



EU-Land21

Trans-European Education for Landscape Architects

Output 03: Developing / Upgrading Study Programmes in Landscape Architecture

03 / A1 Developing A New Curriculum

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Version	Date	Modifications
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V2	20180924	Feedback and suggestions by Jeroen de Vries
V3	20180928	Review by Gintaras Stauskis
V4	20180929	Suggestions by Jeroen de Vries
V5	20180930	Final version by Gintaras Stauskis

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1. Introduction

The aim of this report is to present the proposal on the development of the new first cycle – bachelor – study programmes in landscape architecture by integrating the outputs of the 1st (O1: Guidelines on Revising and Developing Study Programmes in Landscape Architecture) and the 2nd (O2: Peer learning methods on the development of a curriculum focused on the 1st cycle (bachelor)) phases of the EU-Land21 project.

The O1 output offers the guidelines that may be applied to revise the existing and develop new study programmes in landscape architecture, including the requirements by ECLAS and IFLA, the legal framework in project partner's countries and the programme evaluation process.

The O2 output contributes the essential material – the “flesh” for developing the new and revising the existing study programmes: the 13 LL's (blocks of competences / learning lines) descriptions and 31 TSM's (training subject modules) descriptions, including the complex relation to 13 subject specific competences as required by ECLAS Guidance document (2010).

The outputs of the project were pilot-tested during the Intensive programme for HEI's learners (23 students) with invited teachers (12 tutors) – the Summer School that took place in Vilnius on August 27-31, 2018. Students and tutors tested three TSM's in practical teaching process in the context of Vilnius City in Lithuania.

The outputs of the operation were presented to the professional and academic audiences during five multiplier events in Tartu, Estonia, in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, in Budapest, Hungary, in Brussels, Belgium, and in Krakow, Poland, and feedback was received from the participants of these events. We have implemented the received recommendations of landscape architecture professionals into the final versions of the outputs O1 and O2 and on that basis the output O3 was developed.

Landscape architecture programmes currently are run mainly at three types of institutes of higher education in Europe: at life science universities, at technical universities, and at the schools of art. The academic context at these schools is quite diverse. Many schools are facing the challenges of unstable funding, smaller numbers of students, unclear professional recognition procedures, on one hand, and higher expectations from the society in general and the incoming students, on the other hand. In this context, many existing study programmes are and will be in the process of transformation and the new study programmes are developed, e.g. at VGTU, to meet these challenges.

This report will guide the motivated schools through the process of developing a new study programme in landscape architecture starting with the structure of the programme, the curriculum layout and filling these with the contents – the TSM's. The provided material

may be implemented flexibly at each school to meet the local context requirements and to keep the school's specific profile in the process of ongoing transformation.

2. Resolving critical aspects

The EU-LAND21 project consortium partners have discussed the main strategic, didactic and institutional questions that arise while designing a new study programme in landscape architecture and produced the following consolidated responses. As the new study programme is initially the interest of VGTU partner, the main questions concerning the new study programme were responded from that perspective:

- We aim for the two-tier education model for a full graduate in landscape architecture according to the Bologna system: bachelor plus master.
- As the first step and the main result of the EU-LAND21 project, VGTU will launch a Bachelor in Landscape Architecture (BLA) programme. The Master in Landscape Architecture (MLA) programme is also strategically planned as a second step once the BLA programme has been launched and is going on successfully.
- Currently three versions of duration of the BLA programme are developed, having in mind that the total volume of studies in landscape architecture should be not less than 300 ECTS (see Figure 1 in chapter 3);
- Since it is a completely new study programme that is designed, it may be efficient to use some of the existing courses at VGTU and those the project partners have on their ongoing study programmes;
- VGTU is planning to have 20-30 students starting landscape architecture studies in September 2019. The needed studios and classroom space, drawing room and computer room will be provided at the existing space of the Faculty of Architecture at VGTU. The guide for incoming students including study fees, scholarship, accommodation and other details will be provided on the university website www.vgtu.lt;
- The programme will start with a small number of teaching staff which will be enlarged as new students will enter in the next years. The plan is to compose the teaching staff partly from the existing staff members at the Faculty of Architecture and partly with new staff members. Part of staff will be part-time teachers who are practitioners in landscape architecture, planning and urban design. Some staff members are planned as visiting professors from the partner's schools starting with Fall 2019;

- The package of formal documents will be submitted to the national accreditation body: the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education in Lithuania
<http://skvc.lt/default/en/>
- The new study programme is built for VGTU on the basis of Architecture studies and research experience, therefore we will focus on the strong points: artistic design and construction skills for the teaching contents. These aspects are expected to give the national and regional face to the new programme along with the natural science and live material aspects that will be added to VGTU competences as soon as the programme is launched;
- We plan to annually self-assess the study programme and its outcomes against ECLAS Guidance (2010) by using the assessment strategy and methods developed in the EU-LAND21 project. The required modifications will be implemented as the programme runs. Also, we plan to invite IFLA-Europe and ECLAS experts to assess the programme after running it for 2-3 years;
- We will involve the members of the national landscape architects association LALA (www.lkas.lt) in the assessment process and will obtain their feedback on the teaching outcomes after each semester. The recommendations from the professionals will be included into the upgrading package and implemented annually.

Having the extensive partnership across six EU countries, we analysed and used the experience of several schools that are running landscape architecture study programmes for several years as a reference source for setting the versions of the new study programme for VGTU (Tab. 1).

Tab. 1. Structure of bachelor and master education in landscape architecture at some European Union universities.

No.	The school	Country	BLA + MLA study time, years(ECTS)	Running since
EU-LAND21 project partners				
1	Estonian University of Life Sciences http://www.emu.ee/et/sisseastujale/bakalaureuseope/ https://www.emu.ee/en/admissions/landscape-architecture/	Estonia	3 (180) + 2 (120)	2013
2	Krakow University of Agriculture https://oferta.urk.edu.pl/index/site/3359	Poland	3,5 (210) + 1,5 (90)	2006
3	Szent Istvan University in Budapest https://tajk.szie.hu/english-page/faculty-landscape-architecture	Hungary	5 (2 + 3) (300)	1992
4	The Dutch School of landscape www.dsl.nl http://www.vhluniversity.com/vhl-studies/bachelor/garden-and-landscape-architecture.aspx https://www.tudelft.nl/en/education/programmes/masters/architecture-urbanism-and-building-sciences/msc-architecture-urbanism-and-building-sciences/master-tracks/landscape-architecture/ https://www.bouwkunst.ahk.nl/en/study-programmes/master-in-landscape-architecture/ https://www.wur.nl/en/Education-Programmes/master/MSc-programmes/MSc-Landscape-Architecture-and-Planning.htm	The Netherlands	VHL: 4 years BSc. TU Delft: MSc. LA 2 (120) AAA: 4 years MLA (240, including 2 years of practice)	2008 2008 2008
			Wageningen: 3 (180) + 2 (120) MSc. LA	2008
The other EU schools				
5	Krakow University of Technology http://iro.pk.edu.pl/masters-degree/	Poland	3,5 (210) + 1,5 (90)	2006
6	Wroclaw University of Environmental and Life Sciences https://www.upwr.edu.pl/faculties/10596/institute_of_landscape_architecture.html	Poland	3,5 (210) + 1,5 (90)	2006
7	Swedish University of Agriculture Sciences SLU https://www.slu.se/en/education/programmes-courses/masters-programmes/landscape-architecture/	Sweden	5 (180 + 120)	2010
8	Aalto University https://www.aalto.fi/study-options/masters-programme-in-urban-studies-and-planning-msc-in-landscape-architecture	Finland	3 (180) + 2 (120)	2010
9	Latvian University of Life Sciences and Technology http://www.llu.lv/en/landscape_architecture	Latvia	3,5 (210) + 2 (120)	2015
10	Weihenstephan University of Applied Sciences https://www.hswt.de/en/studies/degree-programmes/mla.html	Germany	3,5 (210) + 1,5 (90)	2012
11	ETSAB University Barcelona https://etsab.upc.edu/en/studies/mlandarch	Spain	3 + 2 (120) MLA	2010

As comes from above Table 1, the absolute majority of schools that are giving training for landscape architects in the Baltic Sea Region (SE, FI, EE, LV, PL) and in the other regions (DE, ES) are using the two-tier education with a three-year bachelor plus two-year master education cycles that sums up to 300 ECTS or five study years in total. This level of studies and amount of ECTS offer an acceptable version for the optimum scope of studies as it allows creating the education process for landscape architects equal to that for architects (following the EU directive 2005/36/EC as from 2013). The schools may take their own decision as to draft the intermediate point of studies between bachelor and master levels after three, three-and-half or four years of study.

3. Landscape architect's education cycle

The education of landscape architects cover undergraduate (bachelor) and graduate (master) levels. The EU-Land21 project focuses on the 1st cycle – bachelor study programme, and the versions of Bachelor in Landscape Architecture study programme are provided to see the full range of education levels from bachelor up to the master (Figure 1).

BLA + MLA = 300 ECTS; 5 yrs.



Fig. 1. Versions A, B and C for a two-tier full range education cycle in landscape architecture.

[illegible]

* *Click to enlarge Fig. 2.*

Fig. 2. Relation of the created TSM's to the blocks of competences (learning lines).

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* *Click to enlarge Fig. 3.*

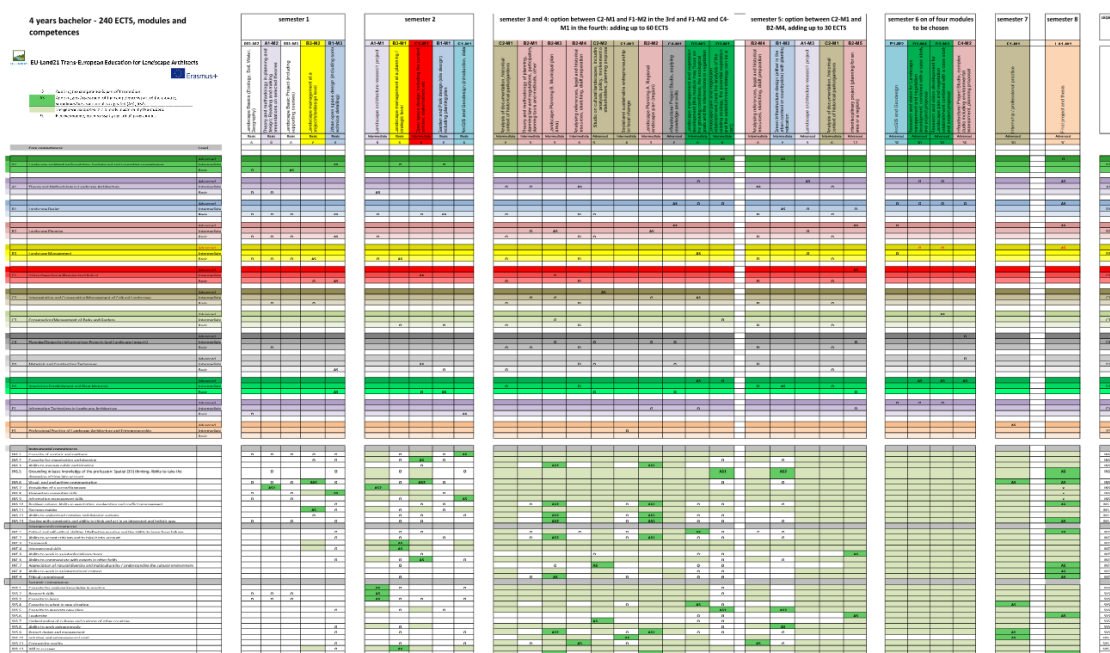
Fig. 3. Assessment of the generic competences through the created TSM's.

In the left column of Figures 2 and 3 the subject-specific and generic competences are listed, on top all the modules are displayed. In the cells where both meet it is defined whether the competence is learned by students and where it is assessed.

Within the programme concept as the next step we build up a set of Training Subject Modules TSM's to teach and allow for the students to learn the full range of required competences. These should focus on the core and subject specific competences as presented in the O2 report.

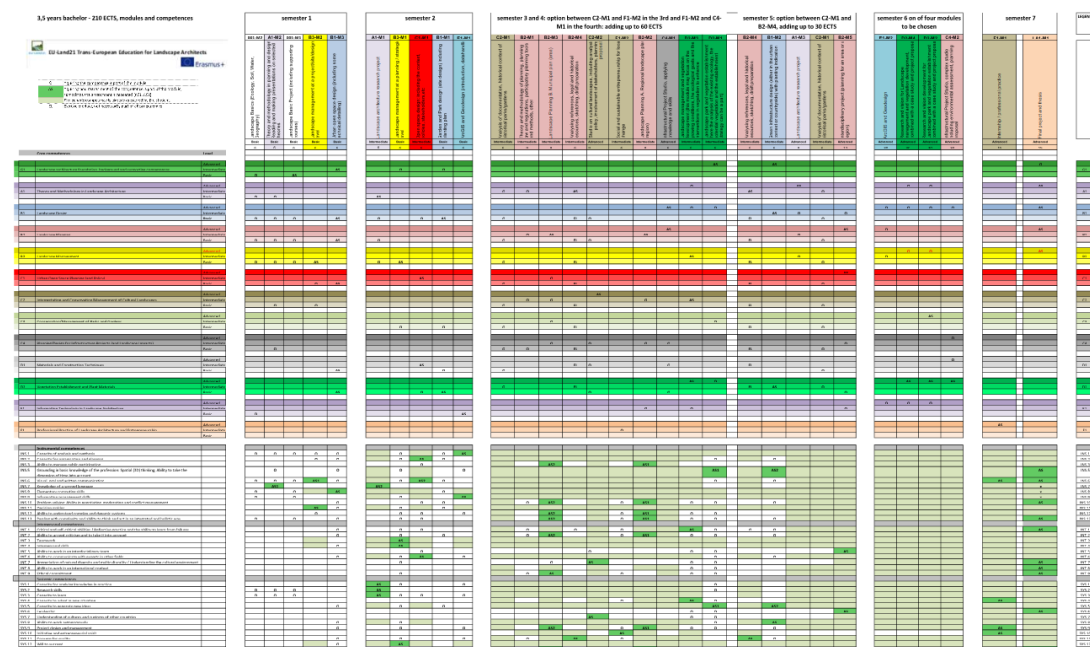
4. Structure of landscape architecture study programme

By using the layout of the fields of competences that were developed into the Learning Lines (O2) and the whole set of Training Subject Modules TSM's we created the matrix of interrelation between them (Fig. 2).



* Click to enlarge Fig. 4.

Fig. 4. Structure of the TSM's through the 4-years bachelor study programme in relation to the full range of blocks of subject-specific competences (learning lines) including the assessment.



* *Click to enlarge Fig. 5.*

Fig. 5. Structure of the TSM's through the 3.5-years bachelor study programme in relation to the full range of blocks of subject-specific competences (learning lines) including the assessment.



* Click to enlarge Fig. 6.

Fig. 6. Structure of the TSM's through the 3-years bachelor study programme in relation to the full range of blocks of subject-specific competences (learning lines) including the assessment.

The project group aimed to allow the degree of flexibility for different universities who may wish to apply the outcomes of the EU-LAND21 project and therefore created different versions of the study programmes mainly focusing on the versions of its duration in study semesters and European credits ECTS. This will allow to come to a balanced decision minding the legal requirements, market situation and academic background in different EU country. We have created the detailed proposal for the layout of the landscape architecture study programme in three versions:

V.1 Three years bachelor in landscape architecture programme;

V.2 Three-and-a-half years bachelor in landscape architecture programme;

V.3 Four years bachelor in landscape architecture programme.

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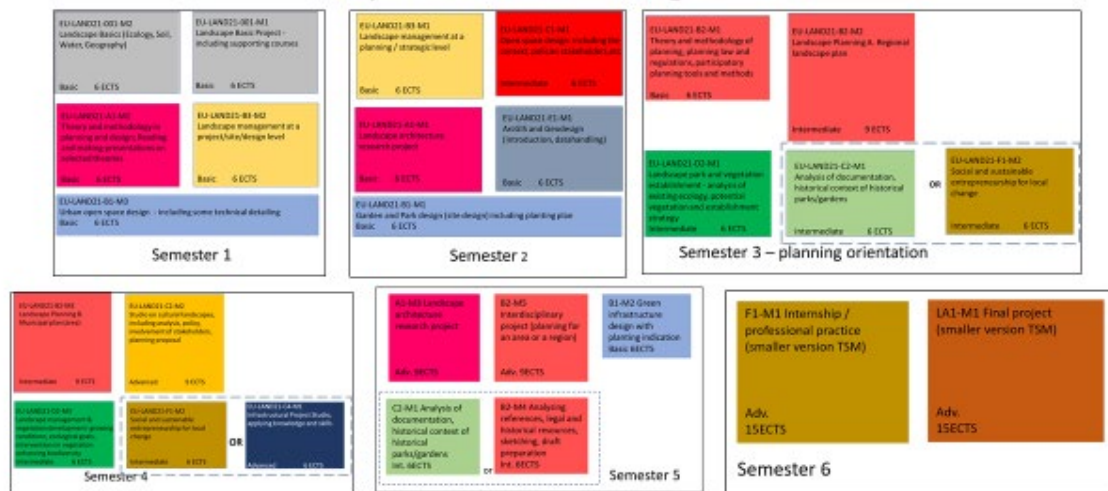


Figure 7. The detailed structure of a three years 180 ECTS BLA study programme.

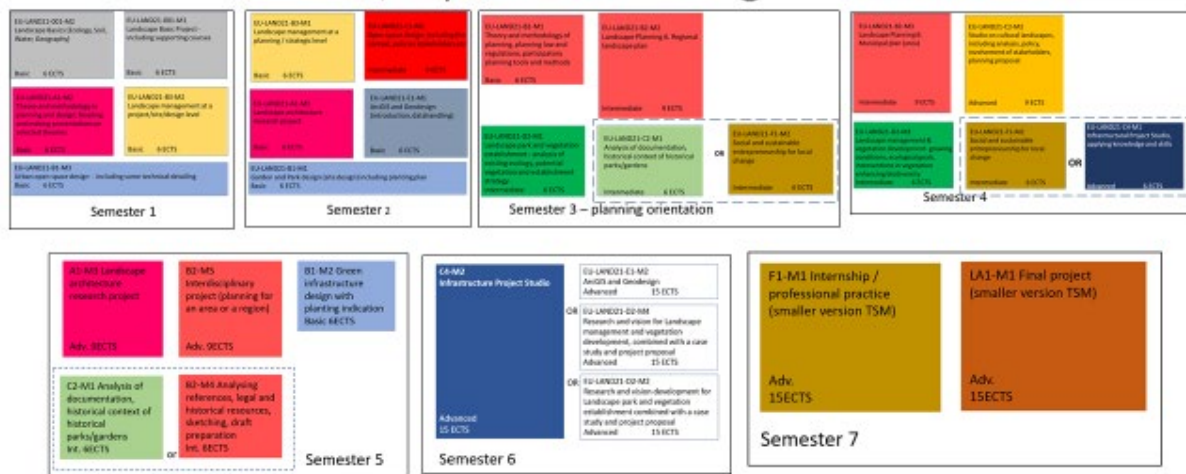


Figure 8. The detailed structure of a three-and-a-half years 210 ECTS BLA study programme.

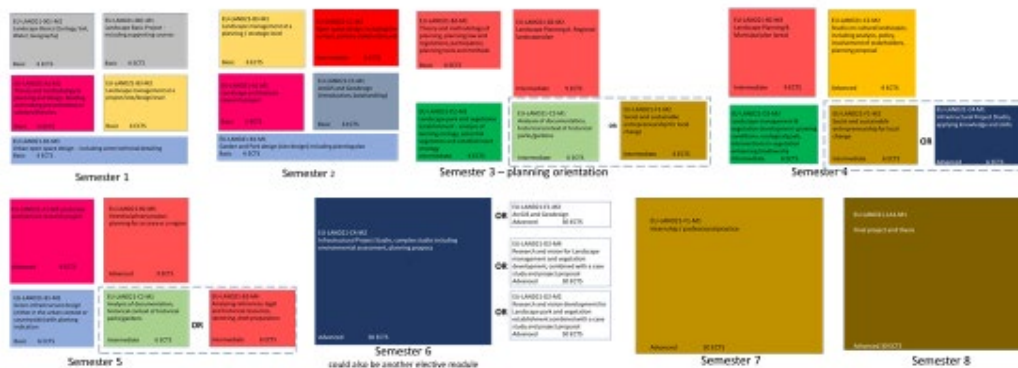


Figure 9. The detailed structure of a four years 240 ECTS BLA study programme.

5. Detailed layout of a 4-years programme

A model for teaching a landscape architecture bachelor

In the EU-Land21 project several models for programmes were discussed. A concept for a 4 years programme is developed. This programme has the following starting points:

- *In the first 2 years there is no specialisation, and students have the possibility to focus more on some aspects in the 3rd year*
- *The third year consists of one semester for elective subjects that also can be used for an international exchange programme. Within a consortium of schools, each school may offer a module on the competences and subject it excels.*
- *The fourth year consists of one semester for professional practice and one semester for a combination of the final project and the thesis work.*

See the detailed by-semester study models in Figs. 10-11-12-13.

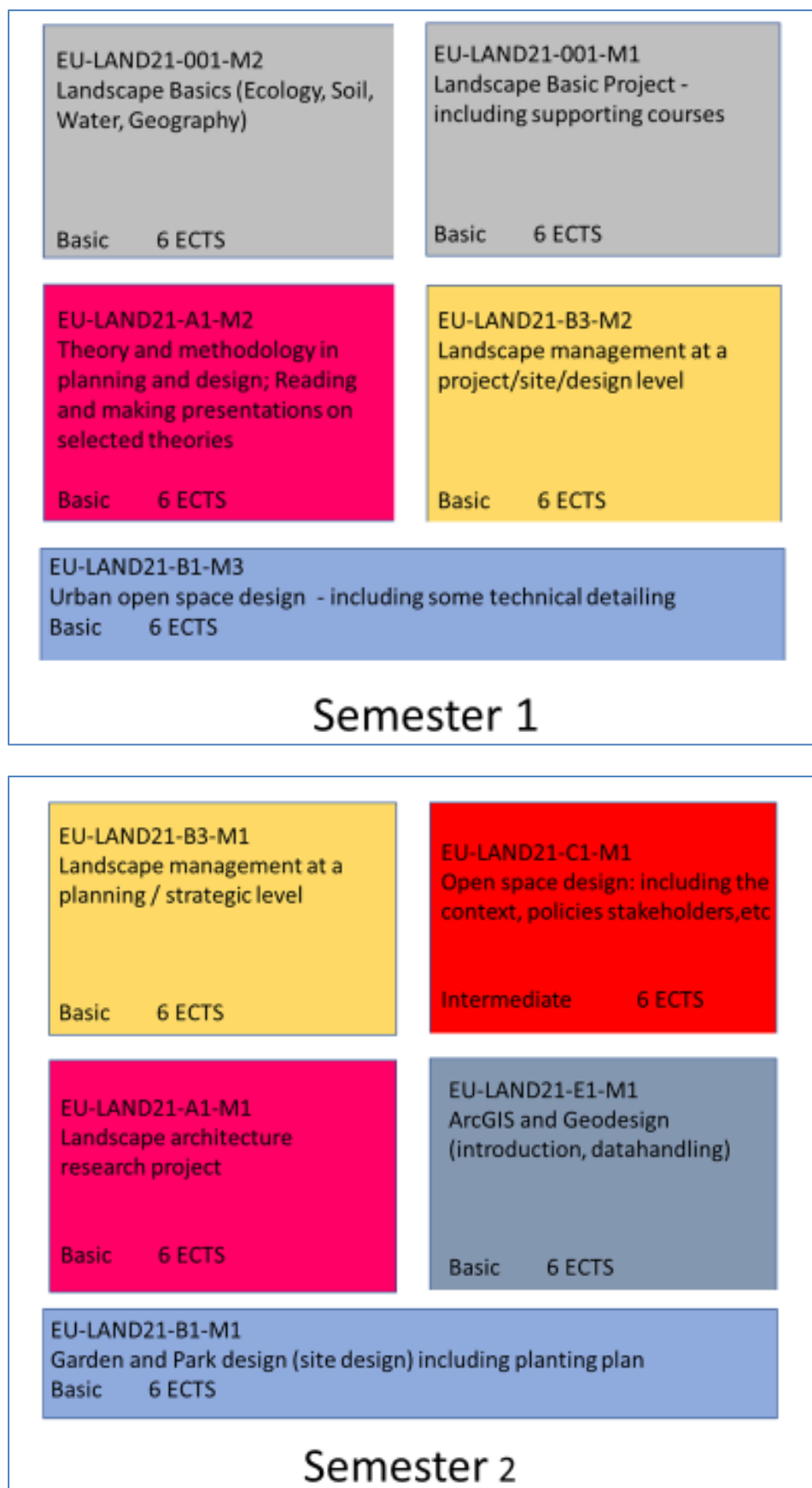


Figure 10. Detailed structure of the 1st study year of a four-year 240 ECTS BLA study programme.

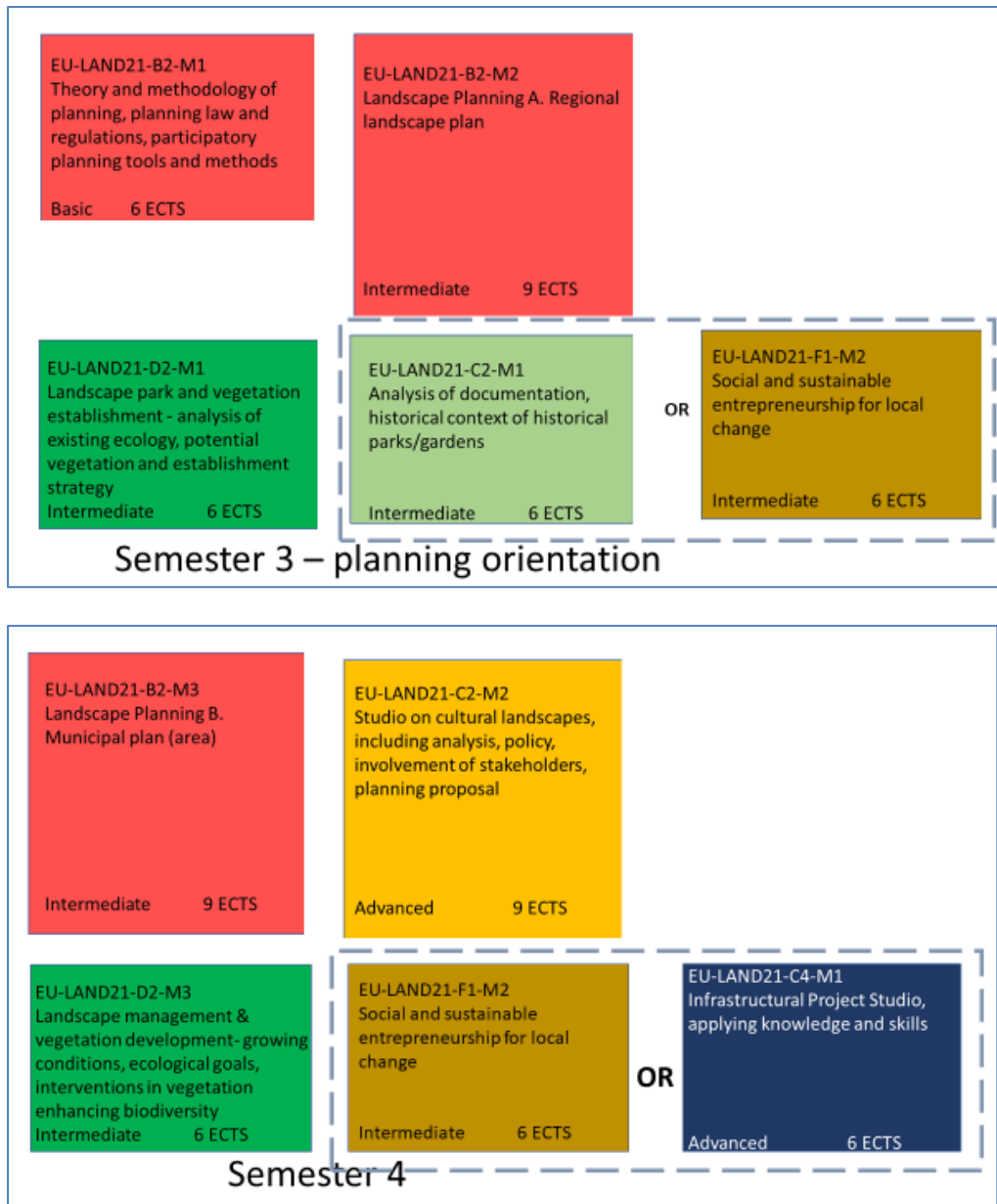


Figure 11. Detailed structure of the 2nd study year of a four-year 240 ECTS BLA study programme.

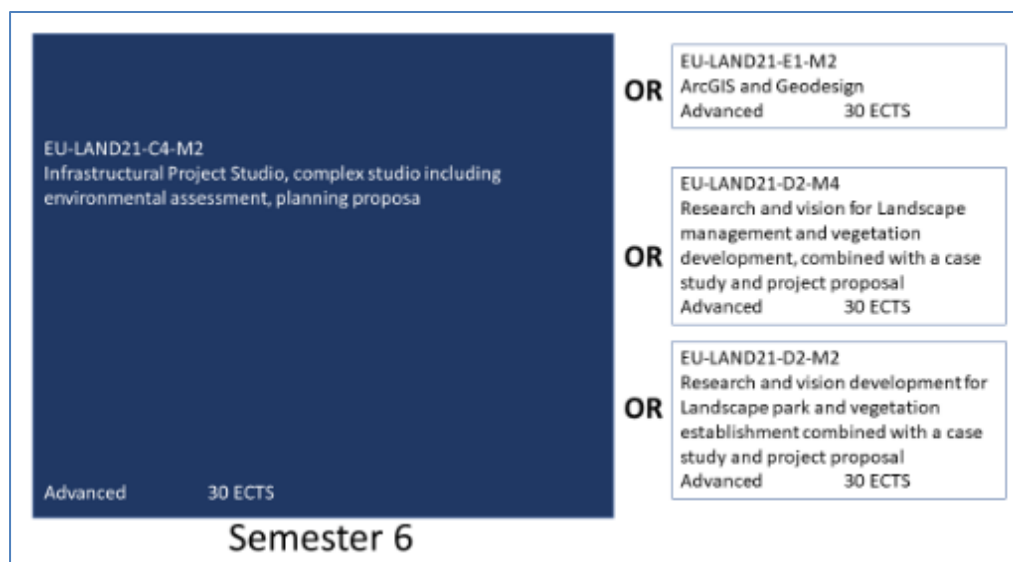
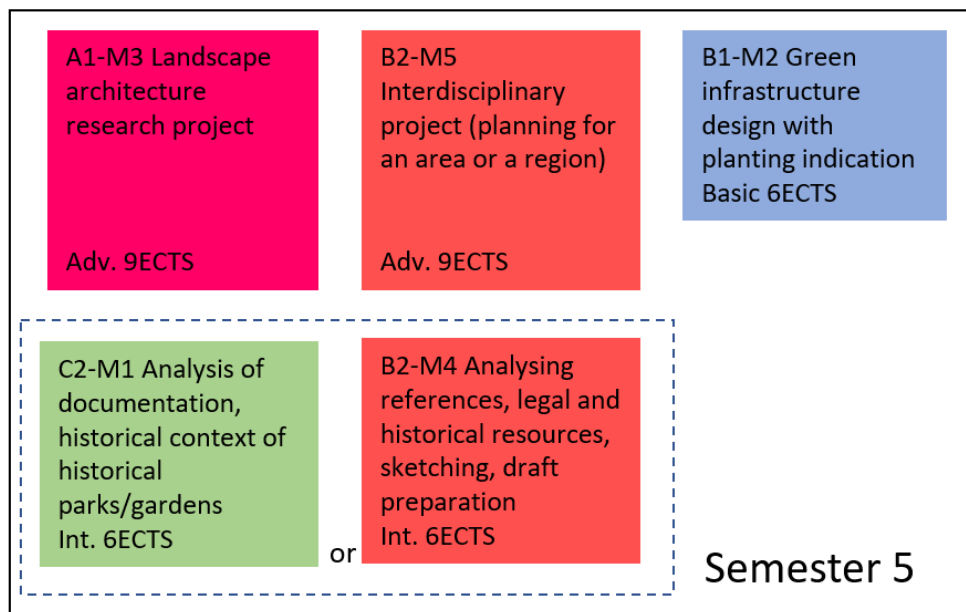


Figure 12. Structure of the 3rd study year of a four-year 240 ECTS BLA study programme.

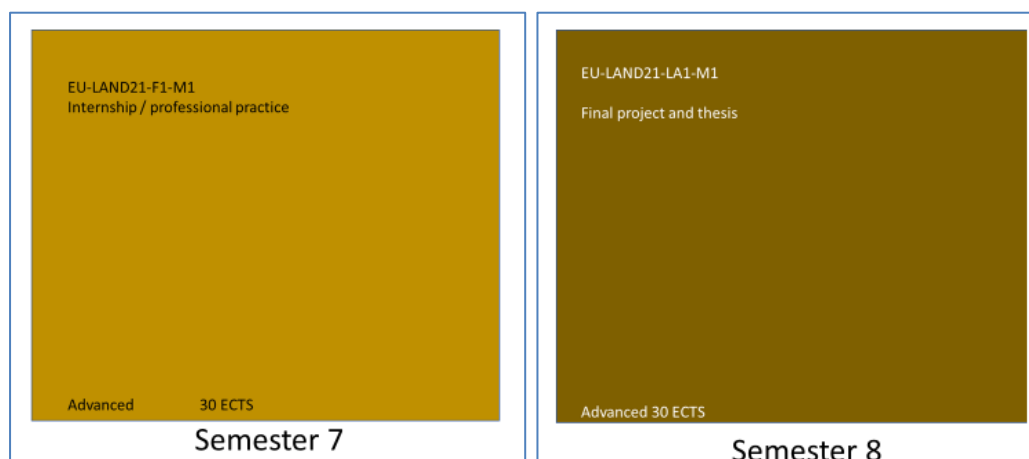


Figure 13. Structure of the 4th study year of a four-year 240 ECTS BLA study programme.

Different versions of the BLA study programme impose definite differences in structuring the MLA programme in relation to the BLA programme: the shorter the BLA programme, the longer should be the MLA programme, to reach at least 300 ECTS in total as drafted in Fig. 1.

Three-years (180 ECTS) BLA study programme (Fig. 7) has all elements to develop basic and intermediate competences in landscape architecture. It has a shorter internship period and a smaller diploma project. This type of programme is good as a new study product and implies a longer two-year 120 ECTS master in landscape architecture studies to obtain the complete volume of studies.

Three and-a-half years (210 ECTS) BLA study programme (Fig. 8) is an extended modification of a three-year programme and it has an interdisciplinary infrastructure project and few elective courses for the 6th semester as an extension. It is optimal structure of a programme, just the end of BLA and start of MLA should happen in the winter period which might create some organisational issues.

The four years-long 240 ECTS BLA programme (Fig. 9) is a conventional classical version of bachelor studies that many schools maintain and some have already abandoned, including the ones teaching landscape architecture (see Table 1). It has a classical structure of the basic and intermediate semesters, an extended interdisciplinary project with several options for the elective courses, one semester-long internship and a same size final project with a thesis. The short one-year long master studies (keeping 300 ECTS as a total volume of studies (Figure 1) is another outcome of this programme version.

6. Prerequisites for studies

There are no additional prerequisites to join the study programme: all graduates of secondary education are eligible to join after passing the entry test which is the specific requirement in all arts studies in Lithuania since 1970 when the programme of architecture was established at VGTU in Vilnius City. The admission test aims to advice the best candidates for studying arts disciplines as architecture and landscape architecture and it aims to identify the potential spatial imagination (intuitive feature) and basic understanding of arts development (as from a gymnasium programme) including basic drawing skills that need extra preparation.

All EU-citizens are eligible to study free of charge, students from the third countries are subject for a study fee that varies following the national regulation and the schools rules and may change from year to year. Exchange students from the partner schools as well as from all other European universities are eligible to study free of charge upon following the mobility and funding rules of Erasmus+ and consecutive European academic exchange programmes.

7. Joint and double degree studies

The EU-LAND21 project partners have thoroughly analysed the existing international (ECLAS and IFLA-Europe) and local legal requirements for landscape architecture studies as well as the situation of each partner school in the process of delivering and transforming the education process and based on that has come to the roadmap of the steps that will be taken to develop double degree teaching process. The Memorandum of Understanding has been developed and signed by all partners (Appendix 1) to ensure this process which will contain several interconnected phases:

1. The partners will carry out the process of upgrading their study programmes following the guidelines (O1), the assessment results (O2) and by using the created outputs of the project (O3) available on VGTU Moodle platform <https://moodle.vgtu.lt/course/view.php?id=1577> in due time;
2. VGTU will launch the new study programme in landscape architecture by using the full scope of project outputs (O1, O2 and O3) and selecting the most suitable version in terms of ECTS and study time;
3. After harmonising the education process the partners will reach the definite degree of compatibility, comparability and most important – transferability of the study process. This will allow starting intensive exchange of students and teachers in between the schools by establishing the landscape architecture study alliance that will allow student building their own study path and moving with confidence between the partner schools as to get the best quality studies available.
4. Students of the partner's schools who will fulfil the requirements of the hosting institution for the second diploma after having completed their exchange studies will receive a second diploma from the host school. For instance at VGTU the requirement for getting a second diploma is that a student should successfully complete his or her studies for 60 or more ECTS with positive assessment results. This will lead to developing a formal double-degree study model in Landscape Architecture.
5. The project partners will join the abovementioned alliance and establish the teaching links between the North-East (EE, LT), the Central-East (PL, HU) and the West (NL, BE) regions of the EU and gradually transit to delivering the harmonised and homogenised studies in Landscape Architecture (Fig. 14);
6. The outputs of the EU-LAND21 project together with the practical teaching experience of the partner schools will allow creating the Common Training Framework in Landscape Architecture that will harmonise the education process across the European Union and beyond (Fig. 15). More, this will allow coordinating the levels of landscape architecture studies according to the requirements of the European Qualification Framework (EQF level 6 and 7);
7. The Landscape Architecture Study Alliance will be an open and flexible network of project partners to allow more schools from the other countries joining the process of improvement and aiming for the higher quality in landscape architecture studies.



Fig. 14. Landscape architecture study alliance among the EU-LAND21 partners over the EU territory.

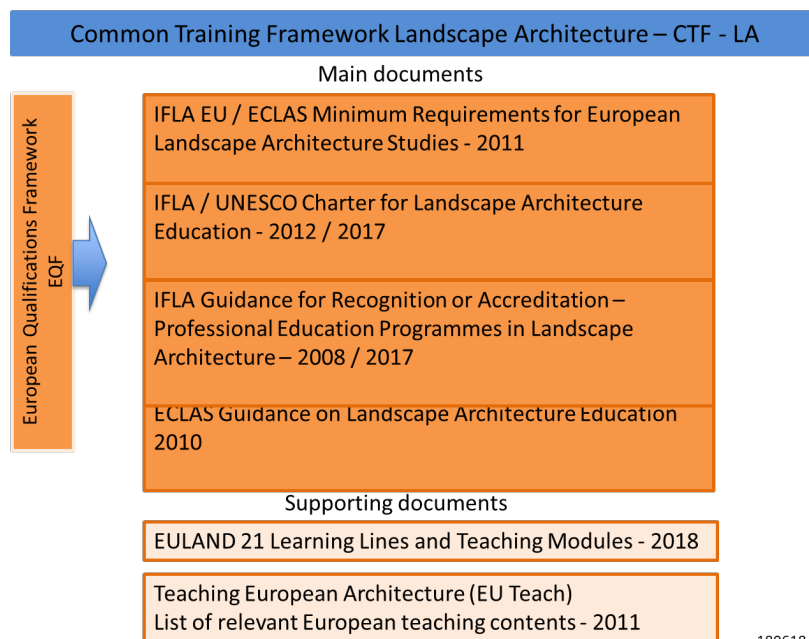


Fig. 15. Structure of the Common Training Framework in Landscape Architecture.

8. Conclusions

- A. The EU-LAND21 project O3/A1 outputs have created a practical framework (assessment tool, learning lines, teaching subject modules, programme structure) for a higher quality studies by upgrading the existing study programmes and creating entirely new study programmes in landscape architecture according to the requirements of professional (IFLA-Europe) and academic (ECLAS) networks;
- B. The versions of possible first cycle – bachelor study programmes with its by-semester structure allow for VGTU to pick the most suitable version and submit it for registration to the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education in Lithuania after which the admission to the first cycle of studies may be started in 2019;
- C. The designed models of the study programmes may be partly or fully implemented in the project partner's schools and may take them to the forefront of landscape architects education nationally and Europe-wide.
- D. The outputs of O3/A1 initiate and start harmonising the landscape architect's education process across the European continent in general and across the European Union in particular, by presenting a live, flexible and open model of an integrated landscape architecture study alliance established by five EU schools, partners of the EU-LAND21 project.
- E. The created innovative study model may guide the professional associations nationally and Europe-wide to upgrade their requirements for the recognition and accrediting of the study programmes and further improve the education of landscape architects over Europe by blending academic and practical experiences and integrating teaching innovation.

References

EU-LAND21 O1: Guidelines on Revising and Developing Study Programmes in Landscape Architecture.

EU-LAND21 O2: Peer learning methods on the development of a curriculum focused on the 1st cycle (bachelor).

Moodle platform at VGTU: <https://moodle.vgtu.lt/course/view.php?id=1577>