

HERAS +

Higher Education, Research and Applied Science Plus (Kosovo)

Guidelines for the Social Dimension Small Grants

1. General Information about the Project and Overall Objective

The project Higher Education Research and Applied Science Plus (HERAS+) aims at a more competitive and diversified public higher education and research sector in Kosovo in line with the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), European Research Area (ERA) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 4 and 9 related to quality assurance, economy and labour market relevance, international cooperation and the Social Dimension of higher education. It contributes to a higher education and research system in Kosovo that is better governed, more international, coherent, effective and efficient, fostering students' employability and the third mission of universities.

The three-year project "HERAS+ – Higher Education, Research and Applied Science Plus" is being implemented from June 2020 – May 2023. The project is funded by the Austrian Development Agency (ADA), and co-financed by the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation of Kosovo (MESTI). HERAS+ is implemented by a highly experienced Austrian consortium represented by World University Service Austria (WUS Austria, lead partner), the Center for Social Innovation (ZSI) and the Austrian Agency for International Mobility and Cooperation in Education, Science and Research (OeAD).

2. Social Dimension Small Grants

The concept of the *Social Dimension of Higher Education* was first developed within the *Bologna Process* in the Prague Communiqué of 2001. It refers to the *goal of removing inequalities when it comes to access, participation and completion of higher education* in the European Area of Higher Education (EHEA).

The London Communiqué of 2007 describes the goal of the Social Dimension as follows:

"We share the societal aspiration that the student body entering, participating in and completing higher education at all levels should reflect the diversity of our populations. We reaffirm the importance of students being able to complete their studies without obstacles related to their social and economic background. We therefore continue our efforts to provide adequate student services,

create more flexible learning pathways into and within higher education, and to widen participation at all levels on the basis of equal opportunity." The social dimension encompasses the creation of an inclusive environment in higher education that fosters equity, diversity, and is responsive to the needs of local communities.¹ This is ever more urgent and relevant in times of the **current pandemic** which has further widened already existing gaps in educational attainment.

The Social Dimension Small Grant Scheme aims to contribute to an enhanced implementation of the Social Dimension of Higher Education in Kosovo in line with the Bologna Principles. Based on the successful experiences and positive responses during the HERAS project, HERAS+ will upscale support to facilitate the implementation of the Social Dimension of Higher Education in Kosovo.

This will be done by developing capacities of relevant institutions and students, addressing existing needs of underrepresented/marginalized groups² in ACCESSING, PARTICIPATING and COMPLETING higher education.

The HERAS+ project will finance 10 small projects to foster the implementation of the Social Dimension in Kosovo. Each selected project will be granted 3.000 Euro.

2.1 Thematic areas of this call

In line with the goals of the Social Dimension of Higher Education of the Bologna Process, this grant scheme aims to foster ACCESS, PARTICIPATION and successful COMPLETION of higher education for persons from underrepresented/marginalized groups. The thematic areas targeted in this call relate to these three stages and are outlined below. The call also aims at contributing to solutions for overcoming challenges related to equity and inclusion in light of the current pandemic.

¹ EHEA, Rome Ministerial Communique, Annex II, 2020.

² During **Focus Group Interviews (FGIs) on the Social Dimension of the Bologna Process** with teaching staff, university management, education authorities, CSOs and students from Bosniak, Roma and Turkish communities, participants concluded that the following groups are considered marginalized or underrepresented when it comes to higher education in Kosovo: **Persons with lower socio-economic background including from rural areas; Minorities including from the Bosniak, Roma, Egyptian, Ashkali and Turkish communities; Returning migrants; Students with a disability; Non-traditional students (mature students, part-time students).** In each category, **women** are considered as particularly vulnerable. For more information see <http://www.wus-austria.org/27/publications/9/>

A.) ACCESS to higher education for persons from marginalized/underrepresented groups:

Activities related to ACCESS may include but are not restricted to activities such as:

- Outreach to potential students through working with schools, youth clubs and other institutions; in particular:
- Raising awareness among pupils and teachers on equal access to higher education;
- Combatting of existing stereotypes that hamper access to education for all;
- Dissemination of information on study opportunities and available support measures, including the promotion of minority quotas;
- Tutoring and mentoring of pupils from underrepresented groups by teachers;
- Targeted support for skills development and empowerment of (potential) students from marginalized groups (e.g. development and/or purchase of learning materials in minority languages, conduction of workshops etc.);
- Other measures that promote access to higher education for marginalized/underrepresented groups that are specifically related to the current pandemic.

B.) PARTICIPATION and successful COMPLETION of higher education for persons from marginalized/underrepresented groups:

Activities related to PARTICIPATION and COMPLETION: This may include but is not restricted to activities such as:

- Mentoring programmes, guidance and tutoring for students from marginalized/underrepresented groups, including providing counselling/advisory services (e.g. financial and legal advice)
- Raising awareness among students and university staff on equal access to higher education;
- Combatting of existing stereotypes that hamper access to education for all;
- Capacity building measures for university staff to enable them to adequately support students from marginalized/underrepresented groups;
- Capacity building activities by conducting study visits in the institutions in the regional countries;
- Peer-to-peer support for students from underrepresented groups;
- Targeted support to promote participation and successful completion of studies for students from marginalized/underrepresented groups (including also measures to support the participation of students with children);
- Creation of incentives for higher education institutions to take action to widen access and participation;
- Measures to ensure student participation in higher education governance;
- Promoting and strengthening flexible learning paths into and within higher education;
- Measures to promote recognition of prior learning;
- Other measures to enhance participation and successful completion of higher education for persons from marginalized/underrepresented groups that are specifically related to the current pandemic;

- Other activities in line with MESTI priorities.

Projects funded as Social Dimension Small Grants under HERAS can apply for an Advanced Social Dimension Small Grant under HERAS+. For applications for advanced Social Dimension Small Grant, a well-grounded justification is required which outlines how the continuation builds upon the success of the previous project. The amount granted is the same for all awarded SD grants.

2.2 Eligibility

The following institutions and persons are eligible for applications under this call:

- **Groups of students (2-max 5 students, both Bachelor and Master students)**
- **CSOs active in a field relevant to this call**
- **Public Universities**
- **Organizations of Kosovar-Austrian Alumni (OKAA)**
- **Secondary schools**
- **Other relevant institutions**

Please note that:

- One grant is earmarked for OKAA, subject to the quality of proposal.
- At least three grants are earmarked for projects which address gender equality/education for girls/women.

2.3 Budget / Financed cost and project duration

The requested small grant should not exceed the amount of EUR 3.000, accounting for a project period of 3 to 8 months.

The following costs are eligible:

- Staff costs (based on fee invoices)
- Travel costs
- Costs for printing and publications
- Costs of events (e.g. food/drinks, rent etc.)
- Other costs (e.g. translations, office supplies, communication costs)

Please note that only costs documented by invoices can be considered eligible.

Information on reporting requirements, funding modalities and visibility guidelines for dissemination will be shared with grantees once the selection process is finalized.

3. Evaluation criteria and submission procedures

3.1 Evaluation Criteria

Applications will be approved based on how well they integrate and demonstrate the ability to implement the following dimensions: (1) project design and substantive quality, (2) project management, (3) dissemination and sustainability and (4) cost efficiency. The evaluation criteria listed below should assist both, the applicants writing the project proposals and the selection committee as an evaluation guideline.

Thematic and/or organizational dimensions	Specification / Description Evaluation grid
1. Project design and substantive quality (problem oriented, relevant)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are the objectives clear? - Are the proposed activities chosen and designed in a way that enables reaching these objectives?
2. Project management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is the application including time plan and budget realistic and well elaborated?
3. Dissemination and sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is planned to disseminate information about the project? - What will be done to ensure sustainability of the project?
4. Cost efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is the budget cost efficient?

3.2 Submission procedures

All documents required for submission have to be in English and have to be submitted via E-mail to donjeta.ibra@wus-austria.org until 11 February 2022

Required documents	Please tick
Signed application form*	<input type="checkbox"/>
Short CVs of contact person and further team members	<input type="checkbox"/>
For CSOs only:	
Certificate of registration	<input type="checkbox"/>
Certificate of fiscal number	<input type="checkbox"/>

*For applications by institutions, the application form needs to be signed by the legal representative. For applications by a group of students, the application needs to be signed by the designated contact person.

Deadline for submission:

11 February 2022

3.4 Timetable

Activity	Deadline
Call for proposals	15 December 2021
Deadline for submissions	11 February 2022
Prescreening of applications against formal criteria	February 2022
Selection Board Meeting	February/March 2022
Information and contracting	March/April 2022
Start of small projects	May 2022
Mid-term report (including financial report) by grantees	Two weeks after the first half of project implementation
Final project report (including financial report) by beneficiaries	Two weeks after the end of the implementation of the project.

3.5 Information about this call

There will be an information session to further disseminate the content about this call. Interested groups of students as well as institutions will be invited to attend. Details will be communicated.

The Social Dimension Small Grant Scheme call will be announced on the project website, and the website of WUS Austria.

4. Selection procedure

1) WUS Austria will check the formal eligibility of the applications:

- complete and correct applications and documents
- eligibility criteria
- timeframe and budget

2) Final decision by the Selection Board (based on the result of the score).

The Selection Board will aim at reaching a balanced portfolio of grants, taking into account the objectives of the call and the quality of the applications.

Aspects that may be decisive when a choice between equally scored applications needs to be made:

- Extent to which the project aims to support (groups of) persons that are particularly vulnerable (belonging to more than one of the categories outlined under section 2 - e.g. women from minority communities, persons with disabilities from lower socio-economic backgrounds etc.);
- Advanced Social Dimension application with a well-grounded justification on the continuation.

The Selection Board will formally approve the decisions and advice WUS Austria to start the contracting process.

During the implementation period, the selected applicants will be also expected to participate in the following events (exact dates to be determined):

- Initial workshop for grantees (introduction of projects to all grantees, guidance on reporting & project implementation);
- Dissemination event.