

The Tempus Tacis Tramal Project: Ulaanbaatar – Barcelona – Dublin

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Abstract [\[Resum\]](#) [\[Resumen\]](#)

The authors describe an international library project between universities in Ulaanbaatar, Barcelona and Dublin. The two year project, called TRAMAL, was part of the European Union's Tempus Tacis Programme and marked the first time that Mongolian library staff from different institutions came together to participate in an extensive training course. The general objective of TRAMAL was to develop the libraries of two Mongolian universities, particularly in the areas of automation and management. The function of the European Union universities was to supply their expertise and experience. The different stages of the project are described from inception to completion and the impact on all participating institutions is evaluated. Reference is also made to another Tempus Tacis library project currently running between Samarkand, Barcelona and Dublin.

1 Overview

The Tempus Tacis TRAMAL Project was developed between 2000 and 2002 by the Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya (UPC) and Trinity College Dublin (TCD). The aim of the project was to develop the libraries of two Mongolian universities: the Mongolian University of Science and Technology (MUST) and the Mongolian State University of Agriculture (MSUA). From the very beginning, emphasis was placed on the importance of the widespread dissemination to Mongolian librarians of the knowledge and information derived from TRAMAL. As a result, other academic institutions in Mongolia (listed later in this paper) were also invited to participate in some of the training events in Ulaanbaatar.

The focus of this paper is to describe the various activities that took place as part of TRAMAL. The project is described and the objectives highlighted. An analysis of the Mongolian university libraries at the outset of the project is given along with a description of the role of the participants. The objectives of the project are defined and in the conclusion, the authors examine whether these were met and what benefits were brought both to the Mongolian and European universities involved.

2 The Tempus Tacis Programme

TRAMAL was part of the European Union's Tempus (the Trans European co-operation scheme for higher education) programme.¹ This programme is the European Union's major instrument for the

development and restructuring of higher education in Central and Eastern Europe; the New Independent States (NIS); and Mongolia.² Tacis (Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States) is the European Union's assistance programme for the NIS and Mongolia.

The two main objectives of Tempus are:

- To promote the quality and support the development and renewal of higher education in “partner countries” (i.e. those listed above).
- To encourage their growing interaction and as balanced a co-operation as possible with partners in the European Union, through joint activities and relevant study visits.

Tempus addresses the specific needs of individual institutions in “partner countries” Projects are developed by universities in these countries in co-operation with partners selected from the European Union. The European Union universities supply their expertise and experience.

Tempus has given support to high quality projects aimed at restructuring and developing curricula and teaching materials, upgrading teaching facilities, and improving university administration in higher education institutions in “partner countries”.

Since 1998, Tempus also supports projects in the field of “institution building” —that is the development of administrative and institutional structures of “partner countries”, in particular with a view to promoting democracy and the rule of law. Tempus does this by providing financial grants for co-operative projects between higher education establishments in the European Union and “partner countries” on topics agreed by them and by the European Commission and which fit in with the overall socio-economic reform process of “partner countries”.

3 Main objectives of TRAMAL

The overall general objective of the TRAMAL project was to develop the libraries at the Mongolian University of Science and Technology (MUST) and at the Mongolian State University of Agriculture (MSUA). The specific objectives were to (a) update managers and staff on automated systems, (b) advise on organisation of tasks, (c) enhance the image of the library both inside and outside the university and (d) ensure that project outcomes were disseminated to other universities and institutes of higher education in Mongolia.

4 Initial analysis of MUST and MSUA and the roles of the participants

Under the umbrella of the Tempus Programme, MUST, MSUA and the Unitat de Formació de Formadors (UNIFF)³ of UPC, devised the TRAMAL project with the aim of developing the libraries of the Mongolian universities involved.

On the basis of information received both from the Mongolian partners and from some UPC staff who worked on a previous project with MUST, it was evident that there was a need for modernisation of the library services of both universities. With the collapse of the former Soviet Union, Mongolia was seeking to establish a new international identity. Universities were beginning to update old models and practices. Formerly, university education was teacher-centred where students had eight to ten hours of classes every day leaving them little time for private study to use the library. This was beginning to change and as a result libraries had to face their shortcomings and work on meeting the new needs and expectations of their users. Problems faced by the libraries included the following:

- Insufficient number of desks and seats.
- Library equipment was either in a bad state of repair or non-existent.
- No online catalogues.
- Most of the books (especially the student textbooks) were out-of-date and duplication of the same title, even where the book was not related to any of the subjects studied at the universities, was usual. As a result, valuable shelf space was being wasted on multiple copies of the same outdated text. Book stock badly needed to be weeded and where possible replaced.

- Collections were in closed access. The lack of a security system was a deterrent to changing over to an open access system.
- Because Mongolia was part of the former Soviet Union, most of the printed collections were in the Russian language. Since Mongolia was now an independent country with its own language, students no longer were learning Russian as a matter of course. Thus, only a minority would be able to understand books written in Russian. There was an urgent need to have more titles in Mongolian and English.
- Lack of periodicals —a crucial resource for many research students and staff.
- Little or no electronic resources.
- Services insufficiently promoted and used.
- Little or no training for library staff.

On the positive side, the following was evident:

- The vast majority of Mongolian library staff were convinced of the benefits that developing their libraries would bring and as a result, were ready to embrace change.
- Clear organisational structures existed even if some of these needed to be redefined.
- Libraries had been identified as a main priority by university management. In addition to this, both universities were moving towards a style of management based on strategic planning which was in line with the goals and objectives of the TRAMAL project.
- Mongolian librarians had the capacity to create their own software – a great advantage for implementing change.
- Both universities were dedicated to ongoing mutual co-operation between each other and with academic institutions throughout Mongolia. MUST was to assume a leadership role here.

It is also worth noting that a good relationship between the European partners was established from the beginning. The participants worked well together and benefited from the personal and professional enrichment that international associations bring.

All universities shared the following responsibilities:

- Participating actively in the steering group.
- Following the guidelines in the official contract with the European Union.
- Providing the scheduled project reports to the agreed deadlines.
- Disseminating ideas and information.

In addition, each university had specific roles to play:

UPC

- Co-ordinator university. UPC was in charge of the management of the project and the co-ordination of all activities between the partner universities. Their staff led the steering group that monitored the project.
- Development of its share of training contents and material.
- Organisation of all training seminars.
- Hosting of one of the seminars.
- Facilitating dissemination.

Two units of UPC were involved with TRAMAL: UNIFF who played the co-ordinating role and the Library and Documentation Service (UPC-SBD) whose brief it was to organise and develop training activities.

TCD

- Development of its share of training contents and material.
- Hosting of one of the seminars.
- Facilitating dissemination.

MUST and MSUA

- Development of their share of training contents and material.
- Hosting of two of the seminars.
- Following the work plan as devised by UNIFF.
- Creating the appropriate social and working environment for the implementation of the project.

MUST in addition assumed the responsibility of the co-ordination between partner universities in Mongolia.

5 Development of the project

The following table summarises the various phases of TRAMAL:

Activities	Month - Year	Place of Activity
Visit of MUST staff to UPC	July 1999	Barcelona, Spain
International Seminar - 2 members of UNIFF, 3 librarians from UPC and 2 librarians from TCD delivered a training programme tailored to the identified needs and requirements of staff in the participating Mongolian universities.	July 2000	Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia
Extensive English Language training of 28 librarians and staff from MUST (13 people) and MSUA (15 people)	December 2000 to March 2001	Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia
International Seminar - Training and placement of 6 librarians and staff from MUST and 6 librarians and staff from MSUA in TCD and UPC libraries. Training was delivered by lectures, seminars, workshops and visits to various departments in the library as well as to other libraries of interest.	April 2001 to May 2001	Dublin, Ireland Barcelona, Spain
Internal training plan developed at MUST and at MSUA	June 2001 to March 2002	Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia
International Seminar - 1 member of UNIFF, 1 librarian from UPC and 2 librarians from TCD returned to Ulaanbaatar to provide more training and to monitor progress made in the libraries of MUST and MSUA	March 2002	Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia
Activities related to project management: co-ordination, quality control, and evaluation, budgeting and reporting	December 2000 to April 2002	Barcelona, Spain Dublin, Ireland Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia
Development and implementation of a strategic plan at MUST and MSUA.	May 2001 to March 2002	Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

6 Description of activities

6.1 Barcelona, July 1999

In the context of a previous project between MUST and UPC, the theme of which was the improvement of managerial techniques at MUST, some Mongolian university managers visited UPC in

July 1999. The visit included the libraries of UPC as well as other departments and services. It was at this stage that the managerial team at MUST requested that UPC and the European Union continue the collaboration, with libraries as the focus for a new project.

6.2 Ulaanbaatar, July 4th–7th 2000

Initial training took place in Ulaanbaatar from July 4th-7th 2000. Two members of UNIFF, three librarians from UPC and two librarians from TCD delivered a training programme tailored to the requirements of staff in the participating Mongolian universities. Lectures, seminars, workshops and visits to the different libraries all formed part of the timetable. This facilitated a two way learning process, in that the trainers had the opportunity to listen to the Mongolian librarians and to understand more clearly the issues facing them.

Indeed all three parties realised that they were benefiting from a Mongolian/Catalan/Irish perspective on the library themes that were being discussed. Topics included library management; organisation and planning; main library services; evaluation of services and products; automation and digitisation; and working with library users.

It is important to note that this visit marked the first time that Mongolian library staff came together to work on an extensive training programme.

6.3 Ulaanbaatar, December 2000 to March 2001

A cross-section of administrators, librarians and academic staff were selected to participate in an intensive course of English language training. Initially, they had to do an exam to determine their level of English. Participants had to agree to attend classes regularly with the specific goal of improving their fluency for the intensive training awaiting them in Europe.

MUST and MSUA chose the English language trainers according to parameters set out under the partnership agreement. The two universities also took responsibility for selecting the participants again in accordance with established guidelines.

The teaching material was a combination of existing textbooks and handouts created for the purpose of the course.

6.4 Europe, April–May 2001

This phase of the training took place in Europe. Six librarians and staff from MUST and six from MSUA came on placement to Dublin for two weeks and to Barcelona for a further two weeks. The participants were selected on the basis of their role at their home universities. The authors of this paper worked closely together in setting up a programme of training that would run along similar lines but that would show the contrasting approaches of an older traditional university library (TCD) with a more modern and technologically advanced university (UPC). Seminar topics were carefully chosen on the basis of what had been identified in July 2000 as areas of key importance to the Mongolian librarians:

6.4.1 Dublin

In Dublin, the main seminars were organised into ten different modules. The topics covered were:

1. The University Library
2. Catalogue Development
3. Accessing Information
4. Library Management & Planning

5. Readers' Services
6. Library Systems
7. New Library Building
8. Periodicals
9. Accessions
10. Information Systems & Services and ECDL (European Computer Driving Licence) –Staff from TCD's Information Systems Services (Computer Services) provided this training.

In addition to these seminars, there were workshops, question and answer sessions and visits to various departments in TCD Library as well as to other university libraries in Dublin. Each participant was provided with a folder containing handouts covering the content of all the seminars and other material of interest.

All the initial planning had been focused on working with a group of library staff. Unexpectedly however, a senior delegation of university administrators and one academic were present in the travelling party: from MTU two vice-rectors and the Head of Academic Affairs and from MSUA the rector and a lecturer.

In order to maximise the benefit of the administrators' stay in Dublin, it was decided that additional activities should be put in place for them and for the head librarians from each of the two institutions. Meetings were set up with TCD's Provost (Rector), the Provost Elect, the Vice-Provost, the College Secretary (Head of Administration), the Head of Information Systems Services (Computer Services) and some of the academic staff. However, it must be emphasised that the administrators attended most of the library seminars too, as these were central to the purpose of the visit.

A programme of cultural and social events was organised as well and this enhanced personal links.

6.4.2 Barcelona

In Barcelona, five library modules were delivered:

1. University libraries.
2. Cataloguing, classification, and information management.
3. Tools for information access.
4. Basic services.
5. Human and economic resources, and project management.

Again, although the composition of the Mongolian team made it hard to plan and deliver a training programme of interest to everyone, the Library Service at UPC considered this phase of the project to be crucial and, like TCD, decided that despite the extra workload involved, it was essential to provide additional resources to make the visit as successful as possible.

Parallel activities to suit the different working backgrounds of the delegates were put in place, making the planning and implementation of the schedule difficult and labour-intensive. Co-ordination was a complex task because a large number of sessions had to be arranged. However the main focus remained the training of the librarians from MUST and MSUA. In total ten UPC library staff (two per module) delivered the training topics listed above.

There was the added difficulty for the Mongolian team and for the UPC staff that English was the sole working language. However despite having to work in a non-native language, the results of the assessment survey carried out at the end of the visit proved that this was not a hindrance to what was a very successful visit.

6.5 Ulaanbaatar, June 2001 to March 2002

Following the visit to Europe, an internal training plan was developed in each Mongolian partner university. The following activities were carried out:

- Meeting of heads of groups who had participated in the previous activities and training of TRAMAL.

- Translation and preparation of materials.
- Task assignment and planning of activities.
- Group seminars organised by topic.
- Fine-tuning of all materials prepared for training.
- Evaluation of activities both at an internal level and in conjunction with the partnership institutions.

6.6 Ulaanbaatar, March 12th–15th 2002

The main objective of this second visit to Mongolia was to see what progress had been made at the libraries of MUST and MSUA. The travelling group consisted of one member of UNIFF, one librarian from UPC and two librarians from TCD. Only two people from the original team that travelled in July 2000 were in this delegation but new members had been fully briefed.

The librarian from UPC delivered papers on “strategic planning” and “consortia activities”. The TCD librarians spoke on “organisational structures”, “services for library users” and “finance and budgets”.

Colleagues from both MUST and MSUA described the changes that had been made to their libraries since the beginning of TRAMAL.

6.7 Barcelona, Dublin and Ulaanbaatar, December 2000 to April 2002

During this time period, a variety of activities took place relating to the management of the project. This included a visit of the Tacis Monitors of the “Monitoring Programme NIS and Mongolia” to Mongolian partner institutions in Ulaanbaatar in October 2001 and a visit to Barcelona by the head librarian of MUST. Emphasis was placed on the co-ordination of tasks; quality control and evaluation; budgeting; and the planning and implementation of all reporting procedures.

6.8 Ulaanbaatar, May 2001 to March 2002

Both MSUA and MUST worked on the development and implementation of a library strategic plan. A first draft was written and following some recommendations from UPC and TCD as well as from the academic governing bodies of their home institutions, a revised plan was put in place.

On the second visit to Ulaanbaatar, UPC and TCD were able to gauge if the plans were being adhered to and how effective they were.

7 Conclusions

7.1 Achievement of objectives

a) Updating managers and staff on automated systems

By the end of the project, MUST had started to develop an Online Public Access Catalogue. Records for 10% of the book stock had already been created. Automation had also started on student and staff records. Patrons were registered by paper and these files were then transferred to computer. When the automation process was completed at MUST, the university would be able to supply all the statistics required by the Ministry of Education.

MSUA planned to prioritise the automation of their library activities too.

b) Advice on organisation of tasks

Both universities devised a ten-year library strategic plan. However neither UPC nor TCD received a detailed report of the content of either. Badarch Dendev, President of MUST at the time, mentioned

how difficult it was to make plans in Mongolia and that any plans made had to be realistic. This suggests that the Mongolians were reluctant to commit themselves to a detailed long-term plan in case it was not sustainable.

Despite this hesitation however, it was clear from our second visit that both universities had taken on board much of the advice that had been given to them about reorganisation. Librarians in both institutions had realised that their role was no longer simply custodial and that they had to become more user-orientated. At MUST, there was a remarkable changeover to a more user-centred approach. For example library orientation was already in place. MUST was also working towards having subject librarians, emulating the TCD model. We were told that a library committee had been formed which should ensure that a representative section of the university would have a say in important decision making and in implementing new policies.

Library regulations and procedures had been established and were being used as a code of practice at MUST. Each school in the university had its own student handbook that contained information on these regulations and procedures.

There was an understanding in both universities of the importance of keeping statistics.

c) Enhancement of the image of the library both inside and outside the university

Beyond a doubt, it was clear that the position of the library both at MUST and MSUA had been enhanced. Both libraries had become much more central to their institutions. There was a commitment from senior administration in each of the universities to channel necessary resources into the library.

During the second visit to Ulaanbaatar, some very senior university administrators spoke with great enthusiasm about their vision for their libraries. Also the Head of the Department of Culture and Arts Policy at the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science gave a talk in which she referred to the commitment of the government towards university libraries.

d) Dissemination of project outcomes to other universities and institutes of higher education in Mongolia

There have been some positive developments with regard to the dissemination of ideas and issues raised during the project. At MUST it was planned to incorporate elements of the TRAMAL training into a new BSc and MSc Course in Information and Library Automation. The course was being developed at the Department of Information Technology at the MUST School of Telecommunications and Information Technology. The introduction of similar courses at other universities was being looked at.

MSUA had started to implement some of the TRAMAL content in its regional colleges throughout the country.

The University of Culture and Arts which has a Department of Library Studies was committed to introducing new concepts and approaches learnt during the course of the project.

All participants from the other academic institutions were provided with an element of training. They attended both international seminars held in Ulaanbaatar and received all the handouts and documentation. The following institutions were represented:

- Mongolian State University of Education
- National Medical University of Mongolia, Central Medical University
- Mongolian University of Economics
- Mongolian University of Humanities
- Mongolian University of Culture and Arts, Research Institute in Culture and Arts
- Mongolian University of Commerce and Industries
- Mongolian Business Private Institute
- Mongolian Ministry of Science and Education
- Mongolian Ministry of Finance
- Central State Library
- Central City Library
- Mongolian Association of Librarianship
- Police Academy
- Military Academy

7.2 Main benefits of TRAMAL for the Mongolian Universities

TRAMAL brought benefits not only to the people who took part in the training courses but also to other staff in the participating libraries who were able to learn new ideas and ways from their colleagues. The wider university circle gained a more user-centred and technologically advanced library with a staff who had become considerably more motivated than at the outset of the project. As described above, library staff from other academic institutions apart from MUST and MSUA also benefited by being present at some of the seminars and by being included in the dissemination of information.

In addition to the benefits listed in Paragraph 7.1, the following should also be noted:

- Successful training courses for librarians and other staff in Mongolia. It was an excellent opportunity for the sharing of experiences and the gaining of expertise in new approaches.
- Participation in intensive English language courses.
- All courses were highly valued and regarded by those who took part in them.
- Purchase of modern library equipment.
- Acquisition of Dewey Decimal Classification schedules, books on cataloguing rules and other library related handbooks by way of donations from TCD Library.
- Donations of up-to-date textbooks from TCD Library on subjects taught at the participating universities.
- MUST had remodelled one of its main libraries. It was a vast improvement on the original – bright and well designed. MSUA was beginning the construction of a new library building. The goal was to provide the reading rooms with modern furniture and equipment by the end of 2002.
- Increase in the number of readers.
- Increase in the number of seats. At MUST, the number of seats in the library catered for 48% of the student population. Under their ten-year library strategic plan it was hoped to increase this number to 50% by 2005 and to 100% by 2010.
- Improved co-operation between libraries in Mongolia: All parties understood that in order to be able to exchange books and other materials and to pursue consortia deals for electronic resources, co-operation was vital. MUST had already started to implement an interlibrary loan programme and there were plans to create a Mongolian Librarians Union.

7.3 Main benefits of TRAMAL for the European Universities

Both UPC and TCD staff gained considerably from being exposed to each other's cultures and philosophies as well as to those of their Mongolian colleagues. The Mongolian connection captured the imagination and interest not only of the European librarians involved in the project but also of colleagues from all sectors at UPC and TCD and indeed from other universities in Spain and Ireland.

The key benefits were as follows:

- This was a high-profile project and raised the status of UPC and TCD libraries in their respective institutions. It was a unique public relations opportunity for the libraries as TRAMAL attracted the attention and genuine interest of the most senior members of academic and administrative departments in each university.
- Excellent working relationship between Barcelona and Dublin: Both sides learnt much from each other about their different approaches to running libraries. A staff exchange programme was set up and librarians from UPC have been on short study visits to TCD and vice-versa.
- At a personal level, many participants in the project learnt new skills, either in teaching and/or in organising international seminars. Colleagues from different departments were very generous with the amount of time they gave towards the project. There was a good sense of team spirit and as a result a first class training programme was put in place. The involvement of the Computer Services Department at TCD in the Library programme was also the start of a very positive working relationship between the two departments and now, both the Library and IS Services at TCD deliver a joint programme of induction for First Year students.

7.4 Shortcomings of TRAMAL

Although the outcome of TRAMAL was positive and successful, there were some shortcomings:

- First and foremost of these was the language constraint. Despite the provision of English language classes, most of the library staff who visited Europe did not have a good level of English. It was the visiting senior administrators from the Mongolian universities who had the best English and as a result they had to do the interpreting. This was a rather “hit and miss” affair as there was sometimes the feeling that not everything was being translated. The authors of this report strongly believe that future projects should have the provision to pay for qualified interpreters.
- The budget was inadequate for the provision of equipment and essential textbooks on librarianship. As a result, many of the ideas proposed and explored during the course of the project could not be developed further.
- UNIFF, the co-ordinators of the project, felt that in their experience the duration of the project was too short. They were also disappointed that there was no external study about the general impact of the project. This had been expected to be developed by external institutions.
- As described earlier in this report, it was agreed from the outset of the project that MUST would act as the contact university with the European partners. This was in an effort to streamline everything – to reduce communication costs and to avoid translation and interpretation difficulties. However the drawback with this approach was that the European partners felt at many stages that the specific needs and interests of MSUA were not being identified and addressed.
- Any project of this nature will of necessity be limited. For the foreseeable future, there will be a continuing need of committed financial resources at MUST and MSUA for the following:
 - Staff training (courses on librarianship and management, computer skills, and English language classes).
 - Purchase of equipment (mainly computer hardware and software), and the acquisition of books, periodicals and electronic databases etc.
 - Supply of basic library working tools (such as classification and indexing manuals).

8 Further co-operation

Barcelona and Dublin are engaged in another EU Tempus library project, this time with Samarkand State University (SamSU) in Uzbekistan. The title of the project is “Maracanda: University Libraries in the New Millennium”. Maracanda is the ancient name of Samarkand. The project will last two years. The official start date was January 2004 and it will end in February 2006.

The main library at SamSU is called the Scientific Library, which holds more than three million volumes. The Scientific Library acts as a reference library for the Samarkand region and for the country as a whole. All good practices implemented at SamSU as a result of the project will be applied to other libraries of higher education institutions in the region.

The broad objective of the project is to enable university libraries in Uzbekistan to adapt to a changing economic and social environment so that they can provide excellence in the services they offer to their members and to society at large.

The more specific objectives of the programme are to focus on the implementation of Information and Communication Technology at SamSU; to meet the changing needs of the users; to look at library management and internal organisation; to offer advice on book conservation (there are special collections of eastern medieval manuscripts at SamSU) and to examine the possibilities for developing consortial activities between university libraries in Uzbekistan.

9 A final word

It was a great pleasure for the authors of this paper to be involved with TRAMAL. We sincerely hope that our Mongolian colleagues will get the financial support they need so that they can continue their work towards a brighter future.

Notes

¹ Information on Tempus sourced from: < <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/ampro/cinterfor/temas/youth/exp/tempus.htm>>

² These countries were formerly part of the Soviet Union.

³ UNIFF - Training of Trainers Department - has recently been integrated into the Institute of Education Sciences at UPC. The main goal of the former UNIFF was to offer training services for academic staff from institutions in Catalonia and Spain other than universities, but UNIFF also developed a large number of international projects like TRAMAL.

