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INCO-CT-2007-043848

Project acronym
TRAINASA

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Training Programme on International Research Project Development and Management for Young Scientists from the Academy of Sciences of Albania

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Thematic Priority: Sustainable development, global change and ecosystems

Publishable Final Activity Report

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Project coordinator name: Prof. Vladimir Nika

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Project coordinator organisation name:
Academy of Sciences of Albania

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Project execution

TRAINASA

Training Programme on International Research Programme Development
and Management for Young Scientists from the Academy of Sciences of Albania
Project No: FP6-INCO-2006-043848
Web site: www.trainasa.org

Objectives

The overall objective of TRAINASA International Research Training Programme is to encourage the participation of young scientists from the Academy of Sciences of Albania (ASA) in international research projects in all fields of natural sciences. It derives from the strategic objective of stabilizing, reinforcing and connecting the Western Balkan Countries (WBC) research potential to the mainstream European research activities.

The aim of this project is to make young Albanian scientists more capable to participate in international projects via the following specific objectives:

- ♦ Assess the needs of the Albanian and other WBC researchers in order to identify barriers to their EU research project participation
- ♦ Provide the necessary knowledge and skills required for successful research project development and management via three interactive training courses and traineeship programmes
- ♦ Provide international networking opportunities for young WBC researchers via two brokerage events to encourage EU project participation.

There are several synergies between the project objectives and EU policies in different fields. The contribution can be observed in the following areas:

- Research – The main aim of the TRAINASA project is to provide young scientists with the ability and skills to prepare and manage EU research projects that are in line with the EU goal of strengthening the European Research Area.
- Environment – The project focuses on young researchers in the area of natural sciences that contribute to environmental research activities and policy implementation at national and international level with special focus on the Western Balkan Countries.
- Education & Employment – The training and internship programme offered by the project enables young researchers to improve their knowledge, skills and networking to better contribute to the Albanian and European environmental research activities in line with the educational and training strategies of the Lisbon Agenda.
- Enlargement – As the Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) was signed on 18 February 2008, TRAINASA helps young researchers to become familiar with EU policies, priorities, and activities to get prepared for future EU membership.

Project partners

The TRAINASA consortium consists of two partners, the Academy of Sciences of Albania and Hungarian Geonardo Ltd.

Coordinator: The Academy of Sciences of Albania (ASA) founded in 1972, is experienced in the coordination, management and monitoring of various research projects related to natural sciences. The ASA focuses on different research programmes emphasising cooperation at the international level. Special attention is put upon supporting the successful initiation of young researchers' scientific careers. Additionally, the Academy will contribute with its knowledge of regional needs and weaknesses related to environmental research and will provide the connection to the target audience.

The management staff of the Academy has several years of project management experience from coordinating national and international R&D programmes such as Science for Peace (NATO), National Research and Development Programs: Natural Resources, Black Sea for Economic Cooperation (BSSEC), INTERREG.

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Partner: Geonardo Environmental Technologies Ltd., Hungary

Geonardo Ltd. (GEO) is a Hungarian small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) active in the field of EC research project development and implementation, trainings and high-tech research activities in the domain of natural resources, especially in renewable energy sources. In the last couple of years the company has gained considerable experience in the field of EU research funding programmes that was incorporated into several seminars, trainings and conferences on EU programmes. The company's contribution is, therefore able to share the experience from past projects and provide the target group with information and knowledge on EU research programmes, policies and research project development theory.

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Work plan

TRAINASA consists of three main capacity building activities to strengthen the research potential of the Academy of Sciences of Albania based on a needs assessment aiming to identify problems, challenges, and lack of knowledge and skills causing barriers to international research project participation:

- Selected **young scientists from ASA** and other research institutions take part in one-week long intensive Research Training Programmes carried out three times in Albania in 2008. The programme consists of lectures and workshops about theoretical and practical issues of **managing international research projects**.
- There are traineeship opportunities for selected candidates to gather experience in international research project development and management by assisting senior project managers in their daily work activities covering the whole lifecycle of EU project participation.
- As closure of the project, two brokerage events are organised to provide international networking opportunities to young researchers and to link ASA with research projects under formulation.

Expected result

The Consortium is expecting significant results from the TRAINASA programme via its capacity building activities based on the needs assessment. The result of the proposed integrated capacity-building programme, the three one-week long training programmes and six internship positions and networking opportunities provided by the two brokerage events will result in a solid group of highly-qualified and motivated young ASA researchers, who fully understand the theoretical and practical aspects of managing international research projects and who will act as generators for future international ASA initiatives concerning European research activities.

With the help of such a competent group of researchers the Academy of Sciences of Albania and other WBC universities and research institutions will be better integrated into European research activities and contribute to the implementation of the EU research, enlargement, environment, education and employment policies.

Work performed

The needs assessment carried out via on-line questionnaires and personal interviews summarised and evaluated the needs, expectations of young researchers and experiences of ASA and other Albanian and WBC external researchers and project managers with previous Community Programme participation experiences. The report on the result of the needs assessment was prepared and integrated into the training, traineeship and brokerage event programme and was published in the first edition of the TRAINASA newsletter and on the project website.

The International Research Training Programmes were organised with over 70 participants from Albanian universities and research institutions in Tirana, Albania 14-18 April, 7-11 July and 8-12 December 2008. The training consisted of lectures and workshops on EU policies concerning research activities, project development, management and reporting activities, mainly focusing on the Seventh Framework Programme. Guest lecturers provided further useful input to the course by sharing their research project participation experiences. The feedback of the participants was integrated into the next trainings in order to continuously increase the course quality.

The TRAINASA internships were organised at the premises of Geonardo Ltd. June-July, November-December and March-April 2008. Young researchers from the Academy of Sciences of Albania, Agricultural University of Tirana, Polytechnic University of Tirana, and University of Tirana have been involved in developing Community Programme proposals, assessment, result analyses, management activities and report writing by assisting senior project managers.

The brokerage events were organised 25 March 2009 in Budapest, Hungary with co-operation of the RESBOAT (FP6) project and 27 April 2009 in Tirana, Albania. More than 100 participants became familiar with the structure and opportunities of the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7), expressed their organisations' interest in research project participation and presented their project ideas.

It is of strong interest to the TRAINASA consortium to disseminate the project results to a wide community; therefore several dissemination activities have been carried out during the project implementation. Based on the developed dissemination strategy the project website was launched and is continuously being updated to provide information on the project's results. Four editions of the TRAINASA newsletter and posters were prepared and disseminated to the target groups. The project brochures were prepared and distributed at different national and international conferences and events.

Publishable results of the plan for using and disseminating the knowledge

The following deliverables have been developed during the two-year project period:

As part of the management activities, the Minutes of the Kick-off meeting (D10), the interim and final reports of TRAINASA project were prepared (D11). For the needs assessment the list of the preliminary selected researchers with description of their specific research topics (D1) were developed and as a result of the assessment the summary of ASA needs (D2) was prepared. The curriculum for the training courses (D3) were finalised based on the results of the needs assessment and the training course material (D4) for the lectures and for the workshops were prepared. After each training, the participants were asked to fill in a training course evaluation sheet (D5) in order to increase the quality of the next course by including the previous course experiences into the training programme and material. The experiences and conclusions of the traineeships were integrated into the internship reports (D8). Proceedings of the Hungarian and Albanian brokerage events (D12) were finalised.

To support the dissemination activities, the TRAINASA project website (D6) was launched and is continuously updated. For all other dissemination material (leaflets, newsletters – D9) refer to the website to garner further information about the project activities.



Second TRAINASA training



Third TRAINASA training



Hungarian Brokerage event



Albanian Brokerage event

Final plan for using and disseminating the knowledge

The objective of this document is to define the overall plan for the dissemination and spreading of excellence of the TRAINASA project. The plan is to utilize inputs from all work packages with regard to their dissemination actions. In Section 1 the vision of the expected results and the strategic impact of the different types of dissemination actions will be outlined. Section 2 contains reports on the completed and planned dissemination actions such as international workshops, presentations and press releases, and co-operation with NCPs and partner organisations of the Academy of Sciences of Albania. Section 3 presents the publishable results for the second year of the project, including a short description and a graphical representation of the deliverable plan over time.

Section 1 - Exploitable knowledge and its Use

This section provides a general overview of the outputs, knowledge and results of the project. These outputs form the basis of the dissemination activities.

Exploitable knowledge

TRAINASA assessed the actual needs of young Albanian researchers to provide them the proper capacity building activities in order to enhance their participation in European research activities. The capacity building activities consist of training programmes, internships and networking opportunities via two brokerage events.

The knowledge that makes the scientists capable to develop their own project ideas, to prepare FP7 proposals, and create consortia in their field is the following:

- Training participation and training materials
- Internship opportunities
- Brokerage events with networking opportunity

The knowledge built up within this project is available to the interested community at the project website. The main exploitable knowledge gained at the second year of the projects are the training material of the second and third trainings, that consists both the lectures and the workshop materials, the list of Albanian universities and research institution, organisational descriptions and project ideas of WBC organisation interested in European research project participations. In addition to this, the knowledge and practical experiments will also be used by the TRAINASA partners themselves to help define the next generation of services and the strategic orientation of the Consortium.

Overview table

Exploitable Knowledge (description)	Exploitable product(s) or measure(s)	Sector(s) of application	Timetable for commercial use	Patents or other IPR protection	Owner & Other Partner(s) involved
1. Knowledge on young researchers needs on EU project participation	Study on the result of the needs assessment	All natural sciences field	It will remain free	Not required	Both partners of the TRAINASA consortium
2. Training material on EU project development and management	Curriculum and training materials	All natural sciences field	It will remain free	Not required	Both partners of the TRAINASA consortium project
3. Database on Albanian universities and research institutions interested in EU research programmes	TRAINASA web page	All natural sciences field	It will remain free	Not required	Both partners of the TRAINASA consortium project
4. Organisational descriptions of WBC organisations interested in European research project participation	Brokerage event proceedings and TRAINASA web page	All natural sciences field	It will remain free	Not required	Both partners of the TRAINASA consortium project
5. Project ideas of WBC organisations interested in European research project participation	Brokerage event proceedings and TRAINASA web page	All natural sciences field	It will remain free	Not required	Both partners of the TRAINASA consortium project

1. Study on the result of the needs assessment will be freely available from the project website after the closure of the project.
2. The training material of the third TRAINASA training based on the feedback and evaluations could be further developed and deployed. It has expansion potential as well, however, in order to provide as wide access to the materials as possible, the materials will be available free of charge at the project website after the project closure.
3. The database created for the Brokerage event were distributed at the events and all interested parties can search for potential project partners in all research fields at the project website after closing the project as well.
- 4-5. The organisational descriptions and project ideas were distributed firstly at the brokerage events, than later on they were published at the project website and will be still available there after the project closure.

Section 2 – Dissemination of knowledge

This section gives a short structural overview on the multitude of dissemination activities. It is of strong interest to the TRAINASA project and its partners to disseminate its ideas and results to a community as broad as possible. Dissemination was an important interactive interface for the project for getting continuous feedback on ideas and concept refinement. Dissemination was done mainly in the following manner:

- Dissemination was based on project deliverables. Information on the trainings, traineeship opportunities and brokerage events, by being made available to the public, supported the dissemination actions.
- Towards the global community, dissemination was pushed with the help of conferences, seminars, workshops, and media.

Overview table of the TRAINASA dissemination activities in the second year

Planned/ actual Dates	Type	Type of audience	Countries addressed	Size of audience	Partner responsible /involved
July 2007	Prototype of the website	Researchers	Europe	1000	ASA
August 2007	Project website launch	Researchers	Europe	1000	ASA & GEO
August 2007	Link from ASA's and GEO's web site to the Project Webpage	General Public	World wide	1000	ASA & GEO
October 2007	TRAINASA first newsletter	WBC researchers	WBC	1000	ASA & GEO
Oct. 2007	Direct e-mailing	ASA network	Albania	300	ASA
Dec. 2007	Dissemination of leaflets	WBC researchers	WBC	500	ASA
February 2008	On-line press releases	General public	Europe	2000	GEO
March 2008	Direct e-mailing	ASA network	Albania	500	ASA
May 2008	TRAINASA second newsletter	WBC researchers	WBC	1000	ASA & GEO
May-June 2008	Direct e-mailing	ASA network	Albania	300	ASA
July 2008	TV interviews	Public	Albania	3000000	ASA
December 2008	TV interviews	Public	Albania	3000000	ASA
February 2009	TRAINASA third newsletter	WBC researchers	WBC	1000	ASA & GEO
March 2009	TV interviews	Public	Hungary, Serbia	13000000	GEO
Aug.-Sept. 2008	Direct e-mailing	ASA network	Albania	300	ASA & GEO
April 2009	TV interviews	Public	Albania	3000000	ASA
April 2009	TRAINASA fourth newsletter	WBC researchers	WBC	1000	ASA & GEO

The project website was developed and placed originally on the operating website of ASA. The website has been moved to a new domain www.trainasa.org in order to avoid any potential delay or problems might occur because of the server provider change at ASA. There is a direct connection between the two domains to provide the highest accessibility possible. The content is comprised of public research study and other informative documents.

The Research Forum serves as a platform for discussions between researchers interested in European research projects also after the project closure. It provides the opportunity to get answers for questions concerning both the administrative and scientific side of research project development and management.

To further enhance the dissemination activities, a TRAINASA newsletter has been launched that is available on the website and is distributed among the partners of ASA and also among the newsletter subscribers.

The TRAINASA project was presented at different national and international conferences and events.

- Annual meeting of Scientific Network of South-Est Europe (April 4-6, 2008 Sofie, Bulagria)
- Academies of Europe meeting (April 16-18, 2008 Madrid, Spain).
- Several workshops and scientific meetings organized at ASA such as the FP7 Information Day organised by the Ministry of Education and Sciences of Albania and ASA in Tirana, 6 May 2008.
- Celebration of Academy of Sciences of Austria (May 14-15 2008 Viena, Austria)
- Higher Education (July 2-3 2008 Budva, Montenegro)
- FP7 – European Summer Academy (14-18 July 2008, Siófok, Hungary)
- Scientific Policy (September 19-20 2008 Kishinau)
- International Seminar on Albanology (September 22-25 2008 Tetovo FYROM)
- FP7 Information Day (3 November 2008, Budapest, Hungary)
- NISE Star Conference (November 8, 2008 Budapest)
- International Conference “Technology Transfer” November 20, 2008, Tirana Albania (In the context of Project FP6 “RETEXRESALB” Organized by the Department of Textile and Fashion, Polytechnic University of Tirana)
- Untold Stories (4-5 December 2008, Budapest, Hungary)
- Scientific Conference: “Use of materials in naval industry” (December 22, 2008 University “I. Qemali” Vlora, Albania)
- FP7-ICT Proposers' Day 2009 (22 January 2009 Budapest, Hungary)
- National information days at different universities in Albania.

The leaflets of the project have been distributed about the training opportunities to several institution, like Polytechnic University, Faculty of Natural Sciences (University of Tirana), University of Shkodra, University of Vlora, Center for Geo-science studies and others.

Further promotion of the project activity was made during both Brokerage Events where participants and young researchers from Hungary and other New Member States (first case) or other regions in Albania or other WBS countries (the second event) can start new partnerships and work out ideas for joint research initiatives.

On-line media contacted:

Website	Target Area	Description
www.eec.org.al	Albanian energy sector	Albania - EU Energy Efficiency Centre (EEC)
www.academyofsciences.net	Albania	Academy of Sciences of Albania
balkans.courriers.info	French in Albania	Le Courier des Balkans – Albanian information portal in French
http://www.upt.al/	Albanian university students	Polytechnic University of Tirana
www.albania-agroweb.net	Albanian agricultural sector	Agricultural website with information on the EU integration
http://www.shqiperia.com/	Albania	Albanian on-line information portal
www.albanian.com	Albanians in Europe	General news and information portal
pages.albaniaonline.net/ags/	Albanian geologists	Providing a scientific framework for surface and subsurface assessment of Albania
http://www.albforumi.com/	Albania	General Albanian information portal
http://www.balkanweb.com/	Albania	General Albanian information portal
http://kesh.com.al/	Albanian environment protection organization	The Albanian Power Corporation
www.ake.gov.al	Energy sector in Albania	ENERGY NATIONAL AGENCY
www.delalb.cec.eu.int/en/index.htm	EU and Albania	Portal of the EU delegation to Albania

Press releases on the main websites of Albanian universities and institutions regarding the TRAINASA Project:

- ♦ Polytechnic University of Tirana <http://www.upt.al/>
- ♦ University of Tirana http://www.letersia.fajtori.com/Universitet/Universiteti_i_Tiranes/
- ♦ Faculty of Natural Sciences <http://www.fshn.edu.al/indexshqip.htm>
- ♦ Agriculture University of Tirana <http://www.ubt.edu.al/aut.htm>
- ♦ University Aleksander Xhuvani <http://www.uniel.edu.al/>
- ♦ University of Shkodra <http://www.shkoder.net/en/univ.htm>
- ♦ University of Vlora <http://www.univlora.edu.al/>
- ♦ Ministry of Education and Science http://www.mash.gov.al/ministria_eng/home.html

List of conferences where the TRAINASA project, its objectives, activities, the training, traineeship opportunities and the brokerage events were presented:

- The 9th meeting of the CEEN (Central and Eastern European Network) “Invest in the Future” was held in Cluj-Napoka, Romania 5-6 October 2007, organized by the Romanian Academy and the European Academy of Sciences and Arts.
- Conference on 'Emerging Regional Co-operation. Southeast European Academies of Sciences and Humanities in the ERA', 18 – 19 October 2007 meeting of ALLEA, at the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, Amsterdam, Netherlands.
- Annual meeting of Scientific Network of South-Est Europe (April 4-6, 2008 Sofie, Bulagria)
- Academies of Europe meeting (April 16-18, 2008 Madrid, Spain).
- Several workshops and scientific meetings organized at ASA such as the FP7 Information Day organised by the Ministry of Education and Sciences of Albania and ASA in Tirana, 6 May 2008.
- Celebration of Academy of Sciences of Austria (May 14-15 2008 Viena, Austria)
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- Untold Stories (4-5 December 2008, Budapest, Hungary)
- Scientific Conference: “Use of materials in naval industry” (December 22, 2008 University “I. Qemali” Vlora, Albania)
- National information days at different universities in Albania.

Dissemination strategy

Partner 2 has several years of experience in organising international training courses and conferences. As this is one of the participants' every-day activities, the consortium is aware of the most cost and time efficient methods of organisation and dissemination activities. At the same time the training series, as well as the brokerage events were at the expected **highest professional level**.

Learning from the experiences of previous project results the consortium has developed a competitive **exploitation and dissemination strategy** for the whole project period, in order to achieve a great and measurable impact within the target sectors. The partners are aware of the fact that it is equally important to spread information about the project to an individual person as to a large audience and that the channels and methods to reach the target groups are slightly different. To ensure the quality and the effectiveness, the project partners have worked out an own dissemination model that takes into account the special characteristics of the project, focusing on the target groups:

Raising public participation and awareness

For introducing the project results and to raise awareness for events and future use of the findings all aspects of media tools – including the traditional and IT-based media - are utilized. (e.g. general printed and communication media, professional research and business magazines, information portals).

The partners continuously evaluated and developed the dissemination activities, negotiated, shared experiences at meetings, and collected best practises from other similar projects. During the whole project the partners ensured **interactivity and effective cooperation** so as to guaranteed the adoption of innovation and the results, not only just deliver the information.

Targeting Stakeholders

For targeting the stakeholders of Phase 1 (Young researchers from ASA and other Albanian institutes), the consortium used the databases and networks of Partner 1. They directly contacted relevant institutions and used all channels of communication to connect with the target group.

The dissemination of the results was made on-line and off-line through articles, reports and presentations on appropriate forums. This is achieved in the form of articles, reports, and newsletters and over channels of Albanian, WBC and further European organizations. Apart from the organised events, the consortium uses all their existing relations (all involved stakeholders of environmental projects where Geonardo or ASA participated) to increase the impact of its efforts and reach deep penetration at regional level – in terms of Albania and other WBC, and at international.

An effective follow-up procedure is enacted and ensured after each event in order to assess further needs and requirements of the participants and to enable dissemination of project results even after the project's end, supporting other Albanian and WBC researchers in the region.

Section 3 – Publishable results

The results achieved by the TRAINASA project have been documented in the project deliverables. A list of deliverables realised in during the project is given below. Most of the deliverables have a dissemination level of public (PU). These deliverables contain a significant part of the project achievements and therefore dissemination activities are largely based on the results reported in these documents.

The following deliverables have been developed during the two-years long project:

- ♦ As part of the management activities, the Minutes of the Kick-off meeting (D10) and the interim report of TRAINASA project have been prepared (part of D11).
- ♦ For the need assessment the list of the preliminary selected researchers with description of their specific research topics (D1) has been developed and as a result of the assessment the summary of ASA needs (D2) has been prepared.
- ♦ The curriculum for the training courses (D3) has been finalised and the training course material (D4) for the lectures and for the workshops has been prepared based on the results of the needs assessment. After each training, the participants were asked to fill in training course evaluation sheets (D5) that were integrated into the next course materials.
- ♦ The experiences and conclusions of the traineeships were integrated into the internship reports (D8). Proceedings of the Hungarian and Albanian brokerage events (D12) were finalised.
- ♦ To support the dissemination activities, the TRAINASA project website (D6) was launched and is continuously updated. All other dissemination material (leaflets, newsletters-D9) refer to the website to give further information about the project's activities.

After the project closure, the project website will be still regularly updated and available to the public in order to access all project related results by the public.

Publishable results

D2 – Summary of ASA needs

The study with the result of the WBC researchers' needs assessment presents the identified barriers of international research project participation and is available on the project website.

D3 – Training Curriculum for training courses

Based on the needs assessment results the curriculum for the one-week International Research Training Programme has been prepared and integrate into the training material.

D4 – Training course materials

Material for the lectures and workshops of the International Research Training Programme have been prepared and made available for the participants and other WBC researchers on the project website.

D5 – Reports on Traineeships

The experiences and conclusions of the traineeships have been finalised in the internship reports. The summary of the traineeship reports is accessible at the project website.

D6 – Project website

The project web site is available under the domain www.trainasa.org for all interested parties and is continuously be updated with information about the project progress and results.

D9 – Leaflets and brochures

The TRAINASA poster raised the attention of the project stakeholders. It was distributed at national and international conferences, information days and other events organised and participated by the partners.

D12 – Brokerage event proceedings

Proceedings of the brokerage events have been finalised and are available at the TRAINASA project website.