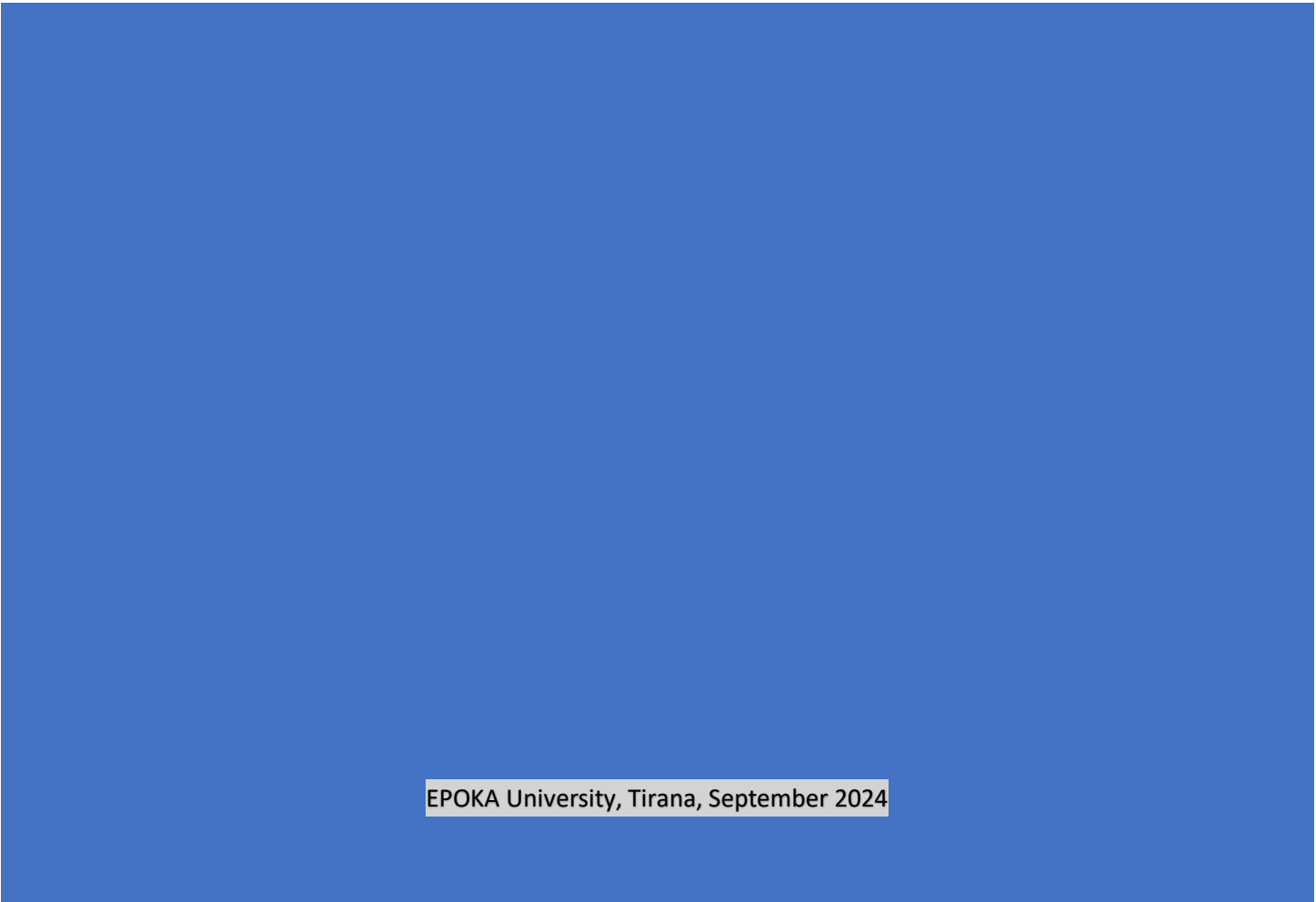# EPOKA UNIVERSITY STRATEGIC PLAN 2024-2028

EPOKA University, Tirana, September 2024

Approved by the Administrative Board through its Decision No. 02, dated 04.10.2024

Approved by the Academic Senate through its Decision No. 01, dated 25.09.2024

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Table of Content

Pasqyra e lëndës

Preface

EPOKA University is proud to confirm that the obligations and promises presented in EPOKA's last strategy, Framework Strategy 2018-2022 were implemented successfully. These achievements materialized in a challenging environment due to the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. In this context, the Rectorate decided to extend by one academic year the timeline on the conduct of actions envisaged by the 2018-2022 Framework Strategy, hence the 2023-2024 academic year served as a link connecting the finalization of the implementation of the 2018-2022 Framework Strategy with the adoption of the new Institutional Strategic Plan.

EPOKA University's Strategic Plan 2024-2028 is a tool that can help guide the University toward achieving its ambitions. The Plan was developed under the leadership of the Rector Prof. Dr. Ahmet ÖZTAŞ in cooperation with the Strategy Steering Committee. The new goals in the Strategic Plan 2024-2028 build upon more than a decade of tradition. They ambitiously reflect the recent national development strategies, the increasing public demand for higher education and the interests of our stakeholders, owners, students, alumni, staff and faculty members alike. These goals are also coherent with the most recent regional and global education and economic policies. This strategic plan envisages a greater role of EPOKA in local, national and regional development, and a greater engagement with the community.

We would like to thank every contributor of this ambitious future plan for cooperating with the Strategy Steering Committee.

The document is not meant to be a definitive template, nor a detailed prescription, but rather a broad basis for strategic development and continuous dialogue.

1. Introduction

EPOKA University (EPOKA) started its academic activities during the 2007-2008 academic year.

EPOKA University comprises three faculties: the Faculty of Architecture and Engineering, comprising the Departments of Architecture, Civil Engineering and Computer Engineering, the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences composed of the Departments of Banking and Finance, Business Administration and Economics, and the Faculty of Law and Social Sciences comprising the Department of Law, the Department of Political Science and International Relations as well as the Center for European Studies. EPOKA University offers education in three study cycles with 11 Bachelor, 8 Master of Science, 6 Professional Master, 2 integrated second cycle and 6 PhD study programs. All study programs have been granted national accreditation.

EPOKA offers in total 35 study programs: 11 in the first cycle (Bachelor); 16 in the second cycle (8 Master of Science programs, 6 Professional Master programs and 2 integrated second cycle program); and 6 programs in the third cycle (PhD). EPOKA is focused on economics and finance (13 study programs), information and telecommunication technology (7), architecture (3), civil engineering (4), law (1) and political science (4). The programs are currently provided by the Faculty of Architecture and Engineering, Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences and Faculty of Law and Social Sciences. The University employs 136 academic staff and 60 administrative staff members. As of December 31, 2023, the total number of students in all study programs was 2670, of which undergraduates constitute 87 percent of the student body.

EPOKA has an increasing number of partners in EU member states, the USA, and Western Balkan countries. In 2023, EPOKA had 83 university partnerships around the world and it has been a hosting university for several student and staff mobility programs, with a particular focus on the Erasmus+ Programme. EPOKA University is also an associate member of the European Universities Association (EUA), a member of the Global Engineering Deans Council (GEDC), and at the same time, it is a signatory of Magna Charta Universitatum.

EPOKA actively supports the research of its faculty members through the granting of financial support regarding participation in international conferences as well as publication of articles in international peer-reviewed journals with impact factor. The university has also been part of many international and national research projects, especially under the European Research Area. In 2023 EPOKA was involved in three Erasmus+ CBHE projects, one Jean Monnet Chair, one Jean Monnet Module and eight COST actions.

EPOKA University has a large smart campus, situated in a green area outside the city of Tirana including venues with state-of-the-art physical and IT infrastructure. The facilities provide high-quality services to students, staff and other stakeholders.

EPOKA obtained its first institutional accreditation in 2011. In 2011 and between 2012 to 2017 the Ministry of Education and Sports accredited all Bachelor programs, Master of Science (MSc) and Professional Master (PM) programs offered by EPOKA University. In the 2015-2016 academic year EPOKA received accreditation for all its third cycle programs (PhD). In 2017 the University obtained its first periodical institutional accreditation and in 2021 its second periodical institutional accreditation.

2. Core values

EPOKA's strategy 2024-2028 builds upon the success of its previous strategy (2018-2022). The new strategy sets out new goals and a new roadmap for the future development of the university.

The Strategic Plan describes the goals and provides a roadmap for the development of EPOKA University in the three main missions of the university: teaching, research and service to the community. Hence, this Strategic Plan constitutes an overarching structure for the more flexible strategies of the departments and other units of EPOKA University.

The strategic goals are based on the core values, vision and mission of the university.

The Vision of EPOKA University is:

"To be a leading university in our country in the areas of education, research and development, as well as service to society."

The Mission of EPOKA University is:

"To be an innovative and influential teaching and research institution, serving to fundamental human values through the production, dissemination and development of knowledge at an international level as well as to contribute to the improvement of the life quality of society based on national and regional needs. In this context, EPOKA University aims at raising well-prepared, productive and competent individuals with a research-oriented spirit, who possess professional ethics and social sensitiveness and are also open towards national and international challenges."

The Core Values of EPOKA University according to its Statute are:

EPOKA University:

- Believes in the universality of education and research;
- Obeys to universal legal principles and rules;
- Is respectful and tolerant towards different religions, languages, genders, nationalities, colors, and differences in opinion;
- Shows no compromise regarding the preservation of justice and integrity;
- Keeps institutional identity in the forefront;
- Adopts a participatory, transparent, decision-oriented, sensitive, rapid and effective governance;
- Continuously interacts with the community to become a pioneer and a model of learning and research at the local and international level;
- Is a student-focused institution in all procedures;
- Gives importance to the harmony, liaison and satisfaction of its personnel;
- Is open to innovation;
- Pursuits excellence;
- Values time;
- Creates a safe and sustainable environment in the premises;
- Puts emphasis on the conduct original research.

2.1 Challenges of the present and future

The higher education system has been reformed by the government and higher education institutions have been reorganized and adapted according to the new system in Albania. During 2008-2013, when the system expanded, EPOKA University grew rapidly and became a leading university in the country. While further opportunities are waiting to be grasped by higher education institutions, there are also some risks affecting the future of private higher education institutions in the market. EPOKA University has been reorganized and has adapted its system according to this newly reformed system, and it is now ready to accomplish its strategic goals under the reformed higher education system of Albania. The decline in student numbers in Albanian universities, arising from population decline and emigration, is set to further increase the competition among Albanian private higher education institutions. However, EPOKA University has already created its reputation in attracting and graduating highly qualified students in the fields of engineering and social sciences. Furthermore, the University will continue to target the regional and international higher education markets by attracting foreign students from the Western Balkans, including Albanian migrants from Greece, Italy and other countries, other Eastern European countries as well as Asia and Africa.

EPOKA University is aware of the industrial priorities of Albania in the service and industrial sector and it will continue to provide education and training in the fields of engineering, business, tourism and social enterprises. EPOKA will actively contribute to the development of the communities surrounding the EPOKA University campus, including Vora, Kamza, the International Airport area and Tirana, which are evolving into industrial hubs for the whole Western Balkan region. EPOKA's engagement with the local industries will also continue to be of benefit to students for internship and future employment possibilities.

EPOKA will continue to cooperate with its partners in applying for EU-funded research projects. The university will also increase its financial commitment to faculty members involved in interdisciplinary scientific research. EPOKA will put a greater emphasis on scientific projects that are to the benefit of the Albanian community and the region, particularly regarding the development of tourism in the coastal areas as well as in inner cities and towns around Albania. Projects of regional outreach will be further supported by EPOKA with the aim to increase university's reputation in the region.

EPOKA University recognizes the challenges associated with its aspiration to achieve excellence in research, in teaching, in student performance and in management. The University will now put more emphasis on the international accreditation of its business and engineering study programs. EPOKA University is also committed to fulfill all the required improvements from the institutional review carried out by the national accreditation body in the framework of institutional accreditation as well as the accreditation of its study programs.

In line with the commitments undertaken by Albania to mitigate the impact of climate change, EPOKA will aim at becoming a carbon-neutral institution by 2030. EPOKA will also further consolidate its environment-friendly policies by fully implementing sustainable waste management policies and significantly reducing paperwork through the administrative dematerialization process which will be

supported by the full implementation of the e-governance and e-service systems.

2.2 Vision

The vision of the university sets out the direction for the future development of EPOKA University in terms of its obligation towards the society. EPOKA's societal obligations are the production, transfer and the application of knowledge. Knowledge provides the solutions to our societal problems in Albania and enables us to face the regional challenges.

The Vision of EPOKA University is: *"To be a leading university in Albania in the areas of education, research and development, as well as service to the society."*

EPOKA University will continue to emphasize its contributing role to the community, as in its previous strategy (2018-2022) under the motto:

"On creating public value". Now the vision is to stress the relationship between knowledge, innovation and the service to the community. Thus, EPOKA University will teach its students the required skills and conduct research by emphasizing the role of knowledge in providing solutions to everyday problems of our community. EPOKA University will devote resources and strategies to providing further training and services in Albania, focusing on the sectors of information technology, tourism, construction and other priority areas for the development of the Albanian economy. Hence, EPOKA University will continue to be one of the greatest contributors of the region in terms of resources, innovative solutions, knowledge transfer and employment.

3. Institutional and Faculty Priorities

The vision and goals of EPOKA University's Strategic Plan 2024-2028 are part of the **four main themes** of the strategies at the departmental and unit level, mentioned below. The Rectorate is committed to present these strategy goals and visions as valid for the whole university. They are enshrined accordingly in the Strategic Plan 2024-2028. Faculties and departments will have to adapt the Strategic Plan to their own strategic priorities and themes, contribute to the formulation of goals and measures for their implementation, and work and develop the appropriate tools and skills necessary for the implementation of these

priority themes at the unit level. The Rectorate, together with the Permanent Commission on Quality Assurance, will coordinate the Strategic Plan 2024-2028 and departmental strategies and oversee the implementation.

The strategies at the departmental and unit level will be set according to these themes and priorities:

1- **Provide a high-quality environment for teaching and learning.**

EPOKA University is a teaching-focused institution that integrates research into its study

programs, with a particular emphasis on cultivating a research-informed learning environment. Offering undergraduate, graduate and PhD degrees while introducing state-of-the-art teaching technologies represents EPOKA's strength and it will remain a priority of the university in the coming five years.

EPOKA is committed to provide and improve its teaching and learning environment. The University will continue to use innovative pedagogical approaches to enhance the positive learning experience of its students. The University values the research of its academic staff on teaching, and it will increase its efforts to develop creative ways of teaching. Training activities in the area of teaching and learning will continue to be provided, but they will have to be tailored to the needs of each department. EPOKA University will provide the resources and facilities for such activities.

The focus of the curriculum and teaching will remain on the student, their support and development. The curriculum will continue to provide mainly practical training and personal instructions to students seeking to develop technical skills in combination with academic study and professional development.

EPOKA remains committed to the goals of the national Cross-Cutting Employment and Skills Strategy 2023-2030 concerning the links with the labor market. The University will continue with its promotion of entrepreneurial learning and assisting students to transit to the world of work. Students will continue to have access to highly trained instructors, who often are or have been practicing professionals.

EPOKA's commitments in the area of citizenship education are in accordance with the national social policies and United Nations (UN)'s Sustainable Development Goals with a particular focus on ensuring that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development (Target 4.7). Students at EPOKA will acquire the relevant knowledge and technical skills needed for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles. The promotion of human rights, gender equality, the values of peace and non-violence, global citizenship, social inclusion and appreciation of cultural diversity will be integrated in the curriculum.

The internal and external quality assurance processes will serve to improve the learning environment, whereby the Permanent Commission on Quality Assurance and the responsible units at the departmental level will play a greater role. All study programs will undergo an annual review and be updated with the most recent developments in the labor market. The competence and training centers at the university will have to be revived and supply high quality lifelong learning courses for both in-house and outside students.

The university will continue to attract high-quality and diverse academic staff with international reputation. The number of faculty members will increase according to the needs of departments. EPOKA University will capitalize upon the mobility of staff, international research projects and other activities with national, regional or global outreach, in order to increase its status as an international teaching university.

Individual or collaborative research will be integrated into teaching and include students from all levels of education, especially graduate students at the master and PhD level. A greater emphasis should be given to the community-related research projects at the graduate level.

EPOKA University will continue with its commitment to the community, but a greater emphasis will be given to service learning. In order to promote the civic growth of students, EPOKA will require the departments to integrate community service into their coursework. This requires a purposeful use of learning activities that focus on the knowledge, skills and dispositions of a civic-minded university graduate. Students will thereby be able to play an active role in empowering others and enhancing the quality of life in their community. Students will be required to engage in learning activities that involve classroom instructions on civics, moderated discussions of current events, student governance, community activities and simulations. Students will be required to actively search for internships and similar involvements in their first year.

Investments in the teaching and learning infrastructure will continue with the same intensity. Computer and laboratory facilities must be kept up to date and be used efficiently and productively. EPOKA University will ensure that instructional technologies are modern, versatile and fit for active learning. In alignment with the national Cross-Cutting Strategy on Information Society, the University will expand its digital provision in e-education and research.

2- Enroll, educate, graduate and provide placement assistance for a high-quality and diverse student body.

Since 2008 EPOKA University has steadily increased enrollments and the university will continue its growth course. The university will maintain its reputation as one of the best engineering, business and social science universities in Albania, both in undergraduate and graduate programs. Retention, graduation and employment rates of students will increase above those at the national level. To this end, EPOKA University will further enhance its academic advisership for students by providing personalised guidance and support systems that help students throughout their academic journey.

EPOKA University will implement new scholarship programs to increase the diversity of the students' background and status. The scholarship programs will be both need- and merit-based.

EPOKA University is committed to provide students with high quality services in catering, transportation, accommodation and other facilities. The units responsible for the student affairs will prepare their own strategies and goals on how to improve their services and responsiveness towards students' needs. EPOKA remains devoted to the extracurricular involvements of students within the university and outside, for the community at large.

While the staff of EPOKA University will continue to provide assistance to students with special needs, the University will make available additional services to ensure the well-being of these students.

3- Provide a high-quality environment for research and project development.

EPOKA University will continue with its commitment to research. The financial resources at the disposal of faculty members will increase. However, these commitments will require a greater involvement of the staff in research project applications in national and international calls. Collaborative research or services provided to and with government entities or international donors will continue to be positively evaluated in the process of staff evaluation.

Resources must be distributed more efficiently at the departmental level. Departments must develop their own research strategies according to their strengths in terms of their human resources. Research strategies must be concentrated on two or three particular areas of

research. EPOKA University will finance activities that are related to the needs of the community and promise to improve the life of the people affected by the project.

4- Provide an environment fostering a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship.

EPOKA University will continue to foster a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship. In this context, it will provide incentives for the hosting of incubators and accelerators, offering support for start-ups and fostering an entrepreneurial spirit within its student and staff community. With regard to industry collaboration, EPOKA will develop a more sophisticated relationship with industries, in order to act as a partner in the innovation process rather than solely as a provider of knowledge or skilled labour. In this context, EPOKA will encourage entrepreneurial activity, knowledge transfer, and joint research projects with businesses and other organizations.

4. Goals and objectives

The four main strategic priorities mentioned above also constitute the strategic goals of EPOKA University. The strategic goals should establish the basis for the departmental strategies. Each Faculty, department and other academic or administrative unit will make its own contribution to successfully implement the strategic goals of EPOKA University. The goals comprise the pillars of EPOKA's mission: teaching, research and services.

4.1 Goals and Objectives of the Faculties

1- Teaching goals:

- EPOKA University will increase its commitment to improving its teaching content and methodology, by increasing its offer in study programs and encouraging the development of innovative pedagogical approaches.
- EPOKA University will increase its reputation in supplying practice-relevant knowledge in its undergraduate and graduate programs.
- The Bachelor and Professional Master study programs will be tailored to the needs of the labor market at the national, regional and European level.
- EPOKA University will further improve the quality of its programs and attract the best students from Albanian high schools. The university will also invest in its reputation abroad in order to increase the number of students from Western Balkans' countries.
- The curriculum will emphasize the role of creativity and innovation, by promoting critical thinking and other soft skills as well as entrepreneurship. The curriculum will be aligned with the UN's goals of citizenship education and sustainable development; and in alignment with the goals of the national cross-cutting strategies on Information Society.
- The curriculum will further develop an interdisciplinary approach in order to enable students to tackle complex world problems.
- Departments should increase their efforts in the area of internationalization by encouraging cooperation and strategic partnerships with Western

universities, the public sector and business organizations.

- Study programs will meet the quality assurance standards of international accreditation bodies.

2 – Research and project development goals:

- EPOKA University will provide opportunities to engage its staff in a wide range of research activities and other relevant project development areas. Among others, such opportunities involve financial and infrastructural support and they should be used efficiently and productively. Research activities must be oriented towards the needs of a variety of stakeholders, especially the local economy and the Albanian public administration.
- Research activities will involve national and international research organizations and have a strong interdisciplinary element. Project development should comprise both national and European areas of interest and cooperation partners.
- Research and project development activities will be focused in those areas that efficiently utilize the human capacities of the university and are integrated with the research strategies at the departmental level.
- Departments will continue to facilitate the international mobility of researchers, and participation in European-wide projects and other international programs.

- Graduate programs (Master of Science and PhD) will be tailored according to the priorities of the human resource strategy for research in Albania, the Western Balkans, and European Research Area (ERA).

3 – Community Service goals:

- EPOKA University will offer services in those areas that the university has demonstrated expert knowledge, such as in the field of engineering, design, business, finance, law and social sciences.
- Service provision should be tied to the provision of research and teaching, especially at the graduate level.
- The University will encourage faculties and students to create business incubators. A good example that should be replicated is the Yunus Center for Social Business and Sustainability (YCSBS).
- Opportunities of collaboration with external partners, such as the public sector, international organizations, voluntary organizations, non-governmental bodies and business organizations should be sought.
- Empowerment of women to foster their involvement in the public, political and business domains.

4.2 Goals and Objectives for the Research Centers

EPOKA has established three multi-disciplinary research centers: the EPOKA University Center for European Studies (CES), whose main scope is the improvement of the understanding of global issues and interdisciplinary studies, the Center of Research and Design in Applied Sciences (CoRDA), whose aim is to promote excellence in research and bridge-building with the

construction industry, and the Yunus Center for Social Business and Sustainability (YCSBS). The centers will be assisted and supported by the Research and Project Office (RPO).

CES was founded on EPOKA University's regionally-renowned teaching reputation and research excellence. The Center seeks to encourage programs across disciplines that increase an understanding of the diversity of the societies and cultures that constitute Europe. In the focus of its research is to examine the traditional divisions within and across Europe (North/South, West/East) and how those divisions influence the present membership in the European Union and its future expansion; while dealing with the issues of exclusion and inclusion, and global positioning in the European "space."

CoRDA intends to implement design strategies based on interdisciplinary principles, generating integrative design between the user and the designer; and develop projects in different fields of Applied Sciences. The center provides consulting services in different fields, such as Urban and Building Physics, Universal Design, Structural Engineering, Construction Materials, Construction Management, Water Resources, and Environmental Engineering, etc. Functioning as a research entity, the center aims to offer to the academy a platform for developing research projects and publishing the results of the related subjects in scientific research. One of the main objectives of CoRDA is to facilitate the engagement of students and graduates in the professional practice.

YCSBS serves as a research center to map the social business ecosystem, gather knowledge on social business, examine and test theories of social business, while also seeking to find predictors of success in social business and its ultimate impact in reducing poverty and other social, economic, or environmental problems.

YCSBS further works to disseminate knowledge on social business with academia, in the market, with government, and with civil society. Additionally, YCSBS educates students with the principles of social business and prepares them in accordance with market needs.

To achieve a more effective and better coordination of the research and development activities, EPOKA established a Research and Project Office (RP0). The office will provide support for project application, administer the research calls and research funds of the university, and assist researchers in research dissemination and evaluation.

The goals and objectives of the research centers and the research and project office are as follows:

1- **CES' goals and objectives are:**
- In order to cover research that investigates processes of European integration and cooperation from a political, economic, social and cultural perspective, the Center will establish new areas of research and multidisciplinary research groups.
- In order to promote scholarly work that analyzes the development of EU policies and institutions over time, the Center will increase its research output (theses, publications and policy papers).
- In order to establish inter-institutional research groups that conducts research in CES research areas, the Center will intensify its effort to apply in European wide projects.
- To increase the number of graduate studies (Master and PhD. level).
- To inform and increase awareness on the EU integration opportunities and challenges to students at all levels, by organizing joint events with leading authorities.

- To promote knowledge transfer and share best practices mainly with EU institutions.
- To develop sustainable academic partnership based on equality and mutual recognition, by building a network of institutions of common interests and developing exchange agreements or capacity building projects.

2- **CoRDA's goals and objectives are:**
- To promote multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research at EPOKA University, by intensifying applications in international projects and organizing and participating in research activities.
- To promote high quality publications.
- To increase international collaborations and intensify cooperation with regional centers.
- To increase the collaboration between academia and the public and private sector.

3- **YCSBS' goals and objectives are:**
- To address pressing economic, social, and environmental challenges through interdisciplinary research on the ecosystem, theory, and practice of social business.
- To improve awareness of social business through knowledge-sharing.
- To engage students in social business experiences.
- To provide consultancy and referral services to social businesses.

4- **RPO's goals and objectives are:**
- To promote EPOKA University's national and international reputation for research excellence.
- To promote the level of engagement in research among academic staff and the quality of research outputs produced.
- To strategically build the strength and capacity of the research base.
- To build research capacity among PhD students and to motivate them to disseminate and critically apply research.
- In order to achieve high-quality research on a par with international standards, EPOKA will develop a human resources strategy for research in compliance with European Research Area (ERA) priorities, and fulfill all pre-requisites for applying for "Human Resource Excellent in Research" certification.

4.3 Goals and Objectives for Student Development

Enrollment of highly qualified students is a key priority of EPOKA University, whose responsibility lies with the Admission Office. The mission of the Admission Office is to admit and to serve an eligible, diverse student population nationally, regionally and internationally, while ensuring the integrity of the admission process. The Dean of Students contributes to the university's mission by facilitating access to EPOKA's learning community and engaging students in an inclusive community. The mission of the Dean of Students is to provide learning experiences designed to cultivate self-awareness, wellness, care and respect for others, and prepare students for a successful life and career.

The goals and objectives for the area of student development are:

- Develop a stronger outreach program for EPOKA's prospective students.
- Provide opportunities for students to increase their knowledge in extracurricular activities and internships.
- Support students in developing life and decision-making skills to optimize health, relationships, virtue, and personal finance.
- Increase the number of cultural activities on and outside the campus.
- Create feedback and evaluation mechanisms for student's satisfaction.
- Increase the collaboration with companies to promote career and employability of students.
- Reach out to alumni and increase their contribution.

4.4 Goals and objectives for training and life-long learning

EPOKA will remain committed to the idea of life-long learning by offering continuing education and training courses. EPOKA seeks to increase the education provision to create a trained and motivated workforce, with appropriate skills for the regional and European labor market. The involved academic units will further expand their supply in training opportunities and tailor their offerings to the needs of the labor market.

The goals and objectives are:

- Increase the number of training courses offered, whether vocational or research oriented, and in every form possible (short-term courses or summer schools)
- The offering of training and other life-long learning events shall positively affect the image and the visibility of the EPOKA in the applied sciences (IT, civil engineering, design, finance and public administration).
- The Administrative Board will invest into the launching and promotion of the training opportunities for third parties with a special developed marketing strategy. The Permanent Commission on Quality Assurance will ensure the quality of provision of the training courses.

5. Management and Resources

The managing bodies at EPOKA University are the Academic Senate, the Administrative Board and the Rectorate. Deans and heads of departments will report to the Rectorate, who in turn reports to the Academic Senate and the Administrative Board. The Rectorate, together with the Permanent Commission on Quality Assurance will monitor the implementation of the strategy. The Rectorate covers the issues of management, finances, human resources, infrastructure, community involvement, mobility, networking and communication.

EPOKA University is committed to achieve excellence in management. The leadership of the university will continue to contribute to the achievement of EPOKA's vision and mission. The organizational values and the management system will continue to ensure the sustainability of EPOKA's success. The University's policies and strategies will remain focused on the interests of its stakeholders.

In alignment with the national strategies on information society, the University is committed

to expand the utilization of its digital infrastructure to also include administrative processes (*e-governance*) and service provision (*e-services*).

5.1 Management System

EPOKA's management system undergoes every year a review by an internal and external audit. The audit reports demonstrate that the institution's management is improving its management and increasing in efficiency, especially concerning the delivery of academic services to students. The audit will continue in providing insights for the further improvement of the management processes.

The managing bodies at EPOKA University are the Academic Senate, the Administrative Board and the Rectorate. The managing authorities at EPOKA University are the Rector, the University Administrator and the Deans of each Faculty. They are also responsible for the implementation of the strategy at Faculty-level. The management structure acts according to the law of higher education and its system is transparent.

The Administrative Board is the highest collegial administrative decision-making body, which guarantees the fulfillment of the mission, and the administrative and financial sustainability of the institution. The Administrative Board regulates and oversees the University activities related to administrative, financial and economic management as well as its assets.

The Administrative Board consists of five members. The members of the Administrative Board are appointed by the Supervisory Council of the Founding Company for a period of five years and may be reappointed.

The Rectorate of the University is a collegial executive body consisting of the Rector as chairman, Vice Rectors, Deans of Faculties, Secretary General, Dean of Students, Vice-Dean of Students and the head of unit responsible for the institutional and legal matters.

In the area of management EPOKA University presents these goals:

- Maintain and increase transparency in the decision-making process of the management bodies.
- Improve the communication between the different management bodies and authorities.
- Oversee the implementation of strategies at the departmental level.
- The results of evaluation will be used to further improve the efficiency of resource management at the Faculty- and department level.

5.2 Financial Resources

The Rectorate formulates criteria for the allocation of human resources and submits them for approval by the Administrative Board. The Administrator proposes criteria on the management of financial and material resources, submits them for approval by the Administrative Board and supervises their allocation and implementation. The Rectorate cooperates with the Administrator on the drafting of the budget to be submitted for approval by the Administrative Board. The Administrative Board approves the annual and mid-term budget of the institution, including the investment plan, and supervises their implementation. The Administrative Board also determines the rules for the distribution of the income generated by the University through the conduct of its activities, and supervises the use of financial resources.

EPOKA University draws its funds primary from students' fees. Other funds include: international research projects and other national or international research funds.

In the area of finance, the university sets out two main goals:

- Secure appropriate funding for all teaching and research activities at the university.
- Increase external funding from international research projects and the provision of services.

5.3 Human Resources

EPOKA University will continue to support its personnel, so they can release their full potential at an individual, team-based and organizational level. University's policies will continue to promote fairness, diversity, inclusion and equity holding the belief that a diverse and inclusive campus leads to innovation, broadened perspectives and social understanding which represent fundamental values of higher education institutions. EPOKA will also continue to host and support scholars and researchers at risk.

EPOKA's system of evaluation will continue to incentivize and motivate its staff to use their skills and knowledge for the benefit of the University. EPOKA will update its academic performance assessment system with the aim of recognising and rewarding the full breadth of activities, roles and functions of faculty members in teaching and learning, research, innovation, management/leadership and service to society. EPOKA will further improve the financial compensation and the services provided to faculty members. The distribution of duties within the department, especially concerning administrative services, will undergo a revision and be subject of annual review. EPOKA University will continue its commitment toward the cooperation between the industry and its academic personnel. University employees are encouraged to engage with the industry and provide services to them through the university.

In the area of human resources, EPOKA University sets out these goals:

- EPOKA will provide better services and work place conditions to continue attracting national and international staff experienced in the respective disciplines.
- EPOKA will undertake human resources needs analysis of the employees, assess their job skills and performance, and plan and design an effective remuneration system. According to this strategy and the strategy of their unit, the human resources office will develop a human resources management plan, study the feasibility of flexible work schedules and provide training and development for both academic and administrative staff.
- In order to achieve high-quality research on a par with international standards, EPOKA will develop a human resources strategy for research in compliance with European Research Area (ERA) priorities, and fulfil all pre-requisites for applying for "Human Resource Excellent in Research" certification under the Research and Project Office of EPOKA. In order to provide a high-quality teaching and learning environment, EPOKA will continue to improve its teaching and research infrastructure (e.g. labs and other facilities).
- Collaboration with the industry is to be encouraged even further and departments will develop strategies on how to further engage industry

professionals in the teaching and learning process.

5.4 Infrastructural Resources

EPOKA University is committed to provide the best spatial infrastructure for its students and staff. The management will prepare a long-term strategy for the development of facilities at EPOKA that will also integrate the urban plans of the local and central government for the region. EPOKA University will increase the amount of space available for student and make a more efficient use of the available space.

The labs and other learning facilities will continue to be improved and updated in order to reach the teaching and research goals of the university. Some of the facilities will open for the community development of the district of Vora.

EPOKA University has set the following goals concerning infrastructural resources:

- Prepare a long-term strategy for the future development of the spatial infrastructure of EPOKA University in alignment with the urban plans of the local and central government.
- Create additional space to meet the demands of the increasing number of students.
- Continue to maintain the laboratories and update the existing infrastructure.

5.5 Quality Assurance

EPOKA University has created an exemplary tradition in assuring high quality of teaching and research. This has been reflected in the positive periodical internal and external reviews of the Albanian Accreditation Agency. The Permanent Commission on Quality Assurance shall continue to conduct its internal evaluation and provide recommendations for the improvement of the quality at EPOKA University based on the EPOKA Internal Quality Assurance Handbook and other relevant institutional documents. Quality assurance shall now also include other dimensions of quality, such as social policies and the community engagement of the university.

EPOKA University has set the following goals concerning quality assurance:

- The further development of internal quality assurance in teaching and research has priority over other aspects of the university.

- The Permanent Commission on Quality Assurance shall ensure an efficient and effective provision of highest quality in teaching and research.
- The Permanent Commission on Quality Assurance and the Rectorate shall involve all faculty members in the process and discussions concerning quality assurance.
- The Permanent Commission on Quality Assurance shall also include other aspects of quality assurance in its evaluation, such as social policies (e.g. review of the scholarship programs, the assistance to the students with special needs etc.), student's civic engagement and the service to the community.
- EPOKA will continue to receive specialized advice and feedback from external stakeholders, including – but not limited to – the Stakeholder Forums

- at the institutional and Faculty-level as well as the International Advisory Board.
- EPOKA University commits itself to the fulfillment of the national and international standards of accreditation.
- EPOKA will seek accreditation from international accreditation bodies. They should be full members of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and part of a European professional association or European higher education institutions renown in the respective disciplines.

5.6 Community and Social Involvement

EPOKA University will commit more resources to the betterment of the local community in the nearby districts.

EPOKA will continue to produce graduates who are civically-minded, and increase their involvement in the community through their students' clubs and other associations. The university will invest its efforts and resources in transmitting not only academic knowledge and technical skills, but also knowledge for volunteer opportunities and nonprofit organizations, knowledge of contemporary social issues, listening and communication skills, diversity skills, self-efficacy and support behavioral intentions for civic behavior.

Further, EPOKA remains committed to the social inclusion and gender mainstreaming policies of the national cross-cutting strategies, such as the National Strategy for the Social Protection 2024-

30, and the National Strategy for Gender Equality 2021-2030.

In terms of community and social involvement EPOKA University has defined these goals:

- Increase the number of projects and community involvement activities in the local communities.
- Educate students for informed community involvement and motivate them to participate in the issues of their community.
- Adapt the coursework to the prerequisites of community involvement.
- The university promotes equal employment opportunities for faculty members by encouraging the employment of the underrepresented gender when there is an overwhelming gender gap at the unit.

5.7 International Networking and Mobility

EPOKA University has a broad network of partners and involvement in the national and international research area. The partnership with the industry has been of benefit to the students for internship and employment. The number of university partnerships in formal and

informal agreements has also increased and demonstrates the reputation of the university as one of the best teaching and research institutions in Albania. EPOKA will continue its commitment and the university shall utilize its alumni to broaden and deepen its cooperative

network. Besides the office responsible for projects and research, the training and research centers also shall undertake an active role in networking. Faculty members are required to engage in international exchange programs.

The goals for international networking and mobility are:

- EPOKA University shall continue to broaden and deepen its network of partners by particularly building upon the excellent cooperation established with universities in Italy, Germany and the Netherlands.
- Alumni clubs and associations will be utilized to broaden the partnership network.
- TheI involvement of faculty members in international exchange will be part of

performance evaluation, both at the individual and at the departmental level.
- EPOKA University will continue to support student mobility with logistics and funds, especially at the graduate level.
- EPOKA University will encourage future blended mobility modules as a combination of a short- term physical mobility with a virtual component thus having further positive effects on the implementation of mobility programmes in terms of inclusion and wider accessibility of participants from all backgrounds.
- The research and continuous education centers are to be actively involved in the international networking of EPOKA University, in order to increase the visibility of the university and its reputation.

5.8 Institutional Communication

EPOKA University stands in continuous communication with the Administrative Board, the community, the government and other stakeholders. EPOKA's website and the annual reports demonstrate the will of the university to be transparent to its stakeholders. The university will continue with the activities that aim to inform prospective students across Albanian high schools. Relationships with the alumni shall also be expanded and developed further.

EPOKA will continue to get involved with the community and it will intensify its support for life-long learning and continuing education by marketing these offerings appropriately. Faculty members are encouraged to transmit their knowledge and engage in public debates and dialogues.

Regarding institutional communication, EPOKA University has the following goals:

- As a private provider EPOKA shall remain in constant communication with its main stakeholder, the Administrative Board.
- EPOKA University will continue its policy of transparency and be in continuous communication with the public through its website and contact points.
- EPOKA University will further strengthen its reputation as a research-based teaching university that is responsive to the needs of Albanian society and the development of the labor market.
- The university will develop a public relations strategy to increase visibility and improve on its reputation.
- The university will increase communication activities that aim to inform prospective students and recruit highly qualified teaching staff.

- The university will improve its inner communication among its management, administration, students and faculty members.

- In alignment with the national Cross-Cutting Strategy of Information Society, the university will expand its digital infrastructure to all other areas of management.

6. Implementation

The implementation of the Strategic Plan will proceed under the leadership of the Rector and the coordination of the Strategy Steering Committee. A detailed Implementation Framework for the Strategic Plan has been developed and follows as *Annex 1*. The Implementation Framework provides guidance on the implementation of broader goals and specific objectives. Each goal is elaborated according to the following aspects of implementation: specific instruments and action; measurable outcomes; and envisioned timeline.

Based on the Implementation Framework, EPOKA University will prepare a detailed Action Plan with the departments and other units for the implementation of this Strategic Plan. The Action Plan will determine the responsible units for implementation as well as the financial implications of each instrument and action.

The Academic Senate will be informed annually about the implementation of the strategy. The Rectorate shall carry out an annual assessment of the implementation of the Strategic Plan and submit it to the Academic Senate and the Administrative Board, in that order. Additional structures supporting strategic initiatives and the implementation of the Strategic Plan may be established if such need arises. Within 2025 the departments and other responsible units of the university shall prepare and submit their first evaluation reports and studies that define the changes and opportunities for the further implementation of the strategic plan. The Administrative Board is committed to provide the financial resources for the successful implementation of the strategic plan.

The Strategic Plan and its Implementation Framework have been developed keeping in mind the recommendations from the national accreditation agency and the other relevant international accreditation agencies as well as their respective quality and accreditation standards.

The measurable outcomes in the table below may correspond to more than one objective or goal.

Annex 1: Implementation Framework and Indicators

Area	Goals	Objectives	Instruments and actions	Measurable outcomes	Start[1]	End
A. Teaching & Learning	G.1 Improve quality of study programs by launching innovative and multi-disciplinary study programs	O.1 Increase the number of study programs	I.1 Increase the number of Bachelor programs	M1. Design two for FAE, one for FEAS in two years, and two for FLSS in three years	2024	2028
			I.2 Increase the number of Master of Science/Professional Master programs	M.2 Develop one Master of Science and one Professional Master for FAE, one Master of Science for FEAS, and one Master of Science for FLSS	2024	2028
	G.2 Tailor programs to labor market demand	O.2 Offer practice relevant knowledge in undergraduate programs	I.3 Revise curriculum to adapt to labor market demands	M.3 Revise all curricula	2025	2028
		O.3 Offer practice relevant knowledge of Master of Science and Professional Master programs	I.3 Revise curriculum to adapt to labor market demands	M.3 Revise all curricula	2025	2028
	G. 3 Improve the curriculum	O.4 Promote creativity, innovation, entrepreneurship and critical thinking	I.4 Revise curriculum to integrate critical thinking skills and entrepreneurship	M.3 Revise all curricula	2025	2028
		O.5 Promote soft skills	I.5 Revise curriculum to integrate soft skills	M.3 Revise all curricula	2025	2028
		O.6 Align curricula with UN's goals of sustainable development	I.6 Revise curriculum to align with UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).	M.3 Revise all curricula	2025	2028
	G.4 Improve methodology of teaching	O.7 Encourage faculty members to develop innovative and creative	I.7 Train faculty members for course design according to the Bologna System	M.4 Annual training and workshops for	2024	2026

		approaches to teaching	teaching and course design		
		I.8 Incentivize staff to critically assess their teaching philosophy and methodology	M.4 Annual training and workshops for teaching and course design	2024	2026
G.5 Expand the international dimension of teaching & learning	O.8 Emphasize international aspects or content in the curriculum	I.9 Revise curriculum to emphasize international aspects and content	M.3 Revise all curricula	2025	2028
	O.9 Encourage staff exchange and mobility	I.10 Include mobility as a criterion of staff performance assessment	M.5 Increase the annual number of exchanges by 20%	2024	2028
			M.6 One mobility carried out abroad by EPOKA's staff each year	2024	2028
			M.7 Adapt regulation of staff evaluation to include mobility in the assessment criteria	2024	2025
		I.11 Encourage staff mobility financially by giving stipends and premiums for staff	M.8 Earmark an amount in the budget as financial contribution for the mobility of administrative staff	2025	2028
	O.10 Increase the number of international students	I.12 Facilitate and encourage the enrollment of foreign students	M.9 Draft EPOKA's outreach strategy for international markets	2024	2025
		I.13 Organize social media international campaigns and advertisement	M.9 Draft EPOKA's outreach strategy for international markets	2024	2025
	O.11 Meet the quality assurance standards of international accreditation agencies	I.14 Study the possibility of international accreditation of EPOKA	M.10 Draft a policy paper on the international accreditation procedures and opportunities	2024	2025

		I.15 Develop a plan for the international accreditation process	M.11 Develop a strategic plan for the international accreditation	2025	2026
		I.16 Review and adapt international teaching and management standards for international accreditation bodies	M.10 & M. 11	2024	2026
		I.17 Apply for the international accreditation of EPOKA	M.12 Achieve the international accreditation of EPOKA	2026	2028
	O.12 Expand EPOKA's network of HEI partners	I.18 Encourage staff to create opportunities for cooperation between EPOKA and internationally renowned universities	M.7 Adapt regulation of staff evaluation to include mobility in the assessment criteria	2024	2025
			M.13 The number of partnership agreements should increase by 30%	2024	2028
G.6 Increase student performance	O.13 Increase retention rates	I.19 Study and diagnose issues with student enrollments, applications and achievement	M.14 Prepare a report on the effect of tuition fees and the quality of application, enrollment and retention	2024	2025
			M.15 Prepare an action plan to increase retention	2025	2026
		I.20 Study and diagnose issues with students' achievement (grades, projects and performance)	M.16 Prepare a report on student performance at EPOKA University for each year	2025	2026
	O.14 Increase student satisfaction with the study programs	I.21 Improve feedback mechanisms from students in Master of Science/Professional	M.17 Change the Course Instructor evaluation format	2024	2025

			Master and PhD programs		
			M. 18 Receive feedback from student representatives on the curriculum	2025	2026
			M.19 Improve students' participation in the representative bodies	2025	2028
		I.22 Increase student involvement in ancillary activities	M.20 Increase the number of students engaged in internships	2025	2028
			M.21 Increase the number of students' clubs and their membership	2025	2028
			M.22 Increase the number of cultural activities at EPOKA	2025	2028
		I.23 Promote the diversity of the student body	M.23 Adopt a formal policy on Diversity, Inclusion, Equity, Belonging and Non-Discrimination	2025	2026
	O.15 Assess student learning outcomes	I.24 Improve the learning outcomes of the programs: align curriculum activities with the learning outcomes	M.24.a Prepare report on the alignment of the curriculum activities with the mission of the university and the learning outcomes	2025	2026
			M.3 Revise all curricula	2025	2028
		I.25 Improve the assessment of knowledge, skills and competences of students	M.24.b Prepare report on the alignment of the general education curriculum activities with the learning outcomes (communication,	2026	2027

4

				research, reasoning, civic engagement, intercultural skills, application and integration of learning)		
				M.25 Prepare report on the alignment of the curriculum activities with the learning outcomes	2026	2027
B. Research and Projects	G.7 Increase the quality and quantity of research and project development	O.16 Increase the Research and Project budget of EPOKA	I.26 Provide financial support for faculty members engaging in research and project development	M.26 By 2028 the research budget at EPOKA will constitute 10% of the total budget	2024	2028
				M.27 Increase the number of faculty members gaining financial support for research and projects	2025	2028
		O.17 Increase the reputation of EPOKA in research and projects	I.27 Differentiated financial support for research activities that increase the reputation of EPOKA University, respectively for research papers, conference papers and other relevant events	M.28 Continue to give full financial support to faculty members who participate in conferences and publish their proceedings in Web of Science and Scopus indexed journals	2024	2028
		O.18 Increase the international reputation of EPOKA in research	I.28 Develop human resources excellence strategy in compliance with European Research Area (ERA) priorities	M.29 The amount of research papers published in Web of Science and Scopus indexed journals should increase by 20% until 2028	2024	2028
				M.30 Application for "Human Resource Excellence in Research"	2025	2026

		certification in 2021		
	I.29 Faculties will increase the number of international conferences organized at EPOKA University	M.31 Organization of an international conference at EPOKA each year	2024	2028
O.19 Increase the internationalization of research and project activities	I.30 Departments shall increase the number of project application and the quantity of collaboration with foreign researchers	M.32 The number of research project application will increase annually	2024	2028
	I.31 EPOKA will increase the number of partnerships for international projects such as Erasmus+ and Horizon Europe	M.33 The number of collaboration between domestic and foreign researchers will increase annually	2024	2028
		M.34 The number of research project partnerships will increase annually	2024	2028
O.20 Research activities will have strong interdisciplinary elements	I.32 Conference organizers are required to involve and increase the participation of the scholars across disciplines	M.31.a Annual organization of international conferences at EPOKA	2024	2028
		M.31.b Faculties shall create interdisciplinary brainstorming events among EPOKA staff to design innovative interdisciplinary research projects and then publish the results in journals	2024	2028
O.21 Research should be oriented towards the needs of Albanian society	I.33 Research activities financed by EPOKA will be oriented towards the	M.27 Increase the number of faculty members gaining	2025	2028

		and regional concerns	needs of the Albanian society and the regional concerns	financial support for research		
	G.8 Intensify the engagement of the research centers and emphasize their research profile	O.22. CES' and CoRDA's goals and objectives to be in alignment with the overall goals of research and project development at EPOKA University	I.34.1 CES's objectives are to promote research in the development of EU policies	M.35 Increase collaboration with international and national researchers in the field of EU integration	2025	2028
			I.34.2 CoRDA's objectives are to promote multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research	M.36 Increase multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research projects	2025	2028
			I.34.3 CoRDA's objectives are to increase the cooperation with the industry	M.37.a - Increase the cooperation with the industry, public and private sector	2025	2028
C. Community service	G.9.1 EPOKA University will offer services in those areas that the university has demonstrated expert knowledge	O.23.1 Encourage graduate students and professionals at EPOKA University to offer consultancy and expertise to the public and private sector	I.35.1 EPOKA encourages its staff to offer services to the public or private sector in the fields of engineering, design, business, finance and social sciences	M.38 Draft an assessment report on the third mission activities at EPOKA	2025	2026
				M.7 Adapt regulation of staff evaluation to include third mission activities in the assessment criteria	2024	2025
				M.39 Annual increase of the number of projects and services provided by EPOKA academic and administrative staff	2025	2028
				M.40 Annual increase of the	2025	2028

				number of personnel engaged in service provision		
	O.23.2 Services will be provided in the framework of research and teaching activities	I.35.2 Faculties engaged in service provision activities adapt their courses accordingly and involve graduate students in their projects	M.41 Annual increase of the number of personnel engaged in service provision	2025	2028
G.9.2 Students at EPOKA are civically engaged and aware of the problems of their community	O.24 Graduates demonstrate an increased capacity for civic responsibility	I.36 Change curriculum to include activities relevant to service learning	M.3 Review all curriculum	2025	2028
G.9.3 Empowerment of women to foster their involvement in the public, political and business domains	O. 25 The University increases the participation of female staff members in the public, political and business domains	I.37 Facilitate and encourage faculty staff members to participate in activities with a focus on the empowerment of women	M.42 Annual increase in the number of activities in which faculty members participate	2024	2028
	O. 26 Faculty members encourage the active participation of students in the public and political life	I.38 Organise workshops and open forums by inviting role models as an inspiration for encouraging students, particularly women, to contribute to public life	M.43 Annual increase in the number of female students who participate in these activities.	2024	2028
	O. 27 Faculty members contribute by raising awareness for the community, particularly women, to take part actively in the public and political life	I.39 EPOKA signs agreements with international organizations to enable the participation of female faculty members and students in the form of projects, training, and research focused on women's empowerment	M.44 Annual increase in the number of agreements between the university and international and national organizations	2024	2028

				M.45 Annual increase in the number of activities in which faculty members and students participate with regard to raising awareness for the community	2024	2028
D. Training & Lifelong learning	G.10 Life-long learning units expand the supply in training opportunities	O.28 The training centers offer training in high-demand vocational fields	I.40 Assess the actual and future opportunities of EPOKA being involved in vocational education projects	M.46 Draft a report on the possibilities of EPOKA being involved in vocational education projects	2025	2027
				M.47 Annual increase of training certificated seminars provided at EPOKA University	2025	2028
	G.11 Increase the visibility of the University	O.29 Develop a marketing strategy for the training courses	I.41 Marketing strategy for the training courses	M.48-a Draft a public relations strategy	2025	2026
				M.48-b The marketing strategy should contain a strategy for the provision of training courses	2025	2026
	G.12 Ensure the quality of the training courses	O.30 Assess and increase the quality of training courses	I.42 The Permanent Commission on Quality Assurance will assess the design and implementation of courses	M.49 Bi-annual assessment of the certificated seminars	2026	2028
E. Student Development	G. 13 Increase the quality of student outreach and development programs	O.31.a Develop a stronger outreach and recruitment program	I.43 Improve the current outreach program	M.50.a Asses the current program and prepare recommendations	2025	2028
		O. 31.b Increase the quality of student life	I. 44.a Increase the number of cultural activities	M.50.b Increase the number of events and student clubs by 10%	2025	2028

			I.44.b Improve student's satisfaction feedback and evaluation system	M. 50.c Prepare and issue the new student's satisfaction survey	2025	2028
			I.44.c Involve the alumni and increase their contribution to student development programs	M. 50.d Invite alumni to participate in students' events	2024	2028
F. Management & Resources						
F.1 Management	G.14.1 Maintain and increase transparency in the decision-making process of the management bodies	O.32.a Optimize participation, transparency and accountability of EPOKA's governance system	I.45.a Review and revise the regulatory framework of EPOKA	M.51.a Report assessing the regulatory framework of EPOKA	2025	2026
				M.51.b The number of revised regulations	2026	2028
	G.14.2 Improve communication across the university	O.32.b There is an appropriate delegation of the authority within and outside EPOKA	I.45.b Review and assess the delegation of authority at EPOKA	M.52 The number of revised regulations	2026	2028
		O.33 Decisions at EPOKA University are rational, informed and transparent	I.46 Ensure that decisions at EPOKA follow the Statute	M.53 Qualitative Report assessing the decision-making process at EPOKA (staff interviews and process-tracing)	2026	2026
	G.15 - Oversee the implementation of the strategies at the departmental level	O.34 The management oversees the implementation of the strategy	I.47 Deans and heads of the departments oversee the implementation of the strategy	M.54 Annual evaluation reports of the strategy	2024	2028
	G.16 Improve the efficiency of resource management at the Faculty- and department- level	O.35 Use the evaluation and audit reports to improve efficiency	I.48 Evaluation reports findings are discussed in meetings and reflected in the plans for improvements	M.55 Recommendations and changes refer to the findings of the audit and other assessments	2024	2028
F.2 Finance	G.17 Secure appropriate funding for all teaching and research activities	O.36 Research and teaching activities at EPOKA are appropriately funded	I.49 EPOKA has a long and short-term financial plan	M.56 Draft the long and short-term financial plan	2025	2025

			I.50 EPOKA has an annual budget plan	M.57 The budget plan is prepared annually	2024	2028
	G.18 Increase external funding	O.37 Increase external funding from international research projects and the provision of services	I.51 EPOKA's RPO and staff apply for international projects	M.58 An annual increase of income from external funding	2024	2028
	G.19 Ensure accountability and responsible use of financial resources	O.38 Funding will be linked to performance	I.52 Staff performance criteria include the proper use of research funds and other university resources	M.59 The implementation of performance-related bonus payments will be considered for for full-time faculty members	2025	2028
F.3 Human resources	G.20 Continue to attract qualified national and international staff	O.39 Provide better services and work conditions	I.53 Improve the work conditions of staff	M.60 Investment in infrastructure and provision of office space will increase	2026	2028
				M.61 Conduct annual staff satisfaction surveys	2025	2028
				M.62 Adopt a formal policy on hosting and supporting scholars and researchers at risk	2025	2026
				M.23 Adopt a formal policy on Diversity, Inclusion, Equity, Belonging and Non-Discrimination	2025	2026
	G.21 Improve human resources management	O.40 Increase the professionality of human resources	I.54 Improve training and recruitment for human resources staff	M.63 Provide in-house training for HR staff	2025	2026
			I.55 Undertake human resources analysis at EPOKA	M.64 Draft a report on HR management at EPOKA	2025	2026

		O.41 Develop a human resources strategic plan	I.56 Draft a HR strategy of EPOKA University	M.65 Prepare a HR development strategy	2026	2027
F.4 Infrastructural Resources	G.22 Ensure the sustainable development of EPOKA's Campus	O.42 Develop a long-term strategy for EPOKA's campus	I.57 Draft a long-term development strategy for the campus	M.66 Prepare EPOKA's Campus development strategy in alignment with this strategy	2026	2026
			I.58 Plan the adoption of an integrated waste management system at the EPOKA campus	M.67 Implement the integrated waste management system at the EPOKA campus	2026	2028
			I.59 Increase the use of green energy on the EPOKA campus	M.68 Establish a photovoltaic park on the EPOKA campus	2026	2028
		O.43 Use efficiently the existing or create additional space to accommodate the ever-increasing number of students	I.60 Assess the appropriate use of the infrastructure	M.69 Report on the use of infrastructure at EPOKA	2025	2026
			I.61 Increase spaces for classroom and recreational activities for students and staff	M.70 Square meter increase in space	2024	2028
F.5 Quality Assurance	G.23 Internal quality assurance in teaching and research has priority over other aspects of the university	O.44 The further development of quality assurance has priority over other activities	I.62 All units' strategies should refer to, follow and reflect the findings of the internal and external evaluation reports at the institutional and program level	M.71.a EPOKA presents the findings of each report for discussion, involving all units	2025	2028
				M.71.b Quantified data on the participation and the number of meetings should demonstrate an increase	2025	2028
	G. 24 Ensure an efficient and effective provision	O.45 Support the provision of	I.63 Assess and report on quality at EPOKA University	M.72 Conduct the biannual assessment report	2024	2028

of highest quality in teaching and research	education and research				
			M.73 Annual increase of the number of reports and assistance to the department in the framework of external accreditation	2024	2028
G.25 Involve all faculty members in the process and discussions concerning quality assurance	O.46 Involve staff in the process to generate momentum and support for internal quality assurance	I.64 Organize meetings and trainings on quality assurance	M.74 Annual trainings or workshops with staff concerning quality in higher education.	2024	2028
G.26 EPOKA develops its own quality standards to include other aspects of quality assurance in its evaluation	O.47 Develop internal quality standards specific for EPOKA's identity and profile	I.65 Prepare a quality assurance action plan and standards for EPOKA University	M.75 Update the EPOKA Internal Quality Assurance Manual	2025	2026
	O.48 EPOKA's internal quality assurance standards include social aspects	I.66 Review the scholarship programs	M.76 Draft a policy paper on the scholarship program	2025	2025
		I.67 Review EPOKA's policy on students with special needs	M.77 Draft a policy paper and assessment report on students with special needs	2025	2025
G.27 EPOKA commits itself to the fulfillment of national and international standards of accreditation	O.49 EPOKA's internal quality assurance standards include international and national quality standards	I.68 Prepare a report on international quality assurance standards	M.78 Draft a report on EPOKA's compliance with international quality assurance standards	2025	2026
G.28 Seek accreditation from international accreditation bodies	O.50 Ensure that EPOKA qualifies for accreditation by international accreditation agencies	I.14 Study the possibility of international accreditation of EPOKA	M.10 Draft a policy paper on the international accreditation procedures and opportunities	2025	2025
		I.15 Develop a plan for the international	M.11 Develop a strategic plan for	2026	2026

			accreditation process	international accreditation		
			I.16 Review and adapt international teaching and management standards for the international accreditors	M.10 & M. 11	2024	2028
F.6 Community and Social Involvement	G.29 Increase involvement in the region	O.51 Increase the number of projects and community involvement activities in the nearby districts	I.69 Encourage the staff to participate in basic and applied research on issues relevant to the development of the region	M.79 One in ten projects funded by EPOKA should be community relevant. Annual increase of such projects	2025	2028
	G.30 Educate students for informed community involvement	O.52 Educate students for informed community involvement and motivate them to participate in the issues of their community	I.70 Adapt the coursework to the prerequisites of community involvement	M.3 Revise all curricula	2025	2028
			I.22 Increase student involvement in ancillary activities	M.20 Increase the number of students engaged in internships	2024	2028
				M.21 Increase the number of students' clubs and their membership	2024	2028
				M.22 Increase the number of cultural activities at EPOKA	2024	2028
	G.32 The university encourages equal employment opportunities	O.53 EPOKA promotes equal employment opportunities for faculty members by encouraging the employment of the underrepresented gender when there is an overwhelming gender gap at the unit	I.71 Review the ratios of gender representation at each department	M.64 Draft a report on HR management at EPOKA	2025	2025

			I.72 Develop policy for equal gender representation at academia and management levels	M.80 Regulation on gender mainstreaming at EPOKA University	2025	2025
F.7 International Networking and mobility	G.33 Continue to broaden and deepen its network of partners	O.54 Broaden and deepen the network of partners to increase learning and development opportunities for staff and students	I.73 Apply to hold the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education	M.81 Become a holder of the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education	2024	2025
			I.74 Research centers and faculties will be engaged in promoting and creating opportunities for international and national partnerships and cooperation	M.34 The number of research project partnerships will increase annually	2025	2028
			I.75 Utilize alumni clubs and associations to broaden the partnership network	M.82 Solicit calls and invitations for cooperation utilizing alumni	2025	2028
	G.34 Increase the involvement of faculty members in international and national projects	O.55 The involvement of faculty members in international exchange will be part of the performance evaluation, both at the individual and at the departmental level	I.76 Use performance evaluation as incentives	M.59 Performance-related payment for full-time faculty members	2025	2028
		O.56 Continue to support student mobility with logistics and funds	I.77 Support student mobility with logistics and funds, especially at the graduate level	M.83 Increase the number of incoming and outgoing students	2024	2028
		O.57 Involve the research centers	I.78 Research centers are to be involved in EPOKA's efforts to build new partnerships	M. 34 The number of research project partnerships will increase annually	2025	2028

F.8 Institutional Communication	G.35 Remain in constant communication with the main stakeholders	O.58 Build and maintain relations with the members of the Administrative Board, the Government and the Alumni	I.79 Publish and keep up-to-date information on EPOKA tailored and targeted for the Alumni and the Government	M.84 Issue an annual report to the Administrative Board	2024	2028
				M.85 Issue Information Booklets on EPOKA's activities and performance	2025	2028
	G.36 Be in continuous communication with the public	O.59 Increase transparency and improve communication	I.80 Improve communication with the public	M.86 Launch the new website	2024	2025
				M.87 Webometrics and UniRank indicate increased use of EPOKA's website	2025	2028
				M.88 Improved annual ranking of EPOKA in webranks	2025	2028
	G.36 EPOKA University will curate an image as a research-based teaching university responsive to the labor market demands	O.60 Maintain the image of EPOKA as building industry-friendly partnerships	I.81 Curate links with the industry and increase partnerships	M.89 Increase the number of industry partnerships in EPOKA's network and enhance the visibility of such interactions	2025	2028
				M.90 Study the feasibility of establishing a business incubator	2025	2026
				M.91 Establish a business incubator	2026	2028
				M.92 Study the feasibility of establishing a technology transfer office/unit	2025	2026

			M.93 Establish a technology transfer office/unit	2026	2028
G.37 The university will develop a communication and marketing strategy to increase visibility and improve on its reputation	O.61 Further improve EPOKA's reputation abroad	I.82 Target foreign higher education markets	M.9 Draft EPOKA's social media strategy for international markets	2024	2025
	O.62 Communicate the image of EPOKA University as offering practice relevant knowledge	I.83 Work on the image of EPOKA through marketing campaigns	M.38.c Draft EPOKA's marketing strategy (incl. social media strategy). Prepare and produce advertisement materials	2024	2025
	O.63 Continue work on EPOKA's identity and profile	I.84 Create opportunity for discussion among students, staff and faculty members on the identity and profile of EPOKA	M.94 Annual debate sessions on EPOKA's image and identity	2025	2028
			M.95 Prepare annual reports on stakeholders' perception on EPOKA	2025	2028
	O.64 Inform prospective students and recruit highly qualified teachers	I.85 Maintain and increase inventory of outreach programs and methods at EPOKA	M.38.c & M85, M.86	2025	2028
G.38 Expand EPOKA's digital infrastructure to all other areas of management	O.65 Maintain a digital infrastructure in alignment with the national Cross-Cutting Strategy of Information Society	I.86 Improve EPOKA's digital platforms of communication, learning and research	M.85 & M.96 Maintain EPOKA's open access research databases	2025	2028