

# **DEFA** *Development of the Financial Autonomy of Universities in Kyrgyzstan*

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## **DEFA - DEVELOPMENT OF THE FINANCIAL AUTONOMY OF UNIVERSITIES IN KYRGYZSTAN**

**Erasmus+ KA2, CAPACITY BUILDING IN HIGHER EDUCATION project**

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### **SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGIC PLAN**

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## **1. Foreword**

One of the primary objectives of DEFA is to ensure the dissemination and sustainability of the project results, as well as to raise public awareness through active networking among academic communities and stakeholders in the Kyrgyz Republic. The aim is to foster a stimulating environment for the exchange of experiences beyond the project life cycle. This document, approved in June 2023, presents a sustainability plan designed to serve as a guideline for organizing and implementing sustainability activities within the Erasmus+ Project DEFA.

## **2. Project summary**

The aim of the DEFA project is to develop a flexible and efficient model for the financial autonomy of universities that will enable the institution's capacity to mobilise resources, manage their resources, and use them efficiently to meet the changing demands of the society and the market to develop an inclusive, green, creative and fair country.

### **Main objectives**

The project aims to:

- increase the capacities of HEIs, bodies in charge of higher education and competent authorities of the Kyrgyz Republic not associated with the programme to modernise the higher education system, particularly in terms of governance and financing, by supporting the definition, implementation and monitoring of reform processes;
- increase the autonomy of the financial and economic activities of HEIs in the context of economic and labour market globalisation, climate and demographic changes;
- improve the quality of higher education in the Kyrgyz Republic and increase its importance for the labour market and the society, as well as the visibility and competitiveness of the universities' research activities.

### **Expected outcomes**

- Developed a flexible and efficient model for the financial autonomy of universities of Kyrgyzstan;
- Governmental regulation the financial autonomy of universities signed by the Prime-minister;
- Order financial autonomy of universities signed by the Minister of Education;
- Ten partner universities implemented a model of financial autonomy;

## **Expected results at the end of the project**

At the end of the project the project expects to achieve the following results:

### **A) Qualitative results:**

- Analysed the situation on financial autonomy of the universities of the Kyrgyz Republic;
- Document “Strategy for the Development of the Financial Autonomy of Universities” and a Roadmap (plan for the implementation of the Strategy) developed to promote the policy of providing greater managerial autonomy in universities and systematically conduct development, implementation and use processes;
- A methodological manual “Guidelines for the implementation of the financial autonomy model of the university” approved by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic;
- Skills Development Centre on HEI Autonomy was established with the function to train the representatives of HEIs administration and teaching staff on the principles, mechanisms and requirements of HEI autonomy in governance and finance;
- Measuring and office equipment and software installed at target universities for teaching and learning purposes;
- A methodological manual “Guidelines for the implementation of the financial autonomy model of the university” developed and discussed by 200 stakeholders, and recommended for approval by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic (MES).

### **B) Quantitative results:**

- 500 academic and non-academic staff involved in the questionnaires, interviews and seminars;
- About 220 universities administration, policymakers, accountants and teaching staff involved in the focus groups;
- 2 European models of financial autonomy identified and analysed;
- About 400 participants will be trained in the seminars and training workshops for Kyrgyz stakeholders;
- 15 Training packages will be designed and implemented for the Skills Development Centre;
- About 50 staff in partner universities appointed as responsible for financial activities (5 in each university);
- 1 SWOT analysis of financial autonomy for universities developed.

### 3. Main principles

**Stakeholder Engagement:** Regular interaction with universities, higher education governing bodies, competent authorities of Kyrgyzstan, and other stakeholders can ensure project support and sustainability.

**Continuous Learning and Development:** Enhancing the capacity of higher education institutions through continuous learning and development can ensure long-term sustainability.

**Monitoring and Evaluation:** Regular assessment and monitoring of project outcomes can help identify issues and opportunities for improvement, as well as support its sustainability.

**Collaboration and Partnership:** The development of strong partnerships and collaborations with various institutions can help in supporting and sustaining the project.

**Transparency and Openness:** Ensuring transparency in management and financial reporting can help gain stakeholder trust and support project sustainability.

**Fostering an Environment for Experience Exchange:** Stimulating the exchange of experiences and ideas among project participants and beyond can help strengthen project sustainability and impact.

**Use of Technology:** Utilizing digital technologies for information dissemination, education, and communication can help ensure project sustainability.

**Establishing a Support Network:** Organizing a support network among project participants and other stakeholders can help maintain engagement and ensure project continuity even after its completion.

#### 4. Main activities

#	Name of action	Estimated results	Estimated End Date	Lead partners	Guidelines
1	<b>WP1 – Development of the model of financial autonomy</b>	<p>Developed Strategy and Roadmap for Financial Autonomy of Universities of the Kyrgyz Republic</p> <p>Developed the Model for the financial autonomy of universities and legal and regulatory acts</p> <p>Universities strategic plans (10 KG Universities)</p>	<p>05/2024</p> <p>07/2025</p>	<p>OVGU, AIU</p> <p>All KG partners</p>	<p>1. Strategy and Roadmap for Financial Autonomy of Universities of the Kyrgyz Republic should open opportunities for the Financial Autonomy of all types of Higher Education Institutions in the Kyrgyz Republic and cover the period up to 2030.</p> <p>2. The model(s) of Financial Autonomy should include the possibility of use/adaptation by various types of Higher Education Institutions of the Kyrgyz Republic.</p> <p>3. The Roadmap should include not only the development / amendments to regulatory acts, but also mechanisms for promotion and approval beyond the project life cycle.</p> <p>4. Embedding the project's principles, practices, and outcomes into the core strategies and operations of partner universities and relevant government bodies. This could include making Financial Autonomy a central part of universities' strategic plans or incorporating it into government policies and regulations governing higher education.</p>
2	<b>WP2 – Capacity Building</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Practical guide and toolkit on HEI financial autonomy.</li> <li>- Established the Skills Development Centre on HEI Autonomy in Kyrgyz University (KSTU)</li> <li>- Number of trained top and mid-level administration (100 staff)</li> </ul> <p>Universities operating plans (10 KG</p>	<p>07/2025</p> <p>2025-2030</p>	<p>KSTU, OVGU, CESIE</p> <p>KSTU</p>	<p>1. Strategy plan of the Skills Development Centre on HEI Autonomy in KSTU until 2030.</p> <p>2. Operating plan of the Skills Development Centre on HEI Autonomy in KSTU (2025-2026).</p> <p>3. Practical Guide and toolkits should include the possibility of use/adaptation by various types of Higher Education Institutions of the Kyrgyz Republic. The materials from workshops for Kyrgyz stakeholders from universities, the state authorities in charge, and the business community should be published and made accessible for all interested stakeholders.</p> <p>4. Operating plans of the Skills Development Centre on HEI Autonomy in KSTU (annually).</p>

		Universitiesx5 years) Updated Practical Guide and Toolkit			5. Adjustment of the Practical Guide and Toolkit in accordance with regulatory changes.
3	<b>WP3 – Exploitation</b>	Developed and implemented a General Exploitation Plan for financial autonomy at each target university (10 KG Universities) Annual operational plans (10 KG Universitiesx5 years)  Updating internal documentation (annual) Internal/external workshops (5 workshops) Round tables (5 round tables)	07/2025  2025-2030	OshSU, UniFi  All KG partners	1. Development of implementation plans for the Financial Autonomy model for each target university 2. Making changes to the organizational structure of the universities 3. Making changes to internal documents 4. Organization of internal workshops for the implementation of the model and involvement of all stakeholders at the institutional level 5. Development of annual operational plans for the target universities.  6. Updating internal documentation in line with regulatory changes.  7. Systematic enhancement of Financial Autonomy skills and knowledge for target staff groups at each university and government officials. This will ensure that there is a critical mass of people who can sustain the project's benefits.
4	<b>WP4 - Quality Assurance System</b>	Internal and external QA reports (3 reports)  Annual reports on monitoring of legislation  Internal and external evaluation reports (10 KG Universities) Report on evaluating the progress and impact of the sustainability plan (annual)	09/2025  2025-2030	ISM, CESIE, KSTU  All KG partners	1. Monitoring of the Financial Autonomy implementation plans at each target university. 2. Internal and external evaluation of plan execution. 3 Tracking changes in legislation and adapting models accordingly. 4. Incorporating changes in regulations into guides and training programs. 5. Internal and external evaluation of the execution of operational and strategic plans 6. Regularly evaluating the progress and impact of the sustainability plan to ensure its relevance and effectiveness, and making necessary improvements as needed.
5	<b>WP5 Dissemination</b>	Final project conference	11/2025	DA MFA	1. Strict adherence to the dissemination plan (Midterm, final reports).



		<p>Dissemination Plan</p> <p>Strategic Plan on sustainability</p> <p>Website</p> <p>Dissemination events Promotional materials</p> <p>Internal documents (10 KG Universities)</p> <p>Internal/external workshops (15 workshops)</p> <p>Round tables with key stakeholders (5 round tables)</p> <p>Annual hybrid conference</p>	2025-2030	<p>KR, AU, KSTU</p> <p>All KG partners</p>	<p>2. Regularly updating and maintaining the relevancy of information on the website</p> <p>3. Dissemination of informational materials through effective channels, including social networks and other digital tools.</p> <p>4. Conducting a final conference in a hybrid format to attract as many stakeholders as possible.</p> <p>Continuing to document and share the lessons learned, best practices, and success stories from the project. This will contribute to the ongoing learning and improvement of the project's activities and outcomes.</p> <p>Carring out advocacy activities to influence the policies, practices, and attitudes of key stakeholders in higher education and financial autonomy. This could include lobbying, public awareness campaigns, or research and publications.</p> <p>Communication and Engagement: Maintaining open and regular communication with all stakeholders, including university staff, government officials, project participants, and the wider public. This will ensure that they stay informed, engaged, and supportive of the project's sustainability efforts</p> <p>Partnerships and Alliances: Establishing or deepening partnerships with other universities, government bodies, NGOs, businesses, or international organizations that share the project's objectives. These partnerships can provide additional resources, expertise, and support to sustain the project's outcomes</p>
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