



PhD ICT KES

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Kosovo Education System

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Establishing a policy document for governance of the
National Research School in ICT (NRSI)

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Table of Contents

§ 1. PURPOSE	3
§ 2. DEFINITIONS	4
§ 3. MISSION AND OBJECTIVES OF THE NRSI	5
§ 4. ESTABLISHMENT AND THE CONTINUATION OF THE NRSI	6
§ 5. COMPOSITION OF THE NRSI	7
§ 5.1. THE NRSI STEERING COMMITTEE	7
§ 5.2. THE NRSI COORDINATOR	8
§ 6. AGREEMENTS BETWEEN ENTITIES	9
§ 7. RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF PARTICIPATING ENTITIES	10
§ 8. FINANCIAL RESOURCES AND GRANTS	12
§ 9. ADMISSION TO THE NRSI	14
§ 10. ANNUAL REVIEW AND EVALUATION	16
§ 11. REVIEW OF THE PERFORMANCE OF THE NRSI	17
§ 12. DISCONTINUATION	18
§ 13. ENTRY INTO FORCE	19
METHODOLOGY	20

§ 1. Purpose

§1.1 This document provides the framework for the establishment, organisation and the governance of the NRSI, in compliance with the national normative acts and EU regulations in force. Guiding principles for the NRSI are:

- Equality between members of the same level as defined in ¹, i.e., equal contribution from each partner institution,
- Decision-making based on principle of consent,
- Public interest and quality, maintaining the public interest and quality as the highest priority,
- Sustainability, i.e., the aspects related to maintaining long-term continuation of the NRSI, if otherwise is not decided.
- Legislation, i.e Law no.04/L-037 on higher education in the Republic Kosovo

§1.2 The NRSI's purpose is to provide general help by facilitating an umbrella for PhD study programs in the field of ICT in Kosovo. It does not provide study programs on its own and it is not a research institute.

§1.3 PhD study programs facilitated by the NRSI apart from being governed by the provisions of laws on higher education and research in the Republic Kosovo, any other international acts ratified by the Republic of Kosovo regarding the standards of higher education and research, bylaws that regulate the activity of higher education and research in Kosovo are also subject to this policy document.

§1.4 The document is subject to changes in form and content, in accordance with any amendment of laws and bylaws that regulate the activity of higher education and research in Kosovo, and respects any other international acts ratified by the Republic of Kosovo regarding the system and principles of functioning of higher education and research.

¹ **LAW No.04/L-037 ON HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE REPUBLIC KOSOVO (article 10 & 11)**

§1.5 The document will be supplemented with a sustainability plan before the project DI-PHDICTKES (No. 609990) ends, Nov. 14, 2023.

§ 2. Definitions

§2.1 For the purposes of this document, the terms used herein have the following meanings:

- **National Research School in ICT** (hereafter **NRSI**) is the inter-institutional body that is committed to the facilitation of PhD studies (students and their supervisors) of member research institutions of the school as central part of its purpose, through involvement of national and international partners.
- **National and international partners** referred to in this document are all universities, research institutes and centers that are members of the NRSI.
- **Institute** means an organization where people do a particular type of scientific, educational, or social work, or the buildings that it uses.
- **Policy document** means the set of rules adopted by the NRSI that lays down the detailed standards for running and managing the NRSI.
- **Provisional member** is the University, research center or institution that has been included in the setting up of the NRSI and after the commencement will convert into a member.
- A **member** is the University, research center or institution who has the right to vote.
- **Affiliated member** is an industrial partner from the field of ICT or a related field without a right to vote.
- An **Honorary fellow** is a distinguished researcher and/or stake-holder from academia, industry and other institutions relevant to the field of ICT without a right to vote.
- An **Honorary member** is a University, research institute or a research centre from abroad that share interest in joining the NRSI, which can apply if they have an accredited doctoral school in ICT that has been running for at least 5 years.

§ 3. Mission and Objectives of the NRSI

§3.1 The mission of the NRSI is to enhance the quality and relevance of doctoral degree programmes in ICT through quality development, and high-quality relevant scientific research work. It is aimed to provide expertise and general help in establishing of PhD studies in the ICT field.

§3.2 In order to fulfill its mission, the NRSI aims to pursue the following main objectives:

- uniform the criteria for doctoral studies quality assurance in ICT,
- secure rational and effective usage of the scientific, research data and of the available research infrastructure through resource sharing,
- increase the critical mass of research on ICT domain,
- facilitate multidisciplinary studies and research,
- organize seminars, courses, and conferences for PhD candidates from all higher education institutes or research centers to present their ideas and research,
- facilitate the internationalization of research work through mentoring and/or co-mentoring with professors from universities outside Kosovo.

§3.3 The PhD and doctoral studies are organized and realized by the respective member universities.

§ 4. Establishment and the continuation of the NRSI

§4.1 Procedures for setting up the NRSI include the writing and submission of the proposal for the establishment of NRSI which will then be approved by the members of the NRSI.

§4.2 The proposal that will be submitted for approval must contain:

- This document,
- A request to HEI management representative of host institution for assigning a representative for the NRSI,

§4.3 The NRSI will be hosted in the first two years in UP/ Institute of the Faculty of Electrical Engineering

§4.4 Procedures and time schedules for continuations include:

- The NRSI will be established initially for two years as agreed by the participating entities and/or approved by the approving entity,
- In the final year of its mandate (year two), the NRSI will conduct a self-evaluation and undergo a thorough review and evaluation of its activities and accomplishments as described in §11,
- Upon the review and evaluation, the mandate of the NRSI can be extended for the period as agreed among partner Universities concerning the management of the NRSI (i.e., hosting, location, financing, rotation).

§4.5 Procedures for changes to the structure or organization are initiated by the NRSI Steering Committee which can propose structural changes of the NRSI that have to be approved unanimously by all member institutions.

§ 5. Composition of the NRSI

The National Research School in ICT (NRSI) is composed of the:

- The NRSI Steering Committee,
- The NRSI Coordinator.

§ 5.1. The NRSI Steering Committee

§5.1.1 The steering committee consists of members, honorary members and the coordinator as an ex officio member.

§5.1.1.1 Members are representatives of all partner research institutions with the right to vote.

§5.1.1.2 Honorary members are distinguished researchers and stakeholders from academia, industry and other institutions relevant to the field of ICT with no voting rights.

§5.1.1.3 The coordinator of the NRSI has no voting rights.

§5.1.2 The Committee shall elect the chair from among its members.

§5.1.2.1 The chairperson is elected from a Higher Education Institution that has at least three years of a proven record of successful implementation of doctoral programmes in ICT.

§5.1.2.2 The term of office of the chair is two calendar years.

§5.1.2.3 The Chair is elected for at most two consecutive mandates.

§5.1.3 The Chair will run the NRSI Committee and can appoint a committee member for provisional chairmanship of the meetings.

§5.1.4 The NRSI Committee creates sub-committees based on demands.

§5.1.5 Sub-committees can be created for carrying out activities of the NRSI, applying in new scientific projects and for project implementations, organizing conferences, editing

research journals / books, evaluation of new memberships or revoking existing memberships and other activities derived from its mission and objectives.

§5.1.6 The NRSI Committee evaluates the performance of the NRSI on bi-annual basis or upon request by the Chair as detailed in §10.

§5.1.7 The Committee shall meet at least twice per year.

§5.1.8 The Committee shall annually report to each member institution of the NRSI.

§ 5.2. The NRSI Coordinator

§5.2.1 The NRSI coordinator is appointed from NRSI host institution, as stated in §4.3, and must be a different person from the chairperson.

§5.2.2 The NRSI coordinator is a full-time employee research staff in the ICT faculty.

§5.2.3 The NRSI coordinator duties and responsibilities:

- Coordinate all activities that are planned for the actual iteration,
- Coordinate on the implementation of projects,
- Participate actively in discussions/meetings with the NRSI steering committee,
- Report to the NRSI steering committee on annual basis and on demand,
- Act as Project Officer (who approves and supervises) for all ongoing scientific projects.

§ 6. Agreements between entities

§6.1 The minimal requirements that should be included in agreements between universities, research institutions, industry and other partners as part of the NRSI include the following:

- Intent of cooperation (including the approval for sharing mentoring capacities, computing resources, expertise in niche fields, courses, trainings, organisation of symposiums / workshops / seminars / conferences, exchange of information of mutual interest),
- Protection of personal data based on the applicable Kosovo laws and regulations, including GDPR,
- Reference to intellectual property laws and regulations,
- Procedures for amendment and ending of mutual agreement, including obligations, timeframes and the legal entity responsible for overseeing the process.

§ 7. Rights and duties of participating entities

§7.1 Members of the NRSI have the following rights:

- To vote about decision making,
- To have a reasonable time to decide whether it wants to participate in a certain activity of the NRSI,
- To propose a list of research topics that could be the focus of NRSI's activities,
- To have academic freedom in the pursuit of research in the aspect of dissemination of the results and findings,
- To propose and organize workshops/seminars/conferences under the umbrella of the NRSI,
- To be proactive on writing project proposals for national and international funding schemes,
- To have access to the information collected by the NRSI activities, provided that the confidentiality of the information that is subject to intellectual property rights is protected,
- To know who is sponsoring the research and supporting certain NRSI activities,
- To discontinue its membership in the NRSI.

§7.2 Members of NRSI have the following duties:

- To effectively carry out the mission of the NRSI,
- To adhere to both the spirit and the letter of this policy document,
- To adhere to the data privacy and intellectual property laws and regulations,
- Adhere to ethical issues for originality and integrity of the research work,
- The responsibility to be an active participant within the group,
- To contribute towards having a clear annual action plan of the NRSI,
- Be able to provide a research environment, and its academic staff should be active in the research and development,
- To act in the best interests of each NRSI member,
- Demonstrate support and appreciation for all NRSI members,

- The more experienced members should provide development support and guidance to the newly accepted members,
- All members acknowledge and attribute the original research contributions to the respective staff and students working as part of the research team,
- Each NRSI member is responsible for training its research staff regarding appropriate health and safety procedures,
- Each NRSI member is responsible for periodic inspection of its lab facilities regarding the safety and operational issues,
- The organizing members for a certain NRSI activity are responsible for adhering to sponsorship agreements in reference to their visibility and sponsorship attribution,
- Individual NRSI members should disclose any situation that could lead to real or apparent conflict of interest when it comes to implementation of specific activities,
- The research protocols for the use of human and animal subjects in research are obtained and followed as required by applicable laws in Kosovo.

§ 8. Financial resources and grants

§8.1 The financial resources and grants for the NRSI activities might come from the following resources:

- Member institutions,
- Private funding for sponsoring specific NRSI activities (e.g., sponsoring conferences / seminars, sponsoring research competitions, student placements in companies, etc.) coming from sources such as:
 - Philanthropists,
 - Crowd-funding,
 - Private companies,
 - Non-for-profit foundations, and
 - Professional organizations.
- Grants from local public bodies (e.g., Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation of Kosovo, Ministry of Economy, Kosovo Academy of Sciences, etc.),
- Grants from agencies/embassies present in the Republic of Kosovo (U.S. Agency for International Development - USAID, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit - GIZ, Austrian Development Agency - ADA, Swiss Foundation for Technical Cooperation - SwissContact, etc.),
- International funding schemas (HORIZON EUROPE, ERASMUS+, EU COST actions, etc.).

§8.2 The distribution of grants between members of the NRSI is done in a fair and transparent way by close engagement and information of all beneficiary parties.

§8.3 The received fundings/grants must be used efficiently with the aim of maximisation of the NRSI activity outcome.

§8.5 The office space for the meetings of the NRSI committee and the deriving sub committees are provided by the member institution that hosts the NRSI as stated in §4.3.

§8.6 The expenditures regarding the office space for the NRSI coordinator are covered by the member institution that hosts the NRSI as stated in §4.3.

§8.7 The web page of the NRSI is hosted and maintained by the member institution that hosts the NRSI as stated in §4.3.

§ 9. Admission to the NRSI

§9.1 The requirements for the membership in the NRSI are as follows:

§9.1.1 Universities, research institutes or research centers in Kosovo that already have an accredited doctoral school in ICT can apply to become a member of the NRSI.

§9.1.2 Universities, research institutes or research centers in Kosovo that are in the process of the accreditation of the doctoral school and have had a functioning MSc program in ICT for at least three years, are eligible to apply as well.

§9.1.3 Universities, research institutes or research centers from abroad that share interest in joining the NRSI, can apply as honorary members if they have an accredited doctoral school in ICT that has been running for at least 5 years.

§9.1.4 Industry partners from the field of ICT can become affiliated with the NRSI, without the right to vote.

§9.1.5 With the application process and show of interest to join the NRSI, entities should also provide a written commitment to contribute to the NRSI with resources for research, be that human and/or financial and/or equipment as specified in §6.

§9.1.6 Each University, research institute or research center applying for membership should appoint a primary contact person (PCP) who will correspond with the NRSI.

§9.2 The admission procedures for the membership in the NRSI are as follows:

§9.2.1 Every University, research institute or research center has to apply for admission to the NRSI by submitting and delivering a signed application form, by which they agree with duties and responsibilities within the NRSI.

§9.2.2 The NRSI appoints an admission committee which will be responsible for evaluating the application of the applicant within a month.

§9.2.3 The evaluation of the application will be presented in the upcoming meeting of the NRSI Committee where the decision will be taken.

§9.2.4 A written decision will be communicated to the applicants who shall have the possibility to protest the decision of the admission committee.

§9.3 The membership in the NRSI is on the free will of universities, research institutions and industry in Kosovo and abroad in order to increase their research capacities.

§ 10. Annual review and evaluation

§10.1 At the end of each year, every member of the NRSI must hand in information regarding their activities during the last year, which will be compiled by the Coordinator into a report.

§10.2 An evaluation committee appointed by the NRSI steering committee conducts performance evaluation of the report.

§10.3 After the analysis of the coordinator's report, the evaluation committee will send alongside with observations the report to the NRSI Steering committee.

§10.4 The NRSI steering committee will analyse the results of the reports and provide a decision upon continuation or discontinuation of the membership.

§ 11. Review of the performance of the NRSI

After two years of the running of the NRSI, its organization, functions and activities should be reviewed and evaluated.

§11.1 The review should be done by an external body or person(s) who is/are separate from the partners of the NRSI and is appointed based on NRSI guiding principles specified in §1.1. Cost of the reviewing process are shared among partners of the NRSI.

§11.2 The process and content for the review and subsequent report should be discussed together with NRSI steering committee and the appointed evaluator.

§11.3 The review and evaluation should result in a decision, taken based on NRSI guiding principles specified in §1.1, on continuation as presently, needed revisions, or discontinuation of the NSRI.

§ 12. Discontinuation

§12.1 Discontinuation of the membership can be initiated by the university/research institute/research center or by the NRSI,

§12.2 In order to discontinue the membership, the university/institute/research center should fulfil all the obligations and commitments towards the NRSI as described in §6.

§12.3 The NRSI can discontinue the membership of a university/institute/research center based on §10.4

§ 13. Entry into force

§13.1 The regulations stated in this policy document take effect on the day that the final document has been signed by the provisional member institutions.

§13.1 The policy document may be subject of review if such decision is taken from NRSI partners based on NRSI guiding principles specified in §1.1.

Methodology

This initial strategy document is written as part of a workshop organised on 28th of April 2021 by UP who are leading the Working Package 2. Within the PhDICTKES project, the workshop was planned under the activity name WP 2.3.1 Establishing a policy document for governance of the NRSI Workshop for development of the policy document for governance of the National Research School in ICT (NRSI).

In this workshop, 22 professors participated from all 6 consortium partner Universities (UBT, University of Prishtina, University of Prizren, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Linnaeus University and South East European Research Center) with a single aim, to create a deliverable that could serve as a driving document for running the NRSI in Kosovo. In the initial phase of the workshop, four different groups were created and each of them were assigned a number of points that needed to be develop within this workshop and refine those points in the upcoming three months duration, as agreed among the participants.

The draft of the Policy document has then circulated among the consortium partners and been discussed in several Management Board meetings and Advisory Board meetings, resulting in revisions of the original document.