



EUROPEAN INDICATORS AND RANKING METHODOLOGY FOR UNIVERSITY THIRD MISSION

Final Report

Public Part

Project information

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Executive Summary

The E3M research project “European Indicators and Ranking Methodology for University Third Mission” is a project co-financed by the European Commission under its Lifelong Learning Programme, coordinated by Universidad Politécnica de Valencia and developed by eight partners from seven different European countries (Universities of Helsinki, Krems, León, Maribor, Porto, the Istituto Superiore Mario Boella, and the Dublin Institute of Technology). This project has been oriented to create a ranking methodology for measuring the Third Mission activities of universities.

The Third Mission of universities adds to the classical missions of the universities, teaching and research, a new approach that reflects all contributions of universities to society.

Although several known and accepted rankings systems exist for the teaching and research missions of the university, there are no commonly agreed indicators or a cohesive methodology that assess the Third Mission activities of universities. The E3M project has dealt with this need.

Third Mission activities are many and varied. Considering this, the E3M project proposed three dimensions for structuring these activities which are indicative of the Third Mission as a whole: Continuing Education (CE), Technology Transfer & Innovation (TTI) and Social Engagement (SE). For each of these dimensions, the main operational processes were identified. Therefore, the identification and definition of processes within the dimensions led in the direction to obtain a selected set of indicators which determine the basis of a ranking methodology criterion.

For achieving a significant collection of indicators a three step process was defined and later applied. As a first step, a wide collection of indicators associated to each process was proposed. The primary indicators set was achieved as a result of a deep literature review and the work of the project research team. A second step implied an expert’s judgement in a process based on the Delphi methodology, producing a selection of the most relevant indicators. At this process a total of twenty external experts were consulted in three rounds with different and specific purposes but with the common objective to reach a consensus and get a reduced and more refined list of indicators. Finally, a third step was compounded by an evaluation of the feasibility of the indicators set. As a result of all this procedure, a final and homogeneous group of indicators was produced in the three areas of the Third Mission. They intend to satisfy the need of incorporating Third Mission indicators in the evaluation of the university activities as a first step for any type of ranking. A methodology to create a ranking has been also studied and proposed.

Furthermore, and in order to detail best practices in the three dimensions of Third Mission, six case studies were carried out at several Higher Education Institutions in Europe. The institutions were Universidad Politécnica de Valencia, Politecnico di Torino, University of Cambridge, University of Turku, Dublin Institute of Technology and Széchenyi István University. Visits were also used to check the opinion of these

HEIs about the indicators selected through a confrontation with institutional representatives of the Third Mission activities in the three fields.

To conclude, a global web for European Third Mission providers was built to provide access and allow European institutions to enter data regarding their activities in the Third Mission. This is being a useful tool to benchmark institutions and compare their own indicators and services across Europe.

E3M project has ensured a broad and sustainable dissemination of the project's outputs and has intended to give a new approach on the concept of ranking methodologies by creating indicators on Third Mission activities and by generating a comprehensive instrument to identify, measure, and compare Third Mission activities from a wide perspective.

More information: www.e3mproject.eu

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1. Project Objectives

The aim of the E3M project, as described at the beginning, has been mainly to generate indicators that allow to compare and benchmark institutions across Europe. This project has enriched the approach of ranking methodologies by including indicators from the third mission point of view. Activities such as Continuing Education (CE), Technology Transfer & Innovation (TTI) and Social Engagement (SE) demonstrate the university's interaction to society.

The standard indicators and the ranking methodology developed by E3M will contribute towards the quality of continuing education, by encouraging institutions to recognize and work towards excellence. By also studying the innovative practices of technology transfer, as well as the social engagement element of third mission activities, the project will contribute strongly towards improving their performance and quality.

This project has addressed the following general objectives:

- Improve the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of education and training systems in Europe, improving at the same time the global competitiveness of European Higher Education Institutions. The indicators developed enable the management of HEIs to continually assess and improve their performance.
- Encourage Higher Education Institution's contribution to society. By developing key indicators and a ranking methodology, the project allow higher education institutions to improve the services they offer to society, including industry and to policy makers' strategic needs.
- Foster the creation of a European Area of Higher Education by means of increased communication and mutual understanding. The networks developed during the project have built links between institutions, working towards a common European Area.
- Stimulate excellence and improve the visibility of university activities focused on services to society and industry. The dissemination material and the conference organized by the project have served to promote Third Mission.

In order to achieve the above-mentioned general objectives we have set up the following specific objectives:

- Creating a set of indicators to measure the effectiveness of third mission provision. These allow the governing boards of HEIs, funding bodies and policy makers to share a common understanding of excellent practices. In this way, the Third Mission can be more effectively promoted. These indicators have been divided into three dimensions we believe to be indicative of Third Mission activities: CE, TTI and SE.
- Validation of the indicators. The indicators set defined have been checked for relevance and feasibility, to ensure that the information provided by them is reasonable and comprehensive.
- Creating a ranking methodology to benchmark European Third Mission Services providers of HEI. This ranking methodology is able to allow funding bodies and industry to better understand the Third Mission and assess institutions based on performance.

- Producing good practices for institutional dialogue in a European Area of Higher Education framework.

To summarize, the E3M project has intended to have a great impact at European level mainly through the creation of indicators and a benchmark tool. It has attempted to give answers to the needs described above by:

- To provide a conceptual framework for Third Mission activities
- A set of relevant indicators for the three dimensions of Third Mission: CE, TTI and SE.
- A methodology for ranking university third mission activities
- Global web for European third mission providers
- Six case studies of Third Mission activities and best practices
- Three policy seminars on the three dimensions of the Third Mission
- International conference of Third Mission activities providers and interested institutions and persons

2. Project Approach

In order to accomplish the objectives mentioned in the previous chapter, the following structure, approach and methodology were chosen towards different aspects of the project:

Project structure

The strategy was to organize the project activities in the following 10 workpackages, by involving the eight partners considering their expertise and interest:

WP1- Project Management: this workpackage includes mainly the definition of the project, the configuration of the work groups and distribution of tasks.

WP2- Quality and evaluation plan: this stage of the project has assured the specific control points in the project execution in order to guarantee the quality of the development and the results of the project.

WP3- Dissemination: the main aim of this WP has been to spread and diffuse project's partial and final results.

WP4- Exploitation: with this workpackage has intended to give an application to the project outputs.

WP5- Survey methodology definition and pretesting: to design and create a survey methodology to get a selected set of indicators for each key 3M dimension.

WP6- Survey implementation and testing: the objective has been to test and validate the methodology developed during the previous workpackage.

WP7- Data analysis and validation of indicators: to analyse the obtained indicators and assess which of them are suitable to create the methodology of a third mission ranking.

WP8- Study visits and best practices identification: this workpackage intended to compare the obtained indicators with real facts from each institution selected and representative of each dimension.

WP9- Development of web based tools: to create a web tool to disseminate the project outputs and use it for benchmarking third mission providers.

WP10- International conference management: this has been a very important tool to disseminate the knowledge derived by the project, targeting to third mission providers and researchers.

The main responsibility for organizing the activities related to the different lines of action was taken by the coordination at the UPV, Spain, but for every area of study (CE, TTI and SE) there was a specific coordinator who tried to lead the activities carried out regarding these three dimensions. Every project partner was progressing independently during the project period but most of activities were done jointly.

The project coordination ensured a fairly distribution of the tasks among all partners and the active participation of them. An advisory board compounded by two experts helped us to take important decisions and was in charge of a final evaluation of the project.

Evaluation strategy

Evaluation strategy was based on a continuous monitoring of the project on different levels and it was prepared an Evaluation Plan to ensure the clear understanding of all partners to aims of evaluation.

University of Maribor as lead partner was the responsible for the evaluation of the project. However all partners contributed to the successful implementation of the project and therefore it was necessary that they participated in evaluation activities.

Follow up reports of the quality and evaluation plan as well as quality reviews and evaluation questionnaires were produced to guarantee the continuous evaluation of the E3M project.

Moreover, an evaluation of the project results basing on the indicators developed during the project has been done using the EFQM model of Excellence which has been crucial to monitor and check that the results accomplish the necessary levels established by this model.

As mentioned before, also two internal evaluations of the project have been carried out by our experts in Higher Education.

Dissemination and exploitation strategy and activities

Dissemination started from the beginning of the project and was a very important part of the project activities during whole project life. Exploitation started in month 22 once the first results of the project were materialized.

As seen above, two special workpackages (3 and 4) were devoted to disseminate and exploit the project's results widely. Danube University of Krems and University of Porto were in charge of the coordination of these two WPs.

The following mechanisms were designed to ensure its effectiveness:

- Project's website: E3M's website provides information on the project's planning, activities and partners, relevant documents, links and information of related events. Public results of the project are presented in the open section of the website (www.e3mproject.eu).
- Project's blog: the blog is used to facilitate the communication and the accessibility to any person interested in the project. <http://he-ranking.blogspot.com/>
- PoliformaT platform: PoliformaT is the institutional platform of Universidad Politécnic de Valencia, and this platform was prepared to be used by all the project partners as a private source of information about the project. https://www.upv.es/pls/soalu/sic_poliformat.login?P_CUA=sakai
- Newsletters: this tool has been used as an extra source of information regarding the project.
- Design and agreement on project logo: the logo was created to enable a clear and easy recognition of the E3M project.
- Participation and presentation of project at conferences, seminars and workshops.
- Publication of academic papers in the three areas of the third mission.

- Policy seminars: three policy seminars of the three different dimensions of the Third Mission have been organized: CE, TT&I and SE.
- Production of project publicity material: project specific publicity material has been developed which include leaflets and brochures that have been distributed at key events that partners attend during the project and also directly to target groups.
- Project videos: short videos have been recorded in order to highlight the project concept and the developments made along the project life.
- International Final Conference: the international conference has allowed us to make available and visible the results of the project to its main target groups. The conference mainly has served as a means for networking between current and future partners and to exchange the project results among third mission providers and specialists.
- Dissemination via project partners and networks of some of the materials produced by the project: Final Delphi report and Green Paper 'Fostering and Measuring Third Mission in higher Education Institutions'.

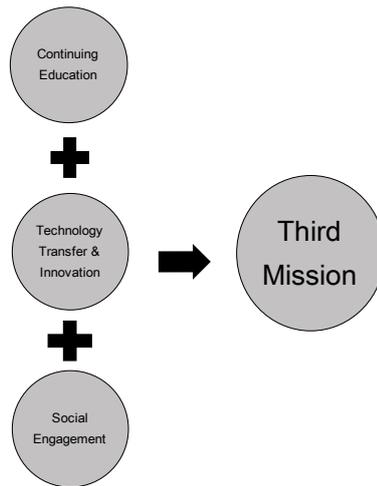
Target groups reached

The project's target beneficiaries have included a broad range of groups: governing boards of higher education institutions, managers of Continuing Education centers, Technology Transfer institutes and Social Engagement offices. Other target groups that have been reached with the project are the public funding bodies. It is often that these public bodies stress the importance of third mission activities to HEI in order to maximize its service to society. Also policy makers can probably been influenced by demonstrating them the necessity of having measurable indicators.

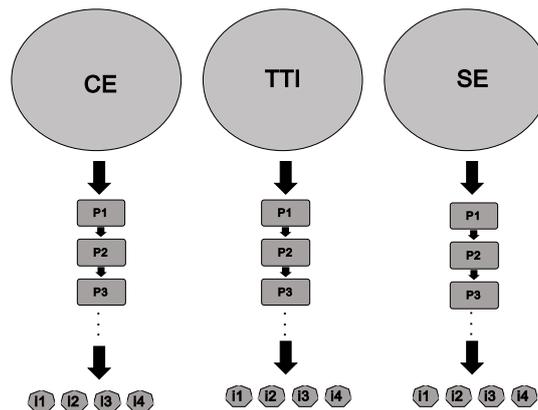
University leaders, HEA from European countries, accreditation and ranking agencies, institutions working with universities in the areas of study of the project, policy makers, international organisations, (ex. OECD, UNESCO) and people working on projects in similar areas as well as the European Commission have been invited to attend the key project events, specially the project final conference held in February 2012 in Dublin.

Project methodology

The E3M project started structuring all third mission activities into three groups or dimensions, which were considered by the project research team to be the most representative of the Third Mission. In this way, the three dimensions we have already mentioned and in which the project characterised third mission activities were: Continuing Education (CE), Technology Transfer & Innovation (TTI) and Social Engagement (SE).



Once these three dimensions were developed and described, different processes or activities were identified, as conforming the way in which the three dimensions are implemented. Their identification was made through a process map which set the basis for the analysis and development of the future set of indicators. Every single process was connected to a collection of different activities with inputs and outputs and with specific objectives as well.

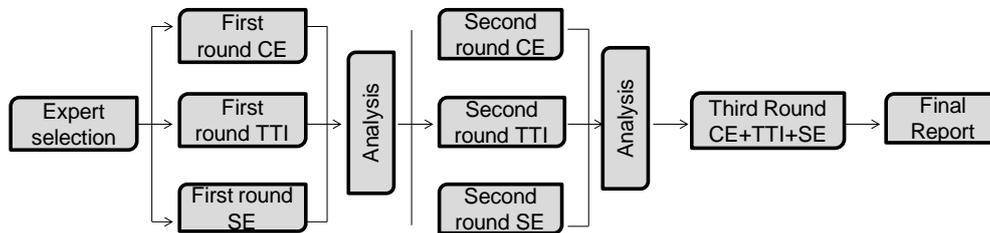


These specific processes for the three dimensions were identified. After a common structure for the processes was established, a set of primary indicators was defined for the three dimensions. Thus, a wide collection of indicators was developed as result of a literature review and the work done by the research group.

For producing a list of the most relevant indicators having as a basis the initial set, an expert's judgment following the Delphi technique was needed. The Delphi technique is an established method for obtaining consensus. Specifically, in the E3M project implied that an expert panel compounded by twenty experts from very different areas in Europe and USA was consulted in three rounds with different and specific purposes, but with the common objective to reach a consensus and get a reduced and more refined list of indicators.

The Delphi procedure was carried out in the following seven stages (Fig. 6): 1. Implementation of the first round questionnaire; 2. Analysis of first round responses; 3. Implementation of the second round questionnaire. 4. Analysis of the second

round responses; 5. Implementation of the third round questionnaire; 6. Analysis of the third round responses; 7. Final report.



During this consultation procedure, experts were asked through an online questionnaire to rate the indicators in terms of relevance, validity, reliability, feasibility and comparability using a rating scale from 1 to 7 from the least to the most important. They also provided a feedback on the processes identified as well as a global vision about the full set of indicators. All experts' opinion about indicator's definition and characteristics were incorporated to produce the final set. As a result, a final and homogeneous group of indicators was produced in the three areas of the Third Mission.

For each indicator, a template was completed including a detailed definition of the indicator as well as other properties like purpose of the indicator, interpretation, formula, level of data collection, type of data source and time reference.

After the description of all indicators and in order to complete their analysis, six case studies were implemented. The objective of the case studies was to check the opinion of these six universities or HEIs about the indicators selected through a confrontation with institutional representatives of the Third Mission activities in the three fields, but also to detail best practices for each university. The cases studies took place at the following institutions in Europe: Universidad Politécnica de Valencia (Spain), Politecnico di Torino (Italy), University of Cambridge (United Kingdom), University of Turku (Finland), Dublin Institute of Technology (Ireland) and Széchenyi István University (Hungary). The case studies also provided a large debate about the possible improvements of the three set of indicators proposed to the visited university.

To conclude, a global web for European Third Mission providers was built to provide access and allow European institutions to enter data regarding their activities in Third Mission. This global web can be used as a tool to benchmark institutions and compare their own indicators and services across Europe.

3. Project Outcomes & Results

Some outcomes and results have already been named in Section 2, 'Project approach', which explains the means by which project partner has produced them.

As a key activity of this project a **list of relevant indicators/measures** obtained along the project in the three dimensions has been directly derived from a **Survey Methodology for Third Mission ranking**. This survey based on the Delphi method, was applied to achieve a consensus about a set of measures that could accurately and economically describe the Third Mission of HEIs, analysing each measure in detail. Through this methodology, working as an organized discussion, measures were analysed individually and as a set. The E3M project set several objectives for the Delphi study: 1. Incorporate experts' opinion about the definitions and characteristics of the various measures 2. Feedback on the processes identified in each dimension; 3. Agreement about a set of measures suitable to describe the Third Mission of HEIs; 4. Analysis of the properties of these measures, mainly relevance and feasibility but also validity, reliability and comparability.

By creating this set of relevant measures, we have been able to offer a new approach on the concept of methodologies to evaluate Third Mission activities of HEIs.

After having the collection of indicators and a methodology developed, **six Study Visits** were carried out. Several institutions in Europe identified as third Mission providers were selected with the following objectives: A. Document good practices in the Third Mission activities; B. Develop a deeper understanding about what constitutes "excellence" in HE third mission activities; C. Discuss and confront indicators developed by E3M with real Third mission best practices and identify criticism from field experts in HE institution; D. Identify practical problems in Third Mission measurement and discuss the Delphi results with HE internal experts.

Completed reports on the Study visits have been produced and are available on E3M the website: <http://www.e3mproject.eu/study-visits.html>.

The production of a **Database for European Third Mission providers** (<http://www.e3mproject.eu/european-third-mission-providers-database/>) represented a relevant deliverable of the project. The database has been designed to be a platform for HEIs both to share and to search information about Third Mission activities. The Web-based survey/questionnaire contained therein presents contextualised information about HEIs: open information about the institution and the importance given to Third Mission activities in the role of the HEI, a description of the main activities of each dimension (TTI, CE and SE) and a selection of good practices. Moreover, four strategic indicators have been included for institutions to fill in the information. These four indicators have been agreed by partners to be the key indicators resulting from the Delphi study that would sum-up the overall situation of third mission activities at HEIs.

The database has been developed with a view to providing European HEIs with a platform to share information about their Third Mission activities and to become a network of European Third Mission providers.

Three Policy Seminars on the different dimensions of the Third Mission were organised in Dublin, Helsinki and Porto. The aim of these policy seminars has been to disseminate the first results of the project (the indicators developed for each of the strands) among relevant stakeholders and at the same time to make known the project and its activities.

The **Project International Conference** that took place on 2-3 February 2012 in Dublin, Ireland also represented one of the most important events of the project.

The purpose of this conference was to:

- To raise awareness of University Third Mission activities and provision in Europe.
- To discuss the importance of measuring University Third Mission activities.
- To exchange good practices among Third Mission providers.
- To present and discuss a Draft Green Paper on University Third Mission policy recommendations.
- To disseminate the results of the E3M project.

The conference was very well advertised and it was open to a large audience. Given that, it gathered hundred Higher Education and the University Third Mission experts from more than 20 countries from Europe, Africa and North America. The conference has helped us to disseminate the knowledge derived from the project across Europe. All details regarding the conference like programme, speakers, registrations, practical info, presentations and photo & video album are available in the project website at: <http://www.e3mproject.eu/final-conference-note.html>.

A comprehensive **Green Paper for European Third Mission Ranking Methodologies** as a very relevant output of the project has been created. It has been written in English and translated to Spanish. Moreover it has been edited, printed and distributed throughout many countries to the most important target groups. As stated in the section of this report 'plans for the future', it will be more extensively distributed in the upcoming months. The Green Paper intends to stimulate informed debate and in relevant cases to motivate alternative courses of action by people in universities and by officials in government at different levels as well as professional and business people. This paper also plans to encourage the next necessary piece of development work on Third Mission indicators and metrics.

<http://www.e3mproject.eu/docs/Green%20paper-p.pdf>

<http://www.e3mproject.eu/docs/Green%20paper-p-C.pdf>

One of the most visible results of the project has been the **Project website** <http://www.e3mproject.eu/>. The majority of activities carried out by the project have been here disseminated, as well as in partners' websites, write-ups (newsletters, articles in journals, etc.) and other dissemination events (seminars, workshops, conference outside and inside the project). Particular effort has been given to the dissemination of the material to the public.

The E3M project website has further information of the project. The project progresses together with the main results have been continuously published. The success of the use and implementation of the website/portal has been dependant on the maintenance and updates.

This website has structured the information at three levels:

- Level 1: Into this level we have provided a general overview about the project activities.
- Level 2: This level provides specific information about the new achievements of the project and the evolution. It also has the possibility to register and to receive regularly the newsletter.
- Level 3: Here it is provided access to the database for European Third mission providers.

The most important information contained in the website includes the following information:

- *Welcome*: introduction to the project.
- *Project summary*: includes a short project description.
- *Objective*: general and specific aims.
- *Structure and Methodology*: it shows how the project is organized in workpackages.
- *Working planning and timetable*: A brief section that lists the major tasks to be conducted by the project and gives a timeline showing when each task will be performed.
- *Database for European Third Mission Providers*: page with access to the project survey used to gather data from European Third Mission providers in the three dimensions.
- *Suggestions*: open window where all comments, ideas or suggestions provided on the project or the website are welcome.
- *Contact us*: created for those who wish to obtain more information about the project.
- *Private*: this section is linked to the internal platform of project partners, PoliformaT.
- *Project leaflet*: possibility of downloading the leaflet made to disseminate the project.
- *Video Area*: repository of video materials about the topic of the project.
- *Newsletters*: here it is possible to find the last newsletters but also to sign up for them.
- *Partners*: Includes information about participant countries, institutions and members involved.
- *Outputs*: the main results arisen on this project are mentioned here.
- *Meetings*: this is a photo gallery were all meetings held along the project are mentioned.
- *Blog*: the blog is available through the website in order to make it more easily accessible for any person interested in the project.
- *International conference*: The access to the conference website provides detailed information on the objectives of the conference, the programme and its sessions, registration and accommodation information, etc.
- *Policy seminars*: This page contains details of the project policy seminars that the project has organised with links to the invitation and programmes, seminars reports, pictures and recorded videos.

- *Study visits*: Information about the organisation and development of the six visits carried out as well as the comprehensive reports of each visit are available here.
- *Useful links*: it contains a list of useful links related to the project topic.

Our project website had more than 7,800 visits from 109 different countries during the project period.

In addition to the project website, the **E3M newsletter** formed also a valuable means for the dissemination of the project tasks, activities and results. They have been distributed widely to ensure that the knowledge and information gathered by the partnership reaches its audience.

In total, six online newsletters (apart from the five internal ones) have been produced and distributed among subscribers. On the website it is possible to sign up for these newsletters. Some of them are also available through the web link: <http://www.e3mproject.eu/newsletters.html>.

The partnership has also been successful in organising all the **Meetings** outlined in the original project application apart from some other extra meetings that have been held after consulting and having the approval of the Agency. The 8 official meetings held in the frame of the project are:

<i>Meeting</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Location</i>
1 st Meeting (Kick-off meeting), Year 1	25-26 February 2009	Valencia, Spain
2 nd Meeting, Year 1	11-12 June 2009	Valencia, Spain
3 rd Meeting, Year 1	9-10 November 2009	Dublin, Ireland
4 th Meeting, Year 2	19-20 May 2010	Turin, Italy
5 th Meeting, Year 3	5-6 April 2011	Maribor, Slovenia
6 th Meeting, Year 3	8-9 September 2011	Helsinki, Finland
7 th Meeting, Year 3	1-2 December 2011	Valencia, Spain
8 th Meeting, Year 4	22-23 March 2012	León, Spain

<http://www.e3mproject.eu/events.html>

Other additional meetings have been held according to the project needs in two ways: face to face and through Skype calls. These are:

<i>Meeting</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Location</i>
Progress Meeting 1	23 May 2011	Via Skype
Progress Meeting 2	12 July 2011	Via Skype
Progress Meeting 3	25 January 2011	Via Skype
Study Visits Meeting	2 February 2011	Valencia, Spain
Green Paper Workshop	29-30 November 2011	Valencia, Spain

All required **deliverables** have been accomplished by project partners. They have been completed in time and will be duly submitted to the EC with this final report. The progress project report (confidential and public) was reported to the EC in July 2010. The project products or 'deliverables' are in line with the aims and objectives outlined in the application of the Grant Agreement made with the EU/EACEA. Thus, all

activities and actions have been implemented, evaluated and reported according to each task description and have been developed with the cooperation among the project partners and the supported contribution and supervision of the EC project manager.

To conclude, all the above mentioned has effectively contributed to the major project objective: the creation of European indicators and a ranking methodology for university Third Mission.

4. Partnerships

The partnership comprises 8 institutions from 7 countries in Europe. At a European level the eight partners represented very distinct local areas with different geographical distributions which mean that very different points of view have been taken into consideration in the project's decisions.

Central Europe has been represented by Austria; Northern Europe with Ireland, England (providing two experts) and Finland; Eastern Europe had one representative from Slovenia and Southern Europe has been represented by Spain, Portugal and Italy, so the partnership has been in general very well balanced.

The opportunity to work with such a heterogeneous group has been a very positive experience. A broad range of skills and experiences have been shared and the possibility to work together at a European level can be identified as a professionally unique opportunity. All partners of the project have brought into the project different knowledge and skills and it can be considered that the concept of Third Mission has been entirely covered. Moreover, the two participant experts highly contributed to the project with their expertise.

The partnership/consortium generally worked very well. All of project partners had been already cooperating for years in different projects at all levels. Partners have met an average of eight times during the project lifetime because it was considered that face to face meetings were necessary. The meetings helped to establish individual strengths, enabling the team to work more effectively to deliver the project outcomes. However, partners had a constant communication via e-mail. Skype calls have been also regular, especially during the second stage of the project. The continuous communication and the exchange of periodically activity based reports also helped to keep everyone informed with project activities.

Without the dedication of the partners and the project coordination, the hard work required to fulfil all the objectives and the deliverables would have not been possible.

The partnership is made up by the following institutions:

- Universidad Politécnica de Valencia (UPV)-Valencia University of Technology. Spain
- University of Helsinki (UH). Finland
- Danube University Krems (DUK). Austria
- University of Maribor (UM). Slovenia
- University of Porto (UP). Portugal
- Istituto Superiore Mario Boella (ISMB). Italy
- Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT). Ireland
- University of León (ULE). Spain.

Every partner of the project has been responsible of a different workpackage according to their skills. The *Valencia University of Technology* is one of the biggest providers of Continuing Education in Europe. It delivers Continuing Education to more than 40,000 people per year with approximately 1,600 different programmes. The *University of Helsinki* designs and provides tailored programmes as well as

research and development services to meet the needs of business life and the public sector. *Danube University Krems* in Austria is a university specifically providing third mission activities to society. The *University of Maribor* is one of the main actors in the area in the field of international cooperation with other institutions. The *University of Porto* is an expert in international cooperation activities. They are present in the steering committees of the main networks in Europe about Continuing Education and Social Engagement. *Istituto Superiore Mario Boella*, in partnership with Politecnico di Torino, supplies post-graduate education and executive training in lifelong training programmes. *Dublin Institute of Technology* has much experience in building relationships between industry and universities, and how to analyse industry's needs and transfer them to the University. They provide teaching, research, development and consultancy services to industry and society, with due regard to the technological, commercial, social and cultural needs of the community they serve. Finally, *the University of León* is a young and pushing public higher education institution with interests in international education.

The specific roles of the partnership by Workpackages (WP) are:

- WP1: Project Management: Spain (UPV)
- WP2: Quality and evaluation plan: Slovenia (UM)
- WP3: Dissemination: Austria (DUK)
- WP4: Exploitation: Portugal (UP)
- WP5: Survey methodology definition and pretesting: Spain (UL)
- WP6: Survey implementation and testing: Spain (UL)
- WP7: Data analysis and validation of indicators: Finland (UH)
- WP8: Study visits and best practices identification: Italy (ISMB)
- WP9: Development of web based tools: Spain (UPV)
- WP10: International conference management: Ireland (DIT)

And the core partners that have been involved are:

1. UPV: Andrés Carrión (project coordinator and Director of the Centre for Quality and Change Management); José Miguel Carot (Director of the Academic Evaluation Area in the Vice-rectorate for Quality and Academic Assessment).
2. UH: Kauko Hämäläinen (Director of Palmenia Centre for Continuing Education) and Tuija Laurén (Head of Training at the Palmenia Centre for Continuing Education).
3. DUK: Attila Pausits (Head of the Centre for Educational Management and Higher Education Development).
4. UM: Marko Marhl (Head of the Continuing Education Centre at the Faculty of Education).
5. UP: Alfredo Soeiro (Academic Dean and Vice Dean of Civil Engineering).
6. ISMB: Stefano Boffo (Expert in ICT& Society at the ISMB and professor of Sociology at the University of Sassari).
7. DIT: Mike Murphy (Director & Dean of the College of Engineering & Built Environment), Marek Rebow (Head of Research for the Faculty of Engineering), Ela Krawczyk (Head of the Futures Academy).

8. ULE: Javier Vidal and María José Vieira (Professor and Associate Professor in the Faculty of Education).

The two external experts that have collaborated as well are: Christopher Padfield (University of Cambridge) and José-Ginés Mora (University of London). Their expertise has been needed for various aspects of the project: acting as consultants for any specific question or doubt needed to be covered along project, collaborating in the project at the workpackage level, participating in the project meetings, periodically reviewing all the main project reports and document and making an internal evaluation of the project.

5. Plans for the Future

The project management in collaboration with all partners will do their best to ensure that the project impact is enlarged in time and that all efforts made during the last three years and a half will continue in the future. Although the funding has ceased the promotion of the E3M project will persist.

The benefits of the project will be exploited as much as possible, and the project team will continue making an effort to spread out the project outcomes after the project completion. It is planned that the partnership will continue nurturing the relationships built with partners and stakeholders during these years in the context of project work.

Basically, there are various pillars on which sustainability of the E3M project impact will be built:

Maintenance of E3M website

The project website (www.e3mproject.eu) will prolong its maintenance and it will also be updated at least for an additional 4 years. This means that we will continue having regular visits and all materials will be accessible for those interested. In this way, all results of the project will continue being widely exploited.

Continuation of the database for European Third Mission providers

We will also keep on having the database for European Third Mission Providers. This will allow to new institutions to enter their data and compare/benchmark with the rest of institutions across Europe concerning their Third Mission activities. Then, the database will be developed further what will ensure the impact of the project in the years to come.

Persistence in the dissemination of the project's outcomes

There are already various events and research activities planned for the coming years. Project partners will continue to use their own networks and professional affiliations to make known and attract more users for the project outputs. Significant in this purpose are going to be presentations of project results in international meetings, seminars and conferences, etc. As well, research and publications based on the results and data from the project will continue being done.

Distribution of E3M materials produced by the project

The main products achieved in the project like the Final Report of Delphi Study and the Green Paper "Fostering and Measuring Third Mission in Higher Education Institutions" will be extensively distributed across Europe and Latin America.

Emergence of new initiatives from our project

We are keen that the knowledge developed will be transferred especially to other new initiatives and projects, and our project will remain as a reference of third Mission in Europe.

In fact, the Valencia University of Technology has recently engaged in the coordination of another project which aims to create an Integral Information System about the Higher Education Institutions in Latin America, which is permitting the institutional development, the academic cooperation between the participating institutions and supporting the development of the Higher Education Common Space in synergy with the European Union. INFOACES (www.infoaces.org) tackles several aspects already identified in the E3M Project as:

- Define a Basic System of Indicators for establishing a typology system of the HEI, in this case in Latin America, using compatible criteria which are being developed in the European Union and other regions.
- To define a Strategic System of indicators for the different types of HEI in LA. The indicators holistically focus and reflect the three missions of HE.
- To define and implement a system to obtain information about institutional results
- To provide information about the HEIs to the target groups.
- To provide information to the international community using criteria comparable with other regions, in order to facilitate the exchange of students and the mobility of graduates
- To support decision making in HEIs promoting benchmarking to foster quality improvement

Furthermore, the idea of a new project proposal built on the work done by E3M is being considered. It could be based on the implementation of indicators in several universities in Europe with the expected outcome to set of procedures and guidelines (good practices) for measuring third mission – practical input into setting up systems for measuring Third Mission activities. An extended version of the database of institutions with information on their Third Mission practices and indicators could be also studied here.

Finally, the long term plans are that the results of the project will be incorporated in the future activities of the project partners and in some degree will be transferred to other European networks from the field of Third Mission of universities. The project outputs, specifically the indicators developed, can become standards of the higher education sector if we consider the present interest of third mission in the developments of the regions in which universities live and work, and also the up to now lack of a methodology to assess quality in Third Mission activities. Definitely, there are all reasons to believe that after its lifetime, the project will continue living, sharing and developing the goals achieved.

6. Contribution to EU policies

The E3M project has been oriented and aligned with the European Commission's guidelines on higher education remarked by the Agenda for Modernizing European Universities which stresses what we are calling Third Mission activities. Let's review briefly the main traits of this Agenda:

1. *The Agenda for Modernizing European Universities*

The Lisbon Strategy re-established the economic relevance of higher education, by trying to reform European universities through this agenda for "*modernising European universities*". Several documents have been produced by the EC as part of this agenda. The first was "*The role of the universities in the Europe of knowledge*". This document: "*seeks to start a debate on the role of Universities within the knowledge society and economy in Europe and on the conditions under which they will be able to effectively play that role*". The objective of this document was to provoke a debate on universities and Member States on the **role of universities in developing the knowledge economy**, something that previously was never clearly stated as a formal policy. In this sense this documents opened doors for further advances in this sense.

"Mobilizing the brainpower of Europe: enabling universities to make their full contribution to the Lisbon Strategy insisted in the same line recommending to Europe's universities: a) Enhancing their quality and attractiveness; b) improving their governance; c) increasing and diversifying funding; and d) increasing flexibility and diversity of universities. This document represents a new twist in the EU policies to promote reforms in EU higher education **becoming universities more responsive to social and economic needs**.

In a newer resolution on "*Modernising universities for Europe's competitiveness in a global knowledge economy*" adopted in 2007 (European Council 2007) the main lines of the modernization process are underlined. The document states that:

"The Council of the EU invites Member States to:

- ***Promote the contribution of higher education institutions to innovation, growth and employment, as well as to social and cultural life, by encouraging them to develop and reinforce partnerships with other parties, such as the private sector, research institutions, regional and local authorities and civil society"***

2. Two main EU policies

a) Lifelong Learning: a long-term strategy

One of the educational areas where the EC is more active is in lifelong learning. Under the EC policies, the concept of lifelong learning is not limited to a purely economic outlook or just to learning for adults. In addition to the emphasis it places on learning from pre-school to postretirement, lifelong learning should encompass the whole spectrum of formal, non-formal and informal learning. Policies include active citizenship, personal fulfilment and social inclusion, as well as employment-related aspects. The document *“Making European Area of Lifelong Learning a reality”* proposed: *“The establishment of a European area of lifelong learning, the aims of which are both to empower citizens to move freely between learning settings, jobs, regions and countries, making the most of their knowledge and competences, and to meet the goals and ambitions of the European Union and the candidate countries to be more prosperous, inclusive, tolerant and democratic.”*

Another communication on lifelong learning (*“Delivering lifelong learning for knowledge, creativity and innovation”* (European Commission 2007)) estates the areas needed of particular effort:

- *“Raising skill levels. People with low skill levels are at risk of economic and social exclusion. Continued high levels of early school leaving, low participation in lifelong learning by older workers and the low-skilled, and poor skill achievement among migrants cause concern in most countries;*
- *Lifelong learning strategies. Most countries have made progress in defining unified and overarching strategies. Within such frameworks, progress is evident in pre-primary education, qualification frameworks, and the validation of non-formal and informal learning. However, innovative learning partnerships and sustainable funding for high quality, efficient and equitable education and training still elude many countries.”*

b) Universities and enterprises: looking for closer relations.

One of the problems of European universities has been the *“lack an entrepreneurial spirit, are too academically oriented and do not make relevance of their programmes to the needs of the labour market a sufficiently high priority”*. This situation is rapidly changing due to the greater sense of urgency brought by the Lisbon Agenda and also by the new challenges of ageing, globalization, sustainable development and the rise of information and communication technologies.

The EC commitment to innovation and university enterprise cooperation is not in doubt. From the first IRDAC Opinion (Industrial R&D Advisory Committee) published in 1988 on the COMETT (Community Action Programme for Education and Training for Technology) to the recent documents developing the Lisbon strategy this area has gained a relevant role. All the latest documents on the modernization agenda for universities make explicit mention to these issues.

The EC Communication *“The role of the universities in the Europe of knowledge”* stated that: *“The knowledge society depends for its growth on the production of new knowledge, its transmission through education and training, its dissemination through information and communication technologies, and on its use through new industrial processes or services. Universities are unique, in that they take part in all these processes, at their core, due to the key role they play in the three fields of research and exploitation of its results, thanks to industrial cooperation and spin-off; education and training, in particular training of researchers; and regional and local development, to which they can contribute significantly”*. This Communication also raises a series of questions such as: how to make universities contribute better to local and regional needs and strategies; how to establish closer co-operation between universities and enterprises to ensure better dissemination and exploitation of new knowledge in the economy and society at large.

A newer EC Communication, *“Delivering on the modernisation agenda for universities: education, research and innovation”* remarks the *“insufficient exploitation of the knowledge produced and insufficient linkage to the business community”* and the *“huge funding deficit in higher education as well as in research, due mainly to much smaller contributions from households and industry”*, and recommend that universities should *“establish stronger and sustainable partnerships with the business community through collaboration with industry on university-based research and technology initiatives; exploit knowledge by sharing it with the business community and society at large and better communicate the relevance of their research activities and identify and implement models that allow co-funding of researchers’ basic salary from other sources”*. On the other hand, this Communication urged Member States to: *“Adapt, if necessary, their legal frameworks at national and regional levels to allow universities to diversify their funding sources, including in the domains of procurement policies; to use offset funds for research; to enjoy tax breaks for endowment funding; to encourage researchers to create university research spin-offs and to apply their research results and patents; and allow and support universities to develop incentive mechanisms for a better exploitation of knowledge and wider sharing of research results and activities with society and SMEs.”*

3. The contribution of E3M project to these strategies

Lifelong Learning, innovation, universities-business partnerships, social cooperation are the most important and recent strategies of the EU in the field of higher education. All these elements have been considered in this project under the names of Continuing Education, Technology Transfer and Innovation and Social Engagement.

The benefit of this project at European level is obvious. This project has focused on the definition of indicators that allow comparing and benchmarking institutions across Europe.

The E3M project has contributed to the EU policies in the following areas:

- The outputs created on this project have become a reference for the higher education sector. That is the reason for collaborating with the representatives institutions of different countries.
- It is intended that Europe becomes a pioneer in the work of the Third Mission activities. A European approach was needed to allow benchmarking between European Institutions.
- This project has developed standard indicators, promoting excellence in Third Mission activities, and encouraging Higher Education Institutions to share best practices across Europe. It has enabled Third Mission providers to assess their own performance and build relationships with other European Third Mission providers. This will lead to more effective and efficient services being provided to society and industry as institutions seek to improve their standards, improving the quality of their lifelong learning provision and other services. Funding bodies are going to be provided with a tool to understand Third Mission performance, rewarding excellence and identifying improvement needs.
- Other benefits are consequence of the wide dissemination of results. As we have made in all the projects we have managed, the dissemination has been extensive. Outputs have being disseminated to an audience as broad as possible. The project website and the global web for European Third Mission providers is a very useful way to promote competitiveness and designing new policies related to Third Mission providers.

