

## **Triple Helix Cooperations to Foster and Improve a Sustainable Development: Tentative Insights from the Cases of Western Norway and Southeast Romania**

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*Abstract.* In the wake of the Covid-pandemic, the Ovidius University of Constanța and Western Norway University of Applied Sciences, along with five other higher education institutions, committed to creating the ERASMOVE consortium, an alliance of European universities. One goal of the alliance was to address the economic challenges in Southeast Romania, particularly in the tourism industry and sustainability. To achieve this, the universities collaborated on building and launching the SUSTENT program, which focused on sustainable entrepreneurship. This paper builds on mid-term interview data of Romanian and Norwegian project stakeholders to explore policy, distance and interaction between actors that promote regional economic development in Western Norway and Southeast Romania case regions. We interview stakeholders and university staff in the respective ecosystems surrounding the participating universities. The theoretical fundament of this paper thus rests on the triple helix model, which involves collaboration between academia, businesses, and public organizations, which has been proposed as a means of promoting sustainable development. This approach recognizes that sustainable development requires the cooperation and coordination of multiple stakeholders, including those outside the traditional boundaries of academia and industry (Carayannis et al. 2018; Carayannis and Campbell 2010). By working together, these different groups can bring their unique perspectives and resources to bear on the complex problems facing society, from climate change to social inequality. The triple helix model can help facilitate this cooperation by providing a framework for joint research and development projects, as well as for policy and regulatory initiatives that support sustainable development goals (Etzkowitz 2008; Skogseid and Strand 2011). Through these collaborations, the triple helix can help to build bridges between different sectors, foster innovation, and promote more sustainable and equitable outcomes for all. The paper includes an analysis of the two regions, a set of guidelines to overcome the barriers as defined by the project, and a consideration of other lessons that can be yielded by employing other frameworks for sustainable entrepreneurship and regional development.

*Keywords:* sustainable entrepreneurship, regional development, multiple case method, Romania, Norway

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