

HEInnovate at the University of Ruse “Angel Kanchev”

The University of Ruse “Angel Kanchev” began using HEInnovate in 2014, after being invited to participate in the Bulgaria HEInnovate country review in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Science of Bulgaria and four other Bulgarian universities.

The use of HEInnovate at the university was driven by the Rector body, as a way to address both broad challenges in higher education in Bulgaria, and a number of specific goals for the university. The challenges facing higher education in Bulgaria included reducing public financing and changing economic demands for graduate employment. While enrolment rates in HEIs had been increasing, growth in the rates of graduate under- and unemployment were evident, and the links between the HEI and business sectors were thought to be underdeveloped. Among the specific goals of the university were to improve university-business collaboration, to improve the financial stability of the university, to address high expectations on the university from regional, national and international stakeholders, and to ensure the sustainable development of the region.

These goals meant that the HEInnovate project in Ruse was ambitious, including an assessment of the university’s management system, development of entrepreneurial thinking among staff, and seeking ways to improve education and research processes in light of the economic environment. This required a significant amount of preparation among faculty and management staff.

The HEInnovate project started with discussions between university management and the academic community around the need for transformation, and regular meetings with department managers to discuss the need for reforms that would answer the challenges. These individuals were then introduced to HEInnovate by email, and asked to complete the online self-assessment – either alone or in groups. The scope of the self-assessment exercise was significant, engaging many types of stakeholder within and outside of the university. The rector body, Academic Council, all heads of departments, and directors of the university’s laboratories were consulted, as well as businesses, local and national authorities, secondary schools, non-profit organisations and international project partners.

The achievements of the HEInnovate project have been underpinned by the strong will of the Rector body to develop the leading role of the University of Ruse “Angel Kanchev” in regional development, and a commitment to maintaining dialog between the university and its stakeholders. The HEInnovate project revealed the importance of proper internal regulations and fruitful dialog with relevant stakeholders in the implementation of an entrepreneurial university. As such, further organisational changes planned for the future include further financial decentralisation to encourage entrepreneurial activity among faculty, and further improvements to inter-faculty relations to achieve better academic results.

For more details about HEInnovate, please visit the official site: <https://heinnovate.eu/en>