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Deliverable abstract

The document contains a detailed report on all the activities performed in the WP. The final section collects a set of recommendations to be disseminated to other WB HEIs, RPOs, and RFOs facing similar problems.

The deliverable contains a detailed description of WP5 activities at the end of the project, paying particular attention to the setting up of the specialized Unit at SSST.

Moreover, an overview of training courses developed by EDIRE partners for both academic and administrative staff at SSST and beyond is offered. These courses were designed to enhance skills and knowledge relevant to research management practices.

Overall period of the project, collaboration between EDIRE partners has strengthened significantly as we collectively worked towards the development of new project proposals that are now collected in this document. This collaborative effort underscores our commitment to advancing research excellence and innovation.

The final part of the document draws from EDIRE experience, to articulate recommendations for Western-Balkans research realities.

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Glossary of abbreviations

AI	Artificial Intelligence
BA	Bosnia and Herzegovina
EC	European Commission
EDI	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
ESR	Early-Stage Researcher
EU	European Union
GE	Gender Equality
GM	Gender Mainstreaming
HE	Higher Educational
HPC	High Performance Computing
IOT	Internet Of Things
IPR	Intellectual Property Rights
KoM	Kick-off-Meeting
ORPA	Office for Research and Project Administration
SSST	University Sarajevo School of Science and Technology
TUD	TU Dublin – Technological University Dublin
UCM	Complutense University of Madrid
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNIGE	University of Genoa
URCA	University of Reims Champagne-Ardenne
WP	Work package

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1. Introduction

This deliverable contains the description of all the activities carried out in EDIRE within the framework of WP5 until the end of the project.

WP5 is a Work package on *Expertise development in research management and fundraising*.

It was focused on ensuring that SSST develops structures and capacities in research management and fundraising in line with the standards required for research-intensive universities in the European Research Area (ERA). WP5 aimed at increasing the internationalisation and the research management and administration performance of SSST.

WP5 Specific Objectives were:

- 1)** establishing a new Research Management Unit within the institution;
- 2)** organising capacity building activities and high-level training for developing research management capabilities within SSST staff;
- 3)** implementing sustainable and durable actions to ensure a higher number of submitted applications to external R&I calls;
- 4)** engaging the highest possible number of SSST staff and especially those at high-level positions.

WP5 consisted of five different tasks, this chapter discusses each task and the related activities which were conducted under each.

The document highlights the project's achievements, challenges and strategic recommendations for improving research management and governance in the Western-Balkan countries. Mentoring and reinforcement activities such as capacity building, high-level training and research management skills development are emphasised as crucial. In addition, the report emphasises the importance of training courses in a variety of areas such as fundraising, project management, intellectual property rights, technology transfer, and EDI awareness.

The report describes the central role of this project in shaping the discourse on gender equality and inclusion and serves as a model for future efforts seeking European funding in the Western-Balkan countries.

Finally, the report contains a series of policy recommendations to systematically address these challenges. These recommendations emphasise the importance of specialised units (as the Office for Research and Project Activities at SSST), training courses and policy measures to improve institutional and administrative capacity, foster collaboration and support researchers throughout the project life cycle.

2. Recognition of current situation for boosting research management and fundraising capacities at SSST and beyond (T5.1)

This first task (M1-5) started with the Kick-of-Meeting, which was organized at SSST on the 23rd of September 2022.

On that occasion, bilateral meetings were organized between SSST and UNIGE Staff to review and analyse the current research management and fundraising infrastructures in SSST. Two panel sessions and a discussion between academics and government representatives were also held at this time.

The first panel included EDIRE partners and experienced Horizon scheme participants, including Prof. Dr. Angela Celeste Taramasso, Rector's Advisor for Equality and Inclusion at the University of Genoa and Prof. Dr. Yvonne Galligan, Director of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion at Technological University Dublin. The panellists shared successful project initiatives that incorporated EDI principles at the core of their activities and explained the importance of gendering data and knowledge across all scientific branches and fields.

The second panel included individuals from BiH – Prof. Dr. Aleksandra Nikolić, the Minister of Science, Higher Education and Youth of Sarajevo Canton; Prof. Dr. Jasmina Husanović from the University of Tuzla; and the academician Prof. Dr. Mirsada Hukić from the Academy of Sciences and Art of Bosnia-Herzegovina. This panel consisted of discussions about recent efforts to highlight and implement gender mainstreaming within the university channels, and about sensitizing academia stakeholders and those involved with decision-making structures on the importance of implementing EDI-related changes.

Having participants from BiH provided an opportunity to discuss research management and fundraising capacities within the country.

As part of this task, SSST conducted a survey of higher education and research institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina, collecting data from 10 institutions with the aim of assessing adherence to EDI principles and current research and innovation practices and infrastructures. The activities helped to illuminate the areas of research management and administration procedures at SSST in need of improvement, and which could benefit from further attention. The task's main outcome was presented in the D5.1 Action Plan, which contains a detailed report on the assessment of the situation at SSST and other research institutions in BiH.

3. Setting up and running of a research management/administration unit within SSST (T5.2)

This task was specifically devoted to the creation of a new research management/administration unit at SSST, as required by the call itself.

According to the needs that emerged in the activities in T5.1 in M6, a new Administration Research Unit was established with the aim of implementing capacity building activities and increasing the Unit's project design and management capabilities as a means of securing sustainability (MS2).

The Unit was named the 'Office for Research Project and Administration' (ORPA). Within the EDIRE project activities, and through the many trainings that have been conducted, ORPA has strengthened its capacities and has been put in the Institutional Statute of SSST University. For most of the project ORPA was composed of three employees (while at the beginning it was 2) all of whom having previous experience in the design and management of research projects.

The names of the persons involved have been:

- *Edis Arifagić, Head of the ORPA*

Mr. Edis Arifagić (Bosnia and Herzegovina) is the University's Director of Research and Project Administration, providing overall coordination and oversight of all externally sponsored programs implemented by the University. Edis has more than 20 years of global experience in delivering large-scale development projects, serving in senior roles with both the OSCE and the UN's Development Program. He has successfully fundraised and implemented technical assistance and infrastructure programs valued at over EUR 120 million. Edis is also a Senior Response and Recovery Coordinator with the United Nation's Emergency Surge Program and has worked as a consultant for a range of international organisations and corporations. He holds degrees from Henderson State University (USA) and the University of Bristol (UK) in Political Science and International Security, respectively.

- *Amina Katica, ORPA Assistant*

As a Project Officer, Amina Katica plays a crucial role in managing administrative project tasks, contributing significantly to the efficient execution of various initiatives. She is responsible for overseeing coordination efforts and ensuring quality assurance across projects. Amina is also tasked with managing the International office, where she oversees cross-border projects and facilitates international cooperation for University SSST. In this role, she facilitates effective communication and collaboration between diverse teams, ensuring that projects are executed smoothly and efficiently across geographical boundaries.

- *Selma Dedović, ORPA Assistant*

Selma Dedović, with a background in law, finance, and project assistance, applies her skills in overseeing financial and other project operations at ORPA. In her current role, she handles tasks like drafting agreements, preparing financial reports, and overseeing budgeting with a careful approach to ensure document integrity and

protect the interests of all parties involved. Selma also manages open calls, evaluating proposals to support ongoing projects and contribute to their smooth progression. Her systematic document review and comprehensive understanding of financial and legal nuances make her a valuable contributor to effective project management and implementation.

- *Hena Saraj Atlić*

Hena Sara Atlıc has built a solid foundation in implementation of project activities with a specific focus on digitalisation, youth empowerment, and supporting civil society organisations (CSOs). With notable experience at international organisations like the UNDP, she has focused on utilising digital technologies to foster development and ensure equitable opportunities. At SSST, Hena is assisting in coordination of project activities, stakeholder engagement, and promotion of digital solutions within projects, while demonstrating a strong commitment to social improvement.

- Jasmina Bajramović, ORPA Assistant for Internationalization (who left SSST in 2024)

In the final year of the project, the composition of ORPA changed to the following members:

- Prof. Dr. Jasna Hivziefendić, ORPA Manager
- Amina Katica
- Mersiha Muranović
- Selma Dedović

Prof. Jasna Hivziefendić is a Full Professor of Electrical Engineering at the Sarajevo School of Science and Technology. With over two decades of experience in the field, she has significantly contributed to the advancement of science, technology, and engineering in the region.

Prof. Hivziefendić has a robust portfolio in EU-funded projects, having managed ten international initiatives and assessed numerous EU project proposals over the past ten years. Her involvement spans various EU programmes, including Horizon Europe, Erasmus+, Digital Europe, and COST Actions. Notably, she has served as an evaluator for Horizon 2020 projects, assessing proposals and monitoring project implementations, thereby influencing the direction of research and innovation funding in Europe.

In addition to her project management and evaluation roles, Prof. Hivziefendić has been an active advocate for gender equality in STEM fields. She has publicly emphasized the importance of equal opportunities for women in science and technology, asserting that competence and perseverance are key to success, irrespective of gender. Her advocacy is reflected in her participation in conferences and initiatives aimed at promoting gender inclusivity in academia and industry.

Furthermore, Prof. Hivziefendić contributes to the academic community by providing training on EU project proposal writing. In collaboration with Dr. Adna Ašić, she lectures at Verlab Academy, equipping participants with essential skills for preparing and submitting successful EU project applications. This training covers an overview of EU programmes, project design and budgeting, and the development of logical framework matrices, among other topics.

Through her multifaceted roles, Prof. Hivziefendić continues to shape the landscape of science and technology in Bosnia and Herzegovina, fostering innovation, inclusivity, and international collaboration.

ORPA deals with internationalisation, project administration, and acts as a support to all SSST academic staff in preparing and implementing research project proposals.

Between M6 and M9, once ORPA was created, specific personalised training was given by the EDIRE EU partners to the Unit's staff on how to organise the new office.

Here is an overview of some of the activities carried out for this purpose:

- On the 13th April 2023, Rita Bencivenga and Cinzia Leone from UNIGE met Jasmina Bajramovic, Edis Arifagic, Amina Katica from SSST ORPA in an online meeting to discuss the following topics:
Day-to-day research support at SSST;
Bottlenecks and criticalities;
How to prevent and minimize obstacles;
Improvements and further actions.
During this meeting 3 training sessions delivered by UNIGE staff for ORPA but also open to other staff at SSST were scheduled:
Fundraising and research funding, 20th September 2023;
Project management and financial issues, 29th September 2023;
Grant writing, 20th November 2023.
- On April 14th 2023, the UCM team (Liisa Hanninen, Patricia Núñez, Cristina Pérez and Olga Kolotouchkina) held another online session with Jasmina Bajramovic, Edis Arifagic, Amina Katica from SSST ORPA to discuss available mechanisms and tools for the identification of partners for European Projects. The main topics of the session were related to the expertise in identifying potential partners and in building effective European consortia. EDI and RRI aspects of partnerships were also discussed.

Further activities were conducted between M10 and M36, as described in the project subtask (a, b, c) and presented accordingly below:

- A) A day-to-day helpdesk service was offered by UNIGE staff for SSST: contacts have been created between administrative staff at UNIGE and the ORPA. This was aided by the in-person meeting that Amina Katica and Jasmina Bajramović (ORPA) attended at UniGe with the Research and Grants Office during their staff visit at the end of January 2023. Apart from the usual contacts via email and informal online calls, important opportunities were created during the numerous in-person exchanges that took place throughout the project — both from SSST staff visiting UniGe and from UniGe staff visiting SSST. These involved ORPA personnel and high-level management, enabling important discussions, moments of clarification, and mutual growth.
- B) Activities also consisted of the organisation of periodic meetings and workshops with the high-level management of SSST Within the framework of T5.2 ST on the 1st and

2nd December 2023. The first day was dedicated to the participation of partner universities. The University of Reims Champagne-Ardenne (URCA) in France provided an introduction of URCA and its laboratories. They also presented an opportunity on Biomaterials and inflammation in bone sites, on HPC and Computer Graphics, and on IOT, AI and Applications. From the University of Genoa, the topics were connected to the work at the Physiochemistry Lab, Virtual Reality, Augmented Reality & Gamification and – EDI in Business and Management Higher Education Institutions. The Technological University Dublin, Republic of Ireland presented two main mobility areas: one on gender and politics/social science, hosted by the RINCE Centre, with a strong focus on interdisciplinary HE funded research, and in the field of computer science with a focus on AI and Data Science, hosted by School of Computer Science. The Complutense University of Madrid, Spain, presented opportunities of the GRASIA research group and the Institute of Knowledge Technology. The main interest areas are on the application of Artificial Intelligence in multidisciplinary projects with social value, such as assistive technologies, health monitoring, ambient assisted living, smart cities, education, computational creativity, and tools to support Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI). During the last part of this meeting, Edis Arifagić, the Head of ORPA presented the ongoing activities at SSST and upcoming projects applications. The second day of the virtual mobility training involved the high-level management of SSST to generate impact at the national level. The people involved were EDIRE Advisory Board Member, Prof. Dr Mirsada Hukić who is member of The European Academy of Science as well as the BiH Academy of Science and Arts, SSST Chancellor Prof. Ejup Ganić and Dr. Jasna Bošnjović, Head of the International Relations Office of University of Sarajevo. More of these events are being planned and organized by EDIRE team, some of which are planned for March 2024, during which time a delegation from UCM and UNIGE will visit SSST. These contacts were further strengthened during the activity international working group (see section C), where members of the ORPA had the chance to get to know several people from UNIGE offices, and created direct links and contacts. Throughout the course of the EDIRE project, several in-person and virtual events and exchanges have significantly contributed to strengthening collaboration, promoting mutual learning, and advancing the project's goals related to Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) in higher education, a collection of these will follow. I) In January 2024, Jasminka Hasić participated as an expert representing SSST in the EDI and AI workshop held in Reims, France, fostering international dialogue on inclusive innovation. II) On March 6th, 2024, SSST organized a workshop titled “Capacity Building Trainings”, which brought together project partners from UniGe and UCM for discussions on institutional development and capacity enhancement. III) On May 7th, as part of the EDIRE activities, the team conducted an Open Session titled “Unlocking Academic Excellence: EDI Principles in Western Balkans Higher Education Institutions”, aimed at sharing best practices and raising awareness on inclusive academic environments. IV) During the Staff Exchange between UniGe and SSST in July 2024, held in Sarajevo, several key meetings took place — including with Emin Ganić, Amina Katica, and Edis Arifagić — with a specific focus on strategies to increase the research impact at SSST. These meetings were attended by Angela Celeste Taramasso and Francesca Bagnoli from UniGe’s administrative staff and served as

important moments for clarification, strategic discussion, and institutional development. In particular, the meeting with Francesca Bagnoli focused on exploring the EU Funding & Tenders Portal, with the aim of understanding how the platform works, how to access and interpret funding calls, and how research mechanisms and databases are structured and interconnected at the European level. Also, during this exchange, UniGe organized a workshop for SSST researchers and technical staff, titled “Knowledge of Project Management: Techniques and Methodologies for Euro-Planning”, offering practical tools for managing and designing EU-funded projects. V) On December 11th, 2024, the project hosted a virtual event titled “Spreading Excellence in Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion in the Western Balkans,” which brought together stakeholders from across the region to reflect on the project's impact and share key outcomes. This meeting was part of the activity that will be mentioned in the section C. VI) On May 8th, 2025, an EDIRE restitution event was held following the earlier mobility experience of Prof. Semira Galijašević at the University of Genoa. During this session, Prof. Galijašević shared her experience with SSST academic and administrative staff, translating the lessons learned into concrete institutional insights and fostering further professional exchange. This moment of reflection and sharing not only highlighted the personal and institutional benefits of the mobility but also reinforced the role of EDIRE mobility activities in embedding EDI (Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion) principles within research practices and university governance. VII) During the second summer school on the 19th June EDIRE organized the public panel “Diversity in Responsible Research and Innovation: The Case of AI”, featuring experts from SSST, the University of Reims, and Complutense University of Madrid. The discussion addressed diversity, ethics, and gender equality in AI research and was aimed at involving in the conversation other representatives from BA. VIII) On June 20th, during the final day of the EDIRE Summer School, the second public event titled “EDIRE Dissemination Activities” was held. A highlight of the event was the presentation of Milestone 7 – the EDIRE Toolkit by Amina Katica (ORPA). This key deliverable offers practical guidance for grant writing and project development using EDI principles. Designed for SSST and institutions across the Western Balkans, the Toolkit (Annex 1) ensures the sustainability and broader impact of the EDIRE project beyond its conclusion.

- C) Another crucial part of the activities related to T5.2 was the organisation of international working groups to tackle crucial issues such as research funding, fundraising, research management, IPR and ethics. SSST and UNIGE asked partner universities to nominate experts in the fields of 1) Research funding and Fundraising; 2) IPR and research management; 3) Ethics. The groups were composed as follows:

International working groups Organization

Cloud Doc iframe

Name	Institution	Contact
GROUP 1_Research fundings and Fundraising		
Aida Hajdarpasić	SSST University	aida.hajdarpasic@ssst.edu.ba
Faruk Hadžić	SSST University	faruk.hadzic@ssst.edu.ba
Edis Arifagić	ORPA SSST	edis.arifagic@ssst.edu.ba
Oluwasegun Seriki	R&I TU Dublin	oluwasegun.seriki@tudublin.ie
Cristina Pérez	UCM	mapere73@ucm.es
Olga Kolotouchkina	UCM	olga.kolotouchkina@ucm.es
Zahia Guessoum	URCA	zahia.guessoum@univ-reims.fr
Arnaud Renard	URCA	arnaud.renard@univ-reims.fr
Claudia Sanguineti	UNIGE	Claudia.Sanguineti@unige.it
GROUP 2_Research management and IPR		
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Roberto Cippitani	UNIGE	Roberto.cippitani@unipg.it
GROUP 3_Ethics		
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Edis Arifagić	ORPA SSST	edis.arifagic@ssst.edu.ba
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Mauro Spotorno	UNIGE	spot@unige.it

The activities started on March with the preparation of the workshops in collaboration with SSST, and the working groups were facilitated by UNIGE partners. The first meeting, dedicated to the introduction of the activity was a plenary session with all the components of each working group, it was held on the 16th of May. During the meeting group members got to know

each other, Carla Maria Reale introduced the framework of the activities and the calendar. The questions that were going to guide further discussions were these:

1. RESEARCH FUNDING AND FUNDRAISING

Is there a specific office covering this issue in my institution? Is there a mechanism to grant research access to the opportunity of funding available nationally, internationally, and at the EU level? Does my institution offer me the possibility of further training on this topic?

2. RESEARCH MANAGEMENT AND IPR

Are there people with this specific expertise in my institution? Are they organized in a proper office? Do they offer their skills to researchers? Are they aware of both the national and international aspects of research management? Does my institution offer me the possibility of further training on this topic?

3. ETHICS

Do we have a specific body for ethics in research? Does it work properly, and which kind of procedures are adopted? Are researchers aware of the principles of research integrity? Does my institution offer courses and training courses?

In June, each working group had a meeting dedicated to sharing good practices. Each partner was asked to present, in 10 minutes, a specific area from their own experiences. In July, presentations on obstacles and challenges were organized for each working group. On the 27th of September, the final meeting was organized, where each working group chose its representatives to summarize the main outcome of their work. Cristina Pérez from UCM Arnaud Renard from URC, offered an overview on Research fundings and Fundraising, Abdul Basit Rafique on behalf of Lindsay Dowling from TUD, and Elisa Brey from UCM offered a summary on Research management and IPR, and Mauro Spotorno, Angela Celeste Taramasso from UNIGE, and Steve Meany from TUD offered a summary on Research fundings and Fundraising. On December 11th, SSST and UNIGE organized the public event “Spreading Excellence in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in the Western Balkans” aimed at other universities’ representatives from Bosnia and the Western Balkans, for SSST to share crucial insights from the work carried out in this activity. The event explored critical themes such as research ethics, funding opportunities, intellectual property rights, and effective research management. The event had the goal of sharing best practices and creating a network of professionals committed to enhancing research excellence in the Western Balkans and beyond.

EDIRE results were disseminated at the UNIGEM generated [INSPIRE Community of Practice](#). The participants were especially interest in [“Final guidelines and recommendation on EDI”](#) to build on EDIRE’s lessons learned and further advance EDI in the Western Balkans.

4. Mentoring and reinforcement (T5.3)

The focus of this task was to raise awareness amongst SSST staff about the need to increase the research community involvement in project design activities.

To do this, workshops and periodic meetings were organized. The virtual mobility training mentioned earlier can be considered an important part of this, and further in-person workshops took place in March 2024, when staff from UNIGE and UCM visited SSST. It is important to report that to organize the activities of WP5 and T5.2 sub (b) and (c), since December 2023, members of UNIGE and SSST, including the ORPA, have attended regular online meetings.

Further activities that were planned in strict collaboration between UNIGE and SSST are:

- The reinforcement of the operational procedures of the research units by putting in place a specific research performance monitoring system, so that researchers and managers can fix objectives and goals, monitor and review performance, detect training needs, and ensure efficient use of resources;
- The preparation of a set of templates and tools, building on the partners' expertise in research management and in the successful implementation of EU and international funded projects. This was published in a first version in M12 and was then revised and refined before summer 2025 and publicly presented in a public event (above-mentioned) to make it available also to other BA and WB institutions.

5. Training courses (T5.4)

As described in detail in D.5.1, EDIRE was to offer six different types of courses to different groups of personnel at SSST:

- 1) fundraising and research funding;
- 2) project design;
- 3) project management, including financial issues;
- 4) IPR and technological transfer;
- 5) RRI principles, especially for what concerns Open Science, ethics, and gender and diversity issues in research);
- 6) EDI and gender awareness and unconscious bias for leading position Managers/Chairpersons, Secretaries of scientific fields, Directors and Deputy Directors.

EDIRE offered several trainings on different topics. Most lessons were held on zoom and recorded, while a few were held in person. Training saw a lively participation of SSST staff, but most of the training is also available on the EDIRE YouTube channel, so that staff and interested persons can watch them in an asynchronous way.

The table provides a list of training courses that took place, their title as well as the name of trainers involved.

Training type	Partner	Training Topic	Targetted audience (ECR, Admin or Leadership)	In-person or online	Trainer(s)	Fixed Time(s)
Project design	TUD	Participating in Horizon Europe projects: How do I identify suitable calls and what to do next?	Researchers	online	Sara Clavero	1st Sept 2023
RRI principles, especially for what concerns Open Science, ethics and gender and diversity issues in research	TUD	Integrating gender+ intersectional approaches in the project design process	Senior Researchers	online	Sara Clavero	12th October 2023
Research and equality	TUD	Tackling unconscious bias in research	ECRs	online	Caitriona Delaney	8th December 2023
EDI and gender awareness	TUD	Leadership for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in Universities and Research Organisations	ECRs	online	Yvonne Galligan	27th March 2024
EDI and research methods	TUD	The What, Why, and How of Using Narratives in Intersectional Research	PhD and Researchers	online	Caitriona Delaney	24th March 2024

Academic writing and publishing for ECR	TUD	How to select a journal to publish your research	ECRs	online	TU Dublin staff	2nd February 2024
Fundraising and research funding	UCM	Fulbright US Student Program	ECR	online	José Peña, ECR	22nd September 2023
Project design	UCM	Building international partnerships for a project success	Leadership	online	Liisa Hanninen, Cristina Pérez, Patricia Nuñez	14th April 2023
Project management, including financial issues	UCM	Internal management of European projects: challenges and best practices	Administrative staff	in person	Liisa Hanninen	6th. March 2024
EDI and gender awareness and unconscious bias for leading position Managers/Chairpersons, Secretaries of scientific fields, Directors and Deputy Directors, where TUD has a deep expertise.	UCM	Gender equality resources in academia and research	all	online	Lucía Vázquez	28th of September 2023
Research management for ECR	UCM	A road to PhD: supervision, networking and autonomous work	ECR	online	Clara Sánchez-Rebato Valiente + guest speaker	29th of September 2023
Academic writing and publishing for ECR	UCM	From abstract to published paper	ECR	*in person	Olga Kolotouchkina, Liisa Hanninen	23rd January 2024
Fundraising and research funding	UNIGE	Horizon Europe	Administrative staff	online	Cinzia Leone	20th September 2023

Project design	UNIGE	Risks and contingencies measures in EU projects	Research staff	online	Cinzia Leone/Rita Bencivenga	15th November 2023
Project management, including financial issues	UNIGE	Typical obstacles and challenges in project management	Administrative staff, Researchers	online	Cinzia Leone	27th September 2023
RRI principles; gender and diversity issues in research	UNIGE	RRI, gender and intersectionality	PhD and Researchers	online	Carla Maria Reale	13th December, 2023
EDI and gender awareness and unconscious bias for leading position Managers/Chairpersons, Secretaries of scientific fields, Directors and Deputy Directors, where TUD has a deep expertise.	UNIGE	Eu projects and GEPs: links, strategies	Researchers, Administrative staff	online	Rita Bencivenga	20th September 2023
Research management for ECR	UNIGE	Grant writing	PhD and Researchers	online	Cinzia Leone	22nd November 2023
Academic writing and publishing for ECR	UNIGE	Social media for ESRs	PhD and Researchers	online	Rita Bencivenga	22nd November 2023
EDI and gender awareness	URCA	Awareness: The Missing Link in EDI,	PhD and Researchers	online	Sofiane Mahi	14th March 2025
Academic writing and publishing for ECR	URCA	Collective Intelligence	PhD and Researchers	online	Zahia Guessoum	23rd March 2023
Academic writing and publishing for ECR	URCA	Social Signals in Affective Cognitive Sciences: Recognition and Production	Researchers, Administrative staff	online	Ali Oker	4th June 2024
Academic writing and publishing for ECR	URCA	HPC / IA / Quantic	Researchers, Administrative staff	online	ROMEOCenter Arnaud Renard, Théo Barrios, Frédéric Maguière	10th April 2025
Research management	URCA	AI for Managers	Leadership	online	Théo Barrios	22nd April 2025

Research management for ECR	URCA	Co-supervized PhD and Post-docs	ECR	online	Prof. Jasminka Hasić Telalović (SSST), Dr. Zahia Guessoum, Sofiane Mahi, Džana Bašić	15th June 2025
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6. Joint research projects (T5.5)

The personnel of the newly established Research management office, ORPA, have been exploring since the beginning of its activities funding possibilities that are offered in the framework of both national and international research funding programs. The consortium has explored different opportunities within every pillar of Horizon Europe and will continue to work on collaboration even after the end of EDIRE

Concretely, 5 new projects, in line with project KPIs, have been elaborated and submitted.

1. Youth EU: Guidance to Emancipation and Autonomy of Youth at Risk of Social Exclusion in Dialogue with Third Countries

Programme: HORIZON-MSCA-2022-SE-01 (Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions – Staff Exchanges)

This project addresses the social exclusion of vulnerable youth in Europe and beyond, fostering their autonomy through collaborative research and knowledge exchange with institutions from third countries. It promotes inclusive and emancipatory practices, with a focus on transnational and interdisciplinary cooperation. The project brings together key academic partners, including SSST University and the Complutense University of Madrid, whose participation strengthens the consortium's capacity in the fields of education, social sciences, and youth policy.

Project partners:

- Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia (Coordinator)
- SSST University (Sarajevo School of Science and Technology)
- Complutense University of Madrid

2. GendEX – Gender Dynamics and Masculinities in the Far Right: Innovation Evidence-Based Solutions for Policy and Practice

Programme: HORIZON-CL2-2024-DEMOCRACY-01

GendEX explores the role of masculinities in the normalization and dissemination of far-right ideologies across Europe, focusing on political parties, grassroots movements, and digital mobilization strategies. The project adopts a multidisciplinary and innovation-driven approach, including the development of an AI-based platform to counter online radicalization. The participation of SSST University provides insights from the Western Balkans region, while Technical University Dublin contributes expertise in data analysis and digital communication. Together, the partners aim to produce actionable knowledge and tools for both policy and practice.

Project partners:

- VILABS OE (Coordinator)
- Technical University Dublin
- Kadir Has University
- Peace Action, Training & Research Institute of Romania
- Fundació EURECAT
- AITEC Asesores Internacionales SRL
- SSST University (Sarajevo School of Science and Technology)
- University of Warwick
- RUSI Europe
- Political Capital Ltd.
- Leiden University
- International Centre for Counter-Terrorism
- SYNYO GmbH
- European Forum for Urban Security

3. REACHr – Responsible Ethics in AI and Cutting-edge Horizon Research

Programme: HORIZON-WIDERA-2024-ERA-01

REACHr responds to the ethical and regulatory challenges posed by the rapid development of Artificial Intelligence. The project aligns with the principles of the EU AI Act, supporting responsible innovation through a focus on ethical design, regulation, and social impact. It brings together a diverse set of institutions committed to Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI), including SSST University, the Complutense University of Madrid, and the Université de Reims Champagne-Ardenne. Their participation ensures a solid foundation in both technological and philosophical approaches to responsible AI.

Project partners:

- SSST University (Sarajevo School of Science and Technology)
- BIT Alliance for Information Technologies
- Brown University
- Complutense University of Madrid
- Fondazione Istituto Italiano di Tecnologia
- Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche
- Université de Reims Champagne-Ardenne
- Kadir Has University
- Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane
- Japan Advanced Institute of Science and Technology
- Momo-o, Matsuo & Namba (Legal consultancy, Japan)
- RIKEN Institute (Japan)
- Instituto Politécnico de Bragança

4. Who Runs the Digital World?

Programme: DIGITAL-2024-ADVANCED-SKILLS-06

This project addresses the significant gender gap in the ICT sector, which remains one of the EU's fastest-growing yet least inclusive fields. Inspired by the ancient Greek concept of the *agora*, it envisions a digital space to celebrate and empower women in STEM, foster dialogue, and connect with policymakers and educators. SSST University plays a central role in the consortium, bringing regional experience in digital education and gender inclusion to a European platform committed to societal transformation.

Project partners:

- EProjectConsult – Istituto Europeo Formazione e Ricerca (Coordinator)
- Sdruzenie Eksperten PUL (Bulgaria)
- Fundación CEEIM (Spain)
- Universidad de Alicante
- AJ Ty v IT (Slovakia)
- Nefinia B.V. (Netherlands)
- Fundacja inCREA (Poland)
- Global Wo.Men Hub (Belgium)
- Kadir Has University (Turkey)
- Vizyoner Kadınlar Dernegi (Turkey)
- SSST University (Sarajevo School of Science and Technology)

5. AI4EDI – AI-Powered Foresight for Gender Equality and Inclusive Societies: Designing Ethical Future-Ready Education and Systems

Programme: HORIZON-MSCA-2022-DN (Marie Skłodowska-Curie Doctoral Networks)

AI4EDI is a Doctoral Network that trains early-stage researchers to address the ethical, social, and technological challenges at the intersection of Artificial Intelligence and Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion. The project adopts foresight methodologies and interdisciplinary training to shape future-ready education systems. With the involvement of SSST University, the Complutense University of Madrid, Université de Reims Champagne-Ardenne, and the University of Genoa, the project ensures a rich multicultural and interdisciplinary environment for academic excellence and societal impact.

Project partners:

- Università Telematica Pegaso (Coordinator)
- Fondazione Istituto Italiano di Tecnologia
- Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia
- Complutense University of Madrid

- Institute of Philosophy and Sociology (Poland)
- SSST University (Sarajevo School of Science and Technology)
- Instituto Politécnico de Bragança
- Sarsen Amanzholov East Kazakhstan State University
- North Kazakhstan State University
- Université de Reims Champagne-Ardenne
- Ion Creangă State Pedagogical University (Moldova)
- University of Genoa

An additional three projects are submitted and are currently under review (so we will note share additional details about them here). It is needed to note that those three projects are all RIA (Research Innovation Actions) with SSST designated as a coordinator for one of them. These are among the first RIAs that SSST has applied for and RIA application in general started with the EDIRE project. So far, institutions from Bosnia and Herzegovina have been awarded to coordinate only one RIA project within the Horizon Europe programme, so the skills that EDIRE introduced enabled greater SSST integration in Horizon Europe and European Research Areas just as was originally intended.

7. Recommendation to improve research management and administration in WB

Enhancing Capacity for European Project Participation in the Framework of the EDIRE Project – WP5

Building on the lessons learned and insights gathered through the EDIRE project, and specifically under the activities carried out within Work Package 5 (WP5), this section outlines a set of tailored recommendations for universities and research institutions in the WB. These recommendations are grounded in the findings of the internal consultation and capacity-building processes at SSST and reflect the overarching objective of WP5: to improve internationalisation, research management, administrative performance, and fundraising capacity.

- **Improve Access to Information on Funding Opportunities**

OBSTACLE: fragmented and insufficient dissemination of funding-related information

Recommended actions:

- Establish and institutionalise a central office (e.g. the new Research Management Unit ORPA) tasked with continuously gathering and distributing funding information.
- Develop a periodic newsletter with updates on European and international calls, deadlines, and practical guidance for proposal writing.
- Organise thematic info-sessions and funding briefings for staff.
- Provide targeted training on Horizon Europe structure and call-specific guidance.

- **Strengthen Institutional Administrative Capacity**

OBSTACLE: lack of sustainability and institutional investment on qualified personnel/office in Research Management

Recommended actions:

- Ensure the Research Management Unit is fully formalised within the university/research structure, with a defined mandate and adequate staffing.
- Develop internal policies for project lifecycle management and institutional support to researchers.
- Allocate permanent resources, and include project development training in staff development programmes, especially for early-career researchers.

OBSTACLE: difficulties in accurate and compliant budgeting across institutions.

Recommended actions:

- Employ or train finance staff within the Research Management Unit with expertise in EU project budgeting, cost eligibility, and reporting.
- Offer hands-on workshops and simulated budget development exercises.
- Develop and share internal templates and practical tools (such as EDIRE MS7).

- **Align Research Priorities with Funding Programmes**

OBSTACLE: low success rates and poor alignment of projects proposal with EU priorities and lack of EDI dimension.

Recommended actions:

- Engage SSST researchers in Horizon Europe policy consultations and agenda-shaping forums.
- Map institutional strengths to Horizon Europe clusters and partnerships.
- Establish internal thematic groups to strategize responses to calls and stimulate joint proposal development.
- Use the Action Plan (D5.1) to guide this alignment.

- **Foster International Collaboration and Networking**

OBSTACLE: underutilisation of international networks for consortium-building.

Recommended actions:

- Strengthen presence on platforms such as CORDIS, EURAXESS, and ResearchGate.
- Design institutional factsheets and project profiles to facilitate partnerships.
- Provide networking training for both academic and administrative staff.
- Support participation in international brokerage events and thematic workshops.

- **Address Co-Financing Barriers**

OBSTACLE: challenges covering co-financing requirements.

Recommended actions:

- Explore national or regional bridge funding mechanisms and pre-financing tools.
- Advocate for government-level programmes supporting co-funding in EU research participation.
- Establish internal funds or contingency budgets to cover institutional contributions to projects.

- **Adopt Essential Policy and Regulatory Frameworks**

OBSTACLE: Lack of institutional alignment with EU standards hampers eligibility and project success.

Recommended actions:

- Update or introduce policies on project implementation, financial management, and ethics compliance.
- Ensure that the institution complies with Horizon Europe requirements, including the Gender Equality Plan (GEP) and the European Charter for Researchers.
- Develop internal guidelines for IPR, data protection, and Open Science in alignment with EU standards.

- **Support Project Implementation and Role Distribution**

OBSTACLE: lack of clearly assigned roles and support mechanisms that bring to less effective delivery

Recommended actions:

- Appoint dedicated project officers within departments to coordinate with the RMU.
- Provide project management software and training to standardise implementation processes.
- Implement a monitoring system to track project progress and identify risks early.
- Develop an internal helpdesk or advisory board for ongoing support.

- **Streamline Public Procurement Processes**

OBSTACLE: Procurement procedures constitute a bureaucratic obstacle to the implementation of EU-funded projects

Recommended actions:

- Train RMU and financial staff in national and EU procurement regulations.
- Develop standard procedures and legal support tools for procurement under EU-funded projects.
- Facilitate dialogue with public authorities to ensure procurement policies are aligned with international

- **Ensure the Reusability of Research Results and Open Science Practices**

OBSTACLE: lack of robust dissemination and reuse strategies to ensure research sustainability.

Recommended actions:

- Promote Open Access policies and compliance with the Horizon Europe Open Research Data Pilot.
- Offer training on IPR, technology transfer, and knowledge valorisation.
- Integrate Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) and Open Science modules into training activities.

Annex

[Annex 1: Milestone 7 – EDIRE TOOLKIT](#)