

Strategy for Life Long Learning Unit FAN S. NOLI UNIVERSITY

Dual Curricula – Study and Work Practice in Agriculture and Food Safety

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The logo for DualAFS features the word "Dual" in a bold, black, sans-serif font, followed by "AFS" in a larger, bold, black, sans-serif font. The text is set against a background of two overlapping rectangular shapes: a light green one on the left and an orange one on the right.

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Statement of originality:

This deliverable contains original unpublished work except where clearly indicated otherwise. Acknowledgement of previously published material and of the work of others has been made through appropriate citation, quotation or both.





1. Executive Summary

This report addresses various aspects of reframing a lifelong learning development strategy and its implementation in the framework of DualAFS project, at the Faculty of Agriculture of “Fan S. Noli” University of Korca.

The development of life-long-learning, extension services, knowledge & technology transfer at Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Albania represents the "Third mission" of modern universities. This mission involves the application of academic knowledge and research to serve the needs of society, specifically in agriculture, food and the labor market.

The development of these functions is very important for enhancing the quality of the academic offer of universities, improving the theoretical education and practical skills of students, and increasing the level of teaching and research of universities. In this way, HEI-s can built important cooperation bridges with all the economic entities and public institutions, contributing to the development of the sectors of the economy that are critical to the Albanian society, such as agriculture, livestock, food quality and safety. Therefore, it is crucial that HEIs have the necessary resources, expertise, and infrastructure to carry out these functions effectively.

In the framework of DualAFS project, “Fan S. Noli” University is committed in addressing the development of life-long learning as part of the capacity building element. In this context UNIKO is focused on:

- Widening the access of lifelong learning
- Adapting study programs to ensure that they are designed toward the needs of the labor market in the field of agriculture and food
- Providing appropriate guidance and counseling services
- Strengthening the relationship between research, teaching and innovation in a perspective of lifelong learning
- Developing partnerships at local, regional, national and international level to provide attractive and relevant programs

In terms of the LLL component, Agriculture Faculty is committed to offer future training courses according to the needs of the representatives from private sector and public institutions. Considering the ratio between the number of farms and the number of specialists that offer extension services and consulting, as part of public institutions, offering extension services to the above-mentioned groups of interest is a necessity.

2. Introduction

UNIKO has a Life-Long-Learning center that has been established during the academic year 2013 – 2014, and accredited by the Ministry of Education. This unit operates as a center of excellence, focused on the development of teaching skills and innovation in education, organizing trainings and qualification activities for teachers that are already in service. It offers training modules and programs that support and ensure increasing the quality of teaching and implementation of innovations in the field of teaching, etc.





The regulatory framework on the development and functioning of the LLL units in Higher Education Institutions is defined by the Albanian Law of Higher Education, University regulation and statute.

Accordingly, Article 1, of Law no. 80/2015, "On Higher Education and Scientific Research in the Republic of Albania", emphasized that one of the missions of higher education is to: "provide opportunities to equal access to higher education and learning throughout life". According to this law, it is provided that HEIs may offer "Programs of continuing education studies".

The Law on Higher Education (80/2015) defines in Article 25/9: „The department can provide services to third parties, as well as carry out other activities, according to the legislation in force and the rules set out in the statute and other acts of the higher education institution “. Further Law on HE (80/2015) stipulates in Art. 81/1 and 2:

1. „Higher education institutions may offer continuing education study programs as a form of lifelong learning. These programs serve to supplement, deepen and consolidate knowledge and can be offered as qualification and retraining courses, summer schools and similar activities. Continuing education study programs help individuals increase their qualifications and professional skills.
2. The structure of these programs, their duration and credits are determined independently by each responsible basic unit, in cooperation with the line ministries, if they possess the competences, according to the legal framework for regulated professions, and are made public by the main unit.

UNIKO has started a consultation phase with all the groups of interest (farmers, business operators in the field of agriculture and agribusiness, public institution representatives and teachers from professional schools with agriculture profile), in order to define their needs and implement in the future different courses that will transfer knowledge to the above-mentioned categories.

Objectives:

The major objectives of the lifelong training strategy are:

- To define a regulatory framework for knowledge transfer and for the provision of extension services from the Faculty of Agriculture at UNIKO, to the stakeholders involved in the agriculture and food sector.
- Provide future services to third parties, as well as carry out activities in accordance with the legal framework in force and the rules set out from the UNIKO authorities.
- Promote and enhance the role of UNIKO in the region, in support of the development of agriculture through knowledge transfer and extension services.
- Expand training for specific and vocational skills to the groups of interest.



Communication & Dissemination & Exploitation

DualAFS

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The contribution of DualAFS activities in the achievement of the objectives provided above consist on:

- Short term and long term mobilities of UNIKO teaching staff in European partner universities.
- Training of the academic staff on the development of e-skills from experienced teachers from European partner universities.
- Upgraded teaching infrastructure (installed e-learning equipment's & tools used for knowledge-transfer).
- Strengthening of the practical training in the reorganized curricula in "Agribusiness Management".

Goals:

The main goal of the Life-long-learning strategy will be to transform the Faculty of Agriculture in UNIKO as an important regional and national center of excellence that trains professionals engaged in the agriculture sector and sub-sectors. This will be achieved through:

- Offering training courses, consulting and extension services, according to the request of the interested partners from private and public sector.

Tasks:

In order to achieve the defined objectives, Faculty of Agriculture in UNIKO, has started a preliminary analysis and consultation phase with different stakeholders (i.e. public advisory service, private sector professionals, farmers and professionals of different agribusiness companies in the region of Korca), in order to define their training needs and prepare specialists and young scientists in the field of agriculture, economics and rural development. The data sources used for this process are as follow:

- Focus group discussions with all stakeholders, who are familiar with all the issues, such as rural youth, agribusiness enterprises, livestock and food processing business operators, medium/large scale farmers, NGO, experts and academic staff.
- Workshops organized in the framework of DualAFS project.
- Face to face interviews.

With regard to the achievement of this task, the results of the baseline survey that has been prepared by the project partners are considered very helpful, assembling valuable responses from the interviews with representatives from the private sector that operate in the agriculture sector and decision-makers authorities. Due to successful completion of this phase and processing of the data's gathered by the stakeholders, the academic staff of Agriculture Faculty will decide upon the training courses and services to be implemented in the future.



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3. Concept of Life Long Learning Unit

At this stage, the program of the training courses and services to be provided by the Faculty of Agriculture at UNIKO cannot be provided due to the unavailability of the results of the preliminary needs analysis. The expected outputs will be decided upon the feedback that will be received by the work-life-partners, experts and academic staff of UNIKO.



4. Target groups

After processing the results of the consultation phase with different groups of interest, the training courses that will be provided by the academic staff of Agriculture Faculty will be provided in different forms: short/long courses; consultation; extension services. The foreseen groups are presented in table 1.

The courses provided by UNIKO, will have a primary role in the development of human resources required for the development and modernization of agriculture and food sectors in regional and national level.

Table 1: Foreseen target groups for the implementation of LLL development.

Target Groups	Measured indicators
Private sector	
small/medium/ large farms	➤ 33600 agricultural holdings in Korca district
Processing companies	
NGOs, societal groups interested in sustainable agriculture/livestock production and agribusiness	
Public sector	
Municipality, Regional Council, Regional Directories	
Teachers	
Professional and vocational schools with agriculture & economic profile	

5. Dissemination of LLL and programme to recruit user

The dissemination of the services that will be provided by the Faculty of Agriculture are foreseen as stated in the table below.

Table 2: Communication channels for the development of LLL

Communication & dissemination tools	Private sector	Public sector	Professional schools	Students
Online tools				
University website	X	X	X	X
Social Media	X	X	X	X
Networking, meetings and events				
Networking	X	X	X	X
Presentations at local & national workshops/seminars	X	X	X	X
Site visits and face-to-face meeting	X	X	X	X
Knowledge Transfer activities	X	X		
Press and media work				
Articles in thematic magazines or general press	X	X	X	X
Local media	X	X	X	X

6. Financing of LLL Unit

The financial activity of the Life-Long-Learning Center is based on Law 80/2015, "For Higher Education and Scientific Research in the Republic of Albania", Article 109, Point 2, which is reflected in the financial regulation and the decision of the Board of Administration of UNIKO. Law 80/2015 specifies: "the Income derived from services, research-scientific activities, consultancies, where the academic staff is involved, is divided between the academic staff and HEI, according to the approved regulation from the Board of Administration.