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D1.1 Report of Kick-Off Meeting

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Abstract

This document was created to present the launch meeting of the GEODES Project and the main results of this work session. This was the first formal moment of discussion involving representatives of all the project's beneficiary institutions, being fundamental to clarify doubts about the roles that each of the beneficiaries play in GEODES, create and strengthen networks, assign responsibilities and inform about rules of execution and partners obligations.

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Introduction

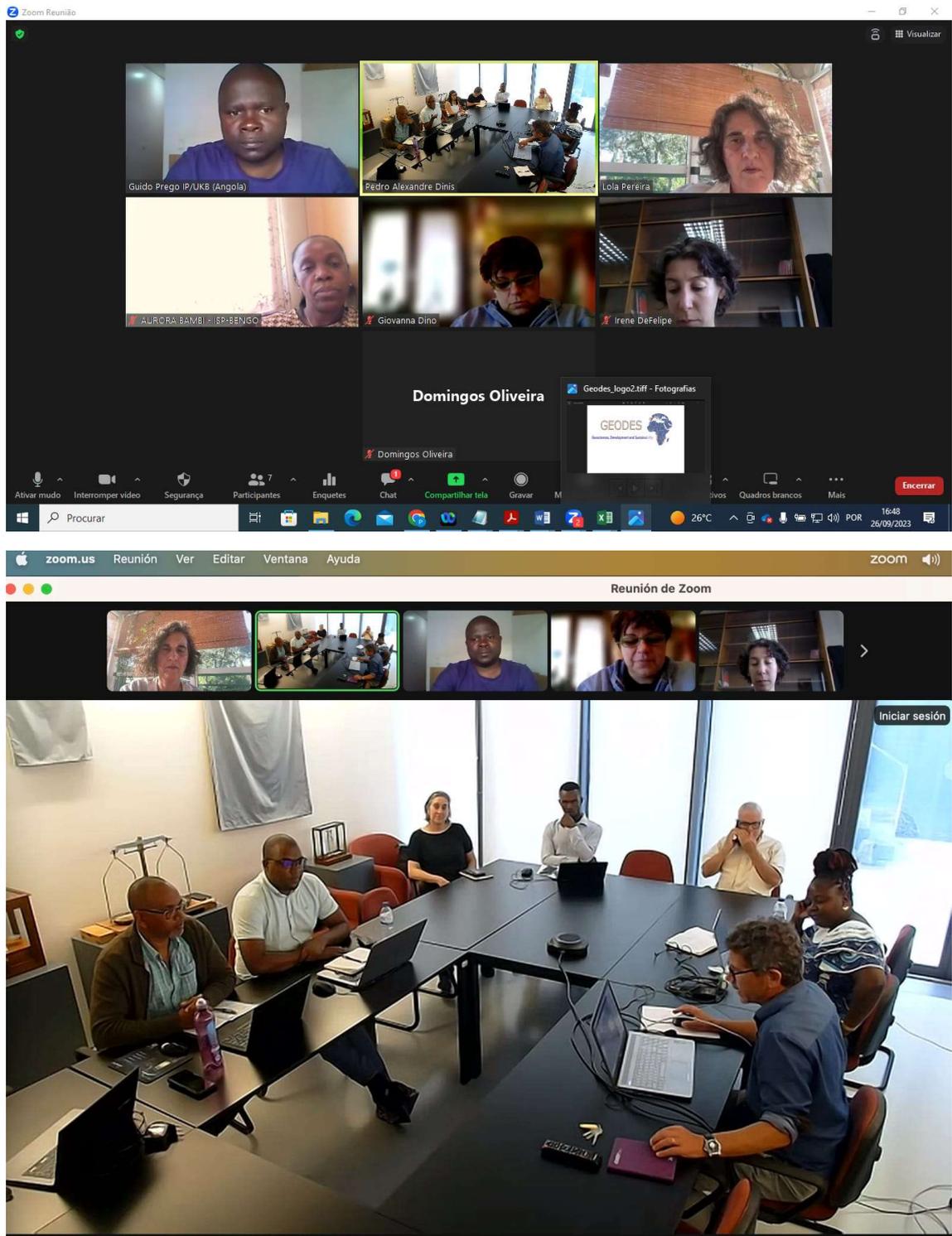
The Kick-off Meeting of the project **GEODES, Geosciences, Development and Sustainability: Africa and Europe together** took place in Coimbra, on September 25-26, 2023. Although the meeting was scheduled for the month 2 of the project, difficulties due to other appointments and the summer break forced postponing it to late September.

Most partners expressed the preference for being physically present in the meeting. However, delays in the information about bank details and the signature of the consortium agreement, which are required for financial transferences to beneficiaries, made it difficult to purchase flight tickets by some institutions. Despite these difficulties, all partners were represented in the meeting.

The following members from different institutions attended the Kick-off Meeting:

- University of Coimbra (UC): Pedro Dinis, Nelson Rodrigues, Luís Santos, Pedro Costa, Ana Castilho, Joana Ribeiro and Luca Dimuccio
- University of Salamanca (USAL): Dolores Pereira (on-line), Irene de Felipe (on-line) and Serafín Monterrubio (on-line)
- University of Turin (UNITO): Giovanna Dino (on-line), Susanna Mancini (on-line)
- University Agostinho Neto (UAE): Aurora Bambi (on-line)
- University Katiavala Bwila (UKB): Guido Prego (on-line and face-to-face)
- University Mandume Ya Ndemufayo (UMN): Domingos Oliveira (on-line), Aida Jacinto (on-line), Amarildo Tito (on-line) and Eduardo Cai (on-line)
- University Eduardo Mondlane (UEM): Daud Jamal
- University Lurio (UL): Elsa António (on-line and face-to-face) and Loite José (on-line and face-to-face)
- University Pungué (UP): Hélio Nganhane and Kátia Marisa Paulo Gotine (on-line)

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During the first day of the Kick-off Meeting, the GEODES beneficiaries made short introductory presentations about their institutions, in general focusing on their general organization, the team that will be involved in the project and what they expected to provide and obtain. In general, all demonstrated strong commitment with the objectives

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of the GEODES. It was emphasized the complementarity profiles of the institutions in Europe and Africa and how this feature will contribute to achieve the proposed goals. This day was also dedicated to choosing the image of the project and the selection of team members that will be most directly involved in the development of the work-packages (WPs), in particular in what regards coordination roles in WPs and respective tasks.

There was also room to bring the experience from previous projects focused on capacity building that included part of the members of the present partnership. Namely, SUGERE (co-funded by the Erasmus + Programme of the European Union), which included UC, USAL, UNITO, UAN and UEM, and SURGE.CPLP (Programas Estratégicos de Cooperação do Instituto Camões), which included UC, UKB and UL. The team members involved in these projects transmitted very positive opinions about their results, but alerts were made about the need to execute GEODES in a balanced way over time and not concentrated in a few periods.

The second day was dedicated to the actual development of the GEODES project. It started with a presentation of the rules of lump-sum grant management by Luis Santos, the project manager in University of Coimbra. Then, a discussion of how to proceed with each WP took place. This discussion was triggered by a short description of the planned functioning strategy by the WPs coordinators. Contributions from task coordinators, where applicable, and other team members were welcomed.

Nominations

Steering Committee

The Steering Committee (SC) is a decision-making body consisting of one representative (preferably the contact person) from each partner institution. It will be composed by:

Pedro Dinis (UC)
Dolores Pereira (USAL)
Giovanna Dino (UNITO)
António Olímpio Gonçalves (UAN)
Daud Jamal (UEM)
Guido Prego (UKB)
Aida Jacinto (UMN)
Elsa Assiaty António (UL)
Hélio Vasco Nghanhane (UP)

The SC is expected to meet on-line regularly to review the progress of project activities and make decision about it. Specific tasks also include the approval of deliverables (namely the present report) and define any risk contingency measures.

QA/QC team

The Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC) team must be formed by 3 members from partner institutions and will directly support the Project Coordination in monitoring and assessing the quality of GEODES development and its results. By unanimity the following names were elected for the QA/QC team:

- Dolores Pereira (USAL),
- Nelson Rodrigues (UC),
- Giovanna Dino (UNITO)

The team will be led by Dolores Pereira, who oversees the WP8 focused on the matters of quality control. The other two team members were involved in previous EU projects on capacity building and are experienced in quality assurance. Based on their acquired experience they are fully aware of possible difficulties that may compromise the project. The other member of GEODES team must promptly respond to alerts coming from the QA/QC team.

WPs & tasks

A few participants were nominated as coordinators of WPs and respective tasks. They will interact with colleagues from their institutions and promote the involvement of all team members from the partnership and stakeholders to ensure a proper development of the project. The following names were appointed as coordinators:

- WP1, Start & Preparation: Pedro Dinis (UC)
 - T1.1, Preparation of Kick-Off Meeting: Pedro Dinis (UC)
 - T1.2, Kick-Off Meeting: Pedro Dinis (UC)

- WP2, Capacity Building- Infrastructures Improvement: Daud Jamal (UEM)
 - T2.1, Equipment acquisition for UAN: Aurora Bambi (UAN)
 - T2.2, Equipment acquisition for UKB: Leonardo Roos Handa Tchindombe (UKB)
 - T2.3, Equipment acquisition for UMN: Eduardo Cai (UMN)
 - T2.4, Equipment acquisition for UEM: Daud Jamal (UEM)
 - T2.5, Equipment acquisition for UL: Loite José (UL)
 - T2.6, Equipment acquisition for UP: Kátia Marisa Paulo Gotine (UP)

- WP3, Study Plans Upgrading: Aida Jacinto (UMN)
 - T3.1, Revision of study plans: Aida Jacinto (UMN)

- WP4, Training in Africa: Irina Miguel (UAN)
 - T4.1, Training in Luanda, Irina Miguel (UAN)
 - T4.2, Training in Maputo, Luis Magaia (UEM)

- WP5, On-Line Training: Dolores Pereira (USAL)
 - T5.1, On-Line Training modules: Dolores Pereira (USAL)

- WP6, Professional Training: Loite Jose (UL)
 - T6.1, Internships in Angola: Amarildo Tito (UMN)
 - T6.2, Internships in Mozambique: Elsa Assiaty António (UL)

- WP7, Training & Proposals Preparation: Giovanna Dino (UNITO)
 - T7.1, Training of selected trainees in research at UC, USAL and UNITO: Manuela Lasagna (UNITO)

- WP8, QA/QC & Sustainability: Dolores Pereira (USAL)

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T8.1, QA/QC: Dolores Pereira (USAL)

T8.2, Sustainability: Irene de Felipe (USAL)

-WP9, Dissemination & Outreach: Laura Joaquim Jaime (UKB)

T9.1, Communication plan: Pedro Costa (UC)

T9.2: Website and social media: Kátia Marisa Paulo Gotine (UP)

T9.3: Sustainability plan, Adélito Bernardo (UP)

-WP10, Management: Nelson Rodrigues (UC)

T10.1, Management of the project: Pedro Dinis (UC)

Project image

Four general alternatives of logotype were presented to the participants (figure below). Multiple minor adaptations were considered before voting possible alternatives. Option 2 was then selected.

1



2



3



4



Development of the project

Rules of execution and funding

The manager appointed by UC for the Project Support Team, Luis Santos, gave a presentation and additional explanations about general issues of the project execution and funding. His explanations were organized according to the following topics: (1) What lump sum is, (2) What lump sum is not, (3) Duties and obligations of beneficiaries (communication and dissemination, information, record keeping, eligibility of lump sum contributions...), (3) Payments, grant reductions and recoveries, (4) Amendments to the grant agreement.

Work Packages development

A summary of main results that arose from the discussion about the WPs development is presented below.

- WP1 (M1-M2): Start & Preparation

The conclusion of WP1 is delayed by approximately two months (milestone changed in <https://ec.europa.eu/> project platform and deliverables due dates were requested to the EU officer). This delay was explained during the kick-off meeting, emphasizing the need to catch-up.

The delay in WP1 was unavoidable. After receiving the request of some modifications to the WPs, deliverables and critical risks, the project was unlocked in June, just before an overloaded July and the summer holiday break for most European members. Hence, the kick-off meeting had to be postponed to late September.

With the present report begins a closure phase of WP1.

-WP2 (M3-M9): Capacity Building- Infrastructures Improvement

A set of instruments was referred in the application form of GEODES. However, the coordinator of the WP2 alerted for the fact that rules of acquisition in the destined countries and taxes may increase substantially the prices of this material relative to what was previously expected. Furthermore, the discussion of this matter by team members made clear that some instruments will require structural conditions that may not be complied with in the facilities where this equipment must be installed or accomplished with the help of the project.

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With the help of the team members from UC, USAL, UNITO along with UAN and UEM, the main beneficiaries of the project will adapt their needs in terms of instruments to be purchased.

-WP3 (M3-M12): Study Plans Upgrading

The coordinator of WP3 proposed a strategy to carry out the upgrading of the study plans. This should start by regional meetings and surveys involving the 3 institutions of the 2 African countries, where UAN and UEM, giving their knowledge of national realities and the presence of teaching staffs with higher degree levels, must play an important role. The regional surveys should result in the identification of general structures for study plan that can be adopted in UKB, UMN, UL and UP. Documents about this issue that could be of interest for these institutions will be identified, shared, and updated.

After sharing the results obtained by these regional groups to the entire partnership, an on-line meeting focused on WP3 should take place.

-WP4 (M3-M18): Training in Africa

A regional coordination frame was established for training in the African countries. The main beneficiary institutions (UKB, UMN, UL and UP) are preparing a set of training needs that will be presented to UAN and UEM, who will decide on which are most adequate considering their staff, facilities, and timetables.

Regular contacts among the universities of each African country are due to start immediately to ensure that WP4 will finish by the month 18 of GEODES.

-WP5 (M3-M18): On-Line Training

The coordinator of WP5 presented a list of topics that were already gathered with the contribution of team members from USAL and UNITO. Some of these topics can be presented both as on-line real-time or recorded sessions. The European partners are waiting for proposals of additional topics from the target group (UKB, UMN, UL and UP).

Final decisions regarding training topics and timetables should be settled as soon as possible. On-line sessions will be open also to staff and students from UAN and UEM. GEODES beneficiaries will use project funding in the improvement of internet access conditions.

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-WP6 (M6-M30): Professional Training

With WP6 a series of internships for students and staff members from UKB, UMN, UL and UP must take place in Angola and Mozambique. Although this WP will be coordinated by UL and is organized in two tasks, one for Angola (coordinated by UMN) and one for Mozambique (coordinated by UL), it was agreed that the bigger regional universities (UAN and UEM) should also play a tutorial role. A set of contacts gathered by UC during the preparation of GEODES application will be made available to WP6 coordinators. The choice of interns and companies will also involve the project team from UKB and UP.

UMN and UL must start promoting contacts with the other GEODES beneficiaries and the companies/institutions that may receive internships as soon as possible.

-WP7 (M18-M32): Training & Proposals Preparation

The WP7 coordinator presented her vision of this innovative component of the project. Although this WP is the last to start, is necessary to find possible calls for project application that could be considered by its target group (UKB, UMN, UL and UP). Contact persons in these institutions will be Guido Prego (UKB), Aida Jacinto (UMN), Loite José (UL) and Hélio Vasco Nganhane (UP).

- WP8 (M3-M36): QA/QC & Sustainability

The workflow regarding QA/QC was communicated during the meeting. This WP has to be developed from the early months of development o GEODES. A quality manual and proposals for the quality satisfaction surveys, which should be delivered to and filled by participants in the training activities, were already presented to team members.

USAL will coordinate the internal QA/QC. An external QA/QC assessment must be performed by the Grupo de Escolas de Geociências José Bonifácio d'Andrada e Silva (in Portuguese). Contacts with this entity are being conducted to agree on the external component of the QA/QC assessment.

Regarding sustainability, the objectives must be two-folded. On one hand major focus will be on a selection of Sustainable Development Goals of UN (namely, Quality Education, Gender Equality, Decent work, and economic growth, Reduce inequality within and among countries, Partnership for Growth). On the other hand, with WP8 we will try to ensure that the objectives of GEODES will prevail after the end of the project through strong and productive networks.

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-WP9 (M3-M36): Dissemination & Outreach

Being coordinated by UKB, the development of WP9 counts with the close participation of UC and UL members, which lead specific tasks, and the contribution of all beneficiaries. In due time, input should also arrive from external stakeholders.

Presently WP9 has a delay of almost 2 months, since deliverables D9.1 (Communication and Dissemination Plan), D9.2 (Project Website) and D9.3 (Social networks) were due on August 31. The EU officer was contacted with requests for change in due dates.

After being informed of new rules regarding data protection that compromised a contract with a private company, the website is being developed at UC. The social networks will be created by the WP9 coordinator. The WP9 coordinator will also seek for regular feeding of relevant information coming from all beneficiaries and stakeholders of the project. The sustainability plan will be developed in close cooperation with those most involved in WP8.

-WP10 (M1-M36): Management

WP10 will be developed as proposed in the Technical Description of the Application Form, with core roles by Pedro Dinis, Nelson Rodrigues and Luís Santos from UC, and close involvement by the SC and QA/QC team. Internal communication will be ensured by channels created for project SUGERE, from which GEODES follows. This information will be included in the Project Handbook (deliverable D10.2).

Additional administrative preparation took place during the first months after the formal start of GEODES and partnership agreements are presently signed by all institutions (deliverable D10.1 expected to be presented in due time). It was communicated during the meeting that funding transfers to beneficiaries will take place soon.

Closure remarks

The consortium created for GEODES involves institutions with wide different features from two continents. Three groups were considered:

- European institutions (UC, USAL and UNITO);
- Institutions in Angola and Mozambique with a long history in the field of geosciences, clearly the most important in these countries, with very significant level of facilities/equipment and graduated teaching teams (UEA and UEM);
- New-comers from Angola and Mozambique, 4 institutions where training in the field of geosciences is relatively recent and enormous potential for regional growth (UKB, UMN, UL and UP).

The meeting made it possible to clarify doubts about the roles that each of the beneficiaries play in GEODES. Networks were created or strengthened, with responsibility assignments to different team members. The terms of financial execution and obligations for partners were presented clearly.

