



## **Working Package 4**

**Establishing Regional Development Centres in each Albanian university**

**Deliverable 4.2**

# **Designing a plan of 3M activities**

**University of Korça**

**Final Report**

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**U3M-AL PROJECT - DEVELOPING THIRD MISSION ACTIVITIES IN ALBANIAN UNIVERSITIES**

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**This report has been prepared with the participation of:**

Ardian Cerava  
University of Korça

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## **1 GENERAL ISSUES**

### **1.1 Objective**

To present a comprehensive plan for developing 3M activities to be implemented by the Regional Development Centre.

### **1.2 Description**

After one year of training locally and internationally, and after finalising local studies on demand, Albanian universities will be ready for presenting a comprehensive plan for developing 3M activities. This plan, conceived to some extent as a business plan, will consider objectives, methodology, needs of support structures and needs of resources (financial, human and others). EU universities will advise Albanian universities with this plan.

## **2 PLAN OF 3M ACTIVITIES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF KORÇA**

### **2.1 Mission Statement**

The mission statement of the University is to prepare new professionals in the programs of study that the university offers through high quality of teaching, professional practice and serve as a training centre for the region and the nation. It serves as a national and international research centre where university researchers address regional and international problems and give solutions and advice for these problems. It serves as a Life Long Learning Centre where all professionals can continue their learning process through their carrier.

### **2.2 The University**

“Fan S. Noli” University of Korça was first established after the approval of the Council of Ministers Nr.5, on January 07, 1992, based on the Higher Agricultural Institute (1971-1992) under the name “The Polytechnic University of Korca”. It was composed of three units: Faculty of Agriculture, Faculty of Economics, and Faculty of Education. In 1994 it was given the name of one of the most significant figures of the Albanian history and culture, Fan Stilian Noli. Since then the University has broadened its educational and administrative structure. Actually the University consists of 4 faculties: The Faculty of Agriculture, The Faculty of Economics, The Faculty of Education and Philology and the Faculty of Natural and Human Sciences. The faculties are organized in 14 departments and one educational-research group (section group). In 2009

the University opened a branch in the city of Pogradec. At the beginning it offered only one study program, Tourism Management, but it was soon followed by another one, that of Elementary Education and English Language, and since 2013 it qualifies its students for the Elementary Education Grades I-VI. The university has two centers of excellence, as basic research and training units whose mission is to train teachers of the pre-university system as well as quality trainings of specialists in natural and human sciences. Part of the Faculty of Agriculture is a Didactic Experimental Economy, which possesses 33 ha., where the students and the pedagogues develop their scientific research and professional practice. The studies in the University of Korça are organized in three levels according to the criteria of the Bologna Declaration:

- the first level: Bachelor with 180 credits
- the second level: professional Master with 90 credits; and, Master of Science 120 credits
- the third level Postdoctoral /PhD

How does the Bologna process work? The Bologna process is a series of university reforms that aim to ensure a transparent, comparable and coherent system of higher education, based on three levels: diploma-master-doctorate. The Bologna process dated on 19 June 1999, with the signing of the Declaration from 29 European Countries. Since 2008 Albanian universities have undertaken a series of reforms for the academic freedom of universities as well as for the free student movement to other universities for the following reasons:

- to exchange experience with other students abroad
- to change the study contexts
- to exchange educational and teaching experiences
- to integrate the study structure and systems
- to compare the learning achievements at different universities, by respecting the tradition and the priorities of each one

The European Union has assessed the students' mobility as an important aspect of the cooperation between universities. How does the equivalency work? The European Union elaborated a new common evaluation system called The European Transfer System to compare and transmit quality. This system enables the measurement of learning achievements. The credit system that is the base of this declaration measures the work done by the student in order to achieve the objectives of the Study Program. For example: if a subject has 3 credits this means that a student needs 75 study hours to achieve positive marks; 37 study hours are spent within the university auditors (during

lectures, seminars, laboratory classes, etc.) and 38 individual study hours should be spent outside the auditors, for research in libraries, practical training, preparation of papers, partial subject check-up, final exams, etc. Marks from 4-10 measure the quality of the student's work, while credits measure the quantity of work done by the student. If a student wants to go to another partner university he must transfer his credits. The University of Korça approximately 7500 students from all regions of Albania, who attend 24 full-time study programs of the first cycle Bachelor; 15 part-time study programs (Bachelor); 15 full-time and 2 part-time Professional Master study programs; 5 programs in Master of Science and 1 Doctorate program at the Faculty of Agriculture. There are 138 full time lecturers (70 per cent of whom hold titles and degrees) and a considerable number of part time academic staff. The admission of students at the first cycle in Fan S. Noli University - Every individual who has successfully finished high school and has passed the state examinations, has the right to apply for the first study cycle at Korça University. Foreign students can study on the first cycle of the study programs, based on bilateral or multilateral agreements. The admission of the students at the second cycle in Fan S. Noli University. All the candidates who have finished a study program of the first cycle and have fulfilled the academic admission standards that are defined in the study program criteria of every faculty, have the right to apply for the registration in the study programs of Professional Master or Master of Science. Only the students who have finished the first cycle and have been awarded a diploma in this program in the fields of study at the University of Korça, (as well as students from other universities who fulfil the criteria and want to pursue the second cycle studies) can participate in this study program according to the respective profiles. Students who possess a Bachelor degree issued by the Faculty of Education and the Faculty of Agriculture in the study programs of: Albanian Language and Literature, Social Sciences, English Language, Mathematics, Teaching, Agro-nutrition, Agro-business and Horticulture, can attend Professional Master studies with no need of supplementing exams. The admission of the students in the study program "Professional Master" is done during September. The applications are submitted from 20-25 of September at the secretary. Within one week from the time of applications, the Faculty Evaluation Committee reviews applications and provides relevant assessments. Students cannot be transferred from one university to another within the same study program in the same academic year, but they may be transferred between programs of the same cycle, within the institution or other institutions of higher education, as well as from previous programs to other study programs of the first cycle.

## 2.3 The University Business Environment

Based on the recommendation and the analyses of the U3M activities for University of Korça some of the University Business Activities has been changed and will continue to change. Technology transfer and innovation will be done throughout each faculty with the opening of the training centres. Some of our new laboratories are undergoing certification. This certification will be able to uphold more research for the region as well as attract more funds from the EU and Albanian governmental institution. With the help of the new Project management office which was equipped by the project and a full administrative staff that has been hired it will be more efficient as an office and hopefully create more income.

More advances have been done in this area where most of the faculties have already received their certificates for the centres for continuing education, this means that the university can give specific courses for professionals already having a job. This will be one of the activities that will be covered under the RDC created by the project

As far as the social engagement is concerned we found out that a stronger and more efficient collaboration is needed with the local government and regional business. Now the university has a fully capable Carrier Office and Alumni Office that has started to operate and give its first results. The student services are being operated by students now and this was taken as an idea from university of Turku. They had their first Student show organized in the City Theatre.

The SWOT Analyses

### ***Technology Transfer & Innovation***

#### **Strengths**

The academic staff has got experience in different aspects in field of scientific research which can be disseminated in the academic community some of the field that the university can transferee new technologies through research are agriculture, economics and education. The university has an experimental farm that can serve as a research facility for new agricultural products that might be introduced in the region. As well as make a few pilot application for farmers and transfer that technology in the region, given that Korca is a highly agricultural region. The consulting for new business is very important especially for the entrepreneurs in the region and the new companies coming into the region from neigboughring countries. University can help in different marketstudies as wellas test the economic environmental situation for these companies. To accommodate these goals the university has a good physical and intellectual infrastructure that has been improved through some projects of the World Bank

and European Union. University has a high capacity of networking with international institutions and getting involved in international projects.

### **Weaknesses**

One of the main weakness and problems is the lack of funds from the government for scientific research and supporting of these activities. The lack of funding from different companies and the low involvement of the university in international research given the high number of partner institutions in the region and Europe. The low number of student involvement and initiative in the entrepreneurship and research.

### **Opportunities**

The establishment of the Developing Centre at Korça University and equipping it with the necessary things for an office will directly help the implementation of the third mission activities at our University.

The experience gained in the training visits at the University of Turku, Turin and Valencia on the third mission activities has helped us to be focused on possibilities/capabilities in order to implement some of the aspects of this mission such as new technologies in our laboratories of agri-food, chemistry and soil science.

### **Threats**

The collaboration with companies that operates at the region is not at required level. Lack of the needed funds for the continuity of the third University mission. The lack of information on the labour market in the region and beyond it. Some of the students do not have the required level of the scientific formation.

## ***Continuing Education***

### **Strengths**

The creation of the Life Long centres at our universities that are operational for the moment. The continuing education centre for teacher of pre-university levels, in education (Albanian language, Albanian Literature, English). The continuing education centre for teacher of pre-university levels, in social sciences (math, physics, IT, chemistry). The continuing education centre for teacher of pre-university levels, in social science (philosophy, sociology).

### **Weaknesses**

There should be a higher awareness of the students in qualifying themselves in accordance to the labor market. The maintenance and renovation of the infrastructure should be one of aspects, which need special and continuous

attention. Some of the students who start to attend the University have a low academic performance. This is due to the low performance at the Secondary schools they attended.

### **Opportunities**

The law on Higher Education in Albania gives to the students to attend their programs of study in three levels (bachelor, Master of Science or Professional Master and Doctoral Studies). The qualification of the academic staff plays a great role in the process continuing education which makes possible the opening of the new programs of study in the second and third level (master and doctoral studies). The demand of the labor market for qualified employees. Open the continuing education for Faculty of Economy and Faculty of Agriculture.

### **Threats**

The fees for any program of study are not in accordance to the economic level. The University competition trade. The need for new facilities and equipment. Through this project it will be possible for the Center of the continuing education for the faculty of natural and Human sciences to be completed and operational.

### ***Social Engagement***

#### **Strengths**

Collaboration with NGOs. Sport activities addressed to the community. International conferences. Good relationship with the neighbour countries and collaboration with local authorities. Now we are involved and are more active in joint cooperation with the Local Municipalities and Prefecture of Korça with different joint European projects.

#### **Weaknesses**

The collaboration with companies that operates at the region should be strengthened. The level of awareness on the third mission of the Universities is not at required level. Faculties should have a bigger communication on labour market with the Labour Offices of the region. The lack of a carrier office for the students, which now has been established and it is fully operational thanks to the U3M Tempus Project.

#### **Opportunities**

Better cooperation in cross-border projects with Greece and FYROM. Involvement in social engagement in local government. The Creation

of the center for Students and the Career Office as well as the Alumni office, which can be very valuable for our University. The career office can organize trainings as well as Job Fairs with companies from the region and national companies as well.

### **Threats**

Informality in working. The lack of information on the labour market in the region and beyond it. There isn't any private employment agency that operates in the region.

## **2.4 The University Products and Services**

After looking at the needs and the opportunities that our university has through out the project a lot of changes and services are created and are now functional. Some of this services and offices are Student Career Office, Project Management Office, Student Service Office, Continuing Education Center for Faculty of Human and Natural Sciences

**The Career Center (CC)** at "Fan S. Noli" University was established in November 2013, as an office whose mission was to help students find a job and advise them how to apply for a job position. Its main goal is to help students make their first professional steps. The students' Career Center serves as a connecting bridge between the students (job seekers) and the employers (business, public administration). It encourages the students to plan their career through trainings, forums, employment projects, workshops and individual meetings with the students. The Career Center cooperates with the public and private institutions in the district of Korça such as: the Directory of Regional Education, The Municipality of Korça, The Job Office, banks and medical clinics and other organizations from Albania and abroad. Being in the center of the city between the faculties, gives the CC the opportunity to offer better services to the students. It keeps contacts with the alumni and notifies them for different events like conferences fund raising and job fairs.

It offers:

- Advice
- Orientation
- Training
- Support

The CC:

- gives information for scholarships
- gives possibility to students to do voluntary work at CC
- organizes informative sessions with students
- organizes the Career Fair
- organizes lectures for career advising
- enhances the individual enterprises of the students who are interested in finding a good job

**Project Management Office** was established with the intent for a better opportunity of coordinating the faculties in general and the department's especially. The office purpose is to help researchers finding and applying for research grants, as well as advise them in implementation of these projects. Another important aspect of these offices is managing the publications of the university Scientific bulletin where the researchers could publish their results and findings.

**Student Service Office** is established with the students themselves in mind, this office is run by the students and it is important that the students get more involved with different activities in mind. The student council of our university has full access and runs this office. They can meet and organize different social and academic events in this office. The latest achievement was their Rini Show where students did perform in the city theater and the money from tickets sold will be managed by the students themselves for different activities that they see fit.

**The continuing education center** at the Faculty of Natural and Human Sciences will be the new addition to the training center of our University. The equipment that will be purchased through the project will help that this center will be operational and will actually become one of the services that the university will generate income. Based on the instructions of MES, Order no. 110, and no. 09.03.2011 on: "Needs for Training of Teachers and Directors of Preuniversity Level", the Centre of Excellence was opened in the premises of the Faculty of Natural and Human Sciences to function as a research and training unit. The mission of this center is to offer qualified trainings of specialists in the relevant fields and to promote scientific research in natural

and human sciences. It functions as a training and research unit in the field of the didactics of sciences, certified and accredited by the Ministry of Education.

Beside the focus on research activity of the Faculty, the Center of Excellence develops a wide range of training activities by providing training programs for teachers in service in Korça Region and beyond, in the fields of Social Sciences Philosophy, Sociology; Natural Sciences: Mathematics, Physics, Informatics, Biology, Chemistry. These training programs aim to develop teaching skills and leadership skills for schools staff. A full administrative staff will be operating the center.

## **2.5 Marketing Plan**

A comprehensive marketing plan has been developed for all the centres and the offices. Since all the offices are physically new and not virtual clear signs have been put in front of the offices.

There are prepared brochures and promotional materials that will be spread explaining all the functionality of this offices and services.

The Carrier office has put big banners outside the location as well as an inauguration took place where local media and local government representatives participated.

The continuing education centres are now licensed by the Ministry of Education and Sports and they have the biggest potential for generating income we are going to advertise in the local schools and business about the opening of this centre.

Another important advertising methodology is mouth to mouth with organizing different events the word will be spread from people participating in these events the alumni database will serve to advertise by electronic mail.

## **2.6 Operations and financial planning**

### **Student Career Office**

A full time staff member has been hired by the university with an assistant for IT and for managing the Alumni Database, this was the first time that a student has been higher part time to help at the office. A new facility and a permanent office has been established in a new building in the center of Town this office is fully equipped with the help of the U3M TEMPUS project. The university pays the electricity and the permanent staff as well as sponsors the activities as job fairs and other activities. There for there is one full time person and two par time

persons working in this office, ideally we need at least two more people working in this office full time, the infrastructure that we have established can accommodate up to four full time persons to be able to work in the center.

### **Project Management Office**

A full time staff office has been hired by the university and all the financial operations of the office it will be covered by the university. The office is actually a new physical office in the premises of the university. Therefore there is one full time member working now in the center and we are trying to put a coordinator in each faculty an academic staff that will coordinate the faculty with the main office. There are two more people needed in this office. This office will collaborate closely with the International Relation Office as well for having more access to international projects.

### **Student Service Office**

This is a new office is fully equipped with the help of the U3M TEMPUS project and now is operational. The students themselves run the office and they are fully supported and funded by the university. There are four students that are involved full time in this office and that manage the office they are all representatives from the student counsel.

### **Continuing Education Center for Faculty of Human and Natural Sciences**

A full staff member is hired to run the office and the program for continuing education, we have the facility and the new equipment that will be bought will be installed in this office so the Center can be fully operational and start bringing income to the university. There is one full staff member for managing the center however there are a lot of academic staff that will be helping and teaching in the continuing education center.

## **2.7 Schedule and monitoring**

The scheduling and monitoring will be done according to the rules of the U3M project and after wards it will be monitored by the Rectorate and by the Deans of the faculties. This will include the number of alumni entered in the database, the number of students employed from the job fares, the number of companies in the job fares and the number of internships won by the students, the number of students that are having consultations and CV created at the centre, the

number of applications for international and national projects, the number of people trained in the continuing education centres, the number of student activities sponsored and run by the students.