

ALBANIA

PROGRESS REPORT¹

on recent developments regarding S&T cooperation in/with the WBC (December 2012 / Belgrade till June 2013 / Budva)

1 Policy actions

In the context of the reform on the scientific research started on 2008, an important step is taken in the integration of research in public universities. Within the Polytechnic University of Tirana today exists a powerful Institute of Geoscience Energy, Water and Environment, which supports the university researches, and provides services as seismology and meteorology. A similar case exists with the institutes of the Agricultural University of Tirana, whose laboratories are certified to provide public services.

- The implementation of the program for a Digital Albania

Investments for the creation of ICT labs in schools, the creation of information systems for public procurement, electronic tax services, business registration and licensing that are the cornerstone of our way to Digital Albania, are followed by a series of other projects, the most ambitious recent creation of which is the modern "datacentre" near NAIS, implementation in practice of "cloud computing", the creation of a unique portal providing electronic services e-Albania etc.

- E- payment

All taxpayers who are declared (currently only via electronic form) can only pay taxes through electronic form without having to appear at bank counters. Through electronic payment, the project intends to shorten the time it takes a business to declare and pay taxes, reducing its administrative costs, increasing transparency and develop the quality of services to businesses from Tax Administration.

- M- Tax

Through this application, all users will have all the necessary information about taxes and declarations they have made anywhere at any time, the latest information from the Tax Administration, tax calendar, which will guide and assist taxpayers to declare and pay taxes on time. This project aims to provide their users the possibility to check the situation without being required to appear in the administration service counters, to increase voluntary declaration by taxpayers fulfilling the tax obligations and to reduce administrative costs to businesses.

¹ The progress reports are collected in preparation of the meetings of the Steering Platform on Research for the Western Balkan Countries and will be provided for download from the WBC-INCO.Net homepage (www.wbc-inco.net) about one week before the meeting takes place. Therefore please submit your report to office@wbc-inco.net until May 29, 2013.

2 Legislative initiatives - development of the legal and strategic framework

- Ministry of Education and Science (MoES), Ministry of Economy, Trade and Energy, (METE), the institution of the Minister for Innovation and Information Communication Technology (MITIK). . in cooperation with relevant ministries are in the process of drafting strategies for the period 2014-2020 in line with EU 2020 and SEE 2020 such as:
- Higher Education Strategy 2014-2020 as part of the Strategy on Education for the period 2014-2020.
- Business and Investment Development Strategy 2014 - 2020
- Digital Albania 2014 – 2020
- National Strategy of Energy 2014-2020

3 Important events, meetings, training activities, etc.

Leading institutions of higher education, public and non-public, students, NGOs, representatives, of the EU Delegation in Tirana, as well as representatives of different businesses operating in Albania have participated in the following activities:

February 2013 - was organized the event "Third Mission activities at the Universities of Albania" (U3M-AL) , a project funded by the Tempus program.

December 2012 - Final Ceremony of Business Plan Competition awards;– the first three places won prizes and these top three teams are working with the OECD Investment Compact to improve their

March 2013, launching of the regional project for Enterprise Development and Innovation Facility for Western Balkans (EDIF-WB) financed by EC, coordinated and implemented by EIB, EBRD and governments of WBC

The OECD Investment Compact (OECD IC) for SEE was mandated by the EC to carry out the process of prioritising policy reforms as part of Technical Assistance (TA), which aims at improving the business environment in respective countries.

8 February 2013, ARTI in collaboration with the Ministry of European Integration organized the "Project Visibility Event". The aim of this event was to enhance overall visibility of the EU assistance in Albania.

26-27 April 2013 – participating of the Minister of Education and Science in the Ministerial Conference on "Governance and quality education" organized by the European Council in Helsinki, Finland.

16 April 2013, ARTI organized a General Information Day in the Faculty of Natural Sciences of the University of Tirana. This Information Day was focused on European programmes such as Enterprise Europe Network (EEN), JRC, Horizon 2020, EURAXESS and Erasmus for all.

9 May 2013 coordination meeting in Tirana with RCC and the line ministries in charge of drafting strategies on development of economy and investment, environment, employment, energy, innovation, in the framework of action plan and coordination activities under the **SEE 2020 strategy**

May 2013 – at the University "Aleksander Moisiu" is organized the National Seminar On Reforms in Higher Education (HERE) with the theme "Strengthening the links between universities and business" - with the financial support of the Tempus program.. The focus was educational policies

pursued by the GoA for the orientation of universities towards labour market in the three stages of the study cycles.

Participating in other activities, trainings, and workshops:

- Study Visit to the AREA Science Park in Trieste on 21-22 January 2013
- 5-6 February 2013, study visit on “Health and Consumer Protection” organized in Ispra, Italy from JRC.
- 27-28 February 2013, “Workshop on Smart Grids” organized in Istanbul, Turkey from JRC and TUBITAK.
- 7-8 March 2013, the consortium meeting of the Web in Union project, in Mavrovo, Macedonia.
- 10 April 2013 WBC_INCO.NET project “Towards Horizon 2020”.
- 13-17 May 2013, the “Science week” organized in Pristina, Kosovo, by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST).

4 Development of international cooperation and actions on integration into ERA

- **April 18, 2013** - Presentation of the 4 new guidelines for new businesses in Albania

These guidelines are developed by the Centre PROTİK in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Norway. It provided information on how to set up a new business, getting access to finance, entering to international markets and how to protect intellectual property rights. Guidelines will be available to entrepreneurs who collaborate with PROTİK, as well as to the general public through the web site PROTİK Regulation (<http://www.protik.org>).

- **May 6, 2013** - UNCTAD and Ministry of Economy, Trade and Energy presented the program **UNCTAD's Business Facilitation Programme:** which is a web-based e - Government system that helps countries to work towards business facilitation through transparency, simplification and automation of rules and procedures relating to enterprise creation and operation. This includes three steps:
 - a. Online catalogue of investment rules and procedures:** The e Regulations system is a multi-lingual, online, step-by-step guide on administrative procedures, seen from the user's point of view.
 - b. Simplification of procedures:** help countries to cut red tape and reduce the duration, the cost and the complexity of business-related procedures without changing the laws.
 - c. Electronic single windows:** UNCTAD can computerize, selected administrative procedures (such as company registration, construction permits, export/import licenses, or any other procedure relating to the doing business indicators).

5 Statistics - major changes / updates of relevant statistical data

ARTI in cooperation with Institute of Statistics (INSTAT) of Albania are in the process of collecting statistics concerning science and innovation in Albania under UNESCO regional project.

6 Assessment of the developments and outlook on the next 6 months

(Optional personal opinion)

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