

Results of the Evaluation Questionnaire for the AVEC Summer School Peyresq, 14-27 September 2003

The aim of this questionnaire was to get feedback from the participants of the summer school on the overall structure, the lectures and organisation in order to improve these at the next summer school. The questionnaires were distributed to the students at the very end of the summer school and with the plea of returning them before leaving the next day. Of the 36 participants only 24 handed them back and two tutors took part in the procedure as well so that in total 26 questionnaires were returned. Not all questions had been answered or rated so that the sum sometimes does not add up to 26.

Expectations

The expectations were generally high but not specific at all. Simply “The Answer” was hoped for.

Accommodation

The accommodation was mostly considered excellent (13) to very good (11) and only rarely medium (2). The low water pressure in Gassendi, which resulted in no provision of warm water for the last days was mentioned as a shortcoming. This difficulty could be avoided by taking a shower in the basement though. Another complaint concerned the proximity of the party room to the bedrooms.

The cuisine was mostly rated as excellent (19) or very good (11) with one medium (1) vote which was voiced by a vegetarian who claimed that this was rather a difficult cuisine for vegetarians. One participant mentioned that the cuisine was a new experience and not a comfortable one to which opinion the majority apparently did not agree. The choice of non-alcoholic beverages was felt to be insufficient, for example herb-teas were not provided (1).

The long and somewhat difficult travel to Peyresq was still rated as excellent (9) or very good (11) while some gave it a medium (3) or even less (3). Two participants especially mentioned that the travel arrangements should have been communicated better.

Almost all agreed in the rating of the staff with (23) excellent and (3) very good. This is an additional confirmation of our own impression: simply marvelous.

Background Material

The AVEC website was been rated by all 26 participants and some mentioned that they couldn't even remember it or had no opinion about it. Only some (4) rated it as excellent, more (8) as very good but (6) as medium and (1) as almost poor. Some missed the travel details which had been distributed in the e-mails, some would have liked more information on the summer school itself and some more background literature to download as pdf on the website.

The next two questions concerning the background material in general and for the working groups in particular were answered in a uniform way but from the comments it became obvious that both questions were answered as if both were in respect to the working groups. This spanned the wish for more basic data for the countries, from specific data on the regions, including specific regional economic data, to more social and economic data in general. One participant wished for a CV of the staff, e.g. what had been their training. That other background material would have helped was confirmed by (4) while (8) were less sure about this, and for (6) this did not matter or (1) answered in the negative. In respect to whether the background material for the working groups was adequate only (1) agreed, (12) were not that happy with it while (8) were only partly happy and (1) was disappointed.

As the preferred type of distribution pdf files were mentioned most often but the web and paper copies would be acceptable as well. (7) would have preferred to receive the material in advance, (4) a short while in advance while (5) had no opinion in either direction, but (6) openly stated that they would not wish to have the material in advance.

As regards receiving the presentations and background material as pdf-copies were most highly satisfied

(21) but still a comment mentioned the possibility of receiving it in advance as much better. On the task of writing a report on one of the lectures the opinions were widely different: (15) found it useful while (2) denied this, questioning why it was necessary at all when the presentations would be available as pdf anyhow. Some mentioned that it would be a useful exercise but as not everybody had to do this only those who had already some practise in this did write a report, but did not learn anything new by this. The majority though approved the task as being useful. Most participants (21) wanted to include the regional assessments of the working groups on the CD-ROM.

Structure and organisation of the summer school

The structure of the working day was in general rated very well with excellent (5) to very good (13) to medium (8). Some (4) complained expressively that it had been too intensive. The participants considered the rare changes in the schedule to be a drawback of a more coherent working group time allowance. Of course, some stated that the time spent in the working groups was too long, so every possible opinion was voiced.

The general quality of the lectures was mostly rated as very good with (9,5) rating them as excellent and (14,5) very good and only (2) rating them in general medium.

The opportunity for discussing the lectures was rated as excellent (14) to very good (9) to medium. (2) rated them less favourably and one commented “the loudest had their say, how to change this?” Which we unfortunately could not change at all.

In the next two questions the rating of lectures was specified into the topical lectures and the aperitif talks. The difference was questioned by some and it was felt the aperitif talks had not been “real aperitif” after all. The topical lectures were rated better with: (11,5) excellent, (10) very good, (1) medium and (1) less than medium. For the aperitif talks the numbers were: excellent (8), very good (7,5), medium (5,5) and less than medium (3). In general the opinion was that the aperitif talks were too long and sometimes too heavy. Social science had been missing as had economy, which was regretted by some participants.

The group work on the regional assessments was rated excellent (9), very good (12,5) medium (4,5) and less than medium (1). This shows that the lectures were preferred and rated better but the difference is not that big.

Surprisingly the own groups’ work was not considered that excellent and with a total of only 21 answers one might suspect that those who did not answer considered this even worse. (6) rated it excellent, (12) very good and (3) medium. One participant commented that it was not true teamwork (Australia), one complained about the lack of data and another argued that this practice was not too serious.

The rating of the contribution of their own tutor was favourable with (9) excellent and (9) very good while only (3,5) rated their tutor medium and (0,5) almost poor. The explicit praises encompassed “did not intervene too much” via sometimes helpful/sometimes hindering or too dominant in the beginning.

The participants would have preferred more activities (14) but some (2) liked it as it was.

The question what worked best evoked all possible answers: from poster sessions, to working groups (3), to lectures (4) or aperitif talks to the excursion. One comment explicitly praised the combination of talks and working groups.

The answers on the question what worked least well ranged almost as broadly as in the opposite case: morning lectures (2), aperitif talks (5) which had been considered to have been too late, some discussions, some working groups and the rotation of posters.

The excursion was judged favourably by most participants: (12) excellent, (10) very good and (3) medium. Some (3) commented that driving was too much or that it was generally too long and it was a effort to put too much into it. One would have preferred to have had more time at Verdon.

The high enjoyment of the free day showed up in the rating: (21) voted it as excellent, (3) very good and (1) medium. Only one complained that the journey to Nice had been not possible with the bad rail connections and gave it a very poor. This was emphasized by the answers on whether the day-off was really needed. (18) confirmed this completely, (2) very much while (1) was medium.

Organisation

The improvement of organization questioned by some (4) as being impossible to improve upon (“typical German”). (3) would have appreciated receiving some material some weeks before the summer school, one asked for a clearer structure for the working groups, more time between the lectures to allow for more discussions. The information distributed via e-mails concerning the train rides and other practical matters should have been put on the web or sent in one e-mail.

Ideas on the summer school: to invite policy-makers/politicians, to integrate more closely natural and social sciences. The chairs of the sessions should have been more strict in respect of time limits. There should have been more time in the working groups for clarification and discussion of the lectures. The working groups and the aperitif talk should stretch more into the evening and leave the afternoon free. More free time

Overall rating

The overall rating was (19) excellent and (7) very good, which is a confirmation of our own good feelings about the summer school.

(6) believed that this summer school might influence their studies, with an additional (2) in the near and (1) in the far future.

The most often mentioned open question was, when the next summer school would take place (3). Then when the CD and certificate would be sent (2).

Any additional comments

One of the additional comments encouraged the organizers to continue to have unusual/unconventional lecturers.

One comment regretted that there has been a lot of prestige issues going on... although the overall impression was very positive nevertheless.

More general information and lectures on global/climate change would have facilitated it for everybody to have the same level of knowledge and would have made things easier and on the same footing.

And a verbal comment repeated many times was that it was the best extended working period in the last 10 years.

Ecosystems under Global Change" 14-27 September 2003

Evaluation

Please answer the following questions by circling the numbers given for each of them. We also appreciate any additional comments you make, either directly in relation to each question or on the back of the last page.

Excellent/Easy/Yes - Poor/Difficult/No

Expectations

| | | | | | |
|---|-----------|----------|----------|----------|---|
| Did the summer school meet your expectations? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| What did you expect from the summer school: | | | | | |
| <u>The Answer</u> | <u>14</u> | <u>9</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>1</u> | |

Accommodation

| | | | | | |
|---|-----------|-----------|----------|---|---|
| How would you rate the accommodation of Peyresq? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Explanation or additional comments: | | | | | |
| <u>only cold water the last days, Party room too near to the bedrooms</u> | <u>13</u> | <u>11</u> | <u>2</u> | | |

| | | | | | |
|--|-----------|-----------|----------|---|---|
| How would you rate the cuisine at Peyresq? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Explanation or additional comments: | | | | | |
| <u>difficult for vegetarians, other non-alcoholic warm drinks (herb tea)</u> | <u>19</u> | <u>15</u> | <u>1</u> | | |

| | | | | | |
|---|----------|-----------|----------|----------|---|
| How would you rate travelling to Peyresq? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Explanation or additional comments: | | | | | |
| <u>too long, should have been communicated better</u> | <u>9</u> | <u>11</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>3</u> | |

| | | | | | |
|--|-----------|----------|---|---|---|
| How would you rate the staff at Peyresq? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Explanation or additional comments: | | | | | |
| | <u>23</u> | <u>3</u> | | | |

Background material

| | | | | | |
|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|---|
| How would you rate the AVEC website? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| What could be improved at the AVEC website? | | | | | |
| <u>don't know, can't remember, more information on the course, literature, pdf files</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>8</u> | <u>6</u> | <u>1</u> | |

| | | | | | |
|--|----------|-----------|----------|----------|---|
| How would you rate the background material? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| What other background material would have helped? | | | | | |
| Explanation or additional comments: <u>social and economic data, more basics of the countries, better internet connection, CV of Tutors (training)</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>10</u> | <u>6</u> | <u>1</u> | |

| | | | | | |
|--|----------|-----------|----------|----------|---|
| Was the provision of background material on CD-ROM for the working groups adequate? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| <u>too little regional and economic data, country-specific data was not sufficient</u> | <u>1</u> | <u>12</u> | <u>8</u> | <u>1</u> | |

Would you have preferred a different type of distribution? pdf in advance: 2, paper copies: 2, no: 2

Explanation or additional comments:

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Would you have preferred receiving background material in advance? | | | | | |
| Which material? key papers, data, background material | 7 | 4 | 5 | 2 | 6 |

Explanation or additional comments:

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|-----------|----------|----------|----------|---|
| Are you satisfied with receiving pdf-copies of the presentations and additional background information after the summer course? | | | | | |
| Explanation or additional comments: | 21 | 3 | 1 | 1 | |
| in advance would have been better | | | | | |

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|--|-----------|----------|----------|---|----------|
| Do you find it useful that participants were asked to prepare a report of each lecture and the discussions? | | | | | |
| Explanation or additional comments: | 15 | 3 | 5 | | 2 |
| why, when the talks are distributed as pdf files afterwards? Only those did it who know how to do this → nobody learned anything doing this | | | | | |

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|-----------|----------|----------|---|---|
| Do you want that the regional assessments of each group is distributed on the final CD-ROM? | | | | | |
| | 21 | 3 | 2 | | |

Structure and organisation of the summer school

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|----------|-----------|----------|---|---|
| How do you rate the structure of the working days? | | | | | |
| Explanation or additional comments: | 5 | 13 | 8 | | |
| too intensive: 4, too long WG: 3 more coherent time for WG was needed, changes in the programme reduced WG time, more short/long breaks needed | | | | | |

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|--|------------|-------------|----------|---|---|
| How do you rate the general quality of the lectures? | | | | | |
| Explanation or additional comments: | 9,5 | 14,5 | 2 | | |

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|-----------|----------|----------|----------|---|
| How do you rate the opportunity for discussing the lectures? | | | | | |
| Explanation or additional comments: | 14 | 9 | 2 | 2 | |
| the loudest had their say, how to change this? More chairing needed sometimes, too long, too short | | | | | |

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|-------------|-------------|----------|----------|---|
| How do you rate the topical lectures? | | | | | |
| Explanation or additional comments: | 11,5 | 10,5 | 1 | 1 | |
| social science missing : 3, economy missing, there was no difference to other lectures | | | | | |

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|--|----------|------------|------------|----------|---|
| How do you rate the 'aperitif talk' lectures? | | | | | |
| Explanation or additional comments: | 8 | 7,5 | 5,5 | 3 | |
| not real "aperitif", too long, could not see a difference | | | | | |

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|--|----------|-------------|------------|----------|---|
| How do you rate the group work developing a regional assessment? | | | | | |
| Explanation or additional comments: | 9 | 12,5 | 4,5 | 1 | |
| lack of social scientist, lack of data, best part of summer school, not enough time due to changes in schedule, better preparation would have allowed quicker access to core problems | | | | | |

Excellent/Easy/Yes - Poor/Difficult/No

How do you rate your own group's work? 1 2 3 4 5
 Explanation or additional comments: 6 12 3
lack of data, not true teamwork, practise not too serious

What did you learn from your case study? _____

How do you rate the contribution of your tutor? 1 2 3 4 5
 Explanation or additional comments: 9 9 3,5 0,5
too dominant in the beginning, more help needed, sometimes helpful/hindering, did not intervene too much

Would you have preferred more presentations or more breakout activity time? **as it was: 2, more breakout: 14**

What activities/presentations worked best in the summer school? **lectures: 4, some WG: 3, aperitif talks, poster session, combination WG/lectures, excursion**

What activities/presentations worked most poorly? **morning lectures: 2, some discussions, some WG, some aperitif talks (too late): 5, change of posters**

Did you enjoy the field trip on Friday 19 September? 1 2 3 4 5
 Explanation or additional comments: 12 10 3
too much driving: 4, too long, tried to do too much, more time in Verdon would have been better

Did you enjoy the day-off on Tuesday 23 September? 1 2 3 4 5
21 3 1

Was the day-off needed to obtain, for example, some rest? 1 2 3 4 5
 Explanation or additional comments: 18 2 1 1
another free day needed to enjoy the surroundings, Nice too far away and difficult to reach

Organisation

What suggestions do you have for the organizers for how they could be more effective? **good, superb, "German" organizing the best I have known, can't think of any, next time the same again,**

material distribution some weeks ahead: 3, clearer structure for WG, more time between lectures e.g. more discussion, all information put on the web/in one e-mail, centrally organized train ride

What other ideas do you have for how the summer school could have been more effective?
almost ideal, invite policymaker/politician, more integration natural/social science: 2, better chairing e.g. set time limits, no talks in the afternoon only WG, more computers for WG, in WG no time to discuss the lectures, tutors should prepare clarification of lectures, WG in the evenings with free afternoons, more free time, more nationalities in GW and different backgrounds, structuring of work time early in the course and keeping it

Overall Rating

| | Excellent/Easy/Yes | - | Poor/Difficult/No | | |
|--|--------------------|---|-------------------|---|---|
| What is your overall rating of the summer school? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Explanation or additional comments: | 19 | 7 | | | |
| vulnerability too complex for sound scientific results | | | | | |

Might this summer school influence your studies and research in the near/far future? _____
near: 2, far: 1, yes: 6

Any open questions? will there be another summer school? when will we get the DC/certificate? will there be a meeting?

Any additional comments?

Continue to have unusual/unconventional lectures, more general information and lectures in the beginning for reaching the same level of knowledge, rather unfriendly atmosphere at occasions (but finishing a fantastic course in this fantastic setting!, next time the same kind of summer school

Please give this form to anyone of the organisers before leaving Peyresq. Thank you!