"CONSTANTIN BRANCOVEANU" UNIVERSITY OF PITESTI

EVALUATION REPORT

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Team:

Jürgen Kohler, chair

Thierry Chevaillier

Lučka Lorber

Mikus Dubickis

Dionyssis Kladis, team coordinator

Contents

1. Introduction

This report is the result of the evaluation of the *"Constantin Brancoveanu" University (CBU) of Pitesti*. The evaluation took place in 2014 in the framework of the project "Ready to Innovate, Ready to Better Address the Local Needs - Quality and Diversity of Romanian Universities", which aims at strengthening core elements of Romanian universities, such as their autonomy and administrative competences, by improving their quality assurance and management proficiency.

The evaluations are taking place within the context of major reforms in the Romanian higher education system, and specifically in accordance with the provisions of the 2011 Law for Education (Law 1/2011) and the various related normative acts.

While the institutional evaluations are taking place in the context of an overall reform, each university is assessed by an independent IEP team, using the IEP methodology described below.

1.1 The Institutional Evaluation Programme

The Institutional Evaluation Programme (IEP) is an independent membership service of the European University Association (EUA) that offers evaluations to support the participating institutions in the continuing development of their strategic management and internal quality culture. The IEP is a full member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and is listed in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR).

The distinctive features of the Institutional Evaluation Programme are the following:

- A strong emphasis on the self-evaluation phase
- A European and international perspective
- A peer-review approach
- A support to improvement

The focus of the IEP is the institution as a whole and not the individual study programmes or units. It focuses upon:

- decision-making processes and institutional structures and effectiveness of strategic management;
- relevance of internal quality processes and the degree to which their outcomes are used in decision-making and strategic management as well as perceived gaps in these internal mechanisms.

Rather than using a standardised, externally defined set of criteria, the evaluation is guided by four key questions, which are based on a "fitness for (and of) purpose" approach:

- What is the institution trying to do?
- How is the institution trying to do it?
- How does the institution know it works?
- How does the institution change in order to improve?

1.2 "Constantin Brancoveanu" University's profile

"Constantin Brancoveanu" University (CBU) was established under the aegis of the Academic Association "Economic Independence" in 1991. Its founder was Prof. Alexandru Puiu (the father of the current rector), previously rector of the Bucharest University of Economic Studies (known also as Academy of Economic Studies) from 1985 to 1990. The founder established CBU in order to create an institution which offered freedom for activities that were not feasible in other institutions of higher education and research, and to provide such a space without competing directly with the founder's previous university while ensuring developmental opportunities mainly, but not solely, for the founder's birthplace, Piteşti.

In 1998, Prof. Alexandru Puiu became, by judicial judgment no. 36/26.06.1998 and upon the Association's General Assembly decision, the successor of the Foundation for Education, Science and Culture. CBU acquired legal personality through Arges Court ruling no. 25/PJ of 7 April 2000. CBU was accredited on 23 April 2002 by Law No. 242/2002 as a higher education institution, a legal entity of private law with public utility status, and it was included in the first group of six private higher education institutions that received recognition.

Over the years, CBU has developed a consortium-type organisational structure as presented in the institutional Strategic Plan 2012-2016: "University's consortium-structure, with branches in Piteşti, Brăila and Râmnicu Vâlcea, allows the institution to bring its important contributions to the balanced development of three administrative regions in Romania, with different economic and social characteristics".

CBU has six faculties that operate in three different locations: three faculties in Piteşti (Faculty of Legal, Administrative and Communication Sciences, Faculty of Finance and Accounting and Faculty of Management, Marketing in Economic Affairs), two faculties in Brăila (Faculty of Administrative and Communication Sciences and Faculty of Management, Marketing in Economic Affairs) and one faculty in Râmnicu Vâlcea (Faculty of Management, Marketing in Economic Affairs). The evaluation team was told that CBU is one of the few Romanian universities that focus on economics. Although there are also study programmes in the fields of social, political and legal sciences, the economic perspective permeates all disciplines.

According to the Self-Evaluation Report (SER), Annex 11, the six faculties offer 28 Bachelor programmes (22 full-time and six part-time) and 17 Master programmes (all full-time) in 24

majors (13 Bachelor and 11 Master). The large majority of these Bachelor programmes (23 out of 28) were accredited by the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ARACIS) during the period 2002-2013, while five others have been temporarily authorised. All 17 Master programmes were accredited by ARACIS during the period 2008-2013. However, in the academic year 2013-2014 four Bachelor programmes and one Master programme are not operating because there was no demand for them.

Currently, there are no PhD programmes on offer in CBU. It is important to note that CBU does not include the establishment of a doctoral school or PhD programmes among its strategic objectives at least until 2016. The establishment of a doctoral school or of PhD programmes are not mentioned in the SER, the institutional Strategic Plan 2012-2016 or the university charter.

In 2011, all Bachelor programmes (with the exception of the Management programme in English that was established in 2013) and the nine Master programmes that operate in Piteşti were subject to the ranking procedure for all study programmes in Romania according to Law 1/2011. They were positioned in ranking categories varying between B and E within a five-point ranking scale. The eight Master programmes operating in Brăila and Râmnicu Vâlcea were not subject to the ranking procedure since they were established after 2010.

In November 2010, CBU was subject to an external institutional evaluation by ARACIS. The evaluation team was told that CBU was the third private university in Romania granted the distinction of "high confidence rating" for the period 2011-2016, which is the highest distinction granted to universities in Romania. Furthermore, CBU was subject in 2011 to the classification procedure of all Romanian universities according to Law 1/2011, and was classified in the category of "teaching and learning universities". By 2016, CBU aims to become a higher education institution centred both on education and scientific research, while maintaining its "high confidence rating".

The number of students of CBU in the academic year 2013-2014 is 2 690 (1 993 Bachelor students and 697 Master students). The number of students in both cycles has been steadily decreasing since the academic year 2009-2010. The total number of students has fallen from 7 967 to 2 690 (decrease by 66%), while the number of Bachelor students has fallen from 5 675 to 1 993 (decrease by 65%) and the number of Master students has fallen from 2 292 to 697 (decrease by 70%). It should also be noted that the decrease of the number of students is slightly lower in the faculties located at Piteşti. The decrease for Piteşti is 60% (from 2 844 to 1 158), while the decrease for Brăila is 75% (from 1 967 to 495) and the decrease for Râmnicu Vâlcea is 67% (from 3 155 to 1 037). A similar decrease of 50% also applies to the number of academic staff (from 217 in 2009-2010 to 108 in 2013-2014). The large majority of academic staff members (98 out of 108) are full-time; out of the 98 full-time teaching staff, 38 are at the two higher ranks (professors and associate professors).

According to the SER (pp. 10 and 13), the decrease of student numbers is attributed to: declining living standards in the wake of the recent economic crisis; the ability of some Romanian families to afford the cost of private higher education; the strong migration trends in Romania in recent years; and the decrease in the number of secondary graduates because of the increasing difficulty of the baccalaureate exams. According to the SER, the decrease in demand for higher education is also attributed to demographic reasons; however, Annex 6 of the SER indicates that in the three counties where CBU faculties are located the population between 15 and 18 years, i.e. the local student potential available in the near future, shows a continuous annual increase at least until 2011.

1.3 The evaluation process

The self-evaluation process

The self-evaluation process was undertaken by a self-evaluation group consisting of ten members, including one student. The self-evaluation group, chaired by the Vice-Rector for Education, prepared the Self-Evaluation Report (SER), which was made available to the evaluation team with the related annexes on 22 January 2014, in due time before the first site visit. As was explained to the evaluation team, the preparation of the SER was based on a relatively inclusive procedure with the involvement of the whole community, and it was documented based on input from all faculties and from the institutional data information system.

The evaluation team appreciated the work done in the SER, which covered all issues and was supplemented with extended appendixes and annexes also including the SWOT analysis for the university. The evaluation team considered the SER a comprehensive, informative, frank and critical analysis, which reflected the strong commitment of CBU to improve and presented the vision and the expectations of CBU for the future.

The two site visits

The two site visits of the evaluation team to CBU took place from 19 to 22 February 2014 and from 6 to 9 April 2014. During the visits, the evaluation team had the opportunity to discuss the situation of CBU with many of its actors and the main stakeholders, namely:

- the CBU leadership
- the leadership, members of the academic staff and students from three (out of the six) faculties, all located in Piteşti, but also with representatives from the three faculties located in Brăila and Râmnicu Vâlcea
- members of the Academic Senate and the Board of Directors
- student representatives from the Senate and from faculty councils
- members of the board of the Students Association

- alumni
- external partners

The evaluation team had the opportunity to discuss with key actors of CBU specific issues through thematic meetings on teaching and learning, research, governance, management and strategic planning. There were also intense and in-depth discussions with the Rector, Professor Ovidiu Puiu, and with the self-evaluation group and the evaluation team had the opportunity to meet the broad spectrum of staff at CBU.

All meetings and discussions were efficiently organised by the Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Legal, Administrative and Communication Sciences, Lecturer Cristina Şerbănică, who served as the liaison person between the university and the evaluation team.

The evaluation team would like to express its gratitude to the staff of CBU for the openness and willingness to discuss all issues during the meetings. Finally, the evaluation team would like to express its sincere thanks to the Rector, Professor Ovidiu Puiu, and his evaluation team for the organisation before and during our two visits and for their generous hospitality.

In between the two visits the university provided the evaluation team with all requested additional documentation.

The evaluation report

In line with the aims of IEP as outlined above, this report focuses on the current strengths and weaknesses of CBU regarding its capacity for change, in view of the surrounding opportunities and threats; it expresses a number of recommendations that may be considered for the future development of the university.

The evaluation report takes into account all data provided to the evaluation team in the SER and corresponding additional information. Furthermore, it should be noted that the overall analysis, comments and recommendations are based on two intense, yet relatively short site visits to the university: a two-day first visit and a three-day second visit. The recommendations, together with the corresponding rationale and analysis, appear in italics in the text of the evaluation report, while a summary of recommendations is presented in the last section of the report. Finally, it should be noted that throughout the body of the report many ideas of the evaluation team appear which should not be considered as mandatory proposals but rather as reflections, which CBU may, and indeed should, consider.

1.4 The evaluation team

The evaluation team (hereinafter "the team") consisted of the following members:

- Jürgen Kohler, former Rector, Greifswald University, Germany, team chair

- Thierry Chevaillier, former Vice-Rector, Université de Bourgogne, Dijon, France
- Lučka Lorber, Vice-Rector, University of Maribor, Slovenia
- Mikus Dubickis, Master student, Riga Technical University, Latvia
- Dionyssis Kladis, Professor emeritus, University of the Peloponnese, and former Secretary for Higher Education, Greece, team coordinator

2. Governance and institutional decision-making

2.1 Philosophy of CBU: norms and values - vision, mission and strategy

The vision, mission and strategy of CBU are outlined in the institutional Strategic Plan 2012-2016. The core message is sustainability of the institution with regard to all three missions of higher education.

Sustainability of education will be achieved by attracting more students, offering better facilities and a learning environment (with a focus on quality), reducing costs, broadening the educational offer through lifelong learning, and developing internationalisation (also outside Europe).

Sustainability of research will be achieved by strengthening the research capacity, consolidating the research centres, cooperating with national and international partners, responding successfully to calls for projects, and strengthening international visibility also through international publications.

Sustainability of service to society will be achieved by developing a lifelong learning offer appropriate for the local societal environment, offering consultancy services, developing an entrepreneurial profile to better address the needs of the local economies and contributing to the balanced development of the three regions.

To summarise, according to the institutional Strategic Plan 2012-2016, the key short-term strategic goal of CBU to be accomplished by 2016 is to become a higher education institution centred both on education and scientific research which nevertheless maintains its "high confidence rating", while its key long-term strategic goal besides ensuring sustainability is improvement of its international visibility.

Although the team endorses these strategic objectives, they do raise the following questions concerning thorough validation of objectives and design of meaningful transformation processes: are these objectives realistic or are they over-ambitious? Is there a robust validation process in setting these objectives? It is in view of these questions that *the team recommends CBU to consider the following operational aspects: moving from aspirational goals to feasible and realistic ones requires thorough investigation (e.g. data analyses, substantial SWOT analysis and a full-scale, in-depth evaluation, consultation with various stakeholders on a regular and systematic basis, etc.) and ensuring endorsement of the whole institution through adequate and regular communication processes, both bottom-up and top-down. In addition, there is also a need to consider the "big picture", i.e. to project where CBU should and could stand in the mid-term, for example in 2025, and what its "brand", i.e. its overarching "selling point", will be by then; working with scenarios would be a useful device to that end.* CBU's documentation, and the discussions the team had, indicated that CBU could

address these issues more deeply, both as regards to the thorough analysis of the validity of aspirations as well as their concrete translation into an overarching strategy and policy.

The team draws CBU's attention to this mode of thinking on the backdrop of the constraints in which the university has to operate and develop and the challenges that it has to meet. During the various meetings, CBU members, and especially its leadership, mentioned some of these — mostly external — constraints, which affect CBU's capacity for change, modernisation, and innovation. The detailed and unstable legal environment in Romania hampers the university's ability to project itself into the future. The prescriptive framework for designing study programmes and for the external quality assurance processes prevents the institution from taking up initiatives regarding interdisciplinarity and multidisciplinarity (the study programmes cannot be accredited in more than one of the predefined study domains) as well as internationalisation (there is no legal provision for the development of joint or double programmes). These constraints also make it difficult for CBU to develop a specific profile outside the strict "boxes" of the predefined study domains and the overall context defined for purposes of accreditation and external quality assurance. Under these circumstances, the team understands the difficulties that CBU faces in preparing its future but also in carrying out its day-to-day activities. CBU staff, however, also consider that the lack of regulation in Romania for specific cases (e.g. for Master studies and for assessing research centres) to be a constraint, while the team does not share this view; on the contrary, it considers such absence of regulation to be an opportunity for the university to use its autonomy in a meaningful way.

CBU strategic plan is implemented through annual operational plans. The team is aware of the most recent operational plan 2013-2014. It contains a large number of 94 action lines. In principle, by and large these appear to be meaningful. As was explained during the meetings, some of these action lines are obligatory for day-to-day operation of the university, while others serve more developmental purposes.

The team believes that many of these action lines are achievable. However, there is a basic point to be considered for further enhancement. The operational plan should move further away from a mere list of actions toward a truly operational outline of the elements required to establish and steer the transformation processes to achieve the objectives set in the action plan. In this regard, *the team recommends that the operational plan should be sufficiently SMART, i.e. the elements in it should be specific, measurable, and achievable, with indication of concrete responsibilities and timelines. The specification should be clear from the very beginning and not made up in later stages of implementation; quantification of actions should be done by assigning performance indicators with clear distinction between routine and development actions; priorities should be clearly set and linked to specific and realistic timelines in order to make the overall process manageable; and, finally, assignment of tasks*

and responsibilities should be clearly defined and personalised so that they show the real owner of the respective action.

The processes for strategic development and strategic management are two indispensable elements for designing and implementing a strategic plan in a university. In this regard, *the team recommends that CBU establishes a participatory bottom-up process for setting the strategic objectives and defining the other constituent elements of its strategic plan in order to create ownership within the university for the overall strategy, to make strategy an institutional affair and not an issue for individuals, to improve effectiveness and efficiency in the achievement of the goals, and, finally, in order to conceptualise strategy.*

Concerning strategic management, it is not clear which instruments oversee and monitor the implementation of the strategic plan and the achievement of the strategic goals. Judging from a reference in the SER (p. 5), the implementation of the strategic objectives seems to be supported by the special committees of the Senate and by functional and administrative departments. However, this is a procedure that needs to be continuous and permanent, and it needs to be backed by specifically qualified staff. Furthermore, monitoring should cover also the achievement of the key performance indicators. In this regard, *the team recommends that the task to oversee and monitor the implementation of the strategic plan should be assigned to a specific body attached directly to the rector or to one of the vice-rectors. This body should also have the task to assess the validity of the strategic goals and the respective key performance indicators and reconsider them in all cases that the goals and the key performance indicators could not be achieved. This does not exclude the right and obligation of collegial bodies of the university or its faculties to take decisions on key policies, objectives, and measures.*

2.2 Governance and decision-making

The Romanian higher education institutions follow a dual governance model with the parallel existence of two collective management bodies, the Academic Senate and the Administrative Board. In this model the Administrative Board ensures the operational management of the universities and implements the strategic decisions of the Academic Senate, which is considered the highest decision-making body at university level. The same governance structure is followed by CBU as well.

A first issue to be clarified here is that there is no relationship at all between the university and the entity (association) that founded it. As the CBU leadership explained to the team, according to Romanian laws, after the legal establishment of a private university, the founding entity has to donate all its patrimony to it. After that, the foundation has no relationship to the university apart from appointing the members of the Board of Directors (the name used by CBU for the Administrative Board). This implies that the foundation does not and cannot continue to fund the university.

According to its Strategic Plan 2012-2016, it is one of the key strategic objectives of CBU "to promote an efficient, result-oriented and transparent management". The team had the opportunity to discuss the governance and management structures and processes with the CBU leadership in the context of the above objective and to identify also the very good cooperation between the two governing bodies, namely the Senate and the Board of Directors.

The Board comprises five members: the rector who is the president of the Board, the vice-rector for teaching, the director of human resources, the general administrative director and the managing director from the CBU branch in Brăila. The president of the Senate is a permanent guest of the Board. According to the Law 1/2011, the composition of the Board in the private universities is decided by the founders.

According to the university charter, the Senate consists of 29 members, of which 21 members are academic staff (72.4%) and eight are students (27.6%). These percentages are in accordance with the Law 1/2011 providing for students' participation of at least 25% in the Senate. Furthermore, each faculty has representatives in the Senate. The Senate operates through special committees and is headed by a president who is elected by the Senate and who chairs its meetings. The rector, the vice-rectors, the deans and the vice-deans cannot be members of the Senate. However, they are invited to all meetings of the Senate. The team was informed that these details are not provided by the Law but by secondary legislation and is disputed in general by the academic community. Nevertheless, the team would like to commend CBU for its practice to invite the key actors of the university management in the meetings of the Senate or the Board. This practice promotes communication among the various governance and decision-making bodies at all levels and facilitates understanding and acceptance of decisions.

The overall impression of the team is that the governance system of CBU (at both institutional and faculty levels) operates well. The distinction of tasks is clearly and extensively outlined in the university charter. An appropriate balance has been achieved between the various bodies and also between the central management and the faculties (as well as those operating in the cities of Brăila and Râmnicu Vâlcea). The team would like to commend CBU for that. *However, the team would still like to make two recommendations. Firstly, CBU should reconsider its overall structures and their operation with a view to their fitness for purpose, thus ensuring not only capacity to decide on operational matters but also to explore strategic options and choices on a comprehensive basis and to develop a pro-active attitude in their operation*. *Secondly, CBU should consider the involvement of stakeholders on an institutionalised and more regular basis*. *The involvement of external stakeholders should become normal practice both at faculty and institutional levels.* Their involvement at faculty level is needed in order to ensure the relevance of the curricula with the demands of society and in order to provide students with opportunities to participate in internships, placements etc. as well as to

prepare future graduates for employment. Involving them at institutional level and more comprehensively will help CBU to increase its partnerships with society, to take up societal demands and expectations, and, furthermore, to improve its visibility.

Management and financing

With regards to CBU's administrative structures, the team has the impression that the university is successful in achieving its key strategic objective "to promote an efficient, result-oriented and transparent management". Furthermore, the team considers it to be an important fact that there are quality assurance processes in place also for the administrative operations of CBU.

With regards to management, the team took note that there is a policy within the university that academics should operate in quality structures and processes and in certain administrative functions. The team understands that this is in line with a tradition in Romania. It brings with it many advantages: It promotes an attitude of ownership within the institution; it helps with acceptability of decisions and functions; and finally it saves money. However, this cannot be a solution in the long term. The availability of academics who are sufficiently competent in administrative matters cannot be guaranteed; and it may prove to be expensive in the long term since academics will not have sufficient time in order to manage their regular tasks – education and research – as thoroughly as they should. This raises the issue of developing further the qualifications of the administrative staff in order to undertake these tasks and responsibilities. In this regard, *the team recommends that CBU should aim to generate highly qualified human potential (training, building capacities and competences, improving professionalism) that will support and back major functions at the institutional level, such as quality assurance and strategic management, in a sustainable, long-term perspective*. Academics currently involved in the respective tasks will play the roles of the trainers and mentors in such a capacity building process.

With regards to financing, it should be noted that student fees are the main ongoing income of the university (as appears to be the usual the case in Romania for private universities). The financial contribution of the university founder was limited to initial funding at the onset of the university. However, like other private universities, CBU is allowed to apply for grants from public funds (i.e. for research or infrastructure). In view of CBU's strong dependence on student fees, the dramatic fall in the number of students during the five-year period from 7 967 in 2009-2010 to only 2 690 in 2013-2014 constitutes a real threat for the future of the university and, consequently, the financial sustainability of CBU becomes of major strategic importance. *The team recommends that CBU develop a comprehensive strategy in order to ensure financial sustainability in the long-term. This strategy should aim to seek alternative resources and could include widening of educational offer to new student categories (clientele)*

through lifelong learning initiatives, improving e-learning offers, raising the capacity to attract research funds (nationally and internationally), consultancy and other services to society. In parallel, this strategy should also have an internal dimension, including efficient financial management, fair and effective funding allocation, allocation of "seed money" for innovation and performance enhancement (e.g. incentives and rewards) and funding of major long-term investments.

Academic structure/academic organisation

As mentioned above, CBU has been developed over the years in a decentralised and consortium-type structure, with six faculties operating in three Romanian cities. The purpose of this development has been analysed and described earlier in the present report (section 1.2). The academic structure and organisation of CBU also include departments and research centres. CBU has developed its departments in a horizontal relationship to the faculties, with the main rationale being that CBU intends to link specific academic domains under one organisational roof. There are three departments, namely the Department of Economics, the Department of Legal and Administrative Sciences, and the Department of Romanian Language, Foreign Languages and Communication Sciences, which are associated horizontally to all faculties of the same or similar field irrespective of their location. As an example, the members of academic staff of all three Faculties of Management, Marketing in Economic Affairs belong to the Department of Economics as far as their educational activities are concerned. According to CBU staff, this structure allows for the more effective and efficient coordination of study programmes with identical names in the three different branches, thus ensuring coherence and unity at the university level. On the other hand, there are six research centres, which are organised at faculty level, in accordance with the accreditation standards of ARACIS. These manage the overall research activity of the university. This means that the members of academic staff of a faculty belong to a research centre in that faculty for their research activities.

As it was explained to the team during various meetings, the faculties manage the study programmes (and the students) from an operation or implementation, point of view, the departments manage the teaching and educational activities and set the normative standards of the educational programmes, and the research centres manage the research activities of the academic staff. However, it should be noted that the evaluation of scientific research in CBU is done with respect to the three departments and not with respect to the faculties or the research centres (see SER, Table 10, p. 21). The team understands the reasons and the advantages of this structure beyond its complexity, as they have been analysed by the staff of the university. However, it also considers it necessary for CBU to develop appropriate measures and effective policies in order to minimise any problems, which this complex structure could create in the overall functioning of the university.

3. Teaching and learning

Objectives and implementation

According to its Strategic Plan 2012-2016, CBU's key strategic objectives embrace the need to match its educational offer to labour market needs and to the knowledge society in both qualitative and quantitative terms, and to "create an appropriate framework for a student-oriented policy". In accordance with these strategic objectives, the team was informed that teaching and learning in CBU is strongly oriented towards the learning-outcomes approach and the "student-centred learning" paradigm.

Concerning learning outcomes, the question for the team is whether they reflect all four purposes of higher education as they are defined by the Council of Europe and as they appear in the Bologna literature (e.g. London Communiqué, 2007). In this respect, higher education aims at both the employability of graduates and their personal development. In parallel, higher education aims at creating research minds through competence building towards creativity, innovation and methodologically-based work. And, finally, higher education aims at democratic citizenship.

The team acknowledges that CBU addresses the objective of employability strongly. Employability is in fact highlighted as the strong point among CBU's educational objectives. It can be seen in various characteristics of the educational offer, like application to practice, internships (also abroad), case studies in courses (also for Bachelor and Master theses) and from invitations to external professional experts. The other objectives can also be found, but only to a lesser degree. For example, the objective to create research minds can be found in the emphasis given by CBU to the involvement of students in research activities. *However, the team believes that a more holistic approach to learning outcomes is needed in order to consider all four educational objectives and it recommends that CBU move to that direction*. Nevertheless, the team would like to draw CBU's attention to the fact that *this move requires an in-depth exploration and analysis of the substantial meaning of the four educational objectives mentioned above in the first place, followed by a statement of values by the institution regarding how and to what extent it would like to address the four objectives in order to transform them into precise educational objectives and into meaningful learning outcomes.*

The objectives for teaching and learning should also have an institutional component besides a strictly educational one. This viewpoint refers to the need to profile the institution, which needs to be reflected in the profile of its graduates. This concerns the definition of the brand of an institution. Even for the case of an institution specialised in economics, the profile is not always evident. It needs to be explored in-depth. In this regard, *the team recommends that CBU work towards creating a clearer view of its institutional profile*. The question should be what the "brand" of CBU is, what makes CBU different, special, and unique. The team heard

some interesting views on the institutional objectives during the various meetings. The central point was that CBU aims at creating an "economically minded person" or at building "entrepreneurial minds". Furthermore, the team was informed that this brand definition permeates all study programmes in CBU. The team believes that CBU has to further explore and analyse these issues since they are not self-evident, nor do they easily transform into an educational experience, which permeates all programmes. *CBU has to clearly define and sharpen its profile, and to make it visible to create a "brand"*.

A third component of the teaching and learning objectives of a university should be the one related to "system" objectives and to policies, which are largely concerned with political issues, i.e. societal expectation beyond educational quality per se, like ensuring fair access, transparency of offer and degrees, permeability of educational paths, recognition of prior learning. This facet of objectives has to do with the basic elements of Bologna reforms and the main characteristics of the European Higher Education Area. The team is aware that CBU is strongly committed to the implementation of Bologna, and there is sufficient evidence of that. Among these elements, the concept of student-centred learning is high on the agenda of CBU and the team had the opportunity to observe the commitment of the staff in this direction. However, student-centred learning means much more than content or methods in teaching and learning. It is an issue of learning modality; it requires change in attitudes for both academic staff and students and it is strongly connected with the "personal development" component of educational objectives. In this regard, *the team recommends that CBU direct its efforts towards the genuine implementation of student-centred learning, while at the same time continuing to address the system objectives related to the implementation of the Bologna principles*.

Monitoring/evaluation

CBU has in place quality assurance procedures for monitoring and evaluating study programmes. This is an ex-post quality process, which monitors existing programmes; this is undoubtedly a positive feature.

However, the team believes that an ex-ante dimension should be added to this process. This ex-ante evaluation should look proactively at the design of a study programme in a more holistic way based on the whole range of the learning objectives, as outlined above, and intended learning outcomes fit for purpose, i.e. matching these objectives. This would lead to "planning quality" instead of simply "checking quality". This ex-ante approach would give the university the opportunity to adapt the content of a programme to the overall educational objectives aligned to the respective learning outcomes going beyond simple employability.

Furthermore, the quality assurance system for teaching and learning has a strong focus on teacher performance. This appears clearly in the questionnaires filled in by students, which, besides their satisfaction for their studies and their university, focus on teacher performance

without dealing substantially with key elements of the study programmes or with learning outcomes. By contrast, employers' questionnaires are more focused on learning outcomes and not on teacher performance.

This is not to say that the team does not value quality assurance with regard to assessment of teaching staff quality. The team appreciates that CBU has a number of tools in place to ensure teaching staff quality. The evaluation of teacher performance by the students is part of the overall evaluation of academic staff, which further includes evaluation by peers and by the management of the university. Furthermore, a strict quality policy is also applied to employing teaching staff with concern for a balance regarding both age and gender.

The study programmes are also subject to the internal audit process of CBU. However, the audit process is intended to check compliance of the quantitative characteristics of the study programmes with the requirements and standards set by ARACIS for the accreditation of the programmes. In fact, the internal audit does not deal with qualitative issues which start where the quantitative issues end.

The team recommends that CBU start reviewing the structural elements of study programmes more holistically, re-addressing learning objectives, all learning outcomes and considering their effect on the curricula, matters of access, the learning methods including the principle of learning progression, the assessment of students and the quality monitoring. Similarly*, the team recommends that CBU improve the student questionnaires with the aim of putting more emphasis on learning outcomes.*

Steps to enhancement

The above monitoring processes offer a good basis to CBU in order to take measures that will ensure improvement. For example, monitoring teaching staff's performance allows for the development of a policy for incentives to the teaching staff, which is indeed a step toward improvement. However, this again is an ex-post measure. *The team would recommend, therefore, that CBU establish a standard, permanent programme for building teaching capacity on the basis of updated didactic methods. This would aim to improve teaching performance in pro-active and supportive way*.

From a more general perspective, the team is of the opinion that CBU's capacity for enhancement regarding teaching and learning depends largely on its ability to address all four purposes of higher education in the development of the learning outcomes of its study programmes and on the clarification of its institutional profile, as described earlier in this section.

It is in line with this that CBU should also explore the concept (or the concepts) of quality in depth to which it will direct its future activities and plans. Although this issue was not discussed during the various meetings, three concepts of quality are of primary importance

for CBU; the concept of "customer satisfaction" (being a private university based on student fees); the concept of "compliance" (being obliged to comply with ARACIS standards for accreditation reasons); and the concept of "value for money" (being obliged to offer good quality with less money). What is not apparent to the team is whether the concept of "fitness for purpose" is considered among the critical ones for CBU. *The team recommends that CBU explore in depth whether this fourth concept ("fitness for purpose") should drive its strategy and its actions to the future, considering also what its purposes are. In any case, CBU should adapt both its strategic management and its quality management to concepts of quality that are assumed by the university.*

Two specific aspects: lifelong learning and e-learning

As mentioned earlier in this report (section 2.1), lifelong learning is a strong strategic option for CBU, related to two of the missions of higher education in general and of CBU in particular (education and service to society). The team believes that lifelong learning should be developed more strongly as it seems to be an important means for ensuring sustainability of CBU, given the dramatic fall in student numbers. Therefore *the team recommends that CBU develop a comprehensive strategy for lifelong learning, which should be both demand-driven (waiting for customers) and provider-driven (making offers to customers). The team recommends that CBU should grasp both options.*

Developing e-learning initiatives is another strategic option for CBU. The team was informed that this is under way. However, it should be clarified that e-learning is not only a matter for lifelong learning; it is also supposed to serve all students. It is not only a technical issue; it is also a content issue. The current debate in Europe for the MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) may open new ways for learning in the coming 20 to 30 years. It may be an issue of virtual programmes offered by new providers operating through new types of networking. Under these circumstances, the university, as an educational service provider, may play a somehow different role, e.g. by steering students participating in e-learning courses of this type, by organising follow-up workshops to create cohesion in the learning process, by creating interacting platforms. *Therefore, the team would recommend that CBU consider these new perspectives in terms of e-learning and integrate them in its long-term strategy, which may also lead to new modes of institutionalised networking with partners inside and outside higher education.*

4.   Research

As mentioned earlier in this report and as is specified in the Strategic Plan 2012-2016, the key strategic objective of CBU is to be a university for education and scientific research. To that end, CBU aims at strengthening its research capacity, fostering individual and team-based research with a view to innovation and transfer, and to improve its international visibility in terms of research. These objectives are further analysed and specified in the document "Scientific Research Strategy 2012-2016" which supplements the Strategic Plan 2012-2016.

The team sees these undertakings as clear underpinnings of CBU's institutional aspiration to fostering research. This aspiration is institutionalised through the six research centres existing in CBU and forming — together with the faculties and the departments — its academic structure. The existence of the research centres is to some extent imposed by the standards and requirements set by ARACIS for the accreditation of study programmes. However, at the same time this structure helps with better organisation of research, broadening income sources by using the labels of research centres and improving the visibility of CBU as a university for education and research. The overall aspiration and attitude of CBU regarding research can also be seen in the related structures for management of research. At institutional level there is a vice-rector in charge of scientific research activities, while at faculty level the vice-dean is responsible for research. This structure is complemented by the directors of the research centres and, finally, by the Scientific Council of CBU which is chaired by the rector and coordinates and oversees the scientific research activity within the university.

The team had the opportunity to discuss the research issues in many of its meetings at CBU, and more specifically in a thematic meeting focusing on research. The key question in all these meetings had to do with the nature of research that CBU wanted to perform. It was not clear to the team whether the main direction was towards basic research or applied research or consultancy activities. It is worth noting that CBU includes consultancy in the research activities in the sense that it considers consultancy as a type of research transfer, which the team considers to be quite acceptable in principle. However, *the team believes and recommends that CBU work on this conceptual issue and define the focus of its research activity. In this regard, CBU should also reconsider the role of consultancy in the research agenda and the blend between consultancy and research*.

Another issue to consider is the process used to decide on research directions, i.e. which research centres are to be established, what research activities or what kind of research is to be undertaken in principle, etc. It is clear that these decisions are taken principally in a bottom-up approach in CBU. The initiative originates from individual academics, depending on their research agenda and their real capacity, and then it is directed to the higher levels in order to be discussed and decided. The team is aware that the university uses three criteria in order to take a decision for research, for example for the establishment of a research centre.

A first criterion has to do with the existence of the appropriate critical mass; a second criterion refers to the strategic importance for the university; and a third criterion refers to the potential impact on society. For the team, this bottom-up process has many positive aspects. However, it is difficult to use when prioritisation of research is needed. The reason is that the above criteria cannot be easily quantified in terms of indicators in order to allow for setting priorities. In this regard, *the team recommends that CBU mitigate the above bottom-up approach, allowing for prioritisation as well. For example, CBU should be in position to establish priorities among the research centres and align staff policies to them in order to ensure the required critical mass*. Furthermore, *the team also recommends that CBU also start looking at defining research strategies in a top-down approach in order to identify future areas of research interest in relation to its long-term strategy and establish research centres or plan research activities in the respective fields with a view of developing interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary initiatives, and supporting these with the appropriate human resource policy.*

Funding is of critical importance to research. The team was informed that there is no specific institutional funding for research centres. This means that research has to be funded externally; and this, in turn, means that CBU should be in position to raise its capacity for attracting external funds through research projects or for offering of services (consultancy or applied research). It is well known that nowadays the capacity of researchers is not the only factor in order to attract external funds. A staff initiative needs to be backed by specifically trained personnel in order to be transformed into a competitive project application. In this regard, *the team recommends that CBU create a strong institutional support office to identify promising projects and process applications for research funding. Additionally, the team recommends that CBU join and share efforts with other small-size universities to that end.*

Monitoring and evaluation of research is done by the department of quality assurance and evaluation, which in fact monitors research production. This means that monitoring of research in this respect is based exclusively on statistical data. Even in the case of the overall evaluation of academic staff or in the case of internal audits, the evaluation of research performance is done in quantitative terms. Qualitative aspects of research monitoring can be identified in the cases of research proposals that attracted external funding (national or international) in a competitive basis or in the scientific publications of the academic staff in the university's magazine, where quality is ensured through peer review processes.

5. Service to society

Establishing strong and close links with society is one of the major aims of any university nowadays, notably because offering services to society is considered the third mission of modern universities. The team was pleased to notice that the active contribution to the local, regional and national development is among the key strategic objectives of CBU. Furthermore, the team had the opportunity to receive positive feedback from its meeting with employers and other external stakeholders as regards the graduates of the university, but also as regards the overall offer of CBU to the society. Quite interestingly, this offer includes partnerships for applied research, continuing education and human capital development; it also includes consultancies, involvement in regional development strategies, etc. The preparation of the strategic plan of the Municipality of Piteşti by CBU is an example of such an offer.

The team appreciates this mutual respect of the need for strong links between the university and its social partners, which even leads to joint operations in some cases. In previous sections, this report made recommendations in that direction, referring either to education (e.g. development of lifelong learning initiatives, fostering internships, involvement of employers in the curricula development) or to research (e.g. applied research and consultancies). In this context, *the only recommendation to add could be that CBU strengthens its efforts towards an even closer cooperation and partnership with the society.* To that end, and following some thoughts expressed in the meeting with the external partners, *the team would also recommend the establishment of an administrative office for identifying present and future opportunities for partnerships between the university and the society*.

6.   Quality culture

The term "quality culture" defines the overall attitude of a university regarding the concept of "quality", which applies to issues like quality assurance, quality assessment, quality improvement, etc. In the context of the IEP methodology, quality assurance offers the means through which a university is in a position to know how well it is doing and whether it accomplishes its chosen mission and goals. It is based on the idea that there is a necessity to go beyond data, figures, statistics, and quantitative elements; it deals with the qualitative dimension. Quality assurance is a central element in European higher education today. Furthermore, it has also assumed a key role in the Bologna Process, while the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area* (ESG), adopted by the European ministers in Bergen in May 2005, have built a European perspective and a European context for quality assurance in higher education.

In the European Higher Education Area, universities are required to implement their own internal quality assurance mechanisms and to develop a quality culture shared among universities throughout Europe. As stated in the Berlin Communiqué (2003), "consistent with the principle of institutional autonomy, the primary responsibility for quality assurance in higher education lies with each institution itself and this provides the basis for real accountability of the academic system within the national quality framework".

The team is aware that in the past few years CBU has undergone many external evaluations of various types, at various levels and for various reasons and therefore may feel that it has suffered — and still suffers — from evaluation overload. However, excess in external evaluation does not necessarily lead to improvement in quality and does not necessarily help in building a quality culture. Quality in a university can be built from different points of view and can be based on different approaches and different concepts. Some of these concepts of quality have been presented earlier in this report (section 3) especially with regards to their relevance with CBU. The internal quality assurance system of CBU follows the "compliance" concept of quality since it aims to meet the requirements and demands set by the national quality assurance system.

The internal quality assurance in CBU is meant to operate through the establishment of a quality management system (QMS) consisting of structures and processes. The central role in the QMS is attributed to the Central Commission for Evaluation and Quality Assurance (CCEQA). It is a commission that is chaired by the rector and is attributed directly to the rector. CCEQA coordinates all activities aiming at the efficient operation and development of the quality assurance system in the university, operating with the administrative support of the Department for Evaluation and Quality Assurance and in line with the mission and the strategic objectives of the university and in consistency with the national and international standards on quality in higher education. In this regard, CCEQA aims to promote the culture of quality in the entire teaching and research carried out within the university.

The team paid specific attention to the consistency of the internal quality assurance system with part 1 of the ESG. The team is aware that almost all standards and guidelines of part 1 of the ESG have been incorporated into the requirements set by ARACIS to the Romanian universities for accreditation purposes. Furthermore, the team found good evidence of consistency with the ESG from the documentation provided regarding internal quality assurance and from the various meetings during both visits.

To conclude this section, while appreciating CBU's efforts to build and consolidate its quality management and quality assurance systems, the team would like to point out that improvement-oriented quality culture is not about standards, rankings, or classifications; it is about attitudes, mentalities, and values. Improvement-oriented quality culture is not expected to be imposed or regulated or monitored in a top-down approach; but it should be built in a bottom-up approach and include the whole higher education community. The involvement of each individual in this bottom-up procedure requires encouragement and inspiration — an important task for the leadership of the university at all levels.

7. Internationalisation

Internationalisation is a key issue in the European Higher Education Area; consequently, it should be high on the strategic agenda of any European university today. An internationalisation strategy may be based on the relationships established by a university with international partners at various levels. This relationship may be built at institutional level (e.g., inter-university relationships, relations with international organisations, partnership in international networks and consortia), at faculty level (e.g., joint or dual study programmes and degrees), at the level of research units/activities (e.g., participation in international research projects and financing by international resources) or at the level of individuals (e.g., mobility exchanges of students and staff, attractiveness of international students and staff, involvement of students and staff in international events and activities).

Therefore, an important part of the internationalisation strategy of a university will be to develop the appropriate conditions that will help establish and/or further improve the relationships at various levels and for various purposes, as listed above. However, it should also be taken into account that these relationships will be built on and will be facilitated and further improved by the international visibility of the university, its overall profile, its reputation, and the way in which it promotes its qualities internationally. All these should be considered a constituent part of an internationalisation strategy.

The concern and the strong aspiration of CBU for internationalisation are expressed through one of its key strategic objectives, which is improvement of its visibility and dynamic at the international level. In this respect, elements of internationalisation can be found both with regards to education and research. However, the team understands that there are system constraints in Romania, especially concerning teaching and learning that make implementation difficult. For example, as mentioned already earlier in this report (section 2.1), joint or double programmes and degrees face implementation challenges in Romania. Nevertheless, and besides these difficulties, the team realises that CBU tries to make significant steps towards internationalisation through the "Erasmus+" programme. Internationalisation is facilitated by the Department of International Relations, a very active administrative unit which reflects CBU's concern regarding internationalisation and which show very good results during over the years regarding both outgoing and incoming students. Furthermore, it is worth noting the efforts to bring international teachers to CBU on the one hand, and to improve international internships for the students on the other hand. The team would suggest emphasising the second facet more strongly since it would align with the entrepreneurial approach of CBU and could be a means to sharpen its institutional profile. In this regard, *the team recommends that CBU reinforce its efforts to strengthen and systematise international internships with a view to develop entrepreneurship as a hallmark and added value for its potential students.*

In parallel, the team would like to stress that internationalisation should begin at home. This, apart from bringing international teachers to CBU, includes "internationalising" home students. An effective internationalisation strategy should be built step-by-step starting within the university, from the entire university community. To that direction, *the team recommends that CBU develop a comprehensive internationalisation strategy building an internationalisation attitude among the students, but primarily among the staff. This strategy should also contain a strict language policy for the students in order to improve their language skills. This policy should be a core element of the curricula as much as ARACIS allows to, thus also fostering the idea to provide a specific profile for CBU. In addition, this language policy should be related to the need for building intercultural competence among the students, which could also be part of the abovementioned hallmark of entrepreneurship.*

Finally, the team recommends CBU to establish a strategic partnership and networking policy which links research to internationalisation, interdisciplinarity and multidisciplinarity with the aim to strengthen its capacity for involvement in international projects.

8. Conclusions

The overall impression of the team is that CBU is a university that shows dynamism and aims to transform by 2016 from a university mainly for education to a university also for scientific research, which at the same time enhancing its strong links with society. The team is impressed by the strong support that CBU receives from its external partners (stakeholders and alumni). It is also impressed by the overall support that CBU offers to its students (e.g. career service, internships, but also affordable fees) and also — last but by no means least — by the overall infrastructure (premises, facilities, modern equipment). Finally, the team is impressed by the successful efforts of CBU to sustain coherence of its faculties over three different locations; this is not an easy task, as it requires hard work in order to create and maintain a spirit of ownership and togetherness to be built among the staff and students of CBU.

The team feels positive for the institution because it takes up challenges; it has a lot of good and valuable intentions and plausible ideas; it has dedicated, knowledgeable and committed staff with plenty of expertise who cooperate inside the university in a constructive way to enhance institutional and personal achievements; it also has motivated and committed students actively involved in promoting the university.

However, apart from and in parallel to the considerations presented above, the team would like to encourage CBU to become proactive. This is not a point of criticism; this is an additional characteristic that CBU should acquire so that it does not mainly follow or grasp current opportunities. The university has to become more forward looking, building in parallel the profile that it wants to have in the mid-term range. In other words, the team believes that there should be a strong shift for CBU from "being driven" to "being a driver".

Furthermore, the team has the view that CBU has a number of good tools in place, which it uses in a consistent and constructive way. And, finally, there is capable leadership and good management in place at all levels, which is able to identify strategic choices and implement strategic options. This being the case should not detract from the need to reconsider its processes and tools in order to sharpen both identification and validation of its strategic objectives as well as to move from to-do-list type of thinking to developing truly operational action plans.

To conclude: CBU informed the team that the university was awarded a high confidence rating after undergoing a national quality assurance process. Based on its own experience, the team believes that CBU's merits in terms of its educational policies and practices are tangible. Therefore, the team shares the view that CBU deserves a good future. Moreover, the team also considers CBU to be in a position to achieve success in the years to come, given the positive circumstances that are in place already.

The recommendations appearing in the present report take due consideration also of the overall context (political, legal, economic and social) in which CBU operates. They also bear in mind the specific situation of Romania and Romanian higher education together with the current trends in European higher education. These recommendations are intended to be the team's own contribution to the process of change and to help CBU to make the most of the opportunities open to it and to cope with the threats it may face in the future. At the same time, this evaluation report aspires to function as an inspiration for CBU as a whole, but more specifically for all those — its leadership, students and staff — who are concerned by its future. The team hopes that the evaluation, including the present report, offers a real help to CBU for its future steps. And it also hopes that CBU will seize the opportunity to realise and demonstrate its great potential.

Summary of recommendations

In this section of the report the main recommendations are summarised as they have appeared in italics in the respective sections of the text. In order for the recommendations to be able to stand autonomously in this specific section of the report, a slight rephrasing was necessary in some cases.

1. The team recommends CBU to consider the following operational aspects: moving from aspirational goals to feasible and realistic ones requires thorough investigation (e.g. data analyses, substantial SWOT analysis and its full-scale, in-depth evaluation, consultation with various stakeholders on a regular and systematic basis, etc.) and ensuring endorsement of the whole institution through adequate and regular communication processes, both bottom-up and top-down. In addition, there is also a need to consider the "big picture", i.e. to project where CBU should and could stand in mid-range, for example in 2025, and what its "brand", i.e. its overarching "selling point", will be by then; working with scenarios would be a useful device to that end.

2. The team recommends that the operational plan of CBU should be sufficiently SMART, i.e. the elements in it should be specific, measurable, and achievable, with concrete responsibilities and timelines. The specification should be clear from the very beginning and not made up in later stages of implementation; quantification of actions should be done by assigning performance indicators with clear distinction between routine and development actions; priorities should be clearly set and linked to specific and realistic timelines in order to make the overall process manageable; and, finally, assignment of tasks and responsibilities should be clearly defined and personalised so that they show the real owner of the respective action.

3. The team recommends that CBU establishes a participatory bottom-up process for setting the strategic objectives and defining the other constituent elements of its strategic plan in order to create ownership within the university for the overall strategy,

to make strategy an institutional affair and not an issue for individuals, to improve effectiveness and efficiency in the achievement of the goals, and, finally, in order to conceptualise strategy.

4. The team recommends that the task to oversee and monitor the implementation of the strategic plan should be assigned to a specific body attached directly to the rector or to one of the vice-rectors. This body should also have the task to assess the validity of the strategic goals and the respective key performance indicators and reconsider them in all cases that the goals and the key performance indicators could not be achieved. This does not exclude the right and obligation of collegial bodies of the university or its faculties to take decisions on key policies, objectives, and measures.

5. The team makes two combined recommendations. Firstly, CBU should reconsider its overall structures and their operation with a view to their fitness for purpose, thus ensuring not only capacity to decide on operational matters but also to explore strategic options and choices on a comprehensive basis and to develop a pro-active attitude in their operation. Secondly, CBU should consider the involvement of stakeholders on an institutionalised and more regular basis. The involvement of external stakeholders should become normal practice both at faculty level and institutional level.

6. The team recommends that CBU aim to generate highly qualified human potential (training, building capacities and competences, improving professionalism) that will support and back major functions at the institutional level, like e.g. quality assurance and strategic management, in a sustainable, long-term perspective.

7. The team recommends that CBU develop a comprehensive strategy in order to ensure financial sustainability in the long-term. This strategy should aim to seek alternative resources and could include widening the educational offer to new student categories (clientele) through lifelong learning initiatives, improving e-learning offers, raising capacity to attract research funds (nationally and internationally), consultancy and other services to society. In parallel, this strategy should also have an internal dimension, including efficient financial management, fair and effective funding allocation, allocation of "seed money" for innovation and performance enhancement (e.g. incentives and rewards) and funding of major long-term investments.

8. The team believes that a more holistic approach to learning outcomes is needed in order to consider all four educational objectives and it recommends that CBU move in that direction. This move requires an in-depth exploration and analysis of the substantial meaning of the four educational objectives mentioned above, followed by a statement of values by the institution regarding how and to what extent it would like to address the four objectives in order to transform them into precise educational objectives and into meaningful learning outcomes.

9. The team recommends that CBU work towards creating a clearer institutional profile. CBU has to define and sharpen its profile, and make it visible to create a "brand".

10. The team recommends that CBU should stress its efforts towards the genuine implementation of student-centred learning, while at the same time continuing to address the system objectives related to the implementation of the Bologna principles.

11. The team recommends that CBU start reviewing the structural elements of study programmes more holistically, re-addressing learning objectives, all learning outcomes and considering their effect on the curricula, matters of access, the learning methods including the principle of learning progression, the assessment of students and quality monitoring. Similarly, the team recommends that CBU should improve the student questionnaires with the aim to put more emphasis on learning outcomes.

12. The team recommends that CBU establish a standard, permanent programme for building teaching capacity on the basis of updated didactic methods. This would aim pro-actively and in a supportive way to improve teaching performance.

13. The team recommends that CBU explore in depth whether the concept of "fitness for purpose" should drive its QA strategy and its actions to the future, considering also what its purposes are. In any case, CBU should adapt both its strategic management and its quality management to concepts of quality that are assumed by the university.

14. The team recommends that CBU develop a comprehensive strategy for lifelong learning, which should be both demand-driven (waiting for customers) and provider-driven (making offers to customers). The team recommends that CBU should grasp both options.

15. The team recommends that CBU consider the new perspectives in terms of e-learning and integrate them in its long-term strategy, which may also lead to new modes of institutionalised networking with partners inside and outside higher education.

16. The team believes and recommends that CBU work on the conceptual issues and define the focus of its research activity. In this regard, CBU should also reconsider the role of consultancy in the research agenda and the blend between consultancy and research.

17. The team recommends that CBU mitigate the bottom-up approach for decisions regarding research, allowing for prioritisation as well. For example, CBU should be in a position to establish priorities among the research centres and align staff policies to them in order to ensure the required critical mass. The team also recommends that CBU should start looking at defining research strategies in a top-down approach in order to identify future areas of research interest in relation to its long-term strategy and establish research centres or plan research activities in the respective fields with a view

of developing interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary initiatives, and supporting these with the appropriate human resource policy.

18. The team recommends that CBU create a strong institutional support office to identify promising projects and process applications for research funding. Additionally, the team recommends that CBU join and share efforts with other small-size universities to that end.

19. The team recommends that CBU strengthen its efforts towards an even closer cooperation and partnership with society. To that end, the team would recommend the establishment of an administrative office for identifying present and future opportunities for partnerships between the university and the society.

20. The team recommends that CBU reinforce its efforts to strengthen and systematise international internships with a view to develop entrepreneurship as a hallmark and added value for its potential students.

21. The team recommends that CBU develop a comprehensive internationalisation strategy building an internationalisation attitude among the students, but primarily among the staff. This strategy should also contain a strict language policy for the students in order to improve their language skills. This policy should be a core element of the curricula as much as ARACIS allows to, thus also fostering the idea to provide a specific profile for CBU. In addition, this language policy should be related to the need for building intercultural competence among the students, which could also be part of the abovementioned hallmark of entrepreneurship.

22. The team recommends CBU to establish a strategic partnership and networking policy which links research to internationalisation, interdisciplinarity and multidisciplinarity with the aim to strengthen its capacity for involvement in international projects.