APPEAR III Selection Board | Terms of Reference | Version 19.7.21

1. An introduction to APPEAR III

The Austrian Partnership Programme in Higher Education and Research for Development (APPEAR) finances partnerships between higher education institutions (HEI) in Austria and universities and research institutions in the following priority countries:

- Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Uganda
- Bhutan
- Palestinian Territories
- Armenia, Georgia, Moldova
- Albania, Kosovo

The impact of APPEAR is to contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by contributing to improving the scientific foundation in the partner countries and by contributing to increasing the commitment to development cooperation of the Austrian higher education institutions.

The outcomes of the projects that are financed by APPEAR contribute to the impact of the programme, as is illustrated in the APPEAR III Theory of Change. Thus, it is important to bear in mind this link during the selection of the projects. The outcomes of APPEAR projects refer to the categories: Teaching, research, management, scholars, dialogue and visibility, project-specific outcomes.
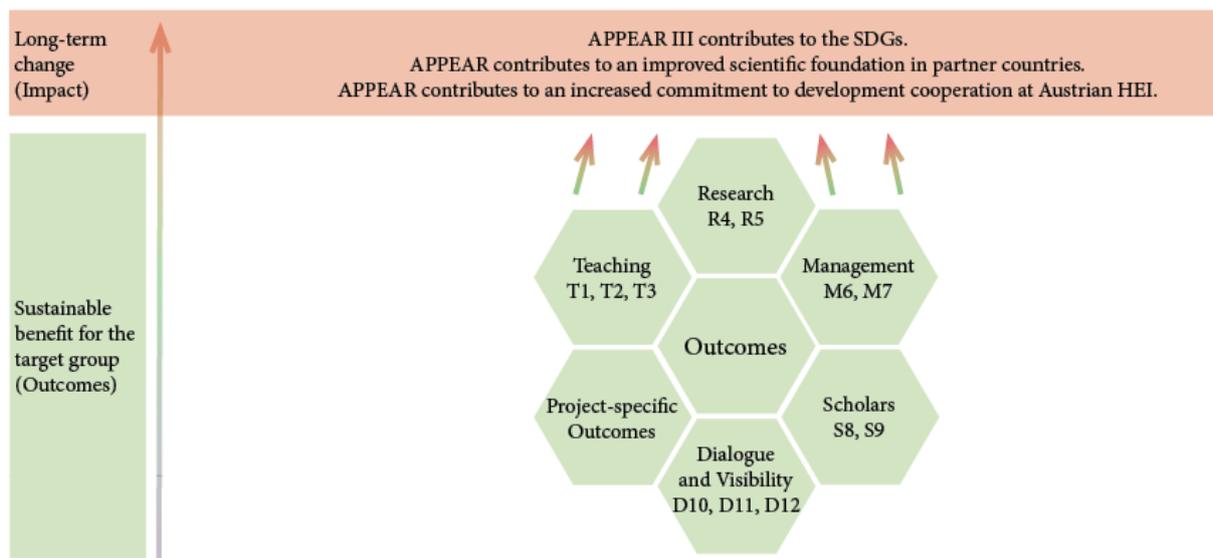

Figure 1: Project outcomes and their contribution to the programme impact

APPEAR is financed by the Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC) and follows its strategy for Higher Education and Scientific Cooperation. Since 2009 it has been implemented by Austria's Agency for Education and Internationalisation (OeAD-GmbH) in the course of three programme phases: APPEAR I (2009–2014), APPEAR II (2014–2020), APPEAR III (2020–2027).

2. APPEAR III projects

APPEAR projects must consist of at least **one HEI in Austria** and **one university or research institution in a priority country**. Only institutions out of these two groups can submit a project. The institution that submits the project proposal is also the one who will be responsible for the overall coordination of the project, which also entails the overall responsibility for reporting.

Non-academic institutions from priority countries are eligible to participate as additional partners. Furthermore, the consortium can be expanded to include associate partner institutions. They are located outside Austria and the 11 priority countries, but in a country listed in the OECD DAC list of ODA recipients. The associate partner institution must be located on the same continent as (one of) the main partner(s) of the core consortium.

APPEAR III offers the following instruments:

Preparatory funding (PF)

- Up to 4 months, up to 15,000 euros
- New institutional partners jointly develop a project proposal for an Academic Partnership.

Academic Partnership (AP)

- Up to 4 years, 50,000–90,000 euros per year with two partners, 50,000–130,000 euros per year with more than two partners
- Collaborations are conducted that strengthen teaching, research and management of the institutions in the partner countries and enhance visibility of development research in Austria.

Advanced Academic Partnership (AAP)

- Up to 3 years, 50,000–90,000 euros per year with two partners, 50,000–130,000 euros per year with more than two partners
- Based on completed Academic Partnership projects, these collaborations build on the results of the previous partnership and define new results that further strengthen the project outcomes.

Extended Impact Partnership (EIP)

- Up to 2 years (Extended Impact **Institutional** Partnership / EIIP) / 3 years (Extended Impact **External** Partnership / EIEP), 50,000–90,000 euros per year with two partners, 50,000–130,000 euros per year with more than two partners
- These collaborations are based on completed Academic Partnership or Advanced Academic Partnership projects. Their aim is to enhance the impact of the projects by cooperating with new stakeholders and by ensuring research uptake and adoption of developed results. Their relevance is defined by further and more in-depth institutional capacity development (EIIP),

or by enhanced impact on the defined social groups benefitting from the adoption of the project results in view of poverty reduction and the SDGs (EIEP).

All projects have to adhere to the **7 APPEAR III principles**:

Guiding principles:
1) participatory
2) culturally open-minded
3) practical and empirical
4) gender sensitive
5) bottom-up and demand-driven
6) leave no one behind
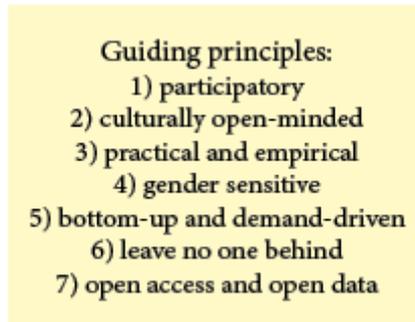7) open access and open data

Figure 2: APPEAR III Guiding principles

Furthermore, the following **added values** will be considered in the judgement by the Selection Board:

- Alignment with the priorities of the ADC country strategies, use of synergies with ongoing ADC-funded projects (this is a prerequisite for projects with partners in Albania and Kosovo)
- Inclusion of persons with disabilities in alignment with the APPEAR diversity strategy
- Strengthening of regional networks and South-South cooperation
- Advancement of young and particularly female researchers
- Practically oriented activities that enhance the application of results, research-into-use and research uptake
- Project responsibility by an institution in the partner country

The overall funding amount available for projects within APPEAR III (2020-2027) is 10.5 million euros for projects (AP, AAP, EIP) and 825,000 euros for preparatory funding. It is anticipated that around 30 projects (AP, AAP, EIP) and 55 preparatory funding phases will be financed.

More information on the specific instruments, the APPEAR III principles and the added values can be found in the guidelines of the respective calls (www.appear.at/application).

3. APPEAR III scholarships

Two different scholarships are awarded:

Individual scholarships

- For PhD studies in Austria
- Up to 4 years, 1,100 euros per month

Embedded scholarships

- For PhD or master's studies in Austria, embedded in an APPEAR project (see above)
- PhD: up to 4 years, 1,100 euros per month
- Master's: up to 2 years, 1,000 euros per month

The overall funding amount available for scholarships within APPEAR III (2020-2027) is about 3.3 million euros. Of this amount, a maximum of 30% is allocated to Individual scholarships, while 70% is assigned to Embedded scholarships. It is expected that around 16 Individual scholars will be financed.

4. Members of the Selection Board

The seven members of the Selection Board will be chosen based on mutual consent between ADA and the APPEAR Office. The Selection Board will consist of the following members:

- Representative of the Austrian Development Agency, chair of the Selection Board
- Representative of the Austrian Development Agency
- Social scientist with expertise in development research and experience in one or several of the partner countries
- Natural scientist with expertise in development research and experience in one or several of the partner countries
- Representative of an Austrian or European funding or development agency with expertise in the implementation of programmes similar to APPEAR
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Members of the APPEAR Office will participate in the Selection Board meeting but will have no voting rights.

5. Mode of working and selection process

5.1. General information

The dates of the Selection Board meetings will be set by the APPEAR Office in consultation with ADA. Indicatively, meetings of the Selection Board will take place in November of each year in which there will be a call for proposals (i.e. 2021 – 2024). The members of the Selection Board will be informed about the date of the Selection Board meeting at least three months prior to the meeting. There will be one Selection Board meeting for each APPEAR Call for Proposals, during which all the projects and scholarships of the respective call will be selected. The Selection Board meetings will either take place in Vienna or will be conducted via telecommunication tools. The members of the Selection Board will not be paid. Travel costs (economy class) and accommodation expenses for meetings held in Vienna will be reimbursed.

The **Selection Board documents** necessary for the meeting will be sent out at least three weeks prior to the meeting. Prior to receiving the documents, all members of the Selection Board are required to sign the data protection declaration of OeAD. The documents contain:

- List of eligible AP, AAP, EIP proposals, sorted by average total score of external reviews
- Overview, abstracts and reviews of AP, AAP, EIP proposals
- List of eligible PF proposals
- Overview and excerpts of PF proposals
- Ranking list of eligible scholarship applications
- Excerpts of scholarship applications as well as rating by APPEAR Office and assessment of scientific supervisors

An introductory webinar will be offered to the members of the Selection Board prior to the Selection Board meeting, in order to establish a common understanding of the APPEAR III Theory of Change and the call guidelines.

ADA will chair the Selection Board meetings. In case the chair is unable to attend the meeting, she/he will nominate a substitute from among the Selection Board. The Selection Board is quorate if at least four members are present. Decisions are taken by simple majority. In case of a tie vote, the vote of the chair will be decisive. Proxy voting is not possible. Circular resolutions via email are possible in exceptional cases.

Resolution minutes will be written by the APPEAR Office. An electronic version of the minutes will be sent to all members of the Selection Board within three weeks after the meeting.

5.2. Selection of Academic Partnership, Advanced Academic Partnership, Extended Impact Partnership projects

All proposals for Academic Partnership, Advanced Academic Partnership and Extended Impact Partnership that meet the formal criteria will be reviewed by two international reviewers. The reviewers are independent experts with experience and knowledge appropriate to the tasks assigned to them and will declare not to have any conflict of interest at the time of their appointment. All reviewers remain anonymous during and after the selection process by the APPEAR Selection Board.

A review consists of two parts:

1. Scoring matrix: Reviewers score the following aspects of the project proposal: (1) Relevance for and contribution to development and the achievement of the SDGs, (2) Results and long-term change, (3) Project design and quality, (4) Project management and capacity of the consortium (5) Cost effectiveness. Each criterion has a maximum score of 20, which adds up to a total maximum score of 100.
2. Textual report

The **average total score** of both reviews on the respective project proposal will be calculated and the projects will be sorted according to their average score, starting with the highest rating. A total average score between 100 and 91 reflects a very good project, between 90 and 81 a good project, between 80 and 71 an average project, and below 70 a poor project. Applications with average total scores below 70 will be rejected without discussion in the Selection Board. If the scoring of the two reviewers differs more than fifteen points from each other, a third reviewer will be appointed. The third review will not be required in case the first two reviewers classify the application as "reject", or in case the first two reviews are both below 70 points.

In addition to the reviews, the APPEAR Office will assess project proposals with regard to their adherence to the APPEAR III guiding principles as well as with respect to added values. Moreover, the Coordination Offices of ADA in the addressed priority countries will assess the respective project proposals and provide comments.

The Selection Board's decision making – upon availability of funds for the respective call – is based on three pillars:

Scores and comments of the external reviewers	Adherence to guiding principles and added values	Assessment of the Coordination Offices of the ADA
• The reviews will be provided in the Selection Board documents sent out at least three weeks prior to the meeting.	• Overview and abstracts of the proposals will form part of the Selection Board documents. • Adherence to the guiding principles as well as added values will be presented by the APPEAR Office during the Selection Board Meeting.	• The assessment / comments of the Coordination Offices of the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) in the respective priority countries will be presented by a member of the ADA during the meeting.

Each project proposal will be discussed individually, starting with the proposal with the highest average

total score. The members of the Selection Board are expected to be familiar with the overview, abstract and reviews of the project proposals, which form part of the Selection Board documents. Adherence to the guiding principles as well as added values will be presented by the APPEAR Office. While adherence to the guiding principles is regarded as a prerequisite for each project proposal, the added values are considered as additional assets that "can be decisive for selection" (see Guidelines for the 8th Call). The assessment of the Coordination Offices of the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) of the ADA will be presented by a member of the ADA. After discussion of each project proposal, the members of the Selection Board will vote on the respective project proposal. The Selection Board has the possibility to:

- accept a project.
- accept a project with conditions to be met prior to the contracting process.
- accept a project with conditions to be met during project implementation, to be documented in the annual and final reports.
- reject a project.

5.3.   Selection of Preparatory Funding projects

Proposals for preparatory funding will not be reviewed by external reviewers. All proposals for Preparatory Funding that meet the formal criteria will be discussed in the Selection Board. The decision – upon availability of funds for the respective call – is taken along the following two pillars:

Quality of the proposal, contribution to the programme objectives	Assessment of the Coordination Offices of the ADA
- Overview and excerpts of the proposals will be provided in the Selection Board documents sent out at least three weeks prior to the meeting. - The APPEAR Office will present key aspects of the proposals during the Selection Board meeting.	- The assessment of the Coordination Offices of the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) in the respective priority countries will be presented by a member of the ADA during the meeting.

The members of the Selection Board are expected to be familiar with the overview and excerpts of the PF proposals, which form part of the Selection Board documents. Key aspects of the proposals will be presented by the APPEAR Office. The assessment of the Coordination Offices of the ADA will be presented by a member of the ADA. After discussion of each PF proposal, the members of the Selection Board will vote on the respective proposal. The Selection Board has the possibility to:

- accept a project.
- reject a project.

5.4.   Selection of scholarships

All eligible applications for Individual scholarships will be rated by the APPEAR Office. Furthermore, the respective future scientific supervisors will provide an assessment of the applications. Based on the rating of the APPEAR Office and the assessments of the scientific supervisors, a ranking of the applications will be provided and sent out at least three weeks prior to the Selection Board meeting.

During the meeting the members of the Selection Board are expected to be familiar with the excerpts of scholarship applications as well as the rating by the APPEAR Office and assessments of the scientific supervisors, all of which form part of the Selection Board documents. The Selection Board will vote on the respective scholarship applications, taking into consideration that female applicants are to be prioritised and equal opportunities will be given to students with special needs.

The Selection Board has the possibility to:

- accept an application.
- reject an application.

Embedded scholarships will not be selected by the Selection Board but chosen by the project coordinators of the respective projects. Formal eligibility of the applicants will be checked and confirmed by the APPEAR Office.

6. Overview of tasks and responsibilities

APPEAR Office	ADA members of the Selection Board	All members of the Selection Board
Prior to the Selection Board meeting		
• Eligibility check of project proposals, organization of review process. • Preparing the Selection Board documents. • Organisation of Selection Board Meetings. • Sending out the Selection Board documents at least 3 weeks prior to the meeting. • Travel arrangements of international members of the Selection Board.	• Inviting the members of the Selection Board. • With support from APPEAR Office, drafting the agenda and time schedule for the Selection Board meeting.	• Getting familiar with the Selection Board documents.
During the introductory webinar		
• Presenting the call guidelines, clarifying open questions.	• Chairing the introductory webinar.	• Attending the introductory webinar.
During the meeting		
• Presentation of adherence to the guiding principles as well as added values (AP, AAP, EIP). • Presentation of key aspects of the proposals (PF). • No voting rights in the selection of projects.	• Chairing the Selection Board meeting, ensuring adherence to the time schedule. • Presenting the assessment of the Coordination Offices of ADA. • In case of a tie vote, the vote of the chair will be decisive.	• Attending the Selection Board meeting. • Voting rights in the selection of projects.
After the meeting		
• Drafting the resolution minutes and sending them to the members of the Selection Board within three weeks after the meeting. • Implementing the decisions of the Selection Board.	• Confirming the resolution minutes.	• Confirming the resolution minutes.