ProSPER.Net Strategies and Roadmap

1 Introduction

ProSPER.Net has made significant achievements during its initial years of existence as clearly demonstrated by the findings of the 3-year review commissioned by UNU-IAS. The review provided recommendations deemed useful for developing a strategy and a roadmap for the network, in close consultation with ProSPER.Net Board.

During the 10th Board Meeting held at TERI University, Board Members discussed strategies to achieve identified goals in three areas: governance, network activities and promotion and resource generation. This document, in addition to reinforcing ProSPER.Net aspirations, is the result of the findings contained in the 3-year review report and recommendations by Board Members, comprising various strategic elements and a roadmap for the network.

2 ProSPER.Net Vision

ProSPER.Net aims to create a community of institutions of higher learning that plays a leading role in societal transformation for sustainable development. Towards this end, as a unique academic alliance, ProSPER.Net strives to transform knowledge institutions, through its members and partners in Asia-Pacific and beyond, introducing innovation in governance, education, research, and outreach, and thus producing a new cadre of leaders equipped with the knowledge and skills required to build sustainable societies.

3 Strategic Focus Areas

The strategic foci are aligned with the specific recommendations of the 3-year review. These are clustered into three main objectives:

I – Strengthen Governance and Accountability

A) Improve decision-making process through transparent and inclusive process aimed at achieving network objectives

B) Implementation of monitoring and evaluation process of all network activities

C) Share resources and expertise

II - Enhance Network Activities

D) Promote innovative research, methodologies and pedagogies through projects and other activities

E) Influence policy for higher education

F) Enhance collaboration with other networks sharing similar objectives

III - Promotion and Resource Generation

G) International recognition of ProSPER.Net

H) Enhance network sustainability

I) Improve information sharing among and within member institutions

For each of these objectives, strategic actions were recommended by Board Members during the 10th ProSPER.Net Board Meeting. All of the suggestions are included in the next section's table and an extract of the summarized discussions during the Board meeting can be found in Annex I.

4 Roadmap

The following table provides the objectives, strategies, indicators and timelines for progress assessment regarding the implementation of the strategies described in this document. It is recommended that the Board creates a committee that will present periodic progress reports to the Board and in other relevant meetings, so that the objectives, strategies and roadmap are constantly revisited and new actions are appropriately proposed.

Strategic Focus Areas		Strategic objectives	Strategic actions recommended by the Board	Indicators	Timelines
Governance and Accountability	**Sub-areas** 1. Improve decision-making process through transparent and inclusive process aimed at achieving network objectives 2. Implementation of monitoring and evaluation process of all network activities 3. Share resources and expertise	Share responsibility and ownership for network activities	Establish a decision-making, implementation and evaluation process Establish an e-governance system Involve the top management of member institutions Establish a working group or committee dealing with ProSPER.Net within the member institution chaired by the leadership of the institution (e.g. president or designate)	Involvement of as maximum number of member institutions possible, and participation of institution heads/top administration in network activities	Ongoing process
		Ensure quality of network activities	Review and evaluate projects Identify names and contact details of potential peer reviewers from member institutions for joint projects.	Achievement of all project objectives and successful and sustainable implementation of results.	Ongoing process
		Expand the network and involve all including non-Board members	Current members encourage potential members to apply and provide guidance Continue the practice of side events in conjunction with Board/General Assembly meetings for local institutes	Target of 50 members Participation of non-Board members in joint projects Successful organization of ProSPER.Net Forum on Sustainability in Higher Education and Young Scientist Award Symposium	by 2014
		Improve the sharing of resources and expertise	Adopt a mutual recognition of resource-sharing system (Learn from Erasmus Mundos and Copernicus Alliance networks resource-sharing programmes) Organize joint initiatives with other networks Provide a platform for mobility of faculty, researchers and students	Creation of database of experts, including YSA winners that may facilitate exchange of faculty and researchers as well as joint research supervision Mutual recognition of credits and eventual recognition of credits for network activities such as the YRS	Ongoing process
Network Activities	**Sub-areas** 1. Promote innovative research, methodologies and pedagogies through projects and other activities 2. Influence policy for higher education 3. Enhance collaboration with other networks sharing similar objectives	Generate new ideas for projects	Foster dialogue using the discussion forums in ProSPER.Net portal	New projects, in addition to the existent ones	New ideas for next Board meeting
		Establish synergies between projects	Encourage cross-project interaction in forums and meetings Harness synergies of joint projects	Coherent links between projects	Through ongoing projects (YRS)
		Improve links with other networks	Actively use the ProSPER.Net portal Make a symbol in members' websites to link with the ProSPER.Net portal Link with websites of other networks Develop research and postgraduate education opportunities to exchange practices Select networks to communicate about ProSPER.Net project Support mobility of postgraduate students and faculty with other networks Collaborate with RCE community	Concrete collaborations with other networks	Ongoing process
		Transform current work into policy documents	Project proponents to map the policy field they are working in Include policy aspects in all joint projects and map science to policy	Policy papers	All projects to contribute starting in 2013
Promotion and Resource Generation	**Sub-areas** 1. International recognition of ProSPER.Net 2. Enhance network sustainability 3. Improve information sharing among and within member institutions	Improve ProSPER.Net's international recognition and visibility	Encourage and compile information on refereed publications from projects, including journals and book chapter Convert project publications to newspapers and magazines, Road shows and seminars, Piggy-back on other similar networks Create a ProSPER.Net channel on YouTube Mandatory budgeting for dissemination in project proposal Find fits in international conferences Hold side events with themes around current projects, Media involvement in side events More press releases, Disseminate promotional materials to donor agencies	Increasing number of members and collaboration with other regional and international networks	To be assessed every year
		Information sharing within member institutions	Develop a human-resource/expert data bank	Increasing participation of members in network activities/joint projects	To be reported by members
		Develop an effective fundraising strategy	Engage a professional fund-raiser Integrate ProSPER.Net in own institutions' fundraising activities (use ProSPER.Net as a benefit for fundraising) Invite businesses to ProSPER.Net activities, Invite businesses and donors in YRS through prizes Seek CSR funds of businesses, Participate in business forums Compile cases of success stories in SD/ESD Use of media and members' own newsletters, Expand mailing lists	Additional sources of funding	Follow-up in 2014

ANNEX I

I – Governance

To ensure good governance, it is important to establish a clear, participatory and transparent decision-making, implementation and evaluation process (input-transformation-output-feedback loop mechanism). This includes accommodation of comments and contributions of members even if they are not attending Board or General Assembly meetings. The governance process can also be enhanced by establishing a system of e-governance, including contributions from members through the network website. Participation in governance need not only be confined to academic institutions; non-academic partners may also be solicited advice and comments from. It is also important to involve the top management of member institutions in ProSPER.Net affairs.

In expanding network membership, an effective approach would be for current members to proactively encourage potential ProSPER.Net members to apply. If this is done and if made imperative for existing members to abide, then membership can easily expand. Side events in conjunction with Board/GA meetings for local universities, companies, and government agencies should be organized regularly. Inclusion of non-Board members as a criterion in project proposal evaluation could enhance wider involvement.

To improve the sharing of resources and expertise of members, it is necessary to adopt a mutual recognition of resource-sharing system. Joint initiatives should be organised such as YRS (an excellent model), jointly-delivered training, curriculum development, joint programmes, and cooperation with other networks. It is also important to provide a platform for mobility of faculty, researchers and students, the latter enhanced through an agreed, but still to be developed, credit-transfer system.

II – Activities

Ideas for new projects, quality assurance and synergy between projects, linkages with other networks and policy work are issues under this strategic area. Regarding ideas for new projects, the Secretariat's role in generating ideas is important and members should recognize their roles in also becoming a source of ideas for projects. The discussion forums in the ProSPER.Net portal should be used to foster dialogue about new proposals, structured discussion sessions as part of ProSPER.Net official meetings and invitation to international and governmental agencies as well as NGOs, to contribute with ideas based on actual needs.

In terms of quality assurance, three elements are essential for sustainability-related projects: interdisciplinary, problem-based and policy oriented. These underlying assumptions should be contained in projects. More specifically, projects shall be reviewed and evaluated, and it is imperative that the process is simple, not costly, although rigorous and the turn-around times are short. Also, the institutional context for projects should be clear so that it supports policy-related analysis, implications and recommendations.

Ideas for strategies regarding linkages with other networks involved connecting the current ProSPER.Net portal to members' websites, developing other research and postgraduate education opportunities to exchange practices and share common thrusts as regards ESD, select a small number of networks to communicate with their members about ProSPER.Net project outcomes, support mobility of postgraduate students and faculty with other networks, and seek ways to collaborate with the Regional Centres of Expertise community, especially looking at performance and ways of operating.

For policy work, project proponents are expected to map the policy field they are working in, and in support of this activity, a framework to assist proponents to analyse and describe the policy field and invite experts in policy analysis from the meeting host country to exchange ideas and contribute to the discussion is useful.

Organizing training programmes on problem-based learning or project-based learning, and learning how to carry out policy research that would lead to writing good policy papers are worthy activities.

III – Promotion and Resource Generation

There are a number of important actions for promoting ProSPER.Net. Among them are – to come up with publication from projects and convert them to newspapers and magazines for the wider readership; road shows and seminars; piggy-backing on other similar networks; having a ProSPER.Net channel on YouTube especially to feature films on important joint projects; mandatory budgeting for dissemination in project proposal; finding fits in relevant international conferences (e.g. DSDS); holding side events mentioned in governance using themes around current projects; involving media in side events and have more press releases. It is also desirable to proactively send ProSPER.Net brochures, booklets and other promotional materials to donor agencies, businesses, banks, government agencies, and regional networks.

As for resource generation, it would be helpful to engage a professional fund-raiser or use own institutional fund-raiser for ProSPER.Net, take ProSPER.Net to business houses, invite businesses to ProSPER.Net Board meetings and other activities, involve businesses and donors in YRS possibly through prizes, tap CSR funds of businesses, and participate in business forums. It is also useful to compile cases of success stories in SD/ESD for showcasing to encourage possible support. Other important activities for promotion and resource generation are use of the media and member institutions' own regular newsletter, as well as expanding mailing lists to receive regular communications about ProSPER.Net.