



# Project Document

***Higher KOS - Promoting Institutional Development  
in Higher Education and Research in Kosovo***

PROJECT CYCLE MANAGEMENT

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**Austrian**  
 **Development Cooperation**



**Project Titel**  
**Higher KOS - Promoting Institutional Development**  
**in Higher Education and Research in Kosovo**

<b>Country:</b> <b>Kosovo</b>	<b>Region:</b> <b>South Eastern Europe</b>
<b>Planned Project Period from:</b> <b>12/2011</b>	<b>till:</b> <b>11/2014</b>

**Applicant** (=consortium of 3 partner institutions listed below)

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### **Local Project Partner**

N/A

### **Financing (Euro)**

Project Budget (total)	Requested Grant ADC	Contribution in Cash by the Applicant	Possible Contributions from Third Parties
100,00%	94,97%	0,00%	5,03%
1.842.140 EUR	1.749.500 EUR	0 EUR	92.640 EUR

## Short Description (max. 2000 characters)

The project „Higher KOS – Promoting Institutional Development in Higher Education and Research in Kosovo“ contributes to the well-functioning of the higher education and research system in Kosovo along European values, practices and standards.

Its purpose is to effectively and sustainably implement the principles of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) in the public Kosovan 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 (MEST, universities) will be further developed in order to be more efficient, transparent, effective and customer-oriented.

The three thematic areas are divided into ten components, thus allowing tailor-made measures for each of the expected results, specifically targeted at the direct beneficiaries. Direct target institutions are: the public universities of Kosovo: University of Prishtina, University of Prizren, University of Mitrovica; the MEST, the Kosovo Accreditation Agency, the Kosovo NARIC Office, and the National Research Council (approx. 2.000 staff members in total). Indirect beneficiaries are the student populations of the three public universities (ca. 55.000) as well as the students of private universities and graduates with foreign degrees returning to Kosovo (approx. another 10.000). Through enhanced research capacities and improved RTDI (Research, Technological Development and Innovation) structures in Kosovo, economic development and entrepreneurship are stimulated from which the whole society benefits. To this end, the project also contributes to poverty reduction and economic development.



# 1. Summary

Das Oberziel des Projekts „Higher KOS – Promoting Institutional Development in Higher Education and Research in Kosovo“ ist die Verbesserung des Hochschul- und Forschungssystems im Kosovo in Übereinstimmung mit europäischen Werten und Standards, wobei das Projekt darauf zielt, die Prinzipien des Europäischen Hochschulraums effektiv und nachhaltig in den Arbeits- und Funktionsweisen der öffentlichen Institutionen im Bereich der Höheren Bildung zu verankern, sowie Kosovos Integration in den Europäischen Forschungsraum voranzutreiben.

Die Ausgangslage im Kosovo ist durch Extreme gekennzeichnet, die Hälfte der Bevölkerung ist unter 25 Jahren, die Arbeitslosigkeit liegt bei geschätzten 40-45%, rund 45% der Bevölkerung leben unter der Armutsgrenze, ca. 14 % in extremer Armut (1USD/Tag). Aufgrund dieser Bevölkerungsstruktur und da die junge Generation besonders von Armut betroffen ist, kommt einer guten (tertiären) Bildung für die nachhaltige Entwicklung des Landes eine besondere Bedeutung zu, da Investitionen in die Höhere Bildung eine anhaltende und positive Auswirkungen auf die Wirtschaft eines Landes, auf die Entwicklung neuer Arbeitsplätze und auf die Beschäftigungsfähigkeit der Bevölkerung haben.

Die offizielle Strategie des Kosovo zur Höheren Bildung ist bereits auf den Europäischen Hochschulraum ausgerichtet und auch wenn aus politischen Gründen eine Mitgliedschaft des Kosovo bei der EHEA derzeit nicht möglich ist, gibt es eine dezidierte Ausrichtung auf den Bologna Prozess und dessen Ziele. Dazu ist anzumerken, dass sich die Rahmenbedingungen im Bereich der Hochschulbildung in den letzten Jahren tatsächlich verbessert haben, auch die Entwicklung des *Kosovo Higher Education Plan 2011-2016* und des *National Research Programme* zielen in die richtige Richtung.

Weiters wurde mit der Gründung einer neuen öffentlichen Universität in Prizren mehr jungen Menschen ein Studium ermöglicht. Die Universität Prizren ist nun neben der Universität Prishtina und der Universität Mitrovica die dritte öffentliche Universität des Kosovo. Wobei es zwischen letzterer und dem kosovarischen Bildungsraum bisher kaum Austausch gibt, was auch eine der Herausforderungen des gegenständlichen Projektes darstellt.

Darüber hinaus sind, trotz offensichtlicher Fortschritte, viele Reformen nur an der Oberfläche geblieben, das betrifft unter anderem die Umsetzung der Bologna-Prinzipien, welche die dahinterliegenden Strukturen bisher kaum erfasst hat. Zusätzlich muss die institutionelle Integration und Autonomie der (öffentlichen) Universitäten in der Praxis umgesetzt werden, um inkohärente Reformen sowie eine wirkungslose und unwirtschaftliche Ressourcenverwendung zu vermeiden, insbesondere in Hinblick auf die knappen finanziellen Mittel. Weitere Themen im Projekt sind die Prinzipien des *good governance* (hinsichtlich Transparenz, Verantwortlichkeit, Haftung, etc.), Qualitätsstandards (auf individueller und institutioneller Ebene) wie auch der Zugang benachteiligter Gruppen zur höheren Bildung.

Die Intervention setzt dazu an drei thematischen Schwerpunkten an:

- (1) Die **Qualität der Ausbildung** an den öffentlichen Hochschulen soll verbessert werden. Dies wird v.a. durch eine modernisierte und arbeitsmarktorientierte Lehre (Didaktik, Planung) und vermehrte Qualitätssicherungsmaßnahmen erwirkt. Ebenso im Mittelpunkt steht dabei die Unterstützung der Internationalisierung und Mobilität der Hochschulen, von Lehrenden und Studierenden.
- (2) Das System der **Forschungsförderung** im Kosovo steckt noch in den Anfängen. In Anlehnung an die Nationale Forschungsstrategie, welche vom Nationalen Forschungsrat entwickelt wurde, soll dieses System wesentlich verbessert werden, Kapazitäten für effektive Forschungsförderung entwickelt und ein nationaler Forschungsförderungsfonds in Übereinstimmung mit internationalen Standards aufgebaut werden.
- (3) **Qualitätsmanagement und verantwortungsvolle Führung:** Vor allem im Bereich des Finanzmanagements sollen in Zusammenarbeit mit den wichtigsten lokalen Stakeholder im Bereich der höheren Bildung und Forschung (v.a. öffentliche Universitäten und Ministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Technologie – MEST) Kapazitäten für effizientere, transparentere, effektivere und kundenorientierte administrative Abläufe entwickelt werden.



Die o.g. drei thematischen Schwerpunkte sind in zehn Komponenten unterteilt, die maßgeschneiderte Maßnahmen ermöglichen, welche speziell auf die jeweiligen direkt Begünstigten zugeschnitten sind und zu jedem der erwarteten Ergebnisse führen.

Die direkt begünstigten Institutionen sind: die öffentlichen Universitäten des Kosovo:

Die Universität Prishtina, die Universität Prizren, die Universität Mitrovica; das MEST, die Kosovo Accreditation Agency, das NARIC Büro Kosovo, und der NRC (insgesamt ca. 2.000 MitarbeiterInnen). Von diesen Institutionen werden rund 10% der MitarbeiterInnen direkt in das Projekt involviert sein: 75 akademische Universitätsangehörige, 45 aus dem administrativen Bereich (aus allen Institutionen), 65 ForscherInnen, 10 VertreterInnen des Universitätsmanagements und 15 andere (v.a. NRC).

Da die Beziehungen zwischen den kosovarischen (Bildungs-)Institutionen und der Universität Mitrovica derzeit begrenzt sind, wird die Universität Mitrovica dezidiert zu allen Komponenten, die sich an die Universitäten richten, eingeladen. Um alle Minderheiten zu erreichen, wird zusätzlich eine Informationskampagne organisiert, welche unter anderem *info days* an den Universitäten in Mitrovica und Prizren einschließt. Auch die Gleichberechtigung der Geschlechter ist ein integrativer Bestandteil der Projektaktivitäten.

Indirekte Begünstigte sind die Studierenden der drei öffentlichen Universitäten (ca. 62.000) und jene von Privatuniversitäten und AbsolventInnen ausländischer Universitäten (ca. weitere 10.000), da alle Studierenden vom verbesserten Service der KAA und des NARIC Office profitieren. Wie die Studierenden überhaupt, wenn auch „nur“ als indirekte Begünstigte des Projektes angeführt, im Zentrum der meisten Komponenten dieses Projektes stehen. Im Projekt wird nicht nur auf eine Verbesserung der Qualität von Lehre/Forschung und im Managementbereich eingewirkt, sondern auch ein Studium propagiert, die sich an den Bedürfnissen der Studierenden orientiert.

Weiters wird auch durch die Stärkung der Forschungskapazitäten sowie Verbesserung der FTI-Strukturen im Kosovo die wirtschaftliche Entwicklung des Kosovo vorangetrieben, wovon die gesamte Gesellschaft profitiert.

Das gesamte Projekt ist thematisch an den Kosovo Higher Education Plan 2011-2016 und die vom Nationalen Forschungsrat (NRC) definierten Forschungsprioritäten gekoppelt. Die Förderung von wissenschaftlichen Aktivitäten zur Unterstützung der Prioritäten führt zu Synergieeffekten der Komponenten untereinander und stärkt somit die Wirkung der Intervention.

Die folgende Tabelle bietet einen Überblick über die Maßnahmen (Sub-Komponenten) und Zielgruppen und Begünstigten je Maßnahme.

<b>Erwartete Ergebnisse</b>	<i>Zielgruppen und Begünstigte (direkt und indirekt)</i>	<i>Öffentliche Universitäten (Mngt., Lehrende/ Forschende, Studierende)</i>	<i>Kosovo Accreditation Agency</i>	<i>Ministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Technologie (MEST)</i>	<i>Nationaler Forschungsrat (NRC)</i>	<i>NARIC Büro Kosovo</i>
<b>Erwartetes Ergebnis 1: Qualität der Ausbildung</b>						
Einrichtung von Zentren für Curriculum-Entwicklung und Hochschuldidaktik		✓				
Unterstützung der Kosovo Accreditation Agency		✓	✓			
Fünf programmatische Hochschul-Partnerschaften Kosovo-Österreich (in Übereinstimmung mit NRC Forschungsprioritäten)		✓			✓	
<b>Erwartetes Ergebnis 2: Forschungsförderung</b>						
Nationaler Forschungsförderungsfonds					✓	
Forschungsförderung im Kosovo (Aufbau einer nationalen Struktur)				✓	✓	
15 PhD oder post-doc Stipendien		✓				
Unterstützung für mind. 10 trilaterale Forschungsprojekten		✓			✓	
Unterstützung des Zugangs zu elektronischen Publikationen		✓			✓	
<b>Erwartetes Ergebnis 3: Qualitätsmanagement und verantwortungsvolle Führung</b>						
NARIC Büro Kosovo						✓
Management Unterstützung/ Trainings		✓		✓	✓	

## 2. Background / context

### 2.1. Relevant governmental and sectoral policies

The relevant governmental and sectoral policies for the proposed intervention are the European trends and developments in HE/the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and research/ the European Research Area (ERA), the respective country and sectoral programmes of the Austrian Development Cooperation and the national Kosovan policies and strategies on HE and research.

Kosovo has started to align its policies towards strategic **EU goals** (such as economic growth, creation of jobs, investment in HE and research), which are also pertinent goals for Kosovo. With regard to the reform of Kosovo's HE system, the Bologna Process is a central driver. Another influential factor in Kosovo's HE development has been the official integration politics of the EU in relation to the WBC, where education has always been assigned a major role in promoting democratisation, socio-economic development, and civil society<sup>1</sup>.

On the **national level the project** is in line with the *Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2011-2016*. Whereas the preceding *Strategy for the Development of HE in Kosovo 2005-2015* focused merely on the integration of Kosovo into the EHEA by aligning the national HE system with the Bologna principles, the Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2011-2016 aims at a quality HE along European standards and on increased capacities for scientific research. The project will further be carried out adhering to the priorities of *The National Research Programme of the Republic of Kosovo*, which were defined to establish provisions for infrastructural investments, to enhance participation in international scientific research projects and to elaborate a systemic education programme for researchers. Against this background the intervention will contribute to the promotion of research in general, the further institutionalisation of RTDI structures and will launch concrete measures to directly support researchers (fellowships, collaborative research grants).

In addition, the proposed intervention is fully compliant with the Higher KOS Strategy Document, jointly issued by the MEST and the ADC. Furthermore, all interventions under the project are guided by the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Finally, the intervention is linked to the Kosovo Country Programme 2008-2011 in that it refers to long-term issues such as gender equality, or social and economic empowerment (see also 2.3.Consistency with the objectives of the Austrian Development Cooperation).

The following institutions are relevant, as partners and/or as target groups/direct beneficiaries, for the proposed intervention:

- **The Kosovo Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST)** comprises 11 departments two of which will be of central relevance for this intervention: the Department for Higher Education (HED) and the Department for Science and Technology (STD). The prior responsibilities of HED are the planning and observation of the development of the HE system; the STD is responsible for executing measures aiming at developing the infrastructure, institutional and financial basis for the development of RTDI. The two centers within the MEST, the Center for Innovation and Technology Transfer (founded in 2008) (CITT) and the Center for International Cooperation in HE, Science and Technology (K-CIRT), are currently not functioning well. Therefore it is considered as an option, which has to be discussed with MEST, to merge them into an Agency for Research Promotion; this agency would then play a vital role in all components related to research.”
- **Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA):** (operational since 2008) is an adjoint institution (to the MEST) acting independently for the (re-)accreditation and quality control of institutions and programmes for HE in Kosovo. To this end the KAA introduces and executes essential standards

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<sup>1</sup> [http://europa.eu/legislation\\_summaries/enlargement/western\\_balkans/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/enlargement/western_balkans/index_en.htm)



aiming at the compliance of educational standards at all HE providers in Kosovo and their compatibility with international standards in the future. The KAA is guided by its Board, an independent body of local HE experts with three international members, one of which is Austrian (currently Ms. Elisabeth Fiorioli from the Austrian Accreditation Council – ÖAR).

- **Public universities:** the University of Prishtina (UP) has around 50.000 students enrolled, in 17 faculties located in seven towns of Kosovo. The University of Prizren (UPPz) started operating in October 2010 with 3.000 students enrolled in the academic year 2011/2012. The University of Mitrovica (UM), which is not integrated in the Kosovan HE system, has around 9.000 students.
- **Private higher education providers:** the number and names of private HE providers change frequently, although the intervention and involvement of the Kosovo Accreditation Agency has contributed significantly to the stabilisation of the private HE sector. According to the Kosovo Accreditation Agency, there are currently 17 accredited private HE providers operating in Kosovo<sup>2</sup>. Some of the project components target indirectly also the private HE providers through the activities implemented e.g. by KAA or NARIC office.
- **National Research Council (NRC):** The NRC has been appointed by the Kosovan Parliament. Its functions, rules and obligations are stipulated in the Laws on Scientific Affairs (see Chapter V, art 53-57). It has primarily an autonomous supervising function regarding the development of science and research in the country and gives the opinion regarding the fulfilment of the standards for organising and developing scientific-research activity. It consists of 15 members. Its first major achievement was the development of the National Research Programme whose implementation will be supported under this project.
- **Kosovo NARIC office** (established in 2008): the NARIC network (EU) and its country offices develop policies and practices for the recognition of qualifications, with the ultimate purpose of promoting the mobility of students, teachers and researchers by providing authoritative advice and information concerning the academic recognition of diplomas and periods of study undertaken in other states. The Kosovo NARIC office has received support through the KAIP project by direct consultancy from the Austrian Federal Ministry of Science and Research/ENIC-NARIC Austria.

## 2.2. Characteristics of the Project environment

Kosovo's policies are characterised by the country's strive to build a nation, challenged by having the youngest population in Europe, a high (youth) unemployment rate and great poverty.

Kosovo declared its independence in 2008; however, the independence has no full recognition neither at regional nor at international level. In addition to these political challenges, Kosovo further faces major economical and societal challenges: On the one hand half of the population is under the age of 25. On the other hand the unemployment rate is around 40-45%<sup>3</sup> and "among these two thirds are considered to be un-skilled for the local labour market needs and the future requirements of the economy" (Alija 2010, p. 107). Approx. 45% of the population live below the poverty line, with ca. 14% living in extreme poverty (1 USD/day).

Considering this very young age-structure together with the young generation being the most vulnerable group to poverty, the provision of good (tertiary) educational opportunities is an important lever for the sustainable development of the country. Investments in HE have a lasting and positive effect on a country's economy, on the creation of new jobs and on the employability of the population. In addition, a good HE system does not only develop human resources, but also increases the **competitiveness** in regard to foreign economies. Consequently the *Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2011-2016* "recognizes the need for the education system to be more responsive to the labor market demands, aligned with key government priorities and pressing economic development goals". Furthermore the KESP "is based on a learning model that reaches out to all learners offering **equal opportunities** and quality education" (KESP 2011-2016, p.7).

Therefore, "higher education institutions are seen as the most important players in national innovation systems and as the main drivers of social and economic development by increasing the

<sup>2</sup> See [http://www.akreditimi-ks.org/sq/?Evaluation\\_of\\_Private\\_Institution\\_of\\_Higher\\_Education](http://www.akreditimi-ks.org/sq/?Evaluation_of_Private_Institution_of_Higher_Education)

<sup>3</sup> Statistical data in Kosovo is insufficiently concrete, most statistical providers however calculate (estimate) the unemployment rate between around 40-45 %.

level of knowledge, producing a highly-qualified workforce and developing technological innovations” (Alija 2010, p.112).

With the National Research Programme, issued in March 2010 by the NRC, and the respective budget for science that has been allocated, an important step towards the development and alignment of RTDI activities, the establishment of capacities and an enhanced linkage to HE has been made in order to overcome the underdeveloped, fragmented and individualised RTDI sector.

The official (HE) policy of Kosovo is already oriented towards good European practices in the field of HE. Even though formal membership in the EHEA is still not possible for political reasons, there is an explicit orientation towards the Bologna process and its objectives (Kosovo has observer status since 2003), and Kosovo has improved the HE framework over the last years by introducing the above mentioned two new strategies related to HE and research and the development of a new law on HE.

In order to increase the participation of young people in HE (strategic goal of MEST: up to 35% by 2015), in 2010, a new public university was founded. The University of Prizren is now the third public university, alongside to the University of Prishtina and the University of Mitrovica. The latter still has limited relations with the Kosovan HE system, which is also one of the challenges the HE sector in Kosovo faces. In addition to the public universities there are also 17 accredited private HE providers. Even though advancements have been achieved over the past years, considerable progress is still needed in order to achieve deep-level reforms instead of superficial implementations (e.g. of the Bologna principles). In addition, the institutional integration and the autonomy of (public) universities needs to be enforced in practice to avoid incoherent reform and the inefficient and ineffective use of resources, which is especially important considering the limited financial resources. Also the principles of good governance (in terms of transparency, accountability, responsibility, et al.) and of quality (individually and on the institutional level) as well as an inclusive access to HE remain open issues that are going to be addressed by the planned intervention.

The intervention presented in this paper is in line with the ADC Strategy “Higher Education and Scientific Cooperation”, where it is stipulated that “an efficient and effective system of HE is regarded as an indispensable precondition for reaching the MDGs, as well as for the sustainable social and economic development of a region or country” (p. 5). Plus, according to Article 2 of the Federal Act on Development Cooperation, education is a priority area of activity for the Austrian Development Cooperation.

### **2.3. Consistency with the objectives of the Austrian Development Cooperation**

The proposed intervention is in line with the ADC “Kosovo Country Programme 2008-2011”, the “Three-Year Programme on Austrian Development Policy (2010-2012) of the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs and with the ADC Strategy “Higher Education and Scientific Cooperation” and its principles.

In the current country programme the ADC **concentrates on the educational sector as one of its priorities** with a special focus on HE (this refers also to the for Kosovo relevant sections in the “Three-Year Programme”). The HE strategy denotes the relevance of HE to poverty reduction, describes the baseline situation of ADC, the guiding principles (such as ownership, capacity development, participation, inclusion, gender equality, coordination, result orientation etc.) and the key areas of (ADC) work.

Consequently the proposed intervention is designed along the above mentioned **principles** and contributes to the integration of the Kosovan HE and research system to the EHEA and ERA by supporting the efficiency and effectiveness of the HE and research system, improving the labour market orientation of the study programmes, increasing employability of graduates, strengthening research, align research to contribute to the socio-economic development of Kosovo, enhancing quality assurance, good governance and developing management capacities, and through supporting the inclusiveness of HE and research. In addition the **cross-cutting issues** “conflict-prevention and interethnic cooperation”, “gender equality” and the “minimisation of negative impacts on the environment” are respected.

## 2.4. Target group, beneficiaries and local project partners

The main beneficiaries (partners/target group, see also 2.1.) are the three public universities in Kosovo, the University of Prishtina, the newly founded University of Prizren and the University of Mitrovica<sup>4</sup>, the MEST, the KAA, the NARIC Office of Kosovo, and the NRC with approximately 2000 staff members (estimated number) in total. Approx. 10% of this staff will directly benefit from the proposed project: 75 academic staff, 45 admin. staff, 65 researchers, 10 representatives from the university management and 15 others (estimated).

Since relations between the Kosovan authorities and the University of Mitrovica are currently limited, it will have to be seen if direct cooperation is possible. The University of Mitrovica will however be explicitly invited to participate in all components targeting directly at universities. Additionally, in order to motivate minorities to join project activities, a specific info campaign will be organised, e.g. info days at the universities in Mitrovica and Prizren. Also gender equality will be actively supported through specific measures by promoting the equal participation of both genders (for details see Annex A.6. Gender questionnaire). In the inception phase the concrete measures for the involvement of minorities will be adjusted in a participatory approach together with the respective groups. This refers also to the gender-issues, where both gender experts (national and Austrian) will fine-tune the related measures.

The potential indirect beneficiaries of the project are the ca. 62.000 students at the three public universities in Kosovo as well as the several hundreds of faculty members (researchers, lecturers). The number of academic personnel actively involved in R&D at the universities, the Academy of Sciences or research institutes can hardly be estimated, but most probably will be below 200 persons. However, any estimation is misleading because R&D activities depend also on supply side-factors (e.g. provision of research funding), which should be stimulated by this project, and, thus increase the number of active researchers.

Spill-overs will also affect the total student population (also of private universities) and graduates returning to Kosovo with foreign degrees, as they will also benefit from the improved services of the KAA and the NARIC office. In general, even though the students are “only” indirect beneficiaries, they are in the center of most components within the proposed intervention as they will benefit from the enhanced education quality and from quality management and governance. Additionally, the KAA will be supported in its effort to actively encourage a more student oriented approach in study programs.

Through enhanced research capacities and improved research structures and RTDI activities in Kosovo, economic development and entrepreneurship are stimulated from which the whole society benefits.

## 2.5. Problem analysis and analysis of local potentials

The proposed intervention has been developed in accordance with the Higher KOS Strategy and contributes to the targets for the HE sub-sector of the *Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2011-2016* and the *National Research Programme*. Consequently the project aims at the well-functioning of HE in Kosovo along European values and standards with a focus on the enhanced quality and relevance of HE and research for the Kosovan economy and society.

Activities are going to take place in the following three areas (1) education quality, (2) research and (3) management and governance. Thus the proposed project contributes to the alignment of the Kosovan HE sector with the standards and principles of the EHEA and thereby supports the European integration process as well as democratisation and sustainable economic growth.

The planned actions address the following problems:

- Studies which lack labour market relevance and business orientation require curricular reforms in order to combat the high youth unemployment and to stimulate entrepreneurship and innovation.

- In order to overcome the underdeveloped RTDI landscape, the weak research capacities and quality and the fragmentation of the Kosovan R&D sector, coordinated and transparent research promotion needs to take place.

- HE and research along European standards and values require professional management (and specifically professional and transparent financial management) and governance.

In addition, all activities address the improvement of quality (from the individual to the institutional level), the inclusiveness and internationalisation of the Kosovan HE and research system.

The improvement of the **educational quality** of Kosovo's HE requires comprehensive curricula development beyond the introduction and reforms of ECTS to introduce the so-called "Bologna architecture". Curricula and the general style of teaching and studying need to be reformed, both at structural and at process level (e.g. modularisation, interdisciplinary, flexibility, student-centred learning, etc.). Educational values and intended outcomes in education need to be elaborated with regard to competence-orientation, labour market relevance, knowledge-society, LLL, etc. Internationalisation and exchange of experiences and knowledge will be fostered through programmatic partnerships between Austrian and Kosovan HE institutions in the priority research areas as identified in the National Research Strategy. External evaluation and quality assurance will be supported with the clear aim to bring the Kosovan HE institutions in line with EHEA standards.

In order to improve the capacities and quality of **research** in Kosovo in the frame of the proposed project, structures will be established for promotion and strengthening of research activities (National Research Fund, National Agency for Research Promotion), and concrete measures will be implemented to support research projects and researchers (doctoral and post-doc fellowships, collaborative research projects). Special attention will be given to the development of procedures along European standards, especially with regard to transparency, fairness and accuracy.

The structural reform process also needs professional staff – in HE steering bodies (ministries, etc.), in single HE institutions, and in intermediate HE bodies (QA agencies, etc.). Staff training and capacity development is therefore at the heart of the proposed activities for **quality management and governance**. A challenge for any intervention is the continuing high turn-over of personnel in key positions in state-level institutions, which aggravate a constructive, sustainable development of capacities and institutions; new staff needs to be trained, institutional memory is lost and development processes are delayed. This problem will be tackled through institutional commitment and knowledge management measures. Institutional commitment will be ensured through the active participation in the project development process and in the fine-tuning of measures in the inception phase (in the frame of some components additionally contracts will be concluded). The proposed knowledge management activities focus on organisational objectives such as improved performance, the sharing of lessons learned, integration and continuous improvement of the organisation. (For more information on knowledge management within the intervention see chapter 4.1. Methodology.) All in all, in the design of the project the principles of ownership and capacity development have been respected, the target group/beneficiaries have been actively involved (participatory approach), the activities focus on existing structures (subsidiary principle) and the regional potentials will be tapped through the involvement of national and regional experts.

In addition, the experiences from previous (ADC) projects have been taken into account, as well as the coordination with other donors (see below 2.6) and programmes/projects (inter-project coaching).

The current intervention is building on two preceding interventions financed by the ADC in the HE sector, namely (1) the ADC contract No. 8116-00/2005: Multidimensional Project for the Implementation of an Institutionalised Partnership between Austria and Kosovo in the Field of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, and (2) the ADC Contract No. 7980-03/2007: Building Quality, Knowledge & Skills for Social and Economic Development – Support to Reforms of Higher Education in Kosovo 2008-2011.

The following recommendations (and lessons learned) from recent external evaluations of ADA's HE activities have been incorporated into the project: to continue with the support to the MEST, to the public universities and to the KAA (on an institutional level and through the deployment of an independent board member from Austria). The project focuses on the enhanced linkage between tertiary education and the labour market, especially in the components 1.1. (DCDC, with regard to labour market oriented curricula), 1.2. (KAA), 1.3. (criteria in the programmatic partnerships) and 3.1.

(to enable NARIC office to cope with regulated professions). Cross-cutting issues (gender, minorities, etc.) are considered in all components of the project and external expertise will be provided. In the collaborative research the competitive approach through a call for proposals that require regional partners will be continued. As a lesson learnt for the fellowship component the development of a PhD fund together with local stakeholders is planned and “sandwich programmes” are proposed. And last but not least, interventions will take place on all levels of the system (multi-level approach) and the consortium acts as the implementation body accountable towards the ADA and MEST.

## 2.6. Harmonisation and Alignment (H&A)

In order to coordinate and align the different donors, the MEST established the Department for International Cooperation, Development Coordination, and European Integration, and made a donor mapping available. Partners/donors and relevant projects are also presented at MEST’s website.

With regard to the (public) HE sector, main funds are provided by the EC (Tempus, IPA, etc.). Austria has been one of the major donors in the HE sector and is the donor focal point for the coordination in this area. Other donors are the EC, OSCE (student career/support centers, teacher training, research capacities), Council of Europe (LLL), SIDA (Mitrovica Business College), the British Embassy (scholarships, accreditation), Embassy of France (scholarships, support to the French Dep. of UP), USAID (partnership programmes) and the Netherlands (Mitrovica Summer University, environmental management).

In the field of research, the EC is expected to become the main donor. A planned EC intervention to support R&D in Kosovo has been agreed with MEST and the NRC. An important research programme in which Kosovo participates is RRPP (regional research promotion programme). It is financed by Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and implemented by the University Freiburg. ZSI experts were included in an advisory group to set-up the programme. European Member States and the EC are also aligning bi- and multilateral R&D activities oriented towards Southeast Europe through the EC sponsored project “WBC-INCO-NET”, which logistically and organisationally supports the “Steering Platform on Research with Western Balkan Countries”. This project is coordinated by ZSI.

In order to reach synergies between the different activities in the field of HE, other projects were taken into account in the development of the proposed intervention and will be continuously monitored throughout the project implementation. Coordination with other donors will be carried out by the ADA; the implementing agency/consortium will support the ADA in donor coordination wherever feasible and if this is asked for by the ADA.

This chapter presents only a short overview of initiatives in the area of HE in Kosovo; an extensive list of initiatives is presented e.g. in the Strategy Document Higher KOS – Promoting Institutional Development in Higher Education and Research in Kosovo (donor mapping of 2010), and the Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2011-2016; a detailed description of the main donors in the area of education can be obtained from the website of the Ministry of Education, Technology and Science. The Consortium will carry out interventions in the framework of Higher KOS in alignment with these initiatives and aims to ensure the harmonization of initiatives by constant dialogue with relevant stakeholders and the revision and adaptation of activities when necessary and feasible during project implementation. Furthermore alignment with major current initiatives will be fostered with the involvement of Dr. Dukagjin Pupovci as senior expert for this project.

## 2.7. Data basis and documentation

### 2.8.

- Higher KOS Strategy Document, jointly issued by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology of the Republic of Kosovo (MEST) and the Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC): [http://www.entwicklung.at/uploads/media/02b\\_Strategy\\_Document\\_FINAL\\_01.pdf](http://www.entwicklung.at/uploads/media/02b_Strategy_Document_FINAL_01.pdf)
- Strategy for the Development of Higher Education in Kosovo 2005-2015: [http://www.see-educoop.net/education\\_in/pdf/MASHT-StratA-ang-format.pdf](http://www.see-educoop.net/education_in/pdf/MASHT-StratA-ang-format.pdf)
- Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2011-2016:

- [http://www.entwicklung.at/uploads/media/2c\\_Kosovo\\_Education\\_Strategic\\_Plan\\_EN\\_FINAL\\_DRAFT\\_01.pdf](http://www.entwicklung.at/uploads/media/2c_Kosovo_Education_Strategic_Plan_EN_FINAL_DRAFT_01.pdf)
- National Research Programme of the Republic of Kosovo:  
[http://www.entwicklung.at/uploads/media/02d\\_National\\_Research\\_Programme\\_FINAL\\_English\\_01.pdf](http://www.entwicklung.at/uploads/media/02d_National_Research_Programme_FINAL_English_01.pdf)
  - Higher KOS Strategy Document, jointly issued by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology of the Republic of Kosovo (MEST) and the Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC):  
[http://www.entwicklung.at/uploads/media/02b\\_Strategy\\_Document\\_FINAL\\_01.pdf](http://www.entwicklung.at/uploads/media/02b_Strategy_Document_FINAL_01.pdf)
  - ADC Strategy “Higher Education and Scientific Cooperation”:  
[http://www.entwicklung.at/uploads/media/Strategy\\_Higher\\_Education\\_FINAL\\_Web.pdf](http://www.entwicklung.at/uploads/media/Strategy_Higher_Education_FINAL_Web.pdf)
  - ADC Kosovo Country Programme 2008-2011:  
[http://www.entwicklung.at/uploads/media/Kosovo\\_Country\\_Programme\\_2008\\_2011.pdf](http://www.entwicklung.at/uploads/media/Kosovo_Country_Programme_2008_2011.pdf)
  - Three-Year Programme on Austrian Development Policy (2010-2012) of the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs:  
[http://www.entwicklung.at/uploads/media/3JP\\_2010-2012\\_03.pdf](http://www.entwicklung.at/uploads/media/3JP_2010-2012_03.pdf)
  - ALIJA Avdulla, Country Report Kosovo. In WUS Austria (Ed.): Higher Education in South Eastern Europe, University-Economy Partnerships for Enhancing Knowledge Transfer (2010):  
[http://www.wus-austria.org/files/docs/manual5\\_endps.pdf](http://www.wus-austria.org/files/docs/manual5_endps.pdf)
  - Evaluation of HE programmes in Nicaragua and South East Europe:  
[http://www.entwicklung.at/uploads/media/Evaluation\\_of\\_Higher\\_Education\\_Progr\\_SEE\\_and\\_Nicaragua\\_2005-2009\\_Final\\_Report.pdf](http://www.entwicklung.at/uploads/media/Evaluation_of_Higher_Education_Progr_SEE_and_Nicaragua_2005-2009_Final_Report.pdf)
  - Evaluation Report: “End Evaluation of Two Projects in Kosovo and in Serbia” HE programmes in Serbia and Kosovo” (2011)
  - Interim Evaluation of the “Multidimensional Project for the Implementation of the Institutionalised Partnership between Austria and Kosovo in the Field of HE, Research and Innovation” (KAIP)
  - Austrian Development Cooperation: Peace building and conflict prevention policy document:  
[http://www.entwicklung.at/uploads/media/PD\\_Peacebuilding\\_Feb09\\_Web\\_01.pdf](http://www.entwicklung.at/uploads/media/PD_Peacebuilding_Feb09_Web_01.pdf)
  - Austrian Development Cooperation: Gender mainstreaming policy document:  
[http://www.entwicklung.at/uploads/media/PD\\_Gender\\_Equality\\_19032010\\_Web.pdf](http://www.entwicklung.at/uploads/media/PD_Gender_Equality_19032010_Web.pdf)
  - ADC quality criteria capacity development:  
[http://www.entwicklung.at/uploads/media/06i\\_Kapazitaetsentwicklung.pdf](http://www.entwicklung.at/uploads/media/06i_Kapazitaetsentwicklung.pdf)
  - TEMPUS: HE in Kosovo: [http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/tempus/participating\\_countries/reviews/kosovo\\_review\\_of\\_higher\\_education.pdf](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/tempus/participating_countries/reviews/kosovo_review_of_higher_education.pdf)
  - Innovation Infrastructures Kosovo; WBC-inco.net:  
<http://www.wbc-inco.net/object/document/121802.html>
  - Assembly of Kosovo (2004): Law No. 2004/42 on Scientific Research Activity of 27.09.2004.:  
[http://www.unmikonline.org/regulations/2005/RE2005\\_08\\_ALE2004\\_42.pdf](http://www.unmikonline.org/regulations/2005/RE2005_08_ALE2004_42.pdf)
  - OSCE (2008): Roadmap for improved university policies and procedures for faculty appointment, retention, promotion and tenure and better support and stimulation to increase qualitative and quantitative scholarly research activity at the University of Prishtina.
  - Schuch, K. (2008): Science and Technology in Kosovo/UNMIK. Thematic Report of the Information Office of the Steering Platform on Research for the WBC. In: Dall, E. (ed.): Science and Technology in the Western Balkans. Brno: Barrister and Principal, pp. 272-303.
  - Tahirsylaj, A. (2004): Higher Education in Kosovo: Major Changes, Reforms and Development Trends in Post-conflict Period at University of Prishtina:  
[http://www.see-educoop.net/education\\_in/pdf/high-educ-kos-enl-t02.pdf](http://www.see-educoop.net/education_in/pdf/high-educ-kos-enl-t02.pdf),
  - University of Prishtina (2009): Strategjia/Strategy 2009-2013. Published by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and the University of Prishtina.
  - Do No Harm Handbook by CDA Collaborative Learning Projects:  
<http://www.cdainc.com/dnh/docs/DoNoHarmHandbook.pdf>
  - 10 OECD DAC principles for good international engagement in fragile states and situations:  
[www.oecd.org/dataoecd/46/6/39437107.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/46/6/39437107.pdf)

## 3. Intervention logic

### 3.1. Overall Objective

This project aims to contribute to the well-functioning of the public higher education institutions in Kosovo along European values, practices and standards (mainly Bologna Process and Lisbon Convention). It therefore supports the European integration process, in particular into the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and the European Research Area (ERA), as well as democratisation and sustainable economic growth.

The project is fully compliant with the Higher KOS Strategy Document, jointly issued by the MEST and the ADC and aims to incorporate the principles of the 10 OECD DAC principles for international engagement in fragile states and situations. Furthermore, all interventions under the project are guided by the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. On the local level, the project design is fully compliant with the Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2011-2016, and directly supports the research priorities identified in the National Research Programme of the Republic of Kosovo, issued by the Kosovo National Research Council.

### 3.2. Project Purpose

At the end of the project, the principles of the EHEA are effectively and sustainably implemented by the public Kosovan HE institutions and the integration into the ERA has sustainably progressed.

The quality of education offered at public universities will be enhanced through improved and labour market oriented teaching and learning, strengthened research skills and activities, improved quality assurance and management capacities and further internationalisation of the Kosovan public HE institutions, thus contributing to the further economic and societal development of Kosovo towards a knowledge society.

Through further developing the skills of university students, graduates, and researchers (specifically focusing on applied research and entrepreneurship), the initiative supports combating youth unemployment and thus contributes to poverty reduction and economic growth.

The complex structure of the intervention, which is divided in 10 different components, is based on the research priorities identified in the National Research Programme which will be the prioritised areas of intervention in all the components to ensure synergies between all components and a common ground for all levels of intervention.

Project planning and implementation include consideration of **cross-cutting themes**: preventing conflict, stimulating interethnic cooperation and making use of existing structures for the inclusion of minority groups, gender equality and minimisation of negative impacts on the environment. Specific measures for every project component are described under 3.3.

In order to ensure local ownership and sustainability, the project activities have been previously agreed upon by the ADC with the MEST and are thus based on the real needs of the different stakeholders in Kosovo. All components and activities are primarily aimed at *long-term institution building and development of capacities and skills at different levels and institutions*. The main beneficiaries are: the three public universities in Kosovo: University of Prishtina (UP), the newly founded University of Prizren (UPPz) and the University of Mitrovica (UM)<sup>5</sup>; the MEST; the KAA; the NARIC Office Kosovo; and the National Research Council. The potential indirect beneficiaries of the

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<sup>5</sup> Since currently, relations between the Kosovan authorities and the UM are limited, it will have to be seen if direct cooperation is possible. The UM will however be explicitly invited to participate in all components targeted directly at universities.

project are the ca. 55.000 students at the three public universities in Kosovo as well as the several hundreds of faculty members (researchers, lecturers). Spill-overs will also affect the total student population (also of private universities) and graduates returning to Kosovo with foreign degrees. Through enhanced research capacities and improved research structures and RTDI in Kosovo, economic development and entrepreneurship are stimulated from which the whole society benefits.

### 3.3. Expected Results

The expected results contribute to the targets 4 and 6-10 as defined in the draft Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2011-2016.

The ten components are subsumed into three expected results: (1) Education Quality, (2) Research Promotion and (3) Quality Management and Governance. Altogether they are designed and connected to each other in a way to achieve the project purpose described above.

The development of components was lead by the current national and international trends and developments in the higher education and research agenda. During the project's inception phase the procedures and guidelines for the different measures will be developed. There, specific focus will be laid on the incorporation of criteria as formulated in the relevant strategic and policy documents as well as in the call for proposals (e.g. guiding principles, cross-cutting issues, labour market orientation, student-centred approach, etc.).

In order to encourage the active participation of minority groups in all components of the project (e.g. as staff, holders of scholarship etc.) a number of strategic measures can be applied.

a) Geographical position: the University of Prizren –due to its geographical position - will play a central role in reaching minority groups e.g. through additional information events. The same can be applied for the University of Mitrovica if it is supported by the management of the university.<sup>6</sup>

b) Information: information targeted at the direct beneficiaries e.g. on calls for application or job advertisement will be provided in English or/and Albanian/Serbian/Turkish.

c) Media: dissemination of information via media in minority languages.

**Expected Result 1 (Education Quality):** Training at public universities of Kosovo is more labour market oriented, based on state-of-the-art methods (didactics, planning) and on quality assurance mechanisms that meet international standards.

#### 1.1. University Didactics and Curriculum Development Centres (DCDC)<sup>7</sup>

This component aims at further strengthening the curriculum development and university didactic services of the University of Prishtina (UP). The existing Academic Development Office (ADO) also includes a Curriculum Development (CD) Unit. The responsible officer has been trained through the project "Support to Reforms of Higher Education in Kosovo 2008-2011", financed by ADC and implemented by WUS Austria. The ADO and especially its CD Unit is understood as the basis for the new DCDC and will be built upon.

Full ownership of the DCDC(s) will be from the beginning with the universities which will ensure sustainability from the very beginning of the intervention. The interest of both universities to operate such a centre was verified by the Consortium in the pre-application phase. DCDC staff will from the beginning be employees of the universities. The support of the implementer and Austrian partner institutions is based on capacity development activities (main methods: knowledge management, study visits, coaching and mentoring, job shadowing/ exposure, and training seminars) which ensure a very targeted support system from the first decisions to be taken regarding the concrete organisational placement of the centres and the Terms of Reference of operation, the profile of staff, etc. to the establishment of a long-term and sustainable partnership with a similar Austrian university centre.

The role of the beneficiaries is to provide space and qualified staff for the centres who have enough time resources available to fulfil their tasks in line with the requirements that will be jointly developed between the beneficiaries and the implementer.

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<sup>6</sup> Although relations between the Kosovar authorities and the University of Mitrovica are limited, the University of Mitrovica will be explicitly invited to participate in all components targeting directly at universities.

<sup>7</sup> The numbering refers to the Plan of Activities (see Annex No. 1a).



Within this component, further capacities will be developed at the ADO, specifically the CD Unit, with the aim to establish a fully operational and sustainable service unit at central university level aiming at constantly improving the University's curriculum development standards through improved procedures and formats and evaluation skills of its staff as well as through offering consultancy services and specific training for teaching and other university staff in subjects related to the Bologna process and implementation of its goals, e.g. student-centred teaching, definition of learning outcomes, labour market oriented teaching and incorporation of hands-on training and practical courses into curricula, quality assurance of the teaching process, etc. Direct and intensive cooperation with one of two similar centres at Austrian universities (coaching and mentoring) will ensure the transfer of knowledge and best practices and build a base for long-term cooperation.

The Department for "Lehr- und Studienservices" at the University of Graz operates under Terms of Reference very similar to the tasks and aims of the envisaged centres in Kosovo and has already agreed to enter in a partnership relation with the Kosovan universities and actively support the establishment of the Centres (for details of the partnership, see attached Lol in Annex D.1.).

A similar centre will be established at the University of Prizren, if feasible (main concern is the financial resources of the UPPz to finance centre staff); in any case, cooperation with the UPPz is foreseen through invitation of its staff to all capacity development activities organised for and with the UP. It is considered highly probable that this will happen at least since both UPPz and MEST have recently acknowledged the need to develop capacities in the area of curriculum development.

The consortium explicitly refrains from the suggested activity line "Development of specific diploma or certificate courses for post-graduates (linked to needs and priorities of the economy). Although the establishment of such services would be of high importance for the UP, this goes beyond the regular activities of a DCDC and would be better institutionalised in the form of a lifelong learning of post-graduate centre. In any case, the task to establish a fully functional DCDC that is not only able to manage the whole curricula development process at the university (planning, evaluation and implementation) AND to develop consultancy and training offers for university staff regarding university didactics and curriculum development which will also be accepted and used by the main target group is not an easy task, given the foreseeable limited resources available at the UP for the extended functions of the ADO. The consortium thus plans to focus on these main functions of the DCDC and ensure high quality and sustainability of these services.

**Cross-cutting themes** will be considered at several levels: When recruiting staff, women will be preferred in case of same qualifications. The DCDC staff will be trained and given materials on gender fair curriculum development in order to enable its consideration when examining curricula. The staff will be informed and given materials / checklists for the evaluation of curricula with regards to conflict sensitivity, avoidance of prejudice generating contents in the curricula and promotion of non-discrimination, and to motivate academic staff to include contents with curricula promoting interethnic understanding and peaceful conflict transformation. Additionally, the staff will be familiarised with already existing guidelines regarding the Do No Harm Approach, as for instance the *Do No Harm Handbook* by the CDA Collaborative Learning Projects. The methodological approach to facilitation of inclusion of minorities into the HE and research process is described in Chapters 3.3., 4.1. and 7.5. whereas an action plan will be a part of the baseline assessment and implemented throughout the project.

## 1.2. Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA)

This component is a continuation of the successful Austrian support for the KAA and their work, aiming at assuring high quality and independence in the evaluation of HE institutions and degree programmes in Kosovo.

After a short assessment of available budgetary means and most pressing needs of the KAA (based on a personal meeting with its Director, Mr. Basri Muja), it has been agreed that further support by Austrian accreditation experts through coaching and mentoring as well as workshops is crucial. Internal and external experts will thus support the development of an improved concept of self-evaluations and strategic academic planning. In addition, the implementer will take specific care of the inclusion of knowledge management as an important method to ensure that institutional knowledge and capacities developed can be accessed also in case of staff fluctuation. It is expected that KAA staff will be available for workshops and use the offer to receive coaching and mentoring by renowned Austrian experts despite their limited time resources.

Ms. Elisabeth Fiorioli from the Austrian Accreditation Council and Prof. Helmut Konrad, former Rector of the University of Graz, have agreed to continue their activities in this regard. Against this background, Ms. Fiorioli will continue to be a member of the Board of the KAA. The Austrian BMWF will continue to co-finance Ms. Fiorioli's expenses as KAA Board Member.

The financing of international expert missions for external evaluations of faculties for public universities, as suggested in the Strategy Document, is considered not feasible since with the available budget, only a small percentage of annual expert missions could have been financed, nor is this a sustainable approach since the financing of expert missions has to be established as responsibility of the HE institutions seeking accreditation. Instead, the KAA has expressed the need of financing of translation costs (English-Albanian and Albanian-English) of reports and documents in order to assure the bilingual operation mode of the KAA, which is unique in the region and ensures the Agency's independence.

**Cross cutting themes** will be addressed by raising awareness about the importance of cross cutting issues in curricula design and evaluation. Ideally, KAA will include some of the cross cutting issues in their accreditation checklists. The Austrian team of experts will be gender balanced.

### 1.3. Programmatic Partnerships

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 will be arranged. Partnership activities will last min. one year and will be financed with a max. of € 70.000. Partners will be encouraged and actively supported to find additional funding for their partnership actions. There will be no open call but partnerships will be identified in close cooperation with the university managements, based on the research priority fields. Possible areas of cooperation are: curriculum development; enhancing of research conditions and capacities; Bologna issues; quality assurance; workshops on specific topics for students and staff; handling of examinations and staff exchange. Partnership proposals will have to proof that (and to which extent) they support the reform agenda and aims formulated in the respective national and international policy and strategy documents, the guiding principles, relevant cross-cutting themes as well as the main objectives of the project and the component Education Quality (e.g. strengthened student-orientation, improved and labour market oriented teaching and learning, etc.). Criteria, guidelines and forms will be developed during the project's inception phase and made available for the participating faculties and HE institutions. These criteria will build the basis for the external evaluation of the partnership proposals, next to the academic quality and relevance. Must-criteria and minimum number of points to be reached in external evaluation will be defined. If these minimum criteria should not be met, the participating institutions will have to improve their proposals before the grant contract can be signed. It is envisaged to realise at least one partnership at the University of Prizren (UPPz) and at least three partnerships at the UP. Although the institutions invited to implement a partnership project will be identified during the inception phase in close cooperation with the Kosovan partner institutions, there are already statements of interest from faculties at the UP and Austrian institutions to cooperate within a programmatic partnership: Faculty of Agriculture (in partnership with BOKU, Vienna: see respective Lol signed by both parties in the Annex D.2.); Faculty of Political Sciences (in partnership with the University of Salzburg: see respective Lols signed in the Annexes D.3) and Faculty of Medicine (in partnership with the Medical University Graz).

Preliminary talks have also been held with the management representative of the University of Prizren. However, a decision regarding the programmatic partnership(s) at the UPPz will be taken during the project's inception phase.

The process and guidelines for partnership actions will be developed in the project's inception phase as well. The experience of former ADC-funded projects in Kosovo as well as experience and basic principles of the ongoing APPEAR project will be used to develop the procedures. It is indispensable that even without an open call, the partner institutions will develop a clear proposal (activities, budget, impact, basic principles) for their partnership actions and submit this for external evaluation. This approach will be used to ensure the quality of the proposals and to provide a clear basis for progress monitoring and monitoring of project results.

Questions related to **cross-cutting themes** will be included into the template for partnership concepts including respective recommendations on possible modalities of their integration into the partnerships. Specifically, partnerships in respective subject areas (e.g. Political Science, UP and

University of Salzburg) will be asked to explicitly include measures / contents supporting conflict prevention and interethnic cooperation in their activities. Partners on both sides will be strongly recommended to include women and men in the partnership actions. Four out of five topics of the NRC priority areas are related to the environmental issues. Partners from Kosovo and Austria will be motivated to explicitly deal with topics reducing environmental risks and promoting modern approaches to the environmental protection and risk reduction.

Based on previously approved project proposal and budget, the following indicative cost categories will be eligible: staff costs, based on the indicative rates foreseen under the TEMPUS project; travel and subsistence costs based on the Austrian Reisegebührevorschriften (RGV) for Austrians and on the TEMPUS rates for Kosovan researchers; if necessary and feasible in budgetary terms equipment and expendables, educational material, dissemination materials (web pages, publications, local workshops and similar) and other approved costs not falling in any of the categories above, such as for monitoring, self-evaluation or bank charges, auditing, stationary, general photocopying, office supplies, postage as well as telecommunication costs directly related to the project.

**Expected Result 2 (Research Promotion):** The capacities and the quality of research in Kosovo are improved substantially, including a national research fund that is functioning according to international standards.

### **2.1. National Research Fund**

The regulations and procedures for one national research funds for basic sciences will be established along the priorities stipulated by the National Research Programme of the Republic of Kosovo and aligned to international good practices. Officials from MEST, NRC and the responsible Research Promotion Agency are trained to be able to implement and supervise the operations of a NRF for basic sciences. A study-visit to Austria will be organised to share and discuss good practices (FWF, FFG). One Austrian expert will be nominated into the supervision board of the National Research Fund. FWF has already agreed to support the nomination. We consider it from a legal point essential to raise the issue of a research funding law, which by now is not available in Kosovo and not sufficiently covered by the Law on Scientific Research. Thus, we earmarked several working days for the provision of a draft research funding law. In case of modification of the existing law or establishment of a new dedicated research funding law, the project will advise MEST to organise a stakeholder consultation process. However, MEST itself must be committed to take over the necessary advocacy work in order to provide the requested legitimisation (which cannot be done by the Consortium).

The project activities will include awareness raising and capacity development for **cross cutting themes** among the involved local participants from different stakeholders. Ideally, the NRF will include cross cutting issues into the evaluation of the research projects and consider those issues when selecting research projects for funding.

### **2.2. 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 (partially implemented under the KAIP-project, such as K-CIRT and CITT) into account. Our intention is to use the existing material and immaterial resources and to integrate them as good as possible into the development process. However, after elaboration of options provided by the project, MEST is required to take a decision on the basic research promotion structure in Kosovo. After this decision, the governance, rules of operations and the necessary capacities in Kosovo to promote research and to administer future research programmes and research calls for proposals will be developed. Dedicated officers will be trained to advise interested Kosovan researchers on how to participate in the 7th European Framework Programme for RTD and "Horizon 2020".

### **2.3. 15 PhD or post-doc fellowships**

A scholarship fund is implemented with the aim that ten PhD students will 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. The ToRs and guidelines for the scholarship fund will be designed in cooperation with local stakeholders and will be managed by the national agency for research promotion (see 2.2). In case of a delay in establishing the national agency for research promotion, two different mitigation strategies are possible: (a) to start the scholarship fund by external administration (OeAD), or (b) the start could be postponed until the national agency for research promotion is established; then the agency has to continue support of the scholars on their own after the end of this project. The funds paid out of this project have to be reserved for the scholarship fund. After the end of this project, the outstanding amount for scholarships will be transferred to the national agency for research promotion. This agency will be responsible for the monitoring of the students and the payment of remaining scholarship rates.

The scholars will be selected from public universities in Kosovo alongside the five programmatic partnerships. There will be an active promotion of fellowships among underrepresented groups in order to reach the desired gender and ethnic diversity of applications. The gender indicator has been set at min. 30% women are among the selected fellows. In addition, there will be beneficiary selection for applicants from underrepresented groups. PhD topics which include dealing with **cross cutting themes** will be actively promoted. During their studies the scholars will keep close contact to their home institutions (if possible “sandwich program”) in view to their further professional career at these institutions. MEST, representatives of the universities and if possible future staff of the national agency for research promotion will be included in the development of the design of the scholarship fund. A starting workshop will develop the basic principles, objectives, etc. of the fund. After this first phase local staff will be offered coaching for specific issues of the fund and exposure and job shadowing at the OeAD.

The fellowships will cover travel costs and fellowship rates amounting to standard ÖAD fellowship rates, financed through ADC and MEST as follows:

Item	Contractual budget		Min. (ADA +MEST I)	Add. co-financing MEST II	Max. (ADA +MEST I+II)
	ADA	MEST I <sup>8</sup>			
Fellowships for PhDs to Austria	5	-	5	-	5
Fellowships for PhDs to other countries	-	2	2	2	4
Fellowships for post-docs	2	2	4	1	5
Travel grants for PhD and post-docs	15	-	15	-	15

#### 2.4. Support to establishment and implementation min. 10 new collaborative research projects

Minimum ten trilateral collaborative research projects with a duration of max. 15 months and a funding of max. € 15.000 per project are 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 within international projects. The MEST, respectively staff of the possibly newly established national agency for research promotion will actively be involved in the implementation process of the call as capacity building measure. The guidelines for the identification/award (and monitoring/supervision) of collaborative research projects will be developed in close cooperation. Basic principles of the funding will be similar to the principles for the programmatic partnerships. Due to the limited project budget and taking into account the limited absorption capacity through the expected amount of qualitative good projects according to the experiences in KAIP, only ten projects will be funded in one call instead of the suggested 15 projects in two calls.

**Cross cutting themes** will be addressed through the promotion of research projects of ethnically mixed research teams, promotion of researchers with different ethnic backgrounds, aspiration research cooperation with scholars of the UM and promotion of research projects of relevance for cross cutting issues.

Based on previously approved project proposal and budget, the following indicative cost categories will be eligible: staff costs, based on the indicative rates foreseen under the TEMPUS project; travel and subsistence costs based on the Austrian Reisegebührenschriften (RGV) for Austrians and on the TEMPUS rates for Kosovan researchers; if necessary and feasible in budgetary terms equipment and expendables, educational material, dissemination materials (web pages, publications, local workshops and similar) and other approved costs not falling in any of the categories above, such as

<sup>8</sup> MEST I – 5% co-financing; MEST II – 10% cofinancing

for monitoring, self-evaluation or bank charges, auditing, stationary, general photocopying, office supplies, postage as well as telecommunication costs directly related to the project.

### **2.5 Support access to electronic publications in the NRC priority research fields**

This component will be supported by EIFL Kosovo, which has already established a consortium of Electronic Libraries in Kosovo. While the University of Prishtina is a member of the consortium, the University of Prizren is not yet in the members list. One of the tasks within this component will therefore be to facilitate the UPPz's membership in the consortium. Furthermore, a working group of faculties and researchers in the NRC priority research fields will be established and, under the guidance of EIFL experts, will work on a comprehensive list of e-resources most relevant for these priority fields. In addition, EIFL experts will deliver two workshops, one in Prishtina and one in Prizren, with the aim to strengthen library collaboration efforts in a form of consortia, strengthen and expand membership of Kosovo Library consortia, help build capacity in licensing of e-resources, training of end users and communication and marketing of licensed e-resources to end users. Enabling access to modern literature, will support awareness raising on **cross cutting topics**. MEST will finance access to important research databases with 8.000 EUR.

**Expected Result 3 (Quality Management and Governance):** The management and administrative procedures of main stakeholders (MEST, universities) are efficient, transparent, effective and oriented towards the needs of their customers and the mobility of work force is enabled.

#### **3.1. NARIC Office Kosovo**

The successful cooperation between the Austrian ENIC/NARIC and the Kosovan NARIC Office will be continued. ENIC/NARIC experts from Austria will continue to coach and advise their colleagues from Kosovo through work visits in Kosovo and a study tour including workshops and trainings in Austria, as well as on demand. A special focus of the coaching and mentoring activities of Austrian experts will be laid on the development of relevant documents/ strategies/ plans on how to approach the aspect of regulating professions. The NARIC Office Kosovo will be enabled to cope with regulated professions in order to prevent continued misuse of professional titles (e.g. lawyer). In addition, the implementer will take specific care of the inclusion of knowledge management as an important method to ensure that institutional knowledge and capacities developed can be accessed also in case of staff fluctuation. It is expected that the Kosovo NARIC office staff will be available for workshops, trainings and study visits and use the offer to receive coaching and mentoring by renowned Austrian experts despite their limited time resources.

#### **3.2. Management Support / Trainings**

Two different strands of activities will lead to the two different aims of this component: on the one hand, an assessment of training needs will be conducted at the institutions concerned (NRC, KAA, universities, MEST), a training plan developed and tailor-made training modules offered for administrative staff responsible for financial management issues. Training subjects will vary for different target institutions and new training needs regarding management capacities may be expressed during the initial consultation sessions. Flexibility to respond to this are given through the provision of a "pool" for internal or external experts in the project budget.

On the other hand, UPPz will be offered on-demand management support which will substantially support the process of institution building of the new university. The support will be available online, through personal coaching sessions (during the regular visits of the Project Director in Kosovo and during visits of other experts) and in up to 6 tailor-made workshops on quality management of a HE institution offered in Prizren.

Proposed methods for both strands of activities are knowledge management, coaching and mentoring as well as tailor-made training seminars.

Gender related topics (e.g. gender budgeting) will be included in the trainings for the management / financial management.

### **3.4. Activities**

A detailed overview of activities needed to implement the ten components of the project in order to reach the expected results is given in the table annexed to the logical framework matrix (Annex 1).

## 4. Implementation

### 4.1. Methodology

For the implementation of the project a combination of different methods and approaches will be used: institutional development activities, capacity development activities, awareness raising activities, policy advice and community (direct beneficiary) centred activities.

The table below shows the combination of different methods used for the implementation of the different components of the Higher KOS project. In addition the respected guiding principles for each component are shown.

Guiding principles	Methods employed under each project component					Guiding principles employed under each project component						
	Institutional Development	Capacity Development	Awareness Raising	Policy Advice	Community Activities	Ownership and capacity development	Participatory approach in planning and implementation	Coordinated procedure	Learning from experience	Subsidiarity principle	Tap regional potentials	Country level approach
University Didactics and Curriculum Development Centres (DCDC)	x	x			x	x	x	x	x	x		
Kosovo Accreditation Agency KAA	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x		
Programmatic Partnerships		x				x	x	x	x	x	x	x
National Research Fund	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		
Agency/ Offices/ Centres for Research Promotion	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x		
Fellowships		x				x	x	x	x	x		x
Collaborative Research		x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Access to publications		x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x		x
NARIC office		x				x	x	x	x	x		
Management Support/Trainings		x			x	x	x	x	x	x		x

For the implementation of the project a combination of different methods and approaches will be used: institutional development activities, capacity development activities, awareness raising activities, policy advice and community (direct beneficiary) centre activities. The specific learning practice approaches, tools and techniques, which will be applied in course of the implementation of

this project will differ by intervention areas and requests by the Kosovan target groups. To support structural reform and change management processes a subsequent combination of different approaches targeting a recurrent target group is proposed (e.g. start with training, advice on knowledge management, implementation of mentoring and coaching, eventually followed by promotion activities).

We suggest the application of the following tools and techniques to ensure **Capacity Development**:

Knowledge Management:

- 1.1.: Setup of University Didactics and Curriculum Development Centres
- 1.2.: Support to KAA
- 2.2.: Development of the Agency/Centres for Research Promotion
- 2.3. Fellowships
- 2.5: Support access to electronic publications
- 3.1.: Capacity development in the NARIC office
- 3.2.: Management Support / Trainings

Knowledge management (KM) comprises a range of strategies and practices used in an organization to identify, create, represent, distribute, and enable adoption of insights and experiences. Such insights and experiences comprise knowledge, either embodied in individuals or embedded in organizations as processes or practices. We understand KM as the management of knowledge as a strategic asset and a focus on encouraging the sharing of knowledge. Our proposed knowledge management efforts focus on organizational objectives such as improved performance, the sharing of lessons learned, integration and continuous improvement of the organization. Our learning approach in this respect is that we will advocate the management of knowledge as a strategic asset with a focus on encouraging the sharing of knowledge.

Study visits:

- 1.1.: Setup of University Didactics and Curriculum Development Centres
- 2.1.: National Research Fund
- 3.1. Capacity development in the NARIC office

A study visit is a short stay of three to five days in a host country for a group of 3 to 15 specialists and decision-makers. A study visit includes presentations and on-site visits to ministries, educational and training institutions, and other stakeholders. The visits provide a forum for discussion, exchange and learning on themes of common interest and on European and national priorities. We assume that study visits will create behavioural additionality, because participants in study visits will experience alternative institutional approaches and solutions and eventually transfer some of the gained insights into their own environment. We will then support the necessary change management processes by coaching and mentoring activities (see next point).

Coaching and mentoring:

- 1.1.: Setup of University Didactics and Curriculum Development Centres
- 1.2.: Support to KAA (by Austrian representative in the Board of KAA)
- 1.3.: Set-up of five programmatic partnerships
- 2.1.: National Research Fund (by the Austrian expert in the supervision board of the NRF)
- 2.2.: Development of the Agency/Centres for Research Promotion
- 2.4.: Collaborative research projects
- 3.1. Capacity development in the NARIC office
- 3.2.: Management Support / Trainings

We understand as coaching the practice of supporting an individual, referred to as a coachee or client, through the process of achieving a specific personal or professional result. In terms of mentoring we propose the approach of peer-mentoring. The relationship between the mentor and mentee gives the mentee a sense of being connected to the larger community where they may otherwise feel lost. Mentors provide support, advice and encouragement.



Exposure and job shadowing:

- 1.1.: Setup of University Didactics and Curriculum Development Centres
- 2.2.: Development of the Agency/Centres for Research Promotion
- 2.3.: Fellowships
- 2.4.: Collaborative research projects

We understand by exposure and job shadowing working visits at working places which implement similar processes and tasks. During the working visits the 'shadower' will follow the professional and observe their daily work.

Training seminars:

- 1.1.: Setup of University Didactics and Curriculum Development Centres
- 1.2.: Support to KAA
- 1.3.: Set-up of five programmatic partnerships
- 2.1.: National Research Fund
- 2.2.: Development of the Agency/Centres for Research Promotion
- 2.5: Support access to electronic publications
- 3.2.: Management Support / Trainings

Peer Reviews:

- 1.3.: Set-up of five programmatic partnerships

Promotion activities:

- 2.3.: Fellowships
- 2.4.: Collaborative research projects

A detailed concept will be presented within the inception report.

### **Integration of cross-cutting issues**

During the training activities, study visits, peer reviews and job-shadowing we will explicitly address also Austrian (and in some cases also international) practice in dealing with cross-cutting issues, such as gender mainstreaming in education and research. Our intention is to raise attention to carefully develop and mainstream cross-cutting issues across the different intervention areas. To support mainstreaming, explicit focus will be directed on knowledge management processes which allow easy securing, storing and (re-)accessing of relevant documents (such as codes of practices).

### **Methods applied to ensure Conflict Transformation**

Kosovo has extensive legislation on the protection of rights of minority groups but their active involvement in capacity and institutional development remains a challenge for everyone. Since Kosovo is not only ethnically mixed but also with high potential for conflict in all areas, it is essential to openly communicate with all beneficiaries the understanding of the donor and the Consortium, that the involvement of people from minority groups (Serbs, Roma/Ashkali/Egyptians, Bosniaks, Gorani, Turks, Croats, and Montenegrins) in the project is supported at all levels (as communication partners, as direct or indirect beneficiaries in the form of staff). In accordance with the Do No Harm approach (OECD: The DAC Guidelines - Helping Prevent Violent Conflict; OECD: principles for good international engagement in fragile states and situations; CDA Collaborative Projects: The Do No Harm Handbook) the risk of inadvertently fostering or creating conflict will be reduced by keeping an open dialogue with all potential conflict parties involved, recognition and encourage involvement of women as stakeholders and peacemakers, reinforcement of local capacity and recognition of support to peace-building measures.

The measures already presented in this proposal (for concrete examples see chapter 3.3) will be discussed with the partners on-site and concrete conflict transformation measures will be elaborated and adjusted in a participatory approach together with all partners in the inception phase (debate about conflict prevention with all beneficiary groups) and will result in an intervention plan for cross-cutting issues to be submitted with the inception report. With Martina Handler the Consortium furthermore has an in-house expert on conflict transformation nominated as focal point by the

Consortium within the framework of the project. Furthermore, Dr. Emir Kuljuh (psychiatrist and specialist for conflict transformation and integration) will be available to support these measures by providing input on the methodology and through mediation on the ground. In case of conflict between partners in a first step informal meetings between (representatives of) conflicting parties with the project management and/or external mediators (Dr. Kuljuh or other to be nominated in agreement with all parties) are foreseen. If necessary and feasible, in a second step the project activities will be adapted in accordance with the donor, the consortium and the beneficiaries. In order to be able to react quickly, smooth communication management with all relevant project partners is essential; communication strategies will be developed together with the donor and all partners during the inception phase.

#### 4.2. Time schedule

The detailed *time schedule* in the requested format is attached in *Annex No. 2*.

#### 4.3. Necessary means and costs

The summary project budget (see Annex A.3.a.) and the detailed project budget (see Annex A.3.b.) are enclosed and give an inclusive overview of necessary means, their costs, and their periodic allocation during the project duration as well as their funding/financing sources. To foster a transparent and clear budget calculation, the table provides financial data for each expected result and each component and furthermore splits those costs among the consortium partners and/or third parties.

Cost effectiveness was of high priority in course of the budget development and is mainly based on the use of experience and compliance with ADA rules and regulations (eligible costs, PBE etc). Clear financial controlling and planning measures will be established by the consortium leader at the very beginning of the project. Financial management will be lead by WUS Austria and covered within the PBE. WUS Austria is highly experienced in coordinating and administering large funding projects, especially ADA/ADC projects.

Accuracy and cost effectiveness is ensured by the following:

- ADA contractual and financial guidelines have been fully respected in the development of the project budget.
- Staff is highly experienced in administering the finances of ADA projects and will ensure that applied guidelines will be also respected throughout the whole project implementation.
- A financial audit will be carried out to provide financial reports in a very clear and efficient way. These costs are covered by the PBE and thus the Applicant requests the maximum amount for PBE.
- Daily salary rates were carefully calculated and represent **real total personnel costs** (no overheads included in daily costs).
- Budget allocation among partners is based on a clear division of components and activities within all thematic areas. Smaller supporting activities are often not budgeted separately, but integrated in the main activities of the partners, using all synergy potentials.
- The estimated workings days for staff are rather low, but not underestimated, since the project makes use of highly qualified project staff to reduce the overall workload and of a clear distribution of roles and responsibilities.
- Different partners are only involved in activities if it makes sense in the frame of the project design and if all possible synergies have been taken into consideration.
- The equipment costs for the DCDC (component 1.1.) are estimated from a low to an average level and appropriate QA procedure (e.g. tendering and/or obtaining comparative offers) will ensure that the best value for money. Equipment will pass into the property of PCUs and can be used by all involved faculties and stakeholders.
- It is envisaged to find a service provider in SEE for publications and printing services (8.1.). The sub-contracting will be based on the principle of best value for money by obtaining comparative

offers (in compliance with ADA rules regarding ceilings for amounts and respective number of offers).

- Trainings, workshops and meetings are carefully distributed within the project, simultaneously combining two activities if possible, guaranteeing that each travel is used to maximum effect.
- The estimation of travel costs is realistic and based on experiences from previous projects.
- Flight tickets are supposed to be booked well in advance to get the cheapest available fare.
- The „Reisegebührenverordnung für Bundesbedienstete (RGV)“ is (budget development) and will be (project implementation) fully respected.
- For a number of activities no travels/visits were foreseen but it is expected that the inputs will be provided via email and other forms of communication.

Among others, especially the following costs will be covered only by PBE and were therefore not foreseen in the (direct) budget:

- Contractual workload, setting up of agreements/contracts among partners and/or with third parties
- Monitoring travels and coordination meetings among the consortium members in Austria
- Development of ToRs for external evaluation and financial audit
- Preparation, implementation and follow-up work related to external evaluation and financial audit
- Costs for the financial audit
- All activities related to financial management (administration of funds, payments to partners or third parties, financial reports, preparation of possible amendment requests etc.)
- Typical indirect and other administration/overhead costs incurred at consortium partners in Austria (e.g. office rent, heating/electricity administrative staff etc.)

In the following section **several tables provide detailed information** on co-financing, in-kind contributions as well as **the workload distribution (in %) as requested in addition to the contractual budget.**

**Planned additional co-financing (MEST part II)**

Thematic area	Activity no.	Description	Planned additional co-financing					Source
			Unit	Estimated quantity	Currency code	Estimated value per unit in EUR	In-kind contribution (estimation in EUR)	
Research Promotion	2.3.1.	2x Fellowships for PhDs to other countries	fell. months	72,00	EUR	940,00	67.680,00	MEST
Research Promotion	2.3.1.	1x Fellowships for post-docs	fell. months	6,00	EUR	1.040,00	6.240,00	MEST
Research Promotion	2.5.1.	Access to most important libraries	unit	1,00	EUR	8.000,00	8.000,00	MEST
			<b>Total amount of additional co-financing</b>				<b>81.920,00</b>	

Max. requested ADA grant:	1.749,500,00 EUR
Max. MEST co-financing (10%):	174.950,00 EUR
<b>MEST co-financing allocated in the contractual budget:</b>	<b>92.640,00 EUR</b>
<b>Additional MEST co-financing allocated but excl. in the contractual budget:</b>	<b>81.920,00 EUR</b>
<b>TOTAL MEST co-financing allocated:</b>	<b>174.560,00 EUR</b>



### Planned in-kind contributions (estimated value)

Thematic area	Activity no.	Description	Estimated value of planned in-kind contributions					Source
			Unit	Estimated quantity	Currency code	Estimated value per unit in EUR	In-kind contribution (estimation in EUR)	
Education Quality	1.1.1.	External experts (in-kind contribution)	working days	15,00	EUR	600,00	9.000,00	University of Graz/LSS
Education Quality	1.2.2.	Travel costs to Kosovo (External experts)	flights	18,00	EUR	600,00	10.800,00	BMWF
Education Quality	1.2.2.	Per diems in Kosovo (External experts)	days	36,00	EUR	31,00	1.116,00	BMWF
Education Quality	1.2.2.	Accommodation costs in Kosovo (External experts)	nights	18,00	EUR	70,00	1.260,00	BMWF
Education Quality	1.2.2.	External experts (in-kind contribution)	working days	12,00	EUR	600,00	7.200,00	BMWF
Education Quality	1.2.3.	External experts (in-kind contribution)	working days	5,00	EUR	600,00	3.000,00	BMWF
Education Quality	1.3.4.	Programmatic partnerships (with UP involvement)	partnerships	3,00	EUR	16.000,00	48.000,00	University of Prishtina
Research Promotion	2.3.1.	1x Fellowship for PhD to other countries	fell. months	36,00	EUR	940,00	33.840,00	University of Prishtina
Research Promotion	2.1.4.	External experts (FWF, in-kind contribution)	working days	15,00	EUR	600,00	9.000,00	FWF
Quality Management and Governance	3.1.2.	Travel costs to Kosovo (External experts/ENIC-NARIC)	flights	2,00	EUR	600,00	1.200,00	BMWF
Quality Management and Governance	3.1.2.	Per diems in Kosovo (External experts/ENIC-NARIC)	days	6,00	EUR	31,00	186,00	BMWF
Quality Management and Governance	3.1.2.	Accommodation costs in Kosovo (External experts/ENIC-NARIC)	nights	4,00	EUR	70,00	280,00	BMWF
Quality Management and Governance	3.1.1.	External experts (ENIC/NARIC, in-kind contribution)	working days	15,00	EUR	600,00	9.000,00	BMWF
Quality Management and Governance	3.1.2.	External experts (ENIC/NARIC, in-kind contribution)	working days	25,00	EUR	600,00	15.000,00	BMWF
Quality Management and Governance	3.	University Management and Governance Expert (WUS Austria - Wolfgang Benedek)	working days	10,00	EUR	750,00	7.500,00	WUS Austria
<i>Project implementation</i>	<i>SC meetings</i>	Travel costs to Kosovo (BMWF), flight costs and local transport	flights	6,00	EUR	600,00	3.600,00	BMWF
<i>Project implementation</i>	<i>SC meetings</i>	Per diems in Kosovo (BMWF)	days	12,00	EUR	31,00	372,00	BMWF
<i>Project implementation</i>	<i>SC meetings</i>	Accommodation costs in Kosovo (BMWF)	nights	6,00	EUR	70,00	420,00	BMWF
<i>Project implementation</i>	<i>Project office</i>	Rent of project office incl. heating/electricity (in-kind contribution by MEST)	months	36,00	EUR	500,00	18.000,00	MEST
<b>Total estimated value of in-kind contributions</b>							<b>178.774,00</b>	

**Allocation of workload within the applicant organisations (names, functions and working time):**

Consortium partner	Title	Name	% of working time*	Function
WUS Austria	Mag.	Almir KOVACEVIC	38,4%	Project Director / Thematic Area Manager "Quality Management & Governance"
	Mag.	Nina BESIREVIC	32,4%	Thematic Area Manager "Education Quality"
	Mag., MA	Martina HANDLER	14,8%	Higher Education Development Expert
	MBA	Veronika NITSCHKE	7,7%	Capacity Development Expert
ZSI	Mag.	Johanna SCHECK	38,0%	Thematic Area Manager "Research Promotion"
	Mag. Dr.	Klaus SCHUCH	16,5%	Research Promotion Expert
	Mag.	Pamela BARTAR	3,5%	Research Promotion Expert
	Mag.	Elke DALL	0,7%	Research Promotion Expert
OeAD GmbH	Mag.	Sabine STALUJANIS	9,2%	Fellowship Expert
	Dr.	Lydia SKARITS	5,2%	International Mobility and Fellowship Expert
	Mag.	Ulrich HÖRMANN	2,6%	Financial Management, Internationalisation and Fellowship Expert
	Univ. Prof. Dr.	Hubert DÜRRSTEIN	0,4%	University Management and Internationalisation Expert

\* basis: 216 days/year

## 4.4. Organisational structure and processes

### Organisational structure

The organisational structure of the project consists of:

1. **The Steering Board** (SB) consists of the ADA, NRC, MEST and BMWF as the main state-level stakeholders. The SB has an advisory role to the project. It oversees and discusses the implementation of the project and its different components and activities. Any recommendations of the SB requiring contractual modifications (e.g. regarding the logframe, budget, etc.) will be considered by the ADA and ADA will take all decisions regarding to contractual modifications. Since several project components address the higher education sector, we suggest not to include the UP in the Steering Board in order to enable an equal distance to all public universities and impartiality. The SB will meet twice a year in Kosovo, if not agreed differently.
2. The **project consortium** (WUS, ZSI, OeAD-GmbH) is responsible for day to day management of the project and support to the Donor and the Steering Board (provision of information, timely warning if steering measures are regarded necessary etc.). WUS Austria Head Office Graz is the Lead partner in the consortium and has overall responsibility for the management of the project and coordination of Consortium partners. WUS Austria, as the lead partner, nominates the Project Director who is the main responsible person on behalf of the consortium. The consortium members will be in regular contact per phone, E-mail etc. and meet when necessary. The staff of the consortium partners will provide expertise within the project together with external experts as described below. The premises for the national project office will as previously agreed be provided for the project by MEST, thus enhancing local ownership. The project office will act as the national hub and coordination unit of the project, and will thus be the main contact point for operational issues. The structure and responsibilities of the national project office are described in the management section below.

The implementation of the project will be strongly supported by the institutional knowledge, network and expertise acquired during 12 years of presence of WUS Austria in Kosovo. Synergies between Higher KOS and six EC funded Tempus projects currently implemented by WUS Austria in Kosovo will be established where possible. Cooperation and establishment of synergies will also be strived for in other activities of the consortium partners in Kosovo.

The expertise of the Consortium's staff covers all thematic areas of the project. The consortium partners perfectly complement each other. All of them show a comprehensive record in their thematic field of intervention, which is evidenced by the reference projects. Moreover, all partners are actively engaged in the SEE region for many years and will sustain their activities there, which facilitates follow-up activities and a better capitalisation of the produced results.

**Thematic responsibilities** within the consortium are attributed according to the core competences of the partners: WUS Austria has the overall responsibility for the components "Education Quality" and "Quality Management and Governance" and ZSI has the overall responsibility for the component "Research Promotion". OeAD-GmbH is strongly involved in components of all three thematic areas based on their expertise and will support the respective thematic area lead partner.

Thus, the experts' team of the consortium consists of:

- *Mag. Almir KOVACEVIC*, Project Director and Manger of the Thematic Area "Quality Management and Governance"
- *Mag. Johanna SCHECK*, Thematic Area Manager "Research Promotion"
- *Mag. Nina BESIREVIC*, Thematic Area Manger "Education Quality"

Other **In-house Experts** (in alphabetical order) are:

- *Mag. Pamela BARTAR*: Research Promotion Expert
- *Univ. Prof. Dr. Wolfgang BENEDEK*: University Management and Governance Expert
- *Mag. Elke DALL*: Research Promotion Expert
- *Univ. Prof. Dr. Hubert DÜRRSTEIN*: University Management and Internationalisation Expert
- *Mag. Martina HANDLER, MA*: Higher Education Development Expert
- *Mag. Ulrich HÖRMANN*: Financial Management, Internat. and Fellowship Expert
- *Veronika NITSCHKE, MBA*: Capacity Development Expert
- *Mag. Dr. Klaus SCHUCH*: Research Promotion Expert
- *Dr. Lydia SKARITS*: International Mobility and Fellowship Expert
- *Mag. Sabine STALUJANIS*: Fellowship Expert

A more detailed information on division of roles and responsibilities of consortium partners is provided further in this section.

3. **External experts** support the implementation of the project. The experts' team consists of a pool of local and international experts, with the aim to support reaching the goals of the projects and provide advice to the SB and management.
  - a. **National experts** provide in-country expertise and networks. Their participation in the project also enables local capacity development and further strengthens local ownership. The pool of experts consists of senior and junior experts. The senior expert, Dr. Dukagjin Pupovci, responsible for providing expertise at the project level, has already been nominated, as well as two further local experts (R&D expert Dr Hysen Bytci, gender expert Shykrane Germizaj; CVs are attached). Further experts will cover specific thematic areas. Interviews with potential further experts are currently ongoing, and the first agreements are already made, a large part of the selection process will be completed before the project start. Most of the experts should be officially appointed within the first two project months. Further experts can be invited later in case further expertise is needed during the implementation.
  - b. **International experts**: A broad range of knowledge and expertise necessary for a successful implementation of the project can be covered by the project consortium from internal experts. However, in some activities it might be functional to involve external experts. Examples are the inclusion of key gate-keepers, who have unique positions in Austria, which cannot be assumed by other experts, such as the ENIC/NARIC expertise of Mr. Kasparovsky or Mr. Demand; the expertise of the former (Prof. Helmut Konrad from the University of Graz) and current (and future) member of the KAA Board, Ms. Elisabeth Fiorioli from the Austrian Accreditation Council; and further experts, mainly from Austrian universities supporting the setup of the Didactic and Curriculum Development Centres, and providing good practices and insider knowledge for labour market oriented higher education offers, improved quality assurance mechanisms and trainings and consultancies on other subjects for UP and UPPz about subjects relevant to reach the program objectives. A small budget volume for external expertise is thus set aside.

An overview of the pool of local and international experts is given below:

**External Experts** who already confirmed their participation in specific components:

National Experts:

- *Dr. Dukagjin PUPOVCI*; Senior expert in Education SWAp Project (until December 2011); overall thematic support to project management and coordination of national experts
- *Dr. Hysen BYTYÇI*: Assistant professor Faculty of Agriculture, University of Prishtina; manager of R&D Unit of University of Prishtina; expert for R&D and the thematic area of agriculture
- *Dr. Shykrane GËRMIZAJ*; Professor at University of Prishtina, national thematic expert on gender

International Experts:

- *Dr. Gudrun SALMHOFER*: Head of Department for Teaching- and Study Services LSS at University of Graz and further LSS experts (component 1.1.)
- *Mag. Elisabeth FIORIOLI*: Managing Director of the Austrian Accreditation Council (component 1.2.)

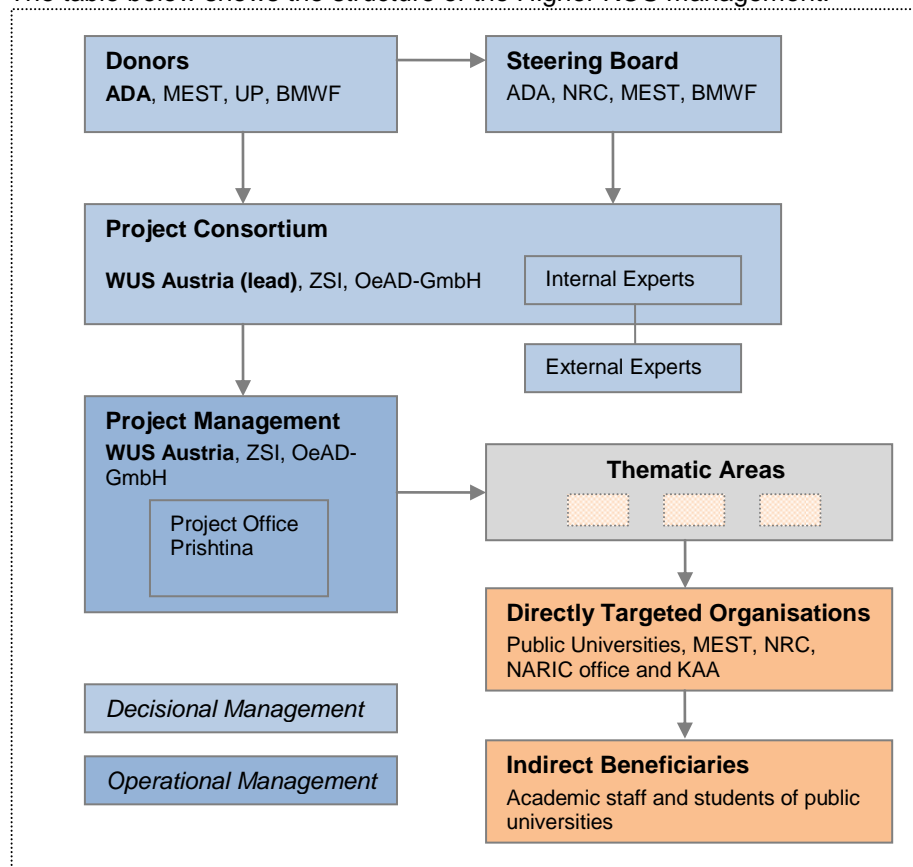


- *Mag. Roland HUMER*: Sole proprietor of “Bildungsprojekte: management consulting for HE institutions”, Expert in Quality Assurance in HE (all components)
- *Rima KUPRYTE*: Director of EIFL, Rome and further EIFL experts (component 2.5.)
- *Dr. Heinz KASPAROVSKY*: ENIC/NARIC Austria, BMWF (component 3.1.)

Further experts (national and international) will be identified during the project's inception phase.

4. **Direct target organisations and indirect beneficiaries**, the main direct target organisations being the public universities of Kosovo, relevant offices of the MEST, the NRC, NARIC office Kosovo and the KAA. Indirect beneficiaries are academic staff and students of public universities.
5. **The main donor** of the Higher KOS is the ADA. In addition to this funding, the project is supported by substantial co-financing by MEST as well as contributions in-kind by the Applicant and other third parties. The ADA organises the financial transfer of its funds to the consortium leader (WUS Austria) based upon the results produced under the internal control mechanisms. Financial audits of the project will be subcontracted to an external authorised (according to ADA guidelines) auditor financed within the foreseen amount for administration costs (so-called “PBE”).

The table below shows the structure of the Higher KOS management.



**Overview: Structure of Higher KOS management**

### Project Management (decisional and operational)

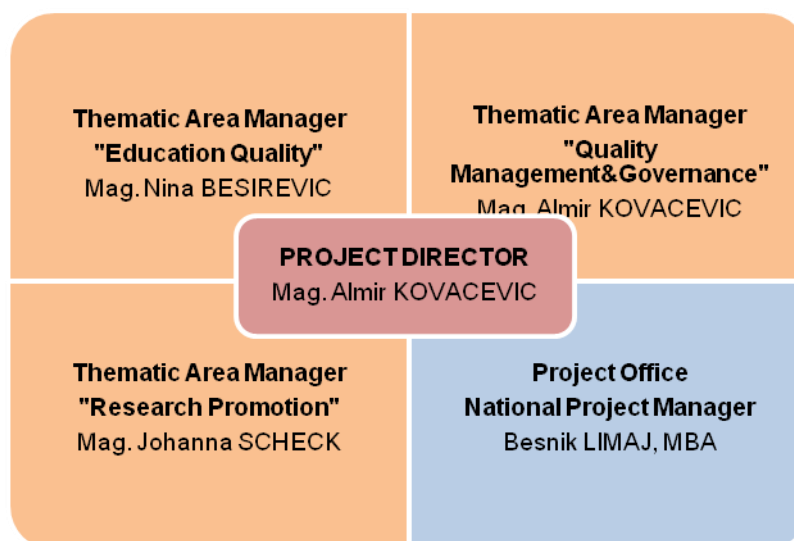
**Overall organisation of the project** will be based on a contract between the main donor of the project (ADA) and the consortium leader (WUS Austria). In case of successful bidding, a Consortium Agreement will be established between the implementing partners defining the rights und duties

between and of WUS Austria acting as consortium leader and the two project partners ZSI and OeAD-GmbH.

The consortium acts as the implementation body accountable towards the ADA and the MEST, whereas WUS Austria as the lead partner is in charge of reporting to the donor. Highly qualified staff and experts have already been identified and will be involved in the implementation of the project. The three thematic areas will be co-ordinated by one Thematic Area Manager each; the Thematic Area Managers and the National Project Manager report to the Project Director.

The Consortium nominates the **Project Director** (Almir Kovacevic, CV is attached) who is the main responsible person on behalf of the consortium. The three thematic areas will be coordinated by one Thematic Area Manager each (CVs attached):

- 1) Education Quality: Nina Besirevic (WUS Austria)
- 2) Research Promotion: Johanna Scheck (ZSI)
- 3) Quality Management & Governance: Almir Kovacevic (WUS Austria)



In addition, one consortium partner is assigned to each component as listed below:

**1. Thematic Area "Education Quality"** (lead partner: WUS Austria)

- Setup of DCDC: WUS Austria
- Support to KAA: WUS Austria
- Setup up 5 Programmatic Partnerships: WUS Austria

**2. Thematic Area "Research Promotion"** (lead partner: ZSI)

- Establishment of Framework, Rules and Procedures for the National Research Programme: ZSI
- Development of Governance, Regulation and Empowerment of Research Promotion: ZSI
- Organisation of 15 PhD/Post-Doc Fellowships: OeAD-GmbH
- Support to 10 Collaborative Research Projects: ZSI
- Support Access to Electronic Publications in NRC Priority Fields: WUS Austria

**3. Thematic Area "Quality Management and Governance"** (lead partner: WUS Austria)

- Capacity Development of the NARIC Office: OeAD-GmbH
- Provision of Management Support/Trainings: WUS Austria

The overall responsibility for the different **methods** applied (institutional development, capacity development, awareness raising, policy advise, community activities) lie within the Project Director.

Responsibility to implement the methods foreseen in all components lies within the thematic area managers for their respective thematic area. This approach enables a systematic application of the suggested methods in all project components.

### Cross – cutting topics

Responsibilities for **cross-cutting topics** lie as follows:

- For the cross-cutting topic "**gender**", Ms. Martina Handler will be the focal point within the Consortium. Additional methodological expertise/ input will be given by two gender experts, one Austrian: Ms. Barbara Hey from the University of Graz, and one Kosovan: Professor Dr. Shykrane Gërmizaj, University of Prishtina.
- For the cross-cutting topic "**peace building and conflict prevention**", Ms. Martina Handler will be the focal point within the Consortium. Additional methodological expertise/input will be given by Mr. Emir Kuljuh - For the cross-cutting topic "**environmental protection**", Mr. Klaus Schuch will be the focal point within the Consortium. Additional methodological expertise/input will be given by Prof. Hubert Dürstein, OeAD GmbH.

A full overview of the team of experts for cross cutting topics is given below:

Gender:

- *Mag. Martina HANDLER, M.A. (WUS Austria, Consortium focal point)*
- *Dr. Barbara HEY, MBA (University of Graz, external thematic expert)*
- *Prof. Dr. Shykrane GËRMIZAJ (University of Prishtina, national thematic expert)*

Peace building and conflict transformation:

- *Mag. Martina HANDLER, M.A. (WUS Austria, Consortium focal point)*
- *Dr. med. Emir KULJUH (OMEGA- Transcultural Centre Graz; external thematic expert)*

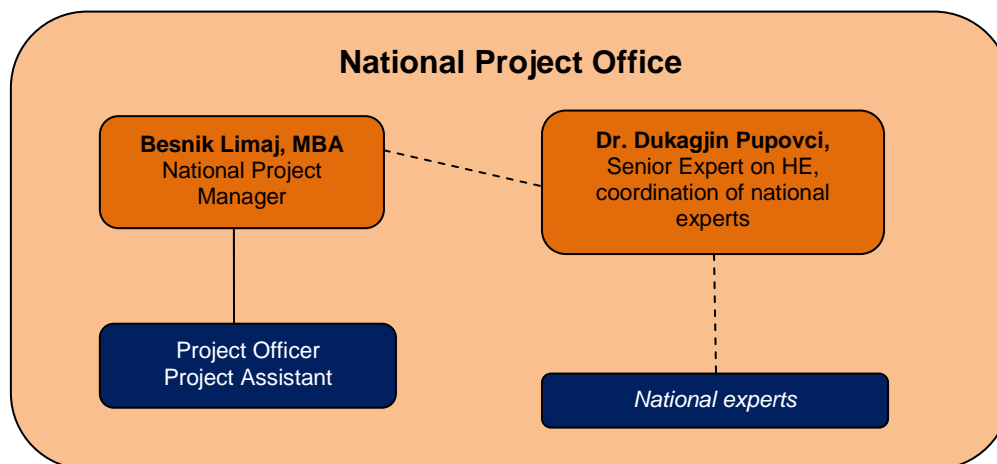
Environmental protection:

- *Dr. Klaus SCHUCH (ZSI, Consortium focal point)*
- *Prof. Hubert Dürstein (OeAD GmbH; thematic expert)*

The Consortium will establish a **national project office in Prishtina**, which will be located at the premises already offered by the MEST for the purpose of this project. It will consist of three national staff members selected by the Consortium and employed by WUS Austria for this project:

- a. **National Project Manager**, responsible for day-to-day management of the project in close cooperation with the Project Director and the Consortium. Mr. Besnik Limaj has been selected for this position (CV attached). Mr. Limaj has been selected because of his vast experience as project manager experienced in projects with MEST. He is familiar with the main project partners, institutions and structures and has an extensive personal and professional network, but does not belong to any political structure, and is thus not sensitive to often political changes in the country which might jeopardize his position in the project. The National Project Manager will be strongly supported by a local senior expert Dukagjin Pupovci, Director of Kosovo Education Centre and a pool of local and international experts providing specific thematic expertise.
- b. National Project Officer, responsible for support to the National Project Manager and the consortium. (to be selected by the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> project month)
- c. National Project Assistant. (to be selected by the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> project month)

The National Project Manager and the other office staff will be responsible for day-to-day management of the project implementation and will have an important role for the relations with the national stakeholders, detailed assessment of needs and capacities, and will serve as the back-office for the consortium.



WUS Austria will submit semi-annual reports to ADA and be ADA's main counterpart for communication on behalf of the consortium, both in Kosovo and in Austria. The project will be managed and implemented in close coordination with the ADA headquarters in Vienna and its technical cooperation office in Prishtina as the sub-sector focus point. The cooperation will be based on regular formal and informal reporting to the technical cooperation office and ADA headquarters, invitation to participate in project events, participation in the SB and similar. Identified real or potential problems will be immediately reported about. For major steering measures requiring contractual changes approval of ADA will be asked.

The project team will strive to support ADC in the policy dialogue with local donors and the government, for example by means of awareness raising, lobbying and networking, invitation to project events and similar. Institutional expertise and network of WUS Austria and its local structures, as well as of the whole consortium and participating national and international experts will support the policy dialogue process.

## 5. Assumptions

### 5.2. External factors

1.) The volatile situation of the Kosovan political system poses a certain risk for any intervention on the macro-level. Changes of government officials, replacement of university managements etc. are possible and could create problems regarding the actual flow of committed funds for the project or the pre-agreed implementation plan of certain project components.

While changes in the political environment could always gain momentum, it is assumed that the government will continue its HE and research policy along the relevant European documents (especially its commitment to the Bologna Process, and its aspired membership in the EHEA and ERA). It is also assumed that Kosovo will continue to follow and respect European values and standards, seek for international cooperation and follow European trends especially in the areas of higher education and research.

2.) The difficult social situation in Kosovo, especially the high youth unemployment rates, brain drain, etc., has a direct influence on the project and its components, especially on the interventions at public universities. The fact that with each academic year more and more new students "flood" especially the UP may result in a lack of time of the UP staff and resources, which could make the implementation of additional components aimed at increasing the quality of education (meaning also additional workload) often quite difficult. With the continued commitment of MEST and universities to

actively work on the improvement of their higher education offers it is expected that necessary resources will be made available.

3.) The unresolved status of the UM, which still operates as a Serbian university on Kosovan territory, might prevent this institution from participating in the project. Talks with MEST will aim at initiating some kind of cooperation, how-ever small-scale or low-level, and an explicit invitation will be expressed to the UM to participate in the different components offered by the project (e.g. fellowships for PhD/ post-graduate students in Austria; collaborative research grants; sending representatives to participate in capacity development measures like trainings or seminars).

4.) The establishment of the University of Prizren (UPPz) was pushed under enormous time constraints. Recent changes and adaptations resulted in a quite unclear state of affairs at the moment with the recent appointment of a new Rector, Prof. Mazllum Baraliu<sup>9</sup> as well as a lack of well qualified and committed teaching staff. The interventions foreseen to support the UPPz in the frame of this project will depend highly on available resources at the UPPz, crucial for the development of capacities and the institution-building process.

Another critical issue in this regard is the fact that up to now the initial plan of MEST of bringing back highly qualified Diaspora academics to work and teach at UPPz has not fully taken off yet. Instead, it seems that mainly UP staff has started to teach part-time in Prizren, which adds to the human resource problem at the UP.

It is assumed that further efforts will be made by MEST to set up the UPPz as a functioning university, provide the necessary resources and recruit motivated and qualified staff capable of supporting the mission of UPPz as multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-lingual institution offering high-quality, applicable higher education and research. It is further expected that both public universities can offer good incentive schemes to attract qualified and motivated male and female staff.

5.) In order to create an enabling environment for all activities aimed at the establishment of a functioning research promotion framework in Kosovo, a research funding law is crucial. While the project offers support for the development of such a law, MEST must be ready to initiate and to adopt it. Furthermore, MEST must clearly appoint responsibility and resources for the governance and management of a National Research Programme (e.g. in-house or transfer of responsibility to a national research promotion agency), as well as provide the necessary funding for the national research programme (as outlined in the draft strategy) in order to reach the project's expected results.

6.) Donor-coordination and duplication of efforts by different donors has been a risk in the area of HE in Kosovo in the past years. Efforts of World Bank, SIDA and the EC to harmonise donor initiatives and implement a functioning donor coordination system in the area of higher education are ongoing. Coordination with other donors will be carried out by the ADA; the implementing agency/consortium will support the ADA in donor coordination wherever feasible and if this is asked for by the ADA.

7.) For a successful integration of cross-cutting topics into the programme implementation, local partner institutions and individuals need to be ready to take the relevant topics seriously. It is planned to include trainings and provide materials for the KAA and the staff of the DCDCs, as well as for the academic staff involved in the programmatic partnerships on gender sensitive curricula design. It is possible to also include specific trainings on the topic of conflict sensitivity in curricula development. This will however be elaborated together with the main beneficiary group – the KAA and the DCDC – in order to make sure that they welcome the opportunity for (further) training in these areas.

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<sup>9</sup> The founding Rector of the UPPz has resigned. During the period of proposal preparation, there have been two Vice-Rectors in place. In the meantime, a new Rector, Prof. Mazllum Baraliu, was appointed. During the inception phase, concrete involvement of the UPPz will be discussed and agreed upon directly with the new management..

### 5.3. Assessment of risks and the need for modifications

The comprehensive project design with its different components and activities actually allows for different ways to reach the three main expected results. However, it is clear that all ten components of the project do entail their own specific risks (abbreviated titles for components are used below):

The responsibility of the risk management lies with the different managers of the components.

Activity	Risks	Risk level H/M/L <sup>10</sup>	Risk management strategy
1.1 University Didactics and Curriculum Development Centres	The UPPz may not have enough human resources available to establish its university didactics and curriculum development services as independent unit.	M	The UPPz will be invited to send representatives of its management and administrative staff to participate in the capacity development measures conducted at and with the UP.
1.2 Support to KAA	As a consequence of serious political exercises of influence KAA might lose its reputation and status as independent agency. Consequently HE providers might not want to pay for a politically steered evaluation process.	L	The risk that KAA will lose its political independence is seen as low due to the ongoing and continuous support by not only Austrian but also other international experts (in total, KAA has three international Board members). Thus, international peer pressure will be used to avoid a pure party-politically driven influence on KAA:
1.3 Programmatic Partnership	It might be more difficult to find Austrian institutions ready to partner up with UPPz as a new institution which so far has no international reputation and capacities to actively work on a partnership.	M	If no direct programmatic partnership can be established with UPPz, than we will facilitate a "shadowing" activity, which will allow interested staff from UPPz to be involved in relevant programmatic partnerships conducted together with UP.
2.1 National Research Fund	MEST might not be ready to initiate and to adopt a research funding law. If this happens, all further activities are legally implemented in a 'grey zone'.	M	If MEST decides not to initiate a research funding law, than the existing laws and regulations should be improved or a special instruction issued on how to organise the eligibility and disbursement of research funding.
2.1 National Research Fund	MEST may not clearly appoint responsibility and resources for the governance and management of a National Research Programme (e.g. in-house or transfer of responsibility to a national research promotion agency).	L	In the very unlikely case that MEST does not clearly appoint responsibility and resources for the governance and management of a National Research Programme this intervention line has to be stopped.
2.1 National Research Fund	NRC, MEST and any appointed research promotion agency might not work together.	L	Mediate between the different, mostly diffuse, conception to find a realistic compromise. This should be feasible by including the Austrian FWF and other external experts
2.2 Research Promotion Structure	MEST may not provide sufficient material, personal and immaterial resources for the operative foundation and operations of the National Research Promotion Agency.	M	Instead of establishing an organisationally independent Research Promotion Agency, an in-house solution at the MEST has to be identified, which could eventually be more cost-effective in the phase of establishment. If no solution can be found, this intervention area has to be stopped.
2.2 Research Promotion Structure	Impartiality of the officers responsible for research promotion and the administration of future research programmes and research calls for proposals may not be secured.	L	An internal guideline, code of conduct or instruction has to be issued in which it is clearly stated, that officers responsible for research promotion are not allowed to participate in public national research calls and to provide insider information to other parties.
2.3 Fellowships	Due to obligations at the University in Kosovo scholars might have limited time available for their study/research abroad	M	Individual solutions have to be established, but requested minimum standards have to be made clear already at the beginning of the call for fellowships.
2.3 Fellowships	The scholars might get visa for Austria/EU only with heavy support from the project management/ ADC office.	M	Advise the scholars to carefully plan their travels in time. In case of urgency, the ADA office in Prishtina will be

<sup>10</sup> **High:** The event probably will occur.

**Medium:** The event is equally likely to occur or not occur.

**Low:** The event is unlikely to occur during the life of the project.

			asked for support.
2.3 Fellowships	Austrian universities might have limited capacities to cooperate with scholars from the Kosovo	L	In case of too low response from Austria, ÖAD will intensify the promotion in Austria.
2.4 Collaborative research projects	The parallel implementation of the national research programme might lead to a duplication of efforts ; There might not be enough qualified researchers available which might lead to double submissions	M	To avoid this scenario, plan for timing and thematic orientation of calls will be elaborated together with the NRC and information on submissions will be exchanged. In case there is not enough absorption capacity for the call-budget only a part of the budget foreseen for the call will be spent to research projects recommended for funding by the independent evaluators.
2.5 Access to electronic publications in the NRC priority research fields	The branches not covered by NRC research priorities might feel left out of any support and may develop resistance.	L	The rationale for supporting certain libraries/ branches has to be communicated very transparently. In the unlikely case of heavy resistance, some contingency reserves have to be used to allow a broader coverage.
2.5 Access to electronic publications in the NRC priority research fields	If no money is provided directly for literature (e-resources or translations of relevant publications), the interest of main target group to participate in the process and offered activities might be low.	L	This has to be pro-actively counter-acted through an info-campaign and awareness raising for the more sustainable solution of providing access to already available resources. A focus will be put on younger researchers, who are more used to work with online sources.
3.1 Capacity development of the Kosovo NARIC office	High staff turnover.	M	To counteract the risk of losing the developed knowledge and capacities, knowledge management (e.g. transparent documentation) of all support measures and materials will be taken due care of.
3.2 Management Support/Training	The targeted institutions may deny any need for support in the sensitive area of financial management or may deny insight into their internal financial management issues	L	Only those institutions that are actively asking for support and are giving sufficient insight will be supported intensively (e.g. through mentoring or coaching). The others will receive regular trainings only.
3.2 Management Support/Training	UPPz management may not collect their needs in a participatory and coordinated way with regard to management support.	M	Intensive consulting services will be offered also for the process of defining needs and priorities.

The most important risks and assumptions are explained further below:

### Ref 1.1. University Didactics and Curriculum Development Centres

The decision to establish such a centre and to appoint staff for it is up to the university managements. It has been confirmed by management representatives of both institutions, however, that the establishment of such a centre is indeed one of the priority needs of the universities and thus cooperation and support for this endeavour are assumed, while on the other hand the readiness of similar Austrian centres has already been confirmed (see LoI of the University of Graz – Department “Lehr- und Studienservices” in Annex D.1.).

It is currently not sure if the UPPz will have enough human resources available to establish its university didactics and curriculum development services as independent unit. If this should not be the case, UPPz will be invited to send representatives of its management and administrative staff to participate in the capacity development measures conducted at and with the UP.

### Ref 1.2. Support to KAA

The Kosovo Accreditation Agency has been established with strong Austrian support and this support has never stopped. Through the project at hand, the support shall continue with the same experts (who have confirmed their readiness to continue their efforts, see Annex D.) and the KAA staff is also welcoming the continuation of the support. The risk that KAA will lose its political independence is therefore seen as low due to the ongoing and continuous support by not only Austrian but also other international experts (in total, KAA has three international Board members).

**Ref 1.3. Programmatic Partnerships**

The interest of UP faculties and Austrian institutions in the programmatic partnership component has already been confirmed (see Lols in Annex D.). Less clear is the commitment of the UPPz, while it is also more difficult to find Austrian institutions ready to partner up with this new institution which so far has no international reputation and capacities to actively work on a partnership.

**Ref 2.1. National Research Fund**

After the establishment of the National Research Programme the real bottleneck for its implementation are (a) the lack of an implementation structure (governance, rules, resources) and the (b) lack of dedicated research money. The latter is outside the influence of this project, but we have to assume that some public research funding will be allocated; otherwise the whole exercise lacks legitimisation. Regarding the implementation structure, it will be up to us to mediate between the different, mostly diffuse, conception and to find a realistic compromise. This should be feasible by including the Austrian FWF and other external experts. We believe, however, that at least in mid-term a supportive research funding law needs to be established. If MEST does not support it, we can implement the foreseen activities also without, but sustainability cannot be guaranteed yet.

**Ref 2.2. Research Promotion Structure**

Our activities clearly build upon the work done under KAIP-I. There the major problem was the staffing and this problem might continue if no dedicated resources are committed by MEST. Our approach is to include a wider group of persons in our trainings in order to counterbalance ongoing fluctuations. Another problem was the status of the established offices. They have been established as units within MEST. We will analyse in our feasibility study two options for the establishment of an agency, which integrates several functions under one roof, namely option 1 within the MEST and option 2 outside the MEST but with a clear public mandate. MEST has, thus, the freedom to choose and to pick the most suitable format. If MEST, however, cannot decide for any option, than organisational consulting will be targeted to refining both options and not targeted to implementing any of either options.

**Ref 2.3. Fellowships**

A risk for the implementation of the scholarship fund is that scholars due to their obligations at their respective Kosovan university have limited time available for their study/research abroad. The issue of visa or residence permits for Austria and the EU may be delayed and will be possible only with the heavy support from the project management/ADC office. Another risk lies in the fact that Austrian universities have only limited capacities to cooperate with scholars from Kosovo. The main assumptions are that UP and MEST will provide a co-financing of the scholarship fund for ten scholarships (five PhD and five post-docs) and that the scholarship fund will be managed by the national agency for research promotion.

**Ref 2.4. Collaborative research projects**

A risk for the implementation of the call for collaborative research projects is a possible duplication of efforts regarding the parallel implementation of the national research programme. At the same time double submissions to both programmes might be a problem. To avoid this scenario, a plan for timing and thematic orientation of the call will be elaborated together with the NRC and information on submissions will be exchanged. In case there is not enough absorption capacity for the call-budget only a part of the budget foreseen for the call will be spent to research projects recommended for funding by the independent evaluators. As regards the institutional involvement of Kosovo in the call it is an assumption that the MEST respectively the possibly newly established national agency are ready to involve staff in the implementation process of the call as capacity building measure. The second assumption is that the academic relations and networks to engage in trilateral networking projects are in place in the NRC priority fields. We assume that the following financial procedure regarding the instalment and controlling/auditing of research grants will be accepted by ADA: Eligible for funding in the call are costs for travel and subsistence, consumables and other costs (e.g. costs for publication, printing, copying, communications, rental of meeting rooms, materials and supplies, banking fees) for all partners from Austria and Kosovo. Personnel costs are only eligible for Austrian partners (€ 500 per working day) and Kosovan researchers (according to the maximum eligible daily rates for staff, e.g. applied under Tempus). For partners from other SEE countries only travel costs are eligible.



**Ref 2.5. Access to electronic publications in the NRC priority research fields**

Since the problem in Kosovo is not the availability of e-resources but the lack of access, i.e. awareness, knowledge and skills of academic staff and students to access available resources, awareness raising and collection of available e-resources is what the project can offer in this regard. Cooperation of relevant academic institutions, researchers and libraries is a precondition.

**Ref 3.1. NARIC Office Kosovo**

Continuity of this component is assured through the continuous support of the Austrian ENIC/NARIC office and its experts (see attached confirmation of Mr. Kasparovsky from the Austrian ENIC/NARIC Office). Capacity development for Kosovo NARIC staff will consider the risk of staff changes. To counteract the risk of losing the developed knowledge and capacities, transparent documentation of all support measures and materials will be taken due care of. One additional focus will be developing of relevant documents/strategies/plan on how to approach the aspect of regulating professions.

**Ref 3.2. Management Support/Training**

The targeted trainings to administrative staff responsible for financial management issues at the key target institutions (KAA, NRC, Universities, MEST) will highly depend on the readiness of these institutions to accept the necessity for transparent and diligent financial management. A certain risk may be a resistance to provide sufficient insight in the current status of financial management. Awareness will be raised and trust built through the sharing of good (and bad) practices and experiences of European institutions and organisations. Finally, the tailor-made trainings will only be offered to those institutions ready to fully cooperate.

The second part of this component, on-demand coaching for the UPPz, will highly depends on the ability of UPPz management to identify and express their needs with regard to management of the university. The definition of needs and priorities is a process that might as well be accompanied through coaching activities since it is a crucial competence for organisational development.

Risks related to **cross-cutting topics** are generally connected to the complexity of the general political situation in the country and of the target areas of this project, such as accreditation, research etc. It is questionable if it will be possible to optimally include cross cutting topics into the project implementation, for example: KAA staff might not have enough time and/ or the mandate to deal with these topics on a structural level and incorporate them into their official procedures. As regards the partnerships, there might be significant differences in the understanding of cross cutting issues between partners from Kosovo and Austria. This risk can be mitigated by careful consideration of the local context and participatory design of the cross cutting measures.

## 6. Monitoring and Evaluation

### 6.2. Monitoring, information system, indicators

A thorough baseline assessment concerning the status quo of the tendered intervention areas will be included in our inception report. This should enable everybody to retrace the initial condition in each intervention area more than one year after the operational termination of KAIP-I project. We assume that little progress since then was made, but rather expect dismantling processes within some of the tendered intervention areas compared to one year ago (e.g. no staff available in K-CIRT; again personnel turnover in the NARIC office Kosovo which requires re-training etc.).

The indicators and attainment benchmarks used to retrace the project's progress at output level can be extracted from the Logframe Matrix. Due to the substance of this project, the indicators are mostly deliverable based (concepts, feasibility report, curricula, assessment reports etc.) and clearly tailored to the tendered intervention areas. They are unique (in the context of Kosovo), not at least in institutional terms and hardly uniform. Moreover, some indicators will have to be established during project implementation, because of subsequent workflows, which for the time being cannot be clearly stipulated. For instance, it is not possible to clearly establish progress indicators at the level of programmatic partnerships yet, because their specific objectives and priorities will be decided by the partnerships themselves at later stages. However, we will consult on indicators with them and will closely monitor the progress. We will make use also of quality and evaluation panels, for instance to secure the identification of best research project.

We will update information on the project progress on biannual basis and present our findings at the steering board meetings. Furthermore, we will establish a progress measurement template, which will be downloadable at the project's website and included in the progress reports. The responsibility of data collection and data processing is assigned to the partner who is in charge of the respective intervention area. For this a clear division of labour was proposed by us in this offer. Most data will be recorded by the project itself, because almost no reliable and adequate external sources are available. One exception is FP7 participation data of Kosovan researchers (produced by the European Commission). The monitoring will be used by (a) the project management to steer and eventually remedy implementation processes, (b) the steering board to reproduce the progress of the project and (c), information will be provided to the external evaluators.

The detailed *Monitoringplan* is attached as *Annex no. 4*.

### 6.3. Evaluations

We propose a mid-term evaluation of this project focussing on the following aspects:

- Evaluation of processes (incl. stakeholder integration and collaboration; work flows; participation and empowerment)
- Evaluation of intermediate effects and efficiency (identification of slow performing issues; quality assessment; input-output progress; division of labour of project partners and between project partners and stakeholders) including the analysis of the likelihood of achieving the project purpose.

We will not focus on relevance, because relevance should be sufficiently guaranteed given the previous project, its evaluation and the intensive preparatory work done by ADA for the ToR for this project. Furthermore, we do not assume that an appropriate impact evaluation can be reasonably carried out at project mid-term.

For the mid-term evaluation a restricted tender procedure will be applied to put ourselves into the position to compare between three offers. The longstanding procedure of ZSI in organising tendering procedures will be employed for this. The award of contract will be based on best quality for price principle. A fixed, limited budget will be earmarked. ADA will be involved according to its evaluation guidelines. Feedback from ADA will be requested.

## 7. Sustainability issues<sup>11</sup>

This project provides an institutional development and targeted capacity building within institutions. All of the targeted institutions are public by nature and based on laws and other legal regulations. It must be expected that these institutions will operate in a long term perspective. Our support activities will have sustainable impact.

### 7.2. Political support

Relevant for ensuring a lasting political support of the actions proposed are several laws and strategic plans in the field of HE in Kosovo<sup>12</sup>:

- the Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2011-2016
- the National Research Programme of the Republic of Kosovo
- the Laws on Scientific Affairs in Kosovo
- the Law on Higher Education in Kosovo.

The National Research Programme with its respective budget for science allows the financing of accompanying measures and follow-up activities.

The proposed project activities are fully compliant with the Higher KOS Strategy Document, jointly issued by the MEST and the ADC. The MEST has been contacted several times during the project planning phase through the project consortium to ensure full support. In addition there have been some personal meetings with representatives of direct beneficiaries (UP, UPPz and KAA) to involve them into the activity planning and ensure their support as well.

### 7.3. Appropriate technology

To ensure local ownership and sustainability, the project activities have been previously agreed upon by the ADC with the MEST and are thus based on the real needs of the different stakeholders in Kosovo. All components and activities are primarily aimed at long-term institution building and development of capacities and skills at different levels and institutions. (see also chapter 3.2. Project Purpose).

### 7.4. Environmental impact/ environmental protection

Direct links to the environmental protection are not given. However, the implementation of the project has no harmful consequences on the environment and some activities will be carried out considering environmental issues in line with the NRC research priority field “Agricultural Production and Food Safety” and “Environment, Energy and Natural Resources”. These activities are related to the PhD or post-doc fellowships, collaborative research projects and programmatic partnerships.

See the *environmental impact questionnaire* in *Annex no. 5*.

### 7.5. Socio-cultural aspects

The University of Mitrovica (UM), providing higher education to the Serb minority, is under direct (also financial) control of Belgrade. Since relations between the Kosovan authorities and the UM are

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<sup>11</sup> See guideline on „Quality Assurance for Interventions of the Austrian Development Cooperation”

<sup>12</sup> Further details on these strategies, programmes and laws can be found in chapter 2. Background/context.

therefore limited, it will have to be seen if direct cooperation is possible. The UM will however be explicitly invited to participate in all components targeted directly at universities.

### **7.6. Gender equality**

Measures to ensure gender equality (*questionnaire*) are described in *Annex no. 6*.

### **7.7. Development of institutional and management capacities**

It is assumed that the existing structures, processes, staff and skills are sufficient to implement and sustain the intervention; the related risks have been described in the LFM and in Chapter 5. One of the envisioned project results is to enhance institutional and management capacities of the national project partners as described in the Chapter 4.1. Methodology.

### **7.8. Economic viability**

The economic viability of the Higher KOS is regarded to be given, according to the autonomy of the universities. The viability of the other main beneficiaries is granted through their institutional ties to the MEST.

## **Annexes to 1. Project Document:**

Annex A.1.	Logframe matrix
Annex A.1.a	Plan of activities
Annex A.2.	Time schedule
Annex A.3.a	Summary project budget
Annex A.3.b	Detailed project budget
Annex A.4.	Monitoringplan
Annex A.5.	Environmental impact questionnaire
Annex A.6.	Gender questionnaire