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Realizing Eastern Opening in Domestic Tertiary Education:

The role, the strategy, and visions of OBIO

1. Introduction

The main aim of this paper is to analyse the position of the Oriental Business and Innovation Office (OBIO) in the set of activities of the Hungarian Government in achieving the goals of its Eastern Opening Policy. OBIO was established in 2016 under the name Oriental Business and Innovation Centre (OBIC) as the result of pragmatic and far-sighting initiative and cooperation between the Central Bank of Hungary and the Budapest Business University. In the set of undertakings of Hungarian eagerness to connect deeper with the East/Orient, OBIO is primarily and only focused on activities in higher education. Since education directly influences the quality of workforce, it affects, indirectly, the business relations between Hungary and Asian countries.

In 2012, the Hungarian Government launched the Eastern Opening Policy as a responsible, well-timed, and strategic reply to the uncertainties brought by the twisted geopolitical games, geo-economic crises, and incongruences intertwined in the structure of the relations within the international order (Stefanović-Štambuk, 2008). However, the Eastern Opening policy should not be understood as Hungary turning away from the West, its basic political and economic model (Molidcz, 2024, p. 1). The mentioned incongruences were persistently modified by the creator(s) of the international system, particularly in the last decade of the 20th century, and at the beginning of the 21st century. The modifications were justified, explained, and sometimes imposed by the need to create a better/new (liberal and democratic) international order, followed by the need to prevent the emergence of the new crises. The international society was understood as a space of competition, a weaponry race instead of cooperation and togetherness. But, in essence, these modifications were instigated with the aim to curb the desire of some states to institutionalize their real power and to have equal voice in the structure of relations in the international order, measured, at least, by

the voting percentage in the international institutions (Xi, 2019; Wu, Gaenssmantel, & Giumelli, 2022). From the aspect of strategies, the ambition to institutionalize the real power and diplomatize international society, some countries, specifically the creator(s) of the system, understood this as a pure desire to demonstrate their hard power and power projection capabilities, with the aim to challenge international stability and security (Popovic & Stević, 2023). Thus, the created structure of relations was unsustainable, where inner cracks/rifts/fault lines were constantly glued by new platitudes for preserving obsolete strategic goals. In other words, the incongruences were modified in the manner to suppress the obviously changing and rising political, economic, innovative, technological, and diplomatic power of the developing countries (Qin, 2016, Xueting, 2006). The most illustrative example represents the behaviour of the group of the most advanced seven economies in the world (G7). Considering this, the constantly emerging crises are dire steps towards the tipping/billing point that has to happen if we do not realize the changed reality within which the 'one size fits all' approach is not possible anymore. Parallel to the growing appetite of the developing countries in their planned and implemented connecting and transformative activities and initiatives in becoming developed, i.e., high income countries, their dissatisfaction with their share is also becoming a legitimate or aggressive pressing issue in regard to the international stability (Schweller, 2010).

2. A general overview of the strategies employed in the Eastern territories

The global economic crisis of 2008 compelled decision-makers to pursue new avenues and target markets outside the European Union. In light of the embedded nature of Hungarian economic policy within the legal system of the European Union, the scope for action is inherently limited, but on the other hand its member states are protected by transparent norms. The modification of economic relations can only be achieved through the implementation of a unified trade policy. The 2012 foreign trade strategy set forth four primary objectives for the subsequent decade. The first of these is to double Hungary's export volume, the second is to develop the export activities of domestic small and medium-sized enterprises, and the third is to attract foreign direct investment to Hungary. The plan is to double the

amount of foreign direct investment (FDI) and to triple the amount of direct investment in neighbouring countries. The foreign trade strategy recommends active state intervention with the specific aim of diversifying the country's export markets and structures (parlament.hu). This policy was developed in response to the economic challenges that emerged in the wake of the global financial crisis, with the objective of achieving greater independence from European markets. Furthermore, the Hungarian government has indicated its intention to expand scientific collaboration and educational and cultural cooperation with other countries.

The intention of the Hungarian Eastern Opening strategy was to reduce dependence on traditional European and Western markets, establish new commercial partnerships and explore new markets in order to diversify the economy. The goal is to use the advantages offered by the global village (see Koudela & Baranyi 2024), that is, interconnected and intersected globe. The focus of the strategy was on opening up markets outside the EU, particularly in Eastern countries such as China, India, Russia and the ten member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). These countries possess considerable economic potential, vibrant markets, rising middle class, and may serve as new sources of growth for Hungarian exports. Hungary's geographical location at the crossroads of Europe and Asia makes it strategically positioned to foster ties with Eastern countries. This is reflected in the country's geopolitical considerations regarding the importance of establishing connections with these emerging markets. The government has acknowledged the growing economic significance of Asia and is striving to leverage Hungary's geographical advantage in order to deepen its engagement with emerging markets in the East. In order to reinforce commercial relations, the Hungarian government is pursuing the establishment of targeted trade agreements and collaborations. This encompasses the establishment of bilateral trade agreements and the promotion of investment. (It should be noted that 18 agreements have been signed only with China.)

Eastern countries are demonstrating a growing interest in investing in Hungary, motivated by the country's strategic location, its skilled workforce, and the favourable business environment it offers, with a set of norms which offers legal clarity and predictability. Completely understandable, one of the goals of the Eastern Opening policy is designed to attract further FDIs from Asia (Bándy, Neszmélyi & Koudela 2024). This is to be achieved by offering incentives,

simplifying regulatory procedures and creating a favourable investment environment that will facilitate economic development and job creation. A variety of incentive programs and financing opportunities are made available to support the export activities of Hungarian small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The goal of these programs is to facilitate the entry of enterprises into international markets and enhance their competitive advantage. Eastern countries represent a promising market for Hungarian goods and services, offering potential for export growth and market expansion. The Hungarian government's policy of opening up to the East is focused on the dismantling of trade barriers, the enhancement of market access, and the provision of support to export-oriented industries, with the objective of enabling them to capitalize on the demand for Hungarian products in Asia. The development of infrastructure, including the expansion of transport and logistics networks, is a crucial element in the exploitation of new market opportunities. This will facilitate the more efficient transportation of goods and enhance trade relations. The advancement of economic collaboration and the formation of strategic alliances represent a crucial domain of focus. The strategy also identifies the strengthening of scientific, technological and cultural links as a priority. The undertaking of joint research and development projects, in addition to educational and cultural exchanges, will serve to further expand and enhance the economic relations that have already been established. Hungary acknowledges the significance of innovation and technological collaboration in fostering economic advancement and competitiveness.

The policy of opening up to the East places a particular emphasis on the formation of partnerships with countries in the Eastern region. These partnerships are to be established in a number of areas, including research and development, technology transfer and innovation exchange. The objective of such partnerships is to exploit the potential synergies that may be identified and to accelerate the pace of technological development. Another key aspect of Hungary's Eastern Opening policy is cooperation with Eastern countries in the field of energy security and infrastructure development, which are highly prioritized in foreign policy of both sides, Hungary and its Asian partners. By engaging in collaborative projects pertaining to energy, transportation networks, and infrastructure initiatives, Hungary seeks to enhance connectivity, advance regional integration, and guarantee long-term sustainability (Becsey, 2014).

In addition to economic considerations, Hungary's policy of opening up to the East places significant emphasis on cultural diplomacy and people-to-people exchanges as the fundamental pillars of bilateral relations, and to some extent in multilateral diplomacy, with Eastern countries. Hungary's endeavour is to cultivate a deeper mutual understanding and reinforce bilateral ties through the organisation of cultural events, the implementation of educational programs and the promotion of tourism. In the domain of expanding educational collaboration, student exchange projects and scholarships, Hungary has augmented its educational programs with a number of initiatives, including the Stipendium Hungaricum, which provides foreign students with the opportunity to pursue their studies at Hungarian universities. Concurrently, Hungarian students are also given the chance to continue their studies at foreign universities. The essence of student exchange programs is to facilitate the sharing of cultural and academic experiences and to cultivate personal relationships (Korm.Rendelet 2013, 285).

Hungarian universities and research institutes have initiated collaborative research endeavours with their Eastern counterparts, encompassing a diverse array of scientific and technological domains. Examples of university-university collaborations include the implementation of joint training programs, the offering of dual degrees and the provision of internships (Horváth et al., 2020). The joint research projects encompass a range of disciplines, including natural sciences, engineering, medicine, and social sciences. In the biological, chemical and physical sciences, the expectation is primarily to stimulate innovation, setting new patents and discovery. Joint research is conducted in the domains of nanotechnology, pharmaceutical research, and materials sciences. These collaborations encompass a range of engineering disciplines, including information technology, robotics, artificial intelligence, and renewable energy research. This will result in significant benefits for Hungary, as while in 2022 Hungary spent 1.39% of its GDP on research and development, leading Asian economies spent considerably more. In 2022, South Korea also led the way among our Asian partners, with a spending rate of 4.93% (Eurostat, 2022). Japan and China also spent significant amounts on R&D (see Koudela 2019), with rates of 3.34% and 2.41%, respectively (Eurostat, 2022). Joint research is also conducted in the field of medicine, particularly in biotechnology, epidemiology and the development of health technologies.

Cooperation also covers social, economic and cultural research, including migration, international relations and sustainable development.

Furthermore, there has been a notable expansion in the number of joint training programs, along with the introduction of the dual degree system. The creation of joint degree programs and dual degrees through inter-university collaboration provides students with the opportunity to pursue their studies at multiple institutions and ultimately obtain a dual degree that is recognised by both universities. The collaborating universities develop curricula that integrate the strengths of both institutions, thereby enabling students to acquire a broad and internationally relevant knowledge base. A further key feature of the system is that joint projects and programs frequently offer students and researchers the chance to undertake work placements. These opportunities facilitate the acquisition of practical experience and the formation of connections with industry and academia. Students may spend time in international companies, research institutes or university laboratories, working on specific projects and gaining experience of working in an international context. Research placements permit researchers and students to collaborate with international research teams, thus broadening their knowledge and experience.

Such collaborations serve not only to reinforce the ties between the participating institutions and countries, but also contribute to the advancement of science and technology. The realization of projects through collaboration frequently results in the discovery of new phenomena, the development of novel technologies, and the introduction of innovative approaches. These outcomes have the potential to exert a beneficial influence on the social and economic development of both Hungary and Eastern countries over the long term. The internationalisation of higher education institutions is a strategy that takes account of global trends (kormany.hu).

The establishment of language and cultural institutes, such as the Hungarian Cultural Institutes abroad and the foreign cultural institutes in Hungary, which organise language courses, cultural events and academic conferences, serves to promote the Hungarian language and culture and to foster mutual cultural understanding. Hungary plays host to a number of cultural festivals and events abroad, which serve to showcase a variety of Hungarian artistic, musical, literary and other cultural values. In addition, the country also plays an active role in hosting cultural events abroad that seek to foster

greater understanding and appreciation of other nations' cultures. The framework will facilitate artistic exchanges, enabling Hungarian artists to engage in work and exhibition opportunities abroad and foreign artists to undertake similar activities in Hungary. Such initiatives facilitate creative collaboration and intercultural discourse. The development of joint cultural and artistic projects, such as film and theatre productions focusing on shared cultural values and narratives, is a popular phenomenon. The fostering of educational and cultural ties has the potential to reinforce economic links, given that cultural and scientific links often serve as a conduit for the advancement of business and trade collaboration.

In conclusion, the expansion of educational and cultural cooperation represents a pivotal instrument in Hungary's Eastern Opening strategy, facilitating the reinforcement of international relations and the advancement of global integration. A case in point is the work of the Oriental Business and Innovation Office (OBIO) at the Budapest Business University (BBU), and this topic will be addressed in greater detail in the subsequent sections of this study.

3. Methods and Materials

The research conducted about the activities of OBIO is divided in two time periods. The empirical part of the research is further separated into two phases since some activities were not continued after the institutional, organizational, managerial and financial reorganization of the Office. Thus, for the pursued empirical research, the two time periods are:

- The first period is from 2016 to 2022;
- The second period from 2016 to 2023.
- The results of this empirical research are presented in the form of tables (Hurst, 2000).

The outgoing student mobility program and summer university programs are analysed in the period between 2016 and 2022, whereas the program of free oriental language courses provided for BBU students is analysed in the period between 2016 and 2023.

For quantitative data analysis (Crammer, 2003) of OBIO activities in this research, the authors used three types of enrolment documents, as official confirmation of students' participation in a specific program. These documents are separated in three different categories. First, enrolment documents for outgoing student mobility

program. Second, enrolment documents for summer university programs. Enrolment documents for free oriental language courses. Besides this, the authors used data available on the official website of BBU.

Students were free to decide which academic institution among BBU's Asian partners they wish to enroll in. Their choice was limited to the official list of academic partner institutions of BBU. The offer of academic institutions located in Asia was based on institutionalized cooperation. The cooperation was institutionalized through inter-institutional agreements in the form of Memoranda of Understanding. For this empirical research, these MoUs were used as a type of archived texts (Prescott 2016).

Another option for students to take part in Asian courses was also offered for BBU students by OBIO. Namely, free oriental language courses were organized twice a week, with each class taking up one and a half hours. These courses were institutionalized by providing ECT to students who had successfully finished a semester.

The theoretical part of the paper is based on the types of sources. Primary sources include official documents and official statements as well as data available on the website of official institutions. The second type of sources contain academic papers for the topic of research. The employed method was content analysis (Stemler, 2015) and word frequency analysis (Baayen, 2012).

4. OBIO – New Horizon in Higher Education Cooperation in Hungarian “Eastern Opening”

OBIO was created as a tool of the Hungarian Government to broaden its horizon in cooperation of higher education with the Orient. Thus, OBIO took the pioneering role in making stable, durable, and diverse cooperation with universities based in the Orient, and so made this path between Hungary and the Orient brighter.

When it comes to the activities of OBIO, it has to be accentuated that although OBIO had emerged as a result of pragmatic creativity, far-sighted vision, and moved towards the future oriented cooperation between the Central Bank of Hungary and the Budapest Business University in 2016, under the name Oriental Business and Innovation Center (OBIC)¹, its activities are not dictated nor conditioned by political will or hasty political changes and decisions made

¹ Due to the administrative changes within the BBU, in 2024, the name was changed to OBIO.

by the Hungarian Government. OBIO's independence in pursuing its activities could be understood from different points of view. Firstly, this independence has provided OBIO opportunities for making itself more competitive, flexible and resilient on the higher education and business markets. Moreover, it can also be regarded as the result of the thorough analysis of the Hungarian needs in higher education cooperation and making business connections with Asian countries. Finally, it might also be assessed as the perception of the Hungarian Government to have an independent voice when making the most suitable offer to Asian needs (Koudela 2018) which can be met through cooperation with Hungary, or more broadly, with the EU (Oriental Business and Innovation Office, 2024).

OBIO's role in improving the competitiveness of the Hungarian economy by contributing to a better understanding of the East Asian region is mainly realized through people-to-people diplomacy, creating and sharing ideas and knowledge, respecting diversity, promoting the importance of personal development, and joint creation of a vibrant, encouraging and dynamic working environment. In such a working environment every person feels free to express their ideas whilst respecting high professional standards in interpersonal relations and mutual learning.

Following the course of the active search for high quality partners from both the education and business sectors which share the same professional values and principles in doing work, OBIO has faced many challenges. When it comes to making cooperation with Asian partners, the challenges are most likely to occur due to cultural differences which lead to different interpretations of the same facts/events/things. However, pursuing its activities in cooperation with current and new Asian partners by abiding the values of openness and inclusivity, OBIO creates the atmosphere of internationalism, partnership, and synergism at the Budapest Business University. In doing so, OBIO demonstrates its capacities in art of diplomacy, compromises and patience.

Since the Central Bank of Hungary withdrew its funding, BBU has been supporting the work of OBIO both financially and technically, as OBIO has merged into the structure of BBU as part of its international team. Accordingly, the importance of OBIO at the institutional level of BBU is still recognized as a crucial platform in making connections and communicating with Asian partners in Hungary, such as Asian embassies, other institutions, and companies

based in Budapest. Thus, the International Directorate of BBU is constantly supporting OBIO's work (Figure 1).



Figure 1. The position of OBIO in institutional structure of BBU
Source: (BBU, 2024)

As stated on the official website, OBIO's main activities are enlisted as follows:

- Free language courses – Chinese, Korean, and Indonesian (Bahasa) – for BBU students and professors;
- East Asian Culture and Management Training (only in Hungarian at the time of writing this study);
- Student mobility program (including summer schools);
- Providing scholarships for BBU students to travel to East Asian countries and gather first-hand experience in the form of student exchanges and summer school;
- Mobility of researchers and professors;
- Creating, promoting, and sharing advanced and focused research in order to provide wider knowledge on Asia;
- Organizing various types of events: conferences, workshops, round-tables related to the region in fields such as international business management, diplomacy, finance and commerce, hospitality and tourism, communication amongst many (Oriental Business and Innovation Office, 2024).

Given the above-listed activities, we can see that OBIO offers a wide spectra of primarily, non-biased, scientific and cultural approaches through people-to-people diplomacy in understanding

vibrant, tedious, and ongoing processes which occur in the Asian continent, but bringing both captivating challenges and breath-taking opportunities to the whole international community (Stefanović-Štambuk & Popović, 2022). Thus, understanding the Asian continent is not only important for Hungary, but also for the whole international society. In this sense, the insights which OBIO provides and offers for catching the essence of Asia or “Asian spirit” possesses enormous importance not only for creating the public politics towards Asia, but also towards the rest of the globe. Aside from this, OBIO’s professionalism and high-quality experts’ work could provide more than useful assistance in bettering the negotiation position and stance of Hungary in relations with diverse Asian countries. Apart from demonstrating that diplomacy is still sustainable, OBIO, by abiding diplomatic manners, takes you to the Orient and brings the Orient to you. For example, OBIO was the initiator or bridge in signing the Memorandum of Understandings with various universities from Asia. Moreover, OBIO is giving impetus to develop as numerous and qualitative channels of communication as possible, since diplomacy is striving for constant and uninterrupted communication (Jönsson & Hall, 2003).

5. Empirical research on the results of OBIO 2016-2023

In the following section, we intend to present the results of OBIO’s operations since its inception in terms of numbers.

OBIO’s Activities Measured by Numbers

I. Oriental language courses, 2016–2023

Table 1. Number of students participating in free oriental language courses, based on internal documents, available upon request.

Oriental language courses, 2016–2023	
Language	Number of students
Chinese	350
Japanese	327
Korean	203
Bahasa Indonesia	86
Vietnamese	21
Arabic	15
Total	1002

Table 1 illustrates the availability of free language courses for BBU students, which are included in OBIO’s activities. At the outset, the language courses were financed by the Central Bank of Hungary. Scholarships were also provided in the initial years to students enrolled in Oriental language courses offered by OBIC, which was subsequently renamed OBIO. The courses are conducted throughout the academic semesters, comprising 11 weeks of instruction with 90-minute classes held twice a week. Among the language courses offered by OBIO, Arabic was only introduced in 2016, due to the lack of interest amongst students.

The alterations to the financial support for the teaching of oriental languages, which constituted one of OBIO’s activities, took place during the 2021/2022 academic year. This was due to the withdrawal of funding by the Central Bank of Hungary for such activities. Nevertheless, the OBIO Team, through its persistent, agile, cordial and professional communication with various institutions, including Cultural Centres and/or Embassies of East Asian countries in Budapest, guided by the vision and strategic need of spreading its soft power, succeeded in arranging free language courses for BBU students. Specifically, the Cultural Centres and/or Embassies of the East Asian countries provided sponsorship and native language teachers for these language courses. As evidenced by the data in Table 1, the Chinese language course is the most popular, followed by Japanese and Korean languages. This is not an isolated phenomenon, as it reflects the significant influence of these cultures among Hungarian citizens. This raises a number of intriguing research questions about the various forms of Asian cultural, economic, political, and normative influences in Hungary.

II. Outgoing student mobility

Table 2. Number of students that OBIO sent out as part of student mobility programs, based on internal documents, available upon request.

Outgoing student mobility, 2016–2022		
Country	Number of students	Host university
Japan	4	Josai International University
	7	Ritsumeikan University
	2	Josai University
	2	Kanda University of International Studies
	4	Kobe University
Taiwan	6	Shih Chien University
Thailand	1	Mahidol University
Indonesia	1	STIE YKPN Business School
	1	BINUS University
China	1	Blue Mountain International Hotel, Management School China
	1	Beijing Union University
	1	Zhejiang Yuexiu University of Foreign Languages
	2	Xi'an International University
South Korea	4	Woosong University
	3	SolBridge International School of Business
	4	Kookmin University
	1	Dongseo University
Total	45	

Student mobility represents one of the core activities of OBIO and represents a particularly fruitful area of collaboration with Asian countries. In accordance with the organisational structure of BBU and the management of its operations, the OBIO Team is solely responsible for the coordination of outgoing student mobility programmes. Through this activity, the OBIO Team seeks scholarships for students who are interested in spending one or two semesters abroad to gain

a deeper understanding of the multifaceted Asian culture(s) and, subsequently, to disseminate their knowledge for the advancement of scientific development and the reinforcement of Hungarian diplomatic power. Furthermore, this activity represents OBIO's platform for promoting mutual learning and inter-civilisational dialogue as a means of understanding the contemporary world. Consequently, the outgoing student mobility programme constitutes a significant element of BBU's strategy for internationalisation.

During the autumn semester of the 2020 academic year, no students were engaged in mobility programmes as a consequence of the restrictions imposed by the government in response to the pandemic. Furthermore, it should be noted that China adhered strictly to the zero-Covid policy. As a consequence, the Chinese borders were entirely closed until the beginning of 2023. Consequently, only five students have thus far pursued their studies in the mainland portion of China.

III. Summer University

Table 3. The number of students OBIO sent out as a part of Summer Universities, based on internal documents, available upon request.

Summer Universities, 2016–2022		
Country	Number of students	Host university
Taiwan	3	National Chengchi University
Thailand	11	Mahidol University
Indonesia	8	BINUS University
China	10	Xian Northwestern Polytechnical University
	4	Soochow University
South Korea	3	Korea University
Total	39	

The sending of students to a variety of summer universities, including summer schools, as an OBIO activity, commenced during the 2017/18 academic year. For the aforementioned academic year, no data is available regarding the expenditure incurred for this activity. Additionally, the number of students who were awarded scholarships

to participate in summer academic activities abroad is not known. In the 2018/2019 academic year, a total of 18 students from BBU participated in a summer university programme. In order to provide students with the opportunity to engage in international activities and gain new experiences, the OBIO allocated circa twenty five thousand USD (9,166,455 HUF) from its budget. The academic year 2019/20 was marked by the outbreak of the global pandemic, which brought about profound shifts in global, state, and interpersonal relations. Consequently, this OBIO activity also experienced significant disruptions.

Following the easing of the effects and intensity of the COVID-19 pandemic, OBIO began nominating students for summer universities with great enthusiasm, exercising caution and limiting participation to pursue this activity in the 2020/21 academic year. In light of the aforementioned context and the understandable reluctance of individuals to travel abroad due to the unexpected closure of state borders, which could occur at any moment, OBIO sent only three students abroad: two to Thailand (Mahidol University) and one to Indonesia (BINUS University). The total expenditure from OBIO’s funds was around five thousand USD (1,829,870 HUF). The practice of sending students abroad was continued in the following academic year, with OBIO spending around twenty three thousand USD (8,679,291 HUF) from its funds. In that year, the OBIO Team sent nine students abroad: one to Japan, three to South Korea, and five to a Summer University at Mahidol University (Thailand).

In light of the recent developments in OBIO’s financial situation, it has become necessary to temporarily suspend this activity. To date, OBIO has been unable to replace the funds provided by BBU and the Central Bank of Hungary. Despite exploring potential avenues through embassies and private companies, the organisation has been unable to assist students in pursuing studies abroad and gaining fresh insights from the Orient.

IV. Partner institutions – Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs)

Table 4. Partner universities from Asia, source (*Budapest Business University, 2024a*)

Country	Institution
Indonesia	BINUS University Universitas Gadjah Mada Stie Ykpn (Ykpn Business School) Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia
Japan	Josai International University Josai University Ritsumeikan University Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University University of the Sacred Heart Kanda University of International Studies Kobe University
China	Beijing Union University Xi’an International University University of Nottingham Ningbo China Shandong Institute of Business and Technology Taiyuan University of Science and Technology
Taiwan	National Formosa University Shih Chien University National Chengchi University Soochow University National Taipei University of Business Tamkang University
South Korea	College of Business Administration, Kookmin University SolBridge International School of Business, Woosong University Dongseo University
Malaysia	Universiti Kuala Lumpur
Thailand	Bangkok University Mahidol University
Vietnam	University of Economics and Finance Thai Nguyen University of Economics and Business Administration Ho Chi Minh City Open University Industrial University of Ho Chi Minh City

The official website of BBU indicates that the institution is engaged in efforts to cultivate extensive relations with a diverse array of partners based in Asia. In this regard, the OBIO is dedicated to maintaining and strengthening the active partnerships that form the foundation of the agreements. Consequently, both BBU and OBIO are engaged

in ongoing efforts to expand international academic collaboration and integration of mutual interests. In conclusion, the activities of OBIO in facilitating connections between BBU and partners in Asia are founded upon principles of openness, respect for diversity, mutuality, and dynamism (Budapest Business University, 2024a).

6. Conclusion

This research was conducted with the aim to analyse the activities which the Oriental Business and Innovation Office (OBIO) pursues as part of the decision of the Hungarian Government to thread more durable relations and develop deeper cooperation with Asian countries which were recognized as a new portfolio of investments, economic and financial stability. By initiating the policy of opening towards the East in 2012, it is important to accentuate that Hungary did not abandon the Western point of view, normativism and discourse of thinking. Hungary only wished to diversify its partners and use the advantages offered by an interconnected and globalized world, dazed and shocked by economic and financial crises.

Development of this policy on a national, that is, domestic Hungarian level, was followed by the process of establishing new and remodelling existing institutions. Institutional support is a necessitated pillar in pursuing any kind of policy, strategy or action plan. One of the results of institutionalization of the Opening to the East Policy was the establishing of OBIO in 2016. Since its foundation, OBIO's work is defined as independent, but it is in line with providing institutional support to the Opening to the East Policy. Institutional support is primarily focused on developing different types of cooperation in higher education. However, OBIO gradually started to include the possible business partners from Asia. Thus, OBIO's activities are mainly grounded on making and developing people-to-people connections in spheres of education and business. However, OBIO, although independent, is at the same time limited in pursuing its activities due to financial issues. So far, the OBIO Team found ways to realize its activities although the financial scheme of the Central Bank of Hungary and Budapest Business University changed and discontinued the majority of sources directed to the realization of OBIO activities. The changes in scheme of financing OBIO's work, i.e. cutting the sources directed towards the realization the activities of OBIO could be understood in two

ways. Firstly, as the necessity of further transformation of OBIO, and secondly, abandoning the importance of cooperation in higher education in comprehensive Hungarian Oriental Policy.

In the future, analysis should be directed as to why there is no daily communication between OBIO and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Hungary, Ministry of Education and other institutions of Hungarian government in charge of international cooperation and education. Having in mind high quality expertise of OBIO, deeper cooperation between OBIO and Asian companies operating in Hungary should be established. Thus, in future, one aspect of OBIO development should be directed in widening the network of partners, not only abroad, but also amongst Hungarian institutions.

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