# URD: Role of universities in the regional development

# Del 3.1 Quality control and monitoring plan

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# Content

# 1. Introduction

It is well known that institutions of higher education (HEIs) have significant economic, social and cultural impact on local level.
In case of Georgia they are often largest regional employers, tax payers and service consumers, at the same time assuring access to higher education for those who cannot afford living in another city.

Regional universities may and shall play the most important role as basis and centres of regional development, while linking their research and study programs (including training courses) to local needs.

Thus, the general aim of the project is to make Georgian regional HEIs more relevant to the communities and regions they are located.

The objectives of the project are:
- to develop mission and strategic development plans for regional universities based on SWOT analysis and local market research in cooperation with local authorities and social partners;
- to increase cooperation between Universities and Local Government Authorities to increase their capacity and enhance specification of each region;
- to improve and modernize the management structures in universities of Georgia and make their administrative structures compatible with those of the European universities.

Project activities will include:

- Redefining mission and strategic development plans for regional universities based on SWOT analysis and local market research;
- Developing close collaboration with local authorities and other social partners, enhancing academia-labour market dialogue;
- Creating network of regional HEIs to build institutional capacity and sustainability through the sharing of best practice in educational delivery, training, research and organizational management, particularly with reference to regional contexts.

RURD Evaluation Plan is a tool to guide evaluation and monitoring activities during the whole project. In particular, it focuses on the evaluation of PROCESS QUALITY (management efficiency and effectiveness) and on the evaluation of PRODUCTS QUALITY (products effectiveness).
The evaluation will be carried out at different levels – internal and external – and will involve both partners and target groups.
The evaluation criteria will be established according to "who" carries on the evaluation and to "what" is evaluated.

# 2. RURD Quality control and monitoring Quality Strategy

Evaluation strategy will cover the following aspects:

1) Evaluation of process efficiency and effectiveness

The evaluation of project process (management efficiency and effectiveness) is realized externally. The External Evaluation is carried out by an External Quality Expert outside the project consortium who monitors and assesses the management process. The external expert analyses and elaborates data coming from partners' evaluation, which will be conducted through online questionnaires and other

evaluation tools. In this way, he or she is able to study critical aspects and gives inputs/suggestions on how overtaking possible gaps and improve project efficiency. The External Quality Expert will be selected by the project coordinator at the beginning of the project activities through an appropriate "call for tender" in order to guarantee the transparency.

2) Evaluation of product effectiveness

This evaluation mainly aims at assessing the RURD products and methodology in terms of effectiveness/efficacy and impact on the project target group through the submission of experts involved in the project.

3) Quality Reporting Activity

The Quality Progress report includes the analysis of the interim collected data and the recommendations to improve project management activities and the Final Evaluation report at the end of the project which will summarize the results of data collected during the project.

# 3. WP3 QUALITY ASSURANCE AND EVALUATION Planning

The eligibility period of the project is from 15/10/2019 to 14/10/2022

In the context of the RURD Project, evaluation is an important and productive process that aims at the following general objectives:

- it supports the project and acts as a check on whether the targets have been met;
- it allows the results to be improved based upon assessments made about the value and quality of the project;
- it simplifies decision making and can assist with fundamental changes in the project, should these be necessary;
- it involves all the project partners and provides a context for open discussion, debate and agreement on project performance;
- it should reveal strengths as well as weaknesses and identify obstacles to progress.

The outcomes of the WP 3 are the following:

- Quality control and monitoring plan: Internal strategy providing responsibilities, criteria and tools for RURD quality assurance;
- Quality report for the management: it is scheduled two times (end of September 2021 and September 2022). It concerns the evaluation of project management activity and work plan. It will summarize the results of the evaluation grids compiled by partners and the results pointed out by the external evaluation. It includes the recommendations to improve the project management activity;
- Quality report for the products: it is scheduled on the end of September 2021 and September 2022. It will present the results of the RURD products evaluation, the perception and effectiveness including the direct impact of valorisation activities;
- Final Evaluation report: it is scheduled on the end of September 2022. It will present both the results of the RURD process and products evaluation.

## 3.1 Partners' roles and responsibilities

Each partner contributes to the achievement of the good quality of RURD project.

FHJ (AT) as leader of WP3 coordinates all monitoring and evaluation activities while partners participate in the delivery of WP3 tasks. The table below shows the tasks for each partner

| Partner | Role and tasks in the work package |
|---------|------------------------------------|
| FHJ | **WP Leader** <br> • Drawing up of the Quality and Evaluation Plan <br> • Design and submission of quality control and evaluation templates for deliverables <br> • Processing data and analysis <br> • Drawing up of the Quality Reports for the management and the products. <br> • Drawing up of the Evaluation Report (interim and final) |
| ATSU | • Recruit external evaluation expert <br> • Record grid/sheet filling in |
| All other partners | • Record grid/sheet filling in |

## 3.2 Monitoring plan for process and product of the project RURD

Project management is a critical activity that influences the well proceeding of all project activities and the achievement of mid-term and final results. In fact, the evaluation of the management activity is periodically carried out throughout the project with the purpose to improve the ongoing process by taking into consideration the results of the evaluation.

This process guarantees a continuous impact on the project management activity.

As mentioned above, the evaluation of process efficiency and effectiveness is conducted through an EXTERNAL EVALUATION.

The product quality is often perceived as a big challenge in educational projects since quality is indeed a rather subjective matter; this aspect must be taken into consideration when we talk about the quality of educational measures.

The core question is whether the outcome of the project meets the needs and the expectations of the stakeholders as well as the direct and indirect target groups. As stated previously, the quality of the products will be ensured and coordinated by the WP3 Leader "Quality Assurance and Evaluation" partner, FHJ (AT) in collaboration with all partners of the project.

## 3.3 Process Evaluation

### 3.3.1 Finality

The evaluation activities of effectiveness and efficiency of the design process will involve the development of technical tools and methodologies to assess the quality/relevance of management procedures, as the basis for an optimal process of organization and work.

The purpose of the monitoring process will be to identify and support appropriate practices and organizational link between the various partners involved in a common task.

The importance of this level of investigation is supported by the number of parties/partners involved in the project on different levels, as well as by their different working and procedural styles.

The partnership will work in order to pursue a common goal, but if the scheduled timing is not monitored and supported, it will be a very disturbing element of the collaborative climate, and in general, all at the expense of the quality of work done.

In this sense, the monitoring process will provide for the collection of useful feedbacks to support the organization and point out its functionality.

For the above explained the monitoring process will be designed to test and evaluate the work of the different teams, as well as the proper functionality of operational strategies they put in place.

## 3.3.2 Specific objectives

One goal of the QA work package is to support the consortium in the supervision of the project management activities and to design and carry out the management evaluation process, to co-operate with the Internal Q&E Team in the integration of collected data.

On the basis of recommendations and suggestions from the External Quality Expert, the Internal Q&E Team as well as feedbacks from all partners, corrective actions will be taken if needed. The External Quality Expert will use all this information to contribute to the interim report (deliverables n.) and the Final Evaluation report (all part of deliverable n. 3.3) in collaboration with the WP3 leader (FHJ) and the coordinator.

The External Evaluator will be responsible for reporting the progress of procedures in place to assure quality, standards of provision and outcomes, evaluating the activity of project management and work plan.

The evaluation reports will be based on the synthesis of the results of the evaluation grids filled in by the partners, and will include recommendations to improve project management.

In carrying out this role is essential that the external expert uses appropriate means of detection and subsequent analysis of the data to provide objective assessments and detached from the project as a whole.

The activities of the External Quality Expert will be coordinated by the project coordinator (ATSU) in accordance with the WP leader (FHJ).

The role of the External Quality Expert will be to:

- act as an external monitor of the evaluation processes already embedded in the project structure;
- at the outset of his activity he will provide the Quality and Evaluation Team (QA&ET) with a review on the Quality Assurance and Evaluation Plan (deliverable n. 3.1);
- suggest additional tools, indicators and opportunities for evaluation;
- perform external audits (September 2021, 2022) to evaluate the project management effectiveness and identify activities and critical issues of management activity, refer any risk/critical aspects and define possible solutions to the risks identified;
- collect evaluation results and facilitate their analysis;
- use all this information to contribute to the drawing up the Quality Progress report for the management (deliverable n. 3.2) and contribute to draw up the final Evaluation report (deliverable n. 3.4) in collaboration with the WP3 leader.

### 3.3.3 Tools

The collection of data and information, functional assessment process will be undertaken with the help of specially developed tools. These tools consist of structured questionnaires consisting of multiple choice questions and open ended questions. For the submission of the questionnaires and the collection of qualitative and quantitative data outside expert will use multimedia tools. The data and information gathered will be evaluated by applying the following general criteria:

- determination of the degree of relevance of the operational methods adopted by the working groups with the objectives and expected results (benchmarking);
- determination of the degree of relevance and sharing / satisfaction with the support provided by the various operational staff being monitored, the respondents (statistical analysis of data);
- comparative analysis of the results achieved (output), and expected, (qualitative and quantitative analysis - time / type actions).

For the collection and analysis of data will follow the production of a report on the evaluation of process efficiency.
For each area of inquiry, the evaluator will identify the most significant results, summarized as "key findings" and make "recommendations" to highlight aspects of the project will pay particular attention or action to improve the project.

According to the principle of a continuous quality improvement, the recommendations will be drawn up periodically with the aim of improving the quality of project processes and progress step by step. The final goal will be to correct ineffective actions and improve the work throughout the lifecycle of the project, ensuring a high level of quality of the project according to the indicators identified. As consequence, the reports will contain a list of recommendations, procedures and guidelines to improve the success of the project.
After the conclusion of each meeting, the expert will ask the partners to fill in the online questionnaires evaluation including the following indicators:

- planning;
- organization;
- partner participation;
- other issues.

In order to monitor and evaluate the management and coordination activities, the external expert can assess whether the activities meet the timing scheduled by the project plan or they need some improvements.
In fact, the expert has to be able to:

- identify the critical activities and management activities;
- reporting any risks / fundamental aspect for the mitigation plan in order to overcome the problem and support the defining of other possible solutions to the identified risks.

## 3.3.4 Criteria and Indicators

Subject analysis of monitoring and evaluation process will be:
- proper planning of a methodological-procedural approach;
- the response time in strategic and various training activities;
- the quality of support and coordination provided / offered;

- the efficiency and effectiveness of communication processes between the partners and staff working;
- the efficiency and effectiveness of coordination meetings between the partners.

In order to monitor and evaluate the management and coordination activities, the external expert can assess whether the activities meet the timing scheduled by the project plan or they need some improvements. Indeed, the External Expert can:

- identify activities and critical issues of management activity;
- refer any risk/critical aspects to the Mitigation Plan in order to overtake problems, define other possible solutions to the risks identified;

Defined areas of investigation and responsibilities of the monitoring process, experts will undertake an evaluation of compliance/ non compliance process by applying the following criteria:

- effective use of time;
- quality of coordination and leadership;
- definition of detailed work plan;
- suitable allocation of responsibilities;
- definition of internal deadlines;
- compliance with the deadlines established;
- designing of a suitable reporting tools and deliverables templates;
- ongoing and correct cost certification;
- regular meeting attendance;
- regular and complete report and documents of meetings;
- perceived efficiency /efficaciousness of team working;
- clarity of objectives and activities pointed out by the coordinator / WP leader;
- communication among partners: understanding messages;
- communication among partners: promptly replying messages;
- quality of the means of communication.

Considering that the process evaluation will monitor the progress and effectiveness of the above processes of communication and coordination organization, designed to achieve excellent standards of product, special attention should be given to evaluating the effectiveness of the plenary meetings and virtual meetings between partners.

Specifically for the organization of plenary meetings the following aspects should be observed and evaluated:

- streamlining of the planning;
- sharing of planning;
- sharing organization;
- level of active participation;
- quantity and quality of contributions made by participants;
- share common problems and their solution;
- quality and specificity of the comments and materials;
- participants' satisfaction.

As for the organization of virtual meetings can be observed, for the evaluation process, the following aspects:

- quality of audio, visual, internet connection;
- correlation between goals and achievements;
- equal time for contribution;
- level of active participation;
- quantity and quality of contributions made by participants;
- participants' satisfaction.

All data collected for each survey area will be analyzed statistically in order to establish best practices process.

To this end it is for the external evaluator to attribute assessments of compliance / non-compliance process, thereby identifying strengths and weaknesses of organizational plant project and the partnership. The powers of compliance / non-compliance can be attributed to the diagram below:

**Full compliance,** when the overall ratings (average) for a given item will amount to at least 75% in the two best categories of assessment (for example, on a scale of 1 to 5 where 5 is the maximum value, 75% of the ratings must be included in the answer categories 4 and 5).

**Partial compliance**, when the overall ratings (average) for a given item will amount to at least 75% in the three intermediate categories of assessment (for example, on a scale of 1 to 5 where 5 is the maximum value, 75% of the evaluations must be included in the answer categories 2,3,4).

**Non-compliance**, when the overall ratings (average) for a given item will amount to at least 75% in the worst two categories of assessment (for example, on a scale of 1 to 5 where 5 is the maximum value, 75% of the ratings must be included in the answer categories 1 and 2).

## 3.3.5 The operational phases of work

Each phase of the evaluation process will provide for the realization of the following activities and sub-phases:

a) organization of the verification test and evaluation, selection of techniques, timing of administration and monitoring mode with subsequent development and construction of adequate survey instruments (questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, etc.), taking into account:
- the objectives of the audit and the information that you want to get with it;
- type of the target group;
- structure-activity / activities subject to monitoring.

b) administration of the verification test and evaluation at the time and manner established by the external evaluator;

c) development, analysis and evaluation of the findings;

d) drafting of synthesis report of the analyzed data.

## 3.3.6 Timing

| Operational phases of work | TOOL | Due to (after extension of project duration) | Due to (according to proposal) | Output |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | |

| Quality control and monitoring plan | - | January 2020 | January 2020, updated November 2020 | Del. 3.1 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Development of the evaluation tools on RURD processes and project meetings | - | January 2020 | January 2020 | Part of 3.2 Quality control and monitoring tools |
| National Consortium meeting | Meeting evaluation form | January 2020 | January 2020 | Meeting evaluation report; part of Del. 3.3 |
| Kick –off meeting | Meeting evaluation form | January 2020 | January 2020 | Meeting evaluation report; part of Del. 3.3 |
| Coordination meetings | Meeting evaluation form | May 2022 | May 2021 | Meeting evaluation report; part of Del. 3.3 |
| Virtual Consortium Meetings | Online Meeting evaluation form | July 2022 | July 2021 | Meeting evaluation report; part of Del. 3.3 |
| Interim progress | Process evaluation template | October 2021 | October 2020 | part of Del. 3.3 |
| Final project progress | Process evaluation template | October 2022 | October 2021 | part of Del. 3.3 |

## 3.4 Products Evaluation

If the evaluation process seeks to identify, advice and support good organizational practices necessary to carry out project's activities, the evaluation of product aims to assess the achievement of product's standards in line with those expected from the design documents, taking into account the operational context.

Product quality is often perceived as a big challenge in educational projects because the quality is actually rather a subjective issue, this aspect should be taken into consideration when it comes about the quality of educational measures.

The central question is whether the outcomes of the project meet the needs and expectations of stakeholders and the direct and indirect target groups.

Therefore, concerning the monitoring of the achievement of objectives, an assessment will be finalized in accordance with the criteria and rules established and shared among the partners and staff coordination of project activities.

Therefore, the product will be monitored in terms of both the achieved results and the qualitative and quantitative evaluation.

The evaluation of the product should be interpreted as a useful tool for testing and eventual remodeling and realignment of both content and methodology implemented, with the ultimate aim of optimizing operational strategies.

## 3.4.1 Tools

The collection of data and information will be made with the aid of specially developed tools.
These tools consist of structured questionnaires consisting of multiple choice questions and open questions.
The submission of the questionnaires and the collection of qualitative and quantitative data will be carried out using multimedia tools.

The data and information gathered will be evaluated by applying the following general criteria:

- applicability of the developed tools;
- transferability of the tools;
- level of effectiveness of the tools developed;
- flexibility of teaching tools developed;
- comparative analysis of learning outcomes achieved.

Data collection and analysis will follow the production of a report on the evaluation of efficiency and effectiveness of the tools developed and proposed.
For each survey area will be identified the most significant results, summarized as "key findings" and make "recommendations" to highlight aspects of good and critical, aimed at improving the proposed instruments.

The ultimate goal will be to correct any non-functionality of the tools, ensuring a high level of quality according to the indicators identified.
The results of the evaluation of the products will be further included in the annual quality

## 3.4.2 Criteria and Indicators

Analysis subject to monitoring and evaluation will be:

- applicability of the developed tools;
- transferability of the tools;
- level of effectiveness of the tools developed;
- flexibility of tools developed;

Given the survey areas, the criteria for product evaluation will be based on the assessment of their conformity / non-compliance with the expectations and requirements specified by both teachers and students.

In summary, the evaluation criteria will be:
- usability of the tools;
- quality of the instruments;
- comprehension of languages and texts;
- coherence of tools related to objectives;

- level of appreciation of the tools;
- level of participation;
- quality and specific comments and suggestions provided users of tools;
- satisfaction of the participants.

For each variable research staff monitoring will proceed to the allocation of assessments of compliance /non-compliance of products, identifying strengths and weaknesses of tools.

The powers of compliance / non-compliance can be attributed to the diagram below:

**Full compliance,** when the overall ratings (average) for a given item will amount to at least 75% in the two best categories of assessment (for example, on a scale of 1 to 5 where 5 is the maximum value, 75% of the ratings must be included in the answer categories 4 and 5).

**Partial compliance**, when the overall ratings (average) for a given item will amount to at least 75% in the three intermediate categories of assessment (for example, on a scale of 1 to 5 where 5 is the maximum value, 75% of the evaluations must be included in the answer categories 2,3,4).

**Non-compliance**, when the overall ratings (average) for a given item will amount to at least 75% in the worst two categories of assessment (for example, on a scale of 1 to 5 where 5 is the maximum value, 75% of the ratings must be included in the answer categories 1 and 2).

## 3.4.3 The operational phases of work

Each stage of the process of monitoring of product will be organized in the following activities and sub-phases:

a) the organization of the test and evaluation, selection techniques, timing of administration and monitoring mode, with development and construction of appropriate survey instruments (questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, etc.), taking into account:

- objectives of the audit and the information that you want to get with it;
- type of target group (teachers or students);
- structure-activity / activities subject to monitoring.

b) the submission of questionnaires, testing and product evaluation at the time and manner established by the QT;

c) the development, analysis and evaluation of results;

d) the drawing up of the summary report of data analyzed.

## 3.4.4 Timing

| Operational phases of work | TOOL | Due to (after extension of project duration) | Due to (according to proposal) | Output |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Development of the evaluation tools on RURD products | - | January 2020 | January 2020 | Part of 3.2 Quality control and monitoring tools |
| Evaluation on RURD products: SWOT analysis | Reports from partners Product evaluation form | March 2021 | March 2020 | Product evaluation report; part of Del. 3.3 |
| Evaluation on RURD products: Study visits | Study visit evaluation form | May 2021 | May 2020 | Product evaluation |

| | | | | report; part of Del. 3.3 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Evaluation on RURD products: Local Needs Analysis | Product evaluation form | July 2021 | July 2020 | Product evaluation report; part of Del. 3.3 |
| Training kits for HEIs Administration and Local Government | Product evaluation form | August 2021 | August 2020 | Product evaluation report; part of Del. 3.3 |
| Trainings for HEIs Administration and Local Governing Bodies | Event evaluation form | October 2021 | October 2020 | Event evaluation report; part of Del. 3.3 |
| Updated mission, vision and strategy of regional universities | Product evaluation form | December 2021 | December 2020 | Product evaluation report; part of Del. 3.3 |
| Mechanisms for inter-agency coordination in the development of the region | Product evaluation form | October 2021 | October 2020 | Product evaluation report; part of Del. 3.3 |
| Report on university resources to foster design a framework of clear policy regarding the role of HEIs in regions | Product evaluation form | October 2021 | October 2020 | Product evaluation report; part of Del. 3.3 |
| LLL courses | Event evaluation form | January 2022 | January 2021 | Event evaluation report; part of Del. 3.3 |
| Awareness raising campaign documents and materials | Product evaluation form | August 2021 | August 2020 | Product evaluation report; part of Del. 3.3 |
| Development of Management Plan for each university | Product evaluation form | December 2021 | December 2021 | Product evaluation report; part of Del. 3.3 |
| Project web-site | Product evaluation form | October 2022 | October 2021 | Product evaluation report; part of Del. 3.3 |
| Facebook page | Assessment on continuous posting Product evaluation form | October 2022 | October 2021 | Product evaluation report; part of Del. 3.3 |
| Event and Report: Discussions and consultations on issues | Product evaluation form | March 2022 | March 2021 | Product evaluation report; part of Del. 3.3 |

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|---|---|---|---|---|
| of regional development and policy | | | | |
| guidelines, brochures, newsletters | Product evaluation form | October 2022 | October 2021 | Product evaluation report; part of Del. 3.3 |
| Project awareness and dissemination documents | Product evaluation form | January 2022 | January 2021 | Product evaluation report; part of Del. 3.3 |
| Promo materials for awareness raising campaign | Product evaluation form | August 2021 | August 2020 | Product evaluation report; part of Del. 3.3 |
| newsletters and press releases | Product evaluation form | October 2022 | October 2021 | Product evaluation report; part of Del. 3.3 |
| Final Dissemination Conference | | June 2022 | June 2021 | Event evaluation report; part of Del. 3.3 |
| Meetings of Rectors' Conference | Event evaluation form | May 2022 | May 2021 | Event evaluation report; part of Del. 3.3 |