



**Annex B to QC Manual - Word document template**

**Erasmus + Project No 561586-EPP-1-2015-1-RS-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP  
Enhancement of HE Research Potential Contributing to Further Growth of the WB Region  
Re@WBC**

Ref. No and Title of Workpackage	Activity no. 2.9. Cooperation with scientific diaspora established
Title of Deliverable:	Report
Institution:	University of Tirana
Author/s of the deliverable	Etleva Kondi
Status of the document:	Final
Document Version no and date:	v.01, 26.11. 2016.
Number of Pages	4
Dissemination Level	Internal

Abstract	The following document is a report on the current situation of the relationships UTI has with the scientific diaspora
----------	---

**Report on the current situation of the cooperation with scientific diaspora**

**Present situation concerning cooperation with scientific Diaspora and Alumni**

One of the priority areas identified nowadays within the higher education system in Albania focuses on building mutually beneficial cooperation between higher education systems in Europe with the ones in Albania. In this regard, it seems crucial to understand how Tirana University alumni who have carried out part or all of their degree studies in the University of Tirana and Albanian academic Diaspora are contributing to capacity building in the field of higher education in the University of Tirana and not only. It is furthermore important to investigate current efforts made by our university to encourage alumni and the scientific Diaspora contribute to higher education development in UT. The Alumni network identified at the University of Tirana is the one established by students of this university.

**1. Alumni network established by UT university** Alumni network is predominantly organized on a national level – which offers opportunities to create regional linkages of the University of Tirana around specific thematic fields. Its specific objective is to open up and maintain communication channels between graduated students and present students.

*The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.*



ERASMUS+ PROJECT

**Re@WBC**

Enhancement of HE research potential  
contributing to further growth of the WB region



Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union

Thereby, alumni networks will play an increasing role in promoting a broader bi-regional scientific exchange and research cooperation. This national initiative seeks to strengthen alumni ties in order to build up a database of UT Alumni. Tirana University Alumni network seeks to broaden the engagement of alumni. Individuals who join the Alumni Network are expected to have a desire to support and enhance the contributions that further Tirana University's mission of educating students. Those that participate in this network also seek to grow and develop the relationship between the University and the Alumni Network. The UT Alumni network connects and engages its alumni in meaningful activities to create initiatives for greater good. Alumni network is a valuable group of the University of Tirana whose activities offer regular opportunities for alumni to stay involved and active in the life of the University. This group assists our University by extending its connection with alumni on a global scale and enables its graduates to connect with one another for personal and professional reasons. Former students, or alumni, are important members of the University of Tirana community. Any individual who has successfully completed a degree, a full year of study, study abroad/exchange program of one semester of study at the University of Tirana can be a member of the University's alumni community. They need to 'sign up' and all alumni who keep their contact details up-to-date with the University will be treated as active members of the University's alumni community.

### **1.1. Mission**

The mission of Alumni Network is to foster relationships between present and future alumni with the University of Tirana by enriching the professional and personal lives of all alumni, to recognize alumni contributions to our university community and to enhance the growth, development and advancement of Tirana University. Alumni mission is to connect and reconnect alumni, students, and friends to the university and each other through experiences and communications for the purpose of generating multifaceted support for the University of Tirana. There is an opportunity for alumni to act as promoters for the University of Tirana, using their experience, knowledge and leadership skills to assist student recruitment goals. Through the provision of postgraduate alumni insights, we can better target and cross-promote relevant postgraduate courses and enrolment opportunities in our alumni channels. In addition, we are trying to strengthen opportunities for our alumni to take an active role in promoting the University of Tirana, offering volunteering opportunities to represent the University to potential future students. The goal is to empower alumni to become confident promoters when attending and presenting at student recruitment events.

Alumni network provides opportunities for the graduates to receive information on career opportunities and study. This network shall:

- Create a network for members to get connected (networking); - Foster work opportunities, self-development plans. - Collaborate in organizing specific activities like thematic workshop and cooperation in general/at large at the University of Tirana.
- Encourage the setting up of volunteer groups which will help promote the social, educational and cultural activities; - Recruit qualified candidates for companies;
- Match partnerships between alumni and interested partners;
- Gain a different view on work and live in the competitive workplace of nowadays;

*The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.*



ERASMUS+ PROJECT

Re@WBC

Enhancement of HE research potential  
contributing to further growth of the WB region



Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union

- Gain insight and meet well-known firms to pursue a career, especially in an international environment;
- Promote and expand the Alumni network;
- Facilitate alumni's professional career development.

Similar to the alumni group set up by those who graduated from the University of Tirana, there is another type of alumni network built up by students from the same specialization. It means that no matter what university they studied at, all students who graduated either from one EU or US University and share the same interest in one specialization would establish an alumni group. These networks are, of course, different by the purpose of their activities. For example, the DAAD groups support students, who like to learn the German language and offer consulting and scholarships to study, live and research in Germany. Also, after the stay in Germany, the DAAD keeps contact to the Alumni, offers further trainings and networking meetings and assistance in general. Similarly, The Albanian Fulbright Alumni Association (AFAA) supports and promotes the Fulbright Program of international educational and cultural exchange. AFAA aims to strengthen academic, professional, and human contacts among Albanian and US institutions and individuals; to contribute to individual development, solidarity among members, and public prestige and understanding of the Fulbright, Humphrey, and Ron Brown Programs; to create a forum for sharing ideas and experiences in diverse fields, thus playing a significant role in programs and projects which would contribute to national democratic development. The AFAA members have had the opportunity, through their scholarships, to study in some of the most eminent educational bodies in the USA and are committed to the benefits of mutual exchange and communication between nations, groups and individuals. ASAN - Albanian Students Abroad Network is an inclusive network for Albanian students that are currently studying abroad throughout the world. The motivation for the creation of ASAN is the lack of coordinated policies and instruments that motivate Albanian students studying abroad to invest their future in Albania or for Albania... ASAN creates the needed spaces and infrastructure for the effective collaboration of the Albanian students abroad. This way, ASAN serves as a 'generator' of ideas and initiatives for the solution of the problems they face.

## 2. Scientific Diaspora

In comparison with the universities in the neighboring countries, the University of Tirana is lagging behind when it comes to implementing programs regarding Diaspora. Exact figures about scientists living and working outside Albania are unavailable and no systematic analysis or survey of scientific Diaspora has so far taken place. These findings would help to show ways in which the contribution of alumni and Diaspora for the development of higher education systems in Albania can be reinforced and also feed into the early stages of future programmes. In order to involve the scientific Diaspora in domestic development programs, awareness among the general public about this population's possible contribution and the setting up of scientific Diaspora networks are very important. Having more permanent structures and a list of databases of Albanian academics living and working abroad who are willing to come to their home country and contribute to the University of Tirana engaging in various development projects or undertaking teaching assignments at our university would result in the constitution of real Alumni networks. Efforts are continuously made both from governmental and national institutions of higher of education to link migration with development goals and to "mobilize"

*The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.*



ERASMUS+ PROJECT

**Re@WBC**

Enhancement of HE research potential  
contributing to further growth of the WB region



Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union

the large Diaspora for cooperation and contribution. However, most often the way from the idea to a concrete realization is far and complex. For this reason, we intend to increase Research activity mainly concentrating on the development impact of migrant remittances<sup>5</sup> and the scientific Diaspora. Comprehensive approaches to manage migration are being identified and relevant strategies as well as concrete instruments developed. There is a first step toward the application of these strategies - The First Summit of Albanian Diaspora. At the decision of the Albanian Government, the First Summit of All - Albanian Diaspora will take place in Tirana from 18 – 20 November 2016. At this historic Summit have been invited all interested fellow citizens, leaders and representatives of Albanian cultural associations, personalities in the fields of culture, arts, literature, business and others.

### **Suggestion and conclusion**

The formation of an alumni network at the University of Tirana with representatives from the scientific Diaspora could lead to the establishment of a strong scientific group with outreach into various parts of society. This might not be a measurable outcome but a very effective impact on the higher education system provided by the University of Tirana. A programme to connect scientific Diaspora Alumni from everywhere around the globe could strengthen the links between the Albanian scientists living and working abroad with the scientists living and working in Albania and create a network. Through this network, information targeted on research and innovation can be shared with Alumni living and working in Albania. Scientific Diaspora and Alumni associations can play a key role in forming research partnerships and enhance cooperation between scientists. The funding of such a coordinated action would be the key to success. Because most of the alumni associations are working on a voluntary basis, it is necessary to develop a permanent funding source and a programme to ensure efficient long-term impact of Alumni. A programme like this should focus on the expectations and needs of this group. Also, the set-up of the scientific Diaspora alumni database by the University of Tirana is very important, as well as an alumni contact point who might be the main point for the spreading of information to the rest of the members. This database system shall enable Albanian Diaspora to become members filling their profiles in the system. Having created the system, the University of Tirana could bring scientists from the Diaspora and Albania altogether in different research activities which help develop the scientific research.