



FONDAZIONE ITS
TURISMO
E ATTIVITÀ
CULTURALI

SEDE LEGALE

TORINO
Via Massena, 20
10128

SEDI OPERATIVE

TORINO
Via Massena, 20
+39 011 5516108

Via Durandi, 10
+39 011 0371500

BRA (CN)
Piazza Giolitti, 8
+39 0172 413030

CODICE FISCALE
97807770017

E-MAIL:
info@its-turismopiemonte.it

SITO WEB:
www.its-turismopiemonte.it



Erasmus+

Erasmus Policy Statement (EPS) ECHE 2021-2027

Overall Strategy – Internationalisation and modernisation achievements

Higher Technical Institutes (HTI) are a recently established instrument in the Italian Education system, offering Short Cycle tertiary EQF5 educational pathways, with the strategical objective to respond to development and competitiveness needs of National and regional strategic sectors, by developing professional profiles with new high technical competences, to support innovation and technology transfer in a logic of Smart Specialization. This is realized through a stable and structured cooperation with the world of work and business (which provide at least 70% of the teaching staff), and by adopting the best organic mix of formal and informal methods, including Learning by Doing, Work Based Learning and School-work alternation.

Fondazione ITS Turismo e Attività Culturali (Tourism and Cultural Activities HTI Foundation), active since 2016, has the scope of playing a relevant role within the touristic and cultural activities sector, in particular in the Piedmont Region.

Leisure and cultural tourism are growing steadily, in a Region that features recognised excellence assets, historical, landscaping and naturalistic, sporting and leisure, food and wines, which constitute a key element of development in an area that has been facing serious effects of de-industrialization especially since recent years.

Following specific legislation, the Foundation is participated by the educational and institutional system, and by relevant business actors, with the objective to provide specialized resources to the reference labour market needs, and to act as an actual service for the market development towards technological and methodological innovation.

The overall objective is to form a new generation of tourism and culture operators, able to avail innovative techniques and tools, and to contribute to the development of processes, offering excellence in marketing and hospitality, and being familiar to operating in a continuously evolving global context.

The reference market is by nature international; 2019 was a positive year for the tourism sector: compared to 2018 there was an increase of 2.3% of foreign travelers and an increase of 4.8% of presences (as reported by ENIT, 2019).

These elements make international perspective of the Institute activities and constitute a vital and strategic asset for the development and innovation in formative offer and service to the reference

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sector, as well as for having students and staff learning from different cultures and contexts, to acquire the best and to get familiar with needs and expectations from significant and growing demand markets.

To make this perspective stable and effective as highly needed, the Foundation gives the Erasmus+ accreditation a key and strategic role. The Institute has prepared by identifying and starting to implement roles, procedures and tools to support the required approach, organization and activity effectiveness, availing experiences and knowledge already in place within Partner companies and the Education and Vocational training world.

The implementation of this strategy aims at involving the target group by a progressive approach, including curricular and extracurricular traineeships of Institute students and training mobilities for teaching and other staff, starting from the current major markets (in particular EU) and progressively extending to other, where the practices are particularly relevant for the modernisation of the sector, and/or the market for incoming tourism is high potential.

Receiving countries, institutions and companies will be selected based on the knowledge from the staff and the Foundation partners, to be relevant for didactics, training and formative offer development objectives. Other strategy elements include the potential of the receiving entities to build up a stable cooperation network, both for mobilities and for projects, and the opportunity for agreements for incoming teaching and studying. Finally, the international activities are expected to give inputs and hints for new pathways, such as outgoing tourism marketing and organisation, in view of a strong presence in the territory of important global Tour Operators, among which one is partner of the Foundation.

Overall, the mission of the Institute as part of the ITS system, the international perspective of the reference market and of the educational approach and objectives, and the strategy here outlined commit the accreditation towards the EU Leaders Gothenburg Communication and the EU Modernisation and Internationalisation Agenda in HE, in particular referred to the goals: Excellence in skills development; Inclusive and connected HE systems; HEI contribute to innovation; Making learning Mobility a reality for all, Modernising the development of curricula; preserving cultural heritage and fostering a sense of European identity and culture.

Implementation of the Erasmus actions

In the progressive strategy of implementation of the internationalisation of the Institute, cooperation is activated since the beginning, focussed at outgoing students and staff mobilities. In addition to the prime learning, training and cultural objectives, the mobilities are expected to contribute to the strengthening of the international network, to generate feasible and sustainable innovation and best practice exchange initiatives, and to move towards a structured approach for incoming mobilities hosting.

Anyway, incoming mobilities are welcome since the beginning, especially for teachers and staff, while student mobilities require the realization of proper conditions such as disciplines taught in English. Possible mobilities interested to Italian and regional culture and teaching methodologies are welcome as well, in a framework of cooperation and joint initiatives.

The Institute has currently become more familiar with the Transnational Cooperation EU instruments and practices, and it has focused on finding strategies in order to build up a stable



cooperation network. The Institute has become pro-active in proposing cooperation projects, to be targeted to Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership and/or Knowledge alliance. Tourism and Cultural Activities HTI Foundation is currently in contact with IUT de Saint-Dié-des-Vosges and the Stenden Hotel Management School, in order to encourage learning mobilities both for students and staff for the following next years.

Furthermore, in 2018 the Institute became Associated Partner in the Project "Erasmus+ | LOT 2: Sector Skills Alliance For Design And Delivery Of VET - Designing trans-national sector-wide vocational curricula", and in April 2020 declared its strong support to the implementation of the project titled: "Joint Course on the Design & Management of Sustainable Tourism Destinations", and with the acronym "Sustain-Tour-Course", coordinated by the Ionian University (IURC) in the framework of Erasmus+ KA2 call for Strategic Partnerships in the field of High Education. In the event this proposal is funded, the Institute would expect to be involved in the Sustain-Tour-Course project, as Associated Partner, by involving in the development of the common qualification profile; in the design of the HE Course; in multiplier events.

Other instruments such as bi-lateral cooperation or other European or international funding sources will be attentively monitored in scope and objectives and implemented as complementary initiatives.

Possible opportunities to partner in collaboration projects will be considered attentively, to check and decide on a case-per-case basis, vis-à-vis the effectiveness of the contributions that the Institute can supply in the following years.

Another key element that the Institute is developing is the implementation of a process for successfully mobilising the Institute resources to prepare first for participating and then coordinating international cooperation projects. As a matter of fact, at the end of 2019 Tourism and Cultural Activities HTI Foundation adhered to the project financed by the Chamber of Commerce of Turin, which aims at offering extracurricular traineeships for postgraduate students (2018-2020 biennium) in the working profile of Sustainable Tourism Manager. Thanks to this opportunity, the candidates and the Institute got in touch with international company of the sector (in Spain and Netherlands). This project contributed to enhance a cooperation network between the Institute and enterprises.

The owner of the implementation of international cooperation process is the International Office, which reports to the Institute Management and coordinates the staff team and teaching/training activities relevant for the specific cooperation initiatives.

Envisaged impact of the participation in the Erasmus+ Programme

As outlined before, the international development strategy and the consequent decision to apply for Erasmus+ Accreditation comes as an indispensable factor of effectiveness of the Institute formative offer, according to the strategical considerations outlined above. It must be noted that one key effectiveness criteria for Italian HTIs is employability, measured as the percentage of graduates having been hired in the sector within 12 months after the Diploma.

Employability is an ideal measure of effectiveness and thus of impact on students, world of work and society, due to its multidimensional nature: quality of the formative offer and of learning, link



with the actual labour market needs, readiness to operate in real contexts, and to actively contribute to business and operations innovation. Accreditation contributes to improve the effectiveness towards the international nature of the target sector and adds contribution to the strengthening of European Identity through education and culture (Gothenburg 2017 EC communication). Moreover, it is believed that this accreditation for the next seven-year cycle would constitute a significant opportunity for the relaunch of tourism sector, which has been inevitably affected by the present international health emergency. Staff and students mobilities would be encouraged to think of a new concept of tourism, especially thanks to the contact with the companies of the sector, in order to project new ideas related to a more sustainable tourism, in line with the green policy of the Institute.

More in detail, with respect to the above-mentioned documents, the Internationalisation and Modernisation strategy of the institute commits itself to contribute to the successful addressing of the priorities and goals (*), which are discussed below:

* Tackling future skills mismatches and promoting excellence in skills development:

This priority is addressed through the strict link with the reference sector, the Education authorities and the academic and vocational training world, which specify the professional profile requirements, the training methodologies, the relevant discipline contents, provide teachers and trainers, and monitor and advice about the activities and the fulfilment of the objectives. International perspective further develops and implements this approach and the participants competences, by supporting training and studying in relevant countries and realities, extending the business sector network driving and influencing the formative offer.

* Building inclusive and connected higher education systems:

HTIs are a complementary approach and a totally free access offer with respect to University, with high employability rate. The accreditation supports even more inclusion and connection, by a wider network and by offering and promoting effective education to all – students, staff and teachers.

* Ensuring higher education institutions contribute to innovation:

International cooperation for learning and innovation strengthens and extend the response to the needs of the reference sector and enables a wider access to new high-level disciplines and know-how learning and experiencing. Strengthening of the focus on ICT based methods and processes for marketing and operation is another much required and pursued innovation area that will be supported by the cooperation with international best players.

* Supporting effective and efficient higher education systems:

International formative offer and activities require and support the strengthening of Institute's competence-based and market-driven organization, availing and providing best practices, and process and tools innovation. Effectiveness is supported by a stronger link to the needs of Tourism markets and businesses in EU and beyond, and by better preparing students and staff to operate in international contexts.



Finally, the strategy, the priorities and the organization of the International growth of the Institute aim at providing actual contribution to almost all the Goals towards a European Education Area, in particular: making learning mobility a reality for all (also thanks to blended mobilities); removing obstacles to the recognition of qualifications; modernising the development of curricula; improving education, training and lifelong learning; language learning; driving innovation in education in the digital era; preserving cultural heritage and fostering a sense of European identity and culture.