Agricultural University of Tirana

STRATEGIC PLAN
of
AGRICULTURAL UNIVERSITY OF TIRANA

2016-2025

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Working Team

Prof. Dr. Bahri Musabelliu, Prof. Assoc. Remzi Keco, Prof. Dr. Sulejman Sulçe,
Prof. Assoc. Maksim Meço, Prof. Dr. Fatbardh Sallaku, Prof. Dr. Renata Kongoli,
Prof. Assoc. Leonidha Peri, Prof. Dr. Luigj Turmalaj, Prof. Assoc. Ilir Kapaj

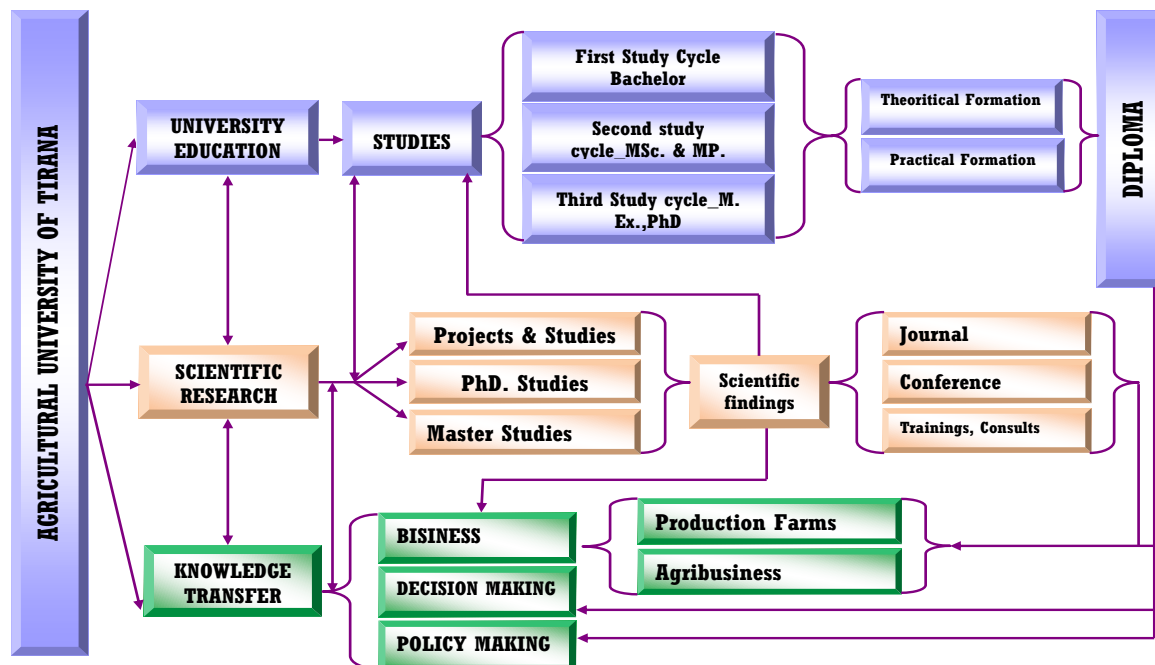# TABLE OF CONTENT

1. MISSION & VISION OF AGRICULTURAL UNIVERSITY OF TIRANA (2016-2025)

1.1. Mission & Vision of AUT

☞**Vision**: Agricultural University of Tirana aims to be the biggest and excellent education centre in the three study cycles, scientific research and knowledge transfer, following to the model below:

☞ Combining education with research and knowledge transfer to third parties at a high level, **AUT not only aims to prepare qualified specialists in the field of agriculture, food and environment, but also responsible citizens in the service of society,** particularly for crop production, animal production; horticulture; plant protection; aquaculture and fisheries; agro environment & its protection; agrarian economy; agricultural policies, integrated rural development; agribusiness management; marketing; finance & accounting; biotechnology and food; beverage industry; forestry management; wood industry; veterinary medicine & public health. In addition, AUT should see itself as part of a broad international perspective, revealing his individuality in language and culture.

☞**Mission:** AUT's mission is the professional education and scientific research in the fields of: crop production, animal production; horticulture; plant protection; aquaculture and fisheries; agro environment & its protection; agrarian economy; agricultural policies, integrated rural development; agribusiness management; marketing; finance & accounting; biotechnology and food; beverage industry; forestry management; wood industry; veterinary medicine & public health, etc.

AUT mission is related to agricultural establishment in the development of modern agriculture and ensuring healthy and quality food. Achieving this major objective focuses on the necessary production, agricultural and livestock products distribution, high quality products, careful management of land, water, air and the harmonized use of functions of green and blue space.

1.2. Strategic Vision

☞Higher Agricultural Education (HAE) is a mean for guaranteeing profitability, acquisition and dissemination of knowledge in the field of agriculture, sustainable forest cultivation, sustainable rural development, agro-tourism, good management of environmental resources, food, etc. The free knowledge transfer is a sign of a civilized society and open competition that provides economic and social inclusion. As long as knowledge becomes every day more important, AUT will face more and more challenges, considering here, students, employers and society as a whole.

☞We bring to attention that the AUT strategic plan combines our vision for higher education, in response to challenges, with practical steps needed to distribute our contributions in response to the tasks stemming from the Bologna process. **Our strategic vision is the regional, European even global integration of the higher agricultural education.**

☞ Higher education in Albania today is more diversified than in the past. It now operates in a global market, competing within them primarily to serve customers who are forced to be educated at home. The needs and requirements of customers and policy makers are increasing in quantity and complexity, therefore AUT will work to offer also other study programs for which there is a need.

1.2. AUT's Role

☞AUT activity today and in the future we hope, involves areas as:

- Sustainable agricultural production chain (plants, animals)
- Agricultural products and livestock processing chain
- Economy and Agribusiness management and tourism
- Strategies and Rural development policies
- Food and animal protection chain
- Agro environment, multifunctional use of the green space.

☞ Considering what is written above, **AUT is balancing the priorities in the light of the challenges arising from the Bologna process and the priorities of the Albanian government**. In the incoming years we will do more to identify and know the students, businesses and policy maker's needs. Through the

funds support we will help to build up a **system where excellence in teaching and knowledge transfer are increased.** We bring to the attention that:

- We will support innovative ways to improve lifelong learning through traditional as well as through new technologies.
- We will support diversity, cooperation and complementarily of working with a different quality.
- We will identify opportunities that grow through funds, to provide assistance and guidance in this sector often sharing the good experience of those who have a better working practice.

☞One of our objectives is the group work. We are focused to work hard in the support of:

- National goals and priorities
- Individual goals and missions as an autonomous body.
- Interest of experience distribution in serving the interests of the country

2. SWOT ANALYSIS HELPING THE AUT STRATEGIC PLAN

☞ The AUT Strategic Plan would be impossible without the identification and assessment to the Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats, through the SWOT analysis.

☞ Lets see this analysis below:

2.1. Identification of Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats

Nr	Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats	S	W	O	T	S/W/O/T
1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	
1	Academic heritage and 65 year long tradition in teaching, preparing specialists in the field of agriculture	S				S
2	Unique institution in the country	S				S
3	Large institution referring to the staff members and students.	S				S
4	Very good and diversified intellectual potential of the staff members	S				S
5	Great help and support of the international institutions like UDAID & GIZ etc.	S				S
6	University self evaluation and University ranking in 2011 from APAL and German institution	S				S
7	University environment in acceptable limits	S				S
8	AUT good reputation related to Albanian agriculture society	S				S
9	The existence of a strategic plan for the development of AUT who speaks and offers little for the development of students AUT.		W			W
10	Not the right reports between theory and practice in disfavor of practice.		W			W
11	Problems related to the theoretical and practical formation of the students within the university campus.		W			W
12	Infrastructure, laboratory and especially the information systems are not in the best level		W			W
13	Very few students from the professional schools while many students of general education schools.		W			W
14	Very few students from geographical areas with strong agricultural potential		W			W
15	Weak practical and professional training of students outside the university campus		W			W
16	Students stay away from the libraries.		W			W
17	Imbalance between teaching and research activities.		W			W
18	Study programs that don't take into consideration the needs of the labor market.		W			W
19	The necessity for new study programs		W			W
20	Problems related with the student admission in the second and the third		W			W

	study.					
21	Quality		W			W
22	Agriculture is and will remain the most important sector of the national economy development			O		O
23	Favorable national policies with regard to the Higher Education (HE) reforming			O		O
24	AUT position, in Tirana, the capital.			O		O
25	High percentage of young population and their desire for higher education.			O		O
26	Cooperative willingness of other institutions of the HE, and also those in the agriculture field, locally, regionally and beyond.			O		O
27	The attractiveness of the teaching programs at the regional level			O		O
28	Government and international organizations support policies to involve academic staff in issues of interest in the field of agriculture, rural development and food.			O		O
29	Establishment of institutional relations with institutions in the field of agriculture and food.			O		O
30	Existing mentality regarding the HE, as a passage of time and not as a human capital investment				T	T
31	Lack of state development strategies for higher education				T	T
32	Legislation is not always in accordance with European standards				T	T
33	Unfavorable economic situation and lack of readiness to support HE.				T	T
34	Brain drain.				T	T
35	Lack of University autonomy				T	T
36	Lack of understanding the major problems of universities by policymakers.				T	T
37	Adaptation of unsuitable foreign experiences for our specific conditions				T	T
38	Weak students coming from secondary high education				T	T
39	Low education tax, which does not support the future development of the university.				T	T
40	Weak infrastructure within the university (lack electricity, water, etc).				T	T

2.2. AUT SWOT Analysis (in focus, weaknesses)

☞*SWOT Analysis* obviously requires the identification of:
- Causes conditioning the S/W/O/T
- Economic Consequences related to them;
- Potential solutions (possible);
- Actors contributing in the solution;
- Strategies & alternatives that enable solutions

Nr	Some of the Weaknesses	Causes conditioning Weaknesses	Consequences associated with them (weaknesses)	Alternatives that enable Potential solutions	Who should contribute in the solution?	Alternatives to be implemented
1	The existence of a strategic plan for the development of AUT who speaks and offers little for the AUT development	⇒ Lack of Attention	⇒ Lack of focus in the strategic plan (Where & how?)	⇒ Drafting the AUT strategic Plan	⇒ Rectorate ⇒ Administration Board. ⇒ Faculties	⇒ Drafting the AUT strategic Plan
2	Not the right reports between theory and practice in disfavor of practice.	⇒ Not the proper consideration of the businesses needs	⇒ Quality problems ⇒ Weak practical formation ⇒ Problems of graduate employment	⇒ Curriculum Review	⇒ Rectorate ⇒ Faculties ⇒ Departments	⇒ Curriculum Review, emphasis on the needs of business
3	Lack of focus regarding professional competencies that graduates need to have in each program/study cycle	⇒ Not the proper coordination with the business needs	⇒ Difficulties of adaptation	⇒ Curriculum Review	⇒ Rectorate ⇒ Faculties ⇒ Departments	⇒ Curriculum Review
4	Weak practical and professional training of students outside the university campus	⇒ Not the proper coordination with the business needs	⇒ Problems in terms of practical training for students ⇒ Employment problems	⇒ Use of audiovisual tools in teaching process, especially the lectures.	⇒ Rectorate ⇒ Administration Board. ⇒ Faculties	⇒ Use of audiovisual tools in teaching process. ⇒ Use of Laboratories

Nr	Some of the Weaknesses	Causes conditioning Weaknesses	Consequences associated with them (weaknesses)	Alternatives that enable Potential solutions	Who should contribute in the solution?	Alternatives to be implemented
5	Infrastructure, laboratory and especially the information systems are not in the best level	⇒ Not the proper consideration of the students' practical formation needs ⇒ Not the right focus of the AUT investments	⇒ Problems related to the practical formation of the students.	⇒ Serious consideration to the students' needs for practical training ⇒ The focus of investments for laboratories & information systems	⇒ Rectorate ⇒ Administration Board. ⇒ Faculties	⇒ Serious consideration to the students' needs for practical training ⇒ The focus of investments for laboratories & information systems
6	Very few students from the professional schools while many students of general education schools	⇒ Problems in the development of professional education ⇒ Poor quality of graduates of these schools	⇒ Problems related to the theoretical and practical formation of the students	⇒ Special focus on the development of professional education	⇒ Authority chain ⇒ Rectorate ⇒ Administration Board. ⇒ Faculties	⇒ Special focus on the development of professional education and students recruiting
7	Very few students from geographical areas with strong agricultural potential	⇒ Lack of attention on the issue by AUT	⇒ Lack of professions for these areas	⇒ More students admissions from these areas	⇒ Authority chain ⇒ Rectorate ⇒ Faculties	⇒ Scholarships for students who come from areas with agricultural potential ⇒ Contracts with students coming from these areas for providing services
8	Weak practical and professional training of students outside the university campus	⇒ Objective and subjective difficulties ⇒ Lack of Support	⇒ Not satisfactory level of practical training for students	⇒ Career fairs ⇒ Improvement of professional practice programs	⇒ Rectorate ⇒ Faculties	⇒ Career fairs ⇒ Improvement of professional practice

		from the Authority chain		⇒ Contracting entities for students' practical training		programs ⇒ Contracting entities for students' practical training
9	Students stay away from the libraries	⇒ Lack of accountability by AUT management, but also by the students	⇒ Problems related to the theoretical and practical formation of the students	⇒ The renewal of the titles entering the library ⇒ The annual renewal of the electronic library (TEEAL).	⇒ Rectorate ⇒ Administration Board. ⇒ Faculties	⇒ A new dedicated fund for journals, current periodicals requested by departments, the annual renewal of electronic library (TEEAL).

Nr	Some of the Weaknesses	Causes conditioning Weaknesses	Consequences associated with them (weaknesses)	Alternatives that enable Potential solutions	Who should contribute in the solution?	Alternatives to be implemented
10	Imbalance between teaching and research activities.	⇒ Problems related to the scientific research	⇒ Problems related to the theoretical and practical formation of the students	⇒ More focus on the promotion and involvement of students in the scientific research	⇒ Rectorate ⇒ Faculties ⇒ Departments ⇒ Student representatives	⇒ More focus on the promotion and involvement of students in the scientific research
11	Study programs that don't take into consideration the needs of the labor market.	⇒ Lack of attention regarding this matter	⇒ No competitive products in the labor market are offered	⇒ Reviews of the study program	⇒ Rectorate ⇒ Faculties ⇒ Departments	⇒ Reviews of the study program
12	The necessity for new study programs	⇒ Lack of attention regarding this matter	⇒ Lack of products that fit the market needs	⇒ The development of new programs for Bachelor & Executive Master	⇒ Rectorate ⇒ Faculties ⇒ Departments	⇒ The development of new programs for Bachelor & Executive Master
13	Problems related with the student admission in the second and the third study.	⇒ Lack of attention regarding this matter and management responsibility	⇒ Weak approach towards continuous training	⇒ Clear admission standards in MSc and PM programs. ⇒ Review of problems related to curriculum studies, in terms of professional skills of students	⇒ Rectorate ⇒ Faculties ⇒ Departments	⇒ Clear admission standards in MSc and PM programs. ⇒ Review of problems related to curriculum studies, in terms of professional skills of students

3. BEHAVIOUR / EVENTS / ACTION STRATEGY AIMING TO ENABLE THE ABOVE GOALS

3.1. Study programs & Professional Competences of Graduates

No	Problems?	Activities What should we do?	Expected Product	Who is realizing?	Deadlines
1	Need for new study programs	• Preparation for new non elaborated programs in areas such as Agricultural Extension (DIND), Environmental Economics (MSc), Rural Tourism Management (MP), Territory's Planning & Development (Exe. Master) Agrifood Management (MSc.) etc. • Joint Programs (between Departments and Faculties).	• New Diplomas (First cycle, second & third) • Inter-Faculty Diploma (First cycle, second & third)	• Departments • Faculties • Curriculum, Learning & Institutional Development Department	• Work has begun & ends in November 2016. • Following on
2.	Problems related to the professional competences of the graduates	• Confrontation of study programs & curricula with the needs of (according the different fields) businesses to judge the professional competencies of graduates in the AUT	• Curricula & Programs enabling competences for business' needs.	• Departments • Faculties • Curriculum, Learning & Institutional Development Department	• Work has begun & ends in October 2016 • Following on

3.2. Theoretical and practical students' formation within the University campus

No	Problems?	Activities What should we do?	Expected Product	Who is realizing?	Deadlines
1	Our main objective for us is and will remain ENHANCING THE QUALITY	• Lecturers should put on their personal Web all the necessary teaching materials	• For every module on the Web should be: full syllabus of the module, seminars' plan, ppt lectures, case studies, project	• Teaching & Research group • Departments • Faculties • Curriculum, Learning & Institutional Development	• This task ends in July 2016.

			course, and the academic CV of the lecturer.	Department • Every academic staff member	
		• Preparing a new teaching record format and providing professors with it, as an official identification document of learning and problems associated with it.	• Discipline, identification and control of the teaching process continuously	• Rectorate, • Departments • Faculties • Administration	September 2016.
		• Providing audiovisual equipment tools for the teaching process, especially in the lecture halls.	• Projectors in every lecture hall	• Rectorate, • Administration	September 2016
		• Special focus should be given to the teaching process and knowledge control through project courses and assignments.	• Syllabuses and the teaching plans should reflect this objective	• Departments • Faculties • Curriculum, Learning & Institutional Development Department • Every academic staff member	September 2016.
		• Learning elements such as projects course & assignments, should not only be evaluated during the year, but also prerequisites for the last final exam	• Students should know that they are on "full time studies"	• Departments • Faculties • Curriculum, Learning & Institutional Development Depart. • Every academic staff member	September 2016.
		• Settings in regulation. Final Exam will not constitute more than 50 % of the final evaluation of the student	• Students should know that they are on "full time studies"	• Departments • Faculties • Curriculum, Learning & Institutional Development	• September 2016

				Department • Every academic staff member	
		• Written, written & oral or only oral exams, should be secreted.	• Syllabuses and the teaching plans should reflect this objective	• Departments • Faculties • Every academic staff member	• September 2016
	There should not be a Practical formation of the students, Inside the campus without laboratories.	• Final course exam (non thesis) should be done only with case studies.	• Sustainable knowledge for students	• Departments • Faculties • Curriculum, Learning & Institutional Development Department • Every academic staff member	• September 2016
		• Total inventory identification (PC, printers, photocopies, projectors) for every office, lab, faculty and AUT. • Engaging a group of IT, faculty chancellor, etc. And setting up the modalities for this process	• A total view of the physical condition and immediate needs for intervention and/ or maintenance. • Planning the facilities for next year.	• Departments • Administration	• September 2016
		• Addressing secondary incomes for: setting up and completing new labs, satisfying the needs of reagents, etc. • Identification of the physical lab infrastructure. For each lab: ⇒Three-dimensional Physical lab infrastructure ⇒Preventives	• Functional laboratories for students but also for services to third parties • Work Stimulation.	• Administration Board • Rectorate • Administration • Chancellor • Administration Board • Rectorate	• Following on • June 2016

				• Administration • Chancellor	

3.3. Practical students' formation outside the campus

No	Problems?	Activities What should we do?	Expected Product	Who is realizing?	Deadlines
1	Practical formation of the students outside the campus is still a major problem.	• A radical review of professional practice programs.	• Programs, through which students can exercise	• Departments • Faculties	• September 2016.
		• Lobbying and contracting with MBZHR & AU, MM, MAS, Municipality of Tirana and other municipalities of the country, agribusinesses, farms, etc	• A list of subjects where students can engage for professional practice	• Departments • Faculties • Rectorate	• Following on
		• Actions to formalize agreements with large companies abroad as well as within Erasmus+ programs	• Internship possibilities	• Faculties • Rectorate	• Following on

3.4. Master Studies

No	Problems?	Activities What should we do?	Expected Product	Who is realizing?	Deadlines
1.	• Second cycle studies (MSc. & MP) are being considered from the students just as a extension in time of their Bachelor studies. This has to be changed.	• Seting up and implementation of new criteria and standards (mainly related to average grade & the study program they come from) for MSc and MP admissions.	• More qualitative admissions in the second study cycle	• Departments • Faculties	• October 2016
		• Resolution of problems related to curriculum studies, in terms of professional competence and practical training level of students	• Curricula that provide the appropriate scientific and professional competence.	• Departments • Faculties	• October 2016
		• Integration of the scientific research (micro thesis), with the scientific priorities of the	• Scientific research oriented towards the priorities of the	• Departments • Faculties	• Following on

		department	department		

3.5. Doctoral Studies

No	Problems?	Activities What should we do?	Expected Product	Who is realizing?	Deadlines
1.	• Quantity but not quality, and a lower inters from the candidates!!!	• Prepare and publish the third cycle studies guide (PhD & Exec. Master).	• Guide for all to learn about the third cycle studies (PhD & Exec. Master).	• Research, Scientific Cooperation & Project Department	• December 2016
		• To intensify contacts with MAS for the opening of quotas for AUT in this academic year.	• The quota for the third study cycle	• Rectorate	• October 2016
		• Full time studies	• PhD studies in AUT as full time studies.	• Departments • Faculties • Rectorate	• October 2016
		• Only PhD candidates who have interests in academic & research field and who meet the standards set, should be accepted	• PhD candidates who have interests in academic & research field	• Departments • Faculties	• Following on
		• PhD research thesis should come from the priorities of the department.	• Scientific research oriented towards the priorities of the department.	• Departments • Faculties	• October 2016
		• Research directions will be precise in the form of stable areas of research	• Sustainable study fields in Departments/Faculties	• Departments • Faculties	• Following on

3.6. Study Regulations

No	Problems?	Activities What should we do?	Expected Product	Who is realizing?	Deadlines
1	• Interventions' discordance in regulation on institutional level and at the main units; often	• Review of university's study regulations that serve to orient the study regulation for each faculty, with main focus in: • The maximum study duration • Elements of the student	• Disposal of an university regulation (manual) that orient the drafting of the study regulation for each faculty	• Departments • Faculties • Curriculum, Learning & Institutional Development	• September 2016

		assessment		Department	
		• Linking the final evaluation *(final exam)* with the assessment made during the year			
		• Correct application and without equivocation of all regulations of studies, bringing to attention that no one will have the right to interpret these regulations	• Regulations are implemented and not interpreted	• Departments • Faculties Rectorate	• Following on

Note: the first data cell above spans: "confusion, and above all, problems with the implementation of regulations."

3.7. Students' Admissions

No	Problems?	Activities What should we do?	Expected Product	Who is realizing?	Deadlines
1	• Little publicity connected with the fact that who is AUT, what it offers. Not taking under consideration the factors that support student admissions. • Further more, the AUT's Web leaves much to be desired. It is rather the product of individual interventions than institutional ones!!!	• In the most notable sights of every faculty building will be located a large poster showing specifically what it is and what faculty offers.	• Secondary school pupils, students, the entire public to know who AUT is and what it can offer	• Administration Board • Rectorate	• September 2016
		• Full reconstruction of the AUT web site through the commitment of the IT department, Informatics Dep., specialized studio for these services and MAS (need to integrate career portal)	• AUT web should be a genuine "platform of communication, information and institutional collaboration". • Improvement of image, functionality, also the information provided to the students and interested stakeholders	• Administration Board • Rectorate	• November 2016
		• Organization of a IT structure as a specialized, flexible and functional center.	• A dignified service center at AUT	• Administration Board • Rectorate	• December 2016

3.8. Professors students relations

No	Problems?	Activities What should we do?	Expected Product	Who is realizing?	Deadlines
	• Lecture halls appear to be almost the only place implementing professors-student relations and vice versa	• Professors should be closer to students, to listen to their opinions & assessments. **Each professor can and must care for a student group**.	• Recognise and contribute to solve the problems of students	• Departments • Faculties • Rectorate	• Following on
		• At the end of the theoretical study course, for each module should be taken the students assessments regarding the teaching process.	• Face our work with the thoughts and opinions of students and report the problems in order to improve	• Departments • Faculties • Rectorate	• Following on • At the end of each term

3.9. Teaching Environments

No	Problems?	Activities What should we do?	Expected Product	Who is realizing?	Deadlines
1	• There are achievement but still some problems	• All the lecture halls should have glass window in their upper part.	• In accordance with the requirements of the Accreditation Agency.	• AUT Administration	• October 2016
		• Conception, preparation and posting of signals at the entrance of each building.	• Significantly improved esthetic image, cleanliness and increase the level of information to anyone.	• AUT Administration	• October 2016
		• Preparation and placement at the entrance to every lecture hall the "plastic envelopes"		• AUT Administration	• October 2016
		• Preparation and placement of numbered labels	• Added service value for students	• AUT Administration	• October 2016
		• Unification of teaching hours as a university, and posting in every building and on the Internet		• Faculties • Rectorate	• Following on
		• Continued investment & maintenance of the lecture and	• Comfortable working environments for	• Rectorate	• Following on

		seminars halls	students & staff		
		Reconsideration of the budget plan and opportunities for reallocation of funds, communication with business interested in recycling, with municipalities for the benches, the FSHP commitment for the doors.			

3.10. Studies & Students Office (ZSS)

No	Problems?	Activities What should we do?	Expected Product	Who is realizing?	Deadlines
1	• Accommodation of ZSS at the FEA building	• Terminate the contract with the Lessee	• More places for students and less for cafeteria	• Administrator-tor	• Immediately
		• Determining the ways of organization and well functioning of the ZSS	• Agreement of views	• Rectorate	• June 2016
		• Preparing the idea of organization and well functioning of the ZSS		• Rectorate	• June 2016
		• Intervention in both places for the necessary adaptation		• Administration • AUT	• June 2016
		• Accommodation of ZSS	• Quality services at ZSS offices for students and all structures	• Rectorate	• September 2016

3.11. Library

No	Problems?	Activities_What should we do?	Expected Product	Who is realizing?	Deadlines
1	• Staff & students are away libraries	• A dedicated fund for: ⇒ New entries (journals). ⇒ Needed periodicals ⇒ TEEAL activization and its installation at every interested user. ⇒ TEEAL upgrade	Disponibility: • New journals • Needed periodicals • Electronic library	• Administration Board • Rectorate • IT Department	• Budget 2017 • Immediate activation of the existing fund
		• Diversification of library services	• Students as part of the libraries	• Administration Board • Rectorate	• Budget 2017

3.12. Student's career office

No	Problems?	Activities What should we do?	Expected Product	Who is realizing?	Deadlines
1	• Not the proper addressing of the activities' object for the Student Career Office	• The design and of the Student Employment file	• Student Employment file	• Information and Knowledge transfer Department	• Following on

3.13. Priorities & Scientific research at AUT

No	Problems?	Activities What should we do?	Expected Product	Who is realizing?	Deadlines
1.	• Problems related to the scientific research priorities for AUT, and stable areas of research by department	• Clear definition of scientific research priorities	• Clear definition of scientific research priorities	• Departments • Faculties • Rectorate	• December 2016
		• Identification of sustainable research areas by departments	• Clear definition of sustainable research areas by departments	• Departments • Faculties • Rectorate	• December 2016
2.	• All of us are convinced that research in AUT is not at the required levels, characterized by lack of adoption, the level of financing, competition, commercialization, etc	• Coordination & introduction of planning elements for scientific activity in every department	• Every staff member should know what to do	• Departments • Faculties • Academic staff	• October 2016
	• Low "on-line" presence of AUT staff	• Indexing the journals at the international database (for rankings, citation, references etc.)	• Individual and institutional image improvement	• Faculties • Rectorate	• October 2016 Following on
	• Spontaneous scientific activities	• Organization of the annual conference (AUT level or faculty level, to be discussed)	• Promotion and publication of the scientific research	• Faculties • Rectorate	• Following on

3.14. Students & Scientific research

No	Problems?	Activities What should we do?	Expected Product	Who is realizing?	Deadlines
1	• Students should be an important part (but they are not) of the scientific research.	• Students' promotion in entrepreneurship	• Students practical skills enhancement	• Departments • Faculties • Rectorate	• Following on
		• Support to the Student Forum and promoting this initiative to other faculties		• Departments • Faculties • Rectorate	• Following on
		• Promotion of the annual students' conference at the faculty level		• Departments • Faculties	• Following on

3.15 Services to third parties

No	Problems?	Activities What should we do?	Expected Product	Who is realizing?	Deadlines
1	• Very weak access of AUT in the business environment.	• Coordination with management levels to identify the scientific research priorities at AUT	• Clear priorities towards scientific research and business	• AUT-Agreement with MBZHRAU. MM etc	• October, 2016
		• Contributions to the statistical data collection at national level & preparation of the statistical yearbook.	• Reliable statistical data		
		• Contributions in creating and maintaining the farms register at national level	• Farms register at national level		
		• Contributions and support for the farms and agribusiness enterprises database creation	• Reliable statistical data		
		• Support for the regionalization map of production	• Regionalization map fro every district		

		• Commitment for the preparation of business plans for actors (individuals and businesses) to apply for funding	• Increase the capacity to absorb investments		
		• Commitment and contributions to certify all projects presented for funding.	• Increase the capacity to absorb investments		
		• Contributions and support for farm horizontal integration (cooperation) in the marketing and supply levels through SHBB.	• Incentives towards the organization of SHBB	• Departments • Faculties • Academic Staff/AUT	• According to agreements
		• Contributions and support for the farm - processing industry vertical integration	• Increase of the domestic production supply for agro-processing industries		
		• Strategy and supporting policies that strengthen links from farmers to markets	• Farmers integration to markets		
		• Strategy and supporting policies that enables the increase and development of the production capacities at farm level	• Increase of the production capacities at farm level		
		• Contribution and support for the establishment of information system on the farm (farm notes).	• Disposal of the "Farm notes"		
		• Preparation and publication of the "Good practices Manual "	• Disposal of the "Good practices Manual " in agribusiness		

		• Development of a new diploma for the preparation of extension specialists	• A new products with great interest for agriculture		
		• Annual training (if not more) of the processing industry technologists	• Technologist with up to date knowledge		
		• Training for preparing "licensed trainers" (agronomists, technologists, extension specialists, Agribusiness managers, etc.)	• Licensed trainers		
		• Contribution and support the promotion and development of the manufacturing industry of medicinal plants	• Alternatives for development of the medicinal plants industry		
		• Contribution and support for the promotion of public-private partnership at local government levels.	• Strategy for the development of this partnership		

3.16. Financial Autonomy

No	Problems?	Activities What should we do?	Expected Product	Who is realizing?	Deadlines
1	• What should we say???	• AUT Revenues will be recorded according to the units that are expected to create/have created them (departments; Education fees; Registration fee; laboratory, Office etc ; faculty, AUT)	• Structures (Departments, Faculties, AUT, active factors in the budget implementation)	• Departments • Faculties • AUT Administration	• Following on
		• AUT Costs will be recorded according to the units that are expected to create/have created them (departments;		• AUT Administration	• Following on

		Education fees; Registration fee; laboratory, Office etc ; faculty, AUT)			
		• Cost/benefit analysis for each item will be an integral part of the budgeting process & budget implementation	• Each Expenditure must be justified	• AUT Administration	• Following on

3.17. Didactic Experimental Centre (EDE)

No	Problems?	Activities What should we do?	Expected Product	Who is realizing?	Deadlines
1	• As we have often noted, EDE continues to be a "black hole" that only "swallows" money.	• Urgent analysis and evaluation of issues related to EDE. ⇒ EDE's didactic role ⇒ EDE's economic role ⇒ EDE's role in terms of providing services to third parties	• A clear picture of the situation in which we are	• AUT Administrator • Rektorate • GIZ_Martin Struck	June 2016
		• Preparation of the strategic plan for the organization and the future development of EDE	• Strategic plan of the EDE development	• AUT Administrator • Rektorate • GIZ_ Martin Struck	
		• Activities that will enable EDE to: ⇒ be organized as a separate economic entity, with a separate account, NIPT number, with an experimental economic activity, managed according to the principles of public enterprises, in our case, a company serving the needs of AUT, as well as services to third parties function	• An efficient model farm to the third parties • A farm with strong didactic approach	• AUT Administrator • Rektorate • GIZ_ Martin Struck	November 2016
	•	In focus: ⇒ UBT will be the owner of EDE, while faculties will be "EDE		• AUT Administrator • Rektorate	

		shareholders " ⇒ EDE will be administrated by the Management Board ⇒ The Management Board shall nominate the Executive Director ⇒ Under the Executive Director will be three sectors directors (Agriculture production, Livestock production, Financial & economic management)		• GIZ_ Martin Struck November 2016

3.18. Inside organization Problems & costs reduction

No	Problems?	Activities What should we do?	Expected Product	Who is realizing?	Deadlines
		High costs regarding:			
a.	• Payments to private guard service!!!	• Study on "Efficiency of private guards payment in AUT "	• Less expenses	• AUT Administrator	• September 2016
b.	• Payments to employees of greenhouses!!! (No products)	• Business Plan "How & What to produce in AUT greenhouses?"	• Product production (flowers etc.)	• AUT Administrator	• July 2016
c.	• Payments to service employees!!! (Almost no products)	• Study on "Effectiveness or not to tender this service of third actors"	• Less expenses	• Administration • AUT Administrator	• September 2016
d.	• Payments for professors under contract	• Identification • Evaluation from the department if the "contract professors" (retired) can be involved only as "guests professors"	• Less expenses	• Departments • Faculties • Human resources Dep.	• September 2016
	• Payments for Genetic Resources Centre	• Study on "What tradable products can be realized by QRGJ_ UBT"	• Tradable products	• Genetic Resource Center	• July 2016
e.	• Payment for professors with under normative workload	• Identification of employees • Recalculation of workload according the format	• No employees without workload	• Departments • Faculties	• September 2016

f.	• Payment for lab personnel with unplayable products	• Identification of laboratories • Identification of employees	• No lab that does not justify their salary	• Departments • Faculties	• September 2016
g.	• … And worse, payments for people who do not do any work!!!	• Identification • Faculty assemblies take the proper decision	• Not any more people who don't have a specific work at AUT	• Departments • Faculties • Human resources Dep.	• September 2016

3.19. Non academic Staff

No	Problems?	Activities What should we do?	Expected Product	Who is realizing?	Deadlines
1	• There is no clear job description.	• Job description for every work place	• Clear job description.	• Authorities in charge	• July 2016
2	• Problems related to the tasks identifying & addressing	• Job description and tasks identification for every staff member	• Clear job description. & tasks addressing.	• Authorities in charge	• July 2016
3	• No work rating at AUT!	• Work rating, and on this base identification of the needed staff.	• "Right job for the right man"	• Authorities in charge • Rectorate • Human resources Dep.	• July 2016
4	• The labor code requirements are not respected	• Precision application of all labor requirements	• Order and legality	• Authorities in charge • Rectorate • Human resources Dep.	• Following on
5	• No work discipline at AUT!	• Staff members working hours are from 7^{45} to 16^{30}. • Staff members can have a break during 12^{00} to 12^{30}. • Laboratory personnel follow the learning process. • Laboratory personnel qualification should be an ongoing process.	• 8 hrs work	• Authorities in charge • Rectorate • Human resources Dep.	• Urgent

4. EDUCATION AT AUT

☞ In the last decade, education in AUT has changed a lot due to the development of information technology, which has also affected the Albanian society itself, which is internationalized (in terms of resources and information).

☞ In our vision, education in AUT aims to fulfill these obligations:
- Increased quality standards;
- Improvements in the study programs;
- Strengthening of the student's orientation towards market;
- Multiple professional competencies;
- Expanding education towards extensive specialization and development of new forms of education;
- Providing learning and organizational infrastructure;
- Strengthening of academic, professional, social and ethical education competencies

☞ Education at AUT will continue to be organized in three cycles of study: Bachelor (3 years), Master of Science (2 years), Professional Master (1.5 years) and PhD (3-5 years).

☞ Education in the first study cycle at AUT aims at the formation of specialists in the field of agriculture and food (according to the study programs), able to respond to labor market according the formula "Knowing how to do", in order to guarantee them a good professional, reliable and competent level of skills, to fulfill the technical solution of frequent and rapid problems in this important sector of the national economic development.

☞ Education in Master course completes the second cycle of university and continues according to the definitions above. This education ensures a greater responsibility of specialists in the public and private sectors, research and intellectual creativity. To accomplish this task, the second cycle of education in AUT will be diversified. **Diversification meets the labor market demand and guarantees elasticity and flexibility**. Of course, the theoretical formation in Master course guarantees a higher level than the Bachelor, and even entirely new theoretical backgrounds.

☞ Third cycle studies, Doctoral & Executive Master are an important part of studies at AUT, which guarantee a completion level of knowledge of all candidates.

☞ We recall here that the Doctoral studies will help to:
- Creating a selected contingent of people, dedicated and intended for research, that would be a great help at the university itself.
- Creating an opportunity for university to support all individuals who cannot undergo this education abroad.

- Creating the necessary conditions to attract to our university Albanian researchers and lecturers working in universities and research institutions abroad.

☞ Organizing the development of doctoral studies will be directed to the departments that meet the requested requirements in infrastructure and tutoring. While a student is preparing his doctoral thesis, he can be involved in the learning process to meet the needs of the department. Doctoral thesis will be part of the sustainable study fields of the department.

4.1 Students and the teaching process

☞ Analyzing the teaching process and the, naturally we examine four essential elements, acting in conjunction with one another, which are:
- Teaching programs and their realization.
- Academic staff position and role.
- Students' role in the education process.
- Organization of studies from the lifelong learning perspective.

4.1.1. Teaching programs & their realization

☞ In our vision, study programs will be guided by business' needs and the flexibility to respond to beneficiaries (labor market) and will be developed in accordance with the development of scientific knowledge, technology and with all new teaching methodologies. Furthermore we aim to:
- Educational programs that rely on the achievements of science and encourage its development, technology and social relations.
- Programs that allow access to the labor market, quick possession of good levels of knowledge and competitiveness.

☞Realization of educational programs will be based on **methods that emphasize the students,** as well as requiring the formation of knowledge step by step. We remind that these kinds of programs should consider:
- Teaching methods that are considered as an active relationship between materials and concrete work with them; between receiving new information and possibilities for its transmission.
- Teaching methods that develop motivation and willingness for effective learning and research to students.
- Learning situations that facilitate the transfer of theoretical knowledge and problem-solving model, based on individual examples.
- Application and tracking system of some sort of ways of evaluation for student results.
- Teaching methods that require more student involvement.

- Teaching that allows students in-depth knowledge of the material, developing their self-confidence and minimizes apathetic and inactive students.
- Good level of knowledge and conceptual, procedural and transforming skills, based on the academic and social standards.
- Critical and creative relationship to students in terms of academic content, social phenomena, flexibility and tolerance for the development of new and different ideas.

4.1.2. Difficulties and obstacles

☞ Some of the difficulties that affect the implementation of the teaching programs development are:
- Little attention to the involvement of Higher Education actors in the decisions making process about the role, goals, tasks, curricula and programs.
- Inflexible programs and their inability to expand;
- Overestimation of traditional methods;
- Exclusion of students in projects and scientific research;
- Insufficient funds for the application of new technologies in teaching

4.1.3. Strategic steps

☞ Strategic steps include as follows:
- Increasing the involvement of interactive teaching, based on the projects' work experience.
- Involvement of academic staff, postgraduate students and external experts in an ongoing dialogue, in terms of assessment and curriculum development.
- Curricula review, in accordance with new knowledge.
- Introduction of new teaching methods.
- University teaching materials as an obligation for professors.
- Evaluation of students through a regular point system.

4.1.4. Necessary actions to be taken

- Spending more time on independent and active learning, research, etc.
- Changing the students' number within the study groups. (60 students for lectures, 15-20 students for seminars, 10 students for laboratories, etc.)
- Continued work with students, based on the results in tasks, projects, writing assignments, etc. (with the obligation to deliver and final exam);
- Restatement of programs with smaller units and their possible end during a semester

4.1.5. Academic Staff

☞ AUT, with its academic staff in disposal, has all the opportunities to precede the university teaching process. The academic staff level at AUT is as follows:

Academic Staff according their qualifications

- Prof.
- Asoc.Prof.
- Doc. (Dr)
- Doc
- Lect.I
- Lect.
- Research Staff

23% — 23% — 21% — 16% — 7% — 6% — 2% — 2%
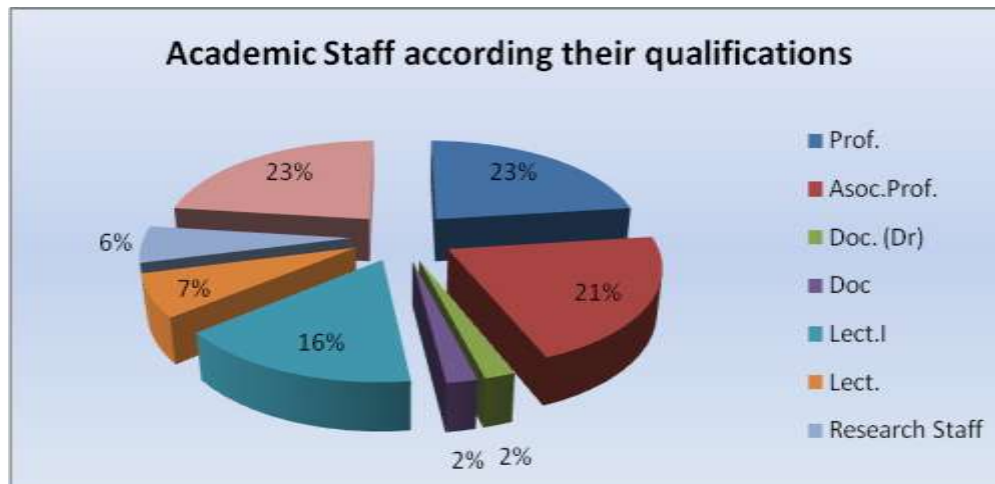
☞ As it can be seen, the qualifications' levels of the academic staff are the **most important source for development and progress.** The above situation is very positive, but the need to increase the level of qualification has to be a continuous process. Therefore a modern management and an improved quality of personnel are required, which must be expressed in particular efforts to increase the flexibility, by stimulating and evaluating the effectiveness and the achievements of a labor force motivated with development opportunities. In this regard, it is aimed at **encouraging the employees to continuously develop their careers and in securing employment permanent staff.**

☞ We are focused that the role of the academic staff in the university should increase in **terms of a high level of competence in academic work as well as in teaching methods**. In the educational process professors are presented as the coordinator of the activities that encourage students to think about problems, for the development of creative methods, within their academic disciplines as well as the possibilities for implementation of some scientific achievements.

☞ In addition, teachers should be open to dialog with students, must support their initiatives and be prepared for debate on issues related to the curriculum.

☞ Increasing the level of professionalism and improving the teaching process require undoubtedly a careful consideration of the educational teaching hours overcharge. The actual teaching load requires a new attention regarding the professors' status. Teaching should not be thought as a full

time profession. Considering that one of the objectives of the reform is the development of the capacities and agricultural education system to align it with the educational system of EU countries, therefore teaching at AUT should and will be seen as a public service, aiming at adjusting the professors' status with that of civil employees. Such a treatment will increase the commitment by the professors, will improve the lecturer-students relation and will make the agricultural education system comparable with region countries. This policy has important implications for AUT, with regard to increase of efficiency and service quality in agricultural education. To achieve this, AUT has begun taking a series of measures and has carried out some interference. Transparency has increased participation of all stakeholders and supports the process for increasing the quality.

☞Improvement of teaching process cannot be accomplished without undertaking some steps in terms of active and logical knowledge acquisition, in raising the quality of teaching as well as the elimination of mechanical and passive learning. In addition, the preparation of agriculture specialist through curricula reviewing, evaluation of experimental preparation and professional practice, independent work, inclusion of new techniques in learning and teaching process, etc. represents the main target of the pedagogical staff of AUT.

☞ We conclude that studies focusing at further improvement of teaching materials design, further development and improvement of teaching and control methods, activating students through referrals, project course preparation or thesis, should be undertaken.

☞ We note that more needs to be done by the academic staff for cultural education and profession passion through warm contacts, scientific conversations, and in particular through printed materials, fighting sometimes excessive hesitations to expand the scientific literature book.

What is needed?

☞ To accomplish the above goals, academic staff should be prepared in this regard:

- Harmonize the two dimensions of their work: teaching and research;
- Build correct relationships with students by increasing the respect and trust;
- To encourage and promote, profession in society and be ready for dialogue and exchange of knowledge between academic and non-academic community.

Difficulties and obstacles

☞ Some of the difficulties are:

- Mentality to become a capable and competent researcher, as a sufficient condition for being a good lecturer.
- Lack of communication skills.

- Lack of teaching and professional training
- The quality of teaching and also university standards fall, if the university is unable to recruit and retain academic and auxiliary staff at a good level.

Strategic steps to be undertaken

☞ Strategic steps to encourage increased effectiveness of professors are:

- Implementation of appropriate and dignified conditions, availability of modern technologies, teaching materials and literature;
- Continuous promotion in teaching;
- Expanding the exchange of experience and cooperation between professors in similar fields and institutions both inside and outside the country.

Actions to be undertaken

☞ Actions aiming at increasing the effectiveness of teaching are:

- Starting the process of rationalization of Faculties and Departments and ensuring equity and access;
- Implementation of rationalization for faculties and departments;
- Redefining the position of full-time professor;
- Adjustment of status of professors with that of civil employees;
- Support the creation of professors associations to exchange professional experience;
- Coordinate the professors' certification system with traditional qualifications, as well as through a series of other measures, which are designed to link the professors' career with their professional training;
- Necessary legal improvements
- Encourage professors' private investment initiatives from their personal income (for offices, study areas, etc.), in support of the university;
- Redefining the norms and obligations about teaching methods;
- Application of evaluation steps in internal and external teaching job;
- Encourage international cooperation and staff member exchange.

4.1.6. Students' position and role within the education process

☞ Relationship between students and academic staff should be a mutual partnership and recognition. The partnership will allow students to become active in the education process, the initiators for a change in the academic community and further more. This will have to take into consideration the following:

- Respecting the needs, interests and students rights;
- Democratic relations through mutual communication;
- The belief that their degree is in response to life & work requests and for the future;

- Encouraging and developing civil values and other opportunities.

What is expected?

☞ Results of this partnership will be:

- Students self- confidence in their potential responsibilities;
- Opportunities to meet the diverse interests of students, through various forms of their involvement;
- Students' willingness to take responsibility for learning and education;
- Student readiness to continue cooperation with the university after graduation in the respective profiles;
- Motivating students for cooperation with the scientific academic staff, in various projects.

Difficulties & obstacles

☞ Difficulties in implementing such relationships come from internal and external causes, such as:

- Students are generally treated as a social category and not as an educational category, which causes a lack of motivation and the delay in learning;
- The difficult financial situation of many students and the concern to resolve their survival needs;
- Their involvement in decision making;
- Passivity as a result of previous not good education experiences.

Strategic steps

☞ Strategic steps in the realization of relations between partners would be:

- Review systematically and tracking students' needs;
- Implementation of better living conditions for students within the university campus;
- Changing the quality of communication with students by changing behavior and mentality in the learning process;
- Establishment of protective mechanisms in the difficult relations;
- Involving students in the learning process and consideration of their opinions at different levels of decision making.

Actions:

☞ Actions for the realization of partnership relations are:

- Solving common problems to ensure better standards for students, looking for external beneficiaries: the *economy* and *the local community*;
- Standards' implementation related to the learning spaces in universities and also in dormitories;
- Improving students' surroundings, preferably in accordance with their specific requirements;
- Implementation and improvement of Internet service;

- Informing students about their rights and responsibilities (exams, consulting, etc.)
- Providing specific resources to encourage individual projects related to academic fields (professional excursions, presentations, etc.);
- Reliance on textbooks and other teaching equipment eg computers, etc.

4.1.7. Studies' organization from the perspective of lifelong learning

Development goals:
☞ In terms of speed of new knowledge and technologies' developing in certain areas, short-term knowledge often is appropriate. For this reason taking into account changes occurring in undergraduate and graduate studies, AUT should become a key element in the possibility of long-life learning.
☞At AUT a special importance is given to short programs with a specific specialization, formulated in accordance with the requirements posed by the labor market or programs aiming at "periodic knowledge updating".

Expected results
☞ Some of the expected results are:
- Improving the education level in society;
- Better horizontal and vertical mobility of study;
- Efficiency related to the rapidly changing working conditions in some areas of activity;
- Education in accordance with labor market needs;
- The rapid response to changes in local and global level;
- Providing additional education; etc.

Difficulties & obstacles:
- Derecognition of the university role in the lifelong learning process;
- Resistance to changes in the post-graduate level;
- Non clear funding and risk factor in post-graduate programs;
- Lack of knowledge with regard to the needs of individuals.

Strategic steps:
- Consistently tracking needs ways lifelong education;
- Establishing relations with professional associations (existing and future ones) in order to be processed occupational licensing models;
- Registration policy change on several AL levels giving" other education opportunities", especially in the post-graduate level;
- Creating opportunities for interdisciplinary combination of programs based on the users' need.

Actions:
- Determining the needs and linking mechanisms with those who are interested in specialization programs;
- Inclusion of professional studies in post-graduate programs;

- Organizing AL studies in accordance with European methods (in accordance with the Bologna Declaration, 3+2 years and 3 years - university doctoral studies)
- Encouraging and developing interdisciplinary programs at the university level (Bachelor, Master);
- Encouraging reduced programs of "professional updating" and specific specialization programs.

5. QUALITY ASSURANCE

☞ Quality assurance remains a fundamental requirement for AUT's growing reputation, nationally and abroad

5.1. Quality improvement

☞ The pressure of competition and the diversity of needs faced by the HE institutions make it necessary that AUT increases flexibility to respond to the demands of time. For this, diversity of models, methods, teaching and networking, etc., is expected. Therefore, learning through practical work should be promoted, so that the continuous professional development can be achieved.

☞ Professors must demonstrate expertise in their disciplines. Their professional development is important in terms of achieving the strategic objectives. It is necessary to work with partners to provide the necessary training and development of academic staff.

☞ The quality of learning is related to the combination of skills and experience among academic staff. It is necessary to enhance the appreciation and reward towards outstanding staff.

5.2 Quality assurance system

☞ Quality assurance in the university covers all activities involving the evaluation, supervision and accreditation, such as:

- Authorization that allows the institution to exercise didactic activities in higher education
- Adaptation and curriculum improvement
- Evaluation of the institution (organization and management, teaching and research)
- Adoption and implementation of criteria for new professors recruiting
- Professors and students' evaluation.

☞ University also is evaluated about the existing quality assurance system level and the results of the work and contribution of the university in social and economic development of the country.

☞ The important steps that our university academic staff should make towards integration are: tracking regional, European and world agriculture trends in Agricultural HE and in particular towards ensuring a high quality.

☞ Quality assurance is a relatively well-known issue in the university community. AUT have had the support of a Tempus project, which has

enabled the design of a self-assessment model and its implement in all the academic units.

5.3 Existing conditions

☞ Quality assurance policies in AUT are based on **Law no. 80/2015 "On Higher Education and Scientific Research in Higher Education Institutions in the Republic of Albania"**, as well as on the AUT Statute and regulations.

☞ There are no adopted standards for HE in our country, although Agency for Higher Education Accreditation (AAAP), often make available to us materials such as: "Accreditation system on HE", "Other aspects and evaluation indicators in higher education quality", "Institutional performance indicators for certain standards for quality assurance in HE", "Standards and guidelines of ENQA for the HE institutions and agencies of Quality Assurance for quality assurance of HE in European space"

5.4 Development goals

☞ Application and development of a broader and more efficient quality assurance system should include all actors: state, professors and students

☞ The aim of the quality assurance system development at AUT includes drafting policies, procedures, culture for quality assurance, compared with the established standards.

☞ A special goal of the quality assurance in AUT is the development and implementation of the system providing quality at the university that is self-evaluation system, supervision and accreditation, respecting the autonomy of the University.

☞ The quality assurance system and periodic assessment are focused on:
- Organization and management;
- Adequate financing;
- Consistent policies for staff recruitment;
- The learning process; increase in professors and students mobility; presentation and implementation of ECTS, accreditation scheme, curriculum development, new methods of teaching and tutorial, etc.)
- Scientific research at the university.

5.5 Expected results

- Defining the criteria and the indicators of institutional quality in relation to programs, learning, research, students, etc.;
- Changing the rules, if the quality assurance mechanisms required in order to improve quality at university, in relation to: organizing and

financing, assessment of curricula, criteria and standards for the promotion of students, professors and students evaluation, etc;

- Increase the competitive spirit in university relations at home and abroad
- Greater involvement of the university in various projects within and outside the country (one-disciplinary projects, but in particular in the multi-disciplinary and interdisciplinary ones);
- Increase professors and students' ability in accordance with the requirements of the society and market.

☞ Increasing the university quality, in addition to the above qualitative indicators may be supplemented with the quantitative indicators as follows:

- Increase the passing rate of students
- Reducing the number of students that leave the studies
- Increasing the professors and students' mobilities
- Increasing the number of joint projects with European universities
- Better employment possibilities for students
- Intensive use of information technology, etc.

☞ Development of structures and quality security system in the university is necessary to rely institutionally (AUT is established the Curriculum Development and Academic Evaluation Office). Academic staff should be informed about changes and should participate actively in the process.

5.6. Strategic steps

☞ Quality assurance system take into consideration the university control through the intern evaluation. Special considerations should be paid to the development of the assessment models during the quality assurance system. This activity includes:

- Self analysis;
- Quality indicators;
- Staff evaluation from students;
- Students evaluation;
- Curricula evaluation;
- Assessment of participation in research activity;
- Assessment in development national and regional activities;
- Participation in problem solving in the rural community.

☞ Particular consideration should be also given to the interpretation of assessment and development joint actions in case of their negative or positive feedback.

☞ Strategic steps in the development of quality in universities are as follows:

- Determination of the role & duties, in Quality assurance system at different levels (University, Faculty department);
- Changing the organizational structure during the quality management, which means distribution of responsibilities and activities in the respective levels;
- Establishing a sustainable registration policies;
- Redefinition of responsibilities for the elected bodies;
- Development and perfection of a internal model for institutional evaluation

5.7. Actions

☞ The actions to be undertaken in order to put in place the quality assurance system are as follows:

- Inclusion of the academic staff in activities related with the analysis of the existing system and the absorption of national and international experience through workshops;
- Organization of meetings where participants discuss, quality assurance standards, procedures for assessment and interpretation of performance appraisal;
- University admission policy will be analyzed in accordance with the needs of the economy and society, the capacity of the institution, payments for education, as well as taking into consideration the general strategic orientation;
- Continuous information about evaluation rules, where all the persons involved in assessment should be informed on time;
- Quality evaluation of the institution, curricula, teaching process, professors and students should be checked periodically and then taking the necessary measures for improvement.

6. AUT _ INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

☞In all its activity, AUT has considered the establishment, development and strengthening of external cooperation in the field of education and scientific research as an integral part of its activity. This cooperation is considered as an instrument for rapprochement and integration of AUT in European system of education and science.

☞During the crucial turns of AUT development, external cooperation has played an irreplaceable role in reforming and modernizing this institution. Two major projects completed in AUT: SARA Project funded by the US government, which focused primarily on comprehensive reform of the former Faculty of Agrarian Economics and the GTZ, funded by the German government, which was focused mainly on the reform and modernization of other faculties of the AUT, certainly representing the greatest and sustainable assistance that AUT could benefit from external cooperation over the years.

☞It is a fact that AUT has cooperative relations with some universities in Europe, USA, Asia, etc., but the **fruits of this cooperation are far away from the possible and expected ones.**

☞Universities that AUT cooperates are: University of Hohenheim-Stuttgart, Humboldt University of Berlin, University of Bonn, University of Gottingen, Germany; Tuscia University, Viterbo, University of Potenza, University of Udine, University of Parma, University of Florence, IAM-Valenzano, Bari University, University of Perugia, Tor Vergata University, University of Turin, University of Marche Italy; Polytechnic Institute and Virginia State University, Atlanta University, University of Colorado, University of Georgia, university of Oklahoma, University of Florida, University of Maharishi, in the US; National Polytechnic Institute and the International Centre Nancy Mediterranean Agronomic Studies (CIHEAM) in Montpellier France; Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, University of Patras, Agricultural University of Athens Greece; Norway University of Life Sciences, University of Belgrade, University of Novi-Sad, Serbia, with EAST, Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina; St. Clement of Ohrid University of Bitola, the State University of Tetovo, Macedonia; University of Pristina, University of Prizren Kosovo; University of Agronomic Sciences and Veterinary Medicine, Bucharest, Romania; Ankara University, Süleyman Demirel University, Turkey Istanbul University, University of Maribor in Slovenia Ljubljana, University of Zagreb, Croatia, Ministry of Higher Education, Poland, Tianjin University of Finance and Economics, China etc.

☞Geography of international cooperation of AUT become broader and more complex if we take into account the multilateral cooperative activities

carried out in the framework of different types of projects. Thus, in the framework of TEMPUS projects, AUT collaborates with analogous institutions from Spain, Portugal, Belgium, and Austria and to those of all former Yugoslav Republics.

☞Also, AUT cooperates in the framework of international organizations or networks as follows: CIHEAM / IAM-Bari, Italy and CIHEAM / IAM-Montpelier, France; ICA Interuniversity Consortium for Agricultural Sciences and Humanities related to Europe; CIRCEOS-Interuniversity Center for Research and Cooperation with Eastern Europe and South-East; Community C.M.U.-Mediterranean University; AUDEM-Alliance of Universities for Democracy; I.U.F.R.O. International Union of Forestry Research Institutions

☞International cooperation has brought great benefits to AUT, and in this context can be mentioned

- AUT international recognition.
- Facilitation of the process of curriculum restructuring and improvement of teaching plans.
- Help for creating a new psychology to academic and non-academic staff.
- The creation of new departments and support of existing departments.
- Modernization of administrative management.
- Qualification of academic and non-academic staff.
- Student movement.
- Strengthening and technical laboratory-based support.
- Preparation and publication of new textbooks.
- Publication of joint activity of scientific research

☞Although the geography of external cooperation is great and the benefits were not small, it is worth also to bring to our attention issues. Among these issues we will evident issues such as:

- **The continuation of external cooperation.** We would like to bring to attention that with many of the abovementioned universities, cooperation has enabled maybe just a visit and nothing more.
- **Orientation of external cooperation,** for which we believe that there isn't a clear idea **where** to achieve and **how**?
- Tendency to have **as many cooperation actors in paper** is evident. Almost in all cases **our partners are the ones seeking cooperation opportunities, not us etc**.

☞Considering the above, but not only, focus of activity of AUT in the future will be:

- **Concretization and continuance** in the connection and implementation of the bilateral cooperation agreements.
- **Increased participation in transnational projects.**

- **Increasing the level of profitability in the context of international cooperation**.

6.1. Internationalization of higher education and AUT

☞Internationalization of higher education is defined as the process of integrating a global, intercultural and international dimension in objectives, functions (teaching / learning, scientific research and services) and higher education activity.

☞ But what does the internationalization of higher education and AUT itself as an institution of higher education in Albania represents?. In our judgment and evaluation, internationalization is defined as **general objective, so AUT should define itself in the framework of a broad international perspective, revealing its individuality in language and culture.**

☞In a more general plan, internationalization of AUT is important and contributes directly:

- **Firstly,** the quality of education and training of students graduating at AUT increasing their competitiveness in the labor market. Eventually, internationalization will benefit all those who study or qualify in AUT while giving clear value-added to the quality of graduation and their competitive position in the labor market. Being equipped with the necessary academic, linguistic and cultural knowledge, future graduates will be able to highlight their distinctive features in the international work market and will function with success in a multicultural professional environment.
- **Secondly,** it will boost the quality of scientific research. International cooperation in the field of scientific research is very important for AUT University. Participation in international research projects brings not only financial benefits, but international recognition of the results of scientific research is one of the main criteria of quality in all areas of science.
- **Thirdly,** AUT as an institution and community will benefit from the ongoing internationalization.

☞International activities contribute to the international recognition of the university. As a result of contacts generated by the movement of students and academics and by comparison of curricula, which is necessary in case of exchange of students, academic staff will reflect on education offered at AUT. While this reflection and comparison will lead to positive actions, on adaptation and dissemination of "good practices", international activities will strongly contribute to the quality of education and training at AUT.

☞The community benefits from internationalization of the university because it brings cooperation and contacts, which are important to the economic, political and cultural interest of the community.

☞Specifically, the internationalization of AUT is important because:

- It expands and diversifies sources of students and academic staff.
- Creates profile and international reputation.
- Strengthens the capacity of scientific research and knowledge, and production;
- It promotes development and innovation in the curriculum.
- Increases international recognition of academic staff, students and intercultural understanding.
- It contributes to academic quality.
- Diversifies sources of income

☞In case we go beyond the context of AUT and the internationalization, we see it in relation to the whole country, its significance consists in:

- Increased competition (scientific, technological, and economic) and the benefits it brings.
- Promotion of international solidarity and cooperation.
- Development of strategic alliances (political, cultural, academic and commercial).
- Development of capacities and human resources of the country.
- Increase of understanding and cultural awareness.
- Increase of contribution to integration and regional priorities.

☞Given the importance of the process of internationalization has for AUT, as well as for the country as a whole, this process should be attributed necessary and sustainable material, financial and human resources. Only in this way the potential benefits can turn into real benefits.

☞As **potential benefits** arising from investment and promotion for internationalization, we may include:

- Students and academic staff more oriented from the international perspective.
- Improving academic quality.
- Increased generating of income.
- Brain gain.
- International increased cooperation and solidarity.
- Renovations in curriculum, teaching and scientific research.
- Support for "national and international citizenship."
- Qualifications and more diversified curriculum.
- Strengthening scientific research and production knowledge.

☞The process of internationalization carries with it *certain risks* that should be taken precautions to prevent or minimize their negative effects.

☞As possible risks we may include:

- Homogenization of curricula.
- Loss of national and cultural identity.
- Deterioration of the quality of education.
- Growing elitarisation in terms of access to international education opportunities.
- On the use of one or two languages as a study tool.
- Commercialization of educational programs.
- Brain drain
- Increasing the number of "degrees foreign providers" and / or low quality providers.

6.2. Strategy/policy of AUT internationalization

☞An **internationalization strategy / policy** adequate to AUT should explicitly include the following elements:

- International/ intercultural dimension of curriculum.
- International cooperation in scientific research.
- Institutional arrangements / international networks.
- Movements abroad opportunities for students.
- Movements abroad opportunities for academic staff.
- Free recruitment of foreign students.
- Paid recruitment of foreign students.
- Teaching overseas
- Award of joint/ double/ duplicate degrees.
- International development projects.
- Area, foreign language studies, and courses with an international focus.
- Visits by foreign colleagues.
- Links with international and community based cultural groups.
- International, intercultural and extracurricular activities.
- Recruitment / activation in the educational process and scientific research of Albanian academics and researchers, employed in foreign educational and research institutions.
- Recruitment of foreign academic staff and researchers.
- Education in distance.

☞Strategy / policy of AUT internationalization should be guided by certain geographical priorities.

☞Given the potential resources of the country in general and in particular geographical priorities of AUT, it can be:

   a.   Albanian speaking areas in the Balkan region.
   b.   Balkan countries.
   c.   Europe
   d.   Mediterranean countries except Europe.
   e.   Middle East.
   f.   North America

☞An adequate internationalization strategy / policy should also establish key elements that will enable its implementation. AUT case key elements are:

   a.   Students
   b.   Academic staff
   c.   Administration
   d.   Experienced directors.

☞The process of internationalization has certain obstacles on his way. Regarding obstacles, enforcement tactics should be developed which at best would lead to overcoming obstacles or minimize their negative effects.

☞In the case of AUT, some barriers of internationalization could be:

   - Little knowledge or interest for internationalization.
   - Lack of strategy / policy to guide the process.
   - Limited experience and expertise to implement the plan of internationalization.
   - Competing priorities for time and resources in the institution.
   - Lack of interest and commitment by the academic staff.
   - Administrative inertia or bureaucratic difficulties.
   - Lack of support, material and financial resources at the institutional level.
   - Not knowing the international activities for promotion, titles and degrees.

☞Implementation of the strategy/policy of internationalization requires creating appropriate regulatory mechanisms. The absence of these mechanisms compromises the implementation and success of strategies, however well they are drafted. Regulatory mechanisms are:

   - Quality assurance and accreditation.
   - Recognition of qualifications and credit and degrees transfer.
   - Regional agreements which include trade in education services and the impact they may have on the provision of education services across the border, particularly in AUT, Albania and the region.

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