

STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS

KLAIPĖDOS UNIVERSITETO VEIKLOS VERTINIMO IŠVADOS

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW REPORT

KLAIPĖDA UNIVERSITY

Grupės vadovas:
Team leader:

Prof. Dr. Bent Schmidt-Nielsen

Grupės nariai:
Team members:

Prof. Dr. Jürgen Kohler

Dr. Heli Mattisen

Prof. Dr. Saulius Vengris

Dr. Aleksandras Algirdas Abišala

Ms. Milena Medineckienė

Vertinimo sekretorius:
Review secretary:

Mr. Gregory Clark

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Institutional Review of Klaipėda University (KU) was carried out between 28 February 2012 and 1 March 2012 by a team comprising:

- three experienced and senior academic staff from different European countries of whom one was Team Leader
- an experienced and senior professional services member of staff from a fourth European country who acted as Review Secretary
- three Lithuanian members representing a range of different interests: a representative of the Business/Stakeholder community, an experienced and senior academic staff member from another Higher Education Institution and a postgraduate research student with experience also of the Bachelors and Masters cycles of Lithuanian Higher Education provision.

2. The team was supported an officer of the Lithuanian Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (SKVC).

3. The Institutional Review Team was provided with a Self-Evaluation Report (SER) by Klaipėda University in advance and in accord with the Republic of Lithuania's Procedure for the External Review of Higher Education Institutions (22 September 2010) and its associated Methodology for Conducting an Institutional Review in Higher Education. The SER, which covers a six year period, was accompanied by annexes of supporting documentation, compiled by Klaipėda University, including lists, tables and a sample programme SER to offer the team an evidenced understanding of the four key areas covered by the SER:

- Strategic Management
- Academic Studies and Life-Long Learning
- Research and Art
- Impact on Regional and National Development

4. The team was additionally provided with the Republic of Lithuania's Methodology for Evaluating the Learning Resources and Associated Infrastructure of a Higher Education Institution (1 July 2011). In brief, this is an analysis commissioned by the Ministry of Education and Science, from an expert group in the Research and Higher Education Monitoring and Analysis Centre (MOSTA), against set indicators with metrics for Learning Resources and Infrastructure.

5. The team was also provided with the results of evaluation of Klaipėda University's learning resources and associated infrastructure, which overall saw Klaipėda University successfully meeting the requirements in all four headline areas. The experts have also been presented with the results of the evaluation of learning resources and associated infrastructure conducted by MOSTA and with the evaluation decision of 22 June 2012.

6. The Ministry of Research and Education also commissions experts from the Lithuanian Research Council to decide upon the provision of Doctoral Studies at a particular University against specified criteria.

7. After consideration of the SER and annexes, the team sought supplementary information, particularly on internal structures, funding and budgeting matters and student enrolment.

8. The overall process is conducted as much as possible in English.

9. The team then assembled at the offices of SKVC for a day of briefing, training and preparation for the Institutional Review. The team compiled agendas for a series of sixteen formal, structured interviews at the main campus of Klaipėda University itself with:

- the Rector

- other Senior Academic staff
- staff involved in the compilation of the SER and in Klaipėda University's strategic planning
- members of Council
- members of Senate
- officers of Klaipėda University's Professional Services units including those with responsibility for Human Resources, Research Support and Teaching Support
- staff able to advise of Klaipėda University's engagement with regional and national development
- graduates
- business and social stakeholders
- students including officers of the Students' Union

10. The team was also given a tour of sample campuses and facilities.

11. The Team Leader made a final oral and explicitly provisional presentation at the conclusion of the Institutional Review, supported by PowerPoint, to an open meeting of Klaipėda University staff, led by the Rector, and attended by about 20 University staff.

12. The team spent a further day at the offices of SKVC to identify matters to be included in the Institutional Review report including its findings, recommendations and identification of good practice.

13. Klaipėda University informed the team that the SER had been compiled by a Self-Evaluation Group appointed by the Rector, drawing on key staff across Klaipėda University. Four sub-groups had worked separately on specific component parts but had on occasion held common meetings. The Self-Evaluation Group's work had followed on from preparatory work for the preceding Evaluation of Learning Resources and Associated Infrastructure. The Self-Evaluation Group had had cross-membership with those staff responsible for Strategic Planning and much of its work, including analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats, had gone on to inform the Strategic Development Plan 2012-2020.

14. Student representatives confirmed their wide involvement in the framing of the SER, including student-generated bespoke surveys. Various staff confirmed having had the opportunity to inform the SER which had, for example, been debated at the Faculty Councils. The SER had been considered by Klaipėda University Council. However, difficulties of timing had prevented its consideration at the newly reconstituted Senate.

15. Klaipėda University advised that this was the first experience of the SER process and that there had been some unintended factual omissions and that the translation of the document into English was not of a high standard.

16. The team found the SER a difficult document to use. It offered no introductory text, was over-lengthy and, despite that, omitted key basic facts. This had required the team to seek significant amounts of supplementary information. The standard of translation was variable, including sections which bordered on the unintelligible.

17. The SER betrayed its generation from different sub-groups and lacked a co-ordinating and discriminating editorial oversight. In some parts, it offered insufficient analysis and depth and, in others, relied upon assertion rather than evidence. As a consequence, the team spent more time at formal meeting stage on points of clarification and description than should have been the case, allowing less time to pursue a more evaluative and reflective discussion with Klaipėda University. Too many questions were perforce of the 'How?' variety rather than the 'Why?' and 'How Do You Know?' variety.

18. The SER was particularly difficult for the four non-Lithuanian members as it did not always give brief explanatory context to particularities of the Lithuanian Higher Education Environment when describing specific matters. Having learnt of good exemplars of practice through the series of formal meetings, the team also felt Klaipėda University could have done more in the SER to illustrate significant points with brief, relevant, specific case studies which evidenced general issues put forward.

19. One unintended consequence of the factual deficiencies in the SER was the greater use the team therefore made of the Klaipėda University website. In contrast to the SER, this was clear, well set out and informative (and indeed included the SER) and the team commends Klaipėda University for its presentation of key public information through its website.

20. In spite of the difficulties experienced in using the SER as a background paper for the Institutional Review, the positive and open response of all Klaipėda University participants at the formal meetings greatly assisted the team in working through its agenda and following through upon the range of issues to be addressed in the four key areas of the SER and Institutional Review Report.

II. BACKGROUND INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSTITUTION

21. The team arrived at a time of quite significant change for Klaipėda University. Firstly, at national level, the Law on Higher Education and Research had been enacted in 2009. This was aimed, amongst other things, to increase competitiveness, reform financing, promote student choice and enhance university autonomy. The new law proposed to strengthen the role of Council as the University's governing body and bring about more accountability, establishing a new legal status for a higher education institution as a public entity.

22. However, the Lithuanian Constitutional Court had found in December 2011 that the transfer of management, functions characteristic of the self-government of higher education institutions, to the Council, on whose composition the academic community had no crucial impact, contradicted the Constitution.

23. Klaipėda University therefore faced the introduction of significant changes in management and funding, arising from legal changes. Some of these changes were uncontested but others, such as the power of the Council, had been found to be contradictory to the Constitution by the Constitutional Court and were awaiting final clarification. In addition, secondly, the new Rector of Klaipėda University had only been in post for two months at the time of the Institutional Review.

24. The University was formally founded by a decree from the Lithuanian Parliament, the Seimas, in 1991 incorporating a number of existing higher education institutions in the City of Klaipėda in Western Lithuania. It has grown since then from three Faculties and 3,000 students to seven Faculties, plus five specialist Institutes, and over 7,000 students.

25. The seven Faculties (52 Departments) comprise:

- Natural Sciences and Mathematics (7 Departments)
- Humanities (8 Departments)
- Marine Engineering (7 Departments)
- Arts (11 Departments)
- Pedagogy (6 Departments)
- Social Sciences (7 Departments)
- Health Sciences (6 Departments)

26. The five specialist Institutes comprise:

- Coastal Research and Planning (Research)
- Baltic Region History and Archaeology (Research)
- Mechatronics (Research)
- Continuing Studies (Study)
- Maritime (Study)

27. Klaipėda University also has a Library, Botanical Gardens, Publishing Office and Careers Centre and is supported by a number of Professional Services Units, including:

- Department of Studies (Taught Programme Support)
- Department of Sciences (Research Support)
- Directorate of Finance and Economy
- International Relations Office
- Infrastructure Department
- Common Affairs Department

28. Klaipėda University is spread across a number of campuses across the City, although ambitious plans are in development for greater consolidation on its main campus.

Both Academic and Professional Services Units report to the Rector, who is assisted by two Vice-Rectors (Research and Studies) and (Infrastructure and Development Affairs). The Rector is also supported by Deans of Faculty, Directors of Specialist Institutes, the President of the Students' Union and Klaipėda University's Professional Services Unit.

29. Subject in detail to clarification of the Constitutional Court's ruling, the Council is the highest authority of Klaipėda University and comprises nine members including staff, student and external members. Amongst other duties, the Council approves Klaipėda University's vision and mission as well as the strategic action plan drawn up by the Rector. The Council also elects and appoints the Rector, evaluates compliance with the strategic activity plan and ensures Klaipėda University's accountability to stakeholders for that plan.

30. Senate governs Klaipėda University's academic affairs and comprises forty members including the Rector, eight student members and thirty one staff members. Senate operates sub-committees, or commissions, for specific areas of its remit, such as the Commission for Quality of Studies, which has operated as a standing sub-committee since 2007 and which makes recommendations to Senate on matters of academic procedure and practice. Senate also receives recommendations in such matters as programme approval and comment upon proposed academic procedure and practice from Faculty Councils.

31. Klaipėda University's SER states that 129 programmes currently operated (68 at Bachelors level, 51 at Masters level and 10 at Doctoral level) and also claimed that all were in compliance with Klaipėda University's strategic goals, as stated in its Strategic Development Plan 2012-2020.

32. The matter of strategy will be considered in more detail in Part III but, as stated in that Strategic Development Plan, Klaipėda University has the following:

33. Vision

'Klaipėda University is the Western Lithuanian university, which is both multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary as well as integrated into international academic networks, a leader of the national and Baltic Sea region research and studies, an upholder of cultural heritage, a life-long learning centre.'

34. Mission

'Klaipėda University is a centre of Lithuania as a marine country and a centre of the Baltic Sea region research, arts and studies, which prepares highly qualified specialists, fosters humanist values and pays parallel priority attention to:

- Research in marine science and marine studies
- History, culture and languages, education, health and social welfare, economy, politics, communications and arts of the Baltic Sea region
- Sustainable development of Western Lithuania and the Klaipėda City
- Development of an integrated science, studies and business centre'

35. Strategic Goals

- 'Development of biomedical, physical and technological sciences and studies, establishment of the national marine science and technology centre

- Development of humanities and social sciences and their studies, nurturance of artistic creativity and arts studies
- Improvement of the University governance’

III. STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

36. In its SER, Klaipėda University outlined the national legislative framework for its strategic plan, including in 2009 the Law on Higher Education and Research, already commented upon in Section II, Background Information About the Institution, which proposed fundamental changes to Higher Education funding and governance. The SER maps elements or, as it describes them, ‘activity goals’ derived that national legislation against strategic objectives of the Strategic Development Plan 2012-2020.

37. The SER also references preceding strategic frameworks generated by Klaipėda University: the Klaipėda University Development Programme 1998-2001, Strategic Action Plan 2005-2007 and the Long-Term Activity Plan 2007-2013 but explains that, in the light of that significant national level legislative change, its impact upon governance of Klaipėda University and the Programme of Integrated Science, Studies and Business Centre (Baltic Valley) for the Development of the Lithuanian Maritime Sector initiated by Central Government in 2010, an updated Strategic Development Plan 2012-2020 was required to factor in those key external and internal changes.

38. The SER outlines that Klaipėda University developed the Strategic Development Plan 2012-2020 in accord with its own approved internal procedure, the Klaipėda University Strategic Planning Procedure, relying on nominated key staff and Professional Services units and supplemented by a University Strategic Planning Group, appointed by the Rector and headed by the Vice-Rector (Infrastructure and Development Affairs). The Strategic Development Plan 2012-2020 was approved by Council.

39. The SER asserts compliance of the Strategic Development Plan 2012-2020 with provisions of the European Research Area and again maps elements of those provisions against its strategic objectives. The SER similarly asserts compliance, but in a general rather than specified manner, with the Bologna Process, European University Association and Lisbon Strategy, presumably as surrogates for the principles of the Europeans Higher Education Area. Klaipėda University staff involved in strategic planning advised that they benchmarked Klaipėda University practice against practice in neighbouring European countries. Finally, the SER mentions compliance with another national ‘Joint Research Programme on National Resources and Agriculture’.

40. Klaipėda University advised the team that its revision of its mission and strategic plan flowed from state legislation including the changes to the national approach to Higher Education and especially the greater autonomy for universities financially and the establishment of the Baltic Valley which chimed with Klaipėda University’s heavy interest and investment in Maritime disciplines. The Rector described Klaipėda University initiating changes to strategy in response to external events.

41. Klaipėda University argued that it was relatively immature in terms of its strategic planning and that the key executive postholder, the Rector, had only been in post for two months. As an example of this early stage of development, Klaipėda University advised that it had only just begun to address the whole area of process management. Council had approved a single, strategic document, the Strategic Development Plan 2012-2020, which had conflated, rather than separated, vision and mission from the strategic plan itself.

42. Council members had a clear understanding of their role in strategic planning, despite the Constitutional Court findings, and confirmed that the Strategic Development Plan 2012-2020 had been completed and approved in compliance with the Law on Higher Education and Research. They saw the final document as appropriately balancing all key elements. They reported involvement throughout the strategic planning process and regretted that an initial intention to separate out vision, mission and strategic plan had not been carried through. Klaipėda University staff involved with strategic planning also saw this failure to separate as a mistake in what the Council had approved.

43. Council members also saw the Strategic Development Plan and Strategic Activity Plan as valid mechanisms not dissimilar to processes and timescales employed in the Private Sector, although against an arguably more predictable financial base than in the Private Sector.

44. Council members believed the new composition of Council's membership achieved a good balance between external influence and internal expertise. They described compliance with the legislative requirements for nomination and appointment of external Council members.

45. Senate members were less comfortable with their role in strategic planning, although they anticipated Senate would usually be consulted, and feared loss of academic autonomy as a consequence of the greater external involvement in Council and wanted greater Senate influence in the nomination and appointment of external Council members. Senate members were happy with the revised composition of Senate membership including the 8 of 40 places for student members.

46. The Rector confirmed that he would use his executive team to assist him in the further development of strategy supported by a standing Strategic Planning Group which he had selected and appointed and which met regularly. He himself served on the Strategic Planning Group as an ordinary member. Subject to any further clarification of the Constitutional Court's findings, Council would continue to be the body which gave final approval to the strategic plan.

47. The Rector highlighted some major factors and considerations which had informed Klaipėda University's vision: the crucial place of Maritime Studies; the desire also to prioritise Arts and Humanities; the desire to build on interdisciplinarity; and the position of Klaipėda in the Baltic Region and in the western part of Lithuania. He also saw structure as requiring to correlate with mission and mooted a number of possible future alternative structures. The Rector and other senior Klaipėda University postholders also cited: the uniqueness of some Klaipėda University programmes; a possible rationalisation of the programme portfolio; the importance of the English Language as a delivery medium; the need to generate better connectivity with Business; the need to develop more international level Research, especially in Science disciplines; and the importance of rolling out Research into Taught programmes, especially niche, Research-informed Taught Masters programmes.

48. Other Klaipėda University staff felt that the precise process and nomenclature of strategic planning was something which Klaipėda University still had fully to master. On further reading of the Strategic Development Plan 2010-2020, elements had been identified which were better categorised as means rather than strategic objectives. They reported a variable level of engagement in strategic planning across Klaipėda University but confirmed that the opportunity to engage was comprehensively available.

49. The team acknowledged that Klaipėda University's Strategic Development Plan 2012-2020 had been informed by European, State, regional and City factors. Indeed, it seemed chiefly based upon those external factors. There was little description of how, firstly, a distinctive mission for Klaipėda University had been thought through. The SER offered the ambition of becoming one of the top 1,000 universities in the world or, less ambitiously, one of the top 5 or 7 universities in Lithuania. However, it described the vision within the SER 2012-2020 in the present tense rather than in the future tense, so what Klaipėda University is rather than what it will aspire to be.

50. Secondly, the team had no sense of how exactly Klaipėda University's mission had been fully validated externally and internally. There was undoubted resonance in the Strategic Development Plan 2012-2020's four stated priorities but there was scope for broadening external and internal validation of those priorities. Moreover, the team believed that the Vision and Mission of Klaipėda University should be taken as a holistic reappraisal of Klaipėda University's activities. For instance, whilst the focus on Maritime aspects appeared valid, Klaipėda University would be well advised more likely to explore the concept in an overarching perspective, for example, aligning most of its academic disciplines, as much as possible where appropriate, to their 'umbrella' and offering specific electives or encompassing Masters and doctoral programmes.

51. The team therefore **recommended** a, perhaps externally mediated, reconsideration by external and internal stakeholders of Klaipėda University's vision and mission, both in terms of the leadership of Klaipėda University seeking support for their top-down conceptualisation of its vision and mission and ensuring that, bottom-up, the vision and mission were duly informed by stakeholder needs and views.

52. The SER advised that the Strategic Planning Group carried out a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis as part of its preparatory work and also commissioned research by three external consultancies. The SER asserts that the Strategic Plan identifies tasks, for each of which policy tools and locus of responsibility are identified. These policy tools and locus of responsibility are usually synonymous with, often externally funded, projects each with their own detailed implementation plans. The team took these to be required as deliverables to draw down that external funding.

53. The SER suggests 'main objectives associated with specification of goals' such as staff development, renewal of infrastructure, IT-enabled business processes and certain structural measures and initiatives such as a proposed Integrated Quality Management System. However, the team overall found the description of validity and interoperability of the Strategic Planning components in the Self-Evaluation impenetrable and effectively incomprehensible and relied instead on, firstly, a mapping of Goals, Objectives and Programs (sic) of Klaipėda University Strategic Documents, which set out the inter-relationship between the Long-Term Activity Plan 2007-2013, the Strategic Activity Plan 2011-13 and the Strategic Development Plan 2012-2020, their strategic goals, objectives and related programmes, and, secondly, the Strategic Development Plan 2010-2020's Measure Plan for Implementation of Strategic Goals and Objectives, with its range of quantitative measures against a matrix of objectives and key performance indicators, which indicators had a financial value assigned to them.

54. Klaipėda University confirmed to the team the structure for assisting the Rector in operationalising strategy: principally, the two Vice-Rectors, one of whom chaired the Strategic Planning Group, and who oversaw the Professional Services Units which supported implementation. There was no Registrar (Chief Operating Officer) or similar senior overarching Professional Services post at Klaipėda University. Strategic Planning Group also had Faculty representation and Research Institute input as well as statistical information from Professional Services Units such as the Science (Research) Office. The student voice was repeatedly captured at all levels from Council downwards.

55. Nevertheless, Klaipėda University staff involved in drafting the Strategic Development Plan 2012-2020 regretted that this did not sufficiently articulate discussion which had taken place at a formative stage on how this would be operationalised. Indeed, that SER itself suggested insufficiently effective implementation of a monitoring process. However, they believed that the Strategic Activity Plan 2011-2013 made good any deficiency, especially as it was monitored annually.

56. The team acknowledged that Klaipėda University's strategic goals were well considered in the context of the current abbreviated exposition of vision and mission. However, there were significant deficiencies in the interoperability of the Strategic Development Plan 2012-2020 in terms of capturing more explicitly national and regional views on major factors likely to impact on Klaipėda University, such as the demographic downturn and the changed funding arrangements, including the likely rebalancing of public and private income streams. Similarly, there was insufficient attention to the articulation of strategic objectives and the detailed means of implementation, other than some compilation of objectives and means of implementation of certain, mainly externally funded projects. For example, there was little on the focused, strategic deployment of resources, both financial and staffing, in support of strategic objectives.

57. The team therefore **recommended** that, after any reworking on the strategic goals to take account of the recommended reconsideration of its vision and mission, Klaipėda University then reconsider as necessary its strategic goals but then act to validate those strategic goals by, firstly, engaging with external and internal stakeholders and then underpinning them by a description of the strategic deployment of resources by which they might be achieved.

58. Again, this sub-section of the SER, from its very beginning, does not aid comprehension of whether quantitative and qualitative indicators inform the implementation of the Strategic Plan. The opening paragraph, given verbatim, illustrates this evident failing – ‘Klaipėda University, developing its activities and responds to European, national and regional needs and contributing to the development of knowledge-based economy. Graduate School of Business quantity and quality to describe the quantitative and qualitative indicators of the system. Strategic Plan for the implementation of quantitative and qualitative indicators (criteria) selected in accordance with Strategic Planning’. The team again fell back on the mapping of Klaipėda University Strategic Documents and Measure Plan for Implementation of Strategic Goals and Objectives referenced in sub-section 1.2.

59. The SER did however appear to confirm that quantitative and qualitative indicators required by external agencies, such as the Central Project Management Agency, the European Social Fund Agency and the Lithuanian Business Support Agency, for individual projects embedded in the Strategic Plan were also themselves embedded. Nevertheless, even the SER itself suggested insufficient clarity of qualitative indicators.

60. Again, Klaipėda University staff involved in drafting the Strategic Development Plan 2012-2020 believed that any deficiencies in qualitative and quantitative indicators in the Strategic Development Plan 2012-2020 were made good by the Strategic Authority Plan 2011-2013 and the annual monitoring that the latter underwent. They cited, for example, monitoring of enrolments.

61. The team acknowledged the Measure Plan of the Strategic Development Plan 2012-2020 as a starting point for further articulation of quantitative and qualitative indicators of its implementation. However, again, the team **recommended** that the further consideration of the validity of Klaipėda University’s strategic goals and their underpinning by a description of the strategic deployment of resources should be supported by a more detailed schedule of milestones, resource implications and benefits, expressed as precise qualitative and quantitative indicators so that implementation might be more transparently monitored.

62. Despite the SER’s difficulty in articulating the components of and the quantitative and qualitative indicators for monitoring the implementation of strategic planning, it did offer in tabular form, a comprehensible and straightforward method for that monitoring. This identified six stages of monitoring: accumulation of data; data analysis and outcome; evaluation of outcomes and proposed adjustment to strategy; decision on proposed adjustment to strategy; further development on approved adjustments; final approval of adjustments. The frequency of monitoring and the locus of responsibility for each stage were also identified.

63. The SER advises that Klaipėda University annually updates its three-year Strategic Action Plan and that the Strategic Planning Group convened by the Rector to draft the Strategic Development Plan 2012-2020 has been retained as a ten-person ‘permanent workshop’ for all strategic planning purposes.

64. The team detected a certain complacency in Klaipėda University’s monitoring arrangements: the failure in five areas of the Evaluation of Learning Resources was attributed to faults in the algorithms used and lack of currency of data used and the relatively poor performance in outcomes of programme external evaluation was seen as discipline specific rather than a systemic flaw. There were also only occasional examples of Klaipėda University maximising effective, say academic, quality assurance systems operating at the local level to draw out generic benefit to inform enhancement across Klaipėda University. On the other hand, Klaipėda University had articulated appropriate frequencies and levels of monitoring of implementation of its strategic plan and, if the recommended articulation of detailed performance indicators is carried out, Klaipėda University should be able to effect transparent monitoring of its Strategic Plan.

65. The SER concentrates upon the more public dissemination of information about implementation of its Strategic Planning and highlights the use of lower cost options, including in-house television, in-house newspaper, its website, press releases, signboards at main campus entrances showing the proposed greater consolidation on the main campus, and the promotion of Klaipėda University’s activities at national and international conferences. The SER did also seem to claim, although the description in the SER was,

again, unclear, that a valorisation strategy plan had been approved by Council at the end of 2011. The team did not see this valorisation strategy plan as a primary source document and received no further information on it at formal meetings and was unable to decipher what added value it was supposed to offer to the dissemination of information about implementation of its Strategic Plan. The SER itself suggested information was inadequately provided to external stakeholders.

66. Klaipėda University informed the team that the whole strategic planning process had been democratic and participative, both internally and externally. Some Faculties had invited external stakeholders into conference discussion on the Strategic Plan at a formative stage. All relevant documentation was available on the Klaipėda University website. External stakeholders confirmed to the team their involvement, citing for example the influence exerted in relation to the proposed construction of specific specialist facilities.

67. Whilst there is ample evidence of attempts to engage the broader Klaipėda University external, even if the resulting level of engagement is somewhat variable, and internal communities in formative consultation on its strategic planning, there is limited evidence of ongoing involvement in or dissemination of implementation. How the team believes that the transparent arrangements it has already recommended should enable Klaipėda University to secure that ongoing broad engagement. Armed with clear and verifiable indicators of performance against implementation, even the lower cost dissemination options favoured by Klaipėda University should suffice.

68. The SER offers the legislative and regulatory background to the guidelines and purposes for the scheme of academic quality assurance set out in the Concept Description of Internal Quality Control of Studies in Klaipėda University. This addresses a State requirement for an internal academic quality assurance system in accord with the principles of the European Higher Education Area. It also sets out in tabular form the locus of responsibility for the elements of the scheme at Department, Faculty and University levels. The various approval and monitoring procedures for internal academic quality assurance are set out in Senate's approved Model of Quality Assurance of Studies and, through its Commission for Quality of Studies, Senate approves additional procedures and receives reports on their operation. Dissemination is carried out via the Department of Studies. A further table cites major such topics considered by this Commission since 2007 from arrangements for Survey of Student Opinion to revision of Taught Regulations and arrangements for Assessment of Student Work.

69. Programme Approval, Significant Amendment and Review is initiated at Department level and includes market and external stakeholder soundings and the clear articulation of learning outcomes. Documentation is checked for national and regulatory compliance by the Department of Studies. It then requires subsequent Faculty and Senate approval before submission for external evaluation by SKVC. The Department of Studies, the internal Professional Services Unit offering Taught Programme support, carried out an overview role in the process and had carried out an analysis of Klaipėda University's variable success over the period 2000-2007 at achieving accreditation. However, the Department of Studies and other Klaipėda University staff advised that the analysis had identified common causes for re-evaluation being required but that these were at discipline level rather than systemic. This had prompted a sharing of good practice which has improved Klaipėda University's performance so that, in 2010, the SER claims that no re-evaluation were required. The Department of Studies now anticipated a future strengthening of its analytical and mediatory role on behalf of Departments in any revised Professional Services structure. Where SKVC has higher confidence in a programme, it grants six year validity but only three year validity where confidence is less. The SER helpfully offers a sample evaluation report by SKVC on a self-assessment report for an undergraduate programme successfully submitted by Klaipėda University.

70. The SER advises that the Lithuanian Government had approved a Specification of Qualification Structure in 2010 and further refined it in 2011 for both academic and vocational qualifications; that this eight level and three cycle specification was consistent with the European Qualifications Framework; and that Klaipėda University's awards were consistent with that specification. Klaipėda University adopted the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) in 2011 and has issued Diploma Supplements, in both Lithuanian and English, with its awards certificates since 2006.

71. The SER makes little explicit reference to enhancement of programme quality and student performance but describes the improving performance in programme self-assessment as a surrogate for the former and explains Klaipėda University's grading and classification systems for assessment for the latter. Klaipėda University illustrates an awareness of the adverse impact on retention and progression which low admission entry requirement levels have contributed to. Nevertheless, Senate had not agreed to raise minimum admission entry requirement levels.

72. In relation to improved teaching competence/staff development, the SER highlights the number of Klaipėda University academic staff studying for higher awards and the work of the Distance Learning Centre to foster IT-enhanced delivery and teaching methodologies. The latter work was in part prompted by two Faculty level analyses in 2009 and 2011 of actual practice. The SER also reports a staff development programme on this and other pedagogical techniques to be available and to be, for some elements, compulsory.

73. The SER advises that Klaipėda University has handled student appeals and complaints since 2003 through its Commission for Settlement of Disputes but also that many issues are resolved at local level without informing the formal process. The SER also describes a range of study support tools for students, including use of the Virtual Learning Environment, to assist the preparation of individual study plans. However, the SER is silent on Personal Development Planning. The SER reports a co-operative relationship with the Klaipėda University Students' Union.

74. The SER is silent on the operation of the Student Information System/data collection but claims a ready availability of general information, including on academic quality processes on its website.

75. Klaipėda University informed the team that an integrated academic quality assurance system was in place and was informed by European Union practice, such as overt identification of learning outcomes. However, some Senate members expressed disquiet at what they felt was an unspecified general lowering of academic standards. They saw Senate, through its standing Commissions/Sub-Committees, as the guardian of Klaipėda University Regulation for academic quality assurance, which were to be implemented at Department level, overseen by Faculties, and the final internal arbiter on academic quality and the range of academic quality assurance procedures.

76. Klaipėda University manages quality assurance at programme level through Department-based programme committees with an internal self-assessment every two or three years, overseen at Faculty level and, ultimately, Senate. The internal process includes student input and may include Klaipėda University staff not from the home Department. An external accreditation takes place every three or six years depending on the validity previously accorded the programme by SKVC. Klaipėda University staff also acknowledged the individual professional responsibility of all academic staff to safeguard academic standards and quality and reported that this responsibility was often discharged in collaboration with external stakeholders.

77. Klaipėda University staff and students reported systematised feedback on programme elements by students and the use of the information derived not just for the immediate remedy, where possible, of issues but also to inform internal programme self-assessment. Student representatives reported general satisfaction with their involvement in the range of academic quality assurance at both Faculty and University level and cited a number of successful outputs from student input including an end to bunching of assessments, the addressing of gender discrimination in certain disciplines and increased IT training. Student representatives confirmed clear induction arrangements, including explanation of and dissemination of all relevant programme level and general information including learning outcomes, the credit framework and assessment criteria. Student representation even extended to membership of Teachers' Testing Committee, the five yearly appraisal process, including level of Research activity, undergone by academic staff to secure continued tenure. Klaipėda University demonstrated a good awareness of the need to engage students in the enhancement of activities, to capture the student voice and to provide a focus of professional development and employability so as to enhance graduates' employment prospects.

78. Klaipėda University staff reported enhancement of individual programme delivery by contributions from external practitioners and postgraduate research students. However, there was little awareness of any institutional level deliberate steps to promote programme enhancement.

79. Klaipėda University academic staff reported generally sound induction support and staff development opportunities, including training via the Distance Learning Centre, where participation was recorded and informed staff records. There were opportunities for staff mobility within the European Union. They also advised that Klaipėda University, through its Andragogy Department, offered academic staff a qualification in Higher Education Didactics partly to make good the absence of a national level staff development programme for Higher Education. This included peer observation and remedial support. Staff Personal Development Plans operated at Departmental level.

80. Klaipėda University offered little analysis of the high withdrawal rates of undergraduate students other than possible financial difficulties or unsuitability for their chosen programmes. The graduates and current students whom the team met felt well supported by academic staff and Professional Services support at Faculty and Department level and were generally happy with programme delivery and content and the overall availability of learning resources.

81. The team acknowledged the existence at Klaipėda University of a framework of academic quality assurance arrangements overseen by Senate. This was consistent with European and national expectations. The team viewed those arrangements as effective, though not faultless, and believed more could be done to extract value by drawing out generic messages for enhancement purposes. There was also evidence of quite broad discretion at Faculty and Department level on the local application of those arrangements. The team felt Klaipėda University might wish to monitor compliance with Senate-approved processes and central and local delivery of support services for students and to disseminate and promote good practice and staff development across Klaipėda University. The team therefore **recommended** the establishment of a regular cycle of overview reports on individual academic quality assurance processes and the central and local delivery of support services for consideration by Senate.

82. The SER reports three principal broad changes in organisational structure over the period of the Institutional Review. Firstly, a realignment of certain Professional Services units. Secondly, some merging of academic units and, thirdly, the establishment of separate Research Institutes. However, there is little rationale offered for the changes nor consideration of whether the current structure is optimal for the delivery of Klaipėda University's strategy, although attention is drawn to the third strategic goal in the Strategic Development Plan 2012-2020, 'the improvement of University governance'.

83. The team found Klaipėda University to operate chiefly a traditional Faculty and Department structure which still reflected Klaipėda University's origins but also its multi-campus operation. The current structure relies on hierarchies of oversight rather than more flexible alignments to deliver specific changes or initiatives. Whilst structure had been identified as a matter to be addressed within the Strategic Development Plan 2012-2020 under the strategic goal on improvement to University governance, even following discussions with senior staff, it was not clear to the team how the options for change would be generated and assessed. There must be some question as to whether, at its size, Klaipėda University can resource the local Professional Services support for such a high number of Faculties, Departments and Specialist Institutes. Similarly, there must be a question as to whether the pool of senior academic leadership is deep enough to head up such a large number of academic units. The number of academic units also made more likely variability in which, say, Senate-approved academic quality assurance arrangements were applied.

84. The team found the establishment of Research Institutes somewhat to have clouded the matter further. Klaipėda University believed Research Institutes to work well, allowing greater critical mass and raising international Research profile, and to operate with greater flexibility but there was no evidence of strategic consideration of whether this structural change should be rolled out across Klaipėda University or whether two-tier arrangements for Research should be retained.

85. The team **recommended** that Klaipėda University, with external benchmarking against recent practice in comparator universities, should review whether current academic structure is optimal, for delivery of its Research and Teaching in particular.

86. The team's formal meetings with Professional Services staff suggested that they were conscientiously seeking to deliver established support and services to academic units and to students. However, the discussions were mainly at the operational level and the team had difficulty in identifying where the strategic review of Professional Services and their part in the delivery of strategy would occur.

87. The team **recommended** that Klaipėda University review what type of Professional Services might best serve the delivery of its strategy and whether by restructuring, staff development or the introduction of more executive leadership, Professional Services might be reshaped to provide appropriate, proactive and informed support for academic units and the delivery of strategy.

88. The SER offers no consideration of whether Klaipėda University's current processes are effective, clearly defined, sufficiently resourced, based on engagement with stakeholders and oriented to its strategic goals. There is basically no detailed description of any process management system being in place and the SER, at best, suggests only a weak system to exist. There is a six stage aspirational process described which would develop such a system within the context of the Strategic Development Plan 2010-2020. There is also reference to the externally funded project for the planned creation of a Quality Management System, which is intended to improve operational efficiency and effectiveness, and to the project, Development of Internal Governance Organisation of Klaipėda University.

89. Senior Klaipėda University postholders informed the team that it was cognisant of Quality criteria and indicators across a range of its activities but acknowledged the need for greater systematisation of Quality Management across such areas as allocation of funding to activities, implementation of strategic planning, staff and student international exchanges, academic quality assurance (which was perceived as variably applied at Departmental level) and staff development. Other Klaipėda University staff saw current Quality Management as too multi-layered and subject to too many interventions below Senate level.

90. Klaipėda University placed great emphasis to the team on the European Union funded Quality Management project as a means of mapping 'islands' of current good practice, systematising existing quality systems and clarifying interrelationships, roles and responsibilities. The project would draw down external consultancy support and would aim to develop key performance indicators, to raise awareness of Quality Management through staff training and engagement and to enhance processes by the introduction of up-to-date management tools and techniques. Staff engaged in the project provided the team with before and after graphic representations of the current and proposed approach at Klaipėda University to Quality Management.

91. The team acknowledged Klaipėda University's efforts from a very low base to address process management deficiencies and the high expectations Klaipėda University has of its Quality Management project. The team also acknowledged the preparedness of the new Rector and his executive team to address these deficiencies. Once the implications of the Constitutional Court findings have been clarified, the context for improved process management may be better as the respective powers and responsibilities of the Council, Senate and Rector will be confirmed.

92. Klaipėda University is **recommended** to prioritise for early attention its intended plans, set out in the Measure Plan for the Strategic Development Plan 2012-2020 for implementation of the Quality Management and Internal Governance Organisation projects, to clarify the purpose, the loci of responsibility (especially concentrating in the appropriateness or not of delegation within the context of the particular process) and the interoperability of all its processes. In particular, Klaipėda University should ensure that the Quality Management project is overtly shown to have executive support as an essential prerequisite for the successful development of the University, is appropriately staffed and its staff duly developed whilst in post. In parallel, whilst assessing the suitability and relevance of its processes for the delivery of its strategy and its activities, Klaipėda University will have to review the capacity and level of staffing resource required and the consequent impact on staffing strategy.

93. The SER briefly places its Human Relations practices in the context of national legislation and collective agreements and reports on the availability of staff development opportunities for both academic and professional services staff. There is a particular emphasis on, in essence, the Strategic, Process and Change Management agendas of Klaipėda University in a training programme to be delivered to Council members and Professional Services staff. Again, there is basically no description of whether staffing arrangements and complements are optimal for its strategic goals but merely cross-reference to aspirations within the Strategic Development Plan 2012-2020. In effect, the SER admits no such arrangements, in the form of what it terms a 'consolidation plan', to be in place.

94. The Klaipėda University staff whom the team met on Human Resources matters were helpful in describing the existence and detailed operational arrangements of the range of related procedures upon which they reported to the Rector including recruitment, selection, appointment and 'Teacher Testing', the five yearly approval process undergone by academic staff to secure continued tenure. However, they had no strategic involvement or engagement in such processes as staff personal development planning. They confirmed that Klaipėda University did not issue staff satisfaction surveys.

95. Again, the team found Klaipėda University to be initiating consideration of staffing strategy from a low base and to be relying on opportunities such as staff mobility, existing programmes such as its staff development provision and projects such as the Quality Management project. From the evidence of the Measure Plan of its Strategic Development Plan 2012-2020, Klaipėda University has an awareness of the need for strategic action on staffing (both improvement of the skill set of existing staff and revision of the staff complement to align with its strategic goals).

96. The team **recommended** that within the context of the recommendations already made on strategic planning, Klaipėda University develop an explicit staffing strategy with a readily monitored implementation plan.

97. The SER unfortunately again offers little description of current Change Management or Process Optimisation arrangements. There is reference to the considerable change externally required of Klaipėda University by the intended refocusing of Lithuanian Higher Education through the Law on Higher Education and Research. The SER also sets out aspirationally how Change Management might operate within the context of the Strategic Development Plan 2012-2020. Cross-reference is also made to specific projects on an Internal Control Framework, on System Efficiency Study and again on the planned creation of a Quality Management System.

98. A Risk Management Plan is offered in the SER's supplementary documentation but this is minimal in content and scope and apparently unrelated to other strategic documentation or process of oversight or review.

99. Once again, the team found Klaipėda University to be addressing management of change from a very low base and in effect to have had some difficulty in discriminating it from mere changes in management. Klaipėda University demonstrated little evidence of routinely reviewing the fitness for purpose of its current systems and processes, tending to institute change only in reaction to external drivers.

100. The team is reluctant to overburden Klaipėda University with recommendations and those in relation to sub-sections III 2.3 and III 2.4 above may mainly suffice for the time being. However, there is one aspect which requires early further development. The team **recommended** that Klaipėda University take forward its initial, developmental work, but drawing on analyses already carried out for that Plan and the SER, on Risk and underpins its Strategic Development Plan 2012-2020 with a comprehensive Risk Register for approval and regular monitoring by the Council.

101. The SER provides minimal description of the management of infrastructure including learning resources other than the internal framework for resource accountability and certain accounting and financial practices and requirements.

102. Some trend information is offered on relative levels of investment in estate, IT and other facilities but this is given no overall budgetary context.

103. The separate State process for 'Evaluating Learning Resources and Associated Infrastructure' is described in Section I, Introduction. Klaipėda University senior and other staff attributed any failings in particular sub-areas of that Evaluation (Upgrading of Equipment, Number of Library Study Places, Funding Per Taught Student, Ratio of Research to Taught Students and Admission Entry Standards) to deficiencies in the algorithms used or in the currency of data collected. They believed Klaipėda University could address any failings through existing arrangements despite the general reduction in State funding. In part, this was because of an increased focus on the area, with external reports on learning resource use now having to be completed every year rather than every three years.

104. Klaipėda University Library and IT staff explained Klaipėda University's operational approach to matching discipline and programme learning resource needs to Klaipėda University's budget allocation process. Inevitably, the students who met the team had individual minor issues with Library and IT access but overall the team noted consistent development of Library and IT access on an electronic basis, a service much appreciated and welcomed by its students.

105. The team found Klaipėda University had basic operational processes for matching learning resource requirements to budget allocation and duly managed its learning resources. The team also acknowledged Klaipėda University's past and recent successes in securing external funding to enhance University resources and facilities. However, the team anticipated that such external sources might become increasingly difficult to access and would require Klaipėda University to finesse its processes to allow prioritisation of learning resource improvements of strategic importance.

106. The SER advises that its budget planning is based on approval of its three year Strategic Action Plan, which itself suites with the Strategic Development Plan, by the Ministry of Education. Before the recent change whereby Klaipėda University became more financially autonomous as a public institution, it had to comply also with requirements on Strategic Planning, Salary Rates and Budget Setting determined by Central Government. The SER contends that budgeting, something like the implementation of the strategic plan, depends on budgeting for individual programmes with programme co-ordinators therefore also acting as budget holders.

107. Unfortunately, again, the SER is not comprehensible in the relevant sub-section to permit further than this broad understanding and the budgetary information originally provided related only to special projects funding which shows a slight decline over the Institutional Review period. The team also received in the requested supplementary information a Faculty level budget, without any explicatory analysis, which confirmed a heavy dependence on international projects and European Union structural funds.

108. For Academic Ethics, the SER advises that Klaipėda University applies its Code of Conduct of Teaching and Scientific Personnel and that this respects international and national principles, although it is not directly regulated by these.

109. Klaipėda University senior staff explained the national methodology for grant funding of universities through specific streams and, to some extent, the protection of that funding despite the economic downturn. Klaipėda University's current practice was broadly to pass on that funding as allocated through specific streams to the recipient units but exercising some low level virement to pump prime or to protect investment in certain activities. The student voucher system meant that the impact of under-recruitment was even more directly immediate upon budgets and staffing levels as resources followed student numbers. However, they were also of the view that a rationalisation of the programme portfolio was required to become more efficient financially. This would see the retention of niche disciplines, such as Lithuanian Culture, but covered by far fewer discrete programmes.

110. Capital funding had been used on key projects which would enhance or maintain the estate, such as the three student residences, or which would promote consolidation on the main campus.

111. The team found a somewhat traditional approach to budget allocation with resource being mainly passed on to the activity generating the resource but with some marginal virement at executive level. The

team would expect that, as external public funding becomes harder to access, Klaipėda University will need to look more strategically at both broadening its income streams, say from more provision of continuous professional development, contract research or other, usually privately funded, activities. The team also expects that, in its recommended more strategic approach to Process Management and Change Management, in the recommended rationalisation of its programme portfolio and in its recommended staffing strategy Klaipėda University will also wish to explore as fully as possible the benefits which might accrue in terms of reduction of expenditure streams. Klaipėda University will wish to factor in this more strategic deployment of resources and therefore budget allocation into its recommended revised, more transparent monitoring arrangements for the implementation of its strategy. The team acknowledges that procedures to ensure adherence to academic ethics were in place.

112. Exceptionally, the team wished to give context to its judgement on the area of Strategic Management. The team has made a number of specific recommendations on the clear scope of Klaipėda University's further development of both a more focused and efficient concept of strategic planning in a holistic sense and of its strategic management capability. Nevertheless, the team also wished to acknowledge the steps already taken by Klaipėda University to address deficiencies it had itself recognised in this area. The team acknowledged that Klaipėda University was working towards establishing a comprehensive, appropriately conceptualised system of strategic planning and management, underpinned by relevant processes and techniques. The team preferred to encourage and endorse that work in progress rather than penalise Klaipėda University with a negative evaluation. However, the team strongly advised Klaipėda University to seize the opportunity offered and to treat with the utmost seriousness the specific recommendations made.

Judgement on the area: Strategic Management is given positive evaluation.

IV. ACADEMIC STUDIES AND LIFE-LONG LEARNING

113. In its Strategic Development Plan 2012-20, Klaipėda University sets out its Mission as concentrating upon:

- Research in marine science and marine studies
- History, culture and languages, education, health and social welfare, economy, politics, communications and arts of the Baltic Sea region
- Sustainable development of Western Lithuania and the Klaipėda City
- Development of an integrated science, studies and business centre (with Science, in this instance, meaning Research. The SER sometimes uses both meanings of 'Science' interchangeably between 'the group of scientific disciplines: Chemistry, Physics, Biology and similar' and 'Research')

114. Klaipėda University's SER states that 129 programmes currently operated (68 at Bachelors level, 51 at Masters level and 10 at Doctoral level) and also claimed that all were in compliance with Klaipėda University's strategic goals, as stated in its Strategic Development Plan 2012-2020. The SER also claims that its approach to disciplines is multi-disciplinary and interdisciplinary and analyses this in tabular form by broad discipline groupings.

115. Klaipėda University seeks to illustrate that the compliance of its programmes is entirely consistent with its strategy and illustrates this by a tabular analysis showing 100% compliance. To a large extent, however, this is self-fulfilling in that the first strategic goal does indeed provide some focus around specific Science disciplines and the Maritime disciplines but the second strategic goal is so broad, essentially all Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, that it is difficult to ascertain what is not included

116. Klaipėda University also identified how many of the programmes are new within the Institutional Review period (29); that most new programmes are in Social Science and Cultural disciplines; and that Klaipėda University draws upon significant European Union funding to enable the renewal of programmes Klaipėda University cites as exemplars how it developed a specific Taught Masters and doctoral programme through international collaboration and evidences its ability to react to changes in

national law by mentioning the only recently permitted development of a joint undergraduate programme with a Lithuanian university partner. Klaipėda University also reports a small number of withdrawn programmes and programmes where student recruitment is suspended.

117. Finally, Klaipėda University tabulates programmes within the three cycles of undergraduate, Taught Masters and Doctoral where it is the sole provider nationally, with the sole provider status most evident at Taught Masters level and especially in its Science and Maritime disciplines. The SER does not analyse what it means by ‘State economic, social and cultural development-oriented programmes’ (although elsewhere in the Institutional Review report the team does recognise the congruence between Klaipėda University’s strategy and a raft of State, regional and City strategic documentation). However it tabulates and categorises these by Economic, Social and Cultural appearing again to show also a 100% compliance with those external priorities.

118. The SER also cross-references to intended actions in the Strategic Development Plan 2010-2020 including the development of further doctoral provision in specific disciplines and the development of further interdisciplinary and joint provision. Klaipėda University staff corroborated this to the team and cited successful exemplars such as Geo Informatics, where an innovative, interdisciplinary programme had recruited well including a number of international students.

119. The SER is silent on Lifelong Learning in this sub-section.

120. The team found that there was clear scope for Klaipėda University to undertake a strategic rationalisation of its programme portfolio, perhaps consolidating its offer into broad degree programmes with a range of pathways, particularly by a broader use of modularisation, and **recommended** such a rationalisation. The team also noted that the breadth of Klaipėda University’s strategic goals, and especially the second strategic goal, the development of Arts/Humanities/Social Sciences, would not assist Klaipėda University in providing a discipline focus for such a rationalisation and would make the development of doctoral programmes in those disciplines less likely as Klaipėda University’s portfolio was so extensive in those disciplines that it inhibited the creation of critical mass. The team would also encourage Klaipėda University to liaise close on the rationalisation with its Business and Social Partners to ensure that their needs fully informed any changes to the programme portfolio.

121. However, the team did not recommend that this strategic rationalisation be undertaken immediately, suggesting that such consideration should follow the recommended reconsideration of its Vision, Mission and Strategy as stated in Section III, Strategic Management.

122. The SER identifies a range of types of Lifelong Learning and their volumes of activity, both in the form of programmes leading to an award and non-award bearing training. These are delivered in the Continuing Studies Institute set up specifically for the purpose or within the existing Faculties. In 2008, Senate approved Klaipėda University’s System of Assessment and Recognition of Non-formal and Informal Learning within University Studies, codifying Klaipėda University’s recognition of Prior and Experiential Learning.

123. External Business and Social Partners advised the team that they would welcome a greater concentration by Klaipėda University on entrepreneurialism and business development skills for graduates and a wider provision of training opportunities through Lifelong Learning

124. The team **recommended** that, at the same time as the strategic rationalisation of its programme portfolio, Klaipėda University could review the non-discipline, generic elements of its programmes, consulting with Business and Social Partners on the broad concept of graduate employability and embedding within its curricula appropriate ‘softer’ skills such as Project Management, Team Working, Foreign Language Competence, Employability and Entrepreneurship.

125. The team also, on the basis of the volume of activity reported, felt that Klaipėda University could do more, in liaison with its Business and Social Partners, to broaden Lifelong Learning provision. It was in Klaipėda University’s interest, in the context of a demographic downturn and reduced recruitment of

traditional applicants from Secondary Schools, to offset reduced income from that source by generating higher volumes of in-service training to meet the needs identified by its external partners.

126. Graduate employment is also considered, in particular in relation to employer and graduate perceptions, by the team in this Institutional Review Report under Section VI. In the SER, Klaipėda University identifies that its main tool for tracking graduate careers is the development of a 'Career Observation System' operated through the Careers Centre and informed by the regional Labour Exchange and Departmental Surveys commissioned to inform the self-assessment of programmes. However, the system will not be fully operational until 2014.

127. The team acknowledged that Klaipėda University had identified the need for the tracking of graduate careers and was addressing it. The team has highlighted, in Section VI, the desirability of Klaipėda University maximising as much as possible graduate engagement and input back into Klaipėda University.

128. Again, co-operation with Business and Social Partners in programme development and programme review is also considered by the team in the Institutional Review Report under Section VI, Impact on Regional and National Development. The SER offers further exemplars of innovative and partner-relevant programme development. Klaipėda University mentions its co-operation across nine doctoral programme with a number of other Lithuanian Higher Education Institutions. It is again silent on Lifelong Learning in this sub-section.

129. The team sees Business, Social and Cultural Partners as key informers of the recommended strategic rationalisation of the programme portfolio.

130. In its SER, Klaipėda University cites the range of its strategic documents which evidence its compliance with the provisions of the European Higher Education Area and the European Union, including its Statute, three strategic planning documents, its Academic Regulations and its Academic Quality Assurance documentation.

131. Klaipėda University specifically claims compliance with the Bologna process in:

- operation of the three study cycles (Undergraduate, Taught Masters and Doctoral);
- operation of the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS)
- production of Diploma supplements
- individual study plans
- progression for other educational institutions
- progression from Bachelors to Taught Masters
- recognition of accredited prior learning in the form of advanced standing
- use of learning outcomes;

132. Klaipėda University informed the team that its programme portfolio was overloaded and that it awaited the removal of supposed current legal constraints on more flexible programme and pathway arrangements so that core and elective modules could allow student choice within the context of named awards. This was characterised as allowing major and minor degrees. Some Klaipėda University staff also speculated that, perhaps previously, Faculties and Departments had been too powerful in their discretion, bottom-up, to develop additional new programmes without rationalising existing provision. It might therefore be timely for a top-down rationalisation, reflecting, Klaipėda University's strategic goals, to be imposed.

133. The team found broad compliance with the provisions of the European Higher Education Area and European Union Higher Education documents. The team encouraged Klaipėda University to take forward its recent experience of the operation of ECTS, ensuring that ongoing review and monitoring operation equalised workload for equivalent credits, and greater student choice under the Bologna Process so as to inform the recommended rationalisation of its programme portfolio in a manner which, though reducing programmes, facilitated greater student choice through creative pathways and electives.

134. Again, staff and student mobility is also considered by the team in this Institutional Review report under Section V, Research and Art. In its SER, Klaipėda University offers further tabular analysis and trends in outgoing staff and student mobility and incoming student mobility.

135. The SER also cross-references to intended actions embedded in the Strategic Development Plan 2010-2020, including greater investment in staff and student mobility.

136. The team found, as reported in Section V, variability of international mobility across disciplines and acknowledged Klaipėda University's difficulties in attracting incoming mobility. However, the team also commended Klaipėda University's intention to invest further in international mobility and acknowledged that, at local level, exemplary use had been derived and had impacted on provision with demonstrable benefit. Klaipėda University might wish to consider allocating part of its intended investment in this area into the development of delivery in the English Language and dedicated student residences to make its provision more attractive to incoming students and might consider cross-University mechanisms, such as specific events/'student fairs' to permit the equitable differentiation of student mobility opportunities.

Judgement on the area: Academic Studies and Life-Long Learning is given positive evaluation.

V. RESEARCH AND ART

137. Again, in its Strategic Development Plan 2012-20, Klaipėda University sets out its Mission as concentrating upon:

- Research in marine science and marine studies
- History, culture and languages, education, health and social welfare, economy, politics, communications and arts of the Baltic Sea region
- Sustainable development of Western Lithuania and the Klaipėda City
- Development of an integrated science, studies and business centre (with Science, in this instance, meaning Research. The SER sometimes uses both meanings of 'Science' interchangeably between 'the group of scientific disciplines: Chemistry, Physics, Biology and similar' and 'Research')

and advises that its Strategic Goals include:

- 'Development of biomedical, physical and technological sciences and studies, establishment of the national marine science and technology centre
- Development of humanities and social sciences and their studies, nurturance of artistic creativity and arts studies
- Improvement of the University governance'

138. Klaipėda University also claims in its SER that it discharges a national Research role in disciplines exclusively developed there and not in other universities in Lithuania, again especially in relation to Maritime disciplines. However, Klaipėda University has to balance this against a national approach in the Law in Higher Education and Research to increase competition, to integrate autonomous Research Institutes into universities, to revise Research funding (although this does not explicitly describe a shift from public to private investment), to develop Research staff pathways and to achieve better integration of Business and Research.

139. The SER offers detailed tabular information on Research publications in international and national journals which are described as increasing, although from a low base, and on Scientific Research and Experimental Development, effectively Applied and Contract Research. The SER also itemised eleven internally published Research journals and the hosting of international Research conferences at Klaipėda

University. There is also tabular information on Art (Artistic Activities and Productions in the categories Music, Theatre and Original Arts).

140. Klaipėda University operates a dual Research structure with Research traditionally embedded in Faculties within Departments and Research Centres but also managed through three separate Research Institutes:

- Coastal Research and Planning
- Baltic Region History and Archaeology
- Mechatronics

141. Klaipėda University also claims an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approach to its Research. Klaipėda University informed the team that Science and Arts/Humanities were equally esteemed and prioritised and that opportunities could be created through an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approach so that normally poorly funded disciplines, such as those under the broad umbrella of the Baltic Region History and Archaeology Research Institute, could secure funding. However, because of low funding levels, Arts/Humanities Research was limited and would probably not be able to acquire the critical mass, say, to develop further doctoral Schools.

142. Klaipėda University denied to the team that the dual Research structure was a two tier structure. Research Institute staff also taught up to 50% of the workload and supervised postgraduate research students and indeed used their Research to develop new Taught Masters programmes whilst other Faculty academic staff were still Research active. The staffing procedures applying to Research staff, including Research Institute staff were said to be the same as for all academic staff, although Research staff were said to be subject to a more secure form of tenure.

143. However, Research Institutes were also characterized as more responsive, service-oriented and flexible and better able to engage with Business and Social Partners. Indeed, Klaipėda University, advised that the separation of Research Institutes from the Faculty structure had allowed them, and their Research, to develop more successfully: for example, this was demonstrated by increased Research publication levels. The probability was that Klaipėda University would seek to increase the number of Research Institutes and the greater concentration of Research activity was inevitable, perhaps by clustering disciplines in a manner which would best mesh with future European Union Framework Programmes. Research capacity could be built by higher-level or European Union funded researchers leading groups of lower-level researchers and cascading down information and opportunities.

144. However, there was recognition that to build or even retain Research capacity, Klaipėda University might have to invest, say in the retention of a minimum level of Research posts, by virement from other budgets. Although there was also recognition that Klaipėda University possibly underexploited the more commercial end of the Research spectrum and might successfully increase its relatively low level of Contract Research income by better marketing and systematisation.

145. The team found that Klaipėda University's Research was broadly compliant with its Mission and Strategy, focusing as it did on Maritime disciplines, disciplines especially associated with the geography and culture of Western Lithuania and disciplines exclusive to Klaipėda University.

146. However, the team was uncertain why Klaipėda University operated a dual Research structure, establishing discrete cross-disciplinary Research Institutes but also retaining Faculty based Research. Klaipėda University put forward its Research Institutes as evidence of how it successfully built a Research base and emphasized the flexibility, cross-disciplinarity and supportive nature of Research Institutes, which allowed exciting developments in such innovative fields as GeoInformatics. However, no strong counterargument against seeking to apply that structure across Klaipėda University was offered. Klaipėda University itself acknowledged that, in some disciplines, whether because of intense competition or scarcity of funding, Research was unlikely to be developed beyond a minimum.

147. The team recommended therefore that Klaipėda University should carry out a strategic review of its Research structures to determine how these might be best aligned to support its already defined strategic

Research focus, including Klaipėda University's ambition to achieve parity of esteem for Research in the Arts/Humanities.

148. In the SER, Klaipėda University places its Research activity in the context of the National Education Programme and the Long-Term Development Strategy of the State and cites active participation in such areas as Ecosystems of Lithuania: Climate Change and Human Impact and State and Nation: Heritage and Identity.

149. Klaipėda University similarly places its Research activity in the context of Western Lithuania and the City of Klaipėda and their dependency upon the Baltic Sea, presenting tabular information on Research projects related to regional priorities such as Maritime Environmental Science, Maritime Technology and Engineering, Hydrology and Oceanography and, in compliance with the Lithuanian Government's Regional Culture Development Programme for 2008-12, related to Lithuanian History and Culture.

150. The SER also sets out Klaipėda University's Arts Activities' contribution to the Lithuanian Government's Ethnic Cultural Development Programme and Children's and Youth Cultural Programme 2006-11 and Regional Culture Development Programme 2010-2020.

151. Finally, the SER emphasized, by reference to their actual titles, the direct match between the discipline areas of its ten doctoral programmes and, similarly by sample, specific titles of doctoral theses defended reinforce that direct match.

152. Klaipėda University advised the team that Research was overseen by a Scientific (Research) Commission of Senate and Klaipėda University described the internal assessment of Research quality by an evaluative Sub-Committee of Senate.

153. However, Klaipėda University admitted that, other than funding and the availability of specific staff expertise, there was no prohibition on recruiting Research students to any discipline within Klaipėda University. The Strategic Research themes were broad and sought to be interdisciplinary but there was no restriction on Research activity outside those strategic themes. Nevertheless, the general approach of Klaipėda University was to move towards the greater concentration of postgraduate research students. Klaipėda University had limited opportunity domestically to develop postgraduate research student provision because of State restrictions on bespoke funding and concentration of that restricted funding chiefly at other Lithuanian universities. The number of 'free' State sponsored places was low and postgraduate research students' tuition fees were high. The options were therefore either to collaborate with other Lithuanian universities on joint doctoral programmes, to secure postgraduate research opportunities by successful Research project bidding or to vire from other budgets into Research.

154. The Science Department (Research Support), which coordinated, regulated and administered Research had a dedicated post to support postgraduate research students. However, those students had no dedicated work or social space.

155. Klaipėda University advised that the Baltic Valley, and to some extent the Research Institutes in general, offered postgraduate research students a supportive multi-disciplinary Research environment which could prevent the loss of sound postgraduate research students to European Union competitors, especially to countries with stronger economies. Klaipėda University also had in train two significant projects to update Research laboratories and to update and originate Research-informed Taught Masters programmes.

156. Entry to postgraduate research study was regulated by minimum entry requirements, although the bar might be set higher for doctoral programmes operating with European Union partners.

157. The team acknowledged the compliance of Klaipėda University's Research with national and regional priorities. In effect, those priorities were such cornerstones of Klaipėda University's Research strategy that compliance with that strategy was anyway the equivalent of compliance with those priorities.

158. The team commended Klaipėda University's efforts in a difficult and competitive funding climate to retain and to increase levels of postgraduate research student recruitment, particularly via national and international collaborations. However, again the potential of the development of further doctoral schools and postgraduate research student provision should be a key factor in the strategic review of Research structures already recommended.

159. The team also acknowledged Klaipėda University's efforts to respond to the State's agenda within the Research approach enshrined in the Law on Higher Education and Research and especially in the integration of Research Institutes in universities and the better integration of Business and Research witnessed by the Baltic Valley.

160. In the SER, Klaipėda University cross-referenced the information already offered on match of national, and especially regional Research priorities, to the demands and needs of its Social and Business Partners and its significant engagement with these partners. Its reference to academic partners is limited to co-operation on doctoral programmes.

161. Individual and somewhat anecdotal examples of engagement are cited. By far the most important is the Baltic Valley, which was established and co-ordinated by Klaipėda University, and which is a consortium including Klaipėda University, the Klaipėda Science and Technology Park and Social and Business Partners and which is a platform for engagement in Research, Applied Research and Contract Research as well as academic, training and business activities in the Lithuanian Maritime sector.

162. In terms of its Art Activities, Klaipėda University also claims within its SER a range of engagements with Social Partners including the Lithuanian Folk Culture Centre and various regional cultural and educational centres and other entities.

163. Klaipėda University advised the team that Klaipėda University's strategic Research focus, and especially its co-ordination of the Baltic Valley, had the potential to offset any adverse financial impact of reduced taught student recruitment because of a demographic downturn. Klaipėda University also cited exemplar developments with regional and City entities in such key fields as Health and Urban Regeneration.

164. However, Klaipėda University displayed little awareness to the team of the potential to maximize income through the exploitation of the Research and Contract Research opportunities available in the Baltic Valley and elsewhere in Klaipėda University. Klaipėda University confirmed in response to questioning from the team that it had done little to seek to influence the national authorities to accord greater esteem to Contract Research and similar more entrepreneurial activities. Arrangements for Intellectual Property Rights, establishment of Spin-off Enterprises and the generation of income from hire of facilities were described as somewhat ad hoc and not the primary focus of Research and expert support for those activities was limited. Despite the existence of the Technology Park and its remit to serve and engage with business, Spin-off Enterprise development was described as just beginning even though a dedicated Technology Transfer postholder had been appointed.

165. Klaipėda University was unable to quantify the income and benefits already derived or which might be derived from the full range of Research-related commercial opportunities.

166. Klaipėda University's Business Partners reported little willingness to sponsor Research projects directly themselves. However, they already enjoyed fruitful commercial arrangements with Klaipėda University such as collaborative working, some hired use of facilities and consultancies. Klaipėda University's Environmental Science laboratories and the new laboratories available through the Baltic Valley consortium were already used by Business Partners. The Business Partners welcomed the recent liberalisation of restrictions on the commercial, private use of State or other public facilities. To remain competitive and to prevent the loss of jobs to other regions or countries, the Business Partners recognized the need to collaborate with Higher Education to access the latest technological developments and services. They also reported themselves to be generally satisfied with the Technology Park as offering potential Spin-off and networking opportunities and as a mediator of Technology Transfer. They

described a good relationship with Klaipėda University Research staff offering specialist expertise and knowledge.

167. The team acknowledged the undoubted close working relationship in Research between Klaipėda University and its Business and Social Partners. The team similarly acknowledged Klaipėda University's significant impact with its regional and City Partners through its Art Activities.

168. The team commended Klaipėda University's initiative in responding to Central Government's national initiative by capturing for Klaipėda University's a lead coordinating role for the Baltic Valley. This had created a platform for a deeper and broader engagement with Business Partners. However, the team believed that the full potential of the Baltic Valley to benefit all partners had yet to be realised.

169. The team **recommended** that Klaipėda University, perhaps commissioning specialist external guidance on marketing and branding, develop an implementation plan describing, with key performance indicators and milestones, ambitious but realistic targets for greater revenue generation by Klaipėda University in such areas as Contract Research, Intellectual Property Rights, Patents and Spin-off Enterprises. In parallel, the team recommended that Klaipėda University codify a University-wide set of underpinning legal and financial procedures to standardize the exploitation and protection of Klaipėda University's interests in the full range of Research and Consultancy activities.

170. In the team's view, it might well prove important for Klaipėda University to diversify its income streams, especially in the commercial sector, in a context where European Union and State funding might become more difficult to secure.

171. Klaipėda University confirmed in its SER its prioritisation of the intensive development of international, and particular European, relationships, citing its Strategic Action Plan 2007-13. It aspires to align its Research with European Research Area programmes, guidelines and reference points, not least to be able to draw down funding from European Union FP6 and FP7 programmes, to develop its Research infrastructure and capacity and to increase investment and researcher mobility. It offers the Coastal Research and Planning Institute as a successful example of its potential for building Research through interdisciplinarity, thematic projects and partnerships, generating a critical mass of Research and establishing or joining related European networks.

172. The team acknowledged Klaipėda University's individual successes, particularly through its Research Institutes in aligning its Research approach and priorities with those of the European Research Area. Klaipėda University showed demonstrable success in drawing down project funding from European Union Framework Programmes. As suggested above, the team has already recommended a strategic review of Research structure.

173. Klaipėda University offers in its SER descriptive and tabular information on its active participation in a range of international Research projects, grouped especially around its broad strategic interest in Maritime Research and growing in number (as value is not shown), after a fall in 2009, to a highest level, over the six years of the Institutional Review, to 42. These Research projects are further analysed by consistency with European Union FP6 and FP7 programmes. Briefer reference is also made to sample international collaborations in Art Activities.

174. Klaipėda University informed the team that externally funded, often European Union projects including Research projects, offered the best opportunity to supplement income, improve facilities and raise Klaipėda University's Research profile. For example, such projects provided some opportunity for Klaipėda University to redress its inability to fund its sabbatical scheme because of lack of resources. Klaipėda University also saw international agreements with collaborative partner universities as a means on continuing the gradual increase in postgraduate research student recruitment and associated, jointly attributed publications.

175. The team acknowledged Klaipėda University's preparedness to participate in international, and especially European Union, Research but again the optimum Research structure to develop such partnerships should be a factor in the recommended Research structure review. The team acknowledged

Klaipėda University's efforts at participation in international Art Activities, particularly through outreach and performance.

176. Klaipėda University, through its SER, identifies internal supporting mechanism including scholarships and other resources, for the participation of its Research staff in international Research conferences and seminars and also reports successful application to external competitive support funding. Klaipėda University also claims that academic staff take advantage of ERASMUS exchanges simultaneously to promote their Research interests.

177. The Self-Evaluation estimates incoming academic staff visits over the six year period of the Institutional Review but seven times that estimate in terms of outgoing visits, chiefly to the European Union, by Klaipėda University staff, with Research Institute staff the most active in international participation. Klaipėda University reports individual examples of Klaipėda University staff having a formative influence on individual international Research agendas. Active engagement is also duly enumerated and exemplified in relation to Klaipėda University's Art Activities.

178. Klaipėda University informed the team that pump-priming monies were made available to Research-active, and especially newer academic staff and postgraduate research students, to foster publications in external journals.

179. Yet again, the team, whilst acknowledging individual efforts within Klaipėda University to promote international mobility of staff and postgraduate research students, the variability of mobility across Research disciplines and the difficulty Klaipėda University had in attracting incoming mobility suggested that this activity too should be a factor in the recommended review of Research structures. The team commended Klaipėda University's intention to build developing Research groups around experienced researchers who could cascade down experience of outgoing mobility to international partners but the team felt this was much more likely to succeed in a standardized, clear and supported Research structure and environment.

Judgement on the area: Research and Art is given positive evaluation.

VI. IMPACT ON REGIONAL AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

180. As Klaipėda University's Research agenda is so overtly informed by national and regional priorities, there is inevitably some overlap in the two related sections of the Institutional Review report.

181. In its SER, Klaipėda University concentrates more upon how its strategy can be mapped consistently and closely against strategic plans of the State, region and the City. Such documents as the Law on Regional Development of the Republic of Lithuania and the Programme of Cultural Development of the Regions 2012-2020 (national), General Plan of Klaipėda District Territory Western Lithuania 2025 (regional) and Strategic Plan of Klaipėda City Development 2007-13 (City) are cited. The SER is silent on measures of impact in Klaipėda University's own strategic documentation.

182. However, these measures are set out in a detailed Measure Plan for Implementation of Strategic Goals and Objectives in the Klaipėda University Strategic Development Plan 2012-20. Moreover, as Klaipėda University's mission and strategy is so closely intertwined with national and regional development the impact measures cited can be taken also to measure regional and national development and not just the progress of the overall strategy. The Measure Plan has a broad range of relevant quantitative measures against a matrix of objectives and key performance indicators: from the number of facilities refurbished, to the number of staff trained and qualified to a particular level, to the number of specialist staff recruited and to the take up by students of particular learning resources. A financial value is also assigned to the key performance indicators. Some objectives are more overtly related to regional and national development, such as those linked to the Baltic Valley, but most have only an implicit linkage.

183. The means (or measures) of achieving the objectives are also itemised, as is the locus of responsibility for action. Several of the means cite particular externally funded projects and highlight Klaipėda University's dependency on project income to deliver its strategic plan.

184. Klaipėda University advised the team that national and regional impact was a key factor in its construction of the Strategic Development Plan 2012-2020. The staff who had coordinated the construction of that Plan advised that a Research focus on the needs of the region and investment in the Baltic Valley were key parts of the University's strategy and were aimed to offset the impact of the demographic downturn. The team was advised that Klaipėda University felt an obligation to provide professional graduates to serve the region's industries and some Departments had responded to the loss of potential applicants to other, including European, universities by improved communication and outreach to Schools through such Widening Participations initiatives as Saturday Schools and organised visits from Secondary Schools to Klaipėda University's laboratories. The students who met the team, however, suggested that, in particular disciplines, Klaipėda University was less active in engagement in Secondary Schools than other universities. Klaipėda University staff also reported under-recruitment against expected intake and revealed that Senate had declined to approve higher admission levels for fear of further adverse impact on recruitment.

185. Graduates and other external stakeholders were aware of and identified with Klaipėda University's strong regional remit. There was a general awareness of Klaipėda University's Baltic Valley initiative and of the impact of Klaipėda University upon the region and the City's social and cultural life.

186. Business and Social Partners viewed their preparedness to invest financial and other resources as an impact measure in terms of their confidence in Klaipėda University's preparedness in return to meet their needs. Similarly, they viewed their high level of co-operation on such aspects as Market Intelligence and Conferences and Trade Fairs as illustrative of the impact of Klaipėda University on regional Business Partners.

187. The team found a deep and direct impact of Klaipėda University's mission and strategy on regional and national development, both in terms of generating and retaining employment and safeguarding the region's culture and heritage. However, Klaipėda University had done little at institutional level to measure that impact even though, at Departmental level, there seemed to exist a wealth of individual good practice.

188. The team **recommended** that Klaipėda University develop institutional level measures of impact, specific to regional and national development, within the context of its overall strategic planning. The purpose would be to permit comparison of relative performance amongst Klaipėda University's Departments, for example, in terms of volume of outreach and widening participation activities to promote student recruitment, to attract further involvement of external partners and stakeholders by use of the performance information derived, and to allow celebration of Klaipėda University's undoubted achievements in this area.

189. The SER offers nothing in terms of how effective the Strategic Development Plan 2012-20's Measure Plan has been and instead enumerates and exemplifies different types of Research engagements with national and especially regional business; with State entities; and with non-governmental organizations.

190. The SER also provides tabular information on its Public Relations mechanisms to engage with its stakeholder communities: from Research publications, to conferences, lectures, broadcasts by its in-house television operation and use of its website. Particular attention is drawn to Research and Arts Activities engagements in the areas of Culture and Heritage and of Social Exclusion.

191. However, it was in the formal meetings with Departmental staff that a much more compelling and convincing description of how Klaipėda University is able, in certain Departments, to assess its impact upon regional and national development was substantiated. Departmental staff, for example, outlined how the Social Work Department had worked with foreign universities to introduce a model of professional reflective Social Work practice entirely new to Lithuania. This has produced a generation of

Klaipėda University graduates who were accomplished practitioners and who themselves mentored current students. The Department held three colloquia each year for staff, students and practice mentors to monitor the impact of the Department's provision. Similarly, the Public Health Department described how, again working with foreign universities, the Department had developed qualitative indicators to measure its impact in the area of Health Promotion, had trained cohorts of Health specialists for the region and had carried forward innovative provision of patient-centred inter-disciplinary care.

192. There is clear potential for Klaipėda University to maximize the budget of 'success stories, such as these Departmental initiatives and University-wide initiatives such as the 'Baltic Valley' through more extensive publicity and dissemination.

193. Departmental staff also cited the number of Klaipėda University graduates in prominent positions in the European and Lithuanian Parliaments, in local Business, in the City of Klaipėda and key local industries such as Ecology, Heritage and Tourism as a measure of Klaipėda University's impact on the region. Business Partners saw Klaipėda University's education of competent and professionally suitable graduates for the Business and Social Partners of the region as a key indicator of Klaipėda University's engagement with regional needs. The region was not necessarily one which attracted in-country migration from the rest of Lithuania. They also recognized Klaipėda University as the sole provider of such graduates on certain professions. Business Partners would encourage Klaipėda University also to develop in-country specialist programmes to foster specialist training and capacity and to reduce the costs of regional businesses of having their staff be placed at foreign training establishments. They also cited the in-house development of a new generation of active researchers, engaged with Klaipėda University's regional Research focus, as an impact measure.

194. Some, but not all, employers were impressed by Klaipėda University graduates' ability to use specific and generic skills in a work setting. Much of the on-programme training delivered in programmes was on the same equipment and addressed the same problems as graduates then encountered in the real world.

195. Klaipėda University staff and external stakeholders consistently referred to the prime focus upon the Maritime sector and cited an increase in Research Institute posts from 28 to 88 (50 of which derive from Research and other project income) as an impact measure.

196. The team consequently **recommended**, following on from its recommendation that Klaipėda University develops institutional level measures of impact, that the effectiveness and analysis of those measures is embedded as a standard part of Klaipėda University's strategic planning processes.

197. In its SER, Klaipėda University cites a further regional strategic plan, the Strategic Activity Plan of Klaipėda District, to set alongside the context provided by the three national, regional and City strategic documents cited previously. However, in effect, all that is offered is a broad brush description of the congruity of Klaipėda University's Research and Taught programmes with the different types of regional business, commercial organizations and public entities. This is supported by a detailed enumeration of sub-types of those different types.

198. The SER offers a similar broad brush description of the context for Cultural and Social Development. However, additionally, this is firmly underpinned by a short mapping correlating Klaipėda University's national and regional engagement with legislation (the Law of Regional Development of the Republic of Lithuania, the Law on Principles of State Protection of the Ethnic Culture of the Republic of Lithuania, the Laws of State Language of the Republic of Lithuania) and strategic programmes (the Programme of Cultural Development of the Regions for 2012-2020 and the Long-Term Civic and National Education Programme).

199. The team heard from external Council members and other external stakeholders of the close relationship between Klaipėda University and the region and City and the cross-membership between Klaipėda University staff and Council members on complementary regional, City and Klaipėda University networks. They advised that Business and Social Partners judged Klaipėda University on the availability and preparedness of Klaipėda University graduates for employment in their business and

entities. Employers specified the high number of Klaipėda University graduates in their workforces as a clear impact measure. They welcomed Klaipėda University's focus on Maritime disciplines but also the interdisciplinary approach which allowed synergies between disciplines to produce particular specialists in, say, Maritime Economics. Local employers received surveys on their perception of Klaipėda University's performance and the professionalism and employability of Klaipėda University graduates. In some Departments, this was backed up by annual consultative meetings with employers where the continuing relevance of Programme Learning Outcomes and Curriculum was discussed. Employers also played a role in commenting upon students' progress, for example, in work placement. The alignment of Klaipėda University's Research focus with the needs of regional businesses was also welcomed.

200. Klaipėda University monitored graduate employment through its Careers Centre although there was limited awareness amongst external stakeholders of how the Careers Centre sought to assist its graduates in finding employment. Moreover, graduates noted that its services were limited to current students. Current students, however, valued the support of the Careers Centre, especially as a resource available online in such aspects as cv clinics, psychometric testing and dissemination of employment opportunities, but they regretted the non-provision of general and specialist Career Days.

201. Klaipėda University staff consistently emphasized the concordance of Klaipėda University's Research activity with Lithuania's obligations to the European Union and the Baltic Region, as well as to national and especially regional development priorities. However, they also recognized the infrastructure and funding limitations which inhibited a large scale expansion of that Research activity.

202. The team acknowledged the close correspondence between Klaipėda University's strategic priorities and those articulated at State, regional and City level.

203. The SER advises that work placement is compulsory on undergraduate programmes and optional on Masters programmes. Work placement usually takes place within the region and is always related to the host entity's core activity. A detailed range of typical work placements is offered.

204. Research projects by students and Research theses are also described as usually taking place within relevant regional workplaces. A sample of specific Research theses is identified and it is highlighted that Research projects and theses often have a focus of business improvement and competitiveness.

205. Klaipėda University staff advised that such initiatives as the Baltic Valley promoted greater engagement with Business, including personal contact between employers and Klaipėda University staff, fostered a better understanding of the needs of Business and informed the development of innovative new programmes. Employers confirmed these views and had a broad perception that Klaipėda University did indeed act to meet Business needs. There was general satisfaction from Social and Cultural Partners that, with limited resources, Klaipėda University nevertheless worked to address their needs. Graduates and current students confirmed the relevance and usefulness of work placement and several reported it as key to obtaining later employment. Graduates and current students both reported support from Klaipėda University in securing suitable work placement and no problems in securing placements.

206. Again, the team recognised many examples of sound practice in this area. However, the recommended development of institutional level measures of impact will allow a greater standardization of the appropriateness and relevance of work placement opportunities and project, dissertation and thesis topics.

207. The SER also describes the range of inputs Klaipėda University's academic and Professional Services staff make to the national, regional and City agendas. This is evidenced by tabular information on the number of such inputs, by types of input and specific higher level inputs are also cited ranging from external committee and commission/council memberships, to involvement in the development of strategic documentation and leadership of editorial boards and diverse professional and cultural associations. Graduates and students were aware of the opportunity for students to volunteer to assist in cultural and social opportunities in the City and of the prominent part played in the City by senior Klaipėda University staff.

208. Graduates and employers, whilst consistently supportive of Klaipėda University, were not fully satisfied with the engagement opportunities offered to them by Klaipėda University. There was a minimal uptake of membership of the newly formed Alumni Club. The level of contact was variable, as were the opportunities for engagement. Some graduates reported giving guest lectures and reviewing Masters dissertations. Others would have welcomed such involvement but had not had the chance even though they were now senior practitioners within their own fields. Employers offered illustrative examples on collaboration with Klaipėda University to resolve particular production problems. However, they explicitly welcomed the suggestion by the team of a more formalized consultative forum to engage with Klaipėda University and advised of keenness to be involved in such a development. Business Partners were however reluctant to commit to direct sponsorship of pure research, preferring engagement on more practical and immediate issues for the operation of their organizations. Social Partners were more prepared for such direct investment, citing, for example, feasibility studies relevant to Tourism.

209. There was a general appreciation of the steps Klaipėda University had taken to enhance the learning resources available to current students and recognition of the significant impact of European Union projects on such enhancement. They also welcomed improvements to infrastructure such as new student residences.

210. Graduates in particular reported their studies to have been relevant to their subsequent professional careers. They especially referred to a feeling of being advantaged and made more confident in application because of the professional relevance of their programmes of study and the specific and general competences they had gained. Business Partners also echoed their support for an increase in Klaipėda University's delivery of both discipline specific and generic skills. Some particularly welcomed the cross-disciplinary nature of some Klaipėda University programmes as broadening employment opportunities.

211. There were different views offered to the team by graduates on the currency of curricula. Some, who had hosted work placements, had noted little updating, whilst others recognised the incorporation of recent legislation and Research findings.

212. Social and Cultural Partners also acknowledged the success of Klaipėda University in populating regional heritage, musical and theatrical ensembles with its graduates and the continuous engagement, especially of staff and students of the Faculty of Arts, in the regional programme of concerts, performance and other cultural events. At the moment, the newly established Alumni Club has yet to prove its worth but the team is confident that Klaipėda University will wish to expand membership and maximize graduate engagement and input.

213. The team acknowledged the significant role that Klaipėda University staff played in a very wide range of engagements at national, and especially regional and City, level. However, the team **recommended** that Klaipėda University consider the establishment of a more formalized, consultative forum which would allow external Business, Social and Cultural Partners to influence Klaipėda University in its strategic thinking.

Judgement on the area: Impact on Regional and National Development is given positive evaluation.

VII. BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Good Practice

1. The Klaipėda University website was clear, well set out and informative and the team commends Klaipėda University for its presentation of key public information through its website.

2. Klaipėda University demonstrated a good awareness of the need to engage students in the enhancement of activities, to capture the student voice and to provide a focus of professional development and employability so as to enhance graduates' employment prospects.
3. The team commended Klaipėda University's intention to invest further in international mobility and acknowledged that, at local level, exemplary use had been derived and had impacted on provision with demonstrable benefit.
4. The team commended Klaipėda University's efforts in a difficult and competitive funding climate to retain and to increase levels of postgraduate research student recruitment, particularly via national and international collaborations.
5. The team acknowledged the undoubted close working relationship in Research between Klaipėda University and its Business and Social Partners.
6. The team similarly acknowledged Klaipėda University's significant impact with its regional and City Partners through its Art Activities.
7. The team commended Klaipėda University's initiative in responding to Central Government's national initiative by capturing for Klaipėda University's a lead coordinating role for the Baltic Valley. This had created a platform for a deeper and broader engagement with Business Partners.

Recommendations

1. The team therefore **recommended** a, perhaps externally mediated, reconsideration by external and internal stakeholders of Klaipėda University's vision and mission, both in terms of the leadership of Klaipėda University seeking support for their top-down conceptualisation of its vision and mission and ensuring that, bottom-up, the vision and mission were duly informed by stakeholder needs and views.
2. The team therefore **recommended** that, after any reworking on the strategic goals to take account of the recommended reconsideration of its vision and mission, Klaipėda University then reconsider as necessary its strategic goals but then act to validate those strategic goals by, firstly, engaging with external and internal stakeholders and then underpinning them by a description of the strategic deployment of resources by which they might be achieved.
3. However, again, the team **recommended** that the further consideration of the validity of Klaipėda University's strategic goals and their underpinning by a description of the strategic deployment of resources should be supported by a more detailed schedule of milestones, resource implications and benefits, expressed as precise qualitative and quantitative indicators so that implementation might be more transparently monitored.
4. The team therefore **recommended** the establishment of a regular cycle of overview reports on individual academic quality assurance processes and the central and local delivery of support services for consideration by Senate.
5. The team **recommended** that Klaipėda University, with external benchmarking against recent practice in comparator universities, should review whether current academic structure is optimal, for delivery of its Research and Teaching in particular.
6. The team **recommended** that Klaipėda University review what type of Professional Services might best serve the delivery of its strategy and whether by restructuring, staff development or the introduction of more executive leadership, Professional Services might be reshaped to provide appropriate, proactive and informed support for academic units and the delivery of strategy.
7. Klaipėda University is **recommended** to prioritise for early attention its intended plans, set out in the Measure Plan for the Strategic Development Plan 2012-2020 for implementation of the Quality

Management and Internal Governance Organisation projects, to clarify the purpose, the loci of responsibility (especially concentrating in the appropriateness or not of delegation within the context of the particular process) and the interoperability of all its processes. In particular, Klaipėda University should ensure that the Quality Management project is overtly shown to have executive support as an essential prerequisite for the successful development of the University, is appropriately staffed and its staff duly developed whilst in post. In parallel, whilst assessing the suitability and relevance of its processes for the delivery of its strategy and its activities, Klaipėda University will have to review the capacity and level of staffing resource required and the consequent impact on staffing strategy.

8. The team **recommended** that, within the context of the recommendations already made on strategic planning, Klaipėda University develops an explicit staffing strategy with a readily monitored implementation plan.
9. The team **recommended** that Klaipėda University take forward its initial, developmental work, but drawing on analyses already carried out for that Plan and the SER, on Risk and underpins its Strategic Development Plan 2012-2020 with a comprehensive Risk Register for approval and regular monitoring by the Council.
10. The team found that there was clear scope for Klaipėda University to undertake a strategic rationalisation of its programme portfolio, perhaps consolidating its offer into broad degree programmes with a range of pathways and **recommended** such a rationalisation.
11. The team **recommended** that, at the same time as the strategic rationalisation of its programme portfolio, Klaipėda University could review the non-discipline, generic elements of its programmes, consulting with Business and Social Partners on the broad concept of graduate employability and embedding within its curricula appropriate 'softer' skills such as Project Management, Team Working, Foreign Language Competence, Employability and Entrepreneurship.
12. The team **recommended** that Klaipėda University, perhaps commissioning specialist external guidance on marketing and branding, develop an implementation plan describing, with key performance indicators and milestones, ambitious but realistic targets for greater revenue generation by Klaipėda University in such areas as Contract Research, Intellectual Property Rights, Patents and Spin-off Enterprises.
13. The team **recommended** that Klaipėda University develop institutional level measures of impact, specific to regional and national development, within the context of its overall strategic planning. The purpose would be to permit comparison of relative performance amongst Klaipėda University's Departments, for example, in terms of volume of outreach and widening participation activities to promote student recruitment, to attract further involvement of external partners and stakeholders by use of the performance information derived, and to allow celebration of Klaipėda University's undoubted achievements in this area.
14. The team consequently **recommended**, following on from its recommendation that Klaipėda University develops institutional level measures of impact, that the effectiveness and analysis of those measures is embedded as a standard part of Klaipėda University's strategic planning processes.
15. The team **recommended** that Klaipėda University consider the establishment of a more formalized, consultative forum which would allow external Business, Social and Cultural Partners to influence Klaipėda University in its strategic thinking.

VIII. JUDGEMENT

Klaipėda University is given **positive** evaluation.

Grupės vadovas: Team leader:	Prof. Dr. Bent Schmidt-Nielsen
Grupės nariai: Team members:	Prof. Dr. Jürgen Kohler Dr. Heli Mattisen Prof. Dr. Saulius Vengris Dr. Aleksandras Algirdas Abišala Ms. Milena Medineckienė
Vertinimo sekretorius: Review secretary:	Mr. Gregory Clark

ANNEX. KLAIPĖDA UNIVERSITY RESPONSE TO REVIEW REPORT

2012-04-06

Klaipeda

Response of Klaipeda University to the INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW REPORT

There are no essential incongruities of factual nature found in the expert's Institutional Review Report.

The only one remark would be what in the chapter VII. BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLES AND RECOMMENDATIONS solely *recommendations* are stated coherently, whilst the *best practice* examples what are mentioned in the Institutional Review Report textual part of III-VI chapters aren't reflected here.

The authorities of Klaipėda University appreciate and are grateful to the expert team for the completed analytical, recommendatory work, valuable remarks what will undoubtedly assist to improve University management.

Rector

Prof. Vaidutis Laurenas