

## ACTION PLAN

### 1. ORGANISATIONAL INFORMATION

<b>STAFF &amp; STUDENTS</b>	<b>FTE</b>
<i>Total researchers = staff, fellowship holders, bursary holders, PhD. students either full-time or part-time involved in research</i>	837
<i>Of whom are international (i.e. foreign nationality)</i>	20
<i>Of whom are externally funded (i.e. for whom the organisation is host organisation)</i>	20
<i>Of whom are women</i>	498
<i>Of whom are stage R3 or R4 = Researchers with a large degree of autonomy, typically holding the status of Principal Investigator or Professor.</i>	300
<i>Of whom are stage R2 = in most organisations corresponding with postdoctoral level</i>	167
<i>Of whom are stage R1 = in most organisations corresponding with doctoral level</i>	313
<i>Total number of students (if relevant)</i>	26,706
<i>Total number of staff (including management, administrative, teaching and research staff)</i>	1,296
<b>ORGANISATIONAL PROFILE (a very brief description of your organisation, max. 100 words)</b>	
<p>The University of Tirana, the oldest in Albania, dates from 1957. The University of Tirana is located The main activities of UT are centred on teaching and research, with a wide variety of high quality education delivered by its six faculties: Faculty of History and Philology, Faculty of Foreign Languages, Faculty of Law, Faculty of Economics, Faculty of Social Sciences, Faculty of Natural Sciences and UT branch in Saranda, the Institute of Nuclear Physics, Institute of European Studies and Confucius Institute.</p> <p>The study programs at UT aim at development of education, culture, science and economy in the service of freedom and diversity of ideas to build and consolidate democratic society and the rule of law for enhancing human dignity and well-being through legitimate and transparent activities.</p>	

### 2. STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF THE CURRENT PRACTICE:

<b>Thematic heading of the Charter and Code</b>	<b>STRENGTHS and WEAKNESSES</b>
Ethical and professional aspects	Research freedom at University level is established and defended by the Law on Higher Education Nr. 80/ 2015. Professional attitude is achieved through continuous supervision of practices. Strength of University of Tirana is also the issue of non-discrimination, as well as contractual and legal obligations offering to the researcher, the opportunity to fully clarify issues before contract signing. However, there is need for

	undertaking actions to raise awareness on ethical responsibilities and practice in research, by organizing training on the protection of research results. There is also a need for implementing a strategy for the dissemination of results to the wider public. There is a lack of measurable standards related to the appraisal system.
Recruitment and selection	Recruitment of the staff of the University is done through an open process and is guarded by the Law on Higher Education. All announcements for opening are introduced online and in newspapers. There is need for increasing the duration of position advertisement and also publication of job offers at the Euraxess website. The University recognizes mobility for researchers and most qualifications.
Working conditions	The University encourages mobility based on EU regulations thus recognizing its value and benefit for the researchers, students, academic and administrative staff. Stability and permanence of employment is regulated by law. There are some weaknesses related to the infrastructure which requires an investigation of funds availability and promotion of funding programmes.
Training and development	<p>There is a need for improvement of mentoring and supervision plan and for the evaluation of activities. All mentoring and supervision activities need to be evaluated. There is continual professional development among researchers but an agenda needs to be developed and institutional capacity built in order to implement it.</p> <p>There is need to initiate discussion on effective reporting process and also need for regular trainings on EU sources for scientific research that could be beneficial to researchers.</p>

### 3. ACTIONS

<b><i>Proposed ACTIONS</i></b>	<b><i>GAP Principle(s)</i></b>	<b><i>Timing (at least by year's quarter/semester)</i></b>	<b><i>Responsible Unit</i></b>	<b><i>Indicator(s)/ Target(s)</i></b>
Increase the awareness on the European Charter & Code by organizing info days. Raise awareness on FP7, H2020 and other EU sources of funding	Researchers lack a thorough knowledge of Charter and Code and different EU sources of funding	2s/1y	UT Rectorate	2 trainings with 80 academic and administrative staff
Increase the duration of position advertisement	The duration of the position advertisement is 15 days.	2s/2y	Rectorate Board of administration	Increase the duration by 10 days

Increase capacity of CDC to deal with researchers, at least with PhD candidates. Provide trainings to CDC staff	There is one member of the administrative staff that deals with researchers in each faculty	1s/2y	Rectorate	2-3 trainings, offer 2 internships to assist in duties of the CDC
Introduce standard reports. Investigate the issue of standardized reports among different departments	somewhat worrisome results have been acquired regarding the standardization of evaluation reports	1s/2y	Rectorate/ Faculties	1 training (1 representative per department) continuous monitoring of the effects
Use the webpages of the faculties and the UT webpage to advertise calls for PhD, post-doctoral researchers and young researchers at University of Tirana	There have been publications of opportunities for researchers There is lack of post-doctoral appointments	1s/1y	Vice Rector for Scientific Research	Continuous monitoring
Set precise criteria for recruiting young researchers and post doctorate researchers in line with the Albanian law on Higher Education and in line with Charter and Code. Post recruitment criteria on the webpage of the faculties and Rectorate	All advertisements for openings at university contain general information on the requirements but do not provide a wider range of information with regard to working conditions and career development	1s/1y	Rectorate Senate	Inform staff on respective bylaws for recruitment
Post vacancies for young and senior researchers on Euraxess web portal	Vacancies are only posted at the University website, faculty's website and on <a href="http://www.app.gov.al">www.app.gov.al</a>	2s/2y	Rectorate	Increase the number of applications from abroad
Create a database for the recruitment of young researchers, PhD candidates and senior researchers at home and abroad	There is a database of recruitment but it does not involve all researchers at home and abroad.	2s/2y	Rectorate Human Resources Office CDC	Establish an updated database of researchers
Post criteria on the University website and the EURAXESS web portal and monitor the nomination of a foreign professor in the scientific committee as foreseen in the Albanian law for the Higher Education and the Charter of Code	Criteria are posted on the website of the University but not on the EURAXESS website which would offer more opportunities for foreign researchers	continuous	Vice Rector for Scientific Research	Keep records on the procedures of nomination and committee work

Inform the staff on principles for ethical issues related to the establishment of the ethics committee in line with Charter & Code and the Albanian Law on Higher Education and publish responsibilities and the duties of ethics committee on the University's website	Researchers should be updated regularly on issues related to the ethics committees work and their responsibilities need to be published	1s/2y	Rectorate Ethics Committee	Info day on procedures for ethics committee
Increase qualitative capacity of the ethics committee and monitor procedures for plagiarism detection at UT. Increase the transparency of ethical issues treatment and handling	The cases handled by the Ethics Committee are considered transparent since all meetings are open to the public. The members of the Ethics Committee are not remunerated for their work.  There are no tools to help members. There is only one secretary who keeps the correspondence, takes down minutes of meetings etc.	2s/2y	Ethics Committee Rectorate	By introducing and using new software to detect plagiarism
Increase awareness and publish on the University website all the national laws and bylaws about ethical issues for the researchers in the country and abroad	Researchers need to be better informed on all laws about ethical issues they might face during their research	continuous	Ethics Committee Rectorate	Trainings about ethical issues
Raise awareness on the protection of research results, their confidentiality (before publication), as well as the protection of the personal data which is collected in the research process	There is not a very good feedback with regard to the level of implementation of good practices related to the protection of research results, their confidentiality (before publication), as well as the protection of the personal data which is collected in the research process	1s/1y	Ethics Committee Rectorate (Legal Office)	organize trainings
Develop and implement a strategy for communicating the scientific results with	Researchers consider that there is lack of adequate presentation of the research work in general	1s/2y	Rectorate Vice Rector for Scientific Research	Continuous publication of latest scientific results

the general public	public			
Establish EURAXESS local contact point in cooperation with the Agency	EURAXESS Service Centre is not established in the University of Tirana.	2s/1y	Rectorate Vice Rector for scientific research	Continuous meetings and coordination
Monitoring the availability of infrastructural funds for improving facilities and promote funding programs which involve infrastructural measures	One of the main issues in providing excellent working conditions in University of Tirana is the low level of development of the research infrastructure (laboratories, devices, etc.). As far as facilities are concerned, there have been some improvements in the recent years, though they still cannot be considered in full compliance with international standards. (ratio students/ m2). As a result, the teaching process is carried out in shifts, until the late hours of the evening and during weekends as well.	2s/1y	Board of Administration	Increase in funds in line with the budget of the University and the development strategy
Improve links with both national and international organizations aiming at the involvement of the PhD students and researchers	There are links with some organizations but more work needs to be done with regard to involving researchers in multidisciplinary groups	continuous	Vice Rector for Scientific Research	Roundtables with organizations and publication of results
Monitor procedures for evaluation of mentoring and supervision activities	A considerable number of researchers perceive the work on mentorship and supervision as superficial and not effectively evaluated. They request that apart from the supervision and individual plan there is need for establishing procedures for the evaluation of these activities.	continuous	Vice Rector for Scientific research / Ethics Committee Senate	Aim at improving standards for mentoring and supervision
Improve the system of "contracts" with PhD students, which will	There is a generic plan of individual work. Researchers also have to	Continuous	Faculties Departments	Update standardized contracts/ generic

highlight a generic plan of the individual work with mentors/supervisors	present two times in the respective departments on the work completed			<i>plans of individual work</i>
Implement the strategy for Internationalization at university level	UT is involved in projects and cooperation with other higher education institutions	2s/2y	Vice rector for research IRO Research office	<i>Increase the number of international cooperation, mobility, and projects</i>

University of Tirana implements a well-structured Recruitment process in line with Article 64 of Law on Higher Education, no.80, date 22.07.2015 which directly relates the Recruitment of the academic staff. The criteria for recruitment of the full time academic personnel are established by the base unit based on its needs and approved by the Rector. The competition in the higher education institutions is led by an ad-hoc committee composed in majority by representatives of the respective base unit. The rules and procedures for selecting ad hoc committee members as well as the selection of academic staff are set out in the statute of HEIs. In non-public institutions the criteria, rules and procedures for recruiting academic staff are defined in the statute of the institution.

UT has undertaken some steps in compliance with some of the principles of Open, Transparent and Merit-Based Recruitment

With regard to **Open** Recruitment it publishes all advertisements for openings at university and faculties website. The advertisements contain information on the requirements for the positions, the method of evaluation and they are advertised for 15 days.

As far as **Transparency** is concerned all requirements and obligations arising from employment contract are made known to the applicants.

With regard to **Merit Based** recruitment candidates are ensured by the HR representative of evaluations based on the requirements set out in the job description. The members of the selection committee prepare the same evaluation grid for all candidates, reflecting the criteria mentioned in the opening. The members follow a specific guideline of procedures.

There is need for further actions to be undertaken as a result of issues that have appeared during the process of the preparation of the Gap Analysis and these issues request the consideration and implementation of the following:

- a. there is need to increase the duration of the position advertisements and translations of openings in English. Job opportunities need to be published at EURAXESS website in order to make opportunities available to foreign researchers.
- b. there is need to revise and improve the advertisement content so that they include all elements as foreseen by OTM-R.
3. the evaluation grid should also contain elements that comply with the job requirement and different characteristics that applicants need to have to suit the position.

## 4. IMPLEMENTATION

All offices of the Rectorate and Faculties, clearly defined in the action plan will be responsible for the completion of the activities. Their work will be monitored by a Steering Committee established by the Rector to supervise the whole process of implementation at the University of Tirana. Attention will be given to the work group composition, to make sure that it involves top management, HRS4R expert, a representative of the legal office and also a representative of the IT office. The working group will meet approximately 4 times a year in order to measure the progress and discuss on different problematic issues that might have aroused and consider the possibility for reconsideration and improvement of the plan. After each meeting the Rector and the Senate will be updated on the specific issues.

It is of importance to organize meetings on other levels of University as well at least once a year to not only inform on the results of the objectives but also get support from the staff of the University and Faculties to overcome difficulties.

The working group will also prepare material for workshops to be organized with researchers to provide them with information on the principles of Charter and Code and also inform them on the opportunities offered by the realization of objectives.

Checklist	*Detailed description and duly justification
How will the implementation committee and/or steering group regularly oversee progress?	The steering group will be composed of the Vice Rector, HR Director, members of the Faculties as well as members from the administrative staff. This group will check the progress and work closely with the Senate and the stakeholders to regularly oversee progress. It will meet 4 times a year.
How do you intend to involve the research community, your main stakeholders, in the implementation process?	The Implementation Group will involve one representative from R1 to R4. These members are representative of different bodies of University. This group will be in charge of gathering information required and also check on the dissemination of the actions planned to be completed. The group may also prepare and distribute questionnaires and organize focus groups to get feedback and prepare an analysis of the progress of the whole process of the implementation.
How do you proceed with the alignment of organisational policies with the HRS4R? Make sure the HRS4R is recognized in the organisation's research strategy, as the overarching HR policy.	The University's strategies for development and research foresee an action plan of development with regard to many of the points addressed by HRS4R. After the application will be submitted, there will also be a need to review different organizational policies to fully comply with HRS4R. It will be an on-going process aiming at

	improving strategies and bylaws to be in line with the EU requirements and initiatives.
How will you ensure that the proposed actions are implemented?	The HRS4R Action Plan will be incorporated in the different University policies and it will highlight the procedures for follow-up of these planned actions and prepare a list of indicators to be taken into consideration. There will be an annual analysis of the activities under HRS4R to ensure objectives are met and improve any actions that have not been fully completed.
How will you monitor progress (timeline)?	The progress will be monitored in different ways including meetings of the Steering group, meetings with stakeholders and also distribution and analysis of questionnaires to check on the issues and update different documents to be used in the future. The process will start during the first half of the first year of the implementation and will continue regularly.
How will you measure progress (indicators) in view of the next assessment?	The group will be in charge of regularly reporting to the University Senate and it will prepare internal reviews, and check on the actions which have not been completed and need to be considered in the future. The reports prepared will be made public to the academic staff and also wait for suggestions on the elements that need to be improved. There might also be a consideration of external reviewer's template to better understand how the institution's strategy will be checked in compliance with the regulations of the whole HRS4R process.