

Universities in Kosovo Linking with Industry, Civil Society and
Government:
The Role of Smart4ALL

Kimete Canaj

University "Fehmi Agani" Gjakova

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SMART4ALL SELF-SUSTAINED CROSS-BORDER CUSTOMIZED CYBERPHYSICAL SYSTEM EXPERIMENTS FOR CAPACITY BUILDING AMONG EUROPEAN STAKEHOLDERS

ID: 872614

From: 1 January 2020 to: 31 March 2024

SMART4ALL builds capacity amongst European stakeholders via the development of self-sustained, cross-border experiments that transfer knowledge and technology between academia and industry. It targets CLEC CPS and the IoT and combines a set of unique characteristics that join...

Coordinated in: Greece

Programme: [INDUSTRIAL LEADERSHIP - Leadership in enabling and industrial technologies - Information and Communication Technologies \(ICT\)](#)



Funded by
the European Union

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SMART4ALL network - An extensive network of Digital Innovation Hubs – 484 members (industrial and academic entities, research institutes and digital innovation hubs 2021) 948 members 2024 (15 from Kosovo)



Kosovo's Universities in Innovation Ecosystem

Context: Kosovo's universities are emerging actors in innovation ecosystem
Universities as Drivers of Research & Innovation

Historic milestone: SMART4ALL – the first Horizon project in Kosovo, now expanded to 15 Horizon projects by 2025.

Their role in research and innovation:

Capacity building in ICT, AI, and digital education.

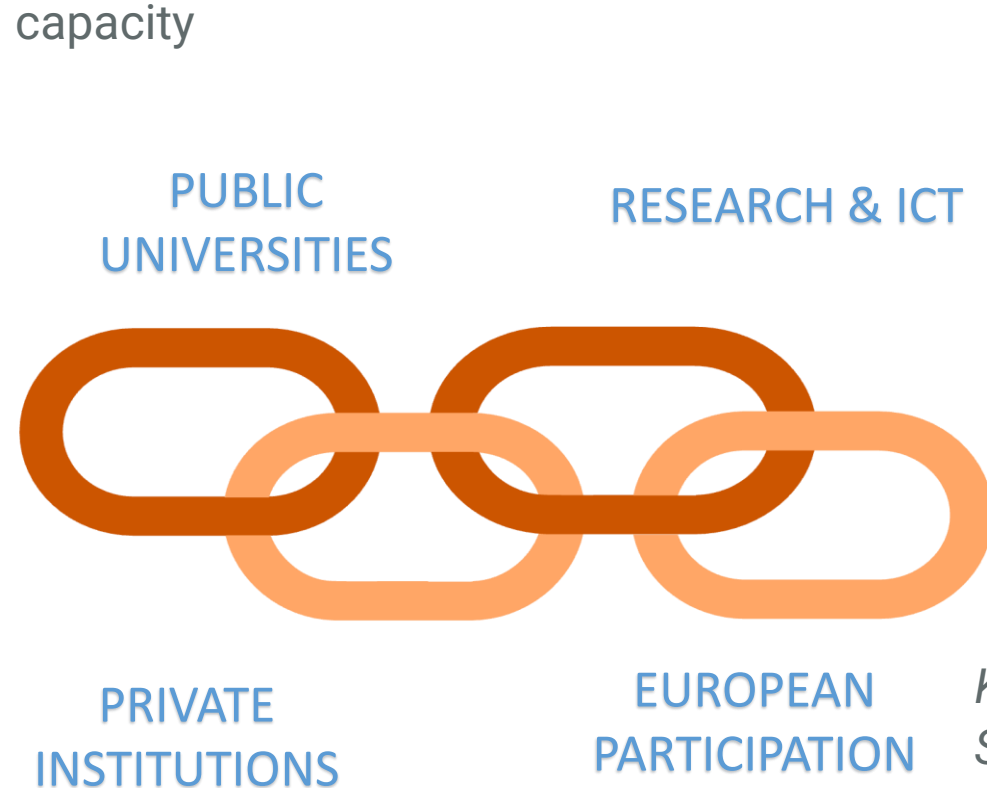
Collaboration with SMEs in Knowledge Transfer Experiments.

Promoting multilingual education, inclusion, and trust in science.

Universities are bridges: connecting academia ↔ industry ↔ civil society
↔ government.

KOSOVO'S HIGHER EDUCATION LANDSCAPE

Kosovo has a growing network of public and private universities, each playing a distinct role in advancing research, digital education, and regional innovation capacity

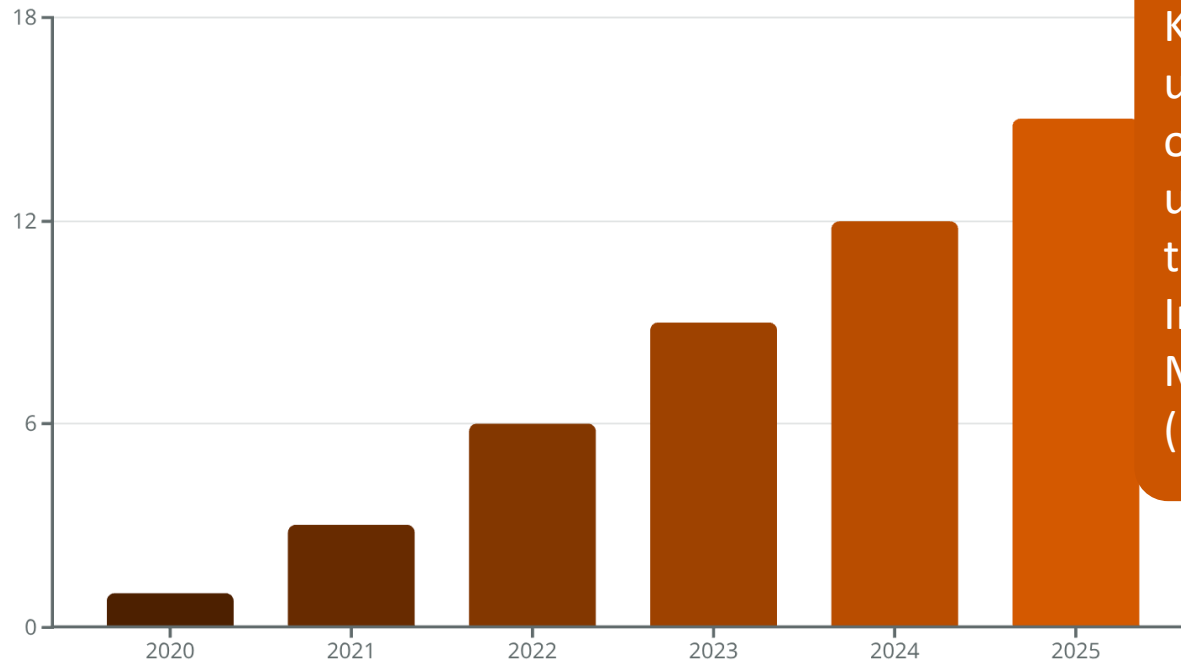


15

From a single pioneering project in 2020, Kosovo has grown to participate in 15 Horizon Europe projects by 2025. SMART4ALL was the first Horizon project in Kosovo – a watershed moment that opened the door to sustained European collaboration and capacity building in ICT, AI, and digital education.

Kosovo's universities are now emerging actors in SEEuropean innovation ecosystems, bridging academia, industry, and civil society.

SMART4ALL: UNCOVERING HIDDEN INNOVATION TREASURES



SMART4ALL

Kosovo's first Horizon Project under the industrial leadership of ICT. A new paradigm to uncover hidden innovation treasures in SSEE through Digital Innovation Hubs (DIHs) and Marketplace-as-a-service (MaaS)

Kosovo now participates across a broad portfolio of European reform SEE to market search an innovation projects, synchronizing national and European development strategies to bring new products and ideas

Supporting academics, startups, SMES and mid-cups entering the digitalization era. Open-sources tools, services and platforms delivered

PROJECT GROWTH: KOSOVO IN HORIZON EUROPE

A trajectory that reflects the transformative role of SMART4ALL as a catalyst for the entire ecosystem



ROLE

UNIVERSITIES AS HONEST BROKERS

- Kosovo's universities are not merely academic institutions; they serve as connectors and catalysts, bridging the gap between academia, industry, civil society, and government to accelerate innovation and digital transformation.
- Universities mediate between competing interests.
- Provide evidence – based, neutral expertise.
- Translate global frameworks (EU, Horizon EU, Erasmus +) into local impact.



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CAPACITY BUILDING

Training researchers, empowering SMEs, and fostering cross-border partnerships. Building expertise in ICT, AI, and digital education across the region.



DIGITAL INCLUSION

Multilingual programs, youth empowerment, and gender equality modules ensure that innovation benefits all communities across Kosovo and Southeast Europe.



SME EMPOWERMENT

Providing SMEs with advanced digital tools, innovation pilots, and integration into European networks through Knowledge Transfer Experiments.



CROSS-BORDER KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

Kosovo linked with partners in Greece, Italy, and other EU states – building lasting collaborative ties that anchor Kosovo in the European research space.



TRUST IN SCIENCE

Promoting multilingual education, inclusion, and trust in science. Awareness of and confidence in innovation have grown significantly through these initiatives.

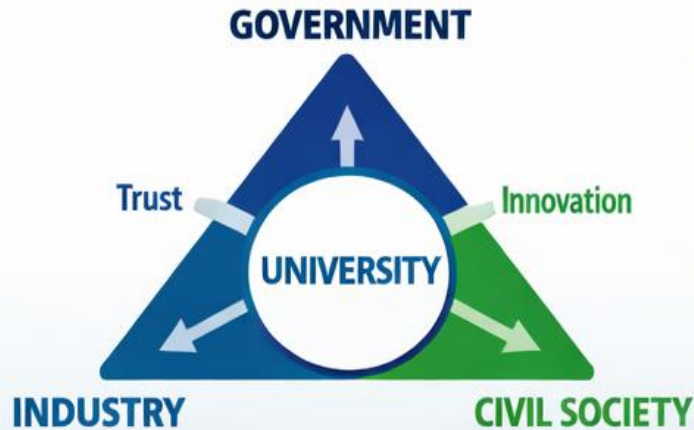


CONNECTING STAKEHOLDERS

Acting as the bridge: Academia ↔ Industry ↔ Civil Society ↔ Government – facilitating dialogue, co-creation, and shared strategy at every level.



Universities as **Honest Brokers** in State Development



- Neutral mediators of trust & cooperation
- Evidence-based expertise for policy & practice
- Translating EU frameworks into local impact
- Building credibility through accreditation & partnerships

Universities as **Connectors and Catalysts**



SMART4ALL Project

EU Innovation Gateway;
15 Horizon Projects



UBT Smart City

Digital Governance
& Mobility



University of Prishtina

Public Health Campaigns & NGOs



Univ. of Gjakova 'Fehmi Agani'

Teacher Education &
Regional Development



MISSING INFRASTRUCTURE: THE RISK OF LOSING MOMENTUM



1

LIMITED R&D FACILITIES

Kosovo lacks robust research infrastructure: limited laboratories, innovation hubs, and digital platforms constrain the ability of universities and SMEs to translate ambition into sustained output.

2

STATE SUPPORT LAGGING

Universities and SMEs are ready to engage with European innovation programs, but government-backed investment in R&D facilities has not kept pace with growing participation and ambition.

3

RISK TO HORIZON PARTICIPATION

Without sustained infrastructure investment, Kosovo risks losing the momentum built through SMART4ALL and its 15 Horizon projects – undermining its positioning as a committed European research partner.

SMART4ALL: Lasting impact for Kosovo

SMART4ALL proves that Kosovo's universities and SMEs can drive sustainable digital innovation, positioning our country as a trusted partner in Europe's future

Sustainability

- Digital hubs integrated into university curricula
- Long-term SME training programmes in leadership & innovation
- Cross-border partnerships embedded in Horizon Europe networks

• Impact for Kosovo

- First Horizon project in Kosovo → expanded to 15 projects by 2025
- Strengthened role of universities as *honest brokers* between government, civil society, and industry
- Boosted Kosovo's visibility in European innovation ecosystems
- Empowered SMEs with digital tools for competitiveness

Thank you for your attention!

Kimete.canaj@uni-gjk.org

We are open to future cooperation in Kosovo's
Kosovo's digital revolution

Make Global Impact

Contribute to research that addresses real-world challenges while building Kosovo's reputation as a regional innovation hub.



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