

The Impact of European Union Programs on the Development of Serres Technological Education Institute (T.E.I.) Library

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**Значението на програмите на европейския съюз за развитието на
библиотеката на Института за техническо образование (Т.Е.И.) в Серес**

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ABSTRACT

This article presents the impact of European Community Policies on the gradual development / evolution of a Greek Academic Library, the Technological Education Institute of Serres. Reorganization of the library included four aspects: services provided, enrichment of its collection, equipment and building infrastructure. An integrated intervention plan was drawn and funded during the 1997-6/2000 period; then a second action plan was drawn and funded for the years 7/2000-2006. This paper first presents an evaluation of the first plan, showing the full achievement of the goals set. Secondly, the paper presents a positive evaluation of the second action plan. The implementation of the two plans presented above has had an exceptional impact on the Library of Serres TEI as it stands today, not only because funds provided were used to acquire equipment and improve technology used, but also because these funds were also used to retrain the library's human resources.

Keywords: *European Union Policies; Academic libraries; Structural funds.*

РЕЗЮМЕ

В този доклад се представя въздействието на политиките на Европейския съюз върху развитието на една гръцка университетска библиотека – библиотеката на Института за техническо образование в Серес. Библиотеката беше реорганизирана в четири направления: обслужване, обогатяване на фонда, оборудване и изграждане на инфраструктура. За периода от средата на 1997 до 2000 година беше съставен и финансиран цялостен план за развитие, а втори план беше съставен и финансиран за периода 2000-2006 г. В доклада на първо място се представя оценката на изпълнението на

първия план и се посочва цялостното изпълнение на поставените цели. След това се представя положителната оценка на втория план за действие. Осъществяването на двата плана, които се представят тук, има изключително значение за съвременното състояние на библиотеката на Института за техническо образование в Серес не само защото отпуснатите средства бяха използвани за ново оборудване и подобряване на използваната техника, но и защото това позволи на института да задържи човешки ресурси.

***Ключови думи:** политики на Европейския съюз; университетски библиотеки; структурни фондове.*

INTRODUCTION

Libraries worldwide are undergoing tremendous changes. In Greece, libraries and information services were facing serious problems until the early 1990s. Since then, however, there has been a great evolution towards modernization. This is, in part, due to the raising of awareness about the importance of libraries stimulated by a European Union Libraries program, funded by the EU Second Community Support Framework (CSF). The main objective of this initiative was to support structural development and adaptation of regions that were lagging behind in development, through the allocation of the so-called "Structural funds".

In 1993-94 Greek authorities presented their Regional Development Plan (RDP) for the period 1994-1999 to the European Commission. The initiative included five axes of development. Actions for the innovation of libraries came under Axis 4: "Development of Human Resources and Promotion of Employment". Since 1996 the picture has changed quite rapidly for Academic Libraries, thanks to funding provided by the EU 2nd CSF, (75% co-funded by the EU and 25% by National Resources) through Axis 4 and a special sub-Action named EPEAEK (Operational program for Education and Initial Training).

The objective of EPEAEK Action for Greek Academic Libraries for the 1994-1999 period was to develop and upgrade them, so that they could support scientific research and current teaching needs. The Action was aiming at:

- reinforcement of the role of the central library of the academic institution and the creation of a union catalogue of the university library holdings in cases of many departmental libraries;
- automation of library operations or upgrading of library services; and
- creation of special collections and selected multiple reference copy collections.

Funding was 23.4 billion drachmas (6,867,205.000) and implementation of the project started in 1997. The Action proceeded along two lines. The first one aimed at the development of individual libraries of 32 Institutions (Vertical Line of Action) and the second one aimed at the development of infrastructure that would be provided by all libraries of the academic community (Horizontal Line of Action) (Papazoglou & Semertzaki, 2001). At this point, we would like to mention that through another fund (ERDF- European Regional Development Fund), many universities and T.E.I. were able to construct new library buildings, impressive both in size and architectural design.

THE TWO LINES OF EU FUNDING FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF GREEK ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

The Horizontal Line

This line was meant to develop the infrastructure for the improvement of Greek Academic libraries as a whole. To better serve this purpose, member libraries created a library consortium, the Hellenic Academic Libraries Link (HealLINK). The consortium is a member of the International Coalition of Library Consortia (ICOLC). The main activities of the consortium are described in the following four areas.

1. Creation and operation of a Union Catalogue (UC) of Hellenic Academic Libraries.

A central virtual UC that will provide a single search engine and a permanent collection made up of the existing collections of cooperating libraries was issued a while ago. GEAC's ADVANCE was selected as the system that will operate the UC and a pilot phase is ready for implementation. Every member of the Link will use the records of the UC and inter-library loan transactions will be a great service for the end users. Through continuous training of the library staff this line also aspires to establish common cataloguing and other practices.

Furthermore, within the framework of the project "Development of Digital Cooperation of Libraries of Tertiary Education Foundations" (Horizontal Line of Action, 3rd CSF, 2000-2006) an access gate called "Zephyr" was created by the Information and Technology Services Unit of the University of Crete library. The environment, accessible via WWW and based on international protocol Z35.50 for searching heterogeneous sources of information, offers users many possibilities (<http://zephyr.libh.uoc.gr>). Search through selected indexes, in one or more catalogues simultaneously and record retrieval, takes place through a user-friendly interface, suitable for both beginners and experienced users (Kosmas & Lenaki, 2003).

2. Common Policy in regards to journal subscription.

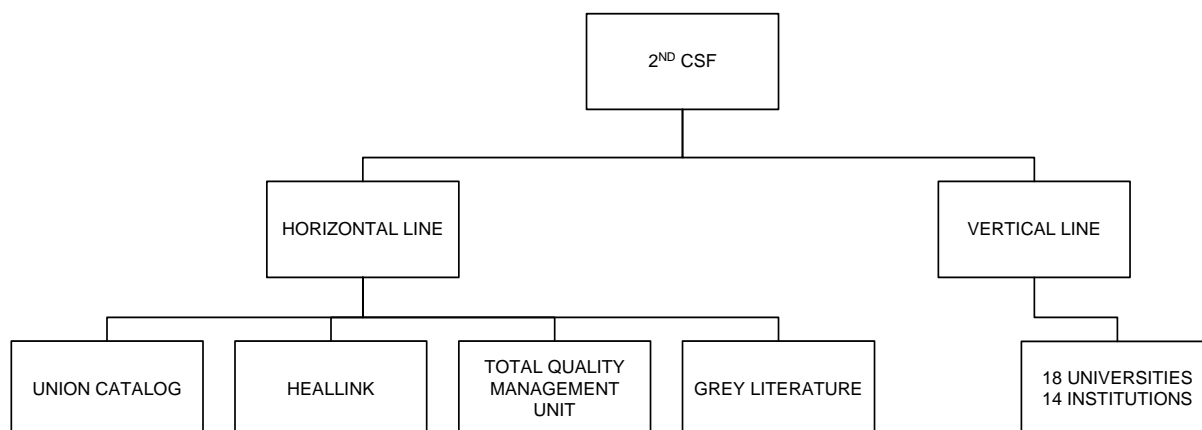
Cooperation through an established common policy in regards to journal subscriptions (both printed and electronic) among members helps them achieve a more rational development of journal collections. To that effect WLN/conspectus software was selected so as to evaluate specific areas of journal collections of five libraries participating in a pilot phase. After analysis and evaluation, license agreements have been successfully negotiated with several major electronic information providers. The case is cited as a success story at international level (Xenidou-Dervou, 2001).

3. Total Quality Management Unit of Greek Academic Libraries (TQMU).

Based at the University of Ioannina, the unit mainly aims at analysis, processing and dissemination of statistical data about Greek Academic Libraries. The purpose of the analysis of statistical data is the formulation of indexes for the evaluation of Greek Academic Libraries' contribution to research and teaching (<http://www.mopab.gr>) Following the example of other European Statistical projects, such as LIBECON2000, TQMU created a similar database, in order to record statistical data (Chalaftri & Pailas, 2003).

4. Grey Literature.

Another activity of the Horizontal line is the creation of a database of Grey literature produced by Academic Institutions in Greece; the database is named ARTEMIS (<http://artemis.cslab.ece.ntua.gr/>). This concerns the entirety of unpublished reference literature, which includes postgraduate and doctoral theses, lecture notes, internal (technical) reports, intended for delivery, research work etc. The software was purchased and has become available for use and content is already being added by some institutions. It is felt that the database produced will be of great interest to the academic and research community at both national and international levels.



The Vertical Line

Greek Academic Libraries benefited greatly from the additional funding of the vertical action line that supplemented their regular budget. All Academic Libraries now use an integrated automation system. Most of them use GEAC's ADVANCE; some use other well-known international systems, while some others use Greek systems, such as PTOLEMEOS and AVEKT. Most academic libraries have extended their normally limited opening hours. Services have improved dramatically. Many libraries provide Internet access, access to CD-Rom collections, to OPAC (Open Access Catalog), to Electronic Journals and Databases. Below, it is described how through the participation in these EU-funded projects and the collaboration with other Greek Academic Libraries, the T.E.I. of Serres Academic Library entered a new era of evolution. We hope to demonstrate a success story of good practice. The implementation of a Vertical Line project was not an easy routine activity. Many people were involved and many problems had to be solved during re-organization and up-grading of our services. We gained expertise and self-confidence and made good friends. We have established a small warm community that has matured and is ready to expand activities to new initiatives. One of them was to hold the 12th Pan-Hellenic Conference on Greek Academic Libraries, 12-14 November 2003, and to edit its proceedings (www.conference.teiser.gr).

THE IMPACT OF THE 2ND CSF ON THE T.E.I. OF SERRES LIBRARY

The T.E.I. of Serres was established in 1979 and recognized as a Technological Education Institute belonging to the Greek Tertiary Education system in 1983. It is a State Institute, which is self-governed, subject to public law, internally regulated and financed by public funds. Education is offered to students free of charge.

The T.E.I. of Serres comprises two Faculties: 1) The Faculty of Applied Technology consisting of four departments: a) Mechanical Engineering, b) Civil Engineering (Structural and Building), c) Information and Communication Sciences, d) Geomatics & Surveying and 2) The Faculty of Administration and Economics consisting of two departments: a) Accounting, b) Business Administration. T.E.I. provides courses for approximately 10.000 students.

T.E.I. of Serres Library began operating in 1985. Its purpose, apart from covering the needs of undergraduate students and members of the teaching and administrative staff, is to meet the needs of researchers of the “educational world” and the broader community and to substantially contribute towards the cultural and intellectual upgrading of the region of Serres.

THE INITIATIVE TO CONSTRUCT A NEW SELF-CONTAINED BUILDING

Before the 2nd CSF, the Library was located in the basement of a building of Serres T.E.I. Initially, a 550 m² space was reformed – shaped (at a total cost of 43,140) in order to temporarily house the Library. As the program evolved, a new three-story independent Library building was designed and constructed, over a total area of 2,500 m², exclusively funded by the 2nd CSF with a budget of 1,467,351. Transfer to the new building took place in September 2001 and the inauguration took place in December 2001 (Architectural design: M-E Theodoridou-Sotiriou, Architect and Static design: Erikos Mouratidis, Civil Engineer).



T.E.I. of Serres Library

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

The action plan and the budget of the project were approved in September 1998 and the next six months proved to be a frustrating and depressing experience for the coordinators. After a decision of the Foundation’s Administration, a three-member scientific group was assigned to monitor the technical parity and quality of the results of the project’s individual tasks, the composition and mailing of necessary progress reports to the competent Greek Ministry of Education, according to the project’s time-schedule and the completion of each of its phases, for the harmonic operation of the program and in order to avoid delays.

Finally a management model was developed similar to those used by non-profit organizations. The model included the creation and continuous coordination of various independent task groups, such as those of books acquisition, journal subscribing, public relations,

etc. It is self-evident that the staff involved undertook numerous roles, which also kept changing. New actions were added as time went by; some actions changed and others became less intensive. Although the staff consists of young librarians and inexperienced administrators, they support the implementation of the project with enthusiasm and hard work. The result has been fairly impressive.

UPGRADING OUR LIBRARY COLLECTION, AUTOMATION AND SERVICES

Reorganization was achieved in 3 basic fields: a) services offered, b) collection enrichment, c) equipment.

The Automation Issue (The Issue of New Technologies)

The Library's collection was registered under a substandard computerization program which did not allow any complex search. A modern automated computerization program (GEAC's ADVANCE) was purchased, under which the Library's existing collection, as well as new material, were registered. There was no possibility of online access to scientific journals. Search capabilities were limited to issues of journals to which there was a subscription. There was no possibility of Internet access. By purchasing PCs, Internet access was rendered possible, while the Library's network and homepage were also created.

With the participation of HEALink, the T.E.I. of Serres Library gained the possibility of remote access to electronic information sources and services, including electronic scientific journals. Furthermore, the Library participates in the Union Catalogue of Journals in Hellenic Scientific and Technological Libraries. This is an online database aiming at online ordering of articles of scientific journals and inter-lending between Greek libraries. It was created in February 1994 (there was no network in Greece until then), following an initiative of the National Documentation Centre, which was founded by the National Network of Scientific & Technological Libraries for this purpose. The National Documentation Centre (www.ekt.gr) has been operating since 1980 and it is the national organization for documentation, information and support on issues of research, science and technology.

New Collection Acquisitions

Acquisition of books: The Library's collection comprised 7,200 book titles. The Library's collection was enriched with specialized scientific titles, as well as books of general interest, increasing the total number to 22,000 book titles (Figure 1).

Journal Subscriptions: There was a subscription to 60 scientific journals (25 Greek ones and 35 foreign ones). The number of subscriptions to scientific journals was raised to 200 (110 Greek and 90 foreign ones) (Figure 2).

Audiovisual material and electronic material: There was no audiovisual (CD-Roms, diskettes, videotapes) or electronic material (databases). An acquisition of 358 titles of audiovisual material and 8 databases in CD-Rom form took place (Figure 2).

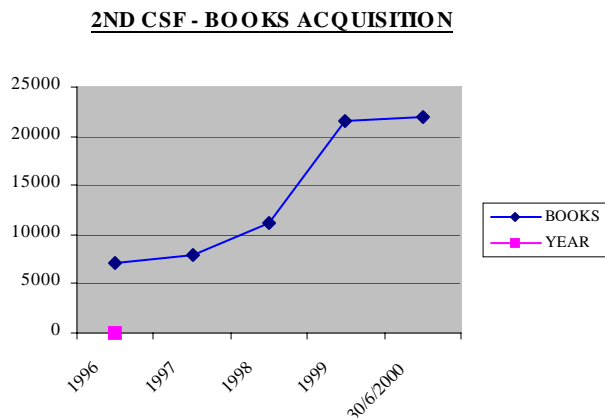


Figure 1.

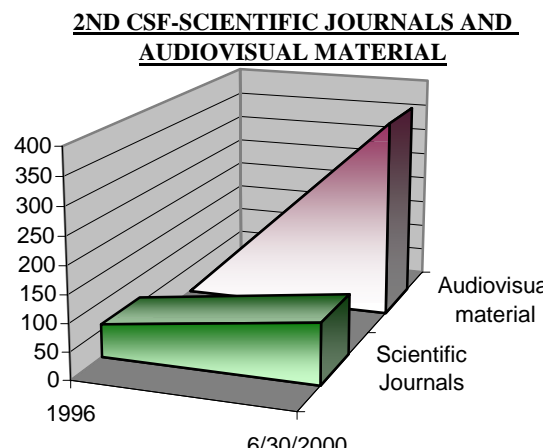


Figure 2.

Equipment

Hardware: There was 1 PC on which the Library's computerization program was installed. The following items were purchased: 23 PCs, 4 servers, 16 printers, 1 CD-Recorder, 1 scanner, 5 photocopy machines, 3 Barcode readers, 8 UPS devices, 1 Fax device, 1 card reader – automatic magnetic card vending system for use of photocopy machines, 2 anti-theft security systems and 2 machines for magnetizing/demagnetizing books and audiovisual material.

Software: There was no other software apart from the Library's computerization program. The following software was purchased: Automated program for the computerization of the collection (GEAC's Advance), Netscape explorer for Internet browsing, Software for accessing the Databank of the Hellenic Technical Chamber, Software for accessing databases in CD-ROM form (Ultranet), Microsoft Office Professional, Z.39.50 protocol, Web interface for the library's OPAC (GeoWeb).

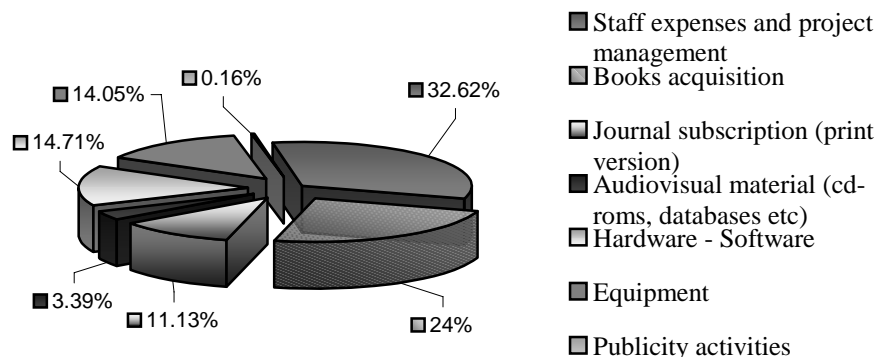
Fixed equipment: Furniture comprised only completely necessary equipment. New purchases included bookstands, desks, seats and reading-room chairs, wheeled stands for moving materials, borrowing benches, drawer cabinets, audiovisual material exhibition-storage systems, etc.

Amount of Funding and Expense Allocation

Total funding came to 1,115,187. The allocation of the total amount into different categories is presented in Table 1. It should be noted that 100% of available funds were absorbed and the project was delivered in time, while all procurements took place after contests according to Greek and community legislation in force.

Table 1: Allocation of expenses according to category

	Description of expense	Percentage within total
1	Staff expenses and project management	32.62%
2	Books acquisition	23.94%
3	Journal subscription (print version)	11.13%
4	Audiovisual material (CD-Roms, databases etc)	3.39%
5	Hardware - Software	14.71%
6	Fixed Equipment	14.05%
7	Publicity activities	0.16%



In general, until recently our library was poor in holdings and its catalogue was in print format. Services were very poor, opening hours was very limited and the technology level very low. We were not housed in a proper library building and did not have adequate and trained library personnel. After the program we are housed in a brand new library building, we have an OPAC catalogue, a good collection, new services and well trained new personnel (4 librarians).

THE NEW 3rd COMMUNITY SUPPORT FRAMEWORK

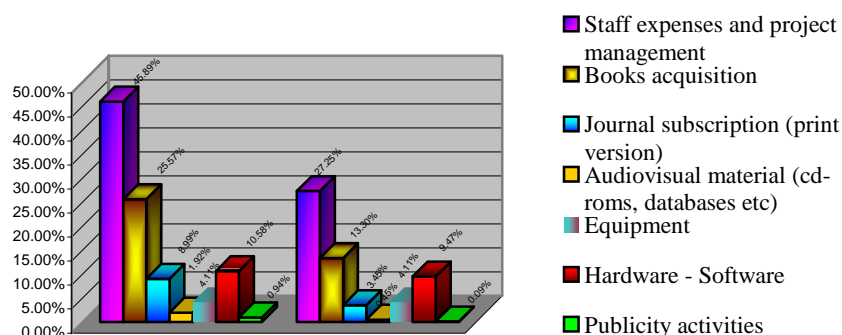
After the successful completion of the first program in 2000, T.E.I. of Serres Library, now having the experience, willpower and capability of adapting to the new, complex procedures governing the 3rd CSF, designed a second action plan entitled “Academic Library Reinforcement and Enrichment” and achieved its funding for the period 7/2000-2006. The success of the positive review of the second action plan submitted was mainly based on the successful realization of the first action plan and the fact that it foresaw actions which would continue, evolve and upgrade actions – activities of the first plan.

After a decision by the Foundation’s Administration, a three-member scientific group was assigned to monitor the technical parity and quality of the results of the project’s individual tasks, the composition and mailing of necessary progress reports to the competent Greek Ministry of Education, according to the project’s time-schedule and the completion of each of its

phases, for the harmonic operation of the program and in order to avoid delays. Total new funding reached 949,483. Allocation according to expense category is depicted in Table 2.

Table 2: Expense allocation according to category (3rd CSF)

Description of expense	Percentage within total	Expenses until August 2004 (in Euros)
Staff expenses and project management	45.89%	27.25%
Books acquisition	25.57%	13.3%
Journal subscription (print version)	8.99%	3.45%
Audiovisual material (CD-Roms,databases etc.)	1.92%	0.45%
Hardware – Software	10.58%	9.47%
Fixed Equipment	4.11%	4.11%
Publicity activities	0.94%	0,09%



CONTINUED ACTIONS

- OPAC upgrade and expansion took place
- T.E.I. of Serres Library continues participating in HEALink and the Union Catalogue of Journals in Hellenic Scientific and Technological Libraries.
- By improving-developing and maintaining the Library's webpage, provision of further services responding to constantly increasing demands and its proper promotion to remote audiences was possible.

In the collection enrichment sector

- Increase of the collection from 22,000 to 31,000 to date.
- For the year 2004, the Library is subscribing to 97 scientific journals (47 Greek and 50 foreign). The number of subscriptions depends on the new agreements HEALink signs each year with major foreign publishers, thus providing the possibility of online access to its members.
- New audiovisual material titles were acquired according to the needs of the Departments operating within Serres T.E.I. The total number reached 502 titles.
- No new databases in CD-Rom form were purchased, because the needs of Library users are met by the Library's participation in HEALink.

In the equipment sector

- Hardware: 15 PCs, 2 servers, 6 printers, 1 scanner, 2 hard drives, 7 UPS devices, 3 Barcode readers, 1 book magnetization-demagnetization device, 1 reporter's tape-recorder, 25 pairs of headphones, 1 sound-system, 7 specialized devices for the Disabled.
- Software: 3 specialized software packages for the Disabled (Screen reading and magnification software–Supernova, Optical character recognition-Fine Reader, Electronic book reading software–Daisy EZ Reader), Software for upgrading-expanding the Library collection computerization program (GEAC Advance), software for managing inter-lending and electronic shipment of material (ILL & Electronic Document Delivery), Software for communication with and data extraction from the Union Catalogue of Academic Libraries, Upgrade of software (Ultraset) for access to databases in CD-Rom form and other electronic material.

In the furniture sector

- Furniture: Completion of the library's furniture with new bookstands and supplementary furniture.
- Apart from the development and upgrading of the first action plan's three basic fields (services offered, collection enrichment, equipment), new actions-activities were included aiming at contributing towards improving and expanding the library's capacities and operation in order to respond more effectively to modern needs and demands.

NEW SERVICES AND INITIATIVES

Expansion of Library services offered in order to service the disabled: Special technological equipment (software and hardware) was purchased so as to provide people with sight and motion problems with the possibility of accessing its services; furthermore, the staff was trained in using this equipment and in their behavior towards these special groups of users.

Pilot application for the development of the Library in the sector of study program support: This concerns the creation of an electronic learning platform which will comprise a network area (through the Library's webpage) for electronic support of subjects taught at Serres T.E.I.. This aims at operating as a support means for students during their studying and as a tool for the teaching procedure, thus contributing towards its improvement.

Creation of an electronic filing system for the management of older issues of the Library's scientific journals: A local database was created and is constantly enriched with indexes of older issues of the Library's scientific journals, in order to improve availability of this material and facilitate lending and inter-lending services. Searching takes place through key-words in the journal's title, as well as in the article's title or author. Initially, searching is available at a local level (through the Library's PC network), while, in the future, remote access will be possible through the Library's webpage in order to serve remote users.

STATISTICAL DATA FOR LIBRARY USERS

The importance of the contribution of both Community Support Frameworks towards developing the Library's services can be seen in the statistical data of the Library's annual lending and registration of new users (Figures 3 & 4).

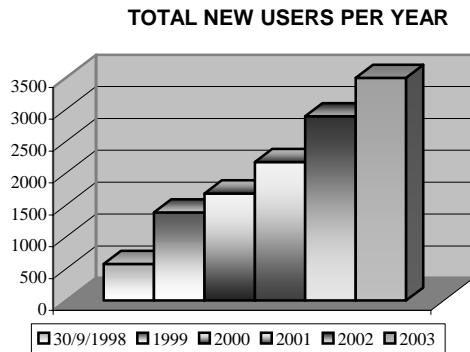


Figure 3

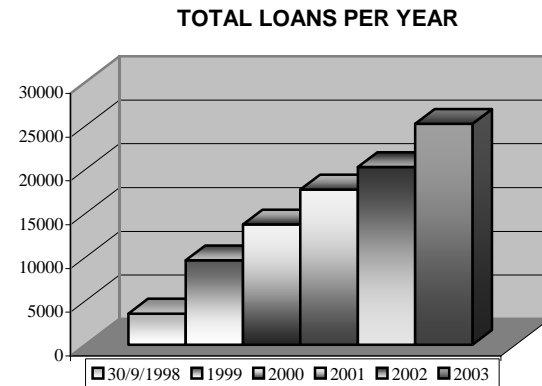


Figure 4

CONCLUDING REMARKS

It is, therefore, clear that within the framework of the 2nd CSF and through the 1st Operational program for Education and Initial Vocational Training, T.E.I. of Serres Library managed, through optimizing the services it offers, developing modern data management systems, creating a fully automated catalogue of its material collection, and through its programs of continuous staff and user training, to open a new trail in its field.

Furthermore, it can be claimed that the realization of the aforementioned programs was very important for the evolution of T.E.I. of Serres Library into its present form, because the funds available were not only used for acquiring equipment and technology, but also contributed towards retraining the human workforce in keeping with important developments taking place in the sector of Libraries and Information Sciences.

The librarians were rescued from their isolation, began to think as managers, to be exposed to new management techniques, and to aspire to more and better collaboration with their colleagues at the national and we hope, why not, at the European level. It is our hope and wish that the current momentum will continue. We will be in a better position to face technological, market and occupational changes with the help and support of well organized Academic Libraries.

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