International

Task T3.3

Career Guidance Strategy

TIRANA COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY

Project: 101183192 — CG-International — ERASMUS-EDU-2024-CB-VET

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Career Guidance Strategy of Tirana College of Technology 2026-2030

Institution Name:	**UNIVERSITY COLLEGE "TIRANA COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY"**
Country:	**ALBANIA**
Prepared by:	**Diana Biba, Petro Plasa, Bebjana Lala, Alida Goxharaj**
Date:	**23.09.2026**

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Executive Summary

This Career Guidance Strategy establishes a structured and institutional approach to career development at TCT. It aims to support students in making informed educational and career decisions, strengthen their employability and career management competencies, and facilitate successful transitions to employment, entrepreneurship, or further education. Career guidance is embedded within the wider educational experience and is understood as a shared institutional responsibility involving academic staff, career guidance professionals, institutional leadership, employers, alumni, and external partners. The Strategy has been developed through a process of institutional self-assessment, stakeholder consultation, and the adaptation of good practices identified through international cooperation and peer learning, particularly through the CG International project. This process identified several areas requiring further development, including stronger coordination of career guidance activities, dedicated and appropriately skilled staff, closer cooperation with employers and industry representatives, improved links with Public Employment Services (PES), stronger career planning competencies among students, and more structured support for the transition from education to employment. The Strategy also recognizes the importance of ensuring that services are accessible, inclusive, and responsive to the diverse needs of students.

The vision is to establish a sustainable career development ecosystem in which every student develops competencies for the labor market, and successfully progress towards employment, entrepreneurship, or further education. To this front, the Strategy is organized around six strategic priorities: strengthening career guidance provision throughout the student lifecycle; improving access to career information and labour market; developing students' employability and career management skills; expanding cooperation with stakeholders; supporting the transition of students and graduates into employment and lifelong learning by enhancing the value of Professional Diploma; systematic monitoring, evaluation, and continuous improvement of career guidance provision.

Implementation will be supported by clearly defined institutional structures and responsibilities. The Career Office, with dedicated and appropriately skilled staff, will have a central operational and coordinating role, supported by the Pro-Rector, the Labour Market Board, the Alumni Council, academic departments, and relevant external stakeholders. This structure is intended to strengthen coordination, ensure institutional ownership, and integrate career development activities with academic provision, work-based learning, employer engagement, and quality assurance processes.

Priority actions will include strengthening the capacity of the Career Office through dedicated staff and professional development; expanding individual and group career counselling, mentoring, and career information services; organizing career fairs, employer presentations, networking activities, and employability workshops; increasing access to internships and other forms of work-based learning; strengthening cooperation with PES and employers; developing systematic graduate tracking and employer-feedback mechanisms; providing targeted career and transition support for final-year students and recent graduates and alignment of academic offer with evolving skills needs.

Over the 5-year implementation period, the Strategy is expected to result in a more coordinated, accessible, and effective career guidance system; increased student participation in career development and work-based learning activities; stronger employability and career management competencies; improved cooperation with stakeholders; and stronger alignment between academic programmes and labour market needs. These outcomes will provide a basis for monitoring progress. Long-term sustainability will be ensured by integrating the Strategy into TCT's institutional policies, resource planning, and quality assurance processes. Dedicated human resources, continuous professional development, stakeholder participation, graduate tracking, and periodic evaluation will support the institutionalization of career guidance and ensure that the system remains responsive to changes in student needs and the labour market.

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Table of Content

1. Introduction 4

1.1 Institutional Profile 5

2. Strategic Context and Needs Analysis 11

3. Methodology for Strategy Development 16

Preparation of the Career Guidance Strategy 16

Internal Preparation 16

External Consultation 17

Adapting Lessons to the Local Context 18

4. Institutional Analysis 20

4.1 Current Career Guidance Situation 20

4.2. SWOT Analysis 25

5. Vision, Mission and Strategic Objectives 29

5.1 Vision Statement 29

5.2 Mission Statement 29

6. Career Guidance Service Model 30

6.1 Career Guidance Service Model 30

7. Governance, Partnerships and Resources 32

7.1 Governance, Partnerships and Resources Framework 33

8. Monitoring, Quality Assurance and Evaluation 35

8.1 Key Indicators 35

8.2 Quality Assurance Methods 37

8.3 Evaluation Cycle 38

9. Sustainability and Risk Management 39

9.1 Sustainability Measures 39

9.2 Risk Assessment and Mitigation Measures 40

10. Action Plan 42

Five-Year Action Plan Table 42

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1. Introduction

"Tirana College of Technology" (TCT), formerly known as the Professional College of Tirana, is a non-public higher education institution in Albania with over a decade of experience in delivering practice-oriented education. The vision of "TCT" as defined in its Statute is to be a leader in offering qualitative higher education, playing a pivotal role in the country's economic and technological development. TCT aims to produce skilled and innovative professionals who contribute to the advancement of society and economy through the application of scientific knowledge in practical fields. Freedom of economic activity, legality, justice and impartiality, freedom of thought and expression, meritocracy and transparency, non-discrimination and equality, information and protection of personal data and confidentiality are the guiding principles of TCT.

The strategic objectives of the TCT are defined in the Strategic Development Plan of the institution, which is usually drafted for a period of 5 years. The Strategic Development Plan emphasizes the importance of career guidance as well.

To this front, Career Guidance (CG) is essential because it connects education with employability, personal development, and the needs of the society. HEIs are not only responsible for delivering academic knowledge but also for helping students make informed decisions about their future careers.

The development of this strategy is strongly linked to the participation of TCT in the CG-International: Fostering International Career Guidance in VET, Project no. 101183192. The participation to the project has provided valuable opportunities to strengthen institutional capacity in career guidance, exchange good practices with international partners, and align our services with European standards and recommendations. Through this collaboration, it is recognised the importance of creating a coherent and sustainable framework for career education, information, advice, and guidance.

Career guidance is a cornerstone in VET education. As labour market demands continue to evolve, learners require support to understand career pathways, identify their skills and interests, and develop the competencies needed for lifelong employability. Effective career guidance helps students make realistic and informed choices, increases motivation and engagement in learning, and contributes to better educational and employment outcomes.

It supports student success and career readiness. It helps students understand their strengths, interests, values, and skills. This enables them to choose academic pathways and career options that align with their goals. Students who receive effective guidance are generally better prepared for employment and professional growth after graduation.

Career services provide students with support in preparing their work portfolio such as CV writing, interview preparation, networking, internships, and job searching. These activities increase graduates' chances of securing meaningful employment. Successful alumni also contribute positively to the institution's reputation and rankings.

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Career guidance helps students understand labor market trends and employer expectations. By making informed choices, students are more likely to develop skills that are in demand, reducing the gap between academic qualifications and workforce needs.
A strong career guidance system encourages and enhances the partnerships between HEI and employers. These collaborations can create internships, placements, mentoring opportunities, and graduate recruitment pathways, benefiting both students and the institution.
The strategy has also been developed in response to the need to improve learner support and strengthen transitions between education, training, and employment. The strategy demonstrates TCT long-term commitment to quality improvement. Career guidance is recognized and assessed as an essential component in quality assurance. Through this strategy, TCT aims to create a culture in which career development is viewed as a lifelong process and where every learner is empowered to achieve their full potential.

1.1 Institutional Profile

University College "Tirana College of Technology" (TCT), formerly known as the Professional College of Tirana, is a non-public higher education institution in Albania with over a decade of experience in delivering practice-oriented education. Initially established with a strong focus on professional diplomas, TCT has now expanded its academic portfolio offering both Bachelor's degree programs and professional diplomas, reflecting its commitment to technology and career-relevant education. Recognized for its applied approach in technology, engineering, and digital skills, and a professional staff, TCT aligns academic programs with labour market demands and emerging technological trends. Its modern laboratories and hands-on learning environments support student engagement in proactive learning. The academic staff of TCT offers a combination of experience and generations: an outstanding academic experience and practice-oriented professionals, including persons who run their own business/ entrepreneurs in the related area. This combination is considered to be quite effective altogether with latest technology labs of leader brands in the market. TCT actively participates in EU-funded projects, contributing to cross-border collaboration. These initiatives have strengthened the institution's capacity to develop forward-looking curricula, foster innovation and international partnerships.
TCT was licensed with the Decision of the Council of Ministers no. 699, dated 26.08.2015, and was reorganized with the Order of the Minister no. No. 266, dated June 19, 2025, decided on the reorganization from a professional college into a University College "Tirana College of Technology" (TCT). TCT is now composed of two main units, the Faculty of Computer Engineering and the Faculty of Industrial and Civil Engineering, each offering Professional higher education study programs (Level 5) and Bachelor (1st Cycle, Level 6).
The current number of learners in both Professional Diploma and Bachelor is approximately 350 students.

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The current academic portfolio is as shown below in Table 1:

Faculty	Department	Study program	Type of study	Duration	ECTS
COMPUTER ENGINEERING	APPLIED INFORMATICS	Database and Web Design	Professional study program /Level 5	2 years	120
		Software Engineering	Bachelor/ Level 6	3 years	180
	ICT	Electronics	Professional study program /Level 5	2 years	120
		ICT	Professional study program /Level 5	2 years	120
		Electronics Engineering	Bachelor/ Level 6	3 years	180
INDUSTRIAL AND CIVIL ENGINEERING	CIVIL ENGINEERING	Civil Engineering	Bachelor/ Level 6	3 years	180
	INDUSTRIAL ENGINEERING	Electrical Installation Technology	Professional study program /Level 5	2 years	120
		Automotive Technology	Professional study program /Level 5	2 years	120
		Airing and Conditioning Technology	Professional study program /Level 5	2 years	120
		Mechanical Engineering	Professional study program /Level 5	3 years	180

Table 1. List of study programs

The programs are offered in Albanian Language, while English is a mandatory course in each of them. However, literature in English is part of the recommended literature in different subjects.

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Target groups served

With regard to students attending **professional higher education**, the main target group of TCT is:

- any person who has successfully completed high school, (irrespective of being vocational or general high school and irrespective of the average grade), and aims to become a pro and enter the labor market in the short run (considering the duration of the study programs is two years);
- any person who has successfully completed high school, irrespective being vocational or general high school, aims to pursue BA in a later moment and whose average GPA is above 6.5;
- any person who has successfully completed high school, irrespective being vocational or general high school and whose average GPA is below 6.5;

For all the above, the students in any case are older than 18 years old and have graduated high school.

With regard to students attending **Bachelor,** the main target group of TCT is:

- any person who has successfully completed high school, irrespective being vocational or general high school and whose average GPA is above 6.5;
- any person who has successfully completed a university degree and would like to attend a second higher education study program (whose average GPA is above 6.5);

For all the above, the students in any case are older than 18 years old and have graduated high school.

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TCT has focused its academic portfolio to technology-oriented study programs, which cover important sectors such as HVAC technology, Automotive technology, Electronics etc. all in high demand in the labor market. During the years, TCT has built an extended network of collaborators:

+100 partnerships with business and industry operating in different sectors such as ICT, automotive area, HVAC, electronics etc. and at some lesser extent with some public agencies/public enterprises.
Bilateral agreements with public and non-public HEIs in Albania, Greece and Kosova.
TCT is part of the League of Entrepreneurs in Education, a national organization in Albania, with the participation of some of main the nonpublic HEIs in Albania. The league aims to support and protect the interest of the entrepreneurs in nonpublic higher education in terms of lobbying and networking etc.
Apart the consortiums established in the frame of the projects (Erasmus + CBHE, Jean Monnet and Mobility in VET) where TCT is a partner, TCT is not part of any international network.
TCT actively participates in EU-funded projects, contributing to cross-border collaboration. These initiatives have strengthened the institution's capacity to develop forward-looking curricula and foster international partnerships.

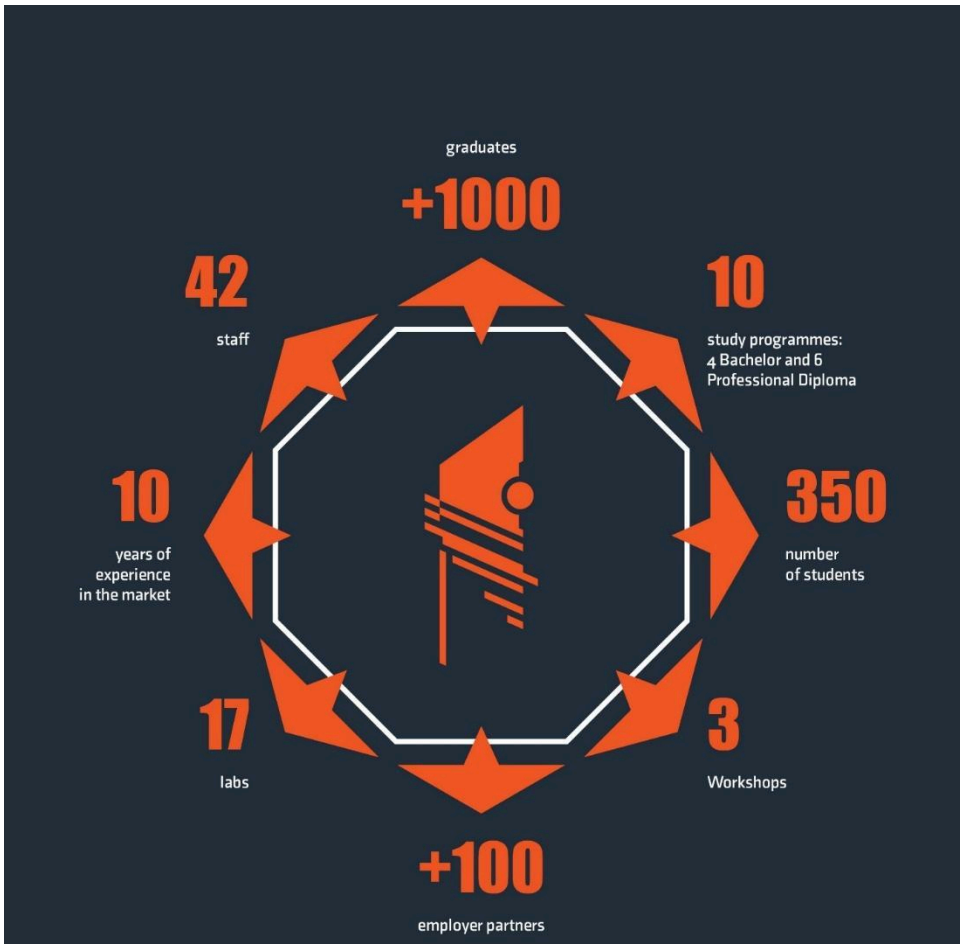


Fig. 1 TCT in figures

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Existing learner support services

Individual counselling - TCT encourages students' support services at different levels of operation. Students are encouraged to discuss any questions whether with faculty members /administrative staff, which appears more feasible considering the moderate number of students.

Group guidance - TCT offers Academic Counselling, Tutorship and Focus groups during the whole academic year.

Employer cooperation – Based on the extended network of +100 business partnerships, TCT provides:

- extracurricular activities (i.e trainings, workshops) for special industry sectors advising students on novelties in the given industry including legislation, new equipment etc.
- open /guest lectures from industry delivered frequently.
- Work fair organized every May in TCT premises.
- Curricula review from the business
- Internship and work placement opportunities

As of this year, TCT will establish Labor Market Board (with at least 3 members), one Board for each of its faculties. The Board shall consult the study programs to guarantee they are in accordance with the labor market demands and should also guarantee the smooth implementation of professional practices and other activities related to labor market.

Internship support - The Professional Practice (placement in company/organization) is a mandatory course of each professional study program taking place during the last semester of the second (final) year. The entire process is regulated by special regulations which are subject to revisions with the aim of improving it. As a course it has 10 ECTS. It lasts 6 weeks (approx. 210 hours) and it's "hands on job" training /placement in the respective business or industry related to the study program of the student.

This practice course serves the practical and professional training of the student and in the same time the student is acquainted with the working and corporate culture. It is also an opportunity to find a potential employer in the hosting entity. For these reasons, practice as a course takes place at the latest stage of studies when the student has created a clear profile and has the skills and competences that allows him to be part of the job, to be then a potential employee.

The hosting entities (related industries / businesses / organisations) are mainly made available from TCT based on the respective partnerships and collaboration with a wide variety of hosting organisations. The pool of the available hosting organisations is updated every year.

Upon the termination of the internship, the student presents the internship file to the internship ad hoc commission and is graded accordingly. The process is complex and requires careful and accurate planning beforehand. It requires the involvement of the Office of Students' Information, Career and Support, Departments and staff members.

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Guidance Sessions – organized with the collaboration of Career Counselling Office, Municipality of Tirana, in which the students are introduced to the preparation of the Career Dossier and all its elements and job opportunities with Municipality of Tirana.

Work placement suggestions/ work vacancies - usually shared via email, webpage or social media.



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2. Strategic Context and Needs Analysis[1]

Albania is an official candidate to the European Union since 27th June 2014. On 25th March 2020, the member states of the European Union gave their agreement to start the negotiations to integrate Albania into the Union. On 19th July 2022, the EU opened enlargement negotiations with Albania.
Albania has an estimated population of 2.75 million and outward migration representing 43.6% of all Albanian citizens**.** Unfortunately, it is noted that [..] *Albania has ageing populations, with the share of youth in the labour market decreasing. This trend is exacerbated in some cases by the tendency of young people to leave their country*[2]. The country faces shrinking cohorts of young people and regional depopulation, especially in rural and northern areas. These dynamics reduce labour supply and heighten the need for upskilling and reskilling.

In a general overview, the Albanian Economy is based on 5 pillars:

1. Agriculture and its derivates (in terms of production, food processing, oil and dairy production etc. with special focus on fruits, olive, nuts etc., machine related to agriculture).
2. Tourism and its derivates, from agro - farms as business family to well established resorts, slow food, traditional food, historic attraction, hiking, nature etc.). The sector is growing and beside hospitality staff, is in need of maintenance staff in terms of building and its related maintenance system (such as electrical, HVAC, lifts etc.).
3. Energy production; besides electrical energy, favorable hydrologic conditions, including attention and investment in photovoltaic and Eolic parks etc.
4. Gas and gas related investment (gas pipeline) in the short and long term.
5. Mining industry with focus on iron, chromium, as well as oil and gas.

Albania is a former communist country with one of the most harsh and isolated dictatorships. As has been noted by a number of researchers (Sultana, 2007; Borbély-Pecze et al., 2022), the collectivist nature of socialist economic and social goals declared in periodic development plans. Personal preference came second to such goals, and as a consequence there seemed to be little use for career guidance, which at best languished as a sub-discipline of vocational and differential psychology, if at all[3]. Albania had quite a good history of VET until the '90, although it was politically motivated and driven in the given conditions of the dictatorship. There was a well-established VET ecosystem both in high and higher education given the isolation of the country during the communist regime. Unlike its neighbors, Albania did not maintain the system of vocational education and industrial development during the transition years.
Since many years now, the Albanian Government has continuously emphasized the importance of vocational education but most of the attention is given to high vocational education (aged 15-19). Albania has placed vocational education and training (VET) at the center of its skills and employment agenda through the National Employment and Skills Strategy (NESS) 2023–2030 and the Education, Training and Research Strategy 2021–2030**.** Key priorities include improving the quality and attractiveness of VET, strengthening work-based learning and apprenticeships, enhancing digital and green skills, aligning qualifications with labour market needs, and strengthening cooperation between education providers and employers.

[1] For this section the information is mainly retrieved from https://www.etf.europa.eu/en/where-we-work/countries/albania
[2] ETF 2022, page 14
[3] ETF 2022, page 15

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VET reforms deepened through 2024. Albania's recent VET and skills reforms have created a more supportive environment for practice-oriented education, work-based learning, career guidance, digitalization, green skills and lifelong learning. Career guidance has been strengthened across VET schools, while dual VET, cooperation with employers and work-based learning have expanded. The National Employment and Skills Strategy 2023–2030, the Education, Training and Research Strategy 2021–2030, and Albania's EU integration process further reinforce the importance of employability, digital and green skills, lifelong learning and stronger education–business cooperation.

The exemption of higher vocational programmes from the minimum GPA requirement applicable to first-cycle Bachelor programmes can facilitate access and provide an alternative pathway for students seeking professionally oriented higher education[4]. At institutional level, this reinforces the importance of clearly positioning professional programmes as credible pathways to employment, further learning and lifelong skills development.

However, important institutional and systemic barriers remain. In particular, digital skills remain a major national challenge, with only 1.7% of adults engaged in lifelong learning. VET and skills reform has targeted only public high education, leaving little to no room for the nonpublic higher education.

The National Internship Programme[5] targets young people holding Bachelor's or Master's degrees and therefore does not provide equivalent access for holders of Higher Education Professional Diploma[1] Furthermore, Professional Diplomas are generally not included among the mandatory qualification requirements for vacancies in state institutions, and holders may not receive the same qualification-related financial recognition as other higher education graduates. Graduates of Higher Education Professional Diploma programmes are currently disadvantaged in accessing public-sector employment opportunities and it is not listed as a criterion for licensing and operating certain services such as electrical services, AC services etc.

These limitations have direct implications for institutions providing professional higher education. They affect the attractiveness of professional programmes and limit graduates' access to public-sector career pathways. Yet the demand from private business and industry remains high and in the same time, the trend to establish one's own business in increasing.

[4] Initially set at 6 in 2018 and since 2020 and on 6.5 as adopted with Decision no. 436, date 3.6.2020 "On determining the average GPA for the admission of candidates to first-cycle study programs and second-cycle integrated study programs or the transfer of studies to the intermediate years of these programs, in HEIs, for the 2020–2021 and 2021-2022 academic years and onwards" (see: https://unitir.edu.al/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Vendimi-I-KM-Nr.-436-dat%C3%AB-03062020.pdf

[5] The National Internship Program aims to engage participants in an integrated work experience involving interaction with career professionals in the public administration, thereby providing a qualifying experience that fosters the development of professional skills and practical competencies, as well as familiarity with the public administrative system. Up to 250 interns may be selected for employment under a one-year contract: up to 200 in state administration institutions and up to 50 in other public institutions. Selection is conducted by the host institutions based on an evaluation of the interns' performance during the internship. The program offers an opportunity for young professionals aged 21 to 29—holders of Bachelor's or Master's degrees—who have not previously participated in the program or worked in the public administration (with the exception of administrative support roles). The three-month internship counts as work experience during recruitment processes for public administration institutions (see more at: https://praktika.rinia.gov.al/?page_id=36

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Labor Market Context

Labor market trends

During 2025, the labor force is estimated to be 1,279,906 persons, where males account for 54.2% of the labour force and females 45.8%. Employment is estimated at 1,172,359 persons, from which males account for 54.8% and females 45.2%. The total number of unemployed persons is estimated at 107,548, of whom 47.3% are men and 52.7% are women.

In 2025, the official unemployment rate for the population aged 15 year and more is 8.4%. For the age group 15–64 years, the unemployment rate is 9.3%, representing a decrease of 0.1 percentage points compared with 2024.

The unemployment rate for men is 2.4 percentage points lower than that for women.

69.3% of the population aged 15-64 years old1 is employed, 9.3% is unemployed and 23.7% is economically inactive (outside the labour force).

76.0% of male population aged 15-64 years old are employed, 8.2% are unemployed and 17.3% are outside the labour force.

62.7% of female population aged 15-64 years old are employed, 10.6% are unemployed and 29.9% are outside the labour force.

The average gross monthly wage of paid employees in Albania is estimated at 84,112 ALL, which is 8.6% higher than in 2024.

The gender pay gap is estimated at 4.6%, indicating that the average gross monthly wage of men is 4.6% higher than that of women. Compared with 2024, the gender pay gap has narrowed by 0.3 percentage points.

12.6% of contributors of the category of employees receive an average monthly gross wage up to the official minimum wage level.

By sector, employment remained dominated by services and agriculture. Around 47% of workers were employed in the services sector, while 34% worked in agriculture. Digital skills remain a major national challenge, with only 1.7% of adults engaged in lifelong learning

Overall, the 2025 figures point to a more stable labour market, characterized by declining unemployment, rising wages, and lower levels of informality.

Our country's economy is oriented towards and underpinned by two key pillars: tourism and agriculture. It is worth noting that according to INSTAT, in July 2026, Albania was visited by 1,955,099 foreign visitors, compared to 1,825,490 visitors in July 2025—an increase of over 7 percent.

The Albanian government's strategy relies on domestic production to support these two vital pillars. This encompasses a wide range of activities: from the processing industries for various products, tourism product development, and destination management, to the provision of installation, operational, and maintenance services—all adhering to European standards—and the digitalization of services in line with the highest benchmarks, particularly those of EU.

Significant developments in the energy sector also merit mention; much like in tourism, agriculture, and their related service sectors, the demand for skilled labor here is steadily rising. This includes services such as the installation and maintenance of HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning) systems, swimming pool infrastructure, and greenhouse systems, as well as agricultural mechanics, smart management systems for accommodation facilities, smart technologies, energy efficiency solutions, and renewable energy systems. In light of the above, we believe that—from a demand perspective—there is significant growth regarding engineering profiles.

The development and modernization of transport infrastructure has been and remains a key priority for the Albanian Government, aiming to: i) create the prerequisites for the development of other economic

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sectors, particularly tourism; ii) enhance access for goods and passengers to trade and service provision within regional and European markets; and iii) contribute significantly to the country's overall economic growth and development.
Today, Albania counts 4,065 active employers in the ICT sector, 63.3% of which are relatively young companies with less than five years of activity. Moreover, 51.1% of businesses export their services, signalling a sector with international presence and ambition. With 22,972 professionals, including 10,049 software developers, ICT in Albania is built on a strong talent base, where 80% of professionals work at mid or senior levels. The vast majority, 90.3%, are employed in the private sector, while 82.4% are concentrated in Tirana, creating a powerful urban ecosystem but also a clear gap between the capital and other regions. While demand continues to rise for roles such as programmers, IT specialists, cybersecurity experts, and Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning professionals, the challenge is increasingly shifting towards retention: the sector has an average turnover rate of 12.3%, and 42.6% of businesses express concern about the rising costs of retaining talent. ICT is transitioning from an emerging industry to a mature one, with relatively moderate employment growth of 5% between 2021 and 2024. Also, based on the admission and enrolment data of students in HE, the fields of health, IT, and engineering in general, followed by economics and finance programs remain the most preferred.
This support TCT academic portfolio regarding Professional Diploma and Bachelor study programs.

Institutional Needs
The national priorities highlight the growing importance of high-quality career guidance within VET institutions. Career guidance supports informed learning and career choices, facilitates transitions between education and work, promotes inclusion, and encourages lifelong learning. By strengthening career guidance services, institutions contribute directly to Albania's national goals for skills development, employability, social inclusion, and economic growth.
It appears that higher institutions should combine strengthened employer cooperation and career guidance with policy dialogue and advocacy for greater recognition of Higher Education Professional Diplomas in internship schemes, public-sector recruitment and qualification frameworks
These developments increase the need for higher vocational education institutions to strengthen their own links with employers, integrate digital and green competences into curricula, and provide structured career guidance and transition-to-employment services.

Besides the good consolidated experience as a professional college focused in higher education professional programs, the shift to University College, brough new opportunities and challenges in the same time. Based on the provisions of the Statute of TCT, the Rector supervises student life and activities such as cultural groups, student centers, as well as the career counseling and student care process. The learner guidance is a shared responsibility between Students' Career, Support and Information Office and the Departments. At the moment with the reorganization of the College, learner guidance appears to be moderate, foreseen in documents, but less doable in practice with lack of dedicated trained staff. The transition of the College, altogether with the transition to a well-established CG system within the institution, requires a clear path to be followed with clear and set KPIs and objectives. The current academic staff involved lacks training on career guidance and tools, which should be mentioned is also a burden to their actual teaching load.

The identified labour-market trends and national policy priorities have direct implications for TCT's institutional strategy: 1. In curriculum development, increasing demand for *practical,* digital, technical and green skills requires *regular curriculum review peer reviewed with the business* and stronger

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integration of emerging technologies, sustainability competences and practical, work-based learning across programmes. 2. For the Career Guidance Office, the priority is to strengthen labour-market information, individual career planning, internship preparation and systematic graduate tracking, enabling students to make informed career choices and supporting their transition from study to employment. 3. Employer engagement should move beyond internship placement towards structured and continuous cooperation, including employer input into curricula, guest lectures, company-based projects, mentoring and feedback on graduate skills. 4. Encourage the collaboration in the quadruple helix to increase collaboration not only with industry, but with policy makers, media and civil society in order to encourage adoption of inclusive/meticulous policies with regard to professional diploma. Together, these measures strengthen student employability by ensuring that graduates acquire not only occupation-specific technical competences, but also digital, green and transversal skills aligned with changing employer expectations. This creates a direct link between external labour-market developments and TCT's curriculum, career services and partnerships with industry.

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3. Methodology for Strategy Development

Preparation of the Career Guidance Strategy

The spirit of the "TCT" University College is use "in extremis" of scientific and practical knowledge in the function of professions and the labor market, thus "TCT" is the "shortest connection to the labor market". TCT applies ESG standards for its academic and research process, with clear pre-defined and published regulations covering all phases of the student "life cycle", providing conditions and support that are necessary for students to make progress in their academic career is in the best interest of the individual students, programmes, institutions and systems. TCT monitors and periodically reviews their programmes to ensure that they achieve the objectives set for them and respond to the needs of students and society.
The Career Guidance Strategy development process was developed through a participatory process involving TCT leadership, faculty members, students, external stakeholders, and project partners. The aim was to ensure that the strategy reflects the needs of HEI and the learners, aligns with labour market requirements, and builds upon national and international good practices. The preparation process combined internal review, stakeholder consultation, and learning from international experience.

Internal Preparation

Besides the good consolidated experience as a professional college focused in higher education professional programs, the shift to University College, brough new opportunities and challenges in the same time. The strategic objectives of TCT are to be defined in its Strategic Development plan, where CG plays also an important role.

The first step in the preparation was paired alongside the preparation of the new statute and related documents of TCT. Initially, a series of management meetings between the Rector and the rectorate were conducted involving heads of departments, deans and key administrative staff. These meetings provided strategic direction, established priorities, and ensured that career guidance would be integrated into the institution's overall development objectives.
It was agreed that with the new bylaw and the new organization chart, the Career, Information and Students' Support Office will be considered as an auxiliary academic unit being under the supervision of the Rector and the Administrator in the same time.
The functions of the Office were accurately described in the regulation of TCT.

Further, a team lead by the Administrator was set with clear tasks and timelines to complete them.
The team initially reviewed the current practices, available services, staff roles, resources, and student support mechanisms, which review and assessment helped identify strengths, gaps, challenges, and opportunities for improvement.
Its members also participated in the Study Visits developed in the frame of the CG project.
The prepared assessments were continually updated and helpful for the preparation of framework of the strategy. In the same time the assessments and the workshops developed during the study visits were crucial documents for the preparation of the strategy.
Faculty members and administrative staff involved in CG provided their feedback and contribution based on their experience, highlighting good practices and concerns.
A valuable contribution came from the staff involved during the admission process and internship process, whose feedback gave perspectives from two different point of view: entry and exit in the system.

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Student Feedback was collected through focus groups, classroom discussions, and Students' Council consultations. Learners shared their experiences, identified challenges in making career decisions, and suggested improvements to better support their educational and professional aspirations.

External Consultation

To ensure that the strategy responds to labor market needs and community expectations, consultations were conducted with external stakeholders.

Companies - partners of TCT, generally involved in curricula review, open lectures, forums and internships, were consulted to identify current and emerging workforce needs, key employability skills, and opportunities for student engagement through workplace visits, internships, mentoring, and job-shadowing activities. Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Tirana offered valuable insights into business sector needs, skills shortages.

Their contributions supported the development of stronger employer engagement mechanisms.

Alumni Council which was recently established, played an important role whereas former students shared their educational and career journeys, especially in establishing their own business, the barriers to access work placement with public companies /public administration. Their experiences provided valuable feedback on the effectiveness of previous guidance services and highlighted the support that learners need during transitions from education to employment or further study.

Learning from the Project was a stepping stone to the building of the strategy. As a matter of fact, it is worth emphasizing that the participation in the project served as a catalyst to the whole process, both in triggering it faster and adopt and implement it more efficiently.

The first step was the desk research and deepened inquiry on Task 2.1 "Definition of last policies and regulations on Career Guidance in Albania". It helped us move smoothly from the macro perspective (national /reginal based) to the micro perspective of TCT reality.

Second: The online training on the CG platform with structured modules, practical tools and assessments as a full Career Guidance Experts Course, improved and strengthened career guidance skills of our staff.

Third, the study visits to Finland and the Netherlands, explored different approaches to career guidance, and helped us reflect on our own institutional reality, advantages, challenges and opportunities.

Building on the Action Plans developed in Finland, TCT presented the work carried out within its institution, including its current Career Guidance provision, main challenges, strengths, vision, strategic objectives, and initial action ideas.

Working in mixed groups, participants discussed the main Career Guidance challenges faced by each school, existing good practices, realistic actions for the next academic year, ways to involve employers more actively, support for vulnerable learners, and ideas from Finland and the Netherlands that could be adapted locally.

Modern counselling methods, employer engagement models, well-prepared professionals, supported by a coherent training framework were some of the topics accurately presented.

It was worth noting that even within the EU countries the approach was different and this was a good opportunity to critically analyse what elements could realistically be adapted in the contexts of Tirana College of Technology.

These visits helped the institutions to move beyond isolated activities and share their own experience. Alongside this strategic work, both visits introduced innovative educational models showing how Career

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Guidance can be supported through entrepreneurship, an important element which TCT aims to improve and enhance through its own curricula[6] and EU supported projects[7].

Adapting Lessons to the Local Context

The knowledge and experience gained through project's activities were carefully analyzed and contextualized to reflect national educational, social, and economic realities and in the same time to be relevant to TCT community. Rather than just replicating international models, TCT relied on it's already identified good practices and enhanced them with the ones that were feasible, relevant, and sustainable within existing resources, institutional capacities, and national policy frameworks. This process of adaptation ensured that international good practices were transformed into practical measures capable of generating meaningful impact for students, employers, and the wider community.

The Career Guidance Strategy aims to empower students to make informed educational and career decisions while responding effectively to the evolving needs of the labour market and the local community.

The Career Guidance Strategy in TCT was developed to embed and include:

- A more structured, systematic, and student-centered career guidance framework covering different phasis of the student's life, throughout their academic journey;
- Stronger partnerships and collaboration with the labor marker, business and industry and state institution where possible and relevant;
- Enhanced use of the existing +100 partners and related data to support informed career planning;
- Clear strategic objectives, measurable performance indicators, and mechanisms for monitoring, evaluation, and continuous improvement.
- Innovative educational models based on entrepreneurship
- The need of dedicated well-prepared professionals, supported by a coherent training framework
  Professional capacity is essential for quality guidance services. Effective career guidance depends on trained staff, continuous professional development, access to relevant tools and resources, and institutional commitment to maintaining high-quality services.
- International cooperation driving innovation and continuous improvement.

To support the implementation and sustainability of these objectives, besides the Career, Information and Students' Support Office, Departments as the primary responsible of CG, TCT aims to rely on several important structures and partnerships:

1. Membership in the Entrepreneurs in Education League, a network of non-public higher education institutions that promotes collaboration between academia and the business sector.
2. Labour Market Board, one for each Faculty. The Board provides guidance on curriculum relevance, ensures alignment of study programmes with labour market needs, supports the

[6] "Basis of entrepreneurship" is a course to all study programs of TCT. Also, in the frame of Intrabuild Project, TVCT has adopted its Entrepreneurship Strategy 2025–2030 and has in place the IntraSphere - a physical and digital space that acts as a catalyst for internal innovation projects, hosting student activities and competitions, prototyping labs, and interdisciplinary collaboration opportunities. The Strategy provides inter alia: Develop Entrepreneurial Mindsets, Strengthen Strategic Partnerships and the Quadruple Helix Model etc.

[7] TCT is a project coordinator of INTRABUILD project - Cultivating Academic Intrapreneurship in Western Balkans. The INTRABUILD project aims to create a transformative and inclusive internal culture within universities that fosters intrapreneurship among all its actors with the HEI, which can further promote innovation and link the university with external entrepreneurial activities. Cultivation of characteristics of intrapreneurship in academia, the concept of the intrapreneurial university emerges as a compelling avenue for innovation and entrepreneurship.(see more at: https://intrabuild-eu.org/

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implementation of professional practices and internships, and strengthens cooperation with employers.

3. The Alumni Council, which contributes to the institution's strategic development, strengthens alumni engagement, provides valuable labour market insights, and advocates for the interests and reputation of the institution.

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4. Institutional Analysis

This analysis provides a comprehensive assessment of the current state of career guidance at TCT, identifying existing institutional capacities as well as the main gaps and challenges that need to be addressed. The analysis examines the organisation and coordination of career guidance services, available human resources and staff competencies, student access to career information and counselling, cooperation with stakeholders, work-based learning opportunities, alumni engagement, graduate tracking, and the integration of career guidance within institutional processes. It highlights important foundations on which TCT can build, while also identifying areas requiring further development, particularly the need for a more systematic and coordinated approach, dedicated and skilled Career Office staff, stronger employer and alumni engagement, improved use of labour market information, and more structured support for students' transition to employment. Based on the institutional analysis, the strategic priorities are not defined as separate interventions, but represent a direct institutional response to the strengths, weaknesses and development needs identified through this very analysis.

4.1 Current Career Guidance Situation

Area	Current Situation
Individual counselling	TCT has the student in focus and encourages students' support services at different levels of operation. Students are encouraged to discuss any questions whether with faculty members /administrative staff, something which is more feasible considering the moderate students' number. However, more often they appear to be individual unilateral acts undertaken whether from the staff members or the student rather than a formal process; i.e upon a request for advice for internship/employment, reference/support from staff members to students etc.
Group guidance sessions	The regulations of TCT provide for the Academic Counselling, Tutorship and Focus groups to take place during the whole academic year. But although they are in place by means of regulations, they appear formal processes being moderately active. Students are reluctant to participate/to share information. Thus, the whole process needs to be improved: 1. Students needs to be well informed on these processes 2. At the beginning they should be mandatory. The process should aim to become effective Staff lack training on career guidance, which should be mentioned is also a burden to their actual teaching load.

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Career information services	Information on further studies, professional certifications in extracurricular activities presented to students; Employer presentations (usually once a month), career fairs (once a year), networking events, and industry engagement activities are as well organized. Standard forms, work placement suggestions, or labor platform are usually shared via email or sharefolder/drive, webpage or social media. TCT has established the Alumni Council and Alumni success stories are shared in the social media or in forums.
Internship / placement support	Six weeks internship during the second semester of the second (final) year is a mandatory course for each VET study program. The Professional Practice (placement in company/organization) is a compulsory course of each study program. The entire process is regulated by special regulations which are subject to revisions with the aim of improving it. As a course it has 10 ECTS and takes place in the last semester of the second year. It lasts 6 weeks (approx. 210 hours) and it's "hands on job" training /placement in the respective business or industry related to the study program of the student. This practice course serves the practical and professional training of the student and in the same time the student is acquainted with the working and corporate culture. It is also an opportunity to find a potential employer in the hosting entity. For these reasons, practice as a course takes place at the latest stage of studies when the student has created a clear profile and has the skills and competences that allows him to be part of the job, to be then a potential employee. The hosting entities (related industries / businesses / organisations) are mainly made available from TCT based on the respective partnerships and collaboration with a wide variety of hosting organisations. The pool of the available hosting organisations is updated every year. In few cases the hosting entity is suggested from the student as it may be a family business, or an entity other than those suggested from the pool of TCT. The Regulation provides for 3 evaluations: 1. Student self-evaluation; 2. Teacher assigned as a mentor evaluation; 3. Hosting entity evaluation. The evaluation form template is part of the Regulation. Upon the termination of the internship, the student presents the internship file to the internship ad hoc commission and is graded accordingly.

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	The process is complex and requires careful and accurate planning beforehand. It requires the involvement of the Office of Students' Information, Career and Support, Departments and staff members. Considering the flow of students that are to be tended accordingly, the period of internship appears to be quite engaging for the staff. It is more challenging to quite difficult to find suitable placement for students of Database and Web Design, and ICT. Although mandatory attendance during internship is 75%, students need to be advised and mentored accordingly during internships.
Employer cooperation	During the years, TCT has built an extended network of +100 business partnerships. There are well established practices in TCT: Extracurricular activities for special industry sectors which help students be informed on novelties in the given industry including legislation, new equipment etc. Usually, they are organized like training workshops and participants receive certificates. Employees of SMEs/business of the related industry also participate. Open /guest lectures from industry are delivered frequently. A work fair is organized every May in TCT premises. As of this year, TCT will establish Labour Market Board (with at least 3 members), one Board for each of its faculties. The Board should consult the study programs to guarantee they are in accordance with the labor market demands and should also guarantee the smooth implementation of professional practices and other activities related to labor market. Professional Diploma is not part of the mandatory requirements /criteria for vacancies in state/government institutions. Even if employed, they don't enjoy benefits of a higher education diploma in financial terms. Despite the large network, the business /industry partners appear to have different levels of engagement /contribution with regard to activities, considering conflicting agendas there may be in place. Very few agreements with PES/Public administration. Thus, it is needed to keep the network up and running, expanding and healthy in the same time in order to achieve effective results.

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	It is needed to improve the collaboration with public institutions in order to be more effective and with tangible results. Since years now, TCT has been paying its best efforts to have LEVEL 5 Diploma recognized as a criterion for employment in the public administration /state owned institutions. We believe that there are many vacant positions in public administration that can be filled accordingly by students with the appropriate practical orientation who have completed higher professional studies, such as database specialists, IT, topography, geodesy, graphic design, etc. for which 2 years of education with 120 credits, and with many practical hours, is enough to prepare the right professionals for the positions.
Graduate transition support	TCT focuses on how it can help students successfully move from education into employment, entrepreneurship, or further study. Mainly this support is provided from Faculty members, Career Office and Contracts Office. Faculty members and Contracts Office provide advice to well performing students who meet the GPA criteria to further continue their studies in Bachelor for the moment. The BA students are yet in their second year. Faculty members, mainly through the Career Office and the Career Office by itself provide access to internship, traineeship, and graduate employment opportunities through employer partnerships; Faculty members through the Course "Basis of Entrepreneurship", E commerce and Project Office in the frame of Intrabuild Project, provide guidance for Entrepreneurship.
Inclusion support	TCT has the student in focus and encourages students' support services at different levels of operation to all students without any limitation or discrimination. The moderate number of students encourages a closer, familiar communication with students. It is worth noting that female students are very few, as professional studies do not appear that attractive to them.
Digital guidance tools	There are not any digital tools in place like a platform or system. TCT relies on e-mail communication, assigned WhatsApp groups, online forms when needed. Standard forms, work placement suggestions, or labor platform are usually shared via email or share folder/drive, webpage or social media. Considering the transition to University College, it may be worth to consider to allow students to build career e-portfolios with: projects, certifications, internships etc. and/or to see the possibility to build our own kind of Job Platforms with all the demands we receive from industry.

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Based on the above analysis, the main institutional gaps are: Lack of an assigned skilled person in Career Office, with career guidance proper training /background. Staff involved in career guidance lack training on career guidance, which is also a burden to their actual teaching load. The Individual counselling and Group guidance sessions appear to be individual unilateral acts undertaken whether from the staff members or the student rather than a regulated institutional process; or moderately being duly implemented. Students appear to lack information on these processes and are reluctant to participate/to share information. With regard to Internship (which is a well-regulated process, whereas 80% of the students are employed during it), considering the flow of students that are to be tended accordingly, the period of internship appears to be quite engaging for the staff, besides their normal burden. Despite the demand from the labor market, it is more challenging to find suitable placement for given study programs (Database and Web Design, and ICT). Professional Diploma is not part of the mandatory requirements /criteria for vacancies in state/government institutions. Even if employed, they don't enjoy benefits of a higher education diploma in financial terms. TCT has very few agreements with PES/Public administration and due to the provisions of the legislation in force, its students are not part of the National Internship Program. It is worth noting that female students are very few, as professional studies do not appear that attractive to them. As far as specific digital guidance tools are concerned there are not any digital tools in place like a platform or system. TCT relies on e-mail communication, assigned WhatsApp groups, online forms when needed. TCT is considering to established a Chatbot with FAQs on Career Guidance.

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4.2 SWOT Analysis

Based on the below SWOT analysis, the strategic objectives were adopted by highlighting the areas where TCT needs to consolidate existing strengths while addressing institutional gaps and making better use of emerging opportunities. In particular, the absence of dedicated and sufficiently trained Career Guidance staff, upskilling of existing staff, together with the need for stronger cooperation with public institutions, points to the importance of strengthening the institutional capacity, visibility and quality of Career Guidance services. At the same time, TCT's extensive network of more than 100 business partners, mandatory internships, practice-oriented academic staff and established cooperation with industry provide a strong foundation for developing more systematic employer engagement and improving students' transition from education to employment.

The opportunities identified in the SWOT further shape the strategic direction. The establishment of the Labour Market Board and Alumni Council provides new mechanisms for incorporating employer and graduate feedback into curriculum development, career services and institutional decision-making. TCT's transition towards University College status, its technology-oriented academic profile, participation in EU-funded projects and Albania's EU integration process also create opportunities to strengthen career guidance in line with European approaches, expand international cooperation and respond more effectively to changing digital, green and technical skills needs.

It is worth emphasizing that strategic objectives should focus on strengthening the institutional capacity and quality of Career Guidance; developing structured and sustainable employer and alumni engagement; improving labour-market intelligence and its use in curriculum and career guidance; strengthening students' employability, work-based learning and school-to-work transition; and expanding institutional cooperation and advocacy for greater recognition of Professional Diploma graduates. These priorities also provide a response to external threats, particularly demographic decline, migration and decreasing student enrolment, by strengthening the labour-market relevance, attractiveness and demonstrated employment value of TCT's study programmes.

Strengths	Weaknesses
1. During the years, TCT has focused its academic portfolio to technology-oriented study programs, which are enriched with level 6 study programs. 2. During the years, TCT has built an extended network of +100 business partnerships. 3. Well established practices in TCT: ● extracurricular activities for special industry sectors which help students be informed on novelties in the given industry including legislation, new equipment etc.	1. Professional Diploma is not part of the state internship programme which is launched from the government (although out of our reach since its policy based). 2. Professional Diploma is not part of the mandatory requirements /criteria for vacancies in state/government institutions; Even if employed, they don't enjoy benefits of a higher education diploma in financial terms. Professional Diploma is not part of the mandatory requirements /criteria for licensing and exercising different professions which pose a threat to the quality of such services.

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Usually, they are organized like training workshops and participants receive certificates. ● Open /guest lectures from industry are delivered frequently. ● A work fair is organized every May in TCT premises. ● Memorandum of Understanding/ Collaboration Agreements are entered into with the new business partners. ● Business partners are often invited in the activities organized from TCT like conferences, workshops etc. 4. Six weeks internship during the second semester of the second (final) year is a mandatory course for each VET study program. 5. TCT staff is a great combination of academia and practice-oriented professionals. 6. A good international project portfolio. 7. The College is equipped with advanced laboratories and technologies for project-based and practical learning in the different areas in an easy to access location.	3. Lower collaboration rate with state/government institutions. 4. Lacking a dedicated skilled well prepared and assigned staff member to Career Office. 5. Lack of specific /upskilling staff training in regard to career guidance.
Opportunities	**Threats**
1. The shift from Professional College to University College 2. Member of the Entrepreneurs in Education League (nonpublic HEIs) 3. Establishment of Labour Market Board, with a at least 3 members, one for each faculty. The Board should consult the study programs to guarantee they are in accordance with the labor market demands and	1. Migration of the population 2. Decreasing number of students in high schools. 3. HEIs Decreasing number of students enrolled in HEIs and in study programs

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should also guarantee the smooth implementation of professional practices and other activities related to labor market. 4. Alumni Council recently established aiming to establish the development strategy of TCT and to lobby on its behalf. 5. Albania positioning in EU integration. 6. Increased attention/orientation to technology - oriented study programs 7. Participation in various EU projects.	

The SWOT analysis serves as a solid institutional foundation for strengthening Career Guidance at TCT, particularly its technology-oriented academic profile, established internship practices, close interaction with students, and extensive network of more than 100 business and industry partners. These strengths provide a strong basis for expanding work-based learning, employer engagement, and career development opportunities. At the same time, priority weaknesses include the insufficiently structured and coordinated provision of Career Guidance, limited specialized staff capacity, uneven student participation, limited cooperation with PES and public institutions, insufficient graduate tracking. Opportunities arise from employer and alumni networks, the establishment of Labor Market Boards, participation in national and international projects, increasing demand for digital and technical skills, and opportunities to strengthen cooperation with labour market institutions. However, implementation must also consider external threats, including rapid changes in skills requirements, competition for qualified graduates, limited recognition of Level 5 professional qualifications in parts of the public sector, and employers' varying capacity to engage consistently in institutional activities. These findings have directly informed the Strategic Objectives in Section 5, which prioritise stronger institutional capacity and coordination, improved Career Guidance and employability services, systematic labour market and stakeholder engagement, enhanced transition support, digitalization, and evidence-based monitoring and continuous improvement.

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4.3. Key challenges

Main challenges identified relate to ensuring consistent data collection, establishing systematic graduate tracking, increasing student participation in feedback mechanisms, and maintaining regular engagement with employers and other labour market stakeholders. Additional challenges include limited specialised staff capacity, the absence of integrated digital tools for managing Career Guidance data, and the need to move from activity-based monitoring towards the measurement of outcomes and impact. Addressing these challenges will require clear institutional responsibilities, appropriate monitoring tools, staff capacity building, and the systematic use of evidence to inform annual planning and continuous improvement of Career Guidance services.

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5. Vision, Mission and Strategic Objectives

Career guidance is an integral function within a HEI. It helps students make informed decisions, improves employability outcomes, strengthens connections with industry, and enhances the institution's overall impact. By investing in comprehensive career guidance services, an HEI supports both individual student success and broader economic and societal development.
Career guidance is most effective when it is systemic and embedded within the institution. Career guidance is a shared responsibility with the active involvement of academic staff, career counsellors, leadership, employers, alumni, and external partners.
Career guidance in 5 years should be strategic, data-driven, student-centered, and integrated into the academic ecosystem—not a standalone service. Career guidance should evolve into a personalized, continuous career development ecosystem that supports students before entry, during study, and after graduation. Career readiness for a dynamic labor market should become a learning outcome.
The Vision, Mission, and Strategic Objectives aims to be ambitious but on the same time realistic, clearly aligned with the context of the Institution student success, and having as a target the employability, lifelong learning, and labour market needs.

5.1 Vision Statement

To be a leading institution in empowering every student to build a qualitative meaningful career, achieve lifelong employability, and contribute to the social and economic development of the community.

5.2 Mission Statement

Mission

TCT is committed to provide accessible, inclusive, and high-quality career guidance throughout the student journey and transition to employment. Through career counselling, career information, employability development, work-based learning, and collaboration with stakeholders, TCT fosters a culture that equips students and graduates with the knowledge, skills, confidence, and opportunities to make informed career decisions and successfully transition to employment, entrepreneurship, or further education.

5.3 Strategic Objectives

SO1: Establish a career guidance coordination system: Develop a coordinated, institution-wide approach to career support.
SO2: Improve Learner Employability: Ensure graduates are equipped with relevant skills and career readiness for the labor market.
SO3: Strengthen Employer Cooperation
SO4: Build staff capacity and sustainable services
SO5. Professional Diploma is recognized as an official mandatory requirement /criterion for vacancies in state/government institutions; [although out of our reach since despite our best efforts it's a fully government policy based]

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6. Career Guidance Service Model

6.1 Career Guidance Service Model

Service	Target Group	Delivery Method	Frequency	Responsible
Individual counselling	*All students*	*Face-to-face*	*Monthly/ Annual*	*CG Coordinator, Faculty Members through mentorship and academic counselling*
Group workshops/ Focus groups	*All students*	*Study program-based*	*Each semester*	*Prorector*
Career planning sessions	*All learners*	*Workshops*	*Annual*	*CG Team*
CV / Interview preparation	*Final-year students*	*Workshops / online*	*Annual*	*CG Team*
Internship support	*VET learners in second (final) year*	*Employer visits / mentoring*	*Forth semester (second year)*	*Career Office* *coordinated with Department*
Entrepreneurship guidance	*Learners interested in self-employment*	*Course /Workshops*	*Semester-based depending when the course is available according to the teaching plan.*	*Entrepreneurship lecturer/invited guest lecture*
Alumni mentoring	*Final-year learners*	*Alumni talks / peer mentoring*	*Twice yearly*	*CG Coordinator coordinated with Alumni Council*

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Inclusion support	*Learners at risk / vulnerable groups*	*Individual support*	*Continuous*	*Prorector*
Digital guidance support	*All learners*	*Online platforms*	*Continuous*	*CG Team with the support of IT office*

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7. Governance, Partnerships and Resources

The Strategy is subject of approval from the Academic Senate.
The body in charge for its implementation shall be the Career, Information and Students' Support Office and the Departments as the main units where career guidance services shall be developed and implemented.
Upon the start of the new academic year the Career Information and Students' Support Office prepares the annual calendar highlighting the main periodic activities which includes inter alia: (i) annual work fair; (ii) Alumni Council meetings; (iii) Professional Practice implementation; (iv) Focus Groups; (v) Career planning sessions etc.
Career, Information and Students' Support Office and the Departments holds monthly meetings with the Administrator, the Prorector and the Deans and bi weekly meetings with the Head of departments.
Career, Information and Students' Support Office reports to the Rector and to the Administrator. Its report is part of TCT mandatory annual report filed with the ministry in charge for education every December.
Communication with third parties is mainly managed through email communication, and followed and /or speeded up with telephone as the case may be.
Communication with students is managed through email communication.
Communication and dissemination of activities on TCT web and social media performed by internal actors and external stakeholders is managed through the PR office duly observing GDPR regulations in place.
The detailed organization and functioning of the Career, Information and Students' Support Office is regulated with a specific regulation.

The Administrator, the Prorector and the Deans shall be in charge for its supervision.
From the internal perspective, the implementation of the strategy requires:
A strong partnership between the Career, Information and Students' Support Office and the Departments, alongside with the Alumni Council, Students' Council and Board of Labor.
From the external perspective:
A strong partnership with the business community, business partners, chamber of commerce, Career Guidance Offices within the Municipalities and High Schools.
In a nutshell:
from the logistics it is required a dedicated physical space for the Career, Information and Students' Support Office, a dedicated physical space for meetings/trainings/events/workshops and their related supplies, well planned and scheduled activities;
Since, Career guidance is most effective when it is systemic and endemic: well-prepared professionals, supported by a coherent training framework.

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7.1 Governance, Partnerships and Resources Framework

Stakeholder / Role	Main Responsibilities	Partnership Contribution	Resources Needed
Academic Senate	*Approves the Strategy*	*Institutional support*	*Review, Meeting and signature time*
Rector	*Strategic leadership and approval*	*Institutional support*	*Staff time*
Management Team	*Oversight and coordination of the Strategy and its related activities*	*Internal coordination*	*Meeting, oversee, staff time*
Prorector /Deans/Administrator	*Supervise delivery of CG related activities such as Focus groups and addresses their concerns*	*Internal coordination*	*Meeting, oversee, staff time*
Career Guidance Coordinator	*Daily management of CG activities*	*Coordination with internal and external partners Career orientation pathways /license application*	*Training / digital tools*
Faculty staff/Department	*Deliver CG activities*	*Support implementation Information on further education*	*Teaching materials*
Contracts Office	*Informs students on future education careers options*	*Information on further education*	*Educational related materials*
Board of Labor	*Oversees curricula and internship*	*Provides advise on the curricula to ensure their alignment with labor market; is engaged in the*	

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		successful delivery of the internships and other related activities to access labor market	
Employers/business/ industry	*Mentoring / placements/open lectures/forums/curricula review*	*Internships / company visits/ open lectures/forums/curricula review*	*Coordination time to avoid conflicting agenda*
Public Employment Service (PES)/career offices in municipalities	*Labour market information*	*Career sessions / labor data*	*Information materials*
Alumni	*Career talks / mentoring*	*Experience sharing*	*Event organization*
NGOs / Community organisations	*Support vulnerable learners*	*Awareness activities*	*Project-based support, if any*

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8. Monitoring, Quality Assurance and Evaluation

Explain how progress and quality will be measured.

Alike the other strategic documents of TCT, implementation of the Career Guidance Strategy will be monitored and evaluated systematically to assess progress towards the achievement of its strategic objectives and to ensure the quality, relevance, and effectiveness of Career Guidance services. Each strategic objective and related annual action plan will be linked to measurable indicators, expected results, responsibilities, and implementation timelines. Career, Information and Students' Support Office, in cooperation with relevant institutional structures, will periodically collect and review quantitative and qualitative evidence, including participation in career guidance activities, counselling and internship data, student and graduate feedback, employer engagement, employment and further-study outcomes, and graduate tracking information. Progress will be reviewed against the established targets to identify achievements, implementation gaps, and areas requiring further attention. Monitoring findings will be documented and discussed within the relevant institutional structures and will provide an evidence base for management decisions, quality assurance, resource allocation, and future planning.

Monitoring and evaluation process will help support a continuous cycle of improvement of TCT's career guidance services.

Periodic monitoring results, students' feedback, employers' feedback, and graduate tracking data will be collected and analysed periodically to assess progress against the Strategy's objectives, indicators, and expected outcomes. The analysis will identify achievements, emerging needs, implementation challenges, and areas where services require adjustment or further development. Findings will be reviewed by the Career, Information and Students' Support Office in cooperation with relevant institutional structures and stakeholders and will inform the preparation and revision of annual action plans. Where necessary, activities, delivery methods, partnerships, resource allocation, and support services will be adjusted based on the evidence collected. This continuous feedback–review–action cycle will ensure that career guidance services remain responsive to students' needs, graduate outcomes, employer expectations, and changing labour market conditions throughout the implementation period of the Strategy.

8.1 Key Indicators

Indicator	Frequency	Responsible
Counselling sessions delivered	*When provided from the department, they run throughout the year [at least one per month]; Source of verification: Evidence, attendance list, topics discussed*	*Department/ Career's Office*

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	When provided through the office/third parties, at least once a year *Evidence, attendance list, photos*	
Students participating	*Depending on the type of activity (I.e work fair – annually)* *15-20 students for open lectures* *Source of verification: Evidence, attendance list, topics discussed, photos* *Work fair 100 students* *Photos. Attendance list*	*Department/ Career's Office*
Employer partnerships	*Annual* *At least 5 new agreements per faculty /year* *Source of verification: Agreement signed*	*Management/Department/ Careers Office*
Internships arranged	*Annual* *Mandatory for all students of second year* *Source of verification: Report on the grades of the students who defend their internship presentation in front of the ad hoc department commission*	*TCT / Department/ Careers Office/ Labour Market Board*
Student satisfaction	*Semester based* *Held each semester*	*TCT/ Careers Office/Department/Prorector*
Graduate employment / progression	*Annual* *Employment rate should be in overall at 80%*	*TCT/Careers Office/Alumni*

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8.2 Quality Assurance Methods

Quality Assurance Method	Current	Planned	Short Explanation
Feedback forms	☐	X	*Usually, feedback is received via forms for specific categories but shall be improved as a process in terms of time scheduling and content*
Student surveys	X	☐	*Done every semester to retrieve students' opinions and feedback.*
Internal review meetings	☐	X	*TCT will start to implement it as a new method*
Annual reporting	X	☐	*It is a mandatory for the preparation of TCT annual report, which every December is filed with the Ministry of Education*
Stakeholder consultation	X	☐	*It is done through different meetings mainly with business/industry to have their feedback/stance on curricula, internship, employment and shall be more institutionalized with the Board of Labor Market.*
Benchmarking with good practice schools	☐	X	*It is not done directly, but through the project, TCT received good practices examples from other partners.*
Other (specify) Focus Groups	X	☐	*Done every semester to retrieve students' opinions and feedback.*

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8.3 Evaluation Cycle

The Career Guidance Strategy will be formally reviewed every academic year and revised every five years based on monitoring results and stakeholder feedback.

Evaluation Stage	**Planned**	**Lead Responsibility**	**Short Explanation**
Mid-term review (Year 3)	X	*Administrator /Prorector /Deans*	The Administrator, the Prorector and the Deans are in charge for the supervision of the implementation of the strategy and how KPIs are met, if otherwise, the reason for the failure; prepares report for the rector, suggests measures for improvement
Final review (Year 5)	X	*Administrator /Prorector/Deans*	The Administrator, the Prorector and the Deans are in charge for the supervision of the implementation of the strategy and how KPIs are met, if otherwise, the reason for the failure; prepares report for the rector, suggests measures for improvement
Additional annual review (optional)	☐		

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9. Sustainability and Risk Management

The body in charge for its implementation shall be the Career, Information and Students' Support Office and the Departments as the main units where career guidance services shall be developed and implemented. These structures are mandatory structures provided by the Bylaw of TCT (approved from the ministry in charge for education) and filed with the State Agency in charge for quality assurance. Activities performed and operated in the frame of career guidance are mandatory assessment criteria evidenced in the annual report and accreditation process. As such they are embedded in the annual activity of TCT to be operated accordingly.
The Administrator, the Prorector and the Deans shall be in charge for its supervision

9.1 Sustainability Measures

Sustainability Measure	**Current**	**Planned**	**Short Explanation**
Career guidance integrated into annual school plans	☐	X	*The aim is to deliver career guidance training to the student (ie career portfolio, entrepreneurship etc.) at least once a year as an extracurricular activity from TCT and /or in collaboration with third parties.*
Permanent staff responsibilities assigned	X	☐	*The responsibilities are assigned in the by*
Regular budget planning for CG activities	☐	X	*It will take place with the annual budget review and preparation with the Board of Administration.*
Long-term partnerships with employers / stakeholders	X	☐	*TCT has a well performing network of +100 partners, which network is meticulously curated. The aim is to expand the network with new members, not only from business but from PES as well.*
Continued staff development and training	X	☐	*The training has started with the online training delivered from the CG platform, for at*

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			least 10 staff members of TCT, both faculty and administrative staff members. Since the objective is to appoint a dedicated person, and upskill the staff involved in CG activities, the persons shall be subject of continuous trainings.
Updated strategy after Year 5	☐	X	*As a rule of thumb, TCT strategies are 5 years term based and are subject of review and update after that*
Other (specify)	☐	☐	

9.2 Risk Assessment and Mitigation Measures

Risk	Potential Impact	Mitigation Measures	Lead Responsibility
Limited staff capacity or workload pressures	*Delays in implementation or reduced service quality*	*Distribute responsibilities across multiple staff members, integrate tasks into existing roles, provide time planning support*	*Management Team, mainly the Rector /Administrator*
Low employer engagement	*Fewer internships, mentoring opportunities, and labor market links*	*Conduct early outreach, maintain regular communication, offer visible partnership benefits, diversify employer network especially with Public Administration as well.*	*CG Coordinator / Management*
Budget limitations	*Reduced number of planned activities or limited resources*	*Prioritise low-cost actions, phase implementation over time, seek external support or sponsorship where possible*	*Board of Administration*

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Low student participation	*Weak impact and low use of services*	*Improve communication, promote benefits clearly, schedule activities at suitable times, use interactive methods*	*CG Coordinator / Faculty members*
Leadership or staff changes	*Loss of continuity or reduced institutional commitment*	*Embed career guidance within official policies, assign documented responsibilities, ensure handover procedures*	*Management*
Professional Diploma is not yet recognized as an official mandatory requirements /criterion for vacancies in state/government institutions; [*although out of our reach since despite our best efforts it's a fully government policy based*]	*Loss of trust in the diploma, decrease in students number*	*Actions at policy level to address the issue at the relevant legislation*	*Management*
Weak coordination and cooperation between actors	*Duplication, delays, or unclear responsibilities*	*Establish regular coordination meetings, clear reporting lines, and annual planning processes*	*CG Coordinator*
Inadequate monitoring data	*Difficulty measuring results and improving services*	*Use simple monitoring tools, assign data responsibilities, review indicators quarterly*	*Coordinator / Administration*

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10. Action Plan

Five-Year Action Plan Table

Strategic Objective	Action	Responsible	Timeline	Indicator / Target
Establish CG coordination system	*Appoint 1 Career Guidance Coordinator in the CG office* *Digital guidance support* *Create online career portal to retrieve information; Establish CHATBOT for FAQs*	*Rector /Administrator* *IT / CG Team*	*Year 1* *Year 3–4*	*Coordinator appointed* *Portal active*
Improve learners' Employability	*Launch counselling programme with Individual counselling and group counselling.* *Career planning sessions: Deliver work portfolio workshops; CV / Interview preparation* *Cross check curricula with the stakeholders;* *peer review from the Board of Labor* *Cross check skills of students during internship with the mentor evolution in the company*	*Coordinator* *Departments*	*Year 1–5*	*30 learners annually* *2 workshops yearly* *Topics integrated/Training delivered*

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	Internship support: Share and match work placement /vacancy demands *Track students' employment during internships* *Curriculum integration: Introduce career learning modules, whether as a topic within the course content (for example like Health and Safety) or as extracurricular activity*			
Strengthen Employer Cooperation	*Organize Annual Career Day* *Organize open lectures/forums to increase Employer engagement*	*Coordinator /Faculty members*	*Year 2–5*	*1 event per year at least /10 employers annually*
Build staff capacity and sustainable services	*Upskill and train staff involved in CG services* *Staff trained by making use of the CG platform*	*CG Team/ Administrator/ Prorector/Project Office*	*Year 1-5*	*Staff trained*
Professional Diploma is recognized as an official mandatory requirements /criterion for vacancies in state/government institutions; [although out of our reach since despite our best efforts it's a fully government policy based]	*Expanding institutional cooperation and advocacy for greater recognition of Professional Diploma graduates.* *Introduce amendments to relevant legislation to enhance the value of Professional Diploma*	*Rector /Administrator*	*Year 5*	*Value of Professional Diploma addressed*

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