



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

Project Management (Work Package 8)

The main objective of WP8 is to ensure the overall administrative and financial management of the project as well as the coordination and stimulation of all WP. WP8 is an overarching WP designed to support all the activities of the project. In particular by ensuring the smooth exchange of administrative and financial information and data, WP8 will guaranty that the resources are made available on time to each WP leader for them to implement their tasks as foreseen.

IMPORTANT ACHIEVEMENTS:

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 Nearly 400 to 61 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 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. The multidisciplinary approach of territory management raises the need to adapt the education programmes to the upcoming issues because of the Acquis Communautaire, Albania's 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 them needs 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 make 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) in the following disciplines (classified by domains):

1. Environmental Economics and Natural Resources Management
2. Territorial development
3. Agricultural and rural policies
4. Tools for monitoring and evaluation: collection of data, management of data, qualitative and quantitative data management
5. Project Management and Evaluation

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



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?

SmartAL is an Erasmus+ Capacity Building project lead by CIHEAM-IAMM, Montpellier and funded by the European Commission. The three-year project is envisaged to operate in Albanian Universities by bringing in the experience of European partners. The main objective of the project is to address the new identified job market needs induced by the new and forthcoming public policies in Albania. Some of the envisaged activities are job market review & training needs analysis; booklet of didactic materials; 9 module description fiches; Teachers Capacity building for modules co-conception; quality assurance.

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 the 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.

WORKING PACKAGES AND DELIVERABLES

Evaluate job market demand, identify training gaps, Benchmark best offers (Work Package 1)

Led by UET and with the active collaboration of all Partners, studies have been carried out to evaluate the actual and future job market, define graduates' training needs, compare them with the existing training offer (in Albania and EU) and thus define initial and vocational training gaps. A study is produced in order to fine-tune the modules' objectives in line with the demand identified in the job market. A concertation meeting with the main potential employers has been organized in January 2018 in Tirana, in order to validate and improve the results.

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: 760 000 EUR

SmartAL iterative design (Work Package 2)

WP1 results help to adjust the focus of the master concerning the modules that will be included. The objectives of this WP2 are to translate training gaps into 9 modules, with a high degree of professional anchoring: each module will be constructed in building blocks for different level of competences (professional and executive master level) in order to be easily used by each of the Albanian universities and match better to their training offer.

- Organize and monitor the overall design process, to ensure a good integration of knowledge and experience acquired throughout the development phase. Three workshops are to be organised all along the project to adjust the content of each module and their constitutive building blocks with all Partners.



Concertation Meeting, European University of Tirana - 20 January 2018

- Identify the teachers and their specific training needs, and organize their capacity building

The curriculum design will be iterative.

Teachers' capacity building for modules co-conception (Work Package 3)

The objective of this WorkPackage is to organise both the content and the logistic of the Albanian teachers' capacity building, giving them the required skills to conceive the different modules of Smart AL.

- Based on the Teacher Capacity Building Plan validated during the First Design Workshop and updated during the Intermediary Design Workshop, nine Albanian teachers will benefit from both theoretical and practical capacity building sessions in European Universities. They will acquire an EU referential in the field of territory administration, agricultural development, and environmental policies.
- Based on this shared referential, and in close collaboration with the EU Partner co-responsible of the module, they will conceive and adjust the content of each module.

Foster SmartAL development through fieldwork and research (Work Package 4)

The objective of this WP is to anchor each Module in practical experience, and to adapt the common EU referential in the field of territorial administration, agricultural development and environmental tools, to the specificities of the Albanian context. In parallel to SmartAL development and implementation, this WP will organize different activities, supervised by the pairs of EU-Albanian teachers responsible for each Module, in order to increase necessary professional competencies and reflexive content of both teachers and students. Their practical experience and thus their employability are hence increased.

These activities consist in joint practical internships, dissemination conferences, PhD internships, training mobility and doctoral seminars. The practical internships will be organized in collaboration with the central and local associated partners.

Implementation of the SmartAL Master and related modules (Work Package 5)

This WP will focus on strengthening the implementation of the SmartAL Master as an executive master and the related modules in the respective professional masters of UET and UNKO. It will pursue two main aims :

1. to test through implementation the pedagogical formulas and module contents
 2. to ensure the professional anchor of the Modules: organization of professional internships, and professional events for the Master students.
- This WP will cover two academic years, allowing refining and strengthening both contents and teaching methods. Thanks to the WP2 activities, the second implementation



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

year will integrate lessons learned from the first one, as well as, research and field work inputs (WP4).

Quality assurance framework (Work Package 6)

Two level of quality assurance will be used throughout the entire project duration:

- Quality assurance of the whole project: the aim is to assure the compliance of the project processes and results with the standards agreed among the Partners (identified indicators of progress), and to implement a continuous quality monitoring.
- Quality assurance of the 9 Modules: the Albanian HEIs have to follow a well defined procedure for the quality assurance. HEIs should build up internal quality bodies and respect the quality procedures foreseen by the existing Public Standard. A better quality assurance framework reflecting the Albanian public standards requests, and integrating best Albanian and EU practices will be set up.

Visibility of the SmartAL Master (Work Package 7)

The dissemination and exploitation strategy enables SmartAL project to optimize its outcomes and impacts (including both theory and methodological processes and educational teaching/material). Dissemination will be an integral part of each activity of the project. This WP activity supports the following objectives :

- Provide information about the achievement of the project
- Increase the impact of the project
- Maintain and create contacts with stakeholders of the project
- Generate new partnership
- Create a platform to ensure sustainable dissemination of the project outcomes

Dissemination and exploitation strategy will be achieved through the creation of a website, Open House Days, Two conferences, several ongoing promotional campaigns on our social media pages and the creation of an Alumni Association.