

Public Disclosure of Project Information on ADA's website

Project title	APPEAR Austrian Partnership Programme in Higher Education and Research for Development
Contract number:	OEZA-Vertrag Nr. 0894-00/2020 bzw. 0894-01/2020; APPEAR
Reporting period	01.01.2022 – 31.12.2022
Implementing agency	OeAD-GmbH – Austria's Agency for Education and Internationalisation

1. Project progress

1.1. Summary

Despite the trend toward more difficult working conditions, especially for local project partners, due to the consequences of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, APPEAR was able to continue in its proven manner.

The focus of APPEAR's work in the past year was on contract preparation, the launch of the newly selected (Advanced) Academic Partnership projects and Preparatory Funding projects of the 8th Call, the preparation and call for proposals of the 9th Call, and the selection of projects and scholarships by the APPEAR Selection Board in November 2022.

With regard to the 9th Call, comprehensive advisory services were offered in spring 2022, primarily in the form of three webinars, which were very well received. In component 2 (scholarships), two of the six selected scholarship holders of the 8th Call were already able to start their studies. The remaining scholarship holders are expected to begin their studies in spring 2023.

Another focus in the first half of 2022 was on networking among the new project partners and the first meeting of the newly constituted Advisory Board. A joyful event in the midst of a work environment marked by multiple crises was the celebration of the anniversary of the APPEAR programme (APPEAR 10+2), which finally took place in June.

The second half of 2022 was dedicated to the preparation and implementation of the APPEAR selection board meeting. 8 new projects were approved in the 9th call (see below).

A number of events were held during the past year. Particularly noteworthy are the OeAD Higher Education Conference (OeAD-Hochschultagung) in Graz, where APPEAR was a focal point on the second day; the Austrian Development Conference (Österreichische Entwicklungstagung) in Linz, where different aspects of the APPEAR programme points were represented and an APPEAR in practice was held by project manager Aminata Fall presenting the latest book publication entitled 'Sustainable Energy Access for Communities'. Furthermore, the APPEAR Film Days in cooperation with 'this human world' international human rights film festival screened the doc-film 'Among Us Women', followed by a lively discussion with the audience.

1.2. 9th Call for funding

The second call of the third programme phase was open from 1 March to 31 May 2022. At the end of November, the APPEAR selection board, comprising of seven national and international experts and chaired by the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) met to discuss and deliberate the project and scholarship applications which had been submitted during the second call. After a presentation of the projects by the APPEAR Office each formally correct project proposal with a total average review score of over 75 (of max 100 points) was discussed and evaluated according to the APPEAR criteria, guiding principles and added values. In a competitive process 8 project applications could be finally approved for funding: 6 Academic Partnership and 2 Advanced Academic Partnership Projects. 37,5 % of these projects will be coordinated by institutions in the partner countries and 62,5 % by female scientists. In addition, 10 Preparatory Funding projects were selected according to the average scores given by all selection board members and one further Preparatory Funding was awarded to an Academic Partnership consortium.

The success rate for Preparatory Funding was 53%, for Academic Partnership 17% and for Advanced Academic Partnership Projects 50%. None of the submitted Extended Impact Partnership proposals was selected for funding. At the end of the current reporting period, the contracts for the selected projects and preparatory funding projects were initiated. The selected projects will start their project activities in 2023.

Moreover, 6 scholarship recipients were selected out of 10 applications (with a success rate of 60%).

1.3. Projects selected within the 9th call (2022)

Academic Partnership Projects

Project277: Ecosystem services assessment through a participatory approach for sustainable water resources management in Armenia

Project coordinator: Verena Radinger-Peer

Coordinating institution: University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna

Partner institution: Yerevan State University, Scientific Center of Zoology and Hydroecology of National Academy of Sciences

Partner country: Armenia

Project278: Strengthening Genetic Biocontrol Capacities under Climate Change in Armenia

Project coordinator: Marine Arakelyan

Coordinating institution: Yerevan State University

Partner institution: University of Veterinary Medicine Vienna, University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna, Medical University of Vienna, Scientific Center of Zoology and Hydroecology of National Academy of Science, Institute of Botany ft. A.L. Takhtajyan of National Academy of Science

Partner country: Armenia

Project287: Strengthening Capacity of Higher Engineering Education for Sustainable Buildings

Project coordinator: Tshewang Lhendup

Coordinating institution: Royal University of Bhutan

Partner institution: Universität Innsbruck

Partner country: Bhutan

Project288: Promotion of Hybrid Renewable Energy Systems Towards Electricity Access in Uganda

Project coordinator: Rafat Al Afif

Coordinating institution: University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna

Partner institution: Makerere University

Partner country: Uganda

Project291: Strengthening transformative capacity of Higher Education Institutions for equitable and resilient governance of natural resources in refugee-host community settings in West Nile, Uganda

Project coordinator: Clement Okia

Coordinating institution: Muni University Uganda

Partner institution: University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna, PALM Corps

Partner country: Uganda

Project303: Capacity Building for Sustainable Rural Tourism in Mozambique

Project coordinator: Claudia Dolezal

Coordinating institution: IMC University of Applied Sciences Krems

Partner institution: Universidade Eduardo Mondlane - Escola Superior de Hotelaria e

Turismo de Inhambane
Partner country: Mozambique

Advanced Academic Partnership Projects

Project310_AAP: Implementation of Academic Geomatics Education in Ethiopia for Supporting Sustainable Development

Project coordinator: Thomas Bauer

Coordinating institution: University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences Vienna

Partner institution: Debre Markos University, Vienna University of Technology, Bahir Dar University

Partner country: Ethiopia

Project311_AAP: Capacity Building for Sustainable Energy Use Towards Green Job Creation in the Gaza Strip – Palestine

Project coordinator: Christoph Pfeifer

Coordinating institution: University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences Vienna

Partner institution: Islamic University of Gaza

Partner country: Palestine

A list of all selected project (including preparatory funding) is published on the APPEAR website: <https://appear.at/en/projects/current-projects>

2. Risk analysis

With the invasion of Russian troops on February 24, 2022, not only the European but also the global security architecture changed. A new hegemonic competition between the USA, China and Russia has been unleashed in the period under review by the war of aggression in the Ukraine – with currently unforeseeable consequences for the world community. A reasonably coherent Western defense block has strengthened the Ukrainian defense – in particular with qualitatively and quantitatively constantly increasing arms deliveries. The area currently occupied by the Russian military amounts to around 20% of Ukrainian territory. The APPEAR programme is affected by the global insecurity, also by rearmament and the local conflicts that are also becoming more violent. High energy costs, general inflation, dramatic increase of food prices, acute threat scenarios affecting other post-Soviet countries – Georgia, Moldova, Armenia – are a direct consequence of the war of aggression. The situation in the Palestinian territories has deteriorated massively, not least because of the new ultra-right government, Burkina Faso continues to face Islamist threats in the north of the country and heavy fighting took place around Tigray in Ethiopia. The ceasefire concluded in October, which

has contributed to the current widespread deescalation of the conflict, is a positive exception in reporting on violent crises and conflicts. Worrying incidents have also repeatedly occurred on the Serbian-Kosovar border.

None of these risks can be directly influenced. However, they must be observed closely and their possible influence on project activities must be analyzed by the project partners.

3. Performance with regard to social and environmental standards/safeguards

APPEAR sets out to contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and has established social and environmental standards as inherent part of the programme design. As stipulated in the call guidelines, all APPEAR projects have to implement seven basic principles:

- Participatory approach
- A concept of culturally open-minded knowledge
- Practically and empirically oriented approach
- Bottom-up and demand-driven approach
- Gender sensitivity
- Leave no one behind
- Open Access – Open data

The **participatory approach** of APPEAR means that project proposals should be planned and worked out jointly by the proposing partners of the main cooperating institutions. APPEAR follows **an open-minded concept of knowledge**, science and empirical research. APPEAR is not interested in one-sided “knowledge transfer”, usually prolonging the predominance – which is often seen as arrogance – of “western science” and “western interests”. Research and teaching outcomes as well as empirical approaches should be considered from the very beginning. Furthermore, beneficiaries on different levels should be identified and defined in order to plan and implement accordingly with a practical and empirical approach. APPEAR strictly follows a **demand-driven approach** through which demand has to be defined by the partners, and a participatory approach in education and research. Respect for different methodological and empirical approaches, of different epistemological and cultural systems, of different modes of interaction and interpretation of results – regarding the impact on the addressed target groups / countries in particular – should be seen as preconditions for the aimed participatory and demand-driven partnerships to be implemented on an equal basis.

APPEAR aims to contribute to **gender equality** and to the individual and collective empowerment of women. This means that equal participation of women and men is envisaged in all areas and that gender dimensions are integrated systematically at all programme levels. A gender-specific analysis of the context in which the research and/or the project takes place is required to understand social structures and institutions of the project and research environment. In addition, gender-specific measures and activities throughout the entire project cycle are crucial. The **APPEAR Gender Strategy** and additional information on gender mainstreaming can be found on the APPEAR website: www.appear.at/gender.

The “**leave no one behind**” principle as inherent part of the SDG agenda is essential for development cooperation interventions and is also to be considered within higher education projects in the framework of APPEAR. Following this approach allows to intervene in time and prevent that people with disabilities, or people from underrepresented or marginalised population groups are further neglected and discriminated by development interventions. Therefore, APPEAR partnerships have to consider the rights of persons with disabilities in their project work. The inclusion of disability mainstreaming in APPEAR Academic Partnerships, Advanced Academic Partnerships and Extended Impact Partnerships as well as in the nomination of master’s and PhD applicants will thus be regarded as an added value and will be taken into consideration in the selection process. The APPEAR Diversity Strategy can be found on the APPEAR website: <https://appear.at/en/implementation/disability-mainstreaming>

The goal of **Open Access** to support free and sustainable access to scientific publications has found its way into academia. APPEAR wants to contribute to this movement and by doing so contribute to the disadvantaged position of many institutions in the Global South that cannot subscribe to high-end journals. **Open data** is an additional initiative that has been started in recent years and is yet to be further institutionalized and systematized.

In order to ensure not only a socially but also an environmentally sustainable programme and project implementation, applicants are required to make use of the **APPEAR CO₂ compensation model**. The BOKU’s (University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna) carbon offset system has been chosen as a compensation model for APPEAR. Academic partnerships pay a compensation for their air travel to BOKU. With this contribution the BOKU finances climate protection projects in developing countries. For more information visit BOKU’s website: <https://klimaneutralität.boku.ac.at/en/co2-kompensation/>

In addition to the social and environmental responsibilities illustrated above, the project coordinators contractually commit to complying with the **principles of ethical behaviour**, with rules and regulations on combatting corruption and money laundering and with international counter-terrorism treaties and UN Security Council Resolutions on terrorism.