

# FINAL EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT

## PROJECT

# RESTRUCTURING OF DOCTORAL STUDIES IN SERBIA

*Report completed by: Prof. Dr. Petar Maric  
University of Banja Luka  
Patre 5  
78000 Banja Luka  
Republic of Srpska  
Bosnia and Herzegovin  
Tel: ++387 51 221 834  
Fax: ++387 51 221 834  
E-mail: [petar.maric@etf.unibl.org](mailto:petar.maric@etf.unibl.org)*

Project full title:	Restructuring of doctoral studies in Serbia
Project Acronym:	RODOS
Project No:	grant number 787517.36, reference number 544093-2013
Funding Scheme:	TEMPUS programme of the European Commission
Scope:	National
Coordinator:	Conference of the Universities of Serbia (CONUS)
Project start date:	December 01, 2013
Project duration:	36 months (per the initial project plan) + 7 months (extension of the project duration)

The report is the outcome of the project activity "5.3.External quality control by external experts", and covers the entire duration of the project per the initial project plan, including an additional four months extension, until March 30 2017. The evaluation is based on a variety of inputs. All materials on the project Web site and internal documents have been analyzed. Furthermore, the evaluator conducted a series of information obtained in communication with representatives of the project consortium members.

The goal of this external evaluation is therefore summarize and present neutral expert view on the strengths and weaknesses of the project's activities to RODOS partners, and to all other potentially interested parties. As such, this document can be used for a follow-up of the activities initiated by the project and the development of new projects, arising from the results of RODOS.

### **General overview on project implementation**

The project has been designed to address restructuring doctoral studies in Serbia in line with the Bologna Process and Salzburg Principles. Activities of the project should provide an essential contribution to fulfilment of strategic commitment "to ensure the primary role of science at universities, to develop and improve the overall research potential, to generate teaching staff for HEI's and highest professionals for industry and civil services, contributing in such a way to the creation of new knowledge, to faster technological development and the improvement of cultural and national identity" stated in the document Strategy of the Development of Education in Serbia (SDES), 2012, Part IV). Synergic activity of 15 partners from Serbia and 4 universities from EU countries should result in doctoral schools, based on the integration of universities, institutes, industry and civil sector, which will be a guarantee for high quality research. The doctoral schools are seen as a vehicle for achieving critical mass of researchers and increasing the overall teaching and research quality. To achieve this goal numerous activities of the project are planned in order to achieve satisfactory quality and efficiency of doctoral studies.

The project was realized in direct correlation with SDES 2012, the National Strategy of Research (2010), the Europe 2020 Flagship Initiatives, the Bologna process, the Salzburg principles, numerous recent documents issued by UNESCO, EUA, EURODOC, ERA, LERU, etc, and the strategic Tempus projects GOMES, SIGMUS and KNOWTS. It is expected that the project will contribute, in general, to the quality and relevance of Serbian HEI's, to the integration processes in and between HEI's, as well as to the harmonization with EU developments.

The specific sub-objectives of the project were: 1) To reconsider the existing national policies/standards for doctoral studies and to develop new ones, better adapted to the EU standards and local experiences; 2) To develop a new model for public funding of doctoral studies; 3) To define more comprehensively the status of doctoral students (student rights, obligations, choice of supervisors, health insurance); 4) To make doctoral studies more compatible with the needs of industry and civil services and better adapted to an employment market that is wider than academia; 5) To develop the concept of doctoral schools as an integration factor at intra university and inter university levels; 6) To develop and test several specific models for new structures developed within 2 – 5; 7) To meet the challenge of interdisciplinary training and the development of transferable skills; 8) To ensure quality control by strong collaboration with students, QA institutions and other stakeholders; 10) To achieve dissemination and sustainability of the results starting from the fact the Consortium incorporates all Serbian institutions in charge of HE at the national level.

The primary target group of the project was the whole academic community (teachers, students, administrative staff and management), together with scientific research institutions, industry and civil services, although the whole society will benefit directly or indirectly from the project actions. The results of the project would contribute not only to a successful implementation of the Bologna principles, but also to the overall economy of the country by better planning and coordination of R&D and innovation activities, strengthening the interaction of students, researchers and research teams through more intensive mobility between different branches, sectors and research institutions, fitting into the EU Modernization Agenda.

The partnership in the project corresponded very well to the objectives of the RODOS project. The Conference of Serbian Universities (CONUS), the Ministry of Education of Serbia (MEST), the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) and the Serbian Academy of Science and Arts (SASA) have given the highest level of priority to the initiative to prepare the project application. All these institutions were aware of an utmost importance of doctoral studies for HE in Serbia and of the urgency to undertake necessary measures. The Consortium is was led by the CONSU, ensuring in such a way an impact of the project results at the national level and involvement of all Serbian HEI's. Also, it encompassed also all public Serbian Universities, two largest private universities, SASA, MEST, NCHE, representatives from industry and students, together with four renowned Universities from EU having great experience in doctoral studies.

The European partners have been well chosen. They are very well known for their achievements in the domain of doctoral studies. From the point of view of introducing new structures in doctoral studies or joint doctoral studies, a particularly significant feature of the EU partners is their diversity in terms of organizing doctoral schools and study programs. This diversity also manifests itself in different approaches and solutions, thus indicating that there are several options, which should be carefully analysed taking into account the context in the Serbia, in order to identify the most suitable concepts, strategies and implementation mechanisms.

### **Key activities and results achieved.**

At the time of writing this report, most project activities have already been realized successfully. Most of these activities have been undertaken according to the envisaged timetable. Delays in the first phase of the project and recommendations for their compensation are set out in the first External evaluation report. The RODOS consortium actions undertaken on the basis on these suggestions were successful so that, by the initial deadline for completion of the project, almost all delays compensated.

The RODOS consortium actions undertaken on the basis on these suggestions were successful so that almost all delays compensated, by the initial deadline for completion of the project. Extension of the project duration was used to complete the few remaining activities, and even more for the implementation of additional activities that were not initially planned in the project proposal.

The following activities need to be completed.

- Adoption of roadmap for doctoral studies
- The accreditation standards for joint doctoral degrees and establishing doctoral schools formulation and adoption.
- Formulation of selected study programs for doctoral schools
- Accreditation and implementation of selected study programs
- Guide for implementation of doctoral schools in Serbia

- Overall results produced by the project are very satisfying.
- Peer review of the study programs
- Organizing final dissemination conference
- Daily management of the project.

The above activities are foreseen in the work plan for the extended eligibility period to be implemented from M40 to M43.

Bearing in mind the above, it can be reliably stated that all activities will be successfully implemented by the deadline for completion of the project (June 30 2017).

Within set of activities "**Quality assurance and funding of doctoral studies**" attention was paid to the following two main topics: Quality assurance standards for doctoral studies and Funding of doctoral studies.

The results related to the QA standards for doctoral studies have been published in the books issued and printed by RODOS "Doctoral Studies in Serbia" and "From Doctoral Studies to Doctoral Schools" and discussed at different events organized by RODOS.

The publication "Doctoral Studies in Serbia" has been based on the formulation of a special questionnaire addressed to all higher education institutions of Serbia in June 2014. The analysis performed, together with the conclusions for further work, represents the first comprehensive insight into doctoral studies since 2005, i.e. since the introduction of the Bologna principles. Within this activity, a conference entitled "Doctoral Studies in Serbia" was organized on December 2014 in Belgrade, with more than 170 participants from all HEIs of Serbia.

The obtained results have had a huge impact on the entire higher education scene in Serbia. The results have been presented in the whole Serbian press with a very high respect and positive opinion

As a result of the above and other activities, the preliminary version of the new QA standard was issued at the meeting of the working group on May 2015.

The final version of the new Standards for doctoral studies was discussed and adopted by the Commission for Accreditation and Quality Assurance (CAQA) and the CONUS. Based on this result, the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) adopted the Standards on June 2016. In such a way, the formulated Standards have become an official bylaw.

Funding of doctoral studies was one of fundamental issues related to successful restructuring of doctoral studies in Serbia and introduction of the doctoral schools. Activities related to this issue were carried out in two phases. In the first phase, the analysis of the existing approaches to the problem of funding doctoral studies was carried out. The second phase was devoted to the proposal of new regulations opening up new possibilities for students and HEIs.

Based on a detailed analysis the first draft of new regulations at the RODOS PMB meeting on December, 2014 was given. The final version of the proposed new regulations was analyzed and adopted at the working group meeting held in Belgrade on May 2015.

The proposed Regulations for funding doctoral studies were adopted by the Ministry of Education in 2015, and incorporated into the bylaws for funding research projects.

Within the set of activities “**Research policy and industry in restructuring doctoral studies**” all the planned activities are implemented. This set of activities has been divided into two groups of activities: Research policy of Serbia in the light of doctoral studies and Role of industry in restructuring doctoral studies and definition of a Roadmap for further actions.

Task Research policy of Serbia in the light of doctoral studies was realized through two activities: Analysis of the research policy in Serbia in the light of doctoral studies and Modification and adoption of bylaws on research policy.

Analysis of the research policy in Serbia in the light of doctoral studies resulted into two main outcomes. The book "Science in Serbia, 2010-2014" was issued and printed in December 2014 within the framework of the Project. One paragraph, entitled "Students of Doctoral Studies" was devoted directly to the first project activity. A critical analysis has been presented, including the main statistical indicators for the given period of time. Furthermore, the book "Science in Serbia in 2014" printed by RODOS presents complementary results. In addition to the systematic analysis new measures that have to be undertaken, in line with RODOS goals, have been proposed in these books.

The conducted analysis showed that one of the major problems for doctoral studies in Serbia is the lack of critical mass of researchers engaged in doctoral studies. According to the Law on Higher Education qualified people from research and development Institutes had no possibility to be engaged in doctoral studies. The project team has been very active in proposing an amendment to the Law on Higher Education in order to enable participation of researchers from the Institutes in teaching and supervision of the doctoral theses. The National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia adopted such an amendment in September 2014.

Furthermore, the academic staff of RODOS in 2015 participated actively in the preparation of a Proposal for Amendments of the Law on Scientific Research Activity. doctoral studies have been treated in two paragraphs of the document. These amendments to the Law on Scientific Research were accepted by the National Assembly on December 2015.

Also, the final text of the Strategy of Research and Development of Serbia and the Action Plan for realization of the Strategy were adopted by the Government of the Republic of Serbia on March 2016, incorporating the text that is the result of the RODOS project.

A more intensive collaboration with industry has been initiated in June 2014 at several meetings organized in the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Serbia. At these meetings it was agreed to start the activity by launching a questionnaire addressed to all members of the Chamber of Commerce of Serbia (more than 1000 addresses). The questions were formulate in such a way as to draw relevant conclusions about further steps to be undertaken in the direction of developing roadmaps for new structures for doctoral studies. The obtained results were presented and discussed at the conference held at the Chamber of Commerce on April 2015.

Based on the above activities, the working group responsible for drafting the roadmap for doctoral studies in Serbia, in collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce and all HEIs of Serbia prepared draft of the document. The draft envisages contribution to the establishment of the rules, procedures and mechanisms in which the wider community (with a special emphasis on institutes and industry) participates in a variety of activities related to doctoral studies. At the time of writing this report, the draft was submitted to CONUS for adoption.

In the first External evaluation report, the results achieved by 1.6.2015 within the activity "**Doctoral schools: concept, standards, organization**" were presented in detail. Therefore, here will be given an overview of activities implemented thereafter.

In the period from September 2015 to September 2016, study visits to all four EU partner universities were organized. Overview on doctoral studies in Greece, Austria and Portugal are presented, with focus on financing, scholarships, accreditation and organization of doctoral schools. In parallel, the round tables with the topics: Concepts of Doctoral Schools in Serbia, Accreditation Standards for Joint Study Programs and Standards for Establishing of the Doctoral Schools were organized

General legal aspects of the founding doctoral schools in Serbia will be covered by the Chapter VIII in the book "From Doctoral Studies to Doctoral Schools" (the material prepared for printing).

At the TREND 2017 conference (February 2017), RODOS team members presented papers Survey of Research and Innovation in Serbia 2011-2016, Contribution of Doctoral Studies and Law Amendments and NaRDuS - What Changes Have Been Brought During First Two Years? A special panel: Accreditation Standards for Establishing Doctoral Schools was organised at the conference.

Furthermore, new accreditation standards and bylaws for establishment of doctoral schools were discussed on many other occasions. The main intention was to find the most efficient ways of introducing doctoral schools in Serbia, not requiring substantial changes of legal regulations, having in mind versatility of situations at different universities. One important conclusion in this regard has been that no explicit changes of the Law on HE is required.

On the initiative of RODOS, the University of Belgrade, in May 2016, adopted the Regulations for doctoral studies. Following the model of this document, many universities in Serbia have adopted similar documents.

The Guidelines for establishing Doctoral Schools were proposed by a nominated working group and discussed at the round table in Belgrade in November 2016. The draft of document was submitted by the CAQA to the NCHE for analysis and adoption. This document will, once adopted, be a comprehensive legal basis for all future actions in the direction of establishing doctoral schools.

The RODOS initiated also changes in the LHE. The CONUS supported unanimously the amendment proposed by RODOS, and in parallel, it was adopted by MoESTD.

Trainings of the university staff on doctoral school organization, until June 01, 2015, were presented in detail in the first External evaluation report. After that date, the following trainings of the university staff have been completed:

1. Study visit to Technical University of Crete, September 2015: Presentation of accreditation and organisation of doctoral studies and doctoral schools in Greece and TUC was given
2. Study visit to BOKU, Vienna December 2015: Overview on accreditation and organization of doctoral schools in Austria and BOKU.
3. Visit to Lisbon University, Lisbon, May 2016: The overview on accreditation and organization of doctoral schools in Portugal and IST (issue of international doctoral schools was included).

On the basis of the LHE and the best EU practice the working group prepared the new accreditation standards for joint doctoral degrees, including both teaching and research parts of the studies. These standards were evaluated and adopted by the

CAQA and CONUS, and addressed to the NCHE. After detailed considerations, the NCHE adopted the proposed standards March 2017.

Furthermore, according to the modified work plan, the working group formulated the accreditation standards for establishing doctoral schools. At the round table organized in Belgrade in November 2016 the draft was discussed and has been forwarded to the CAQA. The NCHE adopted the integral text of all standards related to doctoral schools in March 2017. These standards became a part of the general Standards for self-evaluation of the Serbian HEIs (new Standard 15).

The success of all the above mentioned activities was verified by the activities "**Establishment and implementation of doctoral schools with selected study programs**". In the first external evaluation report was presented the PMB conclusion that some activities need to be merged and to be considered as one unified general activity aimed at forming a number of diverse doctoral schools. This consideration, was presented in a book *Doctoral Studies in Serbia*, and confirmed on numerous occasions: at joint session, conferences, round tables, panel, and other project meetings on doctoral studies, organised or supported by the RODOS project.

In that direction, in the fall of 2015, short courses related to transversal skills (research methodology, project management, composition of scientific papers, research ethics, etc.) were organized. These courses were financed by the Project, and kept open for all doctoral students at particular Universities. Two main goals were: to get more experience in organization of short courses for doctoral students (similar to those organized in UGent), and to show in an evident way advantages provided by doctoral schools.

Based on the detailed analysis (and based on the experiences from the organization of the above courses) it was decided that the formal establishment of doctoral schools offices is not necessary for efficient functioning of the new organizational structure. The PMB decided to make a rather general contribution to the organizational support of doctoral schools by:

- 1) IT capacities of selected universities have been expanded by purchasing additional equipment with the aim to facilitate intensive R&D activities;
- 2) Repositories for doctoral dissertations have been established and implemented (dissertations at the universities where such repositories did not exist before)
- 3) The repository of doctoral dissertations at the state level have been established and implemented (National Repository of Doctoral Dissertations in Serbia - NaRDuS). NaRDuS (<http://nardus.mpn.gov.rs/>) is a common portal of PhD dissertations and thesis evaluation reports from all Serbian universities. It is based on the Law on Higher Education (Amendments, Sept. 2014). All universities are obliged to deposit basic information about each dissertation, dissertation itself and the thesis evaluation report. NaRDuS represents one of the major concrete achievements of RODOS, and direct impact on HE of Serbia

The above experiences and achievements have been taken as a clear guideline for the development, accreditation and launching of the following study programs.

- 1. Doctoral School of Mathematics.** Faculties of Mathematics of the Universities of Belgrade, Novi Sad, Kragujevac, Nis and Novi Pazar, together with the Institute of Mathematics of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, proposed a Doctoral School of Mathematics. It offers a set of courses taught by the best teachers in Serbia, and organizing research projects supervised by the best researchers in particular domains. It did not require any changes to regulations, but the new study program accredited and students enrolled in 2016.

- 2. Doctoral School of Medicine.** The envisaged doctoral school will take care primarily of transversal skills, by organizing specific courses for all doctoral students at the Faculty of Medicine, University of Kragujevac, which contains many different study programs. It will also organize supervision in a more efficient way. It did not require any changes to regulations, but the new study program accredited in March 2017.
- 3. Doctoral School of Technical Sciences.** The Faculty of Technical Sciences at the University of Novi Sad made a decision to organize a Doctoral School of Technical Sciences, comprising 16 study programs in different disciplines of Technology (Electrical, Mechanical, Civil Engineering, Architecture, Applied Mathematics, etc). The School follows structurally the model adopted by RODOS, covering “soft skills”, supervision, multidisciplinary and carrier guidance.
- 4. International Doctoral School of John Neisbitt university.** John Neisbitt university organizes an international doctoral school in all the fields covered by the existing Faculties. International partner on the basis of Joint Degrees have been selected to be University Primorska, Slovenia, and Bari University, Italy. The model follows the concepts adopted in RODOS. The study programs have been accredited and students enrolled in 2016.
- 5. Doctoral Schools at the University of Belgrade.** University of Belgrade decided to merge all doctoral study programs at the University level and to organize a Doctoral School of Belgrade University. So far, the study program of Bio Photonics and Biomedical Engineering and Technology has been accredited and students enrolled in 2016. Also, courses of “soft skills” are organized and funded at the University of Belgrade, with direct support RODOS project. Furthermore, several initiatives are under way to establish additional study programs of the III cycle at the University of Belgrade.
- 6. Doctoral School of Biology.** This doctoral school was established by the Faculty of Biology at the University of Belgrade and the Institute of Molecular Genetics and Genetic Engineering. The study programs have been accredited and students enrolled in 2016.
- 7. Doctoral School of Arts.** University of Arts in Belgrade, has an intention to implement a Doctoral School of Arts, in which the particular Faculties (Music, Painting, Applied Arts, Theatre) will formally continue functioning as before, but in which transversal skills would be taught within the School. For the realization of the study program does not require additional accreditation. In this sense, a doctoral training was organized by RODOS team April 25th, 2017 in cooperation with the Center for Intellectual Property, Belgrade. Training was devoted to intellectual property in arts.
- 8. European Joint Doctoral Degree in Science and Technology for Cultural Heritage Preservation.** The Institute of Physics (member of the University of Belgrad), conceived and organized a doctoral school with the University La Sapienza, Italy, Politecnico do Milano, Italy, University of Avignon, France and University devoted to Science and Technology for Cultural Heritage Preservation. The students will get multiple doctoral degree from the Universities consortium members. The Institute of Physics applied in January 2016 for funding this Project in the framework of the call H2020-MSCA-ITN-2016 for MARIE Skłodowska-Curie ACTIONS, Innovative Training Networks (ITN).
- 9. Doctoral School as Initiative of an R&D Institute.** Vlatacom Institute, Belgrade, decided to organize a doctoral school in the area of Advanced Information and Communication Technology (Radar Systems, Electro-Optical Systems, Cryptology) using its own human and technical resources, in conjunction with



Metropolitan University, which would cover aspects in its domain of competence. Documents are prepared; in near future decision will be made to initiate the accreditation step.

When summarized above, the initial plan to launch four study programs obviously very surpassed.

The University of Ghent, as the Lead Partner for the WP5, prepared an outline of activities in the form of a **Quality Control and Monitoring Plan**.

The Committee for Quality Control and Monitoring (CQCM) was established at the project kick-off meeting. Quality control and monitoring were achieved through the following measures: the procedures for self-evaluation were established by the CQCM; monitoring of activities was performed on a daily basis; internal evaluation was carried out on the basis of questionnaires; the external expert was in charge of external evaluation.

The PMB decided to perform the global process self-evaluation two times, in order to achieve direct coordination and synchronization with the evaluation done by the external expert, having in mind that a combination of internal and external view on the project was expected to provide a useful input in the process of securing quality of the RODOS project. All quality control reports contained evaluation of the indicators specified in the LFM, as well as recommendations relevant for the accomplishment of the project objectives.

The first self evaluation assessment was performed on M18. The analyzed results were included in the Annual Reports of the CQCM.

The second self evaluation assessment was performed on M36. It provided a summary of the results achieved in the Project.

The CQCM had seven meetings (see the Table of achieved results).

The external expert evaluated the project for the first time in M18. The evaluation methodology included an assessment of the timely execution of the activities, the quality of the achieved outcomes and outputs, and the efficiency of the implementation of the project results. The report included comments about possible discrepancies between the planned and the accomplished activities and recommendations how to achieve the planned goals. The project team actions, undertaken on the basis of the recommendations made in the first external evaluation report, were successful.

The study programs formulated for the selected doctoral schools were evaluated by the academic staff from the EU institutions. The PMB took all necessary measures oriented towards taking into account all the suggestions and ensuring quality of the study programs.

The main achievements related to the **Dissemination of the project results** are:

- Website and web portal created
- Website and visual identity of the project created
- Email accounts created
- Regular communication with project stakeholders (with main focus on student representatives) and public audiences.

Regarding the latter, it should be noted that through shared activities in work packages an extensive network of organizations and individuals engaged in the project has been established. It presents a hierarchical network structure that links all levels of higher education and stakeholders in Serbia. Continuously dissemination on the project

activities to all stakeholders of higher education in Serbia was done via this network. Dissemination of information on the project activities continuously carried out through this network, to all stakeholders of higher education in Serbia.

In parallel to the previous activities, it is important to emphasize, that the dissemination on the project results carried out almost continuously through direct contacts with all stakeholders. This has been done in a variety of ways through meetings, round tables, conferences, press releases and media coverage, etc.

Furthermore, the books "Science in Serbia, 2010-2013" (published in December 2014) and Doctoral Studies in Serbia (published in February 2015), and two papers presented at XX TREND 2015 Conference remain as a permanent means of long-term dissemination of the project achievements.

As for the **sustainability of the project results**, as already mentioned at the first external evaluation report, strong connection of all interested parties is established. At the highest level of that network are networked bodies responsible for higher education in Serbia. This primarily refers to the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development; the National Council for Higher Education; the National Council for Science and Development; the Conference of the Universities of Serbia, the Commission for Accreditation and Quality Assurance. Also, the Conference of the Universities of Serbia included other universities of Serbia in the project activities, together with partner universities. The Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Serbia and the Association of PhD students and young researchers of Serbia provide an important support to the project. Furthermore, almost all persons with the power to make important decisions for Higher Education of Serbia are actively involved.

Preconditions for sustainability of the project results have been created by engaging of all mentioned participants. The final result is a number of outcomes which guarantee sustainability. Many outcomes have already been mentioned above. However, it is worth to point out that the sustainability of the project results directly derived from the following outcomes achieved.

- In depth evaluation of the status and perspectives of doctoral studies in Serbia;
- Publication and distribution of a book "Doctoral Studies in Serbia";
- Adoption of new accreditation standards for joint degrees, and new accreditation standards for doctoral schools;
- Critical analysis of the existing system for funding doctoral studies in Serbia;
- Formulation of a proposal of new possibilities for co-funding doctoral studies based on dedicated doctoral research projects;
- Adoption of the new rules for funding studies by the Ministry for Education, Science and Technological Development;
- Publication of two books "Science in Serbia 2010-2013" and "Science in Serbia 2014" with special chapters devoted to doctoral studies;

- Formulation and proposal of a part of the Action Plan of Strategy of Research and Technological Development of Serbia devoted to doctoral studies;
- Successful changes of the Law on Higher Education and the Law on Scientific Research Activity oriented towards the main Project goals;
- Organization of numerous conferences devoted to the synergy doctoral studies - industry and civil sector;
- Publication of the Roadmap for collaboration: doctoral studies – industry;
- Concept of doctoral schools in Serbia defined, discussed and published;
- Rules and regulations for doctoral students adapted;
- The bylaws related to doctoral school founding adopted;
- Nine selected models of the doctoral schools established (study programs formulated, adopted, accredited and first students enrolled) at different universities;
- Legal regulations for doctoral schools elaborated;
- Software tools for PhD theses repository (NaRDuS) designed, implemented and installed at the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development.

## Conclusions

The conclusions follow directly from the facts presented above. The project has delivered good results, until the writing of this report, since all the important activities were successfully performed in accordance with implementation plan.

Despite the very ambitious activity plan, the large consortium and the initial delay of some activities (listed in the first external evaluation report), the planned results have been achieved. More precisely, the initial delays are largely compensated in the third year of project implementation. Only minor volume of activity remained for an extension of the project duration.

It is a pleasure to note that the extended duration of the project was mainly used for additional activities, which were not initially planned. These additional activities (together with initially planned) give outcomes significantly above those specified in the project application.

At this moment there is no doubt that in the time remaining until the formal end of the project, additional outcomes to be achieved, which will guarantee long-term sustainability of the project results. This primarily refers to the publication of the Guide for Implementation of Doctoral Schools in Serbia, and the adoption of the amendment to the laws and the by-laws on appropriate levels (as already indicated above).

The evaluator would like to thank all consortium partners, and especially coordinator, for their open and constructive cooperation, which were essential for carrying out of the external evaluation.