Supervisory Feedback Report

FIN-TECH HO2020 project Mid-Term Event
Romania – Bucharest

Supervisor: *Dr. Shatha Qamhieh Hashem*
                      Assistant Professor, Finance Department
                      Faculty of Economics & Administrative Sciences
                      An-Najah National University, Nablus, Palestine

Project Acronym: *FIN-TECH*

Feedback Date: *December, 15th, 2019*

Executive Summary

This FIN-TECH project aim is to develop expertise in terms of having a common understanding and interpretation concerning the scope, application and risks associated with the applications of:

1. Big data analytics
2. Artificial intelligence
3. Blockchains.

The FIN-TECH project is funded under the EU's Horizon2020 funding scheme, and is used to support the establishment of a European training program, that provides shared risk management solutions to automatize the compliance of Fintech companies (RegTech) and increase the efficiency of supervisory activities (SupTech). Such expertise is specifically key to support the core FinTech hubs in the future.

The project is obviously valuable, as currently, the identification and assessment of the risk profile of FinTech solutions is a necessity, knowing that the financial industry is increasing its investments in technological solutions and increasingly depending on them. The upscaling level of complexities from utilizing these solutions is challenging not only at the institutional level, but also at the regulatory level, which signaled the importance of improving and developing the risk management procedures that can be applied to FinTech services and to regulating them. the collaboration fostered by this project between researchers, regulators and industry specialists is vital for such desired outcome.

The FinTech project consortium is planned to include 25 EU universities as partners in this project. Project participants are supported by an online portal during the two years' project period in which all relevant material and data are provided. The project partners have scheduled periodic meetings and workshops to contribute with improved research procedures that are published on the project website.

Participants Specialties

Within the planned project consortium, the participants are to include universities and research centers, FinTechs and FinTech hubs, regulators and supervisors. The activities of the FIN-TECH project are planned with the contribution from those three types of project participants:
1. Fintechs and fintech hubs to help understanding business models based on financial technologies;
2. Regulators and supervisors to help understanding the regulations and risks that concern financial technologies;
3. Universities and research centers to help understanding the risk management models that can be applied to financial technologies.

The workshop at Bucharest included a diverse and interdisciplinary audience (presenters and non-presenters) with the following specialties:
1. Academic staff participants, mainly from the faculty of economics, and the faculty of engineering and technology.
2. Students from the previously mentioned faculties.
3. Regulators and FinTech industry representatives.
4. Project advisors.

Conclusion:
1. The workshop delivered the promised expertise diversity provided by its participants.
2. The expertise of the project partners is diverse and interdisciplinary.
3. Orientation, knowledge and experience are opened to young students and researches in terms of the importance of opportunities that FinTech provides.

Workshop Pillars

The Bucharest workshop pillars correspond to the project three main technologies that drive the FinTech innovations: Big Data, Artificial Intelligence and Blockchains. The Workshop included three panels:
- Panel session 1: Credit and market risk in peer to peer lending
  (*In correspondence to Big Data analytics, with its application to peer-to-peer lending and main risks arising from credit risk).*
- Panel session 2: Market risk in financial robot advisory.
  (*In correspondence to Artificial intelligence and Blockchains, with its application to financial Robo-Advice, main risks arising from compliance risk, and digital currencies*).
- Panel session 3: Operational risk in Blockchains and innovative payments; selected topics on market risk
  (*In correspondence to Artificial intelligence and Blockchains, with application to market risk*).

Conclusion:
The workshop provided research papers that work within the project three main technologies that drive the FinTech innovations. The speakers were provided a good knowledge base across the different dimensions of the issues discussed.

Networking

The Bucharest workshop Socializing and Network Activities included a dinner on November 14th, in addition to a lunch and dinner on the 15th of November.

Conclusion:
It was noticeable the amount of effort that is dedicated by the local project team to organize and establish friendly network relations between participants. In addition, several participants embraced the collaboration opportunities opened for them through the project network.

Deliverables' Online Platform

The FIN-TECH project provides and distributes use cases through dedicated web-based platform (https://internal.fintech-ho2020.eu/), that is supported by *Firamis*. The main fields provide all relevant project data, including: use cases and coding, network visualization, event map, bibliography, videos, events agendas, and a contagion risk monitor.

Conclusion:
The project portal design is friendly; it allows for the navigation in an easy manner through the different links and folders.
A note that worth mentioning for the portal improvement refers to the Bibliography section upon choosing Table as the type of output:
- The Table appears to be wider than the screen area reserved for the output online without having a horizontal slider to move to the right side of the table.
- When attempting to view the table as a pdf file, the file cuts off any table area that is larger than the reserved onscreen area.
- It would be useful if the table format is allowed to be downloaded as excel or csv file.
- The Blockchains output fields are limited to two options instead of the three provided for AI and Big Data.

The Network Visualization Section seems to still be under construction until now, or the section doesn't load properly.
The project platform is an important tool that contributes to the success and sustainability of the project after its completion. The project team are recommended to continue the portal development in terms of both its content and functionality.

Outcome Sustainability Prospects

The project continued its successful progress through the workshop attended in Bucharest, and is expected to continue doing so in the future. The project has great potential to further host innovative work and research ideas, such as providing an open eLearning platform delivered by academics and FinTech industry representatives. The project can also continue as a main European FinTech hub that fosters collaborations between academics, industries and regulators.

In general, the project is running in a very good manner despite the withdrawal of France and the very few underperforming partners. If the project continues with its successful progress, it is expected to become essential in supporting the European cooperation and integration process.