



DRIVE DEVELOPING RESEARCH AND INNOVATION CAPACITIES IN ALBANIA AND KOSOVO

RISS regulation, Job description, Strategy & Action plan POLIS University

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1. POLIS' Vision and Mission

The vision

The vision of POLIS University is to provide excellence in the education of professionals and scientific researchers capable of addressing the needs of the market and society in areas of interest at home and abroad. POLIS has the following main objectives:

- to provide students with professional leadership qualities in areas covered by it, in order to exert influence for a positive development of the country and the region;
- to provide students with theoretical knowledge and practical skills according to the highest contemporary standards, aiming their integration in the domestic and international labor market;
- to carry out study, research, scientific and practical activities closely related to its respective academic activities and research programs;
- to serve innovation in areas where it extends its activity and influence developments in the region regarding these areas.
- POLIS aims to become a regional platform and reference point in the Balkans and the Adriatic and Ionian region.

The Mission

The mission of POLIS University is focused on activities of education, scientific and applied research, as well as innovation in its areas of interest.

The fundamental objectives of POLIS University mission are:

- to create, develop, transmit and protect knowledge through teaching, scientific and applied research as well as innovation;

- to educate top specialists and prepare young scientists in the fields of design, architecture and engineering, sciences of territory, management and policy development;
- to deliver diploma studies at the Professional level, Bachelor's, Master's and Doctorate in the areas stated above;
- to offer the possibility of vocational training and lifelong learning
- to integrate teaching with research;
- to contribute through education, scientific and applied research as well as innovation in the economic, social and cultural development of the country;
- to contribute for the internationalization of higher education and science in the country through regional, European and international cooperation.

In line with this vision and mission, POLIS Roadmap for network tries to integrate in a single and comprehensive document, important aspects of the institution's partnerships.



2. Research Strategy

In pursuit of its mission to create, develop, transmit and protect knowledge, technology and leadership for development and innovation, in the next four years (2022-2026) U_POLIS envisages itself becoming an institution enjoying international reputation for innovative research cutting across disciplinary boundaries, measured after national and international standards. POLIS researchers, organized in groups working to accomplish joint ends, will intensify their engagement in collaborations and partnerships locally, regionally and globally to produce theoretical and applied research that addresses major social, economic and environmental challenges of national and international importance.

To this end, the following strategic objectives have been agreed:

- Establishment and operationalization of research pillars.
- Fostering group research culture.
- Innovation Factory (IF) serving the WB region and acting as a center of research and innovation
- Linking scientific research with externally funded projects.
- Producing state-of-the-art research outputs.
- Maintaining a sound balance between locally and internationally-oriented research outcomes.
- Creating and sustaining a research image communicating our research culture.

POLIS University aims for an international reputation for innovative research, measured after national and international standards. POLIS research cuts across disciplinary boundaries, its researchers actively engaging in collaborations and partnerships locally, regionally and globally to produce theoretical and applied research that addresses major social, economic and environmental challenges of national and international importance.

2.1 IF Strategic Objectives

1. Establishment & Operationalization of Research Pillars; Promoting interdisciplinary, theoretical and applied research and innovation, as well as the establishment and cooperation of research groups.
2. Fostering a Group-Research Culture; A group culture in research at U_POLIS, so that all of the following research types are developed in a balanced fashion:
3. Incremental research: A build-up from a recent paper which pushes the paper's contribution even further.
4. Foundational research: An introduction of a new concept paving interesting new research avenues.
5. Pathbreaking: A major advancement is achieved by solving an open problem or demonstrating it has no solution.
6. Linking Scientific Research with Externally Funded Projects; Where appropriate, externally-funded projects will support a variety of research activities, such as conducting pilot projects, developing research instruments, collecting primary data, or analyzing secondary data.
7. Creating and Maintaining a State-of-the-Art Research Infrastructure; Within this strategy's implementation, U_POLIS shall identify the necessary resources for its Library and IT Office to be able to support the expanded research agenda of the university in line with the budgetary provisions of the university.

2.2 Internationalization of Research

The ambition of POLIS University when it comes to research is to go beyond the local scale and produce research of international relevance and impact.

Objectives and KPIs

- Creative and innovative research through international networking to be one of the most innovative and research-oriented universities in the region.
- Allocate university resources more efficiently and create new ones in order to involve the POLIS community in international research projects.
- Publishing in high quality and high impact journals.
- Increase the number and visibility of international conferences organized and hosted by POLIS
- Incorporate global topics and concerns into the research agenda.
- Strengthening on international visibility of the research outputs.

3. Digitalization Strategy

3.1 In the academic field

Objective in the field of academia: The whole academic offer of U-Polis is adopted to accommodate Digital Learning (DL) as an integral part.

The implementation of this objective includes:

- The adaptation of the curriculum to fit with DL approach. U-Polis will create the Digital Library for all the programs it offers (Modules, syllabuses, lectures, exercises, practices, illustrations, etc.) and provides them integrated with teaching in the auditorium or alternatively through DL;
- Preparing and training students for a digital world of work, or for a digital age, which means that any U-Polis academic program includes education of the necessary Digital Skills;
- Increasing the level of internationalization of the academic offer through joint programs; common digital modules and mini-modules; input of online lectures by foreign professors; export of online lectures by the U-Polis professor; digital "mobility" of students; digital teaching literature; etc.;
- Increasing the quality of teaching
- Learning flexibility;
- Individualization of learning;
- Increasing the success rate of students in studies

3.2 In the field of scientific research

Objective: POLIS research activity is further expanded using the advantages that Digitalization offers, especially in the internationalization of U-Polis research.

The realization of this objective includes:

- Utilization in the scale of digitalization for the conception, preparation and application, and implementation of research and development projects;
- Large-scale usage for dissemination and publication of the results of U-Polis research projects in national and international periodical scientific activities and bodies;
- Innovation Factory actively engaging in the international network of related actors
- Full digitalization of the international doctoral school and its scientific products;
- Utilization of digitalization to increase the role of U-Polis in organizing national and international scientific activities (congresses, conferences, symposiums, etc.)
- Utilizing digitalization to empower U-Polis's role as a leader in scientific in the main areas of its competence.



3.3 In the field of U-Polis' "Third Mission"

Objective: The activity of U-Polis and Innovation Factory, Co-Plan / Metro-Polis, in the field of knowledge transfer, technology and innovation is expanded and strengthened through Digitalization.

These mainly include:

- Short-term digital training;
- Digital professional training courses;
- Digital *Long Life Learning* Courses;
- Digital professional training for technicians;
- Activities of development projects;
- Seminars and conferences on development issues in the areas of competence with the municipalities / regions of Albania, Kosovo, Montenegro and Republic of North Macedonia;
- Digitalization of development projects in all their stages;
- Digitization of all the information produced by U-Polis and Co-Plan for interested groups in areas of competence;
- Utilization of digitalization for the completion until full certification of post-secondary level professional training acquired through non-formal and informal learning.

3.4 In the operation and management of U-Polis.

Objective: The entire activity of the operation and management of U-Polis is digitalized

- Digitalization of UP operation and management includes:
- Upgrading and modernization of network infrastructure (Intranet, etc);
- Upgrading the U-Polis academic administration;
- Updating the administration functions and the respective offices as a whole;
- Digitalization of the U-Polis library



4. RISS regulation

Research is an essential function of the University, as the foundation of teaching and a means for the progress of society. For this reason, the POLIS University has a series of structures that facilitate this work, represented by Innovation Factory as one of the most important structures for the institution in this regard. The main objective of these structures is to organize, develop and evaluate basic and applied research programs. They also collaborate with the rest of the University and with society by providing technical advice and promoting scientific updating, pedagogical renewal and permanent training. The research support structures, which share functions with the institutes, differ from these in that they can be created by the University, shared with other universities or entities or even simply linked to the University through an agreement.

4.1 IF and other innovation support structures at POLIS University

INNOVATION Factory Makerspace at POLIS University, is the newest innovation-based space in Albania. Equipped with the most advanced machine in the field of digital prototyping, process automation, coding, etc., the laboratory already offers consulting services, as well as prototype development and digital fabrication for the entire start-ups' ecosystem in Albania. The project has been realized thanks to the cooperation between the Challenge Fund project (organized by eu4Innovation) and POLIS University.

Below is given the list of the research and innovation support structures within the institution. Innovation Factory definitely stand as one with the greatest impact among POLIS community and in national level at the same time.

IF (Innovation Factory) - The first FabLab in Albania, a space dedicated to research and innovation near Polis University which has started its activity from May, 2017. During the last years, this space has managed to provide Albanian startups with consulting services, as well as opportunities for prototype development and digital fabrication.

Other research and innovation structures within the institution include;

- POLIS Makerspace – A Digital fabrication, prototyping and 3D printing lab
- Energy Lab – energy efficiency and energy auditing
- Sust-Lab – environmental tests (primarily water, but also soil and air)
- Art Gallery “Gëzim Qëndro”
- Polis-Press – the publishing unit
- International journals - “Forum A+P” and “WBinTG”
- *Tirana Inc.* - a multi-university incubation program for startups (in coalition 4 other Albanian Universities supported by EU4Innovation and Preneurz. Amsterdam). POLIS University is a co-founder among other private and public universities in Albania.
- Co-Plan- Institute for Habitat Development (research in city sciences, territory and good governance)

Metro-POLIS Studio ltd – an architecture design practice whose work is mainly focused on:

- Establishment and operationalization of research pillars.
- Fostering group research culture.
- Linking scientific research with externally funded projects.
- Producing state-of-the-art research outputs.
- Maintaining a sound balance between locally and internationally- oriented research outcomes.
- Creating and sustaining a research image communicating our research culture.

4.2 Linking Scientific Research with Externally Funded Projects

Where appropriate, externally-funded projects will support a variety of research activities, such as conducting pilot projects, developing research instruments, collecting primary data, or analyzing secondary data.

4.3 Producing state-of-the-art research outputs

As bad research papers become liability and show messy research and lack of developmental research strategy, it is recognized that research outputs should be assessed on the basis of internationally accepted research quality indicators (researchers, international conferences, *FORUM A+P*).

Hence, for the purpose of assessing journals, U_POLIS utilizes two international journal indexes. Journals included in SCOPUS, Elsevier's abstract and citations database, are recognized as good venues for good-quality-standards research output. For high-quality-standards research output U_POLIS encourages faculty to publish in Clarivate Analytics' ranked journals with impact factor. For monographs and book chapters, U_POLIS encourages faculty to publish with publishers ranked at Tiers A to C in the SENSE ranking scale. Considering that U_POLIS operates in Albania, whose higher education area it tries to upgrade, researchers are also to be actively encouraged to contribute to the development of research within Albania and the West Balkans. To this end, U_POLIS will continue to support participation in conferences and will also take into account paper, chapters and monographs publications within Albania and the region. It should monitor, however, so that a sound balance between locally and internationally-oriented research output be maintained.

4.4 Creating and Maintaining a State-of-the-Art Research Infrastructure

Within the first two years of its strategy's implementation, U_POLIS shall identify the resources for its Library and IT Office to be able to support the expanded research agenda of the university in line with the budgetary provisions of the university.

4.5 Job description for the position of Research Head

The director of research and innovation within the University will be in charge of directing and coordinating the activities related to the analysis and development of the university's research activities. The head of research is required to bring a wide range of applied research expertise, a good understanding of the research and innovation policies and a consolidated background in national and/or regional project management.

The main tasks of this job position would include:

- Plan, direct and coordinate research and innovation activities to create procedures, products, knowledge or ways of using new or improved materials.
- Plan the general research and development program of the university, define the goals of the projects and set their budgets.

- Direct and manage the activities of research and development staff.
- Coordinate and control the development of projects in external research centers, supervising deadlines, costs and quality.
- Establish and manage budgets, control expenses and ensure the efficient use of resources.
- Establish and direct operational and administrative procedures.
- Plan and organize the daily work/activities.
- Control the selection, training and performance of staff.
- Determine the objectives, programs and calendar of the university's innovation strategy.

The university's R&D department carries out actions related to updating the university's existing products, as well as the development and evaluation of new research actions and activities. This professional has to be up to date with market trends in order to detect new opportunities for the institution. The head of Research has to collaborate with the other departments within the university in order to be able to properly study the needs related to productive innovation. This professional would also be in charge of other technical professionals in R&D.

4.5.1 Skills and abilities

The head of research would also be required to possess the following skills and abilities:

- Initiative
- Interest in innovation
- Creativity
- Analytical and synthetic capacity
- Team leadership skills
- Good communication
- Flexibility

- Project management skills
- Capacity for teamwork

This professional must have basic training in the field of project management, innovation or science, and also other complementary training to help him/her manage projects or teams.

5. Action Plan

Calendar Month	Calendar Year	ACTION	KPI/s	Structure in charge
<i>Jan-July</i>	2022	2022-2023 startups which have passed the “incubation” phase will join the “Acceleration” plan	Established pipeline with other actors (Tirana Inc, Uplift, etc.) No of start-ups registered in acceleration programs	Innovation Factory (IF)
<i>Sep-Dec</i>	2022	Business model and 2022 developed activities	Validate financial forecast (profit / loss ratio); Willingness to pay for services Proven impact model	Head of Research (IF) Head of Finance (POLIS)

<i>Dec 2022</i> <i>Dec 2023</i>	2022-2023	Evaluation and critical reflections regarding the real and expected results from short term period	Active Users Survival metrics Burning rate (proportion of supported businesses that are still operational after a certain period since receiving support)	Innovation Factory (IF)
<i>Ongoing</i>	2022-2023	Additive manufacturing	Production Volume; Total Effective Equipment Performance	Innovation Factory (IF)
<i>Ongoing</i>	2022-2023	Host and support research in Sustainability and circular economy; Material research; Reverse engineering in the field of heritage and restoration; IoT solutions and Smart Systems; virtual/augmented reality	No of Users No of Projects No of Papers Research Impact	Innovation Factory (IF) IF staff
<i>Ongoing</i>	2022-2025	Capacity building	No of Trained Staff	IF staff
<i>Ongoing</i>	2022-2025	Cooperation with other ecosystem	No of MoUs Joint activities	IF staff

		actors		
<i>Jan-Aug</i>	2022-2025	Participate in research projects	No of Applications No of Winning Projects Amount of funds generated	POLIS & IF staff
<i>Ongoing</i>	2022-2025	Joining the FABLAB International Network	Acceptance Interest rate	Innovation Factory (IF) IF staff
<i>Ongoing</i>	2023-2025	Engage in global value chains; Tech Transfer	No of contractors Amount of funds generated	Innovation Factory (IF)
<i>Jan-Dec</i>	2025	Tech Transfer	Attract and retain primary actors in the field, Secure private and public funding.	Innovation Factory (IF) POLIS

References

1. POLIS University, Development Strategy 2021-2026
2. Statute of the POLIS University

