

# Institutional and research capacity developments in Kosovo\*

*\*This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.*

**The Austrian Government supports institutional development in Higher Education and Research and the European Commission launches the first Call for Proposals for Research Projects in Kosovo\*.**

## Start of “Higher KOS” project – Promoting Institutional Development in Higher Education and Research

The purpose of this 3-year project is to effectively and sustainably implement the principles of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) in the public Kosovar Higher Education (HE) institutions and to sustainably enhance Kosovo's integration into the European Research Area (ERA).

The intervention focuses on three thematic areas, leading to three expected results, each contributing to the above-mentioned objectives:

1. The quality of education offered at public HE institutions will be enhanced through improved and labour market-oriented teaching and learning (didactics, planning), and improved quality assurance mechanisms.
2. The system of research promotion in Kosovo\* will be improved substantially through developing capacities and establishing a national research fund and administration that is functioning according to international standards.
3. Quality management and governance as well as administrative capacities of main stakeholders (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) and universities) will be further developed in order to be more efficient, transparent, effective, and customer-oriented.

The project is financed by the Austrian Development Cooperation and co-financed by the MEST. It is implemented by an Austrian consortium consisting of the lead partner World University Service Austria (WUS Austria), the Centre for Social Innovation (ZSI), and the Austrian Agency for International Mobility and Cooperation in Education, Science, and Research (OeAD).

The main research-related activities of the project are:

- **A scholarship fund** with the aim that ten PhD students complete PhD studies and five postdoc researchers are supported for research abroad. It is proposed that five PhD scholarships will be granted alongside the programmatic partnerships at Austrian institutions, five PhD scholarships and five post-doc fellowships will be granted for other universities.
- **Five programmatic partnerships** – possibly one per research priority field – between faculties or universities in Kosovo\* and Austria – supporting the improvement of the quality of education. Partnership activities will last for at least one year.
- **Research Promotion in Kosovo\*** – A strategic analysis and feasibility study about the establishment of a national agency for research promotion will be established by taking existing structures into account. Dedicated officers will be trained to advise interested Kosovan researchers on how to participate in the 7<sup>th</sup> European Framework Programme for RTD and “Horizon 2020”.
- **Ten trilateral collaborative research projects** with a duration of max. 15 months and a funding of max. € 15,000 per project will be implemented. The activities in the funded projects enable researchers from Austria, Kosovo\*, and South Eastern European countries to work together on mutually beneficial science-driven projects and empower especially young researchers in Kosovo\* to cooperate in international projects.



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## Research Capacity Development in Kosovo\*

The European Union Office to Kosovo on 17 October 2011 launched an open call for proposals to strengthen the research and innovation capacity in support of socio-economic development in Kosovo\*.

Proposals were solicited from public and private research institutions in Kosovo\* to meet one or more of the following specific objectives:

- to increase the quantity and quality of research performed by Universities and Research Institutes in Kosovo\* in the priority research fields,
- to consolidate and increase the collaboration between networks of Kosovo\* and European Research Institutions in the priority research fields,
- to promote the inter-institutional as well as inter- and trans-disciplinary collaboration and exchange,
- to make improvements in research facilities and equipment at the institutional level,
- to improve the capacity of Kosovo researchers, in particular young post-docs and PhD students of universities and research institutes in the priority research fields, through exchanges, internships, and research trainings, and
- to improve project management capacity both in terms of scientific and administrative capacity.

The priority research fields match those defined in the National Research Program 2010–2015: 1) Environment, Energy, and Natural Resources; 2) Agricultural Production and Food Safety; 3) Medical Research and public health; 4) Social sciences; 5) Information Technology.

The total amount made available under this Call is € 1m. The financial allocations range from € 150,000–250,000 with an expected contribution of at least 5% from other sources, whereas the duration of projects is between 18 and 30 months. The closing date for applications was January 25, 2012.

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