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**Earmarked Funds:  
Guidelines for Equipment Requests  
(in line with findings from HERAS Plus baseline assessments)**

Ref.: Project Output 2 (Act. 2.2)

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## 1. Introduction

The document is in line with Output 2 of the HERAS Plus project document '*Strategic plans of public universities are reviewed, developed, and decision-making processes are based on these strategies and better contribute to a competitive HE sector as well as to economic, social and cultural development of Kosovo*'.

The methodology for the realization of this output follows a three-phased approach, consisting of an i) Assessment phase (development of baseline assessments); ii) Tailor-made activities based on needs identified during the assessment phase (Competitive Fund for Strategic Development of Public Universities); and iii) Earmarked requests for equipment in line with findings from the baselines.

After completion of phase 1, the project has entered the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase, addressing identified needs through a variety of activities (currently ongoing; for further details see also section 3). While these activities will be continued also in the 3<sup>rd</sup> phase, the project hereby also invites public HEIs to submit requests for equipment purchase in order to address the needs identified in their baseline assessments.

The strategic development of public HEIs is closely related to teaching and research, and in this context, the need for additional equipment and items that public HEIs are lacking has already come up in consultations with senior management of public HEIs during phases 1 and 2. These guidelines thus provide the framework and describe the requirements for earmarked requests for equipment in line with findings from baselines.

Last but not the least, through the requested equipment and in line with the project objectives, public HEIs shall also demonstrate that they contribute towards 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.

## 2. Rationale for using these funds

Public HEIs that are interested to access these funds need to submit a request (annex to this document) and explain/answer the following questions as outlined in the template:

- What equipment is planned to be purchased? How is this connected with the findings of the respective baseline assessment and/or strategic document?
- How exactly will it contribute to the strategic development of the university?
- Why is this equipment needed and what will be its exact use?
- How will the new equipment promote research-based studying?
- What measures will be taken to ensure that young academics will benefit from the equipment?

In addition, and in order for funds to be granted, an official inventory list of the existing equipment needs to be provided. Furthermore, the requesting HEI needs to clearly demonstrate how young academic staff and/or young researchers of the university will benefit from the envisaged equipment.

## 3. Interconnection with the previous phases of earmarked support

The request for new equipment must be based on needs identified in phase I and activities implemented in phase II of earmarked support. These activities may include:

- Revision, upgrading of the existing strategic and action plans, as well as development of new strategic documents (if needed);
- Development, revision, or upgrading of the regulatory framework for monitoring and evaluation mechanisms;

- Development, revision, or upgrading of the regulatory framework for international cooperation;
- Development, revision or upgrading of the legal framework;
- Support of the accreditation process of public HEIs (institutional and programme level);
- Development, revision, or upgrading of the regulatory framework related to quality assurance;
- Leadership training and capacity building measures for staff of public HEIs as identified in the baselines;
- Establishment of centers for teaching and research;
- Building capacities of the institutes within the public HEIs;
- Support in developing the regulatory framework and institution building for specialized Institutes that exist within the public HEIs' structures;
- Support in the development of applied science programs;
- Support of activities related to HRBA, Social Dimension and gender equality;
- Support of activities related to research, innovation and science development;
- Project Cycle Management Trainings in order to strengthen staff capacities for writing, monitoring and/or implementing projects;
- Other activities related to strategic development of public HEIs.

#### **4. Amount of the funds and dissemination of information**

The funds are established and earmarked for each public HEI (below EUR 50 000 each), but in case some public HEIs do not come with a qualitative request, the funds will be accessible for other universities.

The project team will organize information sessions for all public HEIs and explain all details pertaining to this initiative and encourage them to comply with the objective, conditions and interconnection between all three phases of earmarked support which targets public HEIs.

## 5. What shall be considered as equipment purchase?

The funds shall be used for purchase of equipment that is directly linked to the baseline assessment, strategies, action plans, research-based studying, laboratory items, equipping the training and/or research centers, classrooms and/or auditoriums and similar. In addition, the requested equipment can also refer to needs and findings that derive from ongoing HERAS Plus funded projects (i.e. Programmatic Partnerships, Research Grant, Social Dimension or Applied Science Small Grant Scheme).

Below are given two examples for potential equipment requests:

Example 1: If the public HEI plans to establish a center for teaching, research or a student support center, then via this request, the HEI may ask for equipment that will be necessary in order for the center to become fully functional from a logistical point of view. This could include, laptop/s for trainers, projectors, screens, training materials, flip-chart table/paper, etc.

Example 2: In case the university or its entities (faculty, institute, academics, students) wants to conduct a specific research work which requires an equipped laboratory, then via this request, the HEI could ask for various tools and equipment to be used by researchers and scientists in a laboratory. This could include microscopes, eprouvettes, pipettes, laboratory centrifuge, laboratory shakers, beakers, Erlenmeyer flask, graduated cylinders, volumetric flask, photometers, incubators and other specific items that are closely related to research/scientific work.

The funds shall be planned not only for the purchase of equipment but also for consumables, work-force for installation of the equipment and possibly the maintenance of equipment. Costs for the maintenance can extend until December 2023 (end of project). In general, the sustainability of the equipment purchase needs to be ensured beyond the project lifetime.

## 6. Management and disbursement of funds

The management and utilization of earmarked funds will be done in close cooperation with the public HEIs.

For this purpose, the HERAS Plus and the respective public HEIs will need to sign an agreement where all contractual relations, funds transfer, evidence collection will be stipulated. The public HEIs will be asked to organize and manage the purchase process. The provisions and the procedures that will need to be followed, will be stipulated in the contract between HEIs and HERAS Plus.

In case the public HEIs has organized the purchase themselves, then all related invoices will need to be submitted to HERAS Plus for reimbursement.

Once the earmarked request is reviewed and approved by the designated review committee, WUS Austria and the respective public HEI will sign an agreement where all cooperation provisions will be stipulated to ensure transparency and accountability.

## **7. Procurement procedures for purchase of equipment**

The entire procurement process will need to be initiated, prepared and finalized solely by public HEIs.

The project team will not be directly involved in the process of equipment purchase. On the other hand, public HEIs need to submit all necessary documentation and evidences of purchase equipment to the project. The same needs to be stored and available for review for at least 10 years, in compliance with ADA rules and regulations.

Please note that the entire procurement (including payment, installment of equipment and recording in the inventory) needs to be finalized by November 2023 the latest.

## **8. Support provided by the project team**

The staff from the HERAS Plus will support the respective public HEIs during the preparation of the earmarked request. This will include preparatory meetings between the project team and public HEIs and info sessions before it is submitted for official review.

## 9. Review committee

The earmarked request for equipment will be open as of 01 November 2022 and all requests will be approved by a review committee composed of representatives of:

- Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI);
- WUS Austria and a second representative from the Consortium;
- HERAS Plus team.

The final decision on the approval will be made solely by the review committee whereas the project team will be in charge of facilitating the contract signing and to follow-up on its implementation.

## 10. Submission procedure

The grant application should be submitted via e-mail to:

Ms. Donjeta Ibra, Office Manager at: [donjeta.ibra@wus-austria.org](mailto:donjeta.ibra@wus-austria.org)

All documents required for submission have to be in English, and include the following:

- Signed earmarked request (Template provided as Annex to this document);
- Inventory list.

## Annexes

- Template for earmark request for equipment in line with findings from baselines;
- ADA Visibility Guidelines.