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Erasmus+ Capacity Building in Higher Education Project “University to Society Innomediaries in Albania: Co-Production of knowledge and research that matters” / U-SIA

Project number: 618997-EPP-1-2020-1-AL-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP
Project timeline: 15/01/2021- 15/01/2023
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Overview

The overall objective is to foster effective and sustainable university to society collaboration in Albania with impact in the development and European integration process of the country.

Specifically, the project intends to:

SO1 – to enhance the capacities of universities in Albania to co-produce knowledge and research with impact through establishment of knowledge transfer and innovation brokerage unit (USIA).
SO2 – to introduce and expand co-production of knowledge that is academically insightful and practically actionable in Albanian context through establishment of network of partners in Quadruple Helix model (QH).

These objectives have been designed to directly address the needs identified in part D1, namely:

- The need to foster the university to society links and cooperation in the sense of the collaboration between all actors in the Quadruple Helix: university, business, policy, civil society, and media.
- The need to establish adequate structures and processes that enables and foster sustainable and meaningful collaboration between university and business, policy, civil society, and media.
- The need to strengthen competences and capacities to co-produce knowledge and research with impact, i.e. to collaborate in the Quadruple Helix and thus contribute to development and EU integration.

Respectively the first two needs, which are interrelated, correspond to the specific objectives 1 which consist in establishing knowledge transfer and innovation brokerage units (USIA) in 5 HEIs in Albania, whereas the specific objective 2 corresponds to the identified need to strengthen competences and capacities to co-produce knowledge and research with impact, i.e. to collaborate in the Quadruple Helix and thus contribute to development and EU integration.

The objectives also serve as a basis to identify the target groups that require capacity building actions. Therefore, the set of activities that contribute to capacity development such as exchange of experience through study visits, trainings, peer to peer support, new structures/units, development of models,





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guidelines, strategies, action plans, piloting of programmes of cooperation with business and policy sectors are grouped into work-packages that focus respectively on the identified target groups within the institution.

While in response to the second need, a network among universities, businesses, public institutions, CSOs, research centres, media and other potential stakeholders will be established at country level: Quadruple Helix network and the corresponding online platform.

Not only the careful alignment among the project objectives, target groups and project activities, but also the direct access the implementing HEIs have on their staff and the dedicated time and resources they are allocating to the project, make for a high feasibility of the project objectives.

Based on this analysis, as well as on the expertise of the consortium members with former projects, the objectives are feasible and appropriately address the identified needs in both countries.

Activities

The activities of the project have been designed to address the objectives of the project as well as the identified needs and target groups. The activities are grouped in work packages as follows:

WP1 – Preparation

- 1.1 Assessment research design, methodology, work plan/ roles in place
- 1.2 The assessment of current university to society linkages completed.
- 1.3 The assessment report + best practices published

WP2 – Design & Development of knowledge transfer and innovation brokerage unit in Albanian HEIs (USIA)

- 2.1 Established USIA and their regulatory and operationalisation framework in 5 HEIs or strengthen existing ones.
- 2.2 Equipment purchased for USIA.
- 2.3 Training of USIA staff through mobility with EU PP (3 exchange experience workshops) and peer to peer support In Albania (3 workshops)

WP3 – Design and Development of Models for co-production of knowledge & research with impact through exchange of experience

- 3.1 Produced guidelines and best practices
- 3.2 Training of staff through exchange of experience in EU programme countries (3 workshops) and peer to peer support at national level (5 workshops)

WP4 – Online collaborative platform for Quadruple Helix

- 4.1 Established a network of Knowledge and Research with Impact in Quadruple Helix Model
- 4.2 Developed the online platform
- 4.3 Developed a calendar of initiatives for QH Network
- 4.4 Developed model of cooperation in Quadruple helix and train staff (one workshop in Rome and 3 in Albania)





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WP5 – Piloted University to Business Cooperation through “Second a Researcher” Programme

5.1 Implemented the programme

5.2 Evaluated, reported, promoted the programme

WP6– Piloting University to Policy Cooperation through Policy Labs & Policy Challenge Fund

6.1 Implemented the programme

6.2 Evaluated, reported, promoted

WP7 – Quality Assurance

7.1 Internal monitoring & evaluation & learning

7.2 External monitoring & evaluation (sub-contracting expert, mid-term, final)

WP8 – Dissemination

8.1 Final strategy of dissemination in place

8.2 Final strategy of stakeholders’ engagement in place

WP9 – Management

9.1 Project structures and procedures in place

9.2 Kick off meeting in Tirana

9.3 Reporting / change management

Tangible results

By the end of the project, universities in Albania will have enhanced and developed capacities of to co-produce knowledge and research with impact and more effective and sustainable collaboration in place between Albanian universities and public institutions, business, civil society and media in the Quadruple Helix Model. The concrete tangible results will be:

>5 newly established or strengthened Knowledge Transfer & Innovation Brokerage Units in 5 universities in Albania (USIA);

> One online collaborative platform for co-production of knowledge and research with impact is established with participation of the network of partners: Albania, Serbia, Italy, Germany + stakeholders (12 partners in project all in all + 8 involved stakeholders)

> 5 Pilot University to Business collaborative "Second a Researcher" programme developed, implemented and evaluation (5 pilot projects)

> 10 Pilot University to Policy Cooperation programmes developed, implemented and evaluated (5 pilot projects):

5 Policy Labs where students work on project-based learning and solve 5 policy issues

5 Policy Challenge Fund whereby 5 researchers are selected by 5 public institutions to co-produce policy solutions.

>Trained lecturers, researchers, assistant lecturers or PhD students, master students on co-producing knowledge and research with impact by collaborating with business, public institutions, civil society, media in QH. (50 staff plus 20 students, 70 in total)

>Validated models and guidelines for best practices on setting up and functioning of USIA (1 model / guideline published)





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- >Trained researchers, research management staff, project management, innovators, senior management staff from 5 HEIs in Albania and 1 NGO, 1 research center and 1 public institution, 1 business association on co-production on knowledge and research that is actionable (50 in total)
- >Trained USIA staff (researchers, research management staff, project management, innovators) on sustainability and capitalisation of results (50 staff)
- >Enhanced cooperation among multidisciplinary groups of local and international researchers through joint projects and initiatives (At least 2 new collaborative projects applied in the framework of Quadruple Helix Network)
- >1 Communication campaign to raise awareness on the importance of collaboration between university, business, public sector, civil society and media in QH Model.
- > 7 workshops at EU partners for exchange of experience for staff
- > 1 workshop at EU partners for students for capacity building
- > 15 “peer to peer” support workshops in Albania
- > 1 roundtable with the Quadruple Helix network and policy sector: “Collaboration with policy: Increasing demand for quality research output by policy”
- > 1 roundtable the Quadruple Helix network and private sector: “Collaboration with business: Enabling conditions for R&I in Albania”

