



# DRIVE DEVELOPING RESEARCH AND INNOVATION CAPACITIES IN ALBANIA AND KOSOVO

## **Establish a Roadmap and Calendar of Activities for the Research Network**

**European University of Tirana**

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*EUT Vision: To be a leading university in knowledge enhancement in Albanian society, a centre of excellence in the academic education of our students, a centre of specialized expertise in socio-political, economic, law, education, and information technology fields of study in Albania, influential in the region and beyond, as well as a centre of excellence for scientific research in all fields of study it has advantage<sup>1</sup>.*

## 1. Introduction

The European University of Tirana (EUT) was founded in 2006, by a group of lecturers (Albanian and foreign), journalists, experienced managers, in both the public and private sector of higher education. The aim was to both respond to the market demands, as well as to establish a high-quality institution that would offer an alternative model of education of the highest standards, different from the existing traditional models. Very soon EUT became one of the most prominent private universities in Albania, in terms of the number of students, quality of academic staff employed, and its active engagement in the public debate.

As regards its main priorities, EUT is highly committed in:

- *Teaching and learning:* provide students with high-quality education, to enable their successful integration in the labour market and their contribution to the society.
- *Scientific research:* intensify collaboration with other universities, industries, and institutions, in Albania and abroad, to conduct research work that provides researched answers to real-world problems that our society faces, advancing knowledge, innovation and creativity.
- *Staff development and Student life:* continue its tradition of hiring professional staff, with strong research and teaching potential and provide their professional development through staff development trainings, inside and outside the institution. As regards students, EUT intends to increase their participation in decision-making processes, in research and extracurricular activities, as well as their contribution in social business activities, social aid, civil society contribution, and civic engagement, among other things.
- *Quality of services and infrastructure:* EUT shall relocate to a new university campus, that will highly improve the infrastructure required for teaching and research activities.
- *International cooperation:* EUT aspires to be an important hub and a national and regional reference point for university academic cooperation, scientific research, publication, and the promotion of higher education's developmental and civic values<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Statute of the European University of Tirana, Article 6 “Vision, Mission and Strategic Objective”

<sup>2</sup> European University of Tirana Strategic Plan 2021-2025

EUT participates in university, scientific, and academic cooperation networks and projects with universities in the EU, OECD, and elsewhere, with the aim to contribute to broader and more specific collaboration with universities in the south-eastern European region, particularly those in Kosovo and North Macedonia. EUT provides opportunities for student professional development by enhancing collaborations with other industries and institutions, either through the engagement of external practicing experts in the auditorium or the development of specific internship programs, to facilitate as much as possible student integration into the labour market<sup>3</sup>.

UET has established a distinct tradition for scientific research and collaborations in research projects with universities and research centres abroad, cooperation projects with industries and institutions in Albania, and engagement of the best Albanian researchers who have settled abroad and/or within the country, all with the goal of providing solutions to real-world problems that our society faces. Academic freedom and responsibility, as well as the depth of research and interdisciplinarity, are all geared toward advancing knowledge, innovation, and creativity.

## 2. EUT Research Strategy, Objectives and Structure

In line with its vision and strategic plan, the institution has designed and implements EUT Research Strategy, which states the aim of EUT to consolidate its identity as the main centre of knowledge production in Albania and to further its transformation from an institution of higher education focused almost exclusively on teaching to an elite research entity whose academic output is respected and contributes to the improvement of teaching and student experience.

Through scientific research EUT aims to:

- Achieve and consolidate a recognition, regarding its teaching practices and research output, as one of the best universities in Albania and the Western Balkan region.
- Aid in the advancement of knowledge and in the perfection of professional practice with the goal of impacting social and economic development through knowledge transfer beyond the academic community towards public and private institutions as well as interest groups.
- Further perfect teaching and academic development at all levels so that students can experience a truly challenging and simultaneously welcoming academic environment.
- Create a stimulating research environment for both students and academics alike through:

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<sup>3</sup> European University of Tirana Strategic Plan 2021-2025

- The standardisation and internationalisation of academic research.
- Structuring a coherent system of research and certification for the academic staff.
- Continuous trainings and periodic certifications for the academic staff regarding their ability to publish original scientific knowledge.
- The further institutionalisation of the Major Research Projects (GRP) and the research units to increase interdisciplinary research, maximise the use of human resources, and provide quality services to third parties interested in the scientific output provided by EUT<sup>4</sup>.

The structure of research and development is based on three main pillars:

1. Research & Publications – this pillar is composed of Grand Research Projects (Research Units and Individual Research Projects, EUT Press, Academic Journals (one for each Faculty), Albanian Studies Days International Conference and other meetings and forums.
2. Training & Certification – EUT organises trainings for research and methodologies based on the experience of the researchers (early, junior and senior).
3. Research & Development – EUT has 5 Centres for Research (4 at Faculty level and one at institutional level).

### **3. Major Research Program 2021-2025: Market Development: University-Research-State**

Major Research Projects (MRP) represent the main organising principle of research at EUT and are led by senior researchers and encourage interdisciplinary research. Housed under the MRPs, the research units are the main mechanism through which the objectives of the MRPs are materialised through empirical studies, which – simultaneously – fulfil the objectives of the MRPs and are in coherence with the overall goals of the researchers' individual research projects. The research units are also the main instrument, which welcomes and 'houses' incoming doctoral students who undertake research that fits the units' main research objectives and interests.

Major Research Projects (MRP) for the period 2021-2022 are:

1. The new economic model in Albania.
2. The state and the right to transformation.

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<sup>4</sup> European University of Tirana Research Strategy 2021-2025

3. The role of the individual in the development of Albanian society.
4. The impact of innovation in industry and services.
5. Challenges and the future in the medical fields

#### **4. A roadmap for the network: Why and how**

A successful implementation of EUT vision and the fulfilment of research aim and objectives, is possible only by identification of needs and possibilities, design of mechanisms and instruments, and organization of activities. This can be achieved through establishment of a research and innovation network. This roadmap, based on strategic planning principles, emphasise the importance of establishing a network of research excellence, by facilitating the organization of interdisciplinary and international research groups and developing and implementing a virtual platform that will enhance and facilitate exchanges among researchers and international activities.

Strategic planning is one of the key elements of successful management in higher education's institutions. Since European University of Tirana (UET) strongly believes in these strategic planning, then long life learning programs are seen as essential for the development of the university and the society. Though, it is not easy to do the strategic planning as it deals with a lot of uncertainties and requires detailed analysis of current situation and a clear look towards the future. However, UET should be able to generate educated and prepared staff population who are able to handle the situation. Strategic planning approaches may assure the following.

- performing planning activities in the light of ultimate goals to achieve
- identifying and prioritising needs as all of them cannot be met with current capabilities necessitating the most strategic issues to be dealt with first

The only way to achieve those is to implement a proper planning process making sure that all activities are carried out as expected by the process itself. Always keeping in mind that there are dynamic, complex, unstable and changing environments in general. The roadmap of the strategic plan starts with the mission and continues with analysis, strategic development and a goal setting. Best practice assessments of economic development activities have made it clear that each state has its own specific industry drivers and growth opportunities through which it can differentiate itself and build specialized areas of expertise and development assets. Also, UET has its own collaboration with several companies and businesses around. The collaboration consists in:

- Close and institutionalized cooperation, discussion, evaluation and receiving suggestions for further improvement of master programs.

- Establishment of sustainable cooperation structures (consultative board, labor market boards, employment fairs, alumni, etc.).
- Institutionalization of "demand" by businesses.
- Periodic evaluation of the quality of the UET diploma offer by business/corporations.
- Extended presence in the auditorium of business/corporate representatives.
- Cooperation for conducting research/studies of interest to business/corporations, consulting and specialized.
- Organizing specific training and qualification programs for business/corporate staff.

Activities of this roadmap will be focused on strategic priorities:

1. *Research and innovation* – this priority involve activities regarding identification and analysis of the *state-of-the-art* of research at European University of Tirana, trainings, internal and external networking (with other HEI's and other research institutions/centres).
2. *University-labour market cooperation* – this priority involves activities regarding cooperation of EUT with partners from labour market for internships, review of curricula, guest lecturers, joint activities, etc.

## 5. Main fields of expertise and list of existing partners from the labour market

### 5.1 Faculty of Economics, Business and Development main fields of expertise

Finance	Banking	Audit
Accounting	Economic Informatics	Management
Marketing	Tourism	Innovation

Partners from the labour market	
DEVPOS	AK Invest SHA
Megatek	Shoqata e Siguruesve të Shqipërisë - SHSSH
AADF – Albanian -American Development Foundation	HYUNDAI
Credins Bank	OSSHE
Deloitte	Tirana Bank
EUROSIG	Dhoma e Tregtisë dhe Industrisë Durrës
INSIG	Union Bank
Dhoma Ekonomike e Gruas	Albtelecon Sha

Bashkia e Tiranës	EHW Sh.p.k
Posta Shqiptare	The Plaza Tirana
Kredo.al	LUFRA Sh.p.k
Poliklinika Mjekësore Gjermane	ARZH
AKH Consulting	INSTAT Instituti I Statistikave
Kurum International sh.a	MicroTic Academy
SALUS	AMF Autoriteti I Mbikqyrjes Financiare
NOA SHA	Qendra Spitalore Universitare “Nënë Tereza”
CODE	ITD Sh.p.k
Lufthansa Industry Solutions	Raiffeisen Bank
Universitetit “Ukshin Hoti”, Prizren	Award Group Consultants
Albtours D – Vas Tour Operator	Balfin Sh.p.k
Alpha Bank Albania	Infosoft Systems Sh.p.k
Shoqata Shqiptare e Bankave (AAB)	We WEB Sh.p.k
OTP BANK – Albania	Dhoma e Tregtisë dhe Industrisë Tiranë

### 5.2 Faculty of Law, Political Science and International Relations

Law	International Relations
Political Sciences	Security Issues
European Studies	Public Administration

Partners from the labour market	
Kuvendi i Shqipërisë	Minho University
Instituti I Statistikave (INSTAT)	Pavia University
Agjensia Rajonale e Zhvillimit (ARZH SME)	Halimi Foundation Institute
Autoriteti për Informimin mbi Dokumentet e ISH-Sigurimit të Shtetit	A.L.T.R.I.
Bashkia e Tiranës	REAL ESTATE PARTNERS” SHP
Consulting and Development - CODE	RealEstate'al shpk
Qendra Multidisiplinore e Shërbimeve Psikologjike dhe Ligjore "FAMILY"	Dodaj & Kane Zyre Ligjore
Universiteti i Prizrenit "Ukshin Hoti"	Tunucci & Partners
Sarland University (law)	KW Albania



### 5.3 Faculty of Humanities, Education and Liberal Arts

Communication	Public Relations	Journalism
Education	Psychology	Sports
Arts	Design	

Partners from the labour market	
Fundjava Ndryshe	Fondacioni Mapo
Bashkia Tiranë	Image and Communications Development
Gazeta Liberale	ZVA Tiranë
UET Press	Roger Williams University, Bristol, Rhode Island
Qendra e Bashkëpunimit Ndërfetar Elbasan	Iceberg Communication
Instituti European Pashko	Universiteti i Tiranës

### 5.4 Faculty of Engineering, Informatics and Architecture

Information Technology	Information Engineering
Telecommunication	Industrial Engineering
Civil Engineering	Architecture

Partners from the labour market	
Alpin AL Shpk	Willi – Impleks
Cloud Architects	X Plan Studio Shpk.
Derbi- E	Bashkia Tirane
Geo Point AL Shpk.	InfoSoft Systems Shpk.
I.D.K Konstruksion	Balfin SHPK
Infra Trans Projekt Shpk.	The Plaza Tirana Sha

KKG PROJECT SHPK	EHW
LEAD CONSULTING SHPK	Lufthansa Industry Solutions
SHOQERIA LIQENI VII sha.	WE WEB SHPK.
Servis Dori shpk	ITD SHPK
Servis Meca	MikroTik Academy
Speed Enigneers	Union Bank Sha
T.T Soil & Earthquake Consulting Shpk.	Albtelecom Sha

### 5.5 Faculty of Medical Technical Sciences

Nursing	Physiotherapy
Imagery	Radiotherapy

<b>Partners from the labour market</b>	
Qendra Spitalore Universitare “Nënë Tereza”	Poliklinika Mjekësore Gjermane
Autoriteti Shëndetësor Rajonal Tiranë	Qendra Kombëtare e Urgjencës Mjekësore
Academy of Training and Education “Auxila” Germany	Spitali Universitar I Traumës
Klinika Multifunksionale “Prana Zonë”	Universiteti I Mjekësisë, Tiranë
Salus Tirana SH.a.	“Mental Health Albania” Sh.p.k.
Shoqeria “American Hospital “SH.a.	

## 6. Action Plan

No	Measure	Timeframe	Expected Deliverables/activities
<b>Priority I: 1. Research and innovation</b>			
1.1	Identification of state-of-the-art of research at EUT	September – October 2022	Need assessment report
1.2	Design of instruments for improvement		Detailed action plan, training materials
1.3	Implementation of the instruments and activities	November – December 2022	Trainings, workshops
1.4	Review and evaluation of main fields of expertise		Report
1.5	Consolidation of research units		Reorganization of research units based on main fields of expertise
1.6	Identification of potential partners outside EUT for joint research activities		List of contacts, memorandums
<b>Priority II: University-labour market cooperation</b>			
2.1	Identification of areas of expertise and interest	September – October 2022	Report on areas of expertise and interest
2.2	Review of existing labour market partners		Report on the efficiency of the cooperation
2.3	Identification of potential partners from labour market		List of contacts
2.4	Establishing contacts and new partnerships	November – December 2022	Memorandums
2.5	Meetings with existing and new partners on potential joint activities on mutual interest		Ideas on joint activities
2.6	Organising joint activities	From December 2022	Internships, open lectures, research for industry and involvement of labour market representatives in other joint activities

## 7. Calendar of activities for network

Based on the Roadmap for the Network at European University of Tirana, and the Action Plan, activities will be focused on two strategic objectives:

3. *Research and innovation* – this priority involve activities regarding identification and analysis of the *state-of-the-art* of research at European University of Tirana, trainings, internal and external networking (with other HEI’s and other research institutions/centres).
4. *University-labour market cooperation* – this priority involves activities regarding cooperation of EUT with partners from labour market for internships, review of curricula, guest lecturers, joint activities, etc.

These activities will be subject to continuous review, based on the feedback from the activities that will be implemented during the first steps of the Action Plan and from the feedback that will be received from meetings with external stakeholders.

No.	Activity	Timeframe	KPI
1.	Internal meeting with representatives from research units and high management on “State-of-the-art of research at EUT”	September 2022	Need Assessment Report Approval of training/ workshop plan
2.	Workshop “Research Groups and Individual Research Projects”	October 2022	No. of participants No. of research groups No. of new doctoral students
3.	International Conference “Albanian Studies Days”	April 2023	No. of papers No. of participants (EUT/non-EUT; National/international)
4.	Publication of 5 Academic Journals	Twice a year	No. of papers No. of authors from EUT No. of authors outside EUT (national/international)
5.		Annually	No. of participants

	Organisation of 5 Seasonal Schools		No. of participants from EUT (staff/ students) No. of participants outside EUT (national/ international; professionals/ students) No. of Partners (academia/ labour market)
6.	Work fair	June 2023	No. of participants (labour market representatives) No. of students No. of new contracts signed (work/ paid internship)
7.	Trainings/ workshops on research, for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early Researchers</li> <li>• Junior Researchers</li> <li>• Senior Researchers</li> </ul>	March 2023	No. of participants No. of EUT Trainers No. of non-EUT Trainers (national/ international)
8.	Erasmus Days	October 2022	No. of participants
9.	Training “How to write a project proposal”	November 2022	No. of participants No. of trainers
10.	Project applications	Ongoing	No. of applications/ success rate No. of national/ international donors No. of projects where EUT is leader/ partner No. of EUT staff involved in projects
11.	Joint study programmes (double or dual diplomas)	Ongoing	No. of new study programmes No. of partners No. of enrolled students
12.	Meetings with existing and new partners on potential joint activities on mutual interest	Ongoing	No. of Agreements No. of new partners
13.	Joint activities (research or applicative) with labour market representatives	Ongoing	No. of joint initiatives No. of research for industry No. of EUT staff/students involved No. of donors and amount
14.	Meetings with Labour Market Board	Twice a year, for each Department	No. of participants No. of new initiatives



## 8. References

1. Statute of the European University of Tirana
2. European University of Tirana Strategic Plan 2021-2025
3. European University of Tirana Research Strategy 2021-2025