

1st NEWSLETTER

Master: European Innovations for a Sustainable Management of Albanian Territories, Rural Areas and Agriculture: Instruments, policies, strategies

**SMARTAL IS AN ERASMUS + CAPACITY BUILDING
IN HIGHER EDUCATION PROJECT FOCUSING ON:**

- 1** Strengthening the linkages between universities and job providing institutions
- 2** Improving the theoretical and practical knowledge of students
- 3** Offering innovative teaching tools and methodologies
- 4** Consolidating synergy among Albanian universities
- 5** Creating 9 teaching modules at executive and professional master level

WHAT DOES SMARTAL STAND FOR?

The objective of this Erasmus+ / capacity building project, funded partly by European funds, is to create a series of Master-Level Training Modules (Executive Master, doctoral courses) in line with the European specifications and focused on the theme of sustainable management of Albanian Rural Territories. Among the activities forecasted are a job market review & a training needs analysis; a booklet of didactic materials; 9 module description syllabi; teachers capacity building for modules co-conception. The main objective is declined in several specific objectives:

1. Strengthen the linkages between the universities and job provider institutions at central and local level.
2. Improve the theoretical and practical knowledge of master's students on territory administration, agricultural policies, rural development and innovation as well as their negotiation and participative decision-making skills.
3. Design at least 9 shared specific teaching modules filling the gap between the existing offer and the market job needs.
4. Offer to Albanian teaching staff innovative tools and methodologies.
5. Improve the matching of academic requirements with professional needs during the practical internship period.
6. Consolidate collaboration among Albanian Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and create synergies and complementarities among the study programs they provide to their own audience.
7. Develop a long term blended research network of EU and Albania researchers on these thematic.
8. Collaborate to the capacity building and generational renewal of Albanian University staff.

WHO ARE THE PARTNERS?

Lead partner

Centre International de Hautes Etudes Agronomiques Méditerranéennes- Institut Agronomique Méditerranéen de Montpellier - CIHEAM-IAMM (France).



Partners

Fan S Noli University Korçë - UNKO (Albania)
University of Hohenheim - UHOH (Germany)
European University of Tirana - UET (Albania)
Agricultural University of Tirana - UBT (Albania)
Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences - UPSPS (Greece)
University Paul Valéry Montpellier - UPV (France)

Associated partners:

Network for Rural Development (Albania)
Ministry of Education and Sports (Albania)
Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development And Water Administration(Albania)
Ministry of Urban development (Albania)
Korçë Regional Council (Albania)



Project duration: 2017-2020
Total EU Grant: 758 308 EUR



Kick-off Meeting of SmartAl project, CIHEAM-Montpellier, 30 November- 1 December 2017

PROJECT EVENTS:

Kick off meeting- SmartAL: the project starts operating!

In the premises of the CIHEAM-IAMM, leading partner of the project, from 29 November to 1 December 2017. Throughout the kick of meeting, the project partners worked intensively to shape and agree on the next steps of this three-year Erasmus+ CBHE Capacity Building project. Discussions were held on the main objectives of the projects, the timeline and the governance organization. The administrative and financial aspects were developed



throughout the design of a manual of goods practices in order to launch the management of the project without delay and in the best way possible.

Concertation Meeting with Albanian Stakeholders

SmartAL Erasmus+ CBHE project organized its concertation meeting on 28th of January 2018, with different public and private stakeholders in Albania, working in the field of territorial management and rural development. The meeting, organized by the European University of Tirana, as the leader of Work Package 1 (WP1) envisaged the presentation of market research findings, project details and discussions and inputs with stakeholders. Local stakeholders and representatives of Albanian Development Fund, Ministry of Agricultural and Rural Development, Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy, Municipality of Tirana, as well as several academics were engaged in a fruitful discussion about needs assessment of the labor market and curricula development of the future master.

First Design Workshop

The First Design Workshop of the SmartAL project, was held on 15 & 16 March 2018 in Korça, Albania.

The Workshop was organized by and in the premises of the "FAN S. NOLI" University in Korça, with the participation of the partners from Agricultural University of Tirana - UBT, European University of Tirana, Panteion University of social and political Sciences, University of Paul Valéry under the coordination of CIHEAM-IAMM.

The workshop aimed at taking stock of the first works carried out, and that will be essential for the continuation of the project: the Job Market Review, a study that states the needs in terms of competency of the future employers in rural Albanian territories, as well as the Benchmarking Study, which objective is to identify the training offer existing in the European Universities and to determine how it can contribute to the building of the future Master in a relevant way.

Moreover, the Workshop was also the occasion for the University Paul Valéry Montpellier – a new partner in the consortium – to back up the Quality Assurance, an essential component of the project, with the Agricultural University of Tirana. The Quality Assurance will have to optimise the efficiency of the teaching modules, their matching to European and Albanian standards in a view to enable the accreditation of the Master, as well as the project's quality plan as a whole. Establishing a first draft curriculum of



Concertation Meeting, European University of Tirana, 20 January 2018

the Master and validating the teacher twinning program as well as the teacher's capacity plan.

Prof. Dr. Ali Jashari, Rector of the University "Fan S. Noli" Korçë, declared that "the project is important and interesting for the University of Korçë as well as for a region in which agricultural development is a priority". Magali Maire, Coordinator of the project at the CIHEAM-IAMM, after thanking the Rector for his warm welcome, underlined at this stage "her confidence in the project because of the strong commitment of the consortium members for the creation of a Master's degree which will have to answer the needs in terms of employability of young people in Albanian rural territories".

First Design Workshop, University "Fan Noli", Korça, 15-16 March 2018-16 March 2018





2nd International Conference -ICOALS, Agricultural University of Tirana, 7-9 May 2018

RELATED EVENTS

2nd International Conference on Agriculture and Life Sciences "ICOALS"

The Agricultural University of Tirana organized the second edition of International Conference on Agriculture and Life Sciences (ICOALS) 2018, from 7th to 9th May, 2018. ICOALS is one of the leading international conferences in the Western Balkans for presenting novel and fundamental advances in the fields of Agriculture and Life Sciences. It also serves to foster communication among researchers and practitioners working in a wide variety of scientific areas with a common interest in improving Agriculture and Life Sciences related issues. Magali Maire, the SmartAL Project coordinator (CIHEAM - IAMM) attended the International Conference by making a presentation on "the Optimization of the youth employment in Albania by designing a Master in European Innovations for a Sustainable Management of Albanian Territories, rural areas and agriculture."

Europe Day: SmartAL as a success story!

On the occasion of Europe day on 9 May 2018, the European Union Delegation to Albania organized the EU village. The aim of the event was to promote EU values and success stories from different realms of life. In the section of Higher Education, SmartAL was presented as one of the success stories from Albania, funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union. Albanian students and interested experts will have the possibility to study within an innovative master on territorial management that promotes sustainable development.



First Design Workshop, University "Fan Noli", Korça, 15-16 March 2018-16 March 2018

SMARTAL MILESTONES

Job Market Review

SmartAL takes pride in consolidating the Job Market Review. Since 2013, Albania is going through a process of structural reforms on several directions. Among these reforms two are directly linked with the objective of the SmartAL project and the aim of this job market review. Firstly, the reform on territory administration (Law 115/2014) considerably reduced the number of the local units from more than a thousand to 64 municipalities. Both rural and urban areas constitute new larger and more complex territorial units. The local and central administration has a limited knowledge on a holistic vision of sustainable territory administration of both rural and urban areas and their interactions. The results show some diversification of the level of proficiency required, between the different profiles. Hence, the results allow reclassifying the skills. The distribution of skills is rather close between profiles. This confirms that the set of profiles does refer to the same family of skills and competencies and those professionals should be able to move from one profile to the other all along their career. Incidentally, it justifies that a single curriculum (possibly with optional) could address all the professional profiles identified here. Project Management and Impact Assessment are more required for the Project Managers, Administrators and Data Managers. Data Management is almost as important for each of the profiles who are strongly connected with data for realizing their tasks. All of them need to have coherent data for finding solutions of the problematic. Some of the most important recommendations can be summarized in here. The multidisciplinary of territory management raises the need to adapt the education



Europe Day event by EU Delegation to Albania, Tirana, 9 May 2018

ONGOING ACTIVITIES

- The List of Modules has been finalized in July 2018.
- The pairs of Albanian and European teachers have been constituted in order to start the co building of each module. (July - August 2018)
- The organization of the Albanian teachers mobilities to the identified European Universities that will start in September 2018.
- SmartAL will publish information on the website which includes the description of curricula, twinning between teachers and the innovative methodologies to be used during this master. (September 2018).

programmes to the upcoming issues because of the Acquis, Albania EU integration, and the new territorial reform. The multidisciplinary is required in both central and local level. The access to Eu funds and the possibility to absorb need more training on EU policies, project writing skills, innovation and soft skills.

Benchmark report

The Benchmark report on training is now consolidated. Benchmarking with appropriate partners, at a national or international level, enables a University to compare and evaluate its performance and, in so doing, monitor standards, compare good practice and quality. Benchmarking enables the structured sharing of ideas and good practices on institutional strengths and weaknesses (Burquel, 2014).

The main objective of the study is to identify, among a chosen sample of a minimum of 30 European Universities (EU + Switzerland + non EU Balkans) formal post graduate trainings (individual courses available in continuous education, full MScs, professional Masters and PhDs).

Manual of Good Administrative and Financial Practices

The Manual was provided by the Coordinator to each Partner giving all relevant procedures and information for a smooth administrative and financial management of the SmartAL project. The manual is considered as a good practice from the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency of European Commission.

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