

SPAIN: Canary Islands

REGIONAL CO-ORDINATOR

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1. A brief Description of Regional Characteristics (in terms of population, the specialisation in economic sectors etc.)

The Canary Islands is an autonomous Spanish region composed by seven islands that qualifies within the European Union as "ultra-peripheral". Ultra-peripheral refers to its remoteness (distance to the mainland: 1.000 Km), insularity, small size (7.424 Km²), difficult topography and climate, and the dependence on a small number of resources.

With an economy based in tourism and construction, the Canaries has experienced in the last years a high growth rate, most of the economic indicators reducing the gap with the Spanish average. Unemployment is higher than in the rest of Spain, the difference getting smaller in the last years (in 2003 is 12,10%, 50% higher than the EU average). These figures are even higher for woman and young people. Most of the new jobs require low skills and coherently the average salary is lower than the Spanish average but showing a tendency to approximate.

In the last decade, due to immigration, the population has experienced an steady growth: 1996, 1,12% increase; 1997: 1,70%; 1998, 2,34%; 2001: 3,79% and 2002: 3,67%; current population (2001): 1.630.105. As a consequence the tendency of the population to become older is somewhat reverted by the immigration influx.

The cultural level of the region was low in the past but has improved significantly in the last decades. Nowadays there is an important share of the population aged 16-35 with only a basic level of education, the same applying for university studies.

2. Characteristics of the HEIs in the Region (the number of HEIs; a basic profile of each institution to be involved in the project in terms of student numbers, balance between teaching and research functions, territorial focus etc.)

There are two public universities, Universidad de La Laguna (ULL) and Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (ULPGC), located at the two main islands and two main offices of the "distance" university Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia. There are not private universities.

The older university is ULL (1792) and the younger ULPGC (1971). ULL is an classical university covering most of the studies and disciplines while ULPGC is more specialised in technical studies. ULL has 24910 students, 22 centres and one associated; ULPGC has 21206 students, 18 centres, one associated.

3. A Brief History of HEIs' Engagement in the Regional Development

The main HEIs' contribution to the regional development are in the task of forming skilled professionals able to cope with the local system demand and more generally to enhance the cultural, scientific and technological development of the region. However, the commitment with these activities are not clearly formulated in the legal and university regulations. There are not well established collaboration networks among the universities, although there are some joint actions in specific fields

such as economy. The implication in the entrepreneurial activities of the region are managed through some university offices that facilitates contracts with the university staff devoted to attend specific social and technological needs. Also the universities cooperate with public institutions and non government organizations in cultural and social activities.

4. The Scope and Level of Involvement of Regional Stakeholders in the Project

The project is managed by the Canary Agency for University Evaluation, an autonomous body linked to the regional ministry of Education and Culture. Professor Néstor Torres, the current Director of this office is the co-ordinator of the project.

Special effort has been put in order to implicate relevant stakeholders of the Canary Islands in the project. Thus, up to 20 different bodies, from private enterprise association to trade unions, public research institutes, regional industry, commerce and research ministries and the three regional universities are actively participating in the project.

5. Resources for Futher Information on the Region (i.e. web-site, published report, etc)

<http://www.uil.es>; <http://www.ulpgc.es>; <http://www.cescanarias.org/index2.html>