DRIVE DEVELOPING RESEARCH
AND INNOVATION CAPACITIES IN ALBANIA AND KOSOVO

FINAL QUALITY REPORT

Project reference No.: 610307-EPP-1-2019-AL-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP

(Deliverable 6)

[December 2019 - December 2022]

Report prepared by Universum College

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

The general objective of this project is to contribute to the development of the research and innovation capacities of HEIs in Albania and Kosovo by enhancing their institutional capabilities, staff skills and networking. The project intends to:

- Enhance the teachers' capacities and their methodologies so that they effectively equip the students (graduate level and beyond) with the skills to conduct independent research.
- Enhance the mentors' capacities to effectively guide the students in their research activity.
- Enhance the research capacities of the academic and managerial staff through study visits and tailored trainings.
- Strengthen the managerial capacities for research activities and innovation in institutional level by setting or strengthening dedicated research and innovation support structures (RISS).
- Promote research excellence and innovation by developing a network that eases the interdisciplinarity and cooperation among local and international actors.

These objectives have been designed to directly address the following needs:

- The need to improve the HEIs capacities for research and innovation.
- The need to foster the links and cooperation among the actors in the innovation ecosystem.

Respectively the first need corresponds to the specific objectives 1-4 which consist in developing the capacities for research of the target groups within the higher education institutions, whereas the specific objective 5 corresponds to the identified need to strengthen the cooperation among the higher education institutions as such with other entities such as businesses and local and international partners.

While in response to the second need, a network among researchers, institutions and other actors will be established at country and regional level.

Not only the careful alignment among the project objectives, target groups and project activities, but also the direct access the implementing HEIs have on their staff and the dedicated time and resources they are allocating to the project, make for a high feasibility of the project objectives.

This report is a part of the DRIVE project Quality Plan and Monitoring Work Package 6. Respectively this report represents activity 6 entirely. As described in the QA Plan, the overall aim of Quality Assurance is to monitor and evaluate all project activities. To do this, several tools have been developed. This final report aims to provide a detailed overview of the progress and processes of each WP at the end of the project (November 2019 – December 2022). It will further provide an overview of the impact of the activities implemented from target groups, considering the key progress and performance indicators which were defined in the QA Plan. To track the progress and achievements of all project activities, we have asked

all of the consortium partners to share the survey with the members of their institution who are actually engaged with the project implementation activities, reports and dissemination. This is the final report dedicated. Meanwhile a separate report is dedicated only for the WP Leaders and steering committee members of the project partners. Below in the annex section of this report you can find attached the questionnaire used to collect information for monitoring and evaluation.

Aims of Work Packages

The aim of Work Package 1 is to strengthen the students' research skills for conducting independent research and for making critical reviews of others' research, in order to contribute creatively in solving problems based on research. To reach this, the initial activities are related with academic capacities, such as strengthen research capacities and develop teaching methodologies. Then comes the evaluation of research capacities through the development of quality assurance indicators. As a third part is the validation of the developed courses/ methodologies through the students' evaluation, Alumni, and partners from industry.

The aim of the Work Package 2 is to strengthen the students' research skills for conducting independent research and for making critical reviews of others' research, in order to contribute creatively in solving problems based on research. To reach this, the initial activities are related with academic capacities, such as strengthen research capacities and develop teaching methodologies. Then comes the evaluation of research capacities through the development of quality assurance indicators. As a third part is the validation of the developed courses/ methodologies through the students' evaluation, Alumni, and partners from industry.

The Work package 3 uses various approaches to strengthening research capacity will be taken, including improving the capacity of individual researchers through training courses, supporting collaborative partnerships, and developing research leadership skills. The aim of the proposed activities is to enhance the abilities of individuals, and institutions, to undertake and disseminate high quality research efficiently and effectively. The first activities are devoted to improving the capacity of individual researchers followed by activities aiming to enhance the institutional capacities for research. Whereas the overall objective of this Work package is to develop and strengthen the Institutional Research Culture and Ethics.

The Work Package 4 aims to address the need for coordinating structures that have processes and procedures in place to support research and innovation within each institution. The poor performance of Albania and Kosovo in terms of R&D and innovation is not only an issue of limited resources (human or financial), but also due to the lack of proper structures which have a specific focus on innovation. Unlike the departments that given the aforementioned conditions tend to get consumed with the day-to-day management of the study programs, these structures (RISS) seek to adopt a systemic and institutional approach towards research and innovation, considering it not merely an individual responsibility of the academic staff but also a matter of institutional culture and organization.

Because they will not confine within one department, RISS are planned to function as an inter-departmental and inter-disciplinary entity and as such they seek to bring together people from

various disciplines and expertise, facilitating knowledge exchange, new research topics and innovation.

The Work Package 5 aims to initiate a process of intensive collaboration among HEIs of the region in the areas of research and innovation. The project team will play the role of catalysts to facilitate the synergies in research and innovation. WP5 foresees workshops and joint work among consortium members in the region. The European members develop presentations that illustrate best practices of successful research network development. The team members from partner countries organize two workshops: one in Kosovo and one in Albania and invite academics and faculty from their university and industry experts. The aim of the first workshop is to define a map of the teaching, research and technology transfer activities of each HEI involved, based on which a roadmap for collaboration areas is defined. The second workshop, starting from the results of the first one, will set the activities to be implemented to achieve the roadmap and the calendar of them.

The Work Package 6, led by UC, is dedicated to ensuring the highest quality during the project implementation. The WP6 implies utilizing internal and external mechanisms to produce deliverables that indicate the quality of the project implementation.

This Work Package 7 aims to gather key stakeholders around DRIVE agenda and ensure that all project outputs and results are transferred outside the partnership and disseminated and used in the most effective way. To achieve such objective, transparent instruments of communication will be used, as well as adequate and timely inclusion of the targeted audience for the project. All will be integrated in the Dissemination Strategy, ensuring a smooth roll out of key messages, while synchronizing targeted outreach with project implementation milestones. A variety of communication tools will be used for measuring communication and awareness, raising effectiveness. To ensure cohesive delivery of project outputs and results, internal communication activities will be performed concurrent to the external ones.

The Work Package 8 aims efficient project coordination, as a basic precondition for a successful project management and sustainability, so that the willingness of the consortium partners to retain the project's objectives is at high-level priority, cooperation and amendments to their organizational structure/ institutional guidelines as required. Partners shall actively participate in all meetings and activities, as well provide the supporting documentation in a timely manner. Set financial and technical management of the project from partners in line with the EU procedures and according to the requested timetable.

The Work Package 9 aims to develop the methodology for the sustainability strategy, Sustainability Plan for RISS and sustainability plan for online network.

Progress of Activities

The activities of the project have been designed to address the objectives of the project as well as the identified needs and target groups. The activities are grouped in work packages as provided in the table below.

Work Package 1	Progress
1.1. Discuss and sign the consortium agreement. 1.2. Draft and sign partnership contracts. 1.3. Appoint members and responsibilities of the managerial structures. 1.4. Validate the work plan.	100%
Work Package 2	
2.1. Define topics and logistics of the training workshops. 2.2. Develop presentations and training materials. 2.3. Develop new teaching and mentoring methodologies. 2.4. Disseminate the developed methodologies. 2.5. Define and distribute the students' questionnaire. 2.6. Report survey findings.	100%
Work Package 3	
3.1. Define topics and logistics of the training workshop. 3.2. Develop presentation s and training materials. 3.3. Develop and disseminate manuals. 3.4. Develop and disseminate promoting material. 3.5. Define the research quality indicators. 3.6. Report the assessment results applying the benchmark system.	100%
Work Package 4	
4.1. Approve RISS establishment in Academic Senates and Boards of Administration. 4.2. Define agenda and logistics of the training workshops. 4.3. Develop RISS regulations, strategies, and action plans. 4.4. Organize tendering process and purchase equipment. 4.5. Report RISS activities.	100%
Work Package 5	
5.1. Define the roadmap and calendar of activities. 5.2. Validate and disseminate the road map and calendar of activities. 5.3. Draft and sign Partnership Agreements. 5.4. Define the virtual platform features and contents. 5.5. Contract platform developer.	100%
Work Package 6	
6.1. Define quality plan. 6.2. Subcontract an external quality expert. 6.3. Prepare and submit the mid-term and final quality report.	100%
Work Package 7	

7.1. Develop a dissemination strategy. 7.2. Design dissemination products and project website. 7.3. Define agenda and logistics for the national info days. 7.4. Organize and host final project conference. 7.5. Launch virtual platform. 7.6. Prepare dissemination report.	90%
Work Package 8	
8.1. Define agendas and logistics for Managerial Committee meetings. 8.2 Contract external audit. 8.3. Prepare and submit mid-term and final report.	90%
Work Package 9	
9.1. Develop Project Sustainability Report. 9.2 Develop RISS Sustainability Report. 9.3. Develop Network Sustainability Report..	90%

QUALITY MONITORING AND CONTROL

This report is dedicated to ensuring the highest quality during the project implementation. According to the WP6, UC is obliged to utilize internal and external mechanisms to produce deliverables that indicate the quality of the project implementation.

Internal Mechanisms For Quality Control

The initial deliverable consists of creating the internal mechanism, the Project Quality Committee (PQC), which is entitled to adopt and monitor the quality action plan and define the performance indicators upon which the quality of the project will be assessed. The representatives of all partner HEIs and stakeholders were invited to contribute by filling out the questionnaires and other online tools used to collect and generate data regarding the project performance. Responsibilities of the PQC include the adoption and implementation of the Quality Action Plan for the cycle of the project. More specifically, PQC was in appointed to conduct the following activities:

- Monitor the implementation of the Quality Action Plan and inform the WP lead on warning signs, deviations and provide recommendations for improving the implementation.

- Assist in the designing of the questionnaires and online surveys that will be delivered to the partner HEIs and stakeholders to collect both qualitative and quantitative data. After each major activity or event, task leaders will gather feedback on the process of the implementation and assess the impact.

- Monitor and evaluate the quality of the deliverables according to the indicators specified on the Logical Framework of the project.

- Provide guidelines and recommendations for the improvement of the quality of the deliverables.

- Plan and apply the necessary corrective actions if any deviation on project outcomes has been identified.

Quality Action Plan provided before elaborates the end goals and the means used to ensure the quality of the project implementation. The Quality Action plan elaborates the strategy, instruments, processes, indicators, the assumptions, and the risks that speak to the project objective and goals. The plan also provides a detailed description of the processes and mechanisms that will be implemented to facilitate a smooth and transparent communication among partners, sharing work documents, reports, and feedback. The QA plan implements the Balanced Scorecard tool to assess and measure the performance of the project implementation. The QA consists of the following information:

- The general principles of the plan with concern on transparency, participation, documentation, collaboration, efficiency, relevance, and contribution.

- The structure and processes of monitoring and evaluation which also includes a timeline and the entities in charge to deliver the action.

- The key performance indicators upon which the progress toward achieving project goals and objectives will be assessed and evaluated.

- The means and procedures of internal communication arrangements.

- The procedures for the deliverable's submission and review.

- Templates of questionnaires and online surveys.

Project Feedback Analysis

Universum College in coordination with all the consortium partners received feedback from partners in terms of effectiveness of all meetings including trainings, management and activity implementation. In general, QA team acquired a good overview of the activities carried out in the 9 different Work Packages. To get a deeper insight into the progress of all work packages and to identify possible strengths and weaknesses during implementation, we asked respondents to answer the questions honestly, to report any issues of concern as well as provide any feedback to address any given issue to the steering committee, partners and project coordinators for future consideration.

Organization Forms of Activities

Project implementation of activities with respondents from all partner institutions is carried out by Universum College. The coordination with all consortium partners is an effort to measure

the implementation level of activities. Given the difficult times of operations of the institutions, it is important to highlight that many partners have face various governmental restrictions which hindered the implementation of many activities physically for a larger part of the project. While this does not apply per se' to project activities only, institutions in general were forced to come up with valid solutions of activity implementations in their institutions. In general, activities requiring physical presence were organized in blended and mostly virtual ways. Activities organized in virtual ways are:

- Steering committee meetings,
- Project collaboration meetings,
- Dissemination activities.

Activities organized in blended method (physical and virtual) include:

- Workshops,
- Focus groups,
- Data gathering.
- Partner meetings
- Info Sessions with stakeholders

Project Management and Communication

Consortium expressed the satisfaction on project management, coordinator's approach as well as coordinator's willingness to always provide information and support for all project partners in different phases of project implementation. Overall project management strategy and its implementation is satisfactory with positive feedback provided by consortium respondents. There are no reported issues regarding project coordination, management, or steering committee by any of the contacted or any responsible respondent committed to this project.

Project Outcomes

Regarding the achieved project results, partners express their satisfaction and highlight some of the drawbacks of the implementation. However, all of the outcomes achieved prove good cooperation and positive results. As highlighted some minor drawbacks such as delays in outcomes and lack of physical presences in promotion and disseminating outcomes are due to Covid -19 restrictions and impact. In general, there are no project outcomes that have not been attained as planned by project timeline for this period of the final reporting. Almost all partners respond that they have a clearer understanding of their research capacities and what they need to do to further strengthen and cooperation in the region and further develop their research capacities. This proves that by small steps the general project outcome and aim is also being accomplished.

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TRAINING EVALUATIONS

In this part are included all inputs received from participants that attended various trainings and workshops at different universities and colleges that are partners in this project.

Training Evaluation in Prishtina

Following the survey for the training held in Prishtina in October 2021, the first question addressed the most important activities respondents have carried out throughout the workshop in Prishtina during October 2021 range as in the following:

- o Guideline for publication

- o 1st day was very attractive

- o The activities of the second day

- o Gender issues in research and science, peer review procedure and importance

- o Discussion about the Gender Equity Plan in Research was very important topic. Also, the assignment on how to write research paper

- o Gender Equality; Research methods; what makes a paper credible and how to help young researchers; Ways to improve the research.

- o Teamwork related with different tasks

- o The blogs, networking etc.

- o Development of Whitten theory, peer review process of articles, involvement of woman in science.

- o research activities

- o Guideline for Theoretical Contribution, Important Factors that contribute in the reliability of a Paper, Gender Balance.

In terms of second survey question on satisfaction with the training activity held in Prishtina on October 2021, 63.6% of respondents declared that they are very satisfied, 27.3% indicated that they are satisfied, whereas 9.1% indicated dissatisfaction with the training.
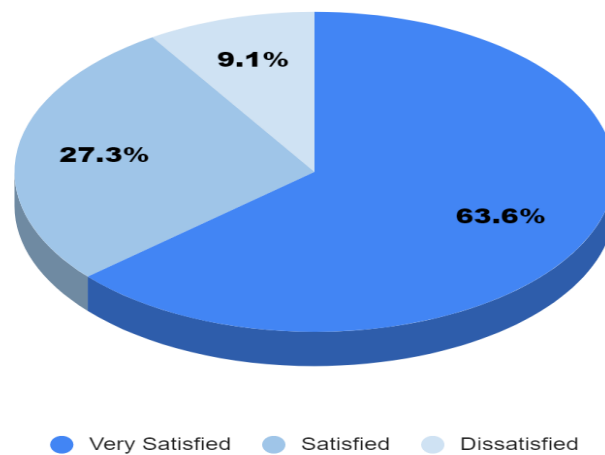
Chart 1.1: Satisfaction with the training in Prishtina held on October 2021

The third, fourth and fifth question addressed the satisfaction of respondents by training offered by Aalborg University, TUUH and Politecico di Milano. The data reveals that respondent's ranged the same University of Aalborg University, and TUUH with 54.5% being very satisfied and 45.5% being satisfied. Whereas, the Politecnico di Milano ranges with 72.7% of respondents being very satisfied, 18.2% satisfied and 9.1% neither satisfied or dissatisfied.
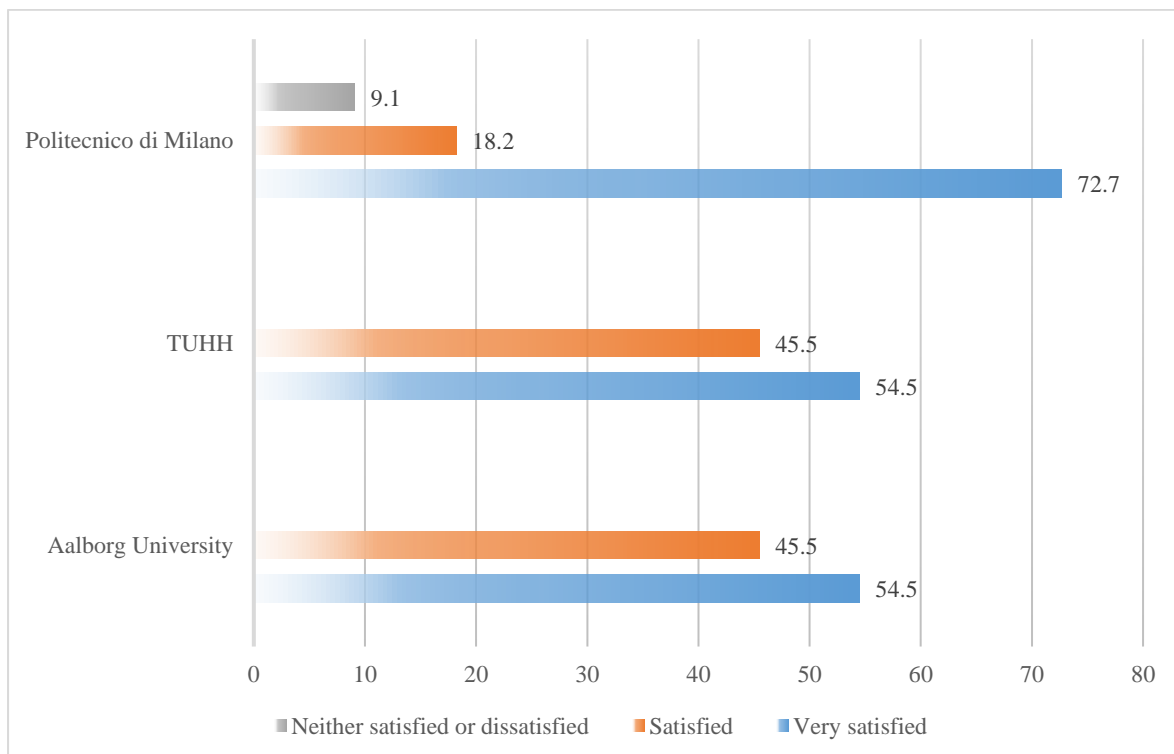
Chart 1.2: Satisfaction with training offered

The sixth question addressed the issue of training being helpful for respondents and data indicates that 81.8% found it very helpful and 18.2% helpful.
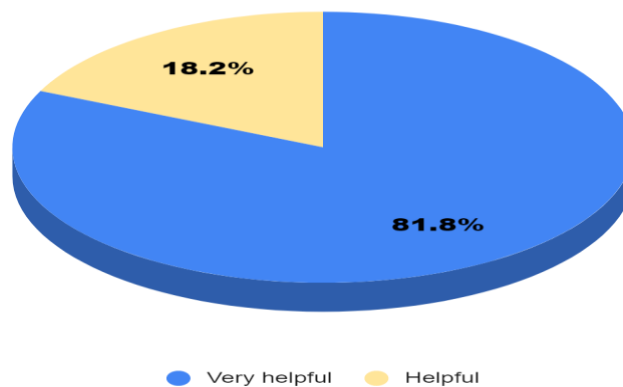
Chart 1.3: Helpfulness of the training offered

The seventh question addressed the issue of utilizing the learnt knowledge and research methodologies at your home institution and all respondents agreed to it (100%) saying that:

- o It helps me to prepare better the policy papers

- o We will some of the training replicate with another staff at our Institution, especially new research staff

- o I will use the information gained from this workshop when I write my academic papers.

- o As a PhD student with all the information gained during workshop, I will able to conduct a good research

- o To share with others so they can work and make more qualitative research

- o Because they are necessary to be applied in the scientific work of the academic staff.

- o Learning by doing

- o The information taken there can be one of the most interesting features of any degree course as it offers you a measure of control and autonomy over what you learn.

- o It gives you an opportunity to confirm, clarify, pursue – or even discover –

- o New aspects of a subject or topic you are interested in.

The eight question addressed the issue of satisfaction with the host institution and data reveals that 72.7% are very satisfied, 18.2% are satisfied and 9.1% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.
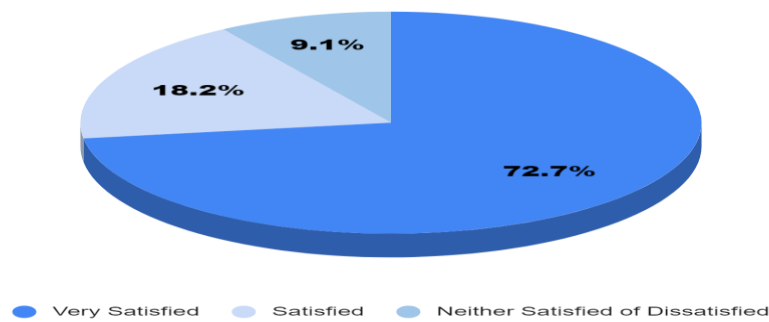
Chart 1.4: Satisfaction with the host institution

In explaining how they will utilize the learnt knowledge and research methodologies at your home institution, respondents provided the following:

o We will organise trainings within the University, where senior researchers will be in the role of trainers

o Also, I think that this information will be useful when I start writing my PhD dissertation.

o Through the techniques we learnt during workshop such as drafting a good research proposal based on 4 sections: why, how, when, who, where?

o By disseminating and working together

o Whenever necessary, especially to inform new staff.

o I will use the information for my doctoral research and for students in the second cycle master and bachelor.

Respondents provided additional feedback for future improvement of training workshops that consist of the ninth question of this survey and feedback is provided below

o If the future activities will be blended (hybrid), then the host institution should be prepared for the logistic and IT issues.

o It would probably be more efficient if the trainers were also physically present

o I think that this workshop was very useful, we should do the same in the future and focus on gender equality and in young researchers as they are our future.

o I am very satisfied with all components, so keep doing the good work :)

o Workshops to be held in physical presence by all participants.

o Greater male participation is needed.

o Face to face training.

Training Evaluation in Aalborg University

Following the survey for the training evaluation held in Aalborg University on November 2021, the first question addressed the most important activities respondents have carried out throughout the workshop and responses range as in the following:

- o Training about research at Aalborg Uni, Lab visit, presentation.

- o The workshop has carried out many types of activities including presentations, discussions, study visits to production centres, networking, and socialization

- o Funding of RISS

- o How to do Cooperation and funding from external partners; How to make funding proposal to our RIIS; How to present of RIIS funding; RIIS strategy for research

- o Laboratory visit, laser lab &smart production Strategy and action plan for research. Cooperation and funding from external partners. How do research with external partners. RIIS strategy for research

- o All the activities were very valuable

- o Collaboration among university/practice with entrepreneurship - students' practical work; Smart Production Center visiting and students' introduction.

The second question addressed the satisfaction with the training activity and mainly 84.6 indicated higher satisfaction, whereas 7.7% indicated dissatisfaction and 7.7% indicated that they are very dissatisfied.
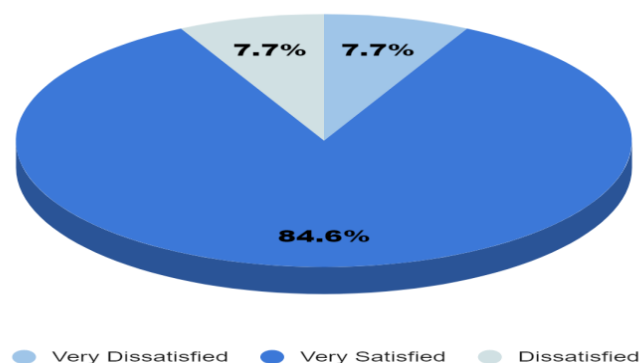
Chart 2.1: Satisfaction with training activity

The third question addressed the issue of rating the training offered by Laser Production centre and 84.6% indicated that the training was successful, whereas 15.4% indicated dissatisfaction.
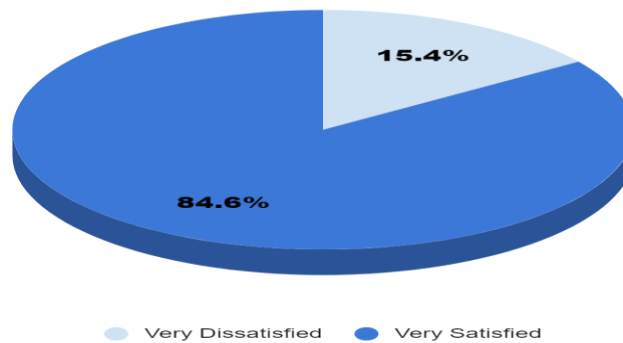
Chart 2.2. Rating of the training offered by Laser Production Center

The fourth question addressed the issue of rating the training offered by Smart Production centre and 84.6% indicated that the training was successful, whereas 15.4% indicated dissatisfaction.
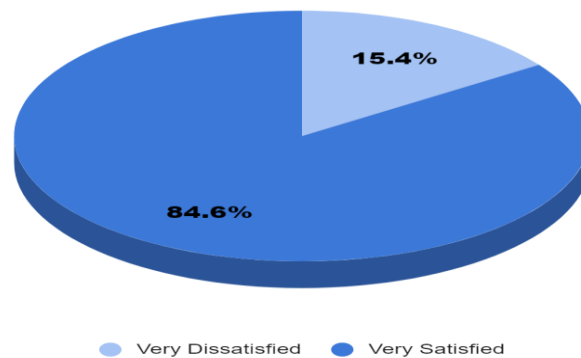

Chart 2.3. Rating of the training offered by Smart Production Center

The fifth question addresses the issue of helpfulness of training and data reveals 84.6% are very satisfied, whereas 15.4% are very dissatisfied.
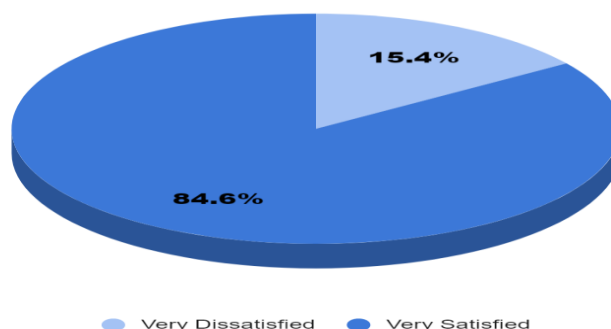

Chart 2.4: Evaluation of helpfulness of training

The sixth question aims to identify how respondents will utilize learnt training outcomes at their home university and inputs are provided below:

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o   We will take further the implementation of production centre at our home university

o   Will refer to the funding objectives

o   We already have new ideas on how to do research with external partners and will start to develop the RISS strategy for our institution

o   Encourage implementation of PBL

o   Outcomes of training will be shared via different meetings with my colleagues. The outcomes of training will be tried to reflect in review of syllabuses of academic year 2022-2023. It is important to be changed in direction of more professional practice, labs, and projects.

o   will present them to the directors of the research and innovation unit

o   I will take care that the acquired knowledge, I start to implement it in my work, of course coordinating it with the situation in which we are as a university

o   Organising training session for the staff of UFAGJ.

o   We will try to adopt the best practices on our institution.

o   We will try to share training outcomes with other staff at our university

o   I will try to implement the learning outcomes within my LAB/Institution and try to properly use them in the Albanian context.

o   I will commit to transfer the theory into practice, where we have space and opportunity.

The eighth question aims to identify contribution of questions and general discussion to the training. The data reveals that 84.6% of respondents rate highly, 7.7% are satisfied, whereas 7.7% of respondents indicate their dissatisfaction.
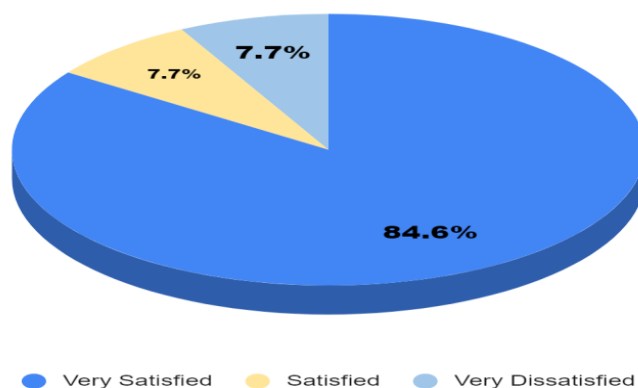

Chart 2.5: Contribution of questions

The ninth question addressed additional feedback for future improvement of training workshops, and inputs are provided below:

- For my opinion this training was very helpful, and I think it will be as a model for other training, very well organized and productive.

- Everything was perfect, thank you!

- The time has been very short, it would have been more relaxing for the time to have been longer

- It was very good organized

- Everything was well organized. I have nothing to suggest.

- Practical demonstration and increase the number of visited structures apart from the usual presentations

- Maybe a longer one with the possibility to directly be involved in some brainstorming/making sessions for a specific project. It would be interesting to concretely touch the workflow and feel like part of it from an applied point of view.

- Everything was good! Thank you, Aalborg University.

Training Evaluation in European University of Tirana

Following the survey for the training evaluation held in European University of Tirana UET in December 2021, the first question addressed the most important activities respondents have carried out throughout the workshop and responses range as in the following:

- Research conduct code.

- How to prepare a project with the University / Students as a linkage among University and Industry; -Identification of calls in national level; regional and international level. Importance of the projects in the framework of the Internationalization Strategy of the University, "Managing an EU Project: tricks and tips"; -Strategy and practical approach to support research projects, Code of research conduct; Practical approach to measurement and implementation of research indicators.

- Training for the project management cycle as well presentation and guideline for the Code of Research and Ethic.

- All the activities were important and very interesting.

- Practical skills.

- Preparation of an analysis of the current code of ethics at UP, Discussion on how to identify new ERASMUS+ and HORIZON calls, Identification of benchmark KPIs for research assessment.

- Workshop on Research Management.

o Importance of the projects. How to prepare a project. Importance of the projects in the framework of the Internationalization Strategy of the University. Strategy and practical approach to support research projects. Code of research conduct.

o Asking questions, discussion with participants.

The second question measures the satisfaction of respondents with training activity and data reveals that 64.7% are very satisfied, 29.4% are satisfied and 5.9% are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.
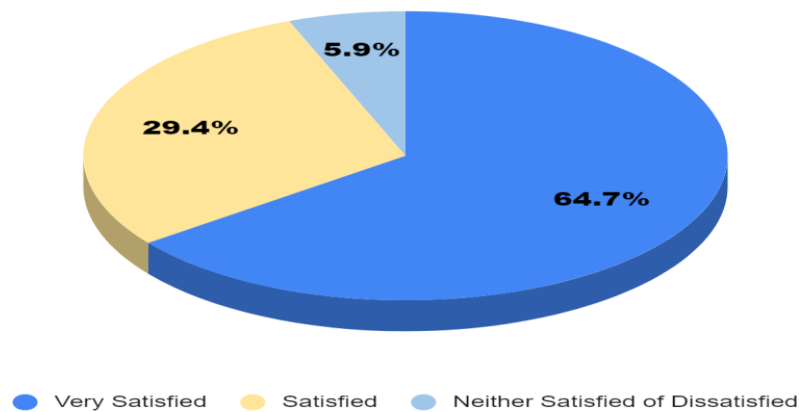

Chart 3.1: Satisfaction with the training activities

The third question addresses the helpfulness of training for respondents and 58% of participants indicate that training was very helpful. The remaining 41.2% of participants find it helpful.
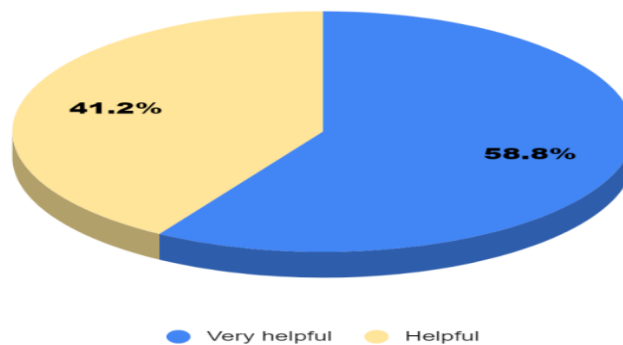
Chart 3.2: Helpfulness of training

The next question addresses the issue of training outcomes and it utilization at home universities, and the answers are provided below:

o Work on Code of research conduct and identify practical approach to measurement and implementation of research indicators.

o Distribute information among other colleagues for research opportunities and calls where they can apply.

- We are working towards a new Code of Research Conduct, and actively pursuing Erasmus+ calls.

- We will discuss internally and implement the lessons learnt at our best capacities.

- I will utilize learned training by improving, developing and strengthening the Institutional Code of Research Conduct and Research Ethics and by creating a document that improve the Gender Equality in Research and Innovation.

- Round table and department meeting.

- Helping students build project application capabilities.

- I will try to implement the learning outcomes to my HEI, transferring the knowhow to my colleagues.

- within the existing structures

- Identify better Erasmus+ priorities that my university can apply.

The following inputs derive from the question on contribution of discussions during training. The data indicates that 56.3% find the discussions very helpful, whereas 43.8% consider discussions helpful.
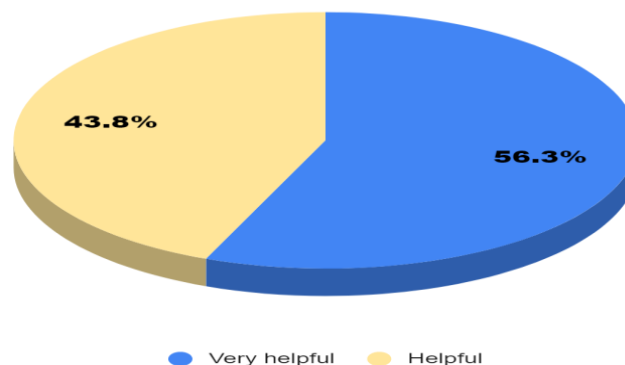
Chart 3.3: Contribution of discussions

The final question addressed additional feedback for future improvement of training workshops, and inputs are provided below:

- In online meetings care shall be taken that the talk is more impactful

- Physically presence of all partners will increase the level of the satisfactions

- I have nothing to add.

- Everything was organized as planned. I have no remarks to the organization and content of the training.

- Time management to be more efficient.

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o   The presentations of the workshop must be more understandable and clearer, in terms of tone of voice and accent.

o   The trainers must be more engaged to answer questions than just delivering their paper in a formal way.

Training Evaluation In Politecnico Di Milano I

Following the survey for the training evaluation held at Politecnico di Milano University on November 3-6, 2021, the first question addressed the most important activities respondents have carried out throughout the workshop and responses range as in the following:

o   Study visit for RISS at Polimi; Meetings with Research and Support Centers
o   MADE Innovation 4.0
o   Competence Center.
o   All the activities were important.
o   All the activities were important and helpful.
o   All the activities were very useful.
o   State-of-the-art of Library Management; State-of-the-art of Industry 4.0 in research; MADE - -Competence Center Industry 4.0; Mission and participation in EU projects; Experience sharing from ERASMUS+ Drive; State-of-the-art of corporate-university collaboration.
o   Visit and meeting in polytechnic University of Milano, visiting and presentation in competence center PUM, visiting the library, working groups, etc.

The second question measures satisfaction of participants with the training activities. The data reveals that 77.8% are very satisfied, 11.1% are satisfied and 11.1% are dissatisfied.
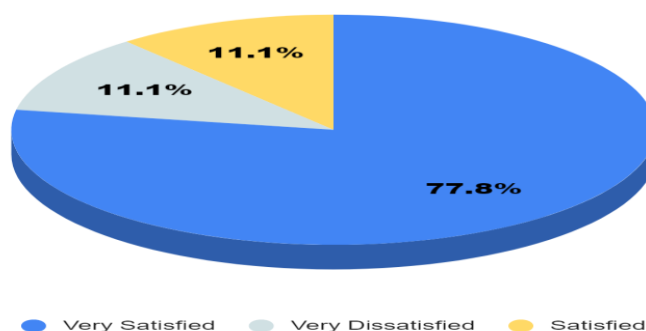

Chart 4.1: Satisfaction with training activities

The third question aim is to identify the general rating scale by participants on the training offered by Politecnico di Milano. The data reveals that 66.7% are very satisfied, 22.2% are satisfied and 11.1% are very dissatisfied.
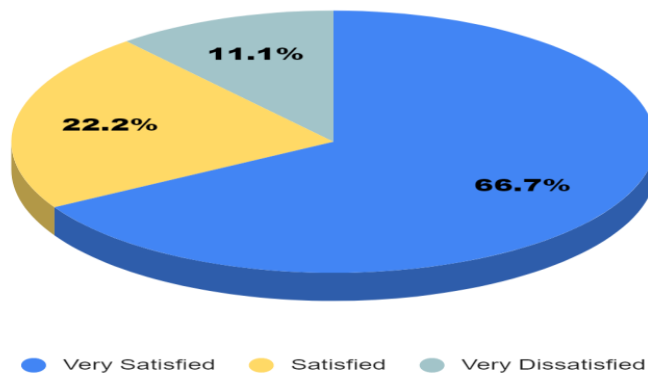
Chart 4.2: Rating on training offered

The forth question addresses the helpfulness of the training and inputs indicate that 77.8% are very satisfied, 11.1% are satisfied and 11.1% are dissatisfied.
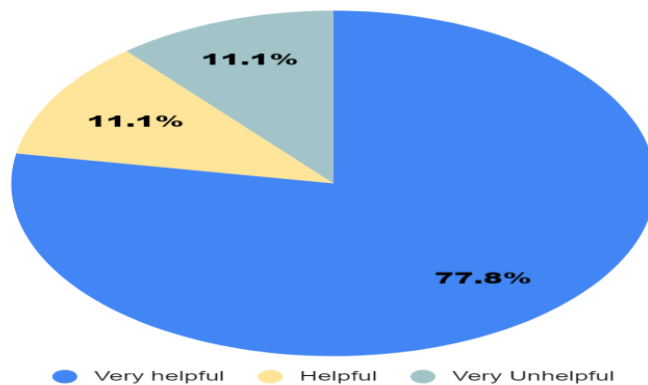

Chart 4.3: Helpfulness of the training

The fifth question addresses the issue of training outcomes and it utilization at home universities, and the answers are provided below:

o Besides the improvements of our RISS, we will try to improve connections with other actors.

o Improving project ideas.

o Disseminating the absorbed information, being ready and helping in establish such centre at our institution.

o Capacity building and knowledge transfer for knowledge production and management

o In the development of the RISS structure

o It serves us to implement and organize the goals that we want to achieve.

o will share the experience with the other colleagues and will use it as a reference in the completion of the RISS

o Drafting the regulation on industry-university collaboration

- o Will discuss with my colleagues about the training and what we can do here to improve the current status.

The sixth question measures the helpfulness of the presentation made by competence center and based on the data 88.9% of respondents found it very helpful, whereas on the other hand there is a group of respondents (11.1%) that has found the presentation unhelpful.
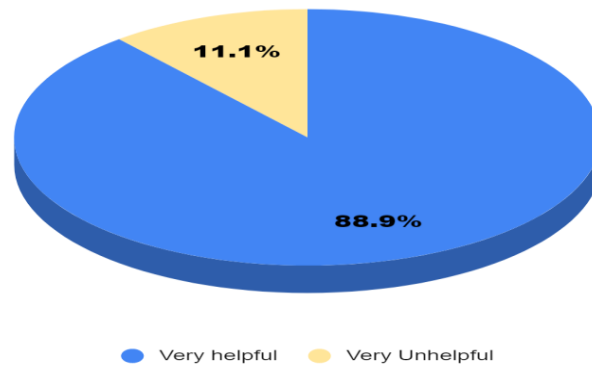

Chart 4.4: Evaluation of presentation made by competence centre

The seventh question measures the helpfulness of the presentation made by POLIS University. Based on the data, majority of the respondents 88.9% perceive the presentation as very helpful and 11.1% perceive the presentation as helpful.
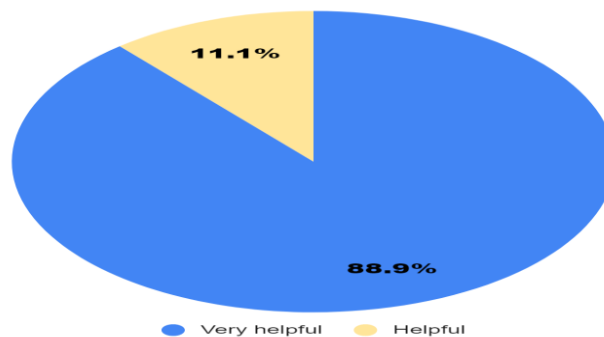
Chart 4.5: Helpfulness of presentation made by Polis University

The eighth question deals with the rating of the contribution of round table discussions to the training, and accordingly data indicates that 77.8% of respondents are very satisfied and 22.2% are satisfied.
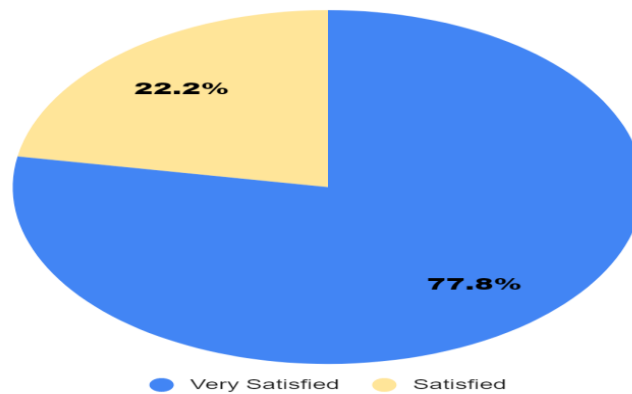
Chart 4.6: Rating of the contribution of round table discussions

The final question addressed additional feedback for future improvement of training workshops, and inputs are provided below:

o Present more videos of concrete cases

o The most impressive was period spent at Competence Center

o everything was very good

o Trainings should be with different topics, training about new technology and 4.0 are very interesting.

Training Evaluation in Hamburg University of Technology

Following the survey for the training evaluation held at Hamburg University of Technology on April 3-6, 2022, the first question addressed the most important activities respondents have carried out throughout the workshop and responses range as in the following:

o RISS and preparation of all the remaining WP's, deadlines, and its quality.

o Presentation from the head of Projects Office.

o Third Party Funding at TUHH, Institutional research supporting structure (LogU case), RISS operation: State of implementation, Sustainability of the RISS operations (workshop), Service provision for university research and its connection to society: the case of TUHH and Tutech, Round table discussion and conclusions.

The second question of the survey aimed measuring the satisfaction with the training activity and based on the data all the respondents indicated 100% satisfaction.

The next question measures the helpfulness of the training. Based on the data, majority of the respondents 86.7% perceive the training as very helpful and 13.3% perceive the training as helpful.
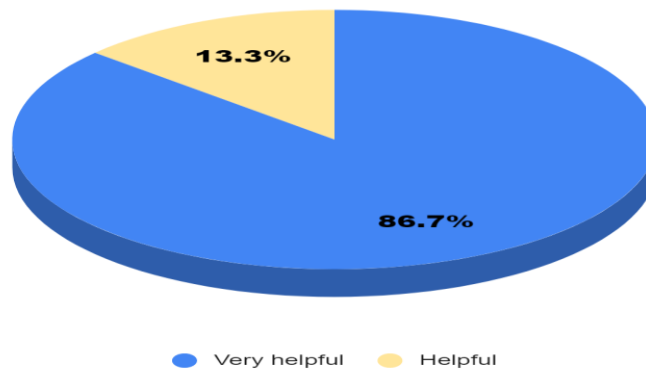

Chart 5.1: Helpfulness of the training

In this part of this survey is addressed the issue of training outcomes and it utilization at home universities, and the answers are provided below:

o Collaborate mostly with research department at our university and push them to elaborate the connection with society.

o By implementing knowledges got there.

o Deciding RISS KPIs, RISS action plan.

o Training will be very helpful to understand how to improve the industrial partnership network of my university.

o Lessons learnt will help us in better structure of the Institutional documents, as well as their implementation beyond the lifespan of the project.

o Refer to the learnings from the workshops while developing the RISS strategy and action plan.

o Present the parts of interest at home institution.

o By sharing knowledge and expertise with university stakeholders at all levels.

o Improving capacities for the institution, achieving long-term impact and sustainability of the project results even beyond the lifespan of the project.

o Institutional research supporting structure and implementation of RISS.

o Improvement of Institutional research supporting structure.

o We will try to adopt the learnt and obtained information at our university in the best way possible.

o The experience learnt will be part of the action plan of the scientific research work of the department in the future.

o I will utilize the research activities because their research was more professional.

The following question measures the rate of the contribution of questions and general discussions to the training. From the total number of responses, 80% of respondents are very satisfied with the interactions and 20% are satisfied.
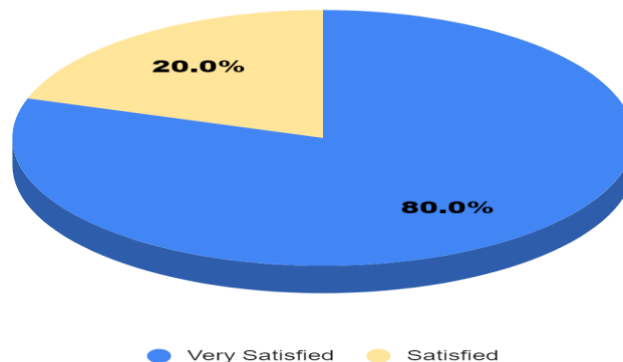

Chart 5.2: Contribution of discussions

Additional feedback for future improvement of training workshops consists of the last part of this survey and inputs are provided below:

o Consistent collaboration to be enforced for the future.

o The training was interactive and very engagement.

o Adding more interactive sessions.

o Everything was as it should have been.

o By providing specific examples.

o I would like to learn more about the Sustainability of the RISS operations.

o Everything was perfect and very professional.

Training Evaluation in Universum College and University of Prishtina

Following the survey for the training evaluation held at Hamburg University of Technology on October 31 to November 2, 2022. The first question addressed the most important activities respondents have carried out throughout the workshop and responses range as in the following:

o Linking University with Industry, Research Project based Teaching, Industrial PhD, functional of Research Innovation Center.

o Reviewing and analysing approaches towards roadmaps.

o Attended the presentations and participated in the visit to Universum College.

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- o Establish research and innovation network, Roadmap of the Network and Calendar of Activities, How to enhance and improve the collaboration among stakeholders, Presentation from Universum College "Best practices of collaboration with the industry and government partners".

- o Networking activity not just among partners but with the other stakeholders, especially regional businesses. Dedicated event was managerial meeting, with the issues at the end of the project.

- o Technical and financial issues. Road map of the network and calendar of activities. Issues about dissemination statues of the project & preparation and issues for the Final Dissemination Report. Best practices of collaboration with the industry and government partners.

- o The first day at the Technical Faculty of Prishtina discussing on the institutional Roadmap.

- o Presentation and discussion on best practices of collaboration between universities and the industry.

- o Evaluation of project results and assessment of potential sustainability methods.

The second question addressed satisfaction with the training activities and data reveals that 66.7% are very satisfied, 16.7% are satisfied, 8.3% are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and 8.3% are very dissatisfied.
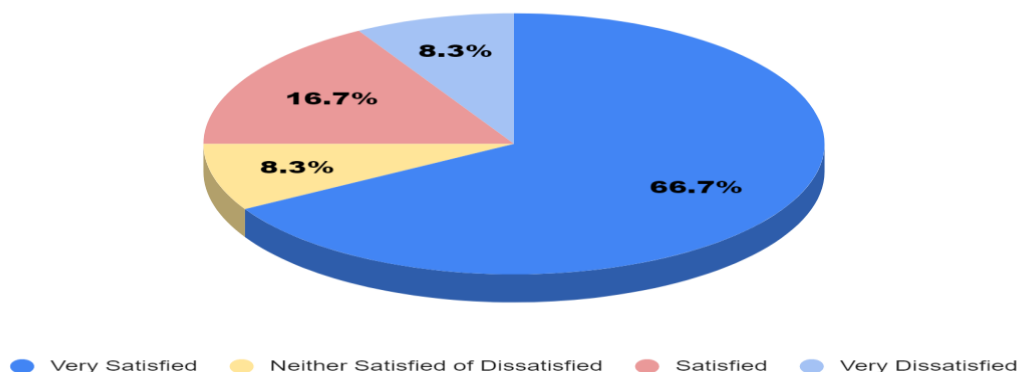

Chart 6.1: Satisfaction with the training

The third question addresses the usefulness of presentations made regarding Road Maps of Network and Calendar of activities. Respondents in general have found Polis University, European University of Tirana, University of Prishtina, Universum College, Polytechnic University of Tirana and University of Gjakova have delivered helpful presentations (58.3%), and 25% of respondents ranked as helpful all presentations. There is a percentage of respondents (16.6%) who consider that delivered presentations were neither helpful or unhelpful or very unhelpful.
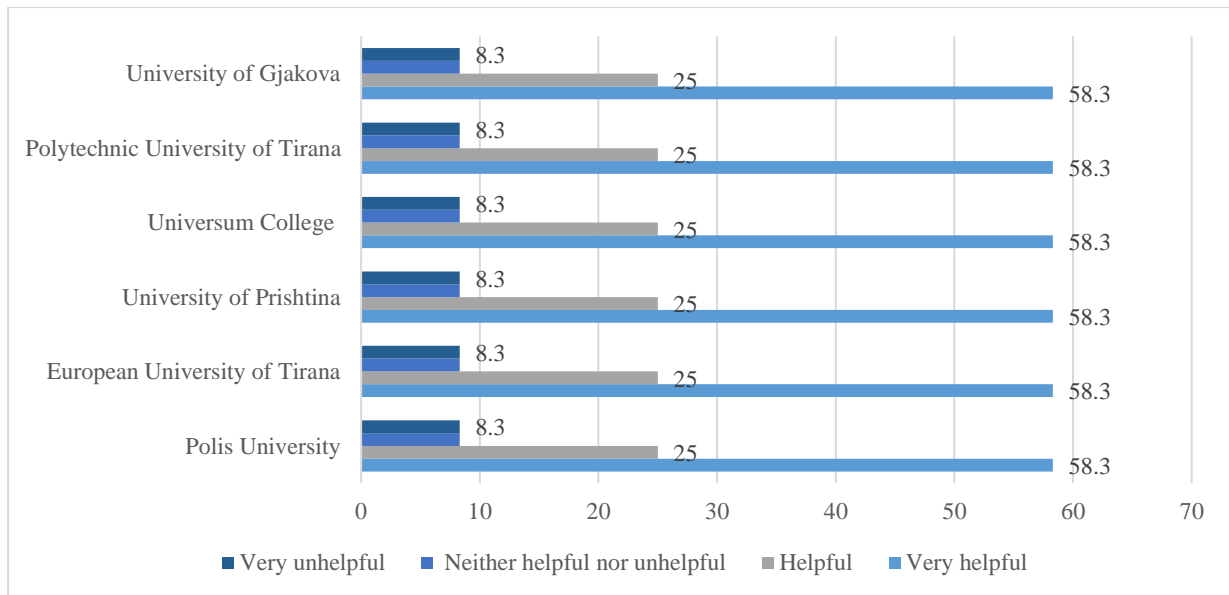
Chart 6.2: Evaluation of presentations made by universities on Road Maps of Network and Calendar of activities

The fourth questions measures the helpfulness of training in general and based on the data, 58.3% of respondents found it very helpful, 33.3% found it helpful and 8.3% found it neither helpful nor unhelpful.
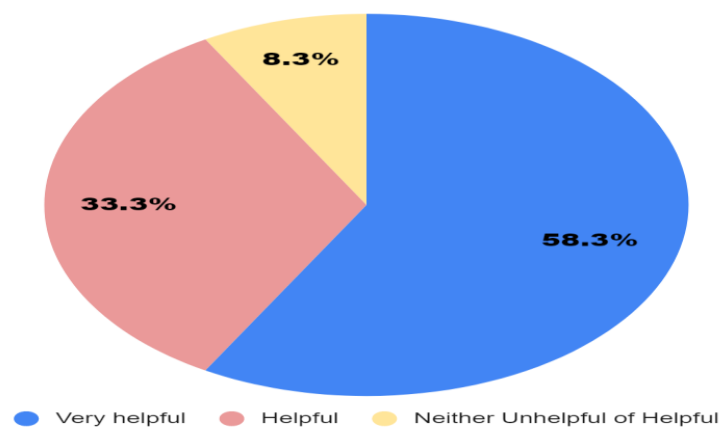

Chart 6.3: Helpfulness of training

In this part of this survey is addressed the issue of training outcomes and it utilization at home universities, and it presents the fifth question within this survey. The answers are provided below:

- o Organizing different workshops.
- o Incorporate best practices and those that are easy to implement considering our research financial restrains.
- o We will use the feedback received in the discussion to update our documentation.
- o Strengthen local and international linkages through interdisciplinary research groups.
- o To better cooperate with the businesses.
- o It will help us for enlarging the communication with innovative structures for research.
- o Improve the collaboration process with the industry.

o To increase the collaboration with the partners, to develop new proposals and to increase the capacities of the office for project development.

The sixth question aims to measure the usefulness of the presentation made by Universum College about "Best practices of collaboration with the industry and government partners". Based on the responses, 58.3% of respondents found it very helpful, 16.7% found it helpful, 16.7% were neutral and 8.3% of respondents found it very unhelpful.
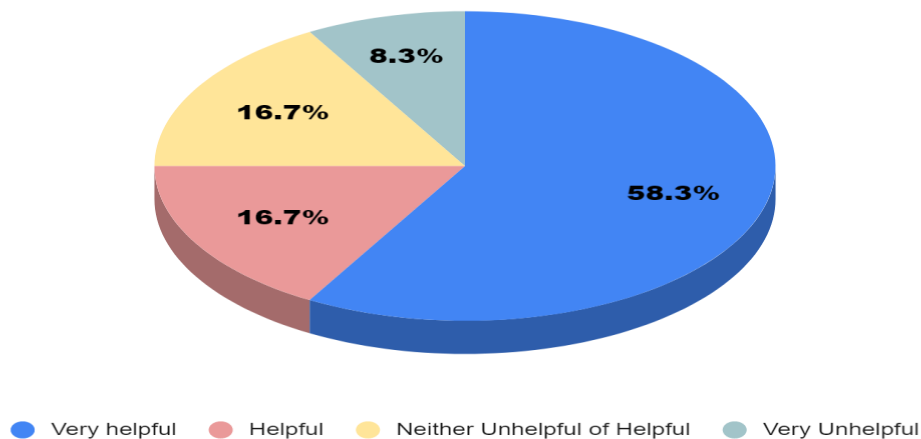

Chart 6.4: Evaluation of the presentation made by Universum College

The seventh question aimed at measuring the helpfulness of the presentation made by University of Prishtina about "Develop local and International linkages through interdisciplinary research group ". Respondents found the presentation very helpful at a scale of 91.7% and 8.3% of respondents declared neither helpful nor helpful.
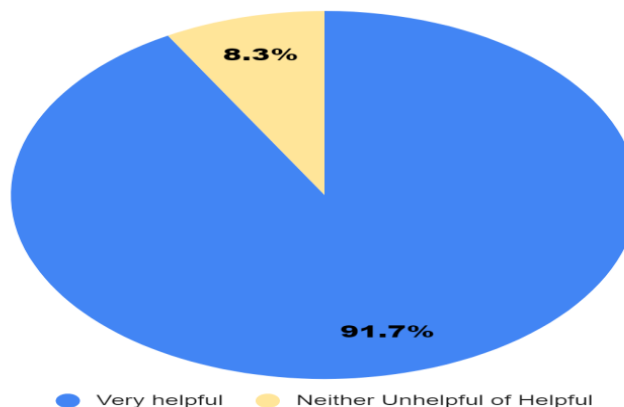

Chart 6.5: Evaluation of presentation made by University of Prishtina

Contribution of questions asked, responses and general discussions during the training consist of the eighth question. The data reveals that 66.7% are very satisfied, 25% are satisfied and 8.3% are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.
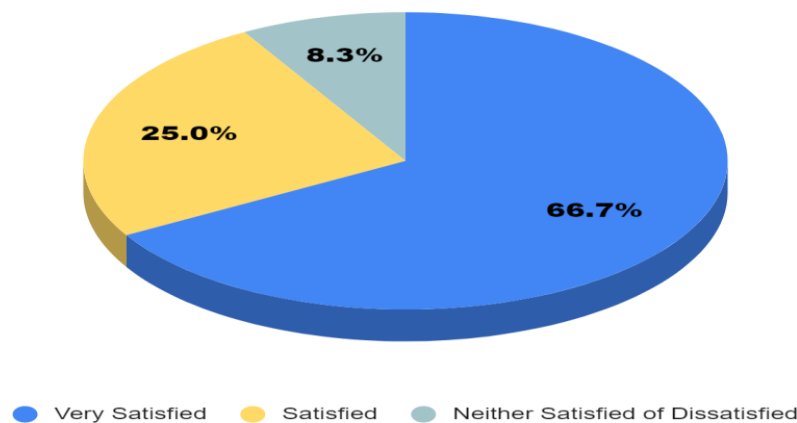
Chart 6.7: Evaluation of discussions

Feedback for future improvement of training workshops consists of the last part of this survey and inputs are provided below:
- o Very helpful project, it's important to go further with new projects in the field of developing dual MA.
- o Future collaboration of partner institutions to be continued.
- o The event was very well structured.
- o To learn from the best practices of collaboration with the industry.
- o Inviting PhD students in activities.
- o Use more case studies from successful cases.

Training Evaluation In Politecnico Di Milano II

Following the survey for the training evaluation held at Politecnico di Milano on October 12 to 15, 2022, the first question posed addressed the most important activities respondents have carried out throughout the workshop and responses range as in the following:
- o Sustainability plan for online networking platform.
- o Sustainability of international partnerships.
- o Sustainability plan for updated teaching methodologies.
- o Sustainability plan for RISS.
- o I organized the logistics aspects of the workshop.
- o Sustainability plan for online networking platform, Sustainability of international partnerships, Sustainability plan for updated teaching methodologies, Sustainability plan for RISS.
- o The sustainability products of the project were in the center of discussions, with the special focus future collaboration among partners.
- o Workshop on RISS sustainability.
- o Training on Education, Research and Knowledge Transfer, Updated Teaching Methodologies training, Networking creation.

The second question addressed satisfaction with the training activities and data reveals that 90% are very satisfied, and 10% are satisfied.
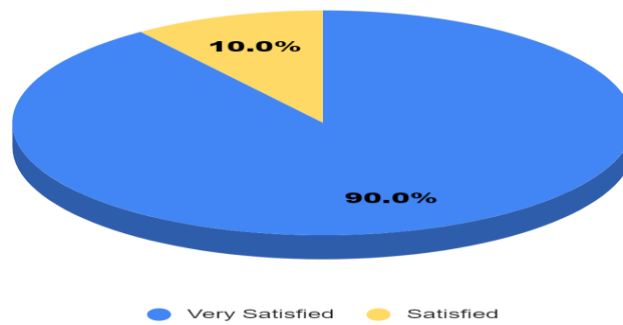
Chart 7.1: Satisfaction with training activities

The third question addressed satisfaction with the workshop on "Sustainability and Networking" and data reveals that 80% are very satisfied, and 20% are satisfied.
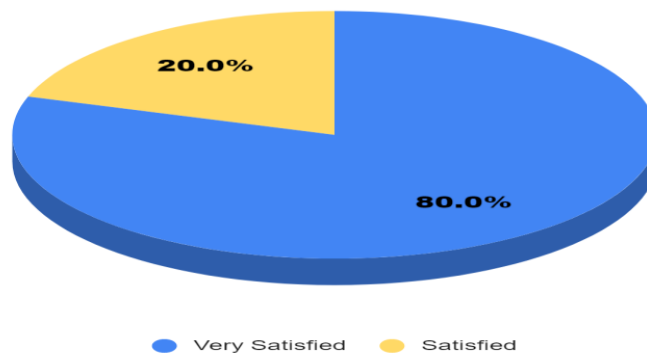

Chart 7.2: Evaluation of workshop on "Sustainability and Networking"

The fourth question addressed satisfaction with the training on "KPIs for Updated Teaching Methodologies" and data reveals that 70% are very satisfied, and 30% are satisfied.
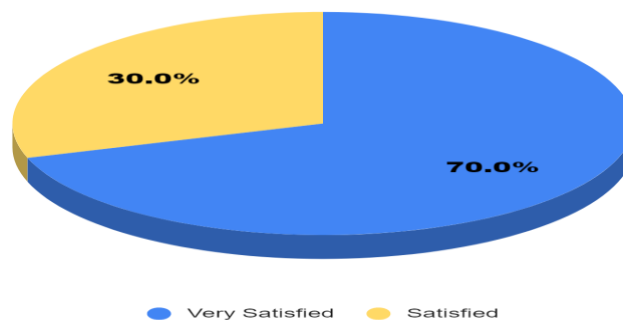

Chart 7.3: Evaluation of training on KPIs for Updated Teaching Methodologies

The fifth question addressed satisfaction with the workshop on "Education, Research and Knowledge Transfer", and data reveals that 90% are very satisfied, and 10% are satisfied.
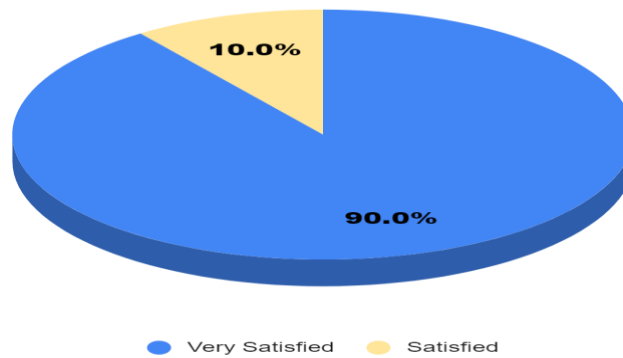
Chart 7.4: Evaluation of the workshop on Education, Research and Knowledge Transfer

The sixth question measures the helpfulness of the training. Based on the data, majority of the respondents 90% perceive the training as very helpful and 10% perceive the training as helpful.
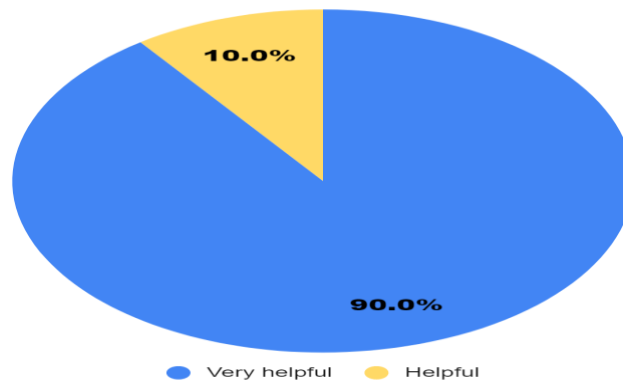

Chart 7.5: Evaluation of   training

The seventh question of this survey addressed the issue of training outcomes and it utilization at home universities, and it presents the fifth question within this survey. The answers are provided below:

- o We learnt much from partner universities and understood better what their needs are.
- o To improve research in our university.
- o I will use for future projects.
- o Serve as input for the sustainability plan.
- o Deep research, bigger network for research and innovation. Improvement of research structure. -Strategic plan for sustainable research.
- o It will help in my responsibilities in defining KPIs for research activities in the department.
- o Through knowledge transfer sessions.
- o Retraining of EUT academic staff.

Contribution of questions asked, responses and general discussions during the training consist the eighth question. The data reveals that 90% are very satisfied, and 10% are satisfied.
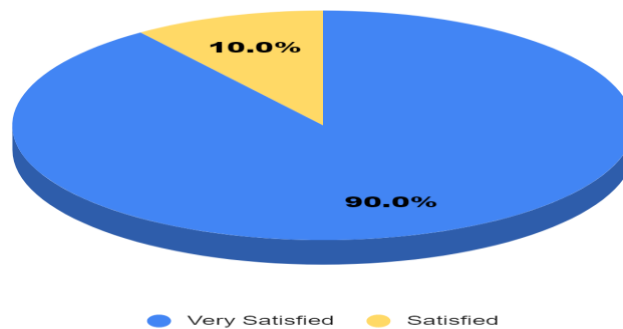

Chart 7.6: Evaluation of discussions

Feedback for future improvement of training and workshops consists of the last part of this survey and inputs are provided below:

- o The training was very interactive, and this made it very useful.
- o The workshop was very well structured.
- o The integration of local and international linkages.
- o Through the online networking platform.

INTERNAL MONITORING

This part presents Internal QA and Monitoring Questionnaire targeted for partner institutions to this Project. The questionnaire is consisted of 18 questions that are elaborated in the following section of this report.

The first question addressed the proposed timeline of activities, how much realistic and feasible where for the HEI/organizations. From the total number of respondents, 96.2% said that proposed timeline was realistic, and 3.8% said that there were some minor issues to be considered in proposed timeline
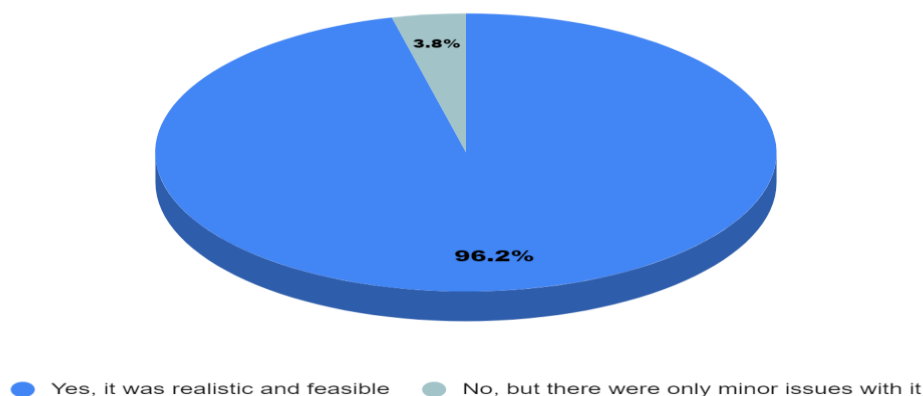

Chart 8.1: Proposed timeline of project implementation

The second question addressed satisfaction with the progress of the activities at all partner institutions, and inputs indicate that 69.2% are completely satisfied, 26.9% are very satisfied and 3.8% are moderately satisfied.
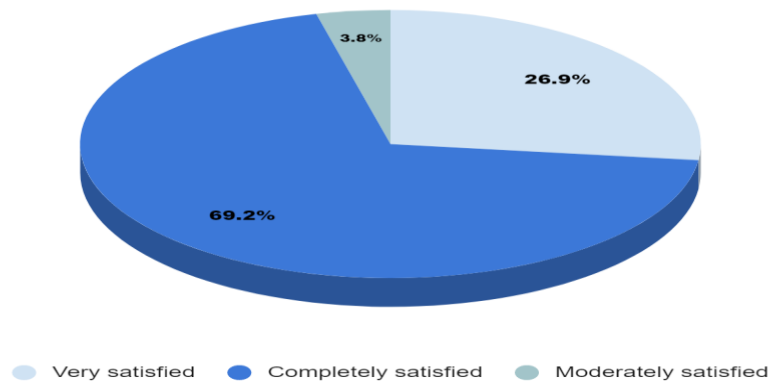
Chart 8.2: Satisfaction with the progress of the activities

The fourth question addressed difficulties or challenges that partner institutions might have had during the implementation of the activities. Majority of respondents 92.3% didn't face challenges, and 7.7% of respondents indicated that they faced difficulties or challenges while implementing the Project.
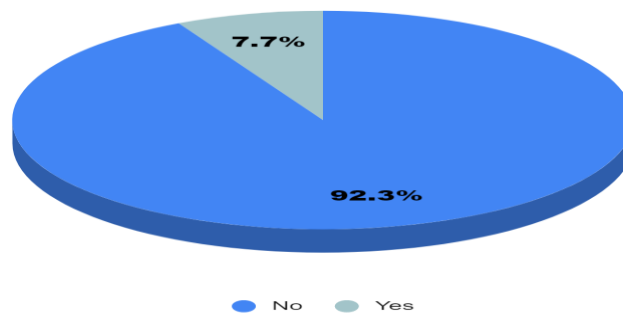

Chart 8.3: Difficulties or challenges while implementing the project.

The difficulties and challenges experienced during the implementation of activities are indicated as in the following:

- o Virtual meeting instead of real meeting brings challenges in interaction.
- o We have not faced any difficulties during the project activities.

The fifth question aims to measure the awareness level about the project at partner institutions. The highest level of awareness within institutions ranges 53.8%, good level 34.6% and fair level 11.5%.
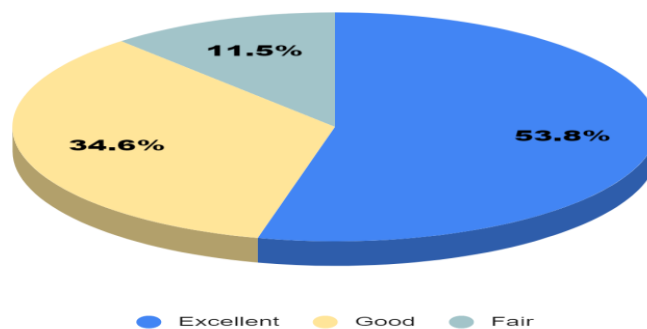

Chart 8.6: Level of awareness about Project at institutions

Regarding the activities implemented in the first year of the project at HEI/organization, respondents provided the following:

- o Teaching Methodologies workshop.
- o Training on mentoring research students; training on teaching methodologies; list of research hub equipment.
- o Problem based learning.
- o Established the project management structures, development of new mentoring and teaching methodologies that enhance students research scales, training workshop on teaching methodologies, training workshop on mentoring research students, working on guidelines for research mentoring.
- o The preparation phase is completed, it involves the validation of the workplan, the establishment of the management structures; the development of new teaching and mentoring methodologies that enhance student's research skills. Training workshop on teaching methodologies and on mentoring research students.
- o The required equipment is purchased.

The seventh question deals with the overall project management and coordination of the project. Data reveals that 76.9% perceive overall project management as excellent, and 23.1% perceive it as good.
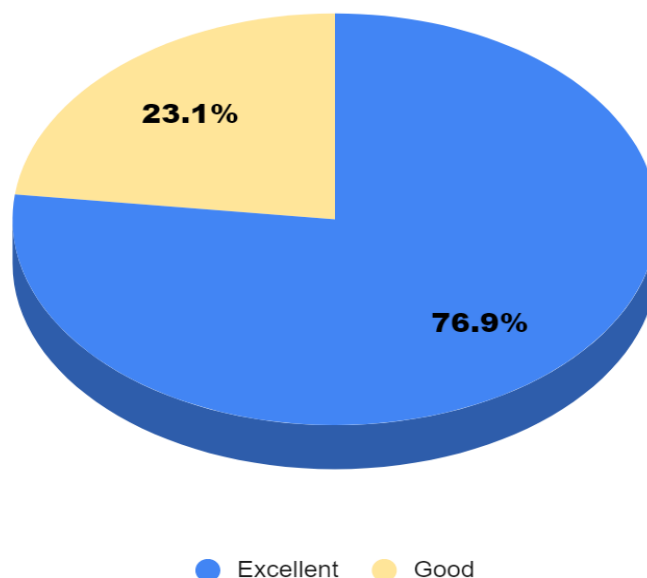

Chart 8.7: Overall Project Management

The eighth question deals with the overall financial management of the Project. Respondents 61.5% perceive the overall financial management as excellent and 38.5 % of respondents perceive it as good.
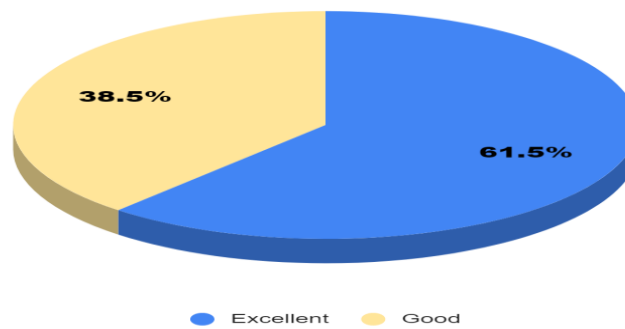
Chart 8.8: Overall Financial Project Management

The ninth question deals with overall time management and respect of agreed deadlines in the Project. Majority of respondents consider it as excellent (73.1%), whereas 23.1% consider it as good and 3.8% consider it as fair.
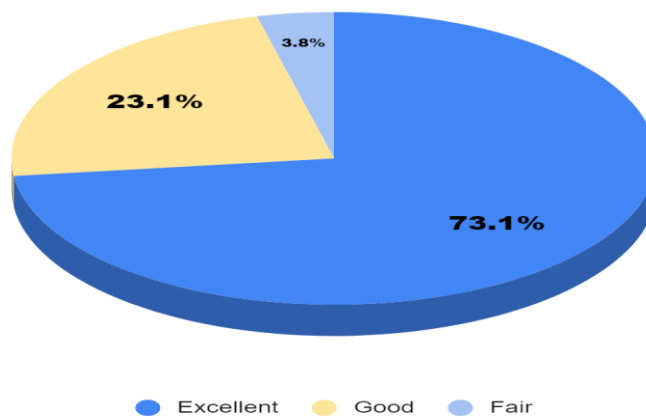

Chart 8.9: Overall Time Management and meeting deadlines

The tenth question deals with the quality of communication among partners and project management team. In general, 80.8% of respondents perceive that communication among partners is excellent, 11.5% perceive it as good and 7.7% perceive it as fair.
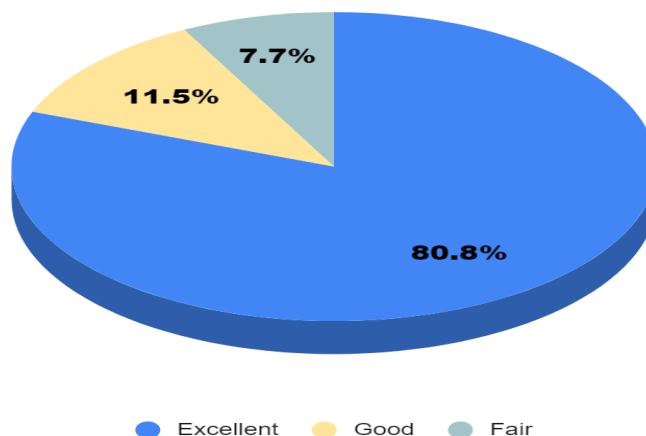

Chart 8.10: Quality of communication among partners

The eleventh questions aim is to measure the efficiency of visibility and communication means at Project level. From the total number of respondents (69.2%) perceive them as excellent, 23.1% perceive them good and 7.7% perceive them as fair.
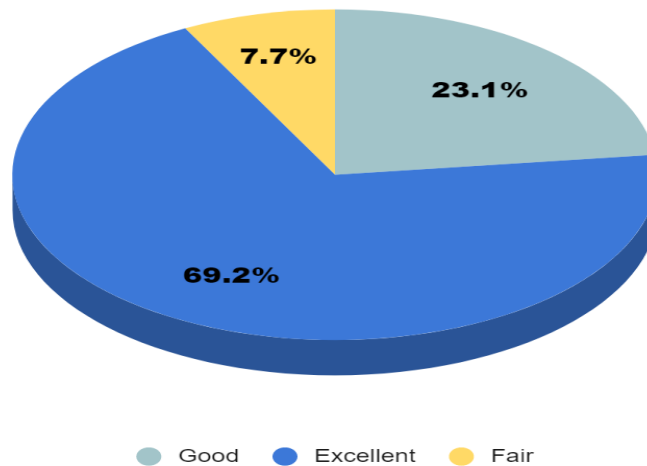

Chart 8.11: Efficiency of visibility and communication means

Regarding recommendations for improvement of the overall project management and communication among partners, the following comments are made:
- o Web page to be updated on time
- o If possible, try to organize the planned study visits physically and not substitute them with online trainings
- o Using the dedicated website for info broadcasting and exchange for everyone to access
- o Due to the pandemic the information flows were reduced. I hope we will have more opportunities for exchanging and sharing information in the future.
- o Nothing that I can think of for now.

Question 13 aims to identify if partner institutions have undertaken any visibility/communication activities to promote DRIVE, and based on inputs 69.2% said yes, and 30.8% said no.
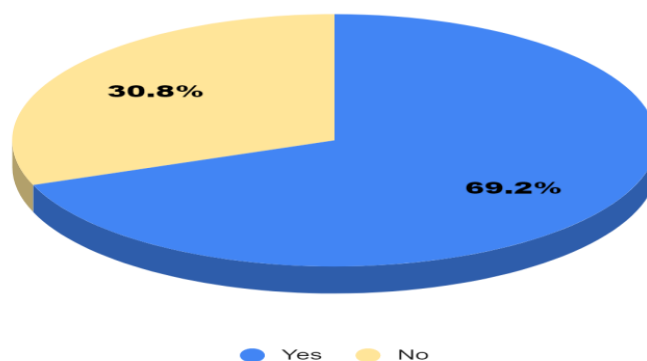

Chart 8.12: Visibility and communication activities to promote DRIVE project

Respondents are asked to shortly describe visibility and communication activities undertaken at their institutions. The inputs of question 13.a are provided below:

- o Through own Institutional Web/ social media
- o Sharing info on the project objectives and results in department, faculty meetings; sharing the project website; various posts in the POLIS website and social media on project activities, mail communications with the staff regarding equipment and the library access provided by the project, info on the project provided to the ministry and accreditation agency during accreditations.
- o Apart from communication e-mails and newsletters related with DRIVE project, the institution has also developed individual and collective meetings, social media, and website activities to inform, involve and engage further academic staff and students. Such process was fundamental for the proper implementation of the activities in our courses.
- o Publication in the organization's newsletter.
- o Project goals and objectives are clearly presented at university web page where there is also the link for the project home page.
- o Project visibility on webpage.
- o The university webpage provides information about drive project.
- o The project description and link to project homepage is available in the main page of university web page.
- o We have published in our official website a general information regarding the project.
- o We have published in our institutional website a short description of the project.

Exceeding initial expectations from project was the survey question number 14 of this internal questionnaire and inputs are provided as given:

- o Yes. First 2 trainings were dedicated to young academic staff recently engaged in teaching, so new methodologies still under piloting are good results. On the other hand, the second workshop, dedicated to the senior staff, more specifically mentors, can serve to all Universities, as a tool to update Guideline for mentoring PhD and Scientific Master Students
- o Yes, the project activities and outcomes have been delivered according to plan despite the challenges imposed by the pandemics
- o I think yes, new methodologies were developed, design thinking workshops and processes that helped us to reflect on the existing curriculum and objectives but also innovative ideas that we can implement in the future.
- o Training workshop on mentoring research students was very appropriate and helpful
- o The training provided from the project were very useful for our staff.
- o yes, networking and working towards common clear vision
- o Yes. The training for mentoring research students was very adequate and welcomed
- o Yes. The project was accomplished.
- o Yes. Since the project was dedicated to research and innovation capacities, a least trainings/ activities realized until now, fulfilled my expectations a
- o I think that the project results until now have met my expectations.

The 15 questions aimed at identifying if participants at sessions, trainings and workshops organized by partners helped respondents learning new things during the project implementation period. The answers are provided below.

- o I learned personally that there is still gap in many aspects of research that must be improved.
- o Yes, several best practices, but I have especially appreciated the training on research mentoring.
- o I am more aware about methodologies that partner institutions from Europe develop and the link between their works in relationship to the methodologies we develop at POLIS University.
- o Yes, personally learned much during this period thanks to this project.
- o The exchange of mentoring and supervision experience during the workshops was enlightening.
- o We could exchange a lot during the trainings.
- o I received information how the mentoring process of MSc and PhD should be improved
- o Yes, I have learned new teaching methodologies like PBL and new mentoring practices.
- o Yes. New mentoring research student's approaches.

Learning from the project includes survey question 16, and inputs are given below:

- o New methods and metrics for research
- o New teaching and mentoring methods that make for better trained staff to prepare students able to conduct independent and high-quality research updated teaching methodologies, learned new research supervision techniques
- o For example: Training workshop on mentoring research students
- o staff members of the project learned new teaching methodologies and approaches
- o New teaching methodologies, how to integrate such methodologies into the curricula, mentoring PhD students.
- o Staff from our institution learned many new teaching methodologies
- o Our institution learned some new teaching methodologies.
- o Innovation and research strategies in many HEIs
- o As it is also known previously, learning by doing is always a better way to learn, is more interactive and closer to real world scenarios.
- o We have learned new teaching methodologies and new practices for mentoring. We have also identified strong and weak points of our institutions in these directions.

Question 17 aimed to find out on what information, knowledge is still lacking at partner institutions to improve the implementation of the activities, and responses are provided below:

- o There is still lack of active engagement of the staff during the project implementation activities.
- o The innovation management in university level, which as far as we have been informed will take place during the second year of the project.
- o I wouldn't consider any skills that are lacking but I think we must develop further mutual exchanges between academic staff and stronger link between the courses we

develop to create a more complementary methodology within courses that also could give a more holistic approach to the student learning process.

o Due to Covid, the institution was not able to organize face to face meetings.
o Additional human resources would be helpful.
o More trainings to strengthen the research capacity.
o Research methodologies.
o Establish the network of research.
o New methodologies of teaching and research.
o There are still some activities foreseen to have possibility to frame all information.
o Better cooperation with industry can help to implement better in some cases the project.
o Collaboration with industry, training staff, source for working in group.

The final question number 18 seeks recommendations and comments to the future activities to be implemented, and the responses are given below:

o All is good for now.
o How to assess the impact of what we are doing? How to do something more grounded on down-to-earth problems? This should be our main concern.
o Initiate and strengthen collaboration among HEIs of the region in the areas of research and innovation.
o Networking events for up-and-coming researchers.
o Motivating a network for research work.
o Implementation of the research and teaching methodologies guidelines.
o There could be organised periodic meetings to discuss the implementation of the project.
o Inclusion in the activities of more academic staff from each Institution.

CONCLUSIONS

Following the objective of this project to contribute to the development of the research and innovation capacities of HEIs in Albania and Kosovo by enhancing their institutional capabilities, staff skills and networking, enormous activities were undertaken from all engaged partners in this project. While closely monitoring activities such as meetings, workshops, trainings, roundtables, and progress of work packages delivered so far, the conclusion is that Drive project is being implemented successfully in all dimensions. The key to this success is being considered the quality of communication, information exchange among partners and project management team. Hence, all trainings offered have had a significant positive benefit for respondents, especially questions and answers time, as well as interactive discussions with partners during all types of meetings. New learning experiences have been highlighted by many respondents. Project is managed in a right path including time management, meeting of the deadlines, financial management, effective communication, and promotion of the project at host institutions. There were no big challenges or barriers reported while implementing the project.

In sum, future protentional joint activities might involve the demand to establish the project on development of innovative mentoring and teaching methodologies that enhance students research skills, organizing training workshops on teaching methodologies, as well as training workshop on how to mentor students interested in research. The further mutual exchanges between academic staff must be maintained to create a more complementary applicable research methodology within courses that also could give a more holistic approach to the learning process. Inclusion of cooperation with industry is considered appropriate and necessary for many respondents.