TERMS OF REFERENCE (ToR)

External Mid-Term Evaluation of the Project

"Higher KOS – Promoting Institutional Development in Higher Education and Research in Kosovo" ("Higher KOS")

1) Background

The project "Higher KOS – Promoting Institutional Development in Higher Education and Research in Kosovo" (hereafter: "Higher KOS") is a three year intervention (15/12/2011-14/12/2014) which aims to facilitate improvements in the higher education and research sector in Kosovo along European values, practices and standards. The project has the goal to implement principles of the European Higher Education Area effectively and sustainably as well as to further integrate Kosovo in the European Research Area.

"Higher KOS" focuses on three thematic areas:

1. The quality of education at public universities will be improved. This is to be obtained through improved and labour market-oriented training (didactics, planning) and improved quality assurance mechanisms.
2. The system of research promotion in Kosovo is still at its inception. Following the National Research Strategy of the National Research Council (NRC), the system needs to be improved and capacities for effective research funding established in accordance with international standards.
3. Quality management and governance, especially in the field of financial management, need to develop capacities for more efficient, more transparent, more effective and more customer-oriented administrative processes in cooperation with important local stakeholders in higher education and research (esp. public universities and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology – MEST).

The three thematic areas are divided into ten specific components in order to allow tailor-made measures which target the beneficiaries either directly or indirectly and lead to the intended results. These targeted 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 NRC. Altogether, these institutions have approx. 2,000 employees. Of them, around 10% are directly addressed by the project. Indirect beneficiaries of the intervention are the students of the three public universities, of private higher education institutions in Kosovo and graduates holding foreign degrees returning to Kosovo, approx. 72,000 students. Although they are indirect beneficiaries only, the students remain to be the central interest of the project.

Through enhanced research capacities and improved RTDI (Research, Technological Development and Innovation) structures in Kosovo, furthermore socio-economic developments are stimulated from which the whole society benefits.

The entire intervention is connected to the Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2011-2016[1] and the research priorities of the NRC. The promotion of scientific activities supporting the research priorities leads to synergy effects of the components among each other and hence should strengthen the impact of the intervention.

More information on the project, including structure, objectives, goals, components and activities, are given in Annex 1.

2) Intention

The mid-term evaluation of the project "Higher KOS" is supposed to focus on the following aspects:

- Evaluation of processes (incl. stakeholder integration and collaboration; work flows; participation and empowerment; division of labour of project partners and between project and stakeholders; changes in the institutional framework; conducive and hindering framework conditions);
- Evaluation of intermediate effects and efficiency (identification of slow performing issues; quality assessment; input-output relation; range of addressed beneficiaries) including assessing the likelihood of achieving the project purpose.

The intention of this mid-term evaluation is to sensitise the project implementing consortium consisting of WUS-Austria, ZSI and OeAD, for flaws and room for improvement which are supposed to be implemented during the last year of the project.

3) Goals

As stated above, the mid-term evaluation of the project aims at analysing the intermediate effects and efficiency as well as the processes at the current stage. Based on the DAC Criteria for Evaluation formulated by the OECD, the goals of this evaluation can be described as follows:

- Measuring the **effectiveness** means measuring to what extent the objectives are likely to be or already have been achieved and indicating the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement.
- Measuring how efficient the undertaken activities were conducted, relating especially to the efficiency of spending on cost resources, thus measuring the **efficiency** of the qualitative and quantitative outputs in relation to the inputs. This tender, however, does not call for an audit!
- **Sustainability** is concerned with measuring whether the undertaken activities are likely to continue after the termination of the project. Hence measuring sustainability includes examining whether the project is well-implemented into its institutional surroundings.

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[1] http://www.masht-gov.net/advCms/documents/KESP_2011_2016.pdf

The evaluation is not supposed to focus on relevance, as this is sufficiently guaranteed due to a previous project and its evaluation. We furthermore do not assume that an appropriate impact evaluation can be carried out at this stage of the project.

- Additionally to the above stated goals, the evaluation should aim at measuring how sufficient the **process** flows are working and provide suggestions for improvement.

4) Subject and Focus

The mid-term evaluation is planned to cover several topics and to target various subjects, as stated below:

Target Groups

The **main target groups** are:
- the three public universities in Kosovo;
  - the University of Prishtina
  - the newly founded University of Prizren
  - the University of Mitrovica
- the Kosovo Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST)
- the Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA)
- the NARIC Office of Kosovo
- the National Research Council (NRC)

The indirect beneficiaries are:
- the students at the three public universities
- the faculty members
- the academic personnel actively involved in R&D
- the total student population (also of private universities)

Area of Coverage

The evaluation will be undertaken in Kosovo. The above mentioned target groups will be addressed in the frame of the evaluation. Furthermore, communications and exchange of information should be established with the ADA representatives in Prishtina and Vienna and the project consortium. The project consortium will assist the evaluators in identifying relevant contact persons in these organisations mentioned above if requested.

Cross-cutting issues

The project is planned to take the following cross-cutting themes into consideration when adequate: 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. The evaluation will particularly address to what extent the project has included appropriate gender aspects and aspects of interethnic cooperation at this stage.

Logical Framework Matrix

The evaluation will have to assess to what extent the intervention logic can be followed so far and if planned outputs and outcomes/project goals formulated in the Logical Framework Matrix (LFM) can be fulfilled or which adaptations have to be undertaken to re-adjust the intervention logic.

Duration

The tendering procedure commences in July 2013 and ends with a tendering deadline on 20th August 2013 at 15:00 CET. The tenders must be deposited at the ZSI via email: schuch@zsi.at. The selection and contracting will be based on best quality for price principle. The evaluation of this project is planned to start Mid-September 2013. The evaluation results should be available in the form of a detailed report and presentation by 15 January, 2014. For more details please consult the time plan below.

Financial Resources

The financing of the evaluation will be covered by the project funds; the maximum budget is limited with EUR 40.000 (all inclusive, incl. travel costs and daily allowances and incl. VAT if applicable). The quality of the offer will be weighted with 70% and the price with 30%.

Ownership

The evaluation process should involve all relevant local stakeholders: the directly participating students, faculty members, university staff, researchers and staff members of the MEST, the KAA, the NARIC Office Kosovo and the NRC but also the involved institutions in Austria (i.e. ADA as well as the project partners WUS Austria, ZSI and OeAD.

5) Main Questions

The main focus of the evaluation is on intermediate **effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability**. Furthermore, the aspect of processes should be equally evaluated.

Effectiveness

- In how far have the main direct beneficiaries been reached until now?
- To what extent has the project already achieved its expected results according to the Logframe Matrix?
- How likely is it that the planned purpose and all results will be achieved in the remaining time period?
- To what extent were the cross-cutting issues already addressed?
- To what extent are teaching staff, students and university management as well as the other stakeholders satisfied with the progress?
- What should be feasibly improved to raise effectiveness of the intervention?
- Are the framework conditions in place to ensure the desired effects of the project?

Efficiency

- Were the material and immaterial resources efficiently exploited to reach the planned mid-term goals stipulated by the Logical Framework?
- To which extent are the purchased items under this project used as planned?
- How effective has the implementation of the intervention been so far, especially in regards to capacity development and cost effectiveness?
- Were cooperation and establishment of synergies with other, similar projects and externally accessible resources made? How supportive have they been until now?
- What should be feasibly improved to raise efficiency of the intervention?

Sustainability

- To what extent has local ownership already been developed?
- To what extent have the universities and the MEST the developed modifications already implemented?
- What measures have been conducted to assure sustainability of project results? Are any further measures planned until the end of the project, and if yes, which?
- In how far have the cross-cutting themes been considered so far? How successful were the considerations?
- What should be feasibly improved to raise the sustainability?

Processes

- How fluently works the cooperation between the involved stakeholders? Are there any difficulties, and how can these be overcome?
- How well have the consortium partners been cooperating/working together for the day-to-day management?
- What factors are conducive or hindering for the implementation of the project?
- What should be feasibly undertaken to improve the project processes?

6) Methods

The evaluation should be designed in different steps. The first step should be a detailed *Desk Study* covering the precise methods and the assignment of the resources. These findings are documented within the *Inception Phase* in a first report. The *Field Study* is the phase of actual data gathering (e.g. by means of approximately 30 interviews etc.). In the frame of a *Draft Final Report*, these findings are analysed and documented. In conclusion and after feedback from the main stakeholders a *Final Report*, that includes recommendations and lessons (to be) learnt is to be written. The end of the evaluation process is marked by a *Presentation* of the key findings.

For the evaluation methods, a few principles should be considered:
All chosen methods have to be in line with DAC standards and have to be sufficiently appropriate to tackle cross-cutting issues.

The Guidelines for Project and Programme Evaluations developed by the Austrian Development Agency should be considered throughout the entire evaluation process, see http://www.entwicklung.at/evaluierung/

7) Time Plan

The Timing below gives a rough overview of the foreseen timeframe of the planned evaluation activities:

August 20th, 2013 (15:00 p.m., CET):	Deadline for the receipt of offers
Mid-September 2013:	Start of evaluation and desk research
10th October 2013:	Inception Report to be delivered
October to December 2013:	Field Study
December 15th, 2013:	Draft Final Report to be delivered
January 15th, 2014:	Final Report and Presentation

8) Evaluation Team

A restricted tender procedure will be applied in order to find a suitable contractor for the evaluation. This contractor will be chosen by the consortium partners on a 'best quality for price'-principle basis. Therefore, tenders need to prove different key qualifications by means of CVs and a list of already undertaken evaluation activities (references). Tenderers have to describe and explain in their written offers also their evaluation approach, methodology and organisation.

Eligible applicants have to prove the following:
- Experience and expertise in the area of higher education and research systems and of current developments in higher education and research in the European Union and South Eastern Europe;
- Preferably specific experience and expertise in the following areas: curriculum development, university-economy cooperation and employability, quality assurance, inter-university cooperation, accreditation, and development assistance in higher education; European Research Area development; systems of research and innovation development (especially in medium- and low-income countries)
- Experience in conducting/managing evaluations;
- Experience and expertise in Kosovo and its specifics (language, history, socio-economic background and so forth) is an asset;
- Experience and expertise in evaluating cross-cutting issues (notably gender and aspects of interethnic cooperation).

The number of experts within the team should not exceed four persons. The composition of the evaluation team will be proposed by the bidder but is subject to approval by the consortium.

9) Reporting

The chosen contractor will be responsible to deliver a number of services, most notably to produce a final report and present the key results and findings to the consortium and the ADA. For general information as well as to assess the baseline from which the Higher-KOS project started in some aspects, it may also be useful to read the evaluation report of the predecessor projects *"Interim Evaluation of the 'Multidimensional Project for the Implementation of an Institutionalised Partnership between Austria and Kosova in the Field of Higher Education, Research and Innovation' (KAIP)"* and *"Building Quality, Knowledge & Skills for Social and Economic Development - Support to Reforms of Higher Education in Kosovo 2008-2011"*.

Besides that, the minimum outputs to be delivered by the contractor are:

- Designing of the evaluation plan in detail including the identification and definition of appropriate methods in the frame of an Inception Report;
- Evaluation of the project considering the three under point 3 mentioned DAC criteria as well as the evaluation of project processes;
- Analysis, interpretation, documentation and presentation of the evaluation results in a Draft Final Report;
- Incorporate feedback to the Draft Final Report and providing recommendations for the further implementation of the project until its planned termination in November 2014.

The Inception Report should contain no more than 10 pages, the final Evaluation Report no more than 30-35 pages without annexes. The final report will be scrutinised by the following questions:

- Are the Terms of References fulfilled and reflected within the report?
- Does the report contain a clear and comprehensive summary?
- Is the report divided according to the OECD DAC criteria?
- Are the findings of the evaluation report methodologically substantiated and transparently argued according to scientific standards?
- Are the recommendations of the report clearly described and in a manner that they can contribute to the further implementation of the project? Do they follow a logic argumentation?
- Are the methods of the evaluation clearly explained within the report?
- Have all relevant stakeholders, i.e. not only the target groups, been included in the evaluation process?
- Have all relevant documents been included in the evaluation process?
- Are cross-cutting issues like gender equality tackled in the report?
- Has the Serbian HE community been targeted in the report?
- Does the report analyse and comment on the LFM?
- Is the final report structured in a comprehensive and appealing way?
- Is the report free of errors and spelling mistakes and can hence be disseminated on various occasions?

10) Coordination and Responsibility

The contractor of the evaluation will be in charge to mobilise and coordinate the evaluation team, to contact, coordinate and to work with all relevant stakeholders and will be responsible of the overall management of the evaluation process. Feedback from ADA will be requested. By submitting an offer the contractor agrees that the Austrian ERP-Fonds and ADA have the same control rights vis-à-vis the contractor as vis-à-vis the client of this evaluation. This includes – inter alia – the right of ADA to access the accounts, invoices and other documents, including in-situ inspection, as long as they are in direct context with this evaluation.

11) Application

The application for this evaluation shall include the following documents:
- a significant description of (a) the methods to be employed in the evaluation and (b) the organisation of the evaluation, including an assessment of the risks and a risk management strategy
- the CVs of the evaluators highlighting also their relevant experience incl. a description of their division of labour and their specific assignments during the evaluation
- a list of maximum 5 reference projects
- a detailed cost plan differentiating between labour costs, travel costs and other costs including an indication of the days foreseen for the implementation of the evaluation.

12) Selection

A committee will be convened to select the best quality for price offer. The "quality"-"price" ratio is 70:30.
Quality is assessed in terms of the
- proposed method and organisation of the evaluation under scrutiny (50 points maximum)
- references and CVs of the evaluators (20 points maximum)

For the lowest price a maximum of 30 points can be achieved.

13) Contact Person for the Tender Procedure

Dr. Klaus Schuch
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Austria

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THIS TENDER PROCEDURE DOES NOT FALL UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE

AUSTRIAN PUBLIC PROCUREMENT LAW. NO LEGAL RIGHT SHALL BE CONSTITUTED BY THIS TENDER PROCEDURE.

The Contractor reserves the right not to place any order. Costs for necessary document preparation by the Applicants to this call for tender will not be reimbursed.

14) Useful links
- **Higher-KOS-Webseite:** http://www.higherkos.info/
- **Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2011-2016**: http://www.masht-gov.net/advCms/documents/KESP_2011_2016.pdf
- **ADA-Länderinformation Kosovo:** http://www.entwicklung.at/uploads/media/Laenderinfo_Kosovo_Nov2012.pdf
- **State Portal of the Republic of Kosovo:** http://www.rks-gov.net/en-US/Pages/Fillimi.aspx
- **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
- **National Research Programme of Kosovo:** http://www.entwicklung.at/uploads/media/02d__National_Research_Programme_FINAL_-_English_01.pdf
- **ADC Strategy "Higher Education and Scientific Cooperation":** 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
- 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: https://www.zsi.at/attach/Kosovo_Final.pdf
- University of Prishtina: The strategy on scientific/artistic research and development activities
- **ADA Richtlinien für Projekt- und Programmevaluierung:** http://www.entwicklung.at/uploads/media/Guidelines_for_Project_and_Progamme_Evaluations_FINAL_DRAFT_Juli_2009.PDF
- **Muster für die Gliederung eines Evaluierungsberichts:** http://www.entwicklung.at/uploads/media/Muster_f%C3%BCr_die_Gliederung_eines_Evaluierungberichts.pdf

Annexes

Annex 1: Project Document
Annex 2: Logframe Matrix