

Recommendations on Talent Development

Developed by NIS j.s.c. Novi Sad (Petroleum Industry of Serbia - NIS) in the Framework of the Tempus Project “Strengthening of Internationalization Policies at Universities in Serbia (SIPUS)”

NIS is one of the largest vertically integrated energy companies in South East Europe with principal activities that include exploration, production and refining, sales and distribution of a broad range of petroleum products, as well as the implementation of energy and petrochemical projects. The main strategic goal of NIS by 2020 is to become the most efficient, fast-growing energy company in the Balkans, while maintaining the leading position on the Serbian market.

In accordance with the Company’s long term Strategy, NIS has expanded its business operations internationally - to the regional markets of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria. In support of the EU integration process of Serbia, a representative office was opened in Brussels, while representative offices of NIS also operate in Russia, Turkmenistan, Angola, Bulgaria, Hungary, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia.

From the point of view of a company with broad international presence and as one of the largest employers on the Serbian market, the key **role of NIS in the implementation of the SIPUS project**, co-funded by the Tempus Programme of the European Union, was delivering three annual seminars to students of Universities in Serbia and participating in the work of University Working Groups dedicated to development of University internationalization policies and measures. The three seminars held by NIS top and middle management at the Universities in Novi Sad, Belgrade and Niš during each project year foresaw a series of interactive workshops on skills development, business communication and active job search with employer’s recommendations for competencies needed for graduates’ entry and response to the challenges of the contemporary labour market, with special emphasis on internationalization.



NIS strongly supports the main aim of the SIPUS project to create conditions to advance the process of internationalization of higher education and research in the Republic of Serbia, and at Serbian universities, in a strategic and structured way through development and implementation of national and institutional strategies, policies and measures that facilitate international cooperation in higher education. NIS is dedicated to investments in the educational system reform through supporting the introduction of international and intercultural elements into university teaching, research, and associated activities, with a view of developing and recruiting highly-qualified experts with international know-how.

In that sense, participation of NIS as partner within the SIPUS project represents a significant contribution to the extensive cooperation framework of NIS with higher education institutions (HEIs) in Serbia, which is at the heart of a large **NIS corporate social responsibility project “Energy of Knowledge”**. The project concept includes partnership with educational institutions in the country (universities, faculties, high schools and expert scientific associations) – the collaboration includes supporting the development of new curricula, most successful students with scholarships, an internship programme, additional professional development of employees, implementation of joint research projects, equipping educational premises.



As part of the “Energy of Knowledge” corporate initiative, NIS has **cooperation agreements** in place with the Universities in Belgrade and in Novi Sad, as well as with individual university departments within these two major universities of the country.

Strategic cooperation with HEIs is directed not only towards the scientific and research segment, but also towards programme cooperation aimed at the **improvement of the HEI curriculum** – amending the accreditation of the existing and accreditation of new programmes in graduate and master studies at faculties of the Universities of Novi Sad and Belgrade, with the aim of adaptation of the university programmes to the requirements of the labour market and facilitating students in their job search once they graduate.

As forms of supplement to the regular curriculum, NIS attracts **guest speakers**, either representatives of company management or international academic or sectoral experts, at university departments of strategic interest, where students are acquainted with the company’s operation and are more closely introduced with the processes they study at university, thus complementing the curriculum from a practical point of view. Within the SIPUS project itself, a HR-themed lecture was delivered by NIS Organizational Affairs Director Andrey Shibanov with a view to draw students’ attention to pivotal skills and competencies from a businessman’s point of view.



This cooperation framework also gives ground for **individual scholarships** for the best performing students of the Universities of Belgrade and Novi Sad, who can, upon completion of the scholarship period, seek employment with the Company.

Being a company relying on the application of new technologies, innovation and scientific discoveries in all business segments, NIS continually puts effort **in supporting scientific and educational projects and science promotion**, also through active participation within different EU Programmes such as the Horizon 2020 Programme, teaming up with partners who regard raising science awareness and social engagement of youth as some of the basic values.

NIS is also implementing a **corporate „Repatriation” programme**, striving to promote the return of highly-qualified professionals who are willing to use their knowledge and skills in Serbia in NIS company environment, understanding the importance and value of international knowledge exchange for advancing business operations.

In addition to the “Energy of Knowledge” project, as part of its corporate social responsibility and recruiting practice, in cooperation with the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina and local self-governments, NIS also implements **an early recruitment programme “NIS Chance”** since 2012. Through implementation of this programme, now tailored to NIS needs, NIS cherishes the national youth employment tradition launched in 2010 with the very first “First Chance” programme. The programme envisages providing employment to young people that have just completed secondary education or are university graduates with no professional experience. Since the inception of the programme, more than 660 candidates have been employed through this framework, of which more than 80 per cent have found their place in the team of NIS. Today, the programme is more oriented to professional backgrounds meeting the principal activity of the company, putting focus on candidates with degrees from technical faculties (Faculty of Mining and Geology, Faculty of Technical Sciences, Faculty of Mechanical Engineering, Faculty of Technology, Faculty of Civil Engineering, School of Electrical Engineering). The programme enjoys high interest among prospective candidates and university graduates, which is proven by a high number of applications - about 5,000 for each programme call.

As the aim of each area of HR management is to attract the best candidates and retain employees with best results and highest quality of performance, NIS continuously works on advancing the mechanisms for supporting the development and attracting candidates.

The leading position of NIS on the Serbian labour market facilitates the process of recruiting best performing candidates, but in its striving to be recognized as the most desirable employer, NIS keeps competing with companies which are also highly positioned on the labour market. Because of that, emphasis is put on different recruitment methods and techniques, and NIS regularly attends a large number of events (job fairs, conferences, workshops and roundtables) organized with a view to expand its network of prospective candidates.

The equal opportunities principle is consistently applied in employment, which guarantees that the selection of a candidate is based on his/her professionalism, experience and knowledge as the key factors. The recruitment and selection of candidates in NIS is a highly transparent process and every decision on a candidate must be based on objective and relevant criteria, i.e. the ability of the candidate to meet the job position requirements and standards.

On basis of continuous cooperation of NIS with HEIs in Serbia through the above outlined mechanisms designed by NIS in cooperation with HEIs, as well as on the basis of experience gathered in the course of implementing its activities in the SIPUS project, NIS delivers the following Recommendations on Talent Development in Higher Education for students and graduates:

- Continuous striving to develop the values of professionalism, initiative and responsibility, positive attitude towards cooperation and shared results – these being the core NIS corporate values;
- Continuous engagement towards acquiring up-to-date knowledge in order to increase the level of educational and professional expertise and the ability to implement it in future business processes;
- Participating in innovative study programmes delivered in collaboration with foreign higher education institutions, as well as active participation in the teaching process with international academic or sectoral experts as guest speakers;
- Participation in a broad range of short and long-term mobility schemes available to students of HEIs in Serbia through international programmes (including the EU Erasmus+ Programme) and projects developed and supported by businesses;
- Active participation in Serbian HEI bilateral and international cooperation mechanisms with HEIs and scientific institutions from other countries including initiation of collaboration with peers from partner HEIs in other countries;
- Participation in a variety of extra-curricular activities including internship programmes delivered through partnership with businesses;
- Participation in a variety of international projects which encourage the development of expertise, including projects financed through EU Programmes.
- Advancing the knowledge in foreign languages to be applied in international professional environment and communication;
- Participation in international (regional, European, world) competitions in the fields of studies.

Internationalization in higher education can be most effectively achieved through the scientific and educational interaction, but also interaction with representatives of the labour market, which, leads towards acquiring international accomplishments and standards.

Continuous partnership of NIS with Serbian HEIs and communication of NIS as an employer with future university graduates is also of great importance for understanding the needs of young future experts and further improvement and adjustment of NIS's corporate support programs for HEIs. NIS strongly supports the process of a strategic and structured internationalization of higher education and research in the Republic of Serbia, and at Serbian universities, through development and implementation of national and institutional mechanisms and will simultaneously continue to support the educational system reform in Serbia with a high level of internationalization elements through design and delivery of corporate social responsibility programmes in cooperation with leading higher educational institutions in Serbia.