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KTU - Knowledge Transfer Unit

From Applied Research and Technology-Entrepreneurial Know-How Exchange to Development of
Interdisciplinary Curricula Modules

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TRANSFER UNIT**

SUMMARY TO 1.2 Installation of KTU offices

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The project installed new units within the institutions (partner country universities): So-called Knowledge Transfer Units (KTUs) were introduced at six Ukrainian universities (WP1) to serve as one-stop-shop for all knowledge transfer activities of the PCU and to trigger university-business cooperation of the PCUs in general. Out of the six universities, five are public institutions and one is under private ownership and management with sizes ranging from around 3.000 students to just below 9.000. On average the teaching and research staff to student ratio is around one to ten.

Four out of six partner country universities already had existing research support, technology transfer or research commercialization activities or services in place before establishing a KTU. These services were transferred to the newly established KTU within the first year of operation. Only two out of the six institutions had no prior existing services that relate to knowledge transfer. One university provided a fully developed existing technology transfer office (P7-KhAI), which was merged with the newly established KTU extending and complementing the existing service portfolio. Three universities provided services through other existing units, which either collaborate directly or integrate services directly in the knowledge transfer unit.

This installation process has been facilitated and harmonized by using standardized templates (based on standard practices of TTO set-up and operations) and forms for strategy development, workshops, and feedback between the Ukrainian universities aiming to establish a KTU. The European universities acted as mentors and providers of knowledge and expertise. In addition, important Ukrainian stakeholders from the Triple Helix such as business representatives, the Ukrainian Students' Association or public bodies (in this case the Ukrainian Ministry of Education and Science) integrated their perspective by participating in and contributing to the development workshops.

In terms of placement of the KTUs within the existing organizational structure and hierarchies, five out of six universities chose to implement their KTU at high levels reporting or under direct supervision of high ranking university officials such as rector, president or vice rectors. One university chose to install their KTU formally at the level of a faculty with direct reporting obligations to the vice rectorate of international relations.

The business models of the business and activity plans have been developed employing the business model CANVAS approach by Osterwalder & Pigneur (2010) that is widely known and well documented. KTUs were expected to swiftly achieve financial sustainability within the organization, which is why the approach of comparing it with starting up a separate venture was undertaken. All KTUs were carrying out at least one pilot project within the project's implementation phase (in total 11) in order to test and evaluate the newly established units as well its processes and functionality. In addition, the KTUs teamed up in twinning relationships (2 KTUs plus one European partner) to elaborate course modules connected to their services.