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GUIDELINES

for Third Mission Activities
Management and Evaluation





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საქართველოს განათლების,
მეცნიერების, კულტურისა და
სპორტის სამინისტრო



“Strengthening the Quality and Relevance of the 3rd mission in Georgian Universities – SQUARE” is Erasmus + Capacity Building for Higher Education project that marks a paradigm shift not only within the consortium member universities but also across the entire landscape of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Georgia.

The SQUARE project consortium comprises eight Georgian HEIs, the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia, the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement of Georgia, and four EU partners from Belgium, Portugal, France, and Finland. Coordination is led by Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University.

At the core of the project’s objectives is the enhancement of the relevance and quality of the third mission in Georgian universities, with an emphasis on encouraging top management representatives to actively participate. The initial proposal outlined specific plans for consortium partners to implement throughout the project’s duration. This involved providing methodologies and guidelines for HEIs to execute the entire cycle of third mission activities. Additionally, it aimed to influence changes in current legislation and institutional accreditation standards, making the third mission a mandatory component for all Georgian HEIs at the national level.



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	6
Chapter 1 – Situation in Georgia as experienced by Georgian universities and public sector representatives	8
Foreword from the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia (by Mrs. Maia Shukhoshvili, MoES).....	8
Situation at the Georgian universities (the universities are presented in alphabetical order)	10
Third mission activity management and evaluation at Akaki Tsereteli State University	10
Third mission activity management and evaluation at Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University	11
Third mission activity management and evaluation at Caucasus University.....	12
Third mission activity management and evaluation at Georgian Technical University.....	16
Third mission activity management and evaluation at Gori State University.....	19
Third mission activity management and evaluation at Ilia State University.....	20
Third mission activity management and evaluation at Tbilisi State Medical University.....	26
Third mission activity management and evaluation at Tbilisi State University.....	28
Complementing view on third mission by the National Center of Educational Quality Enhancement of Georgia (by Mr. Lasha Macharashvili, NCEQE)	32
Chapter 2 – Experiences and recommendations from European universities and institutions	34
Third mission activity management and evaluation in the EU and at European universities	34
Case: Third mission management at NOVA university.....	34
Case: Third mission management at UTU	35
Tools utilised for managing third mission activities in the EU and at European universities.....	37
Impact evaluation practices and experiences of third mission activities in the EU and at European universities	39
Case: Evaluation practices at the NOVA university.....	40
Reflections from EFMD on the state of the art in evaluation practices.....	42
Tools for evaluation	42
Impact.....	44
Quality assurance to evaluate third mission activities, from EFMD.....	45
Case: Evaluation practices at UTU	46
Lessons learned by the EU partners during the Square project	49
Special points of consideration:.....	51
Conclusions.....	53
References.....	54

INTRODUCTION

This guide was prepared as a part of the Square project. The project focuses on the strategic development of the third mission activities of the Georgian higher-education sector.

The main objective of the Square project is the improvement of 3M activities in the Georgian HEIs. Throughout the project, the inventory and assessment of the 3M activities, their analysis and strategic planning, implementation and evaluation are carried out, together with the capacitation of the university's top management and staff. The project's activities lead to the fundamental changes in the policy of universities in Georgia on the institutional level. The Square project results serve as a basis for the update of the national external QA system, provide foundations for guidelines to update the HEI management and improve the articulation between teaching, research and services to the community. The project envisages a clear definition of the mission and role of the universities at a national level and provides clear direction for the universities in Georgia.

The purpose of the guide is to provide practical insight related to managing and evaluating 3M activities, based on the experiences of Square partners, best practices, and lessons learned during the project. The guide is intended to provide tools and methods for planning, managing and evaluating the impact of 3M, along with real-life examples and lessons learnt to the representatives of the Georgian higher education sector and the public sector at large.



Picture of the Square consortium representatives at the Ministry of Education and Science in Tbilisi, Georgia (image credit: TSU)



Picture: Mrs. Irma Grdzeldze chairs the Square project consortium (image credit: TSU)

CHAPTER 1 – SITUATION IN GEORGIA AS EXPERIENCED BY GEORGIAN UNIVERSITIES AND PUBLIC SECTOR REPRESENTATIVES

FOREWORD FROM THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE OF GEORGIA (BY MRS. MAIA SHUKHOSHVILI, MOES)

The objectives of the University 3rd mission development process at the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia are to support the development of the 3M activities of universities, to provide recommendations on the articulation of 3M with teaching and research, to define the mission and role of the universities at a national level and to provide clear direction for the universities in Georgia.

The Ministry was actively involved in SQUARE project activities. The representatives of the Ministry attended trainings and study tours in Europe on the three main categories of 3M (cultural, social and economic). Participation in Policy Dialogue with Key EU Actors was especially important for the representatives of the Ministry.

In March 2023 Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia hosted the members of the SQUARE Project in terms of the Presentation Workshop – Strategic Development Plans. The agenda of the conference included the presentations of the EU partners of the project consortium on their institutional experiences on the third mission. Consortium member Georgian universities presented their internal institutional visions regarding the development of third mission strategies and action plans to the conference participants. It should be noted that the event was attended by representatives of non-consortium member Georgian universities, who during the discussions expressed their willingness to use the results achieved within the framework of the project while planning and implementing their 3M activities.

It should be mentioned that in 2022 The new Education and Science Strategy for 2022-2030 was adopted.¹ The new strategy centers cross-governmental policy development for lifelong learning policies, going beyond the boundaries of the education and training system, linking education and training, employment and industry development and social and regional development policies.

The strategy identifies as a challenge for the higher education system to understand and implement the concept of the “third mission” in the management culture of the educational institution and is focused on cooperation with labor market, industry, civil society, and other stakeholders to encourage the creation of the ecosystem for innovation and entrepreneurship. The strategy emphasizes the role of universities in addressing the needs and opportunities arising from their regions through their teaching, research and innovative capacities. It is declared that the government will take appropriate measures to support the structured implementation of the “third mission” in educational institutions, which means increasing the role of higher educational institutions in the social and economic development of society, meeting the needs of different regions and realizing opportunities.

In order to support the development of the “Third Mission” functionalities at the universities and providing incentives for improving institutional performance grants competition has been announced in 2022 by the Ministry’s Competitive Innovation Foundation (CIF) with support of the

1 <https://mes.gov.ge/content.php?id=7755&lang=eng>

World Bank “Innovation, Inclusion and Quality Project”. One of the main priorities for the call was funding of Universities to develop and enhance third mission-related activities.²

The Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia is working to develop new Performance-based Funding model for Higher Education which will reflect strategic priorities of the Government. Key Performance Indicators of new funding model cover 3M activities together with teaching and research activities of Universities.

The Ministry will continue to take appropriate measures in order to support the structured implementation of the “third mission” in higher education eco-system of Georgia.

2 <http://iiq.gov.ge/en/2022/11/29/competitive-innovation-fund-cif-call-for-proposals-for-hels/>

SITUATION AT THE GEORGIAN UNIVERSITIES (THE UNIVERSITIES ARE PRESENTED IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER)

THIRD MISSION ACTIVITY MANAGEMENT AND EVALUATION AT AKAKI TSERETELI STATE UNIVERSITY

Description of third mission activity management at ATSU

3M activities that are going to be implemented at the faculties and units of the university are described in a form of a plan, that is sent, discussed and approved by the Faculty Board. The report on the conducted activities has to be sent to the Quality Assurance Service of the University

Tools utilised for managing third mission activities at ATSU

No special tools were developed in the frame of the project, as general tools proposed by the university authorisation standards may be applied and used.

Impact evaluation practices and experiences of third mission activities at ATSU

Indication of 3M activities in the monitoring plan

Indicators will be marked with 3M sign in order to be focused on 3M activities and monitor them

Accountability of faculties and units on 3M activities

While preparing self-evaluation reports, attention will also be paid on 3M, and conducted 3M activities and/or implemented 3M programs will be reported.

In general more attention will be paid to 3M activities, projects and initiatives.

Foreseen inclusion of the 3M in the accreditation/authorisation criteria will provoke more devotion of the university faculties and units to run 3M activities and follow the principles of action of the university:

- Responsibility to the public and the state
- Orientation on the universitative society
- Quality orientation
- Academic freedom
- Openness and respect for diversity
- Academic culture
- Teamwork
- Aspiration to perfection

Tools utilized for evaluating third mission activities at ATSU

Indication of 3M activities in the monitoring plan by marking 3m sign and accountability of faculties and units on 3M activities will take place. While preparing Self-evaluation reports, attention will also be paid on 3M, and conducted 3M activities and/or implemented 3M programs will be reported

Lessons learned

Awareness raising on 3M activities took place to change the former situation when despite the fact that Georgian Universities ran wide range of 3M activities, university representatives and actors involved were not fully aware of the delivery of 3M activities.

Understanding of a new concept and more attention to 3m activities was supported in the frame of the project, that in its turn ensures strengthening of social responsibility of the university, increases awareness, understanding and acknowledgement of 3M importance for HEIs and society. In addition, as inclusion of the 3M in the accreditation/authorisation criteria is foreseen, devotion of the universities to their 3M activities supposed by the project will ensure better quality results.

THIRD MISSION ACTIVITY MANAGEMENT AND EVALUATION AT BATUMI SHOTA RUSTAVELI STATE UNIVERSITY

Description of third mission activity management at BSU

At present, before establishing a specific unit for the third mission activities, the third mission activity management is carried out by the Vice-Rector and the Public Relation Office.

Tools utilised for managing third mission activities at BSU

At the start of the academic year a specific plan/schedule of the third mission activities is drawn up, including short-term educational (LLL) courses, school visits, etc. At the end of each month (and finally at the end of the year) the Vice-Rector presents the Rector and the Academic Council with the report of the accomplished events.

Impact evaluation practices and experiences of third mission activities at BSU

Evaluation of the third mission activities is being conducted at the university for the first time this year. Earlier the activities were not evaluated separately. By October 2023 participants of all the 3rd mission activities will have participated in surveys as well as the organisers will provide analysis and evaluation of conducted events in terms of contribution to the society and BSU publicity.

Tools utilized for evaluating third mission activities at BSU

The evaluation will be conducted on the example of the key third mission activity. At the end of August the results of the Unified National Exams will be announced. We will measure the results of the key activity participants (school children having classes in exam subjects) and analyse the advantages and disadvantages of the key activity. The outcome will show the potential continuation of the project.

Lessons learned

The main discovery from the accomplished activities was that bringing schoolchildren to the BSU was more successful than visiting schools by the university teachers. Hence, next year we will schedule more outgoing activities at schools. Furthermore, thanks to the project, the strategic development plan will have a separate place for the 3rd mission activities and evaluation will be conducted in a more organised way. A specific unit will be formed for the third mission activities and more stakeholders will be involved in planning and dissemination processes.

THIRD MISSION ACTIVITY MANAGEMENT AND EVALUATION AT CAUCASUS UNIVERSITY

Description of third mission activity management at CU

The overall process of 3M activities is being monitored by the strategic development department, meanwhile the activities are planned and implemented by schools and departments themselves. At the beginning of the academic year all units involved present a detailed plan of action which is being overviewed and assessed by the strategic department and approved by the governing board. Throughout the whole period of implementation, the unit responsible for the third mission activity is in close cooperation with all supporting units. Step-by-step the activity plan is being reviewed and updated by a special group involved in the implementation of the activity. In case of emergency, the board of directors is to hear and help the case.

Tools utilised for managing third mission activities at CU

The organizational structure and governance principles of Caucasus University (CU) ensure the effective management of the organization and use of quality assurance mechanisms in running the educational and research processes.

The University's highest Governing Bodies include: Board of Shareholders; the President and Governing Board. The University Statute defines the rules of election/appointment to the governing bodies of the University in accordance with the legislation in force of Georgia.

CU schools, research institutes, and departments, among them Training center and the Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, are involved in implementing 3M projects and activities in three basic directions of continuous education, knowledge transfer and social engagement.

The aim of the Training Center is to provide a wider public (individuals and corporate clients) with trainings and certification courses, that enhance their professional and personal development and thus enable lifelong education for the community. The training center carries out training activities based on the needs of public and private organizations and labor market and ensures that training will be conducted by highly qualified international specialists.

Currently Caucasus University strategic plan sets out a framework for its structural entities, where the Training Center have assigned the following activities regularly overseen by the board:

1. Conducting trainings tailored to the needs of the market
2. Preparation of online and hybrid training courses based on market requirements
3. Finding and cooperating with trainers in demand
4. Attracting foreign trainers

In 2021 Total number of direct beneficiaries was 582 people, among which, corporate sector beneficiaries consisted of following three entities: Georgian Railways, Enterprise Georgia, VTB Bank - summing up 432 people; while individual beneficiaries were 150 people. The training Center is part of the University's long term strategic instrument and is dedicated to conduct trainings regularly³.

3 Inventory and mapping of the third mission activities at CU

The main goal of the Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship is to make a sizable contribution to the development of the Georgian entrepreneurship/startup ecosystem. The Center encourages entrepreneurial mindset and gives students startup familiarity in a university ecosystem. Startup trainings, initiating discussions, workshops, hackathons and represent core of the center's activities. From the continuing education point of view, the center's activities include: learning and training activities, encouragement of start-up initiatives, training course content alignment to market needs, offering accessibility on the campus facilities and user-friendly environment for those interested with start-up initiatives. So far, the direct beneficiaries of the Center have been the CU students and alumni. Elaboration and implementation of new, innovative training courses and projects are the strategic objective aligned to the Entrepreneurial Development Center at the University. Hence, the center is responsible to track progress in terms of: the number of innovative projects, new start-up applications to different venture or governmental funds, the number of funded start-up projects and the number of persons involved in entrepreneurial education⁴. Center have assigned the following activities:

1. Support for pre acceleration programs
2. Organization of startup events (hackathon, startup events, workshops).
3. Supporting in innovation grant competitions (GITA, Produce in Georgia,) and support for participating students
4. Hosting an entrepreneurial skills development event for students, staff and external stakeholders

The Board of Shareholders

Caucasus University is the private High Education Institution (HEI). It has five individual shareholders, who are the citizens of Georgia, and, together, they form the Board of Shareholders of the University. The main decisions that shareholders make are:

- Approve seven-year Strategic Development Plan of the CU. The main direction of the development of the University is determined by its Strategic Plan, which is created with the involvement of all structural units of the organization and discussed at the Governing Board;
- Elects the University President once in 6 years;
- Considers, upon the President's nomination, the candidates for Vice Presidents and Deans of the Schools;
- Approves large infrastructure projects of the University

Governing Board

Governing Board coordinates, manages and monitors the University activities and implementation of the strategic development plan. It facilitates fulfilment of the University mission and compliance with the University values and oversees the proper execution of academic and research activities. The Board members include: the President, the Vice-Presidents, Department Directors and the Deans of the Schools. The board is chaired by the President.

4 [Inventory and mapping of the third mission activities at CU](#)

The President

The President is the highest academic and administrative position in the University who officially represents the University. The main functions among others are:

- To define the vision of the University development;
- To lead University in achieving its strategic goals;
- To promote culture and values of the Caucasus University;
- To ensure continuity, improvement and results-oriented processes and to be responsible for long-term sustainability of the Institution;
- To coordinate the relations with local and international stakeholders;
- To lead the managing, coordination and monitoring functions of the University;
- To propose the candidates for the positions of Vice-presidents and the Deans to the Board of Shareholders;

Schools (Faculty)

The main educational structural unit of the Caucasus University is the School (Faculty). There are 11 Schools (Faculties) in the University. Every school is an independent academic unit within Caucasus University. The Head of the School is the Dean and the main governing unit of the school is the School Academic Board. Schools have the freedom to run everyday operations, make decisions connected with the school's internal processes such as faculty management, development and modification of educational programs, etc. Decisions which have more major, long-term, strategic impact are discussed and approved by the Governing Board of the University.

The Dean

The Dean, within the scope of the assigned authority, independently determines and directs the main directions, development and functioning of the school. Among other functions, the Dean:

- Represents the school within the University and beyond it;
- Issues recommendations to increase the efficiency of the ongoing educational and scientific activities;
- Provides overall guidance to the activities of the school academic and administrative staff;
- Exercises other powers defined by the Statute of the Caucasus University.

The School Academic Board

The School Academic Board determines the academic processes inside the school. Among other functions, the School Academic Board:

- Defines the main objectives, current tasks and priorities of the school academic activities;
- Considers the relevant modifications to academic program portfolio of the school;
- Awards academic degree and define the limit of the students to be enrolled on each of the program of the School;
- Exercises other powers established by the Statute of the Caucasus University.

The supporting administrative units guarantee the proper functioning of the University and its Schools. There are 15 (fifteen) Departments, 14 (fourteen) Offices and 12 (twelve) auxiliary structural subdivisions. The functions and responsibilities of each structural unit are so aligned that they serve separately and jointly to ensure the smooth and uninterrupted operation of the core activities of the University. Please find the organization chart of the University on the following link: <https://www.cu.edu.ge/en/about-us/management/university-structure>

Some units are presented as leaders in a particular direction of activities. For example, Training Center leads the programs for continuous education; Innovation and Entrepreneurship Center – Knowledge and technology transfer programs; Schools overtake profile related programs.

Impact evaluation practices and experiences of third mission activities at CU

The 3M activity processes are being evaluated step by step by all the units involved. Second stage is assessing the outcomes of the activity in close cooperation with the strategic development departments. Final reports are made at the end of an academic year. Detailed reports are presented and widely discussed at the board meetings. Further feedbacks and consultations are made later on. All units are welcome for a broad discussion and recommendations.

As an example could serve the project of “Triangle Effect of European Studies at Schools” (TEESS). The aim of the Caucasus University Erasmus+ Jean Monnet project was raising awareness on European Integration and Association Agreement. The project was led by the Caucasus School of Humanities and Social Sciences (CSH). The aim of the organized workshops, seminars, conferences and round tables was to raise awareness through education, communication and information about the EU Georgia Association Agreement and the EU integration process in Georgia. Within the project up to 20 public workshops were held in various languages: Georgian, Armenian, Russian and Azerbaijani Languages in Tbilisi, and two local ethnical municipalities: Marneuli and Akhaltsikhe. The implementation of the project) was supported by the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of Georgia and the Educational Resource Center of Marneuli⁵.

The outcome of the project was as follows:

- ✓ Total number of attendees was about 901 people.
- ✓ Round table discussions were held for the teachers of history and civil education at the Caucasus University.
- ✓ With the support of the Ministry of Education, a methodological supportive textbook “European Association Process in Georgia” for teachers has been successfully published.
- ✓ At the request of the Informational center on NATO and European Union there was conducted an online seminar about the textbook for teachers of general educational schools in Georgia. The seminar was held within the framework of the project “Increasing Awareness and Involvement in the Regions of Georgia” funded by the United States State Department, which is implemented by the Information Center on NATO and the European Union together with the US Embassy in Georgia.
- ✓ An essay competition was held among the pupils of the schools and a final conference was held at the Caucasus University.

5 Inventory and mapping of the third mission activities at CU

- ✓ In addition to the schools involved in the project, the Italian school “Ciskari” started to implement the results of the project.
- ✓ Two articles were published (Multilingual Education, #17, 2021; Language and Culture, 2021) disseminating the results of the project.

The project has finished in 2021 but is supposed to continue to professional colleges for students on European studies and various respective profiles of educational programs. Project has high importance as it encompasses positive aspects local peace building and stability in the country.

Tools utilized for evaluating third mission activities at CU

The main tools for the evaluation of the 3M activities are the tools described in the University’s strategic development plan and decisions made by the directors’ board. Data is being collected, analyzed and presented by the responsible units at the Board meetings. Relatively feedbacks and recommendations are provided.

Elaboration of a complex of tools has been under way in order to scrutinize the evolution of the assessment methods.

Lessons learned

Square project has provided a wider view on the third mission of universities. It has clearly shown the necessity for systemizing the third mission strategy and activities within an institution. Knowledge, skills and tools are to be concentrated for the successful fulfilment of the social function. Furthermore, the Square project has consolidated and brought together Universities and governmental organizations for the benefits of society. Collaborative work has approximated different institutions. A common workspace has been created that would serve as the best platform for the future evolution of the third mission policies throughout the country. Project has dragged the attention of the state by involving the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia.

Priceless has been the experience gained through cooperation with the European partners of Georgia. Partners demonstrated full willingness to cooperation and experience sharing. They showed us the way to follow.

As of major recommendation to Caucasus University would be creating a completely new department that would be responsible for creating, updating, assessing, executing and sustaining strategic planning for the third mission activities.

THIRD MISSION ACTIVITY MANAGEMENT AND EVALUATION AT GEORGIAN TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

Description of third mission activity management at GTU

Projects implemented at GTU are characterized by different content and fields. All these projects are managed by separate management teams. They prepare situational reports and provide them to the University management to update and improve ongoing processes. GTU supports scientific and/or organizational projects which contain interdisciplinary, internationalization, and transdisciplinary components.

Tools utilised for managing third mission activities at GTU

In the management of third mission activities, GTU employs the following:

- Engagement of all competent structural units of the university.
- Conducting relevant and targeted surveys. analyzing the results.
- Determining the role of responsible entities and drawing up an action plan.
- Supervision.
- Review of interim results.
- Review and evaluation of the final report.
- Analysis of stakeholders' feedback.

Impact evaluation practices and experiences of third mission activities at GTU

Evaluation practices for the third mission activities at Georgian Technical University (GTU) are always in the process of permanent improvement. They involve assessing the effectiveness, impact, and outcomes of the third mission initiatives. The evaluation process helps the university understand the value of its engagement efforts, identify areas for improvement, and demonstrate the societal benefits generated through its third mission activities. Here are some examples of practices and experiences in evaluating third-mission activities at GTU:

- 1. Establishing Evaluation Frameworks:** Georgian Technical University develops evaluation frameworks that outline the goals, objectives, and indicators for assessing the impact of its third mission activities. These frameworks provide a structured approach to evaluate different dimensions, such as knowledge transfer, social impact, economic development, and community engagement.
- 2. Collecting Data:** Data collection is a crucial component of the evaluation process. Georgian Technical University employs various methods to gather relevant data, including surveys, interviews, focus groups, case studies, and quantitative metrics. This data helps us capture the reach, quality, and outcomes of third mission activities.
- 3. Stakeholder Engagement:** Engaging stakeholders, including beneficiaries, partners, and the wider community, is essential in evaluating third mission activities at Georgian Technical University. Their perspectives and feedback provide valuable insights into the effectiveness and relevance of the initiatives. Surveys, interviews, and feedback mechanisms are used to gather stakeholder input.
- 4. Impact Assessment:** GTU assesses the impact of its third mission activities by analyzing both qualitative and quantitative data. Qualitative methods may involve case studies, narratives, and testimonials to capture the transformative effects of the initiatives. Quantitative methods include measuring indicators such as the number of partnerships established, patents filed, jobs created, and societal changes observed.
- 5. Knowledge Sharing and Reporting:** Sharing evaluation findings and lessons learned is crucial for transparency and accountability. Georgian Technical University produces reports, publishes articles, presents findings at conferences, and disseminates information through various channels to contribute to the broader knowledge base on effective third-mission practices.

Tools utilized for evaluating third mission activities at GTU

Although GTU didn't yet develop a systematic and comprehensive set of methods, tools, and strategies for evaluating the impact of its third mission activities, surveys, interviews, and feedback mechanisms are used to gather the data relevant to the evaluation practices.

The third mission evaluation practice and experience at GTU can be approached through the real-life example of a joint research project implemented in collaboration with GIZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit) in Akhmeta Municipality. The project involved highly qualified energy specialists and professors from GTU's Scientific & Engineering Center of High-Temperature Thermal Physics Processes. The aim of the project was to develop a mobile energy auditing device for determining the thermal conductivity coefficient, evaluating thermal energy losses, and assessing energy efficiency. Additionally, the project focused on integrating the research findings into the educational program on energy efficiency and energy audit.

Let's explore how GTU works in third mission evaluation tasks through this real-life example, which illustrates ways of applying the evaluation framework for assessing the efficiency, impact, and outcomes of a given initiative.

Technological Transfer: The aim of the research project was to develop a mobile energy auditing device for determining the thermal conductivity coefficient, evaluating thermal energy losses, and assessing energy efficiency. GTU's focus on technological transfer ensures that the outcomes of the project are not limited to academic research but are effectively transferred to real-world applications. By piloting the device in households in Akhmeta Municipality, GTU engages in technology transfer that directly benefits the local community

Knowledge Integration: The project's findings and empirical practical experience obtained during its implementation serve as valuable knowledge for GTU. The university's approach includes integrating this knowledge into the educational program, specifically the Master's degree program in Energy and Power Engineering. By developing new topics related to energy efficiency and energy audit based on the research results, training materials, and experience gained in collaboration with GIZ, GTU ensures that the latest knowledge and practical insights are shared with its students.

Impact on Household Energy Efficiency: The research project's evaluated result relevant to GTU's third mission is the increased energy efficiency of household wooden stoves in Akhmeta Municipality. Through the practical experience gained during the project, GTU works towards improving the energy efficiency level of wooden stoves in households. This outcome showcases GTU's commitment to addressing practical energy-related challenges and positively impacting the local community.

Collaboration with GIZ: GTU's collaboration with GIZ in this joint research project demonstrates its ability to form strategic partnerships and engage in knowledge exchange with external stakeholders. The cooperation with GIZ provides GTU with valuable resources, expertise, and networks that enhance its capacity for conducting impactful research and integrating research outcomes into its educational programs.

Sustainable Development Focus: By focusing on energy efficiency and energy audit, GTU aligns with the principles of sustainable development. The project's outcomes contribute to environ-

mental sustainability by reducing thermal energy losses and promoting energy-efficient practices in households. GTU's involvement in such projects reinforces its commitment to sustainable development goals and its third mission of promoting positive societal impact.

Through the evaluation of this research project, GTU assesses the effectiveness of its third mission activities in terms of technological transfer, knowledge integration, impact on household energy efficiency, collaborations, and contributions to sustainable development. The university's efforts in evaluation tasks ensure that the outcomes of its projects are not only academically valuable but also effectively applied in real-world contexts, benefiting both the local community and its students through enhanced educational offerings. These outcomes collectively strengthen the university's engagement with society and reinforce its role as a driving force in energy research, education, and innovation.

THIRD MISSION ACTIVITY MANAGEMENT AND EVALUATION AT GORI STATE UNIVERSITY

Description of third mission activity management at GSU

Implementation Supervision and Monitoring Stage implies the control of questions considered by the University Strategic Plan with the help of indicators defined in advance. With this aim a monitoring group is being created. The mentioned monitoring is conducted no less than once a year according to the schedule.

Tools utilised for managing third mission activities at GSU

Strategic council of the university executes identification of priorities, based on strategic development plan, goals and mission and compiles 3-year (for academic educational programs) and one-year (for vocational educational programs) activity plan draft. Activity plan is a document that describes a university's strategic development, in accordance with courses, medium-term/short-term objectives for administering academic/vocational educational programs. It is essential that objectives, described in activity plan, would suffice so-called *SMART* criteria.

S (Specific) - detailed, well-determined or described;

M (Measurable) - numbers, quantities;

A (Achievable) **R** (Relevant) - foresees availability of resources;

T (Time-bound) - indicated time frame activities, fulfilment timeframe, fulfilment criteria and necessary resources (material, financial and human) must be clearly described in the activity plan.

After the work version of the activity plan is elaborated, the strategic council of the university manages to organise public discussion and feedback. On the next step, the academic council reviews and affirms a comparison and final version of the activity plan.

Impact evaluation practices and experiences of third mission activities at GSU

GSU has an institutional mechanism at hand, whereas the Action Plan (3 years) is evaluated each year and relevant recommendations are issued by the ad-hoc group working on the evaluation of the Action Plan and respectively the Strategic Development Plan.

Tools utilized for evaluating third mission activities at GSU

The abovementioned monitoring report is presented to the strategic council that assesses the results and draws out relevant final projects. In case of detected negative tendencies and problems, the strategic development council must explain the cause and based on deep and thorough analyses, present improving approaches. For proper feedback, final project is sent back to structural units. After taking feedback into consideration, strategic development council draws out final version, which is sent to academic council. Based on the academic council resolution, the rector of the university initiates relevant procedures.

Lessons learned

Along with the traditional missions of a university – teaching, learning, and research – a latecomer is now well established in higher education: interaction with society, often designated as 3rd mission, which includes a set of different activities that are now an integral part of what universities do. Gori State University does not represent an exception in this regard, as the University works to support the region (referring to Shida Kartli region) and the country in terms of strategic social and economic development, not only to prepare successful graduates, but extend its teaching activities beyond the university walls by offering wider society and interested stakeholders community and industry engagement activities.

We would like to express that Third mission, engagement and interaction with society, cooperation, these are all expressions that mean to designate a certain type of activities now developed in modern universities. It is not always easy to delimit and define which activities specifically are concerned here. One can argue that universities have always had an interaction with society, with governments and with the business world and this as a result of their other two main missions, thus contributing for the economic development of the region and the country they are located in. Gori State University, lacking a viable 3^M mission had been instrumental in interacting with the stakeholders while undertaking its 2 main missions for years; however ever-changing environment clearly showed us the need for the development of the 3M strategy and incorporating as part of the university strategy.

THIRD MISSION ACTIVITY MANAGEMENT AND EVALUATION AT ILIA STATE UNIVERSITY

Description of third mission activity management at ISU

History and Mission and Embedded Third Mission Tradition

Ilia State University (ISU) was founded in 2006 as a result of a merger of six different academic institutions with long and varied histories. Some of them represented VET institutions during the soviet period, while some have been exclusively focused on research. Therefore, creating the synergy and unity between those entities for a common purpose to serve society was and is at the core of ISU's mission.

Beneath the shield of the coat of arms, the motto ribbon bears the Latin inscription «LIGAMUS», signifying University's aspiration to unite research and education, bring together existing knowledge, create new understanding and pass it on to students and society. ISU's mission revolves

around three main principles, which precisely illustrate the three main accents of the third mission of the University:

- Unity of Teaching and Research and Social mission
- Unity of Liberal and Specialized Education, and
- Unity of Universal and Local.

Values

Social responsibility and inclusion are two of the eight core values of the University, which in conjunction with the values of openness and transparency, underline the importance of cooperation with society in creating, preserving and disseminating knowledge. Other values of Ilia State University include: autonomy, equal opportunities, diversity, academic freedom, academic integrity and advancement.

Values also define the notion of “quality performance”. Among the four value systems of quality management identified in the literature (control, continuous improvement, commitment and breakthrough), ISU was always concentrated on the last two. Rather than committing its resources to incremental changes, ISU chose the path of rethinking and redesigning organisational processes and mission. As a relatively small and young organisation, ISU always considered socialisation, competence, flexibility and creativity as its main assets.

Third mission and governance of the University

Based on the principle of unity, the third mission of the University has never been considered separately from research and teaching. Rather it has been always viewed at ISU as an integral part of functioning. Instead of having a separate unit responsible for the management of the third mission, ISU embedded the third mission dimension in internal mechanisms of quality evaluation and management.

Hence, the 3M Tradition at ISU (Vision and Management) - the third mission management and decision-making is decentralised at Ilia State University, all units are held accountable for designing, development, and delivery of the activities.

The principle of unity of three functions was reflected in specific mechanisms of performance evaluation from the very day of establishment. Before the nationwide criteria for the performance-based assessment of university activities were introduced in Georgia, Ilia State University developed its own internal mechanism of performance evaluation with three essential characteristics that distinguish ISU’s internal mechanism from the mainstream model. In particular:

- ISU was the first university in Georgia that **introduced an integrated system of self-assessment of activities of individual faculty based on three categories of activities: research, teaching and social mission.** While in other universities, the main criteria for faculty evaluation were research and teaching, the third mission dimension had almost equal weight in performance evaluation at ISU and could compensate for the other dimensions.
- Ilia State University was also the first university in Georgia that **tested the mechanism of collective responsibility of schools/departments (social science, natural sciences,**

etc.) for the joint output in all three dimensions (research, teaching and social mission). While being responsible for the joint output, faculty members of the departments/schools could reallocate responsibilities among individuals within the schools based on their abilities and aspirations. Some faculty members could take responsibility for conducting more research and others could contribute more to the social mission. This approach allowed the University to increase the efficiency of the use of internal resources, strengthen team spirit within the departments and develop a shared vision of long-term development.

- Another important feature of ISU's performance management strategy is a **differentiated/decentralised approach to quality management coupled with the availability of internal funding dedicated funds for the third missions and institutional development**. Schools are free to set their own targets of development in all three directions (depending on specifics of the field, current stage of development and readiness). To achieve the set targets, departments and schools can use internal university funding. The institutional development fund of ISU facilitates strengthening links within and outside the academia to follow three principles of unity defined by the mission.

Tools utilised for managing third mission activities at ISU

The university utilises some analytical tools (mapping, full needs analysis, strategic planning) with regards to the management of the third mission)

The taxonomy

ISU currently implements more than 50 3M-related projects of diverse scopes, goals and natures (as of the pre-mapping exercise conducted within the SQUARE project).

While those projects can be grouped in many different ways, we propose two alternative taxonomies (see table 1) for classifying ISU third mission activities.

The first one represents a simplified conventional three-dimensional model of the third mission of universities developed by the European Commission and described in the report "European Indicators and Rethinking Methodology for University Third Mission". The three dimensions include: **Continuous Education; Technology Transfer and Innovation; and Social Engagement**. Although the categories are broad, they depict three essential angles of the third mission and allow the University to compare complex and multifaceted activities across its main components.

The second - alternative taxonomy further unfolds the three broad dimensions mentioned above. The alternative taxonomy was chosen to complement the conventional one as it corresponds to long-term priority directions of development of the third mission at ISU and reflects the main features of its identity. Table 1 illustrates that the alternative taxonomy includes two broad subcategories – open science and community engagement. The two categories are in a reciprocal relationship. One symbolises the spreading of knowledge among society, while the second illustrates strategies of creating knowledge with the participation of society.

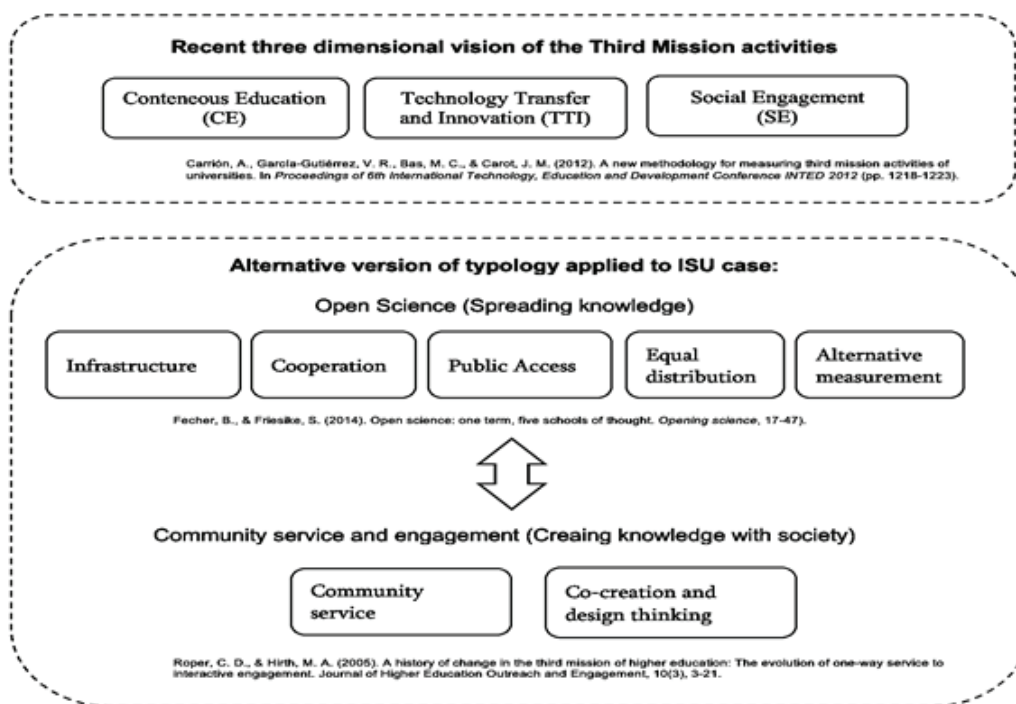


Figure: Categories for grouping ISU Third Mission activities

Another tool is the continuous and annual reporting of the responsible units on all missions of the university, including the 3M. Equally important is the media coverage and dissemination of the information on communicating the results of the third mission with society to enhance public awareness and engagement.

Impact evaluation practices and experiences of third mission activities at ISU

As noted elsewhere in this guide, ISU was the first university in Georgia that **introduced an integrated system of self-assessment of activities of individual faculty based on three categories of activities: research, teaching and social mission**. While in other universities, the main criteria for faculty evaluation were research and teaching, the third mission dimension had almost equal weight in performance evaluation at ISU and could compensate for the other dimensions. This is the only evaluation practice and experience the university has institutionalised. Nevertheless, the next step in evolution of the third mission activity and management is designing and running proper evaluation practices coupled with other challenges.

Pursuing the “third mission” is a difficult task for universities worldwide. Ilia State University, like any other Higher Education Institution, currently faces contradictory challenges, such as:

- Designing, developing, implementing and evaluating third mission activities.
- Finding an exclusive niche in a context of growing demand for diversified products;
- Increasing the return on public investment while ensuring its own financial independence;
- Competing with private actors while creating effective cooperation models with them;
- Developing a long-term vision while dealing with fluctuant current demand; and
- Finding a balance between local and national needs while responding to international trends.

In developing countries like Georgia, the third mission of state universities has additional weight – higher education institutions are considered as relatively stable organisations that should play an important role in producing, transmitting and accumulating knowledge. However, analysis of the context and impact of higher education institutions in the country shows that:

- The share of applied research is small and loosely linked to regional priorities;
- Universities fail to meet the current demand - and anticipate the future demand - of the local job market;
- University extensions (such as incubators, museums, libraries) only contribute marginally to the economic, social and cultural development of the communities.
- The needs of local actors are poorly articulated.

The search of universities for effective ways of producing social impact is exacerbated by the worldwide ambiguity surrounding the future role and function of higher education institutions in the digital era. While recent disruptions related to COVID 19 pandemic irrevocably altered the format and functions of universities and exposed unresolved deep problems in academia, they also created many opportunities.

Increased access to and familiarity with the new technologies, increased emphasis on key competencies in education, evolving interest in micro-credentials system in lifelong education and blurring the boundaries of knowledge production and dissemination are considered as threats and opportunities at the same time for the development of the third mission.

Iliia State University, as a relatively young organisation of moderate size, has less inertia and more adaptive capacity in the rapidly changing ecosystem. The steps that are proactively implemented by ISU towards the realisation of the idea of open science are hoped to contribute to the emergence of new ideas and further development.

Tools utilized for evaluating third mission activities at ISU

Self-reporting is the key tool on evaluating third mission activities at the university. In addition, the special offices are dedicated to the design, development, and delivery of third mission activities at the university and as part of the project management and assessment process, each project, especially the ones funded from external sources is subject to assessment, this evaluating the third mission program in line with the the requirements of sound project management.

Lessons learned

Some of the key lessons and takeaways from the SQUARE project, implementation, and capacity building measures as reflected by the SQUARE staff in the program include:

- 3M an essential element that shapes the university's identity.
- It takes time and effort to engage professors in developing a shared long-term vision regarding the third mission (TM); keywords such as "entrepreneurship", "innovation" "knowledge transfer" have much broader meaning than what is commonly understood.

- It is very important to back awareness building campaigns on 3M with proper organisational support mechanisms and incentives. Managing TM should become an integral part of the university's operations.
- Students and alumni should be actively involved; Their participation is essential for the overall impact of 3M.
- Universities should be very careful when introducing indicators and evaluation methods for 3M. Indicators and evaluation methods should be flexible enough to accommodate diversity of TM activities and their contexts
- There are no significant differences between Georgia and the EU in terms of challenges listed above. We all face similar obstacles. For example, It has been also clear that measuring third mission activities is a challenge everywhere.
- Participation in the training programs on 3M activities hosted by the EU universities has been extremely useful to learn about diverse opportunities an entrepreneurial university can utilise to serve students and wider community. The collaboration between university and other important actors, such as municipalities and local businesses play an important role in reaching different layers of society and addressing community needs.
- For instance, comparing ISU to the setting in UTU, CNAM, and NOVA and activities we were introduced to during the training, it is evident, that ISU already implements number of similar third mission actions, however ISU lacks at the moment strategic approach that would enable to consolidate and streamline the activities, as well as increase the visibility and labelling of certain directions as part of university third mission. One important aspect which differentiates Georgian universities from Finnish universities in terms of third mission is the national setting, which encourages institutions to be more active. It appears that the national incentives (consideration in funding formula) and competition between universities can play a crucial role in individual institutions' aspirations to develop innovative approaches, thus contributing to the national ecosystem.

Iliia State University actively embraces its third mission in many activities, and we can contribute significantly to Georgia's and region's social and economic development. Georgian universities need to learn from best practices, adapt them to the local context, and collaborate with stakeholders to strengthen their third mission activities further. While comparing Georgia and the EU is challenging, from our experience, institutional culture, resources, government support, and regional context influence the emphasis on the third mission.

Project SQUARE provided valuable insights, and some key lessons learned include aligning third mission activities with regional priorities and helped us to think of the setting up the mechanisms for evaluating the impact of these activities.

THIRD MISSION ACTIVITY MANAGEMENT AND EVALUATION AT TBILISI STATE MEDICAL UNIVERSITY

Description of third mission activity management at TSMU

TSMU administration fosters and manages universities' third mission in relevance to stakeholders and society interests with reference to the coordination of the different organisational layers (central and departmental) existing within a university.

Tools utilised for managing third mission activities at TSMU

The holistic understanding of modern university governance tools based on international practices – sharing of the best practices and performance analysis.

Impact evaluation practices and experiences of third mission activities at TSMU

TSMU has conducted a self-assessment phase in which weaknesses and strengths of the evaluation model and process have been analysed. After the conclusion, third mission definitions have been reviewed. The outcomes will help to improve operationalization and have a positive impact.

As mentioned before, not all third mission activities need to be exactly the same in all universities, so there is always some diversity. But the spirit of the mission is the same for all Universities.

Tools utilized for evaluating third mission activities at TSMU

Museum Impact Toolkit (MIT), that was developed under the management of Breda University of applied sciences (BUAs).

Front-end evaluation – Provides background about the visitors' prior knowledge and experience and gathers their expectations regarding a proposed exhibition. The primary goal of front-end evaluation is to learn about the audience before an exhibition has been designed to better understand how visitors will respond to an exhibition. This information can help assure that the final product will meet visitor needs and project goals.

The methods include:

- ✓ Focus groups;
- ✓ Interviews and surveys, face-to-face, phone, mail;
- ✓ Unstructured and semi-structured interviews;
- ✓ Informal conversations and feedback;
- ✓ Online surveys.

Lessons learned

TSMU aimed to find out how the 3M can contribute to the university's overall performance. We have analysed the interaction between European university's teaching, scientific productivity, and 3M.

We have observed during the mission at the NOVA University, Lisbon the positive relationship between the research productivity and the third mission and that society and industry appreciate the scientific progress developed by university research, through appreciable invention patents, academic spin-off organisations, or third-party projects. Also, the third mission seems to increasingly ensure adequate performance for attractiveness and competitiveness of universities.

Key learnings:

- Sense of Purpose - Shared understanding of purpose, value and meaning and role of Third mission (Staff, Students and embed in an organisational strategy);
- Giving relevant support and recognitions to the individual leaders who play key role in University TM
- Involvement - A good strategy is 'owned' and understood by the people who will implement it.

We can argue that society and industry appreciate the scientific progress developed by university research and transferred to the University Third Mission through e.g. to appreciable invention patents, academic spin-off organisations, or Museum projects, while university students, in turn, would find in such synergy new opportunities for their future.

We have experienced throughout the project period that our partner EU University's third-mission strategies contribute to the well-being of society as educational institutions with a public responsibility that is clearly established by the efforts of their staff members, researchers, and students. Our EU partner Universities take part in social action, volunteering, health counselling and other initiatives that undoubtedly help to improve the surrounding areas, but that do not necessarily have to be considered as a part of a USR strategy.

Georgia is an inseparable part of Europe and its values. Therefore, it is most important to implement the innovations in the higher education system that will contribute to the development of students and society.

Georgian University's third mission needs to be part of the main mission of the university and influence it in all areas, from strategic decision making to human-resource management. This model must start from the top (university management), but also has to permeate all university staff, influencing their day-to-day performance and interaction with external stakeholders.

Most European Universities have well established Social Responsibility in terms of Third mission activities -Universities act in socially responsible ways, contributing social mobility and attributing societal challenges. At Georgian Universities currently there is lack of planning and long-term vision on 3M, also all activities are scattered and lack of focus in 3M.

THIRD MISSION ACTIVITY MANAGEMENT AND EVALUATION AT TBILISI STATE UNIVERSITY

Description of third mission activity management at TSU

Third mission activities at TSU are dispersed across various educational and research units within the university. The mapping conducted in 2021 identified a total of 99 third mission activities carried out by these units, whether they belong to faculties, scientific-research institutes, or supportive educational units. The management of these activities varies based on the specific unit's role and functions within the university.

Faculties primarily see faculty members, either individually or collectively, conducting these activities on behalf of TSU. In scientific-research institutes, third mission activities can be seen as integral part of their daily responsibilities. Supportive educational units, on the other hand, offer pre-designed courses, activities, and events geared toward serving society in alignment with their respective scopes of work.

Due to the diverse nature of these activities and the units responsible for them, management approaches can differ. The involved parties have flexibility in deciding how to organize, initiate, and measure the success of these activities. However, adherence to the university's Strategic Development Plan, Mission, and Vision is essential for all parties engaged in third mission activities.

While annual reports are required from structural and educational units to document their third mission efforts, faculty staff members, whose workload is traditionally categorized into teaching & learning and research, lack a structured tool to encourage reporting on third mission activities. Nevertheless, as part of the SQUARE project, TSU has explored avenues for incorporating third mission into faculty staff workloads. Studies assessing staff satisfaction with reimbursement policies have been conducted, yielding insights into how mechanisms for enhancing third mission activities can be included in the forthcoming updated Strategic Development Plan. This progressive step aims to establish tools and mechanisms for planning, managing, and evaluating third mission activities, with a focus on positively incentivizing academic personnel.

Tools utilised for managing third mission activities at TSU

Tbilisi State University (TSU) comprises various educational and structural units, each actively involved in implementing third mission activities, which are categorized into three primary facets: Continuing Education, Knowledge Transfer and Innovation, and Social Engagement. The decision-making process for each unit's action plans is conducted at the highest levels of university management. These levels include the Academic Council, Board of Representatives, Faculty Councils, and other relevant bodies.

Annually, new action plans are developed for each unit, ensuring their alignment with the overarching Strategic Development Plan and the university's mission and vision. TSU sets specific yearly outputs and outcomes, with educational and structural units strategically working toward achieving these targeted milestones. These action plans may partially encompass third mission components, contributing to various aspects of this mission.

While faculties and scientific research institutes predominantly manage third mission activities at the staff level, such as the Faculty of Exact and Natural Sciences, which incorporates third mis-

sion components into academic staff workloads to encourage their involvement in societal development efforts, TSU also hosts several structural units explicitly designed to serve society. These units play vital roles in fulfilling the university's commitment to its third mission.

Center of Vocational Education

TSU implements vocational education courses which certifies the graduate with state recognised diploma and grants with the opportunity to directly enter the labour market. Besides the diploma courses, TSU Center of Vocational Education offers short-term training and re-training courses which supports individuals to shift into the occupational fields or upgrade their skills and professionalism level to develop in their careers throughout their life. Therefore, this unit supports each direction of third mission highlighting the role it plays to develop continuing education component.

Lifelong Learning Center

LLL Center of TSU provides a wide array of courses, seminars, and workshops that are designed to meet the contemporary demands of the labour market. This center plays a pivotal role in helping individuals and society as a whole to enhance their overall well-being. In addition, the LLL Center includes a division that offers preparatory courses tailored for school students who aspire to excel in the Unified National Exams and secure admission to universities. This contributes to the broader societal development and educational support mission of TSU's third mission.

Knowledge Transfer and Innovation Center

TSU has established a reputation for fostering an inclusive ecosystem where active participation is not only encouraged but also strongly supported. The Knowledge Transfer and Innovation Center, representing TSU, extends a variety of services to society. These services encompass diverse activities such as product design, 3D printing services, and the organization of courses aimed at nurturing entrepreneurial skills, among other offerings. These initiatives exemplify TSU's commitment to advancing knowledge transfer, innovation, and contributing to societal well-being through its third mission.

TSU has been proactive in ensuring adequate funding for students to engage in various projects that are directly or indirectly linked to the third mission. For instance, TSU's involvement in the "arCc - Assuming Responsibility for Climate Change" project provided students with the opportunity to develop their own initiatives aimed at addressing climate change.

Throughout the management of third mission activities, TSU consistently seeks to engage external stakeholders to enhance the impact of each initiative. Various stakeholders, including governmental bodies, municipalities, city halls, and private research institutes, have actively participated in collaborative third mission projects facilitated by TSU.

Presently, the management of third mission activities is the responsibility of each unit and individual. However, they must ensure that these activities align with TSU's institutional context and are in harmony with the university's overarching mission and vision. This approach underscores the university's commitment to integrating third mission activities into its core activities and promoting its role as a catalyst for positive societal change.

Impact evaluation practices and experiences of third mission activities at TSU

At Tbilisi State University (TSU), the evaluation of third mission activities has become an integral part of the university's ongoing commitment to societal development. This commitment was notably reinforced after the implementation of the SQUARE project. Several practices and experiences related to the evaluation of third mission activities at TSU can be summarized as follows: TSU conducted an extensive internal inventory and mapping of third mission activities. This involved conducting interviews with various stakeholders, including faculty members, research institutes, educational units, and other departments. These interviews aimed to identify and document ongoing activities related to continuing education, knowledge transfer and innovation, and social engagement. This mapping process provided a comprehensive view of the scope and nature of third mission activities within the university.

To assess the current state of third mission activities, TSU conducted a SWOT analysis. This analysis identified the strengths and weaknesses of existing initiatives, as well as opportunities for expansion and potential threats. The SWOT analysis served as a valuable strategic tool for devising plans to enhance third mission efforts. TSU also requires educational and structural units to submit annual reports that encompass their third mission activities. These reports detail the activities carried out, the outcomes achieved, and any challenges encountered. This reporting system ensures accountability and provides a means of tracking progress toward the strategic goals related to third mission.

It is noteworthy that TSU adopted the Balanced Scorecard model developed by R. Kaplan and D. Norton to structure its strategic planning for third mission activities. This model categorizes strategic goals into four perspectives: Financial, Customer, Internal Business, and Learning & Growth. Each perspective includes specific strategic goals and relevant key performance indicators (KPIs). The Balanced Scorecard framework enables a balanced and holistic approach to planning and evaluating third mission activities at TSU.

TSU recognizes the importance of incorporating third mission activities into faculty members' workloads. Efforts are underway to develop mechanisms that encourage faculty to report on and participate in these activities. This initiative aims to highlight the significance of the third mission alongside teaching and research within the university.

In conclusion, TSU has unintentionally integrated third mission components into its strategic planning, annual reporting, and faculty workload considerations. By actively collaborating with both internal and external stakeholders and utilizing strategic tools such as SWOT analysis and the Balanced Scorecard model used and developed in the framework of the project SQUARE, TSU is committed to expanding its role in societal development and making a positive contribution to the Georgian community.

Tools utilized for evaluating third mission activities at TSU

TSU is taking proactive steps to develop a comprehensive framework for the evaluation of third mission activities. This framework will provide a structured approach to assessing the impact and effectiveness of these activities. It will include definition of the deliverables of the activity from the initial point, during/after implementation collection of the data according to quantitative and qualitative indicators, these data will be used to measure the direct and indirect impact of the

activity. Quality assurance surveys will be developed and sent to the participants to assess the activity from their points of views. The activity will also be evaluated in compliance with the third mission action plan and KPIs indicated through the strategic goals. Elaboration of a complex of tools has been under way in order to scrutinize the evolution of the assessment methods.

This evolving framework represents a systematic and structured approach to evaluating third mission activities. It will enable TSU to more effectively assess the impact of these initiatives on societal development, align them with strategic goals, and continuously improve their quality and relevance.

Lessons learned

The SQUARE project has been instrumental in bringing a clear understanding of the third mission to Georgian universities. Prior to this initiative, the third mission was often underestimated and not fully recognized by various stakeholders. There was a lack of mutual understanding and no comprehensive assessment of its impact. SQUARE has played a pivotal role in elevating the importance of the third mission and has not only benefited the consortium member Georgian universities but also other non-consortium higher education institutions in Georgia that have gradually become acquainted with the project's deliverables.

TSU and other universities within the consortium received valuable insights into strategic planning and assessment tools and mechanisms for the third mission through SQUARE. EU partners shared their extensive experiences in planning, managing, assessing third mission activities, and measuring their impact. The methodologies introduced through the project were relatively new to the Georgian context, highlighting a significant difference between Georgian and EU countries. In Georgia, there was limited experience with systematic approaches to the third mission, while EU countries had well-established policies, mechanisms, tools, and instruments to implement the entire cycle of the third mission.

The lessons learned from the SQUARE project encompassed various areas. They included the importance of defining and conceptualizing the third mission, as well as fostering a unified mindset that treats the third mission equally with teaching and research. The project emphasized that universities' interest in contributing to society can lead to collaborations with external stakeholders, such as governmental and non-governmental organizations and the business industry. SQUARE revealed that external stakeholders were eager to cooperate, and these opportunities should not be missed.

The project also had a positive impact at the national level, as it encouraged the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia and the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement to recognize the third mission as an integral part of higher education institutions. It led to the development of relevant regulations and evaluation mechanisms to support these institutions.

TSU greatly values the contributions of all members of the SQUARE project consortium, as they played a crucial role in changing mindsets regarding the third mission. The action plan for the third mission, developed by TSU, sets a precedent by incorporating not only the national context but also the experiences gained throughout the project. TSU has learned that by bringing interested parties to the forefront, the vibrancy surrounding the third mission can be sustained and enhanced to benefit society.

COMPLEMENTING VIEW ON THIRD MISSION BY THE NATIONAL CENTER OF EDUCATIONAL QUALITY ENHANCEMENT OF GEORGIA (BY MR. LASHA MACHARASHVILI, NCEQE)

The objectives of the university 3rd mission development process at NCEQE

The NCEQE aspires to further develop the topic of the 3rd mission within its mechanism for the institutional assessment. The 3rd mission will be better outlined within the authorization standards as the principles with a recommendatory character. The NCEQE's approach towards the 3rd mission assessment will be comprehensive and development-oriented. As the authorization standards take the autonomy of the university as a major pillar of institutional development, the HEIs will be free to elaborate their vision and strategy of the 3rd mission considering their own institutional mission and goals. These changes will consider the best existing practices internationally.

As the 3rd mission will be more integrated into the standards, the relevant changes will also be reflected within the authorization guidebook. The changes within the guidebook will mainly aspire to further clarify the approach of the standards to the 3rd mission for the stakeholders involved in the evaluations, mainly the HEI representatives and the authorization experts. The changes in the guidebook will be followed by the dissemination activities, which will incorporate the discussions as well as trainings for the stakeholders, for the further clarification, consideration and agreement within the diverse sets of stakeholders.

Role of NCEQE in the SQUARE project

The NCEQE, due to the specificity of its functions, has adopted the role of an observer in most of the activities carried out within the SQUARE project, have been involved in discussions and has actively been disseminating the information within itself. The NCEQE representatives have also presented the future plans for the further integration of the 3rd mission in the authorization mechanism during some of the consortium activities and conferences.

Other than the participation within the consortium activities, the NCEQE has created an extensive report on the 3rd mission related activities of the QA agencies around Europe and the integration of the third mission within their evaluation mechanisms. The report has been actively used by the working group for further considerations within the NCEQE's project related goals.

The working group has been formed that is in an active phase of work for the further better integration of the 3rd mission within the Authorization standards. The working group is parallelly working on the improvement of other parts of the standards as well, which gives it the opportunity for the holistic consideration of the 3rd mission and ensuring structural connections with other parts of the evaluation mechanism.

The experiences of NCEQE on the practical development work conducted during the latest two years in SQUARE

As the NCEQE has been an observer of all of the major events of SQUARE project, the initial impression from the agency perspective is that the Georgian Universities that are involved in the project have started to make 3rd mission more important part of their missions, due to the guidance of the European partners, as well as the activities that they have carried out. When earlier this year every HEI presented their own 3rd mission related sub-projects carried out within SQUARE, it was a potent example of increasing internalization of 3rd mission within their agendas and largely, of the success of the project.

As for the benefits for the NCEQE, the main benefit could be the raised conceptual perspective of the agency towards the evaluation of the 3rd mission activities, which derives both from observing the actual activities carried out by the Georgian HEIs, as well as from the discussions within the consortium activities, and sharing the experiences of the partner universities, regarding their contexts, implementation of the 3rd mission activities and its integration in overall university lives being some of the most beneficial. All of these insights will be useful for the NCEQE within the work on the changes within the standards and the production of the guides, as well as the training and other dissemination activities. The NCEQE has become far better conceptually regarding the 3rd mission activities and this betterment will be reflected in the subsequent changes, mentioned above.

Key challenges in 3rd mission development in Georgia, as seen by NCEQE

Having a large experience of evaluations within the HEIs, the NCEQE has already had an experience amassed in regards to the 3rd mission activities from the perspective of the Georgian HEIs. Probably the biggest challenge that could be noticed based on that experience and which also persevered during the project are the two 1. Relative lack of awareness in the HEIs about the 3rd mission and its practicalities; and 2. From the NCEQE's functional perspective, the conceptual problem of evaluating the 3rd mission as such and implementing relevant feasible indicators.

Both challenges have been addressed and have been improved, if not solved throughout the project. The HEIs (involved in the project) are clearly far better aware of the concept now, which could be a good basis for the further improvements and reaching other HEIs. The NCEQE has gained much competence as well as more experience in regards to the 3rd mission and this could be very helpful in the work on subsequent changes and farther institutionalization of the 3rd mission activities within the evaluation mechanisms. However, both challenges still remain and it will take considerable time and effort, from both the NCEQE as well as the HEIs to finally solve them and to make the changes impactful for the system and the stakeholders within it.

Continuation of the 3rd mission development process at NCEQE

As the changes are planned within the authorization standards and authorization guidebook, this will mean that the legacy of the project will stay on, after it is finished. The NCEQE will continue working with the HEIs when the changes are made and will try to help and support them to promote improvements from the 3rd mission as well as other perspectives, as it is responsibility of the NCEQE according to the legislation. It could even be said that, even though the NCEQE has not and could not have been the most active actor within the project, due to the specificity of the SQUARE's impact on the NCEQE and the changes to be made, the NCEQE together with the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia, are going to be the most important actors for the further promotion of the project's achievements and institutionalization of its' conceptual pillars in the future.

CHAPTER 2 – EXPERIENCES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM EUROPEAN UNIVERSITIES AND INSTITUTIONS

THIRD MISSION ACTIVITY MANAGEMENT AND EVALUATION IN THE EU AND AT EUROPEAN UNIVERSITIES

Third mission activity management in the EU and European universities involves a systematic approach to planning, implementation, and evaluation. It includes activities such as community outreach, knowledge transfer, entrepreneurship support, and social engagement.

Universities often establish dedicated offices or units responsible for managing and coordinating Third Mission activities. These units work closely with various stakeholders, including faculty, students, industry partners, and community organisations, to ensure the successful execution of the activities.

CASE: THIRD MISSION MANAGEMENT AT NOVA UNIVERSITY

- **Strategic Planning:** European universities, like NOVA, often develop strategic plans that include third mission activities as a core component. These plans outline the institution's vision, goals, and priorities in engaging with society. They may identify key areas of focus such as knowledge transfer, entrepreneurship, social innovation, or community engagement. Strategic planning ensures a systematic and coordinated approach to third mission activities.
- **Dedicated Support Structures:** NOVA, following the best practices in Europe, has established dedicated support structures to manage and facilitate third mission activities. These include technology transfer offices (such as the NOVA Impact Office, at the Rectorate level, or the Innovation Research and Impact Strategy – IRIS, at the FCT NOVA level), innovation centres, incubators, or entrepreneurship hubs. These entities provide expertise, resources, and services to facilitate the transfer of knowledge and technology from academia to society, support start-ups and spin-offs, through dedicated policies, and foster collaboration with external partners.
- **Collaboration and Partnerships:** Collaboration and partnerships play a crucial role in third mission activity management. NOVA actively seek partnerships with industry, government agencies, non-profit organizations, and local communities. These collaborations can take the form of research collaborations, joint projects, consultancy services, or social engagement initiatives. Such partnerships help leverage expertise, resources, and networks to achieve shared objectives.
- **Knowledge Exchange and Training:** NOVA actively participates in knowledge exchange and capacity-building activities related to third mission management. They engage in networks, conferences, and training programs to learn from each other's experiences, share best practices, and enhance their capabilities in managing third mission activities effectively.

- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** NOVA employs monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to assess the impact and effectiveness of their third mission activities. Key performance indicators (KPIs) are established to measure outputs and outcomes, such as patents filed, spin-off companies created, industry collaborations, social impact, and regional development. Evaluation provides insights for continuous improvement and evidence of the institution's contribution to society.

CASE: THIRD MISSION MANAGEMENT AT UTU

In Finland, at the University of Turku, the strategy is implemented in practice through policies that are theme-specific. Based on the principles of the policy programme, it is carried out during the strategy period in part or entirely, and it can be complemented along the way. In the planning phase of the strategy, the university community was granted opportunities to provide feedback and suggestions via surveys, and they were then taken into consideration in the realisation of the policy programme. Furthermore, the university also takes into account the discussions with all the stakeholders, both internal and external, in the formulation of the programme. Consequently, detailed plans regarding implementation, schedule as well as assessment indicators were made in detail by the parties responsible in collaboration with the university community.

From the point of view of the university third mission, specific policies at UTU can be considered especially relevant (each policy is categorised under the four main goals described earlier in this publication): "Building partnerships", "Societal interaction" and "Increasing social impact". All of these policies are listed under the main goal of the university as "a proactive and dynamic partner" (i.e. the third goal). Within the policies, more detailed actions are listed that are seen to contribute to the policy, and ultimately, to reaching the goal at the university. Under each action, a party responsible for it is named. For instance, at UTU, one of the actions planned to contribute to the policy of "Building partnerships" and the goal of being a proactive and dynamic partner is "Strengthening collaboration in Africa with the World Bank and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa", for which rectors and the Director of Development are specified as the responsible parties. In addition, for the policy of "Societal interaction", aiming to work towards the same goal of being a proactive and dynamic partner, is named the action of developing the university as the Entrepreneurial University. It encompasses strengthening entrepreneurial attitudes and practices and related internal collaboration along with the promotion of good practices. Also, as further measures, increasing competence and preparedness of the personnel to offer entrepreneurial education by providing personnel training is listed. Finally, within this action, the visibility and impact of the Entrepreneurial University is seen to be added through active communication. In this activity, the main responsible party is the Vice Rector responsible for partnerships and strategic engagement at the university, and the Director of Development. In regard to the third policy, "Increasing social impact", we can mention as an example action pioneering in sustainable development. The action includes the objective of reaching the university's goal of becoming carbon neutral by 2025. In order to bring forward and follow the necessary actions to reach this goal, the action specifies that a permanent steering group be appointed. As the responsible parties for this action, Vice Rector responsible for partnerships and strategic engagement, Vice Rector responsible for research, and the Director of Development are named. (UTU Policy Programmes 2022)



Picture: Georgian university representatives visiting the SparkUp startup community in Turku Science Park, Finland (image credit: UTU)

TOOLS UTILISED FOR MANAGING THIRD MISSION ACTIVITIES IN THE EU AND AT EUROPEAN UNIVERSITIES

To manage Third Mission activities, universities rely on several types of tools, including:

- **Project management frameworks:** Implementing project management methodologies, such as Agile help universities streamline their 3M activities, set clear objectives, allocate resources, and track progress.
- **Collaboration platforms and communication tools:** Universities can leverage online collaboration platforms, project management software, and communication tools to facilitate coordination, information sharing, and stakeholder engagement.
- **Monitoring and reporting systems:** Establishing monitoring systems and regular reporting mechanisms enables universities to track the progress, impact, and outcomes of 3M activities. This helps in decision-making, resource allocation, and strategic adjustments.
- **Capacity building and training programs:** Providing training and professional development opportunities for staff involved in Third Mission activities enhances their skills and competencies in managing and executing such initiatives effectively.
- **Strategic Planning:** Developing a comprehensive strategic plan is a fundamental tool for managing third mission activities. This plan outlines the institution's vision, goals, and strategies related to knowledge transfer, entrepreneurship, social engagement, and regional development. It provides a roadmap for decision-making, resource allocation, and implementation of initiatives, whilst answering to the question "Where do we, as a university, want to be?".
- **Project Management Methodologies:** Project management skills helps us to manage and track the progress of specific third mission projects or initiatives. They enable teams to set milestones, allocate resources, assign responsibilities, and monitor the timelines and deliverables of different projects.
- **Knowledge Transfer and Intellectual Property Management:** Tools for managing knowledge transfer and intellectual property (IP) are crucial in third mission activities. NOVA uses software platforms for tracking, protecting, and licensing IP generated through research. These tools assist in managing invention disclosures, patent filings, licensee scouting, licensing agreements, and commercialization processes.
- **Impact Measurement and Evaluation:** Tools for measuring and evaluating the impact of third mission activities are essential for effective management. They help institutions track and measure the outcomes, outputs, and impact of their engagement with society, providing valuable insights for decision-making and improvement.

Theory of Change

Universities may opt to employ the “Theory of Change” approach for planning and managing the strategy of their third mission activities. This approach represents a tool, which can be used to specify and communicate a) the need that the university strives to fulfil, b) the desired changes that the university would like to establish, and c) what activities the university plans to do. In order to realise it, the university can use a logic model that comprises the following areas (NCCPE 2020):

- Context: describe the situation that would be undergoing change
- Resources/inputs that will be used for supporting the activity being planned
- Activities that would be done to achieve the goals
- Concrete outputs planned to be created
- Outcomes: the foreseen changes in the short term
- Impacts: the desired long-term change
- Assumptions that have been made in the planning phase
- External factors that could have an effect on the outcomes

This logic model provides a frame of reference against which the university third mission management can reflect when managing the realisation, progress and results of the third mission activities.

EDGE self-assessment matrix

The EDGE self-assessment matrix represents a practical tool for the strategy management of a university, especially helping to assess a university’s support for public engagement. It builds on the analysis of the three main challenge areas of Purpose, Process and People. Each of them, are divided into three sub focus areas, which the university strategy managers shall consider from their university’s point of view, with regard to the development maturity of the university in terms of that specific dimension. From non-developed to highly developed, the scale goes from “embryonic” to “developing”, and further to “gripping”, and ultimately, to “embedding”. Completing the form by selecting the most appropriate options on each row will provide the university with an overview of where they are in terms of being an “engaged university”. The EDGE tool can be downloaded at <https://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/support-engagement/strategy-and-planning/edge-tool/introducing-edge-tool> (retrieved on 12.6.2023).

IMPACT EVALUATION PRACTICES AND EXPERIENCES OF THIRD MISSION ACTIVITIES IN THE EU AND AT EUROPEAN UNIVERSITIES

Evaluating the impact of Third Mission activities in the EU and European universities involves assessing the outcomes, effectiveness, and societal relevance of these initiatives.

The third mission of universities can also be described as the *public engagement* or *societal engagement* of their activities. It is commonplace in the European university world today that third mission activities are not seen as an add-on activity, but rather this aspect is built into the way universities work. This implies that they have activities that incorporate societal engagement into their research and teaching. The Britain's National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement describes an "engaged university" as driving public engagement with research by involving actively the public in the research activities. Furthermore, it provides engaged teaching, implying the development of teaching activities that impact positively on the community while improving the engagement skills of students. Third, the engaged university drives knowledge exchange through increasing the two-way flow of knowledge and insight between the university and the society at large. Finally, the engaged university would assume social responsibility in a way to seek to maximise the benefits that the university is able to generate for the good of the public. (NCCPE 2020)

Evaluation practices include:

- **Surveys and feedback mechanisms:** Collecting feedback from stakeholders, including community partners, industry collaborators, and beneficiaries, helps gauge the impact and effectiveness of Third Mission activities.
- **Case studies and success stories:** Documenting and sharing case studies and success stories showcases the tangible outcomes and societal impact resulting from Third Mission activities.
- **Social impact assessments:** Conducting social impact assessments helps universities understand and quantify the broader social, economic, and environmental changes brought about by their Third Mission activities.

CASE: EVALUATION PRACTICES AT THE NOVA UNIVERSITY

- **Impact Assessment:** NOVA emphasizes impact assessment as a key aspect of evaluating third mission activities. Impact assessment involves measuring and analysing the outcomes and effects of engagement with society, such as economic impact, social impact, knowledge transfer, and regional development. In this sense, there has been some changes in the standards that regulate the assessment of researchers at NOVA to include this dimension in their evaluation schemes.
- **Performance Indicators:** NOVA assesses performance indicators and metrics to evaluate its third mission activities. These indicators include measures related to industry collaborations, spin-off companies created, patents filed, technology licensing, social and environmental impact, public engagement, and knowledge transfer activities. Performance indicators provide quantifiable data for assessing the progress and effectiveness of these activities over time.
- **Continuous Improvement:** NOVA emphasizes the concept of continuous improvement in its third mission evaluation practices. Evaluations are viewed as an iterative process that informs future planning, strategy development, and resource allocation. Lessons learned from evaluations are used to refine strategies, enhance the effectiveness of activities, and align with changing societal needs and priorities.
- **Reporting and Transparency:** Related to the points above, NOVA places importance on reporting and transparency in their evaluation practices, preparing reports and publications that communicate the outcomes, impacts, and lessons learned from third mission activities. These reports provide transparency to stakeholders and the wider public, demonstrating our commitment to societal engagement and accountability.
- **Benchmarking and Best Practices:** NOVA frequently engages in benchmarking exercises to compare their third mission activities with other leading institutions and identify best practices. Benchmarking helps us understand our relative performance, learn from successful approaches, and identify areas for improvement.



Picture: Ms. Arlete Meneses of the International Development Office at NOVA University Lisbon (image credit: TSU)

REFLECTIONS FROM EFMD ON THE STATE OF THE ART IN EVALUATION PRACTICES

The first and second missions of the universities are already scrutinised thanks to a large set of quality assurance indicators, performance indicators and monitoring systems to control, report and eventually take any corrective measure if necessary. These indicators are limited to the evaluation of the direct beneficiaries (students, entrepreneurs, etc.) and used for the immediate review of the action. The results are later presented for national and regional accreditations, and for the promotion of the university.

On the contrary, third mission activities have various forms, from lifelong-learning programmes to cultural management of a museum, innovation labs and social inclusion events. They involve a large panel of university' stakeholders: top managers (vice-rectors, deans, directors of university social extension), professors, researchers, administrative and support staff, and sometimes even students. Direct beneficiaries include local entrepreneurs, SMEs, children, and anyone who has attended any activity of the university. As their form is diverse, it is important to consider indirect beneficiaries as well. They include the civil society, the families, and anyone who is indirectly affected by the organisation of an activity. For example, a gender-equality promotion event organised by the university can consider as direct beneficiaries anyone who actually participated, and as indirect beneficiaries the society as a whole.

Unfortunately, current national quality assurance systems and indicators may not be fit to reflect the diversity of these activities. The universities should then take the lead and provide the public authorities with relevant information to reflect on the added-value of these activities, their importance for the society and eventually justify their fundings.

All universities should reflect from the early stage about the beneficiaries (direct and indirect) and put in place a monitoring system that allows their identification, quantification, and satisfaction to make sure to properly reflect on the relevance, and performance of such activities. This will be later used for the impact assessment of the third mission activities.

TOOLS FOR EVALUATION

Impact assessment frameworks, SROI analysis, and outcome mapping are tools that assist in evaluating the effectiveness and societal relevance of 3M activities. They provide structured approaches to measuring impact, understanding the social value created, and tracking progress towards desired outcomes. Utilising these tools allows universities to assess the tangible and intangible benefits of their engagement efforts, improve decision-making, and communicate the value of their work to stakeholders and funders.

Specifically:

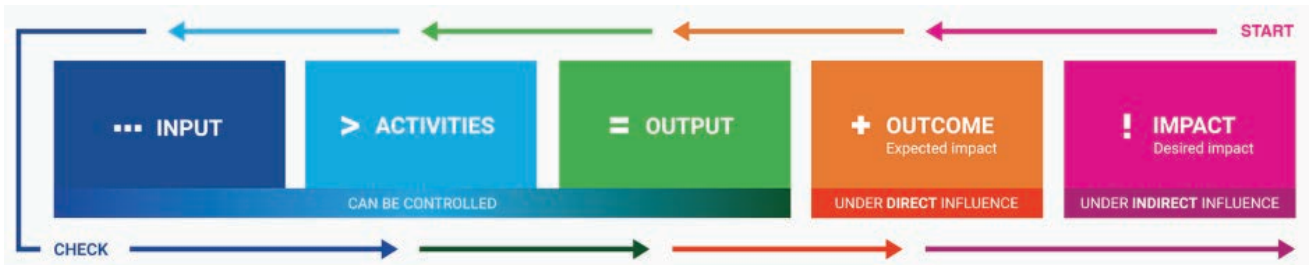
- **Impact Assessment Frameworks:** Impact assessment frameworks provide a structured methodology to measure and assess the outcomes and effects of initiatives. They typically involve defining indicators, collecting data, analysing results, and interpreting the findings. Impact assessment frameworks help universities understand the extent to which their activities contribute to desired societal outcomes and provide evidence of their impact to stakeholders and funders.

- **Social Return on Investment (SROI) Analysis:** SROI analysis assesses the social, environmental, and economic outcomes and assigns a financial value to them. SROI analysis involves identifying stakeholders, mapping outcomes, collecting data, assigning financial proxies, and calculating the ratio of social value created to the investment made. This tool provides a holistic understanding of the social impact of Third Mission activities and helps communicate their value in monetary terms.
- **Outcome Mapping:** Outcome mapping focuses on capturing and understanding the intermediate and long-term outcomes resulting from Third Mission activities. Outcome mapping involves defining boundary partners, clarifying desired changes, identifying strategies, tracking progress, and adapting interventions based on learning. This tool emphasises the importance of adaptive management and learning from outcomes to improve future initiatives.
- **Impact Case Studies:** Case studies and/or Research Narratives involve in-depth examination and analysis of specific third mission projects or initiatives. They provide detailed insights into the processes, challenges, and outcomes of these activities which can be valuable for showcasing success stories, identifying best practices, and generating lessons learned that can inform future strategic planning and raise awareness within the community.
- **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):** Establishing relevant, inclusive, holistic, and measurable KPIs is essential for evaluating the performance and impact of third mission activities. KPIs can be quantitative metrics such as the number of industry collaborations, patents filed, spin-off companies created, revenue generated, or social impact indicators. These indicators allow for objective assessment and monitoring of progress.
- **Surveys and Questionnaires:** Surveys and questionnaires are useful tools for gathering feedback and data from various stakeholders involved in third mission activities. These can include university staff, faculty, students, industry partners, etc.. Surveys can be designed to measure satisfaction, perceived impact, knowledge transfer effectiveness, or other relevant dimensions and its results can be used to feed continuous improvement of procedures.

IMPACT

Impact goes beyond the traditional and regular evaluation of the outputs and outcomes (i.e., the results and effects of the organisation of such activities).

The Erasmus+ agency has developed the [impact tool](#), inspired by the Theory of Change with a methodology to define what impact is, and how it differs from the results and effects.



Impact is the long-term objective of an activity, achieved once the outputs and outcomes have been reached. It is under indirect influence of the stakeholders; managers of the 3rd mission activities, and the universities as a whole, can only pave the way for the activities to reach this impact, but cannot guarantee it as such.

For example, an executive training programme for local entrepreneurs can lead to an increase in the number of SMEs (output), and a better understanding of the existing business opportunities (outcome). This is under the direct influence of the university, which can ensure that these objectives are reached with a careful planification, and quality assurance indicators. However, it cannot secure an increase in the local economic growth (impact) with its programme, as this could be linked with other, external factors (money inflation, security, etc.).

Based also on this graphical representation of the value chain, one must see that impact can only be assessed once the results, and effects have been defined, qualified and quantified. It is also important to precisely identify and estimate all the resources, the inputs, and the activities necessary to reach these results.

As shown in the graph, this is not a one stand-alone evaluation; it should be an ever-going process in which impact is constantly reviewed, as well as the inputs, activities, the results, and the effects. This demonstrates once more the importance to be paid for a careful consideration, and the sufficient allocation of resources to properly assess the impact and integrate the results in the implementation, and organisation of the third mission activities

QUALITY ASSURANCE TO EVALUATE THIRD MISSION ACTIVITIES, FROM EFMD

Business schools have faced criticisms that accused them of focusing on global perspectives, being only global institutions imparting global knowledge, or being talent factories for international companies hiring their graduates, detaching them from their local environment and communities. They are also expected to play a role in shaping society, engaging with and benefiting their local surroundings, and making positive contributions to their environment through various third mission activities.

The pivotal role of teaching and research of Higher Education has traditionally formed the foundation of quality assurance and accreditation frameworks. Management education international accreditation agencies such as EFMD and its American counterpart AACSB have broadened their review scope to also assess the institution's contribution to its regional, national, and local environment. The evaluation now encompasses the quality of research, teaching, and the impact of the school's third mission endeavours, outlining the societal impact of their non-academic activities and the strategies to engage with stakeholders such as entrepreneurs, government bodies, alumni, and associations.

Business schools need to prepare themselves to report on their third mission activities and include the outcomes in the assessment reports. It is crucial to note that these activities should align with the institution's mission and vision, as all accreditations are based on a mission-driven approach. Therefore, a comprehensive identification, mapping and strategic understanding of the third mission activities is essential for the institution.

All accreditations and assessments must be supported by data; establishing a monitoring system becomes imperative to collect qualitative and quantitative information about third mission activities. This includes the provision of data such as the nature and number of beneficiaries (both direct and indirect), the outcomes achieved, and an estimation of the expected impact (measured qualitatively and quantitatively). The identification and inclusion of these activities in the institution's strategic plan, coupled with the implementation of a robust monitoring system, are crucial prerequisites for the full consideration of the third mission in the institution's quality evaluation.

While this shift reflects the stance of international accreditation agencies for management education, it is expected that a similar approach will be adopted in other disciplines.

CASE: EVALUATION PRACTICES AT UTU

The University of Turku understands third mission impact as establishing and promoting change. At UTU, societal interaction is lead by an appointed vice rector. In this thematic entity, activities include the acquisition of monetary resources, alumni relations, business collaboration, supporting international partnerships, and actions supporting sustainability and responsibility. Societal interaction is steered as part of the management, strategy and annual planning processes. The realisation and follow-up of strategic implementation programmes represent central development means at UTU. In terms of evaluation, three topic entities are followed annually: a) annual reporting materials of units are analysed in March-April, b) feedback and development trends from stakeholders and the university community are analysed in September-October, and the development of societal interaction for the upcoming year is prepared as part of the annual plan of the university in November. In addition to multifaceted follow-up of research and education, the actions of societal interaction are followed in line with the directives from the rector. The follow-up is based on university-level collection of data, unit reports, and feedback collected from the operation environment, for instance surveys and immediate feedback via website. Furthermore, data is also retrieved from own and commissioned reports, and follow-up procedures. Many evaluations, accreditations and rankings in which the university participates take into consideration societal interaction, and they can thus be used as a tool of evaluation. One of the central ones of those is the national auditing of universities (<https://karvi.fi/en/higher-education/audits-higher-education-institutions-2018-2024>). Societal interaction can as well be seen in thematic (e.g. entrepreneurial university, ACEEU) as well as unit-specific accreditation processes (accreditation evaluation at Business School about personnel's other than scientific merits, AACSB). With regard to the adoption of third mission assessment at UTU, the updated third mission implementation programme of UTU strategy for 2018–2020 specified the action "Adoption of tools for the assessment of societal interaction of the university". UTU carries out the collection of information based on annual planning and reporting of activities. In it, the activities of units are described qualitatively. In addition to research and teaching, societal interaction and stakeholder collaboration are as well described. In addition to qualitative follow-up, it is also necessary to follow the development of societal interaction on a regular basis also through quantitative indicators. The UTU societal interaction impact assessment (assessment targets and assessment scales) were developed by the University Impact unit, which functions under the Development Services unit, in collaboration with the societal interaction project group. These actors made a proposal in 2018, and it was then examined by the university board, and it was openly made available for comments by the staff in the university intranet. Furthermore, feedback on assessment targets was also enquired from external members of advisory boards. The assessment scales are characterised by the following traits: they take into consideration the different third mission profiles of the university's units so that the assessment targets and respective assessment scales cover societal interaction in a multifaceted manner. The points of view are a) the effect of the university on the society, and the participation of stakeholders in the activities and development of the university. The assessment and follow-up are conducted on a yearly basis. Depending on the scale, it takes place either on university or faculty level. At UTU, the assessment scales do not have an effect on the internal money distribution model of the university.



Picture: On their visit to Finland in November, 2022, Georgian university representatives learned about the societal interaction and impact at UTU (image credit: UTU)

Next, we present the impact assessment scales of societal interaction at the University of Turku. They are presented from two points of view: a) the point of view of the effect of the university on the society, and b) the point of view of the participation of stakeholders in the activities and the development of the university.

- a1:** Publishing to the professional community and the public at large (number of publications)
- a2:** Applied research and development activities (income financing of applied research and development activities in €)
- a3:** Innovation activities, business activities, and education export (number of innovation propositions and invention disclosures; volume of business activities in €; number of education export transactions and volume of education export in €)
- a4:** Working life collaboration in degree programmes (number of study credits done in practical training; number of study credits from working life studies included in degrees; number of commissioned theses)
- a5:** Other than degree programme education (number of study credits from studies carried out at the open university; number of study credits from studies carried out in lifelong learning programmes, leadership training programmes, and specialisation education programmes)
- a6:** Expertise into the society (number of expert assignments, expert statements, and expert memberships in stakeholder organisations; number of appearances of experts in media)

- a7:** Meeting forums – opening the university to stakeholders (number of people who have registered for events targeted at the public at large, alumni events, expert seminars, and professional events; number of visitors to destinations such as museums and special attractions; number of loans carried out by people external to the university from the university library)
- a8:** Co-use of resources with external stakeholders (data from management system of the collaborative use of university's devices, software programmes and similar)
- b1:** Participation of stakeholders in the realisation of the university's tasks (number of project partners collaborating in research; number of teacher or tutors representing stakeholders in teaching or tutoring tasks; number of mentors representing stakeholders in mentoring activities)
- b2:** The participation of stakeholder representatives in the development work of the university (number of stakeholder representatives in preparation, planning, development groups and boards of permanent nature at the university)
- b3:** Orders (of commissioned research) and donations (income from commissioned research in €; income from adult education in €; donations in €)



Picture: SQUARE visit to a collaborative space for student entrepreneurship activities at UTU

LESSONS LEARNED BY THE EU PARTNERS DURING THE SQUARE PROJECT

The SQUARE project has yielded valuable lessons, including:

- Importance of stakeholder engagement: Involving a diverse range of stakeholders, including faculty, students, industry partners, and community representatives, is crucial for the success of Third Mission strategies. Their active participation ensures the relevance, effectiveness, and sustainability of the initiatives.
- Integration with institutional strategies: Aligning Third Mission strategies with the overall institutional mission, vision, and goals helps integrate these activities into the core fabric of the university. This integration enhances the visibility, impact, and long-term sustainability of Third Mission initiatives.
- Continuous evaluation and adaptation: Regularly evaluating the outcomes and impact of Third Mission activities enables universities to make data-driven decisions, identify areas for improvement, and adapt strategies accordingly. Flexibility and agility are key to maximising the effectiveness of Third Mission strategies.

For university actors, the EU, and Georgia, the key lessons from the SQUARE project include:

- Building strong networks and partnerships: Collaborating with relevant stakeholders, both within and outside the university, fosters synergies, knowledge exchange, and shared resources. Building strong networks enhances the effectiveness and sustainability of Third Mission activities.
- Encouraging interdisciplinary approaches: Emphasising interdisciplinary collaboration and encouraging the involvement of different academic disciplines in Third Mission activities promotes innovative solutions and a holistic understanding of complex societal challenges.
- Tailoring strategies to local contexts: Recognizing the unique needs, priorities, and cultural aspects of specific regions and communities helps design Third Mission strategies that are contextually relevant and impactful.

Short-term recommendations for Georgian partners include:

- Extending the inventory and mapping of existing Third Mission activities to the Georgian universities that did not participate in the SQUARE project
- Building capacity and raising awareness among university actors regarding the importance and potential of Third Mission activities.
- Facilitating collaboration between academia, industry, and community organisations through targeted partnerships and knowledge transfer initiatives in line with local specificities and needs.
- Increasing the weight of 3M activities in the evaluation of the performance of staff, academia and students.

Long-term recommendations for Georgian partners include:

- Integrating Third Mission strategies into the overall institutional framework and strategic planning processes.
- Investing in dedicated 3M infrastructures to maximise the impact of 3M activities.
- Promoting a culture of social responsibility and engagement among students, faculty, and staff, emphasising the societal impact of their work.

By implementing these recommendations, Georgian universities can enhance their 3M activities, contribute to regional development, and strengthen their ties with the wider community.

Professors and faculty actually benefit from the third mission activities. Executive teaching programs, for entrepreneurs or knowledge transfer offices can provide the ground material and data for research, case studies, and publications that could later be used during the classes. However, some activities are done on the consultancy basis, carried individually by the professors with limited or inexistent support from the university. At the same time, professors do not always report it to the central office, leaving these activities below radar, which means that information on the beneficiaries, and their results might be lost.

In this document, partners from Portugal and Finland are sharing recommendations for the assessment, update, and execution of the strategic planning of the third mission from their own experience, and university. During the course of the project SQUARE, EFMD has also shared best practices on the third mission from its experience in international projects, and from its members. In this regard, it is important to note the similarities and the common challenges that Higher Education Institutions around the world are facing when dealing with the social engagement of the university, and their contribution to the development of the local environment. The experience of the Erasmus+ project IMPALA – Strengthening IMPAct in Latin American universities (2018 – 2022) was regularly presented to the Georgian partners, with the double objective of sharing the best practices to Georgian institutions, and encouraging the collaboration between HEIs from the two regions.

A Colombian partner from the project IMPALA has developed a database that includes the definition of the beneficiaries, the tasks, their location and time, and their budget of all 3rd mission activities, used by a department specifically in charge of the third mission activities, and able to properly monitor and evaluate them. This experience, presented in the *Best Practices on the Strategic Planning of the Third Mission, Experiences of the project IMPALA* (In Spanish), could bring inspiration in other national contexts, such as Georgia.

In a constantly changing world, with a new generation of students and entrepreneurs, with different expectations and capabilities, it is important to efficiently understand, report and adapt to this new audience. The different strategic analysis and mapping tools (SWOT or Porter) can be useful for the institution to understand the situation, and eventually better respond to the new challenges.

It is also important for universities to complete the activities of one another to better respond to the local challenges. Universities should find the platforms and forums to discuss altogether the evolution of this field, and share a common position to the public authorities. Conferences of rectors, international networks, and specialised platforms can be an excellent tool available to each institution.

The ministry and Quality Assurance agencies are also adapting to these new challenges and to the new world regulations. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and their translation into concrete, national objectives demonstrate the interest of the public authorities to encourage, and put legislation on the social engagement of the universities. In this respect, it is important to note the already proven experience of the universities in integrating, and adapting to the local challenges. National, and international legislation should be therefore used to further encourage this aspect, and not limit the scope, nor the reach of the third mission activities.

It is also important to continue with the reflection about the third mission, and its theoretical foundations. While teaching and research have been well conceptualised, the third mission is often split between community engagement, knowledge and technology transfers; each category with its own backgrounds, manifestations and regulations. The further reflection and discussions about permission will help other universities to develop the sector, learn from one another, and eventually better respond to global challenges.

SPECIAL POINTS OF CONSIDERATION:

1. It is crucial to engage in a continuous and transparent communication with key stakeholders about the needs, aims, opportunities and risks of its 3M strategic plan.
2. This strategic plan must be a vision of what the university aims to be and achieve in terms of social and economic value creation and has to include a set of initiatives and programs to help achieve that vision. This guiding document must be clear in terms of ambition, goals and implementation means, but sensitive to the context, concise and adaptable.
3. Given the financial constraints from the low public support of Higher Education, the request for additional budget to implement the strategic actions can be justified by the alignment of Universities' 3M with regional strategic priorities and by the need to invest in a quality higher education system that better serves the needs of society.
4. Change is the only constant thing in life: opportunities come and go, and the economy improves or degrades, sometime due to unpredictable internal or external factors. The Russian invasion of Ukraine and the set of events it triggered in our global economy, is just one example. It is therefore important to keep reviewing the 3M Strategic Plan.
5. Possible vehicles to 3M include, at institutional level, the development of a dedicated 'Value Creation Office', that promotes entrepreneurship and tech transfer to the business sector and manages the University's intellectual property. Externally, Georgian Universities could explore the possibility of partnering with other local academic institutions and public partners, to form collaborative associations or laboratories dedicated to thematic areas that constitute a key challenge for the government. . These areas will most certainly be related to Resource Management, Urban Planning, Sustainability and Environment, Health and Technology, Data and Security.
6. Put more efforts on the attractiveness of graduate education in order to stimulate high level knowledge and innovation.

7. Adjust study programs to become more labor market oriented and with a stronger employability focus.
8. Engage students and researchers in entrepreneurial and innovation activities aimed at solving pressing societal and business challenges, promoting the creation of new ventures anchored in knowledge and research produced at the university.
9. Meet with City Mayor, Regional and National Funding Bodies, and potential private donors to present the University projects for 3M: these projects must have a Knowledge Component and a Societal Impact Component. Support can be provided for different ends: in the form of land allocation, public or private funding, construction, or knowledge capacity.
10. Improve Alumni Relations for fundraising purposes and for the improvement of graduates' employability rate. Alumni are usually keen on supporting their Alma Mater, whether in donations or 'in kind', and enjoy feeling acknowledged for that support.
11. It is also very important to continue networking with other European institutions for knowledge exchange, joint research opportunities and access to additional funding.

CONCLUSIONS

This publication presented guidelines and best practices for Third Mission Activities Management and Evaluation especially in the Georgian higher education context, based on the experiences of the Square project consortium. The publication provided a comprehensive overview of the Square project, university 3rd mission, and their impact on the Georgian higher education system. From the results, it became evident that naturally the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia plays an active role in the strategic advancement of the university 3rd mission in Georgia. From the point of view of third mission in Georgia, the report lifted as one of the key avenues for future development the Education and Science Strategy. The newly adopted Education and Science Strategy emphasizes the importance of understanding and implementing the concept of the third mission in higher education institutions. Furthermore, it emphasizes the role of universities in addressing regional needs through teaching, research, and innovation. We also saw that stimulating measures on which the Ministry is working, such as a Performance-based Funding model covering 3M activities, teaching, and research activities reflects the strategic priorities of the government and further contributes to the progress in this sector of activity. Several practical examples and experiences illustrated the potential and importance for evaluating the effectiveness and societal relevance of 3M activities through using tools such as Impact Assessment Frameworks, SROI analysis, Outcome Mapping, and others. Furthermore, universities were seen to be able to benefit greatly from the possibility to collaborate with accreditation agencies like EFMD and AACSB, which are broadening their scope to assess the societal impact of universities and their engagement with stakeholders. Finally, as important lessons from the Square project, universities should lift the importance of stakeholder engagement, alignment with institutional strategies, and continuous evaluation and adaptation as crucial for the success of their 3M strategies. The short-term recommendations for Georgian universities include extending the inventory of 3M activities, building capacity, and facilitating collaboration, whereas the long-term recommendations include integration into institutional frameworks and promoting a culture of social responsibility.

This report emphasized the need for continuous reflection and adaptation to the evolving landscape of 3M activities, also underscoring the importance of precise identification of beneficiaries and resources. Collaboration with international partners, sharing best practices, and learning from experiences of other universities globally is seen as essential. Also encouraging interdisciplinary collaboration is recommended for addressing complex societal challenges effectively. Furthermore, there is a great need today and in the future for universities to adapt to changing global and local contexts, such as geopolitical events like the Russian invasion of Ukraine. It was seen as important to also take into account the significant role of national and international legislation in encouraging and supporting the social engagement of universities.

In summary, the Square project, in conjunction with Georgian universities, the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia, the National Center of Educational Quality Enhancement of Georgia, and the participating EU partners drove significant advancements in the understanding and implementation of the third mission in Georgian higher education. The project's outcomes, along with the strategies and tools recommended, provide a robust foundation for universities to enhance their societal impact and engagement. The editors of the guide would like to express warmest gratitude to all the partners of the Square project: ATSU, BSU, CNAM, CU, EFMD, ISU, MoES, NCEQE, NOVA, TSMU, TSU, UTU, and all the other stakeholders that have participated in the activities of the project. Without you, the realization of the guide would have not been possible.

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