

External Evaluation Report of Doctoral Domain in Geography

I. Introduction

This report concerns to periodically External Evaluation of the Institution Organising Doctoral Study Programs (IOSUD), in the doctoral study domain of Geography at „Ștefan cel Mare” University of Suceava (USV). The evaluation period occurred between 2-8.09.2021.

The assessment will determine the accreditation of the doctoral area in geography, taking into account the following levels:

- the activity of doctoral supervisors and doctoral students;
- the research outcomes in relation to the defended doctoral theses in public meetings and respective CNATDCU validation;
- evaluation of doctoral field in Geography, with reference to the criteria and performance indicators (A., B, C.);
- the activity of Doctoral School of Applied Sciences and Engineering (SDSAI);
- the activity of SDSAI as the Institution Organizing Doctoral Study Programs in domain Geography.

The Evaluation Panel for doctoral studies in fundamental domain of Geography is constituted by:

- Coordinator Prof. Dr. Adrian Grozavu, Universitatea Alexandru Ioan Cuza Iasi, Romania.
- International expert Prof. Francisco da Silva Costa, University of Minho, Portugal;
- PhD student Sorin Furdui, Universitatea din Oradea, Romania.

The university status is enshrined by the Romanian Government Decision no. 225 of March 7th, 1990, establishing the “Ștefan cel Mare” University of Suceava as a public institution in accordance with the Law on National Education and the University Charter. The USV Charter represents the fundamental internal act in full accordance with the Romanian Constitution and the laws of the country.

Regarding the organization of the doctorate the IOSUD-USV was established in 2005 within the institution of higher education Ștefan cel Mare University of Suceava by a Senate Decision. Since 2012,, there were established two Doctoral Schools: Doctoral School of Applied Sciences and Engineering (SDSAI) and Doctoral School of Socio-Human Sciences. The activity carried out in IOSUD-USV complies with the provisions of the Regulations for the organization and conduct of the doctoral study programmes revised in the Senate in 2017.

The doctoral field of Geography is operating within the SDSAI and have a body of 4 Doctoral supervisors and 20 students. Eight Doctoral theses was defended in the field of Geography in the interval 2015-2020.

II. Methods used

At first, the consultation and analysis of the documentation in electronic format sent by IOSUD was carried out, namely:



- the periodic self-evaluation report for maintenance of accreditation of the doctoral field of geography;
- the attached documents;
- the list of the domains, criteria, standards, performance indicators;
- the list of critical performance indicators.

We also carry out the consultation collection of information in:

- the website of USV: <https://usv.ro/>;
- the webpage of the SDSAI: <https://usv.ro/academic/programe-academice/doctorat/programe-de-preparare-universitara-avansata/scoala-doctorala-de-stiinte-aplicate-si-ingineresti/>;
- the webpage of the Doctorate: <https://usv.ro/academic/programe-academice/doctorat/>;
- the website of the Library: <https://biblioteca.usv.ro/>.

In a second moment, occurred, in hybrid mode, the evaluation period between 2-8.09.2021. Two preliminary meetings was held on August 30 and September 2, aims to present all the members of the panel and discuss the preparation and harmonization of evaluation steps of doctoral study domains and IOSUD. In the following days, online meeting/discussions were held with (annex 1):

1. The representatives of the USV institution, the Director of the Council for Academic Doctoral Studies (CSUD) and the Directors of Doctoral Schools. September 2th, 2021.
2. The members of the Ethics Commission. September 3th, 2021.
3. The contact person for the doctoral study domain under review and the team who drafted the internal evaluation. September 6th, 2021. Main topics analyzed: Structure and organization of the report; SWOT analysis; Human Resources; Postdocs; Online activities for students.
4. The academic staff corresponding to the doctoral study domain. September 6th, 2021. Main topics analyzed: Human Resources; Curricula; Finances and budget; Internationalization.
5. The Directors/persons in charge) of the research centers/laboratories within the doctoral study domain. September 6th, 2021. Main topics analysed: Financial resources, Laboratories, collaboration with foreign universities, software licenses.
6. PhD students, on domains. September 7th, 2021. Main topics analysed: Administrative processes; Choice of thesis theme; Involvement in teaching activities.
7. Graduates of the respective doctoral study domain. September 7th, 2021. Main topics analysed: Current status at the professional level. Difficulties in the PhD; Grants and research projects;. Relations with the university after the end of the PhD.
8. Employers of doctoral graduates in the domain. September 7th, 2021. Main topics analysed: Status of collaboration; Relations with the university; Research, planning and civil protection activities.
9. The Doctoral School Director and Doctoral School Council (CSD members). September 8th, 2021.
10. The Commission for Quality Evaluation and Assurance (CEAC) members/Quality Assurance Department. September 8th, 2021.
11. The IOSUD evaluation panel for conclusions. September 8th, 2021.
12. The representatives of the institution under review to discuss on the conclusions of the evaluation process and the main recommendations. September 8th, 2021.

During and after the evaluation period, email was exchanged to clarify doubts and gather additional information with the team who drafted the internal evaluation and the internal director of the research centres (annexes 2 and 3).



III. Analysis of ARACIS's performance indicators

Domain A. INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY

The Institution Organizing Doctoral Studies, of which the SDSAI is a part of, operates within the USV, which has legal status and is a higher education institution. The status of university is enshrined by the Government Decision No 225 from 7 March 1990,

USV was recognized in 2008 by the evaluation carried out by the National Authority for Scientific Research (ANCS) when the university was accredited as a research and development institution, being part of the research and development system of national interest. Following the external institutional evaluation, the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education has reconfirmed in 2019, the rating "High Confidence Grade".

Since 2012, based on the USV Senate Decision, it was established the SDSAI. There have been prepared and are in operation the Rules of Organization and Operation of the SDSAI since 2017. The regulations contains a number of criteria, procedures and legislative standards about the structure, organization and functioning of the SDSAI. The doctoral field of Geography benefits institutional, administrative, management structures and financial resources secured by SDSAI). Based on the Code of Doctoral Studies, approved in 2011 and of the Institutional Regulations for the organization and conduct of doctoral degree programmes, the Council of Doctoral University Studies-CSUD was established, was established, as to its composition, organic and competencies.

A various functional documents - regulations, procedures, methodologies and frameworks - about the organization and functioning of doctoral studies was published in the last years. Procedures for PhD students, criteria for the evaluation and standards required from applicants for admission are specified. The recognition of the quality of doctoral supervisor is made according to the legislation in force. PhD activities are carried out under the supervision of IOSUD-USV. The organisation of doctoral degree program is specified in the Institutional Regulation and according the acquisition of a level 8 qualification of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and the National Qualifications Framework.

Criterion A.1. The administrative, managerial institutional structures and the financial resources

Standard A.1.1. The institution organizing doctoral studies (IOSUD) has implemented the effective functioning mechanisms provided for in the specific legislation on the organization of doctoral studies.

The regulations are in place and they are applied at the level of IOSUD and of the SDSAI , namely: specific regulations, the methodology for conducting the competition for the position of director of the Council of Doctoral Studies, methodologies for organising and conducting doctoral program, the existence of mechanisms for the recognition of the position of doctoral supervisor, functional management structures, internal procedures for analysis and approval of proposals on the topic of doctoral study program.

Performance Indicator A.1.1.1. *The existence of specific regulations and their application at the level of the Doctoral School of the respective university doctoral study domain:*



- (a) the internal regulations of the Doctoral School;
- (b) the Methodology for conducting elections for the position of director of the Council of doctoral school (CSD), as well as elections by the students of their representative in CSD and the evidence of their conduct;
- (c) the Methodologies for organizing and conducting doctoral studies (for the admission of doctoral students, for the completion of doctoral studies);
- (d) the existence of mechanisms for recognizing the status of a Doctoral advisor and the equivalence of the doctoral degree obtained abroad;
- (e) functional management structures (Council of the doctoral school), giving as well proof of the regularity of meetings;
- (f) the contract for doctoral studies;
- (g) internal procedures for the analysis and approval of proposals regarding the training for doctoral study programs based on advanced academic studies.

Several documents were analyzed, highlighting:

- the institutional regulation for the organization and functioning of the IOSUD-USV doctoral studies programs;
- the internal regulations of the SDSAI;
- the functional management structures of IOSUD and SDSAI;
- the regulation regarding the organization and conduct of the competition for admission to university doctoral studies;
- the contract for doctoral studies.

The verification of the documents presented on this indicator demonstrates the conditions of the IOSUD and SDSAI for the regular functioning of the Doctorate in Geography.

However, the SDSAI must meet the conditions in order to:

- Make all documents available on the website USV in order to promote values of transparency and ethics.
- Enable bilingual (English/Romanian) edition of main content.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator A.1.1.2. *The doctoral school' Regulation includes mandatory criteria, procedures and standards binding on the aspects specified in Article 17, paragraph (5) of the Government Decision No. 681/2011 on the approval of the Code of Doctoral Studies with subsequent amendments and additions.*

The SDSAI Regulations includes and establishes a series of mandatory criteria, procedures and standards provided in the Code of Doctoral Studies. The Paragraphs 4.4, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, 4.9, 4.10, 4.11 and the Article 22 of the Regulations of the Doctoral School guarantee compliance with the Performance Indicator A.1.1.2.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Standard A.1.2. The IOSUD has the logistical resources necessary to carry out the doctoral studies' mission.



To assess the logistical resources needed to carry out the mission of the doctoral studies in Geography, we analyzed the Student Registration Information System based in two IT platforms adapted to USV requirements and the software to check the similarity index of doctoral theses.

Performance Indicator A.1.2.1. *The existence and effectiveness of an appropriate IT system to keep track of doctoral students and their academic background.*

The University of Suceava's Student Registration Information System contains and processes the data of PhD students and is available in Admission Platform (at <https://admitere.usv.ro>) and the People Soft platform (at <https://80.96.122.141/psp/PT90SYS/?&cmd=login&languageCd=ROM>).

The USV must study the possibility of making the system available in English in order to serve foreign students.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator A.1.2.2. *The existence and use of an appropriate software program and evidence of its use to verify the percentage of similarity in all doctoral theses.*

All PhD students' theses are checked through the of the plagiarism identification program TURNITIN purchased by USV. The average resolution obtained in the SDSAI doctoral school is about 5%.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Standard A.1.3. *The IOSUD makes sure that financial resources are used optimally, and the revenues obtained from doctoral studies are supplemented through additional funding besides governmental funding.*

We identify financial resources and funding and their application by the IOSUD. The expenditure and financial statement made in the last 5 years by the SDSAI are disponible in various documents.

Performance Indicator A.1.3.1. *Existence of at least one research or institutional / human resources development grant under implementation at the time of submission of the internal evaluation file, per doctoral study domain under evaluation, or existence of at least 2 research or institutional development / human resources grant for the doctoral study domain, obtained by doctoral thesis advisors operating in the evaluated domain within the past 5 years. The grants address relevant themes for the respective domain and, as a rule, are engaging doctoral students.*

During the evaluated period, several research projects at the level of the doctoral field, Geography, were carried out with the involvement of PhD students.

Two Grants have been awarded:

- Solutions for the organization of the agricultural territory and for sustainable agricultural exploitation based on the inventory of landslides and ravines;
- Reconstruction of Romanian river channel changes in last 10,700 years: the role of climatic conditions and of human impact.

It will be important to increase the number of scholarships for the coming years through projects and services.

The indicator is fulfilled.



Performance Indicator *A.1.3.2. *The percentage of doctoral students active at the time of the evaluation, who for at least six months receive additional funding sources besides government funding, through scholarships awarded by individual persons or by legal entities, or who are financially supported through research or institutional / human resources development grants is not less than 20%.*

The proportion of doctoral students existing at the time of evaluation, who benefit for at least 6 months from other sources of funding or are financially supported by research or institutional development grants / human resources, is about 32% . In the field of Geography in the last 5 years, more of 20 % of doctoral students were included in funded research projects.

Based on the collection of information from the teaching staff and PhD students in Geography, we can conclude:

- the lack of public funds provided by the Ministry of Education causes a small number of scholarships and also the lack of funded research projects;
- the explanation provided regarding the lack of funded research projects is that in recent years, the number of national projects has been lower and the latest grants obtained do not have the possibility to introduce new members;
- the number of scholarships is distributed at the University level by the ministry, subsequently being distributed in the Doctoral fields. In recent years, the number of nationally funded research projects has been lower.

It is advisable for the SDSAI to study news strategies to increase the number of scholarships and thus attract more students to PhD program. The supervisors should promoting the students involvement in research projects and diversify financial sources in order to increase the number of PhD grants.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator *A.1.3.3. *At least 10% of the total amount of doctoral grants obtained by the university through institutional contracts and of tuition fees collected from the doctoral students enrolled in the paid tuition system is used to reimburse professional training expenses of doctoral students (attending conferences, summer schools, training, programs abroad, publication of specialty papers or other specific forms of dissemination etc.).*

About 26 % of the total amounts related to grants PhD in geography obtained by the university is used to reimburse the training expenses of doctoral students. The financial policy of IOSUD-USV is found in the long-term and medium-term strategic plans on the assumption by this structure of the university of ensuring the financing from doctoral grants as well as from own revenues of the activities involving doctoral students.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Criterion A.2. Research infrastructure

Standard A.2.1. The IOSUD has a modern research infrastructure to support the conduct of doctoral studies' specific activities.



IOSUD / The doctoral school have a research infrastructure that supports the development of the related activities. Within the Geography field, the university study programme benefits from the facilities of the Faculty of History and Geography and research centers:- lecture hall; teaching laboratories; research laboratories and office rooms.

The situation of the research spaces, infrastructure and equipment is presented in detail. These show that the equipment available to geographic researchers has multiplied in the last 5 years and that they can support a complex and diversified activity.

Students have access to all the Libraries and the benefits from online access of the USV.

Performance Indicator A.2.1.1. *The venues and the material equipment available to the doctoral school enable the research activities in the evaluated domain to be carried out, in line with the assumed mission and objectives (computers, specific software, equipment, laboratory equipment, library, access to international databases etc.). The research infrastructure and the provision of research services are presented to the public through a specific platform. The research infrastructure described above, which was purchased and developed within the past 5 years will be presented distinctly.*

IOSUD / the SDSAI / the Faculty of History and Geography allow for the conduct of research activities in the Geography field, in accordance with the mission and objectives assumed providing PCs, dedicated software, equipment, laboratory equipment, library, access to international databases, etc.. The research infrastructure and the offer of research services provision are complex, diversified and proper:

- research infrastructures provided by the Centre for Applied Geography and the Interdisciplinary Research Centre "Carpathica";
- development and Innovation Centre for Advanced Materials, Nanotechnologies and Distributed Manufacturing and Control Systems" (MANSiD);
- five laboratory spaces equipped with modern technology that allow work essentially related to physical geography;
- education and research spaces where the students have a high number of books, volumes and collections of periodicals in the field of Geography;
- softwares and their user licenses are disponibilized to PhD students;
- online access to scientific databases.

In the last five years is the establishment of the Integrated Research, Development and Innovation Centre for Advanced Materials, Nanotechnologies and Distributed Manufacturing and Control Systems (MANSiD) with laboratories wich serving SDSAI supervisors and PhD students.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Criterion A.3. Quality of Human Resources

Standard A.3.1. At the level of each domain there are sufficient qualified staff to ensure the conduct of doctoral study program.

The SDSAI emerged at the USV in accordance with the provisions of the National Education Law regarding the of Doctoral Studies,. Four doctoral supervisors currently work in the PhD of Geography.. The subjects of the advanced training program included in the study plan of the PhD in Geography are



taught by professors who supervise doctoral theses. The doctoral supervisors have publications indexed by the Web of Science or ERIH in impact journals and other achievements of relevant significance to the domain of Geography. The doctoral supervisors are still active in their scientific field and qualified according to the minimum standards required by the CNATDCU.

Performance Indicator A.3.1.1. *Minimum three doctoral thesis advisors within that doctoral domain, and at least 50% of them (but no less than three) meet the minimum standards of the National Council for Attestation of University Degrees, Diplomas and Certificates (CNATDCU) in force at the time when the evaluation is carried out, which standards are required and mandatory for obtaining the enabling certification.*

The four doctoral supervisors in the field of Geography meet the minimum necessary and obligatory standards and conditions for conferring didactic degrees in higher education according to Order 6.129 of 2016 and the standards required and mandatory for obtaining the enabling certification of the CNATDCU in force.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator *A.3.1.2. *At least 50% of all doctoral advisors have a full-time employment contract for an indefinite period with the IOSUD.*

All four PhD supervisors in the field of Geography have a tenured position within IOSUD-USV.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator A.3.1.3. *The study subjects in the education program based on advanced higher education studies pertaining to the doctoral domain are taught by teaching staff or researchers who are doctoral thesis advisors / certified doctoral thesis advisors, professors / CS I or lecturer / CS II, with proved expertise in the field of the study subjects they teach, or other specialists in the field who meet the standards established by the institution in relation with the aforementioned teaching and research functions, as provided by the law.*

The subjects in the program based on advanced higher education studies of the Geography PhD curriculum are supported by professors and associate professors, within IOSUD-USV.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator *A.3.1.4. *The percentage of doctoral thesis advisors who concomitantly coordinate more than 8 doctoral students, but no more than 12, who are themselves studying in doctoral programs does not exceed 20%.*

The proportion of Ph.D. advisors in Geography who coordinate more than 8 Ph.D. students at the same time, but not more than 12, during their Ph.D. studies (3 years) and 15 Ph.D. students in total, does not exceed 5%.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Standard A.3.2. *The Doctoral advisors within the domain are carrying out a scientific activity visible at international level.*



We analyse the publications in indexed journals and international level contributions of the PhD supervisors in order to understand the progress in scientific research-development-innovation and international visibility. We also consulted the list of research projects that supervisors were involved in as coordinator/investigator and awards received. Hereby we try to infer if the supervisors are scientifically active by the CNATDCU minimum standards, required and mandatory to obtain the habilitation certificate.

Performance Indicator A.3.2.1. *At least 50% of the doctoral thesis advisors in the evaluated domain have at least 5 Web of Science- or ERIH-indexed publications in magazines of impact, or other achievements of relevant significance for that domain, including international-level contributions that indicate progress in scientific research - development - innovation for the evaluated domain. The aforementioned doctoral thesis advisors enjoy international awareness within the past five years, consisting of: membership on scientific boards of international publications and conferences; membership on boards of international professional associations; guests in conferences or expert groups working abroad, or membership on doctoral defense commissions at universities abroad or co-leading with universities abroad. For Arts and Sports and Physical Education Sciences, doctoral thesis advisors shall prove their international visibility within the past five years by their membership on the boards of professional associations, membership in organizing committees of arts events and international competitions, membership on juries or umpire teams in artistic events or international competitions.*

From various attachments, namely the curriculars, it was possible to assess the scientific and research portfolios of the four supervisors. We found that supervisors perform the tasks of editors and reviewers of journals specialized in the field of Geography and are affiliated to international scientific bodies and organizations and have international visibility in the last 5 years. The publications indexed Web of Science in journals with impact factor as well as other achievements such as articles ISI Conference Proceedings prove that the 4 PhD supervisors have at least 5 indexed publications or other relevant achievements in the field.

All PhD supervisors in the field of Geography carry out activities that meet the requirements regarding the contributions made at national and international level regarding the development-innovation in the field of Geography.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator *A.3.2.2. *At least 50% of the doctoral thesis advisors in a specific doctoral study domain continue to be active in their scientific field, and acquire at least 25% of the score requested by the minimal CNATDCU standards in force at the time of the evaluation, which are required and mandatory for acquiring their enabling certificate, based on their scientific results within the past five years.*

The consulting of the curriculars, research Contracts and other documents available in the annexes allows us to assess whether the minimum CNATDCU standards for the last 5 years are met by the Doctoral supervisors. The proportion of at least 50% of the leaders of at least 25% of the score required by the minimum standards CNATDCU, necessary and mandatory for obtaining the certificate of qualification, based on scientific results of the last 5 years, is accomplish. The doctoral supervisors fulfill totally the habilitation conditions in the field of Geography.

The indicator is fulfilled.



Domain B. EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

We analyze the entire admission process, namely the organization of the different phases. We assess the quality of this process in terms of the ability to attract candidates, We tried to infer from the consequences of the doctoral student dropout rate on the course functioning.

We examine the specialization curriculum in the area of doctoral geography, the content of the doctoral programs and the training program based on advanced academic studies.

We have consulted the annexes on ethics in research and intellectual property,

We have identified the different counseling/guidance strategies for students used by functional advisory committees.

We consulted the lists of scientific research activities and participation in international events carried out by doctoral students.

We tried to understand if the involvement of evaluators in the defense committees of doctoral theses is significant.

Criterion B.1. The number, quality and diversity of candidates enrolled for the admission contest

Standard B.1.1. The institution organizing doctoral studies has the capacity to attract candidates from outside the higher education institution or a number of candidates exceeding the number of seats available.

Based on the statistical elements presented in the report, we analyzed the capacity to attract students, with regard to their institutional origin and the profile of candidates in their academic, research and professional performance components. We also interpreted the data presented on doctoral students' resignation / dropout.

Performance Indicator *B.1.1.1. *The ratio between the number of graduates of masters' programs of other higher education institutions, national or foreign, who have enrolled for the doctoral admission contest within the past five years and the number of seats funded by the state budget, put out through contest within the doctoral domain is at least 0.2 or the ratio between the number of candidates within the past five years and the number of seats funded by the state budget put out through contest within the doctoral studies domain is at least 1,2.*

The ratio between the number of master's degree graduates of other higher education institutions in the country or abroad who have entered the competition for admission to geography doctoral studies in the last 5 years and the number of places funded by to the state budget put up for competition, in the period 2015/2016 - 2019/2020, was 0.429 being higher than 0.2. The ratio between the number of candidates in the last five years and the number of places financed from the state budget put up for competition within the field of doctoral studies, Geography, is 1.44 accomplished the indicator.

It will be prudent for the SDSAI and to determine strategies for attracting students from the Master's Degree in Geography at USV as well as from foreign institutions.

The indicator is fulfilled.



Standard B.1.2 Candidates admitted to doctoral studies demonstrate academic, research and professional performance.

Performance Indicator *B.1.2.1. Admission to doctoral study programs is based on selection criteria including: previous academic, research and professional performance, their interest for scientific or arts/sports research, publications in the domain and a proposal for a research subject. Interviewing the candidate is compulsory, as part of the admission procedure.

Admission to doctoral studies is based on the regulations contained in the Institutional Regulation for the organization and operation of doctoral and postdoctoral studies of IOSUD-USV. Annually, the Regulation for conducting the admission in cycle III - doctoral university studies establishes a pre-established annual program with the reassessment and grading in the admission procedures, evaluation criteria and standards. According to the Regulations, the selection for admission of doctoral students is carried out on a compulsory basis through a competition that includes three phases: a language proficiency exam, a specialised exam and an interview. According to the stipulations of the Specific Admission Criteria, "admission to the doctoral programme shall be in the order of the average obtained by the candidates in the admission competition, within the limit of the places available, but who have obtained at least an average of 8 (eight)".

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator B.1.2.2. The expelling rate, including renouncement / dropping out of doctoral students 3, respectively 4, years after admission does not exceed 30%.

The expelling rate of doctoral students is 7,15% and, not exceed 30%. From the stage of the admission procedure, the school continue should to identify scientific risk factors and possibly present some alternative solutions: Development of an effective mentoring system at the level of doctoral university studies, Creating more direct links between the doctoral and master's programs of the University and elements of continuity, Integration of doctoral students in the activity of presentation and promotion of master's and doctoral programs, Organizing social events and considering volunteer actions to support doctoral students in difficult situations.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Criterion B.2. The content of doctoral programs

The training program is based on advanced academic studies includes topics relevant to geography and standards of scientific research ethics and intellectual property. IOSUD-USV is responsible for creating mechanisms to ensure that the training program based on advanced academic studies achieves student learning outcomes.

Doctoral students should benefit from the guidance of functional advisory committees on their academic path.

The relationship between the number of doctoral students and the number of number of teaching staff is an important criterion to guarantee quality in the supervision of academic work.



Standard B.2.1. The training program based on advanced university studies is appropriate to improve doctoral students' research skills and to strengthen ethical behavior in science.

Performance Indicator B.2.1.1. *The training program based on advanced academic studies includes at least 3 disciplines relevant to the scientific research training of doctoral students; at least one of these disciplines is intended to study in-depth the research methodology and/or the statistical data processing.*

The curriculum of the training program based on advanced academic studies in Geography include two disciplines study in-depth research methodology and/or statistical data processing. for the first semester:

1. Methods, databases and means / techniques of advanced research in the field of Geography;
2. History and current state of research in the field of Geography.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator B.2.1.2. *At least one discipline is dedicated to Ethics and Intellectual Property in scientific research or there are well-defined topics on these subjects within a discipline taught in the doctoral program.*

From the academic year 2018-2019 onwards, a common discipline has been introduced for all doctoral fields in IOSUD-USV called Ethics and Academic Integrity. A subject dedicated to ethics in scientific research and intellectual property is taught in the first semester delivered by a IOSUD full-time professor.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator B.2.1.3. *The IOSUD has mechanisms to ensure that the academic training program based on advanced university studies addresses „the learning outcomes”, specifying the knowledge, skills, responsibility and autonomy that doctoral students should acquire after completing each discipline or through the research activities.*

The curricular description of the academic training program based on advanced university studies demonstrates that each discipline is centered on and aims at learning outcomes, specifying the competencies, skills and attitudes that students should acquire.

A feedback on the content and competences offered by the discipline sheets is obtained using the PhD students' satisfaction survey.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator B.2.1.4. *All along the duration of the doctoral training, doctoral students in the domain receive counselling/guidance from functional guidance commissions, which is reflected in written guidance and feedback or regular meeting.*

There is a correspondence system in place by email between the doctoral supervisors, the school and the USV and the doctoral students that allows the communication of information related to schedule, fees, tutorials, etc. . The communication with the students is permanent facilitating the achievement of the individual plan. Another online platforms, such as: Zoom, Google classroom, WhatsApp are, also, used.



Throughout the doctoral training period, doctoral students in the field benefit from the counseling / guidance of functional guidance commissions, aspect reflected by written guidance and feedback or regular meetings. The PhD supervisors in the field of Geography and the guidance commissions coordinate the activity of doctoral students in this field.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator B.2.1.5. For a doctoral study domain, the ratio between the number of doctoral students and the number of teaching staff/researchers providing doctoral guidance must not exceed 3:1.

Analyzing statistically the number of doctoral students in geography during the three years of study, but also those in extension periods, we found that their number varied between 17 and 24, the average for the 5 years being 20 students. A number of 12-13 teachers worked in the guidance commissions of the geography students during the reference period. Based on the data provided we calculate the ratio between the number of Doctoral students and the number of teachers providing guidance is 1,66:1.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Criterion B.3. The results of doctoral studies and procedures for their evaluation.

Standard B.3.1. Doctoral students capitalize on the research through presentations at scientific conferences, scientific publications, technological transfer, patents, products and service orders.

Each doctoral supervisor is involved in the supervision of their own doctoral students, involving them in scientific research activities, conferences, publication of relevant papers in journals and proceedings, participation in workshops, scientific sessions, etc.

One important performance indicator is the ratio between the number of presentations delivered by the doctoral students and the number of the doctoral students who successfully completed the doctoral programme during the evaluated period.

Performance Indicator B.3.1.1. For the evaluated domain, the evaluation commission will be provided with at least one paper or some other relevant contribution per doctoral student who has obtained a doctor's title within the past 5 years. From this list, the members of the evaluation commission shall randomly select 5 such papers / relevant contributions per doctoral study domain for review. At least 3 selected papers must contain significant original contributions in the respective domain.

Based in the list of published articles or other relevant contributions of the doctoral students who have defended their doctoral thesis in the last five years, we select 5 relevant papers which we analysed and rated in a scale from 1 to 5, according to the original contribution to the development of the studies in Geography. All papers contain significant original contributions in the field of Geography.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator *B.3.1.2. The ratio between the number of presentations of doctoral students who completed their doctoral studies within the evaluated period (past 5 years), including posters,



exhibitions made at prestigious international events (organized in the country or abroad) and the number of doctoral students who have completed their doctoral studies within the evaluated period (past 5 years) is at least 1.

Based on the analysis of the student activity lists, we conclude that the ratio between the number of presentations including posters, exhibitions, made at prestigious national and international events and the number of students who completed their doctoral studies is 9,5. To achieve this value we used the number of manifestations of PhD students who have defended their theses in the last five years..

The indicator is fulfilled.

Standard B.3.2. The Doctoral School engages a significant number of external scientific specialists in the commissions for public defense of doctoral theses in the analyzed domain.

This performance indicator lets you know if significant number of external reviewers in the doctoral theses defence committees.

Performance Indicator *B.3.2.1. The number of doctoral theses allocated to one specialist coming from a higher education institution, other than the evaluated IOSUD should not exceed two (2) in a year for the theses coordinated by the same doctoral thesis advisor.

It is found that in the last five years in the field of Geography there not have been cases in which two (2) appointments from a higher education institution, other than IOSUD evaluated, are exceeded, for the theses coordinated by the same doctoral supervisor, in the same year.

No doctoral thesis defended in the field of Geography was invalidated at CNATDCU.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator *B.3.2.2. The ratio between the doctoral theses allocated to one scientific specialist coming from a higher education institution, other than the institution where the defense on the doctoral thesis is organized, and the number of doctoral theses presented in the same doctoral study domain in the doctoral school should not exceed 0.3, considering the past five years. Only those doctoral study domains in which minimum ten doctoral theses have been presented within the past five years should be analyzed.

The indicator is not applicable.

Domain C. QUALITY MANAGEMENT

Criterion C.1. Existence and periodic implementation of the internal quality assurance system

In this domain, we analyse the internal quality assurance system based on the institutional framework and internal quality assurance policies. We attend to the description of the process of evaluation and internal quality assurance in accordance with a procedure developed and applied at the



IOSUD level and we identify the evaluated criteria mandatory and if the student feedback mechanisms are implemented.

Standard C.1.1. There are an institutional framework and procedures in place and relevant internal quality assurance policies, applied for monitoring the internal quality assurance.

Performance Indicator C.1.1.1. *The Doctoral school in the respective university study domain shall demonstrate the continuous development of the evaluation process and its internal quality assurance following a procedure developed and applied at the level of the IOSUD, the following assessed criteria being mandatory:*

- (a) the scientific work of Doctoral advisors;*
- (b) the infrastructure and logistics necessary to carry out the research activity;*
- (c) the procedures and subsequent rules based on which doctoral studies are organized;*
- (d) the scientific activity of doctoral students;*
- (e) the training program based on advanced academic studies of doctoral students;*
- (f) social and academic services (including for participation at different events, publishing papers etc.) and counselling made available to doctoral students.*

The evaluation and internal monitoring of the evolution of doctoral schools is based on Framework Regulation on the initiation, approval, monitoring and periodic evaluation of study programs, Regulation on the organization and conduct of doctoral study programs taking into account Evaluation methodology, reference standards and and the list of performance indicators of ARACIS.

We verified this condition with regard to the scientific work of Doctoral advisors, the infrastructure and logistics the procedures, the scientific activity of doctoral students, the training program and the social and academic services.

The proof of the internal monitoring and periodic evaluation of the SDSAI is given by the reports prepared annually by CSUD and through the internal self-evaluation files made in 2016, 2019, 2021.

In order to increase the quality of the research activity at the level of the doctoral programs, the SDSAI should pondered e intensify the the following actions:

- increasing the number of doctoral students by recruiting master students of the Department of Geography with outstanding performance;
- attract master students / doctoral students with special performances in research, offering them financial ;
- the development, together with the companies, of study topics with direct applicability in production;
- encouraging researchers to work in prestigious professional and scientific bodies.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator *C.1.1.2. *Mechanisms are implemented during the stage of the doctoral study program to enable feedback from doctoral students allowing to identify their needs, as well as their overall level of satisfaction with the doctoral study program in order to ensure continuous improvement of the academic and administrative processes. Following the analysis of the results, there is evidence that an action plan was drafted and implemented.*



Following the internal evaluation CSUD and CSD analyze and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses arising from the analysis of data from internal evaluation reports. The measures to be taken following the annual evaluation are reflected in the strategies and policies adopted by SDSAI in the form of a Development Plans into account the wishes, desires, aspirations, vision of PhD students regarding the entire socio-professional activity in which they are involved in USV in general and in the field of PhD Geography in particular.

The SDSAI provides methodologies to assess student satisfaction with the functioning of the doctorate and identify their scientific needs. There is a questionnaire on student satisfaction and the exchange of ideas is favored which allows the implementation of student feedback mechanisms aiming at the continuous improvement of academic services.

The SDSAI must reflect on the employability rates and the continuity of students in scientific research careers.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Criterion C.2. Transparency of information and accessibility of learning resources

In this criterion, we analyze the information transparency policy and the regulations for accessibility to learning resources and scientific research laboratories.

Standard C.2.1. Information of interest to doctoral students, future candidates and public interest information is available for electronic format consultation.

Performance Indicator C.2.1.1. *The IOSUD publishes on the website of the organizing institution, in compliance with the general regulations on data protection, information such as:*

- (a) the Doctoral School regulation;*
- (b) the admission regulation;*
- (c) the doctoral studies contract;*
- (d) the study completion regulation including the procedure for the public presentation of the thesis;*
- (e) the content of training program based on advanced academic studies;*
- (f) the academic and scientific profile, thematic areas/research themes of the Doctoral advisors within the domain, as well as their institutional contact data;*
- (g) the list of doctoral students within the domain with necessary information (year of registration; advisor);*
- (h) information on the standards for developing the doctoral thesis;*
- (i) links to the doctoral theses' summaries to be publicly presented and the date, time, place where they will be presented; this information will be communicated at least twenty days before the presentation.*

There website of USV (<https://usv.ro/>) providing all the information for doctoral supervisors and doctoral students and the admission conditions for the doctorate of Geography.

The IOSUD publishes, in compliance with the general regulations on data protection, information such as: internal regulations and standards about the Doctoral programme; the doctoral studies contract; the academic and scientific profile of the Doctoral advisors; the informations of doctoral students activities and doctoral theses summaries.



The disponible information about doctorate is not in english. This makes it quite unattractive for foreing students who want to study geography in USV. It should be an effort to allow all information to be published in bilingual format.

Also the Public Relations, Communication and Image Service which is responsbile with the relationship with the press and the management of social media should an effort to promote the PhD in english.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Standard C.2.2. The IOSUD/The Doctoral School provides doctoral students with access to the resources needed for conducting doctoral studies.

Performance Indicator C.2.2.1. All doctoral students have free access to one platform providing academic databases relevant to the doctoral studies domain of their thesis.

The USV Library has provide through the Anelis Plus Project access to international scientific databases, from different fields of knowledge, and, periodically, to other databases on the consortium list. The databases and other bibliographic sources can be accessed on the USV library websites. Based on the access to international databases, each PhD supervisor and PhD students have their own documentation in electronic format in their field of specialisation.

Based on the number of accesses Library activity report for 2020, the proof of accessing the international databases is made.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator C.2.2.2. Each doctoral student shall have access, upon request, to an electronic system for verifying the degree of similarity with other existing scientific or artistic works.

To avoid intellectual fraud,USV has acquired the identification services TURNITIN wich PhD students can have access. In documents analized, no cases of plagiarism have been identified in the SDSAI.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator C.2.2.3. All doctoral students have access to scientific research laboratories or other facilities depending on the specific domain/domains within the Doctoral School, according to internal order procedures.

The doctoral students have access to research laboratories, the libraries of USV and the databases specialized in scientific literature, an essential support in the drafting and development of theses, without discrimination, prohibitions, restrictions on material resources or of any other nature.A internal procedure ensures the unrestricted access of the Geography doctoral students to all the infrastructure provided by SDSAI, research centers and excellence laboratories.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Criterion C.3. Internationalization



In this criterion we evaluate the strategies to increase the degree of internationalisation of doctoral programmes, the involvement of doctoral student, the participating in international conferences and workshops. We consult the joint doctoral programmes and the mobility agreements. The degree of internationalization of the activities is also considered within the doctoral program

Standard C.3.1. There is a strategy in place and it is applied to enhance the internationalization of doctoral studies.

Performance Indicator *C.3.1.1. *IOSUD, for every evaluated domain, has concluded mobility agreements with universities abroad, with research institutes, with companies working in the field of study, aimed at the mobility of doctoral students and academic staff (e.g., ERASMUS agreements for the doctoral studies). At least 35% of the doctoral students have completed a training course abroad or other mobility forms such as attending international scientific conferences. IOSUD drafts and applies policies and measures aiming at increasing the number of doctoral students participating at mobility periods abroad, up to at least 20%, which is the target at the level of the European Higher Education Area.*

Based on the activities of doctoral students, it was proven that they completed training courses abroad or other forms of mobility, such as participation in scientific conferences and international workshops.

For the mobility of doctoral students and doctoral supervisors in the field of Geography and the doctoral school, financial support is provided in conducting research internships in the country or abroad. Almost 40% of doctoral students in geography have completed an internship abroad or another form of mobility, In the case of international mobility, we highlight the collaboration materialized through the realization of joint ERASMUS projects.

As it is a young doctoral course and currently aimed at national students, it is important to motivate and support supervisors and doctoral students to take improvement courses in English. It is also important to continue to motivate doctoral students to develop national / international mobility programs and to participate in doctoral workshops with other courses that have affinities. Scientific capacity shows are also a good modality to demonstrate the importance of student mobility.

There is free platforms to videoconference system that allows virtual participation in thesis defense committees and thus increase the number of participation in doctoral juries.

It is important to refer the USV defined the internationalization strategy to 2021-2027.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator C.3.1.2. *In the evaluated doctoral study domain, support is granted, including financial support, to the organization of doctoral studies in international co-tutelage or invitation of leading experts to deliver courses/lectures for doctoral students.*

The IOSUD-USV allocates necessary funds for the organization of co-supervised doctorates. The Departmente of Geography established partnerships with institutions abroad for the exchange of doctoral students and teachers contributing to the internationalization of the didactic and scientific activities. At the Department of Geography foreign teaching staff worked as associates. There are plans of doctorates in co-supervision with three foreign Universities.

The indicator is fulfilled.

Performance Indicator C.3.1.3. *The internationalization of activities carried out during the doctoral studies is supported by IOSUD through concrete measures (e.g., by participating in educational fairs to attract international doctoral students; by including international experts in guidance committees or doctoral committees etc.).*

The internationalization of activities carried out during the doctoral studies is supported by IOSUD through concrete measures manifested by:

- mobility of doctoral students through projects, ERASMUS programs, research contracts, own funds, etc...;
- the number of international mobilities;
- the number of enrollment of foreign students;
- the number of international internships offered a “Eugen Ionesco” scholarship holders;
- the number of PhD students studying entirely in an international language;
- the number of trips of doctoral supervisors from IOSUD-USV for lectures or other scientific activities related to doctorates abroad.
- the inclusion of international experts in the commissions for guiding and defending doctoral theses.

The indicator is fulfilled.

IV. SWOT Analysis

<p><u>Strengths:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - USV is a reference element in the local and national community and a credible partner internationally - International relations that outline a potential for collaboration in the field of education and research - The institutional capacity - The academic qualities of the internal supervisors. 	<p><u>Weaknesses:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -- The absence of a strong economic environment in the area to support research projects and provide solutions for the insertion on the labour market - The reduced promotion of internal mobility for students - The lack of information in English about PhD
<p><u>Opportunities:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The geographic placement in a strategic cross-border area - The relationship with municipal/regional/national institutions. - EU funds that can be used for mobility, ERASMUS+ programs and other emerging programmes. 	<p><u>Threats:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Decrease of the school population - Social and economic factors that limit mobility. - Países vizinhos com melhores condições de mercado de trabalho - Low external financing

V. Overview of judgments awarded

No.	Type of indicator (PI, PI *, CPI)	Performance indicator	Judgment
1.	PI	A.1.1.1. The existence of specific regulations and their application at the level of the Doctoral School of the respective university doctoral study domain: a) the internal regulations of the Doctoral School;	<i>Fulfilled</i>

No.	Type of indicator (PI, PI *, CPI)	Performance indicator	Judgment
		b) the Methodology for conducting elections for the position of director of the Council of doctoral school (CSD), as well as elections by the students of their representative in CSD and the evidence of their conduct; c) the Methodologies for organizing and conducting doctoral studies (for the admission of doctoral students, for the completion of doctoral studies); d) the existence of mechanisms for recognizing the status of a Doctoral advisor and the equivalence of the doctoral degree obtained abroad; e) functional management structures (Council of the doctoral school), giving as well proof of the regularity of meetings; f) the contract for doctoral studies; g) internal procedures for the analysis and approval of proposals regarding the training for doctoral study programs based on advanced academic studies.	
2.	PI	A.1.1.2. The doctoral school' Regulation includes mandatory criteria, procedures and standards binding on the aspects specified in Article 17, paragraph (5) of the Government Decision No. 681/2011 on the approval of the Code of Doctoral Studies with subsequent amendments and additions.	Fulfilled
3.	PI	A.1.2.1. The existence and effectiveness of an appropriate IT system to keep track of doctoral students and their academic background.	Fulfilled
4.	PI	A.1.2.2. The existence and use of an appropriate software program and evidence of its use to verify the percentage of similarity in all doctoral theses.	Fulfilled
5.	IP	A.1.3.1. Existence of at least one research or institutional / human resources development grant under implementation at the time of submission of the internal evaluation file, per doctoral study domain under evaluation, or existence of at least 2 research or institutional development / human resources grant for the doctoral study domain, obtained by doctoral thesis advisors operating in the evaluated domain within the past 5 years. The grants address relevant themes for the respective domain and, as a rule, are engaging doctoral students.	Fulfilled
6.	PI *	A.1.3.2. The percentage of doctoral students active at the time of the evaluation, who for at least six months receive additional funding sources besides government funding, through scholarships awarded by individual persons or by legal entities, or who are financially supported through research or institutional / human resources development grants is not less than 20%.	Fulfilled
7.	PI *	A.1.3.3. At least 10% of the total amount of doctoral grants obtained by the university through institutional contracts and of tuition fees collected from the doctoral students enrolled in the paid tuition system is used to reimburse professional training expenses of doctoral students (attending conferences, summer schools, training, programs abroad, publication of specialty papers or other specific forms of dissemination etc.).	Fulfilled
8.	CPI	A.2.1.1. The venues and the material equipment available to the doctoral school enable the research activities in the evaluated domain to be carried out, in line with the assumed mission and objectives (computers, specific software, equipment, laboratory equipment, library, access to international databases etc.).	Fulfilled

No.	Type of indicator (PI, PI *, CPI)	Performance indicator	Judgment
		The research infrastructure and the provision of research services are presented to the public through a specific platform. The research infrastructure described above, which was purchased and developed within the past 5 years will be presented distinctly	
9.	CPI	A.3.1.1. Minimum three doctoral thesis advisors within that doctoral domain, and at least 50% of them (but no less than three) meet the minimum standards of the National Council for Attestation of University Degrees, Diplomas and Certificates (CNATDCU) in force at the time when the evaluation is carried out, which standards are required and mandatory for obtaining the enabling certification.	Fulfilled
10.	PI *	A.3.1.2. At least 50% of all doctoral advisors have a full-time employment contract for an indefinite period with the IOSUD.	Fulfilled
11.	PI	A.3.1.3. The study subjects in the education program based on advanced higher education studies pertaining to the doctoral domain are taught by teaching staff or researchers who are doctoral thesis advisors / certified doctoral thesis advisors, professors / CS I or lecturer / CS II, with proved expertise in the field of the study subjects they teach, or other specialists in the field who meet the standards established by the institution in relation with the aforementioned teaching and research functions, as provided by the law.	Fulfilled
12.	PI *	A.3.1.4. The percentage of doctoral thesis advisors who concomitantly coordinate more than 8 doctoral students, but no more than 12, who are themselves studying in doctoral programs does not exceed 20%.	Fulfilled
13.	CPI	A.3.2.1. At least 50% of the doctoral thesis advisors in the evaluated domain have at least 5 Web of Science- or ERIH-indexed publications in magazines of impact, or other achievements of relevant significance for that domain, including international-level contributions that indicate progress in scientific research - development - innovation for the evaluated domain. The aforementioned doctoral thesis advisors enjoy international awareness within the past five years, consisting of: membership on scientific boards of international publications and conferences; membership on boards of international professional associations; guests in conferences or expert groups working abroad, or membership on doctoral defense commissions at universities abroad or co-leading with universities abroad. For Arts and Sports and Physical Education Sciences, doctoral thesis advisors shall prove their international visibility within the past five years by their membership on the boards of professional associations, membership in organizing committees of arts events and international competitions, membership on juries or umpire teams in artistic events or international competitions.	Fulfilled
14.	PI *	A.3.2.2. At least 50% of the doctoral thesis advisors in a specific doctoral study domain continue to be active in their scientific field, and acquire at least 25% of the score requested by the minimal CNATDCU standards in force at the time of the evaluation, which are required and mandatory for acquiring their enabling certificate, based on their scientific results within the past five years	Fulfilled

No.	Type of indicator (PI, PI *, CPI)	Performance indicator	Judgment
15.	PI *	<p>B.1.1.1. The ratio between the number of graduates of masters' programs of other higher education institutions, national or foreign, who have enrolled for the doctoral admission contest within the past five years and the number of seats funded by the state budget, put out through contest within the doctoral domain is at least 0.2 or the ratio between the number of candidates within the past five years and the number of seats funded by the state budget put out through contest within the doctoral studies domain is at least 1,2.</p>	Fulfilled
16.	PI *	<p>B.1.2.1. Admission to doctoral study programs is based on selection criteria including: previous academic, research and professional performance, their interest for scientific or arts/sports research, publications in the domain and a proposal for a research subject. Interviewing the candidate is compulsory, as part of the admission procedure.</p>	Fulfilled
17.	PI	<p>B.1.2.2. The expelling rate, including renouncement / dropping out of doctoral students 3, respectively 4, years after admission does not exceed 30%.</p>	Fulfilled
18.	PI	<p>B.2.1.1. The training program based on advanced academic studies includes at least 3 disciplines relevant to the scientific research training of doctoral students; at least one of these disciplines is intended to study in-depth the research methodology and/or the statistical data processing.</p>	Fulfilled
19.	PI	<p>B.2.1.2. At least one discipline is dedicated to Ethics and Intellectual Property in scientific research or there are well-defined topics on these subjects within a discipline taught in the doctoral program.</p>	Fulfilled
20.	PI	<p>B.2.1.3. The IOSUD has mechanisms to ensure that the academic training program based on advanced university studies addresses „the learning outcomes”, specifying the knowledge, skills, responsibility and autonomy that doctoral students should acquire after completing each discipline or through the research activities.</p>	Fulfilled
21.	PI	<p>B.2.1.4. All along the duration of the doctoral training, doctoral students in the domain receive counselling/guidance from functional guidance commissions, which is reflected in written guidance and feedback or regular meeting.</p>	Fulfilled
22.	CPI	<p>B.2.1.5. For a doctoral study domain, the ratio between the number of doctoral students and the number of teaching staff/researchers providing doctoral guidance must not exceed 3:1.</p>	Fulfilled
23.	CPI	<p>B.3.1.1. For the evaluated domain, the evaluation commission will be provided with at least one paper or some other relevant contribution per doctoral student who has obtained a doctor's title within the past 5 years. From this list, the members of the evaluation commission shall randomly select 5 such papers / relevant contributions per doctoral study domain for review. At least 3 selected papers must contain significant original contributions in the respective domain</p>	Fulfilled

No.	Type of indicator (PI, PI *, CPI)	Performance indicator	Judgment
24.	PI *	B.3.1.2. The ratio between the number of presentations of doctoral students who completed their doctoral studies within the evaluated period (past 5 years), including posters, exhibitions made at prestigious international events (organized in the country or abroad) and the number of doctoral students who have completed their doctoral studies within the evaluated period (past 5 years) is at least 1.	Fulfilled
25.	PI *	B.3.2.1. The number of doctoral theses allocated to one specialist coming from a higher education institution, other than the evaluated IOSUD should not exceed two (2) in a year for the theses coordinated by the same doctoral thesis advisor.	Fulfilled
26.	PI *	B.3.2.2. The ratio between the doctoral theses allocated to one scientific specialist coming from a higher education institution, other than the institution where the defense on the doctoral thesis is organized, and the number of doctoral theses presented in the same doctoral study domain in the doctoral school should not exceed 0.3, considering the past five years. Only those doctoral study domains in which minimum ten doctoral theses have been presented within the past five years should be analyzed.	Not applicable
27.	PI	C.1.1.1. The Doctoral school in the respective university study domain shall demonstrate the continuous development of the evaluation process and its internal quality assurance following a procedure developed and applied at the level of the IOSUD, the following assessed criteria being mandatory: a) the scientific work of Doctoral advisors; b) the infrastructure and logistics necessary to carry out the research activity; c) the procedures and subsequent rules based on which doctoral studies are organized; d) the scientific activity of doctoral students; e) the training program based on advanced academic studies of doctoral students; f) social and academic services (including for participation at different events, publishing papers etc.) and counselling made available to doctoral students.	Fulfilled
28.	PI *	C.1.1.2. Mechanisms are implemented during the stage of the doctoral study program to enable feedback from doctoral students allowing to identify their needs, as well as their overall level of satisfaction with the doctoral study program in order to ensure continuous improvement of the academic and administrative processes. Following the analysis of the results, there is evidence that an action plan was drafted and implemented.	Fulfilled
29.	CPI	C.2.1.1. The IOSUD publishes on the website of the organizing institution, in compliance with the general regulations on data protection, information such as: a) the Doctoral School regulation; b) the admission regulation; c) the doctoral studies contract; d) the study completion regulation including the procedure for the public presentation of the thesis; e) the content of training program based on advanced academic studies;	Fulfilled

No.	Type of indicator (PI, PI *, CPI)	Performance indicator	Judgment
		f) the academic and scientific profile, thematic areas/research themes of the Doctoral advisors within the domain, as well as their institutional contact data; g) the list of doctoral students within the domain with necessary information (year of registration; advisor); h) information on the standards for developing the doctoral thesis; i) links to the doctoral theses' summaries to be publicly presented and the date, time, place where they will be presented; this information will be communicated at least twenty days before the presentation.	
30.	PI	C.2.2.1. All doctoral students have free access to one platform providing academic databases relevant to the doctoral studies domain of their thesis.	Fulfilled
31.	PI	C.2.2.2. Each doctoral student shall have access, upon request, to an electronic system for verifying the degree of similarity with other existing scientific or artistic works.	Fulfilled
32.	PI	C.2.2.3. All doctoral students have access to scientific research laboratories or other facilities depending on the specific domain/domains within the Doctoral School, according to internal order procedures.	Fulfilled
33.	PI *	C.3.1.1. IOSUD, for every evaluated domain, has concluded mobility agreements with universities abroad, with research institutes, with companies working in the field of study, aimed at the mobility of doctoral students and academic staff (e.g., ERASMUS agreements for the doctoral studies). At least 35% of the doctoral students have completed a training course abroad or other mobility forms such as attending international scientific conferences. IOSUD drafts and applies policies and measures aiming at increasing the number of doctoral students participating at mobility periods abroad, up to at least 20%, which is the target at the level of the European Higher Education Area.	Fulfilled
34.	PI	C.3.1.2. In the evaluated doctoral study domain, support is granted, including financial support, to the organization of doctoral studies in international co-tutelage or invitation of leading experts to deliver courses/lectures for doctoral students.	Fulfilled
35.	PI	C.3.1.3. The internationalization of activities carried out during the doctoral studies is supported by IOSUD through concrete measures (e.g., by participating in educational fairs to attract international doctoral students; by including international experts in guidance committees or doctoral committees etc.).	Fulfilled

VI. Conclusions and general recommendations

Justification

- The leaders of the USV and the SDSAI consider that the study programme in Geography is well framed in the development strategy of the IOSUD.



- The PhD programme in Geography is valued by local and regional public institutions.
- The teaching staff consists of PhDs, with a stable conditions to the USV and integrated in research units.
- The SDSAI has a good system of evaluation and quality assurance.
- The students expressed satisfaction with the PhD programme and high appreciation for the teachers and thesis supervisors.
- The USV library has good working conditions for the students.
- The students have access to laboratories, computer rooms and software suitable for their needs.

Guidelines:

We summarize some guidelines we established from the analysis of performance indicators:

- increase the participation of supervisors in research projects, both national and international with competitive funding.
- promote the marketing of the study programme in order to attract more students.
- encourage PhD students to publish their research outcomes in peer-reviewed scientific journals.
- encourage teaching staff and student mobility (mobility out).
- institutionalize the practice of organizing a doctoral workshop. This will provide a good opportunity for the students presenting their work and getting feedback from teachers and their pairs.

Final recommendation:

All performance indicators was fulfilled, with exception of the B.3.2.2. which is not applicable.

September 16, 2021.

(Francisco da Silva Costa, International expert)

VII. Annexes

Annex 1 - The detailed schedule of the evaluation visit.

Annex 2 – Document sent in September 6th to Professor Adrian GROZAVU, member of the evaluation team of the Geography domain of the Doctoral School of Suceava University, about organization, functioning and management of the doctorat in Geography (questions to the team who drafted the internal evaluation).

Annex 3 – Document sent in September 6th to Professor Adrian GROZAVU, member of the evaluation team of the Geography domain of the Doctoral School of Suceava University, about organization, functioning and management of the research centers in Geography (questions to the directors/responsibles of research centers/laboratories).