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## Partnership



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# European Indicators and Ranking Methodology for University Third Mission

## Project approach

E3M is a three years research project (2008-2011) funded by the European Commission's Lifelong Learning Programme. The main objective of the project, involving as partners eight European Higher Education Institutions, is to generate a comprehensive instrument to identify, measure and compare Third Mission activities of HEIs from a wide perspective. This will be achieved by creating indicators on Third Mission activities and by giving a new approach on the concept of ranking methodologies.

## Background and overview

There is a growing recognition around the world of the role universities can play towards economic growth and social development in the modern "knowledge society" as lay out by the Lisbon Strategy. University activities have traditionally been understood as two missions: teaching and research. However, more recently policy makers have been keen to encourage all the other contributions of universities to society, their Third Mission. While several ranking systems exist for the first and second missions, the Third Mission lacks any cohesive methodology. E3M addresses this need. First a set of standard indicators for three dimensions of the Third Mission that are believed to be indicative of the Third Mission as a whole will be selected and developed. These dimensions have received the following titles: Continuing Education, Technology Transfer & Innovation and Social Engagement. Second, several study visits will be organized to document best practices in Third Mission activity. Finally, a ranking methodology is planned to be created to assess the performance of European Third Mission providers, benchmarking excellent practices, and helping to create a common European area of Higher Education institutions.

## Objectives

The objectives of the E3M project are:

### General objectives:

- To improve the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of education and training systems in Europe, improving the global competitiveness of European Higher Education Institutions.
- To encourage and improve Higher Education Institution's contribution to society.
- To foster the creation of a European area of Higher Education by means of increased communication and mutual understanding.
- To stimulate excellence and improve the visibility of university activities focused on services to society and industry.

### Specific objectives:

- To create European standard indicators to measure the effectiveness of third mission provision.
- To create a ranking methodology to benchmark European Third Mission Services providers of HEI.
- To create good practices for institutional dialogue in a European Area of Higher Education framework.

## Major outputs

There will be six primary quantifiable outputs for this project which are:

1. Standardized indicators
2. Methodology for ranking Third Mission activities
3. Web tools for benchmarking university Third Mission activities
4. Global web for European Third Mission providers
5. Case studies of third mission activities
6. International Conference of Third Mission activities providers

## Partnership

The partnership is formally structured and managed by eight participant members of the following European institutions:

- SPAIN: Universitat Politècnica de València (project coordinator);  
Universidad de León
- PORTUGAL: University of Porto
- SLOVENIA: University of Maribor
- IRELAND: Dublin Institute of Technology
- ITALY: Istituto Superiore Mario Boella
- FINLAND: University of Helsinki
- AUSTRIA: Danube University Krems

