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Capacity-Building projects in the field of Higher Education

Raising Research Capacity of Georgian HEIs through Developing R&D Units / HERD

HERD Steering Committee Meeting

On June 24, 2019 in frames of the HERD project, Tbilisi State Medical University (TSMU) hosted HERD Steering Committee Meeting involving representatives from various Georgian and HERD International partner universities. Human and material resources, risk possibilities and project implementation phases were discussed at the meeting. Representatives from different universities presented their presentations about the research outcomes of the project. Participants of the meeting asserted quality control mechanisms and media communication strategy of the project. The newsletter presents the Short description of the outcomes of the SC meeting.

Needs Assessment Report Findings and Institutional Needs Assessment and Good Practice Review



Report provides an overview of main challenges related to research management in higher education institutions in Georgia. It is expected to inform the process of devising subsequent activities in the frame of the project. While serving specific project-related goals, the findings of the report also outline general challenges in the area of research management in higher education and provide insights for policy planning and evaluation. It is no exaggerated to say that a new "research management profession" emerges, along with its own professional organizations, means of communication and guidelines, and this implies a new allocation of tasks and responsibilities among individual researchers, departments and institutions.

Report incorporated the views expressed by the HERD consortium members - 12 local higher education institutions. Together, the members of the consortium represent up to 82% of Georgian research capacity in all major fields of science and the ideas and concerns they express reflect the diversity of profiles, sizes and locations that is found in Georgian higher education. Another source of information that was used for this report is the review of recent policy documents, studies and evaluation reports on higher education and research in Georgia. Finally, this report also incorporates good practices from partner European universities.

Main findings and conclusions

Optimizing scarce human and material resources and creating effective inter-organizational linkages is an important task to increase productivity, efficiency and visibility of research in Georgia. Successfully accomplishing this task requires a stronger capacity for research coordination and management within and across higher education institutions.



Project Quality Control Plan

The Quality Control Plan (QCP) is an integral part of the project and aims to ensure that objectives are met in the most effective way. It also defines the general approach to quality control, internal and external evaluation and the procedures to be followed by the partners for effective communication as well as production and documentation of the Project deliverables.



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The document outlines the strategy for how the quality control mechanisms will be applied so that the operational, management and working procedures are comprehensively monitored and improved throughout the project duration.

The QCP contains a set of scheduled activities and defines the objectives, roles and responsibilities. The QCP includes established indicators, methodology and procedures for evaluation of project activities and results. For each task it determines the responsible partner(s), timeframe and tools of implementation, the expected results or products, as well as the respective quality criteria.

All Higher Education Institutions involved in HERD project stress the importance of cooperation and information exchange among HEIs for achieving progress in the following five directions:

1. Diversify the forms of academic cooperation within and across HEIs;
2. Strengthen links with external partners;
3. Contribute to setting national and institutional research priorities;
4. Improve human resources management in research;
5. Introduce a result-based management system and a shared information portal.

The report underlines the importance of synchronizing and consolidating HEI efforts in three main directions:

1. Creating adaptive networks of formal and informal units involved in research, in order to improve communication within academia and with external stakeholders for better planning and coordination;
2. Strengthening support processes to university-based research through introducing need-based capacity building programs for researchers;
3. Building a strong information base on research performance and resources for informed decision making.

Media Communication Strategy

The Media Communication Strategy outlines the key messages, the target audience and the mechanisms and activities related to facilitating the dissemination of information such as the project website (in Georgian and summaries in English) with an internal section only for partners, Facebook/Twitter social network, project brochure (in English and Georgian), press releases, press articles, interviews on TV and radio, international and local e-newsletters, movie-documentary on the project that documents the main project phases and the final capstone conference (Batumi, Georgia).



Media Communication Strategy integrates four main activities:

1. Media Communication Strategy;
2. HERD project website;
3. Promotional materials;
4. Capstone conference.



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Taking into consideration that the HERD project will have an impact on various stakeholders at the individual, institutional, national and international levels, the Media Communication Strategy focuses on the following target groups:

- Academics and researchers in target universities;
- Universities and research units;
- Policy actors;
- International partners and donor organizations;
- Private sector;
- Public;
- Media.

The HERD Media Communication Strategy within the partners and towards external users will support all of the other work packages making use of the following channels, tools and materials:

- Media engagement and dissemination events;
- Social media;
- Project promotional materials;
- HERD Project Website;
- HERD Partner Communication Channels.

Overview of the HERD Training in Research and Development strategy based on the shared experience from the UCA, Batumi, 26-28 of June, 2019



On June 26-28, one of the project partners, Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University hosted a three-days training within the framework of HERD project. The representatives of University of Côte d'Azur (UCA) shared their experience by using six step training, based on a participatory approach. During the workshop, several key points of the Research & Development strategy were discussed: purpose, structure, objectives, steps that are typically undertaken while building the research strategy.



Special focus was on the importance of building an R&D strategy that requires participatory approach to mobilize all assets to address social and economic challenges and foster better cooperation of academic and public sector. During the workshop was discussed UCA experience of regrouping of Higher Education Institutions within the framework of IDEX program and the selection of the limited number of the Campuses of Excellence. Presenters provide useful information about building the transdisciplinary graduate schools with linkage to public-private partnerships, research-based trainings, consultancy and UCA's technological transfer offices.





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The workshop hours were actively used for identifying the HERD project partners' R&D experience and reflection on their disciplinary research potentials, transdisciplinary research, organizational considerations regarding the research-based training, research-oriented industry, capacity building activities for empower and support young researchers, internationalization, to improve research staff management via training; overall policy and processes - technology transfer, incentive mechanisms, HR policies, etc;

The last topic of the workshop was Partnerships: contacts with European laboratories, MOU with other Higher Education Institutions, etc. In the end of the workshop HERD consortium members discussed priorities and details of their study visit in Nice, at the UNS on the beginning of October, 2019.

