TIRANA METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY

13.05.2012

Title of the suggested Action:

Establishment of an R&D Agency to facilitate and coordinate start up initiatives of undergraduates, to support innovation and provide collaboration with business sector

Subtitle (or short description in one sentence):

Creation of an R&D Agency that coordinates and supports projects of students from Tirana Metropolitan University, University of Prizren and South East Europe University.

Description of the Action (approx. 1 page):

Applies sciences in the Western Balkans includes the higher education, scientific research, knowledge and technology (innovation) development. As such it includes not only the public and non-public institutions of higher education and basic research, but also entrepreneurships operating in the field of research, development and innovation. Capacity and competence to manage both basic and applied research in Albania, FYROM and Kosovo are limited and generally far from standards that would enable co-operation and participation in European or international programs. Reforms initiated by Central Government in the field of higher education, in basic research aim primarily at integrating these two systems which so far have been entirely separate from one another, and which should be innovative and efficient in a small country with limited financial resources. These are still in their early steps of development, but show quite a positive trend. There are private organizations in the form of institutes or NGOs with a clear profile in research and development system that provide good support for policy-making, executive and legislative bodies. The number of private entrepreneurships involved in information and communication technology in the field of technology and knowledge development and transfer has increased recently. But similar initiatives in other important areas of economic and social development are scarce. Nevertheless, it should be noted that development of private entrepreneurship involved in development and transfer of technology and research has been in any case faster than that of public institutions, due to the absence of stimulating financial mechanisms for researchers and to the lack of a genuine reform of public science institutions.

Capacity and competence to manage both basic and applied research in Albania, FYROM and Kosovo are limited and generally far from standards that would enable co-operation and participation in European or international programs. Equally, scientific infrastructure is outdated and inadequate to support quality research. A sustainable investing program is needed to ensure minimal scientific equipment and facilities (i) for university training across all scientific fields (ii) and to develop new profiles and upgrade existing ones. From a cost-efficiency point of view, there is a need to align a regional scientific agency, at regional (Western Balkans) level to finance innovation activities, market friendly technology research projects, regional research, to boost and coordinate start up initiatives, to provide incentives for undergraduate and recent graduates in applies sciences to commercialize their ideas in the market. The regional agency will prove to be a platform to link students, researchers and academics with entrepreneurs and secure knowledge transfer. The project foresees the establishment of three University Research Centers in Tirana Metropolitan University in Tirana, Albania; University of Prizren in Prizren, Kosovo; South East European University in Tetovo, FYROM. These research centers are research-oriented academic institutions whose mission is to carry out scientific research to support start up initiatives from students of each university and to develop and transfer knowledge and technology.

These three higher education institutions are ethnically Albanian speaking universities, mobilizing the scientific Diaspora, increase mobility and provides incentives to better cooperation and exchange of practices and know how at academic and research level, but not only. It provides an ample space for students for regional networking for business innovation to better interact and exchange knowledge and information on their technological trends.

References to running activities, lessons learnt from other regions, etc. (one paragraph):

The concepts described above are in line with national strategies of science and technology in Albania, FYROM and Kosovo, in compliance with latest priorities and objectives of FP 7 and related EU funded programs for the Western Balkans in the framework of Stabilization and Association Process. Slovenia and Croatia make up success stories of state investment and support to research and innovation resulted in market friendly technological innovations to make their companies compete in Europe.

Actors to be involved in the implementation and their roles (max. half a page):

Tirana Metropolitan University – Tirana, Albania

TMU is established by investors who invest in the field of engineering, architecture, technology and economy, financed by Future University Tirana Groups **FUT GROUP. Its mission is education, research in technology and innovation, business development plans in Albania. Specialized in applied sciences students will design and present market oriented plans in civil engineering and business. FUT group offers opportunity to students to test their business plans in their companies via an internship period.**

University of Prizren – Prizren, Kosovo

UP provides expertise in computer sciences, laboratories and specialists in electronic engineering, software design and implementation of soft packages. UP brings forth the instruments and know how in experimenting projects in Soft Engineering and Information Technology

South East European University – Tetovo, FYROM

The SEEU, the latest on modern technology provides links with other centers and institutions in Europe and US, Center for Research and Training in the field of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) Center for research and training – ICT and a modern laboratory center with the most contemporary computer equipment in R.M and abroad. It is intended for scientific research work for realization of practical hours and projects for the courses.

Expected impact (one paragraph):

Boost research and development regionally, increase cooperation successfully in ethnic Albanian speaking countries, increase visibility towards enterprises where 53 % of businesses in Albanian speaking territories, 53 % have their seats in Tirana, FDI’s are concentrated in Tirana being attractive to students from Prizren and Tetovo to test their skills in the private companies in Tirana. This projects stimulates research which is an impulse for the economy to reshuffle itself and catch up with latest technological advancements. Last but not least generate incomes and channel in the market graduates with innovative ideas.

Relevance to the WBC region (one paragraph):

This will involve the creation, in synergy with the higher education institutions of research action plan in Albanian speaking universities in three countries. Increase innovation activity in companies (this figure may be revised once the results from the first business RTDI survey are published) through investment in R&D through consortia laboratories and with the academic. Creation and development of University Research Centers in the above mentioned universities and a coordinating Agency as liaising body of each of these Research Centers.

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