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Project Acronym: DI-PHDICTKES

Project title:

Brief introduction of the national PhD school in ICT concerning proposed Model A, B, and C

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Contents

1. Purpose

This document serves to explain in detail the three models that are proposed for the positioning of national PhD school in ICT domain, as part of the project "The development and implementation of a PhD Program in ICT for the Kosovo Education System" (hereafter: PhDICTKES), co-funded by Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union under the reference number: 609990-EPP-1-2019-1-SE-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP.

All the proposed models comply with the national and EU regulations in effect.

2. National Doctoral school positioning opportunities

In this section are described all three models that are created and adapted during several activities organised in the first year of the project, and the same models have been discussed in all communication levels among all consortium partners.

Note that in all models, the PHDICTKES responsibility is the same, i.e. Training, Funding, Policies, Strategies, Regulations and Program Structure. After the completion of the project, these responsibilities will have to move to the National School, irrespectively of the model adopted.

3.1 Model A – Physical national PhD school under the Ministry of Education

In the initial proposal, known as Model A (see Figure 1), the national PhD school for ICT domain will run as Institute of Research Excellence under the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology in Kosovo, similar to the other existing institutes, such as Albanology institute, pedagogical institute and institute of history "Ali Hadri".
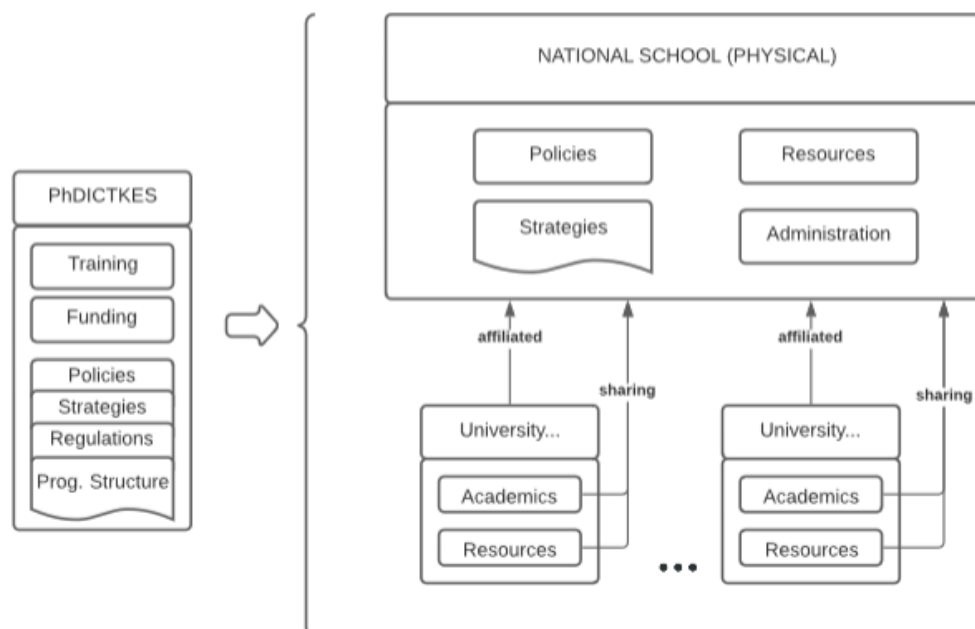

Figure 1. Model A - National PhD School as a physical entity in Kosovo

As depicted in Model A (see Figure 1), the PhDICTKES during the three-year lifetime of the project will establish all governance documentation and will set up the running of the national PhD school as a national body where all Universities that have PhD programs or are aiming to develop one in the future could be affiliated, by showing interest in advancing their research competencies on one hand, and by sharing human and infrastructure resources from the other hand. The governance of the national PhD school will be under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, who needs either to establish a division and employ a director of the school and administrative staff as a permanent position within Ministry or list the national PhD school responsibilities under the existing division for development and quality in higher education. Whereas all researchers will be engaged as part of particular research projects and use the research infrastructure of all affiliated Universities.

3.2 Model B – A virtual national PhD school with affiliated Institutes

In Model B (see Figure 2), the national PhD school will run virtually, but compared to Model A, in this model, each of Universities will have to create profiled institute of research excellence, and these research institutes will be affiliated into the virtual national PhD school which will be governed by a Steering Committee. The Steering Committee will be composed of all existing project consortium partners, and in the future possibly increasing the number of representatives from other research institutes that will show interest to be affiliated under this national umbrella. Initially, the Steering Committee will have a chair and co-chair, from the University that is currently running a PhD program in ICT domain or has the highest number of actual registered students in ICT faculties. Further on, after one year, the governance of the national school will run in a round-robin approach, with academics from all affiliated institutions, starting with the second University that has PhD program in ICT domain, or has the second-highest number of actual registered students, and this will continue for the rest. All future decisions will be depending from a voting process among the Steering Committee members.
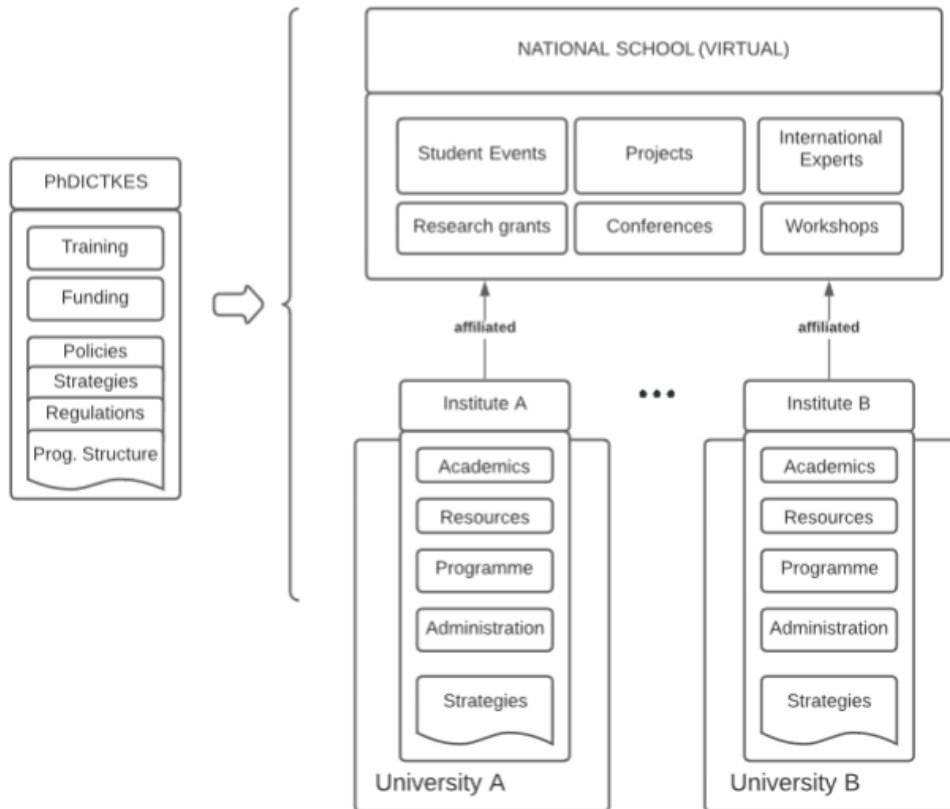
Figure 2. Model B - National PhD School running virtually

3.3 Model C – A virtual national PhD school with affiliated Universities

Model C depicted in Figure 3, is similar to Model B, the main difference is that the Universities will not be pushed to profile their research, and in this regard will not have to create research institutes. In this model, the universities will be affiliated within national PhD school in ICT, and the governance of the national school will be identical as explained in Model B.
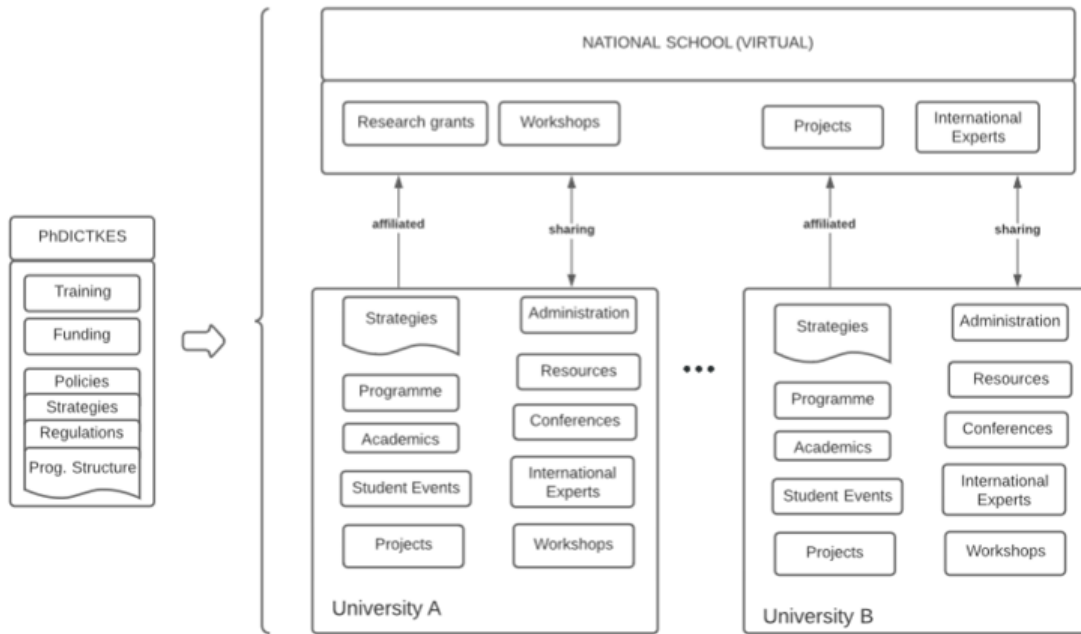
Figure 3. Model C - National PhD School running virtually

3. Discussion

The Table 1 summarises the key issues related to the three models with justification that follows:

Table 1: Comparation of the proposed models

	Model A	Model B	Model C
Long term Sustainability	High	Low	Low
PhDICTKES suitability	Medium	High	High
Centrally organized shared activities	Yes	No	No
Sharing Resources	Yes	Yes	Yes
Management/Organisation	Central	Distributed	Distributed
Profiling research in national level	Yes	No	No
Profiling research in Universities	Medium	High	Low
Immediate applicability	Depends on discussion that we will have with MEST	Within one-year	Immediately

In all three models, the PhD students will be registered in respective universities that have an accredited PhD program from the accreditation agency of Kosovo. However, the courses, seminars, conferences, projects, research could take part in the national PhD school. In case the national PhD school will run either as Model B or Model C, all the aforementioned activities will be organized in the institution of the chairperson.

To all the student will be assigned a mentor from the main University where she/he has registered her/his PhD studies, however, the students will be able to use the shared resources of the national PhD school, by having a co-mentor from other Universities (nationally and/or internationally) that has the appropriate competence of the particular research project and also use the research infrastructure of all universities affiliated in the national PhD school.

All three models will contribute to increasing the research capacities in Kosovo and assure the quality of the PhD program, since all universities that have the interest to run PhD school will

join the synergy of all affiliated partners, to reach outstanding results in national, regional and global level.

With respect to the sustainability of the project, Model A, is the one that is ranked as the number one model, since the Ministry will allocate dedicated people and budget for the successful running of the national PhD school after the end of the project lifetime. Whereas, concerning Model B and Model C, the sustainability component is more blurred when we consider that all affiliated partners should have a strong motivation to be part of the school, and use their resources not only for research purposes but also to run the school.

Pursuing Model A, based on the experiences of Ministry of Education, Science and Technology representatives, this approach may take longer than the project lifetime therefore the risk of achieving the targeted result could be estimated as very high. While Model B and Model C for sure can be concretized within the project lifetime.

However, if all actors involved in consortium partners, especially the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology guarantees to establish Model A within project lifetime, the national PhD school will have a strong positioning and in the near-future will be able to self-sustain since it will be more convincing in the inflow of international funds from various world organizations, emphasizing the unity of the singularity of actors within the school, and offering guarantees from the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology in its sustainability and upcoming implementation of international funded projects.

To conclude, in all cases, the national PhD school will have its strong component the research excellence, and among many other responsibilities, this will act as the main driver of the digital transformation of Kosovo. And the most important part is that it will impact Kosovo's future by positioning Kosovo as an innovation hub in Western Balkan Region, and Europe.