical exercise to do just that. We conducted a simple social network analysis (SNA) of the project participants. We bounded the network using the participant list we compiled ahead of the start of the project resulting in 35 individuals. We constructed a roster with these names and asked all participants to mark the people that they (i) have worked with in international projects; (ii) have worked with outside international projects, and (iii) have published together (academically), for the purpose of building a multiplex network with these three relations. We categorized the participants by university and country and visualized the relations among them. We plan to conduct this exercise at different points in time for comparative purposes.

The following figure (Figure1) shows what SECRA looks like for all three relations. There are existing ties across universities and countries, mainly emanating from the previous Erasmus+ projects in which the participants have been involved in the past.

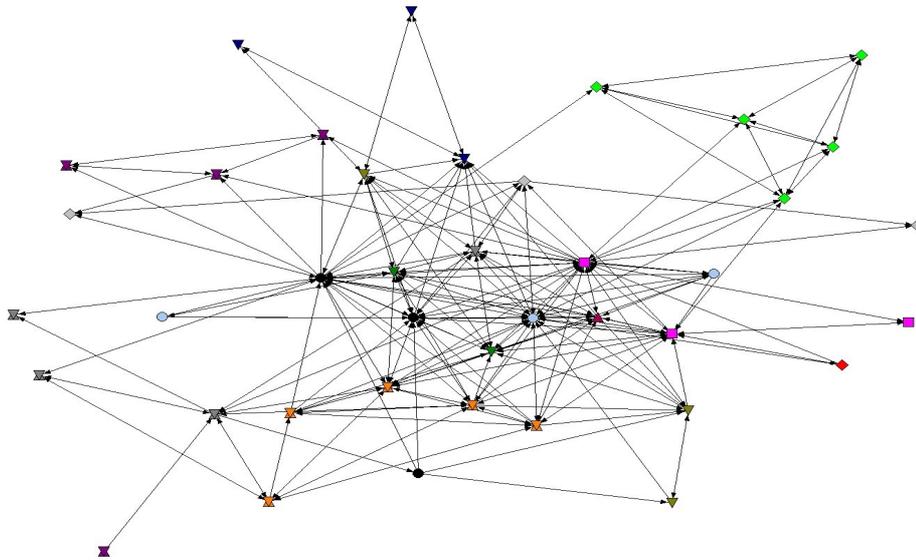


Figure 1 Multiplex network.

**Color:** MIUN: Pink; UCLan light blue; HUD: black; TTU: maroon; UoR: hunter green; USJ: olive green; UoP: dark blue; CMU: aubergine; NU: orange; MSU: grey; ADMU: light grey; PNU: red; MCL: neon green. **Shape:** SE: square; UK: circle; EE: up triangle; LK: down triangle; TH: hourglass; PH: diamond.

Note that, for example, MCL has ties among participants within the university, but not so much outside the university. This is shown more explicitly in Figure 2, which visualizes just international collaboration.

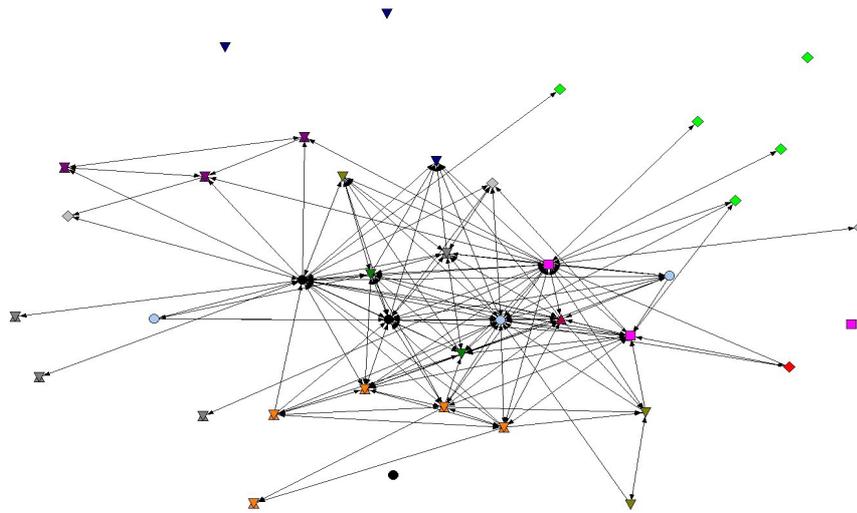


Figure 2 Collaboration in international projects.

**Color:** MIUN: Pink; UCLan light blue; HUD: black; TTU: maroon; UoR: hunter green; USJ: olive green; UoP: dark blue; CMU: aubergine; NU: orange; MSU: grey; ADMU: light grey; PNU: red; MCL: neon green. **Shape:** SE: square; UK: circle; EE: up triangle; LK: down triangle; TH: hourglass; PH: diamond.

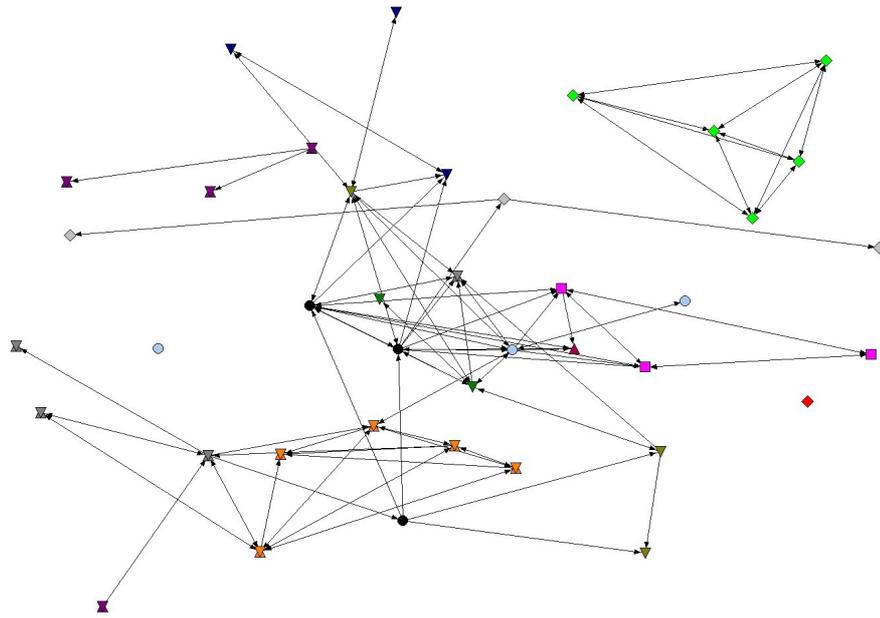


Figure 3 Collaboration other than international.

**Color:** MIUN: Pink; UCLan light blue; HUD: black; TTU: maroon; UoR: hunter green; USJ: olive green; UoP: dark blue; CMU: aubergine; NU: orange; MSU: grey; ADMU: light grey; PNU: red; MCL: neon green. **Shape:** SE: square; UK: circle; EE: up triangle; LK: down triangle; TH: hourglass; PH: diamond.

Not all international collaboration leads to publications, but there exists some collaboration in the consortium already as shown in Figure 4 below. We aim to increase these connections as the project unfolds.

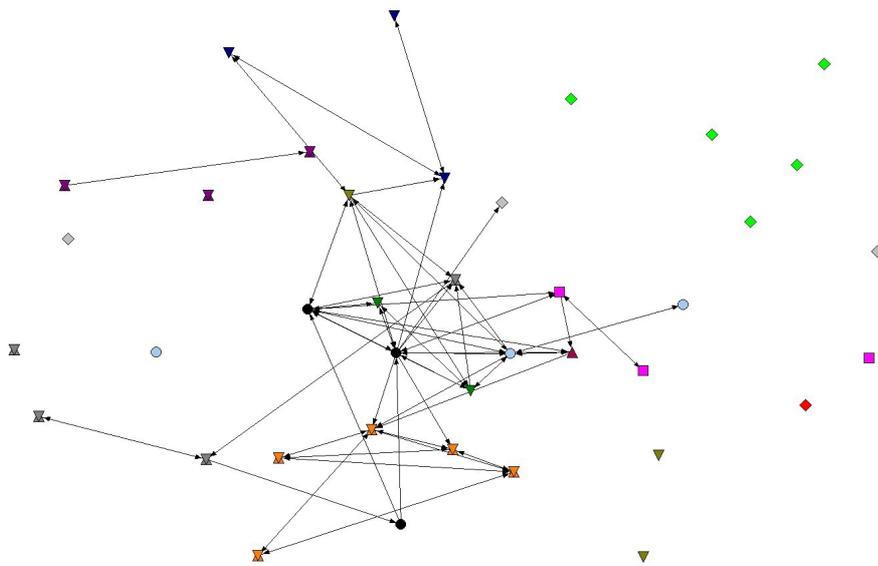


Figure 4 Published with.

**Color:** MIUN: Pink; UCLan light blue; HUD: black; TTU: maroon; UoR: hunter green; USJ: olive green; UoP: dark blue; CMU: aubergine; NU: orange; MSU: grey; ADMU: light grey; PNU: red; MCL: neon green. **Shape:** SE: square; UK: circle; EE: up triangle; LK: down triangle; TH: hourglass; PH: diamond.

Finally, SNA allows us to discover the most central actors in a network. As shown in Figure 5, the European partners—as coordinators of projects— remain central. We will work towards increasing the connections among the remaining of the participants, especially the Asian partners, within the lifetime of the project and beyond.

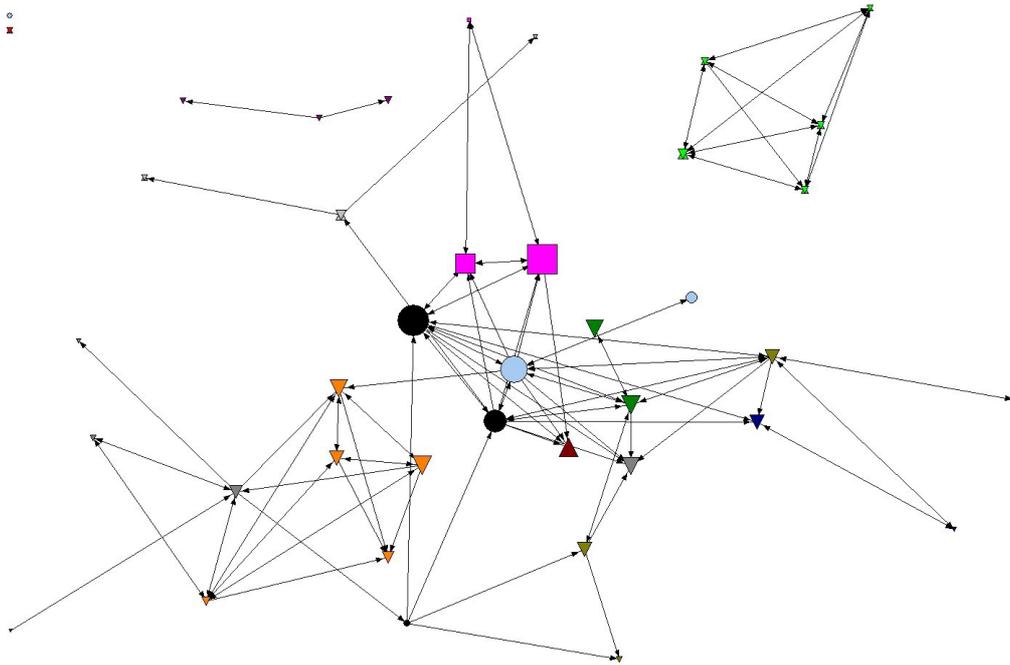


Figure 5 International collaboration, with centrality.

**Color:** MIUN: Pink; UCLan light blue; HUD: black; TTU: maroon; UoR: hunter green; USJ: olive green; UoP: dark blue; CMU: aubergine; NU: orange; MSU: grey; ADMU: light grey; PNU: red; MCL: neon green. **Shape:** SE: square; UK: circle; EE: up triangle; LK: down triangle; TH: hourglass; PH: diamond

## Reflections and Looking Forward

A project that aims at building capacity in Asian partner universities must necessarily feature high levels of collaboration partners. We argue that the most efficient way to increase the quantity and quality of experience and knowledge shared within the project, a more integrated collaboration among partners is necessary. Additionally, and in terms of sustainability of SECRA, any future bids with the Erasmus+ scheme presupposes a conscious and careful choice of partners. Understanding the centrality of some partners over others not only can contribute to a sustainable plan for the future, but also help with risk assessment in the current project. As an example, the centrality of UK partners is evident in Figure 5. Given that as it stands UK universities are not eligible for Erasmus+ funding, SECRA must ensure an integrated partner team for future endeavors. It must also facilitate the knowledge transfer from the central partners to the rest of the consortium so that all that knowledge and experience disappears.