

Understanding Current Practices of Science Communication in Albania and Serbia; Recommendations for Enhancing Effectiveness

Project name:	PERFORM
Country:	Albania; Serbia

Positions:	1 Research team per country, composed of:
	1 Senior Researcher
	1 Junior Researcher

Contract Duration	12 June– 29 September 2017
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1. Background

The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation project PERFORM is supporting social sciences in Western Balkan countries to contribute more to socio-economic and political change processes in their societies. The project focuses on three outcome areas: strengthened social science communities, systemic linkages with political reform processes, civil society organisations, private sector and media, and favourable framework conditions and financial mechanisms.

Science communication is a key element of any research system. Good science communication is of benefit to the individual researcher, for the community of researchers, their institutions, policy and decision makers, and the wider public.

The science community in Western Balkan countries tends to be self-referential and inward looking. The current culture of communication re-enforces the relative isolation of social sciences. Communication by social scientists is mainly driven by the current evaluation system for scientists, which counts the number of publications as the main, if not the only measure for career advancement.

Communication and collaboration within the scientific community in Albania and Serbia is rather weak and fragmented. Modern and impacting research requires increasingly to be interactive and interdisciplinary, requiring multiple inputs from different areas of expertise.

PERFORM in Albania invited young and mid-level researchers to a roundtable discussion on science communication in Tirana mid last year. Most of the articulated concerns were related to the lack of communication within the scientific community and the lack of knowledge and good practice sharing. The fact that much of the research is of low quality and relevance contributes to the reluctance of institutions to engage in science communication.

PERFORM wants to gain a better understanding of the current performance of science communication in Serbia and Albania, and how science communication can be strengthened, to contribute to the overall objectives and the outcome areas of PERFORM.

For this purpose, PERFORM is going to request a team of researchers to conduct a research project. Based on the findings, the group is expected to come up with recommendations for enhancing the performance of science communication. PERFORM will consider acting on some

of the recommendations.

The research project will be coordinated by PERFORM; scientific support and backstopping will be provided by a team of researchers from the University of Graz.

2. Research Project Objectives

The focus of the research project will be on social sciences and humanities.

The objectives will be:

1. Gain an understanding of the current performance of science communication in Serbia and Albania (practices, analyses, impacts), and identify the key (underlying) factors that drive and impede good science communication in Serbia and Albania.
2. Develop recommendations for support measures that will address those factors critical for a more impacting science communication. Addressees of these recommendations will be PERFORM itself, the social science research community, and relevant policy institutions in Serbia and Albania.

3. Scope of the Research Project

The research project is expected to focus on three key audiences:

- Peer to peer: communication within the science community
- Scientists addressing policy institutions
- Scientists addressing the media and the general public

Research teams are expected to focus their research on communication in two scientific disciplines:

- Political sciences
- Economic sciences

4. Expected Results (or Outputs)

The research teams are expected to achieve the following results:

1. Discuss and define a set of indicators for measuring the performance of science communication;
2. Assessment/stock-taking of the current situation of science communication in Albania and Serbia:
 - a. How do scientists communicate now: current practices and application of such practices?
 - b. How does the regulatory framework, cultural values and norms steer or influence these practices?
 - c. What are the impacts of these practices on individuals, their institutions and the wider environment?
 - d. How does it compare to communication in Western countries (benchmarking)?
3. Identify main factors that contribute to the current state of science communication;
4. Identify drivers that have the potentials to contribute to improving science communication;
5. Recommendations to policy and higher education institutions on measures that will contribute to better performing science communication;
6. Recommendations to PERFORM how it can facilitate change processes leading to impacting science communication practices.

The team from Graz will support the two research teams (quality assurance) and contribute to the study on the question of *key international trends in science communication*.

5. Research Document Structure

The research teams propose the structure of the document.

Country specific chapters of the documents shall not exceed 25 pages per country, and shall not exceed 12,000 words. Annexes can be added beyond the 25 pages.

6. Requirements for applicants

Senior Researcher	
Education:	Post-Graduate Degree in the field of Social Sciences and Humanities
Experience and competences:	At least 10 years of relevant research experience in the field of social sciences and humanities Good understanding of the complexity of science communication Experienced in communicating research results with policy institutions and the media Experience with international funded research projects Excellent writing skills Excellent analytical skills Experience in regional research projects (preferable) Proven team worker Readiness to travel within the region
Language requirements:	Fluency in English
Junior Researcher	
Education:	
Experience and competences:	At least 3 years of relevant research experience in the field of social sciences and humanities Understanding the complexity of science communication Some experience in communicating research results with policy institutions and media Excellent writing skills Excellent analytical skills Experience in regional research projects (preferable) Proven team worker Readiness to travel within the region
Language Requirements:	Fluency in English

PERFORM expects researchers to apply as a team, composed of one Senior and one Junior researcher per each country; (gender mixed team would be encouraged)

7. Financial Offer

This assignment will cover the period of June 2017 – September 2017. Each research team will work for a maximum of 50 working days. Consultants should submit a financial offer specifying the gross remuneration fee per day, and total amount.

Expenses incurred by regional and wider travel shall not be included in the financial offer.

8. Time Frame of the Assignment

This assignment will cover the period of June 2017 – September 2017.

	June		July				August				September			
	III	IV	I	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV
Development of research design and methodology Regional Workshop (Country TBD)														
Finalisation of research design and methodology Workshop at the University of Graz														
Independent work of Research Teams														
Submission of 1st Draft														
Incorporation of comments from RCT at Uni. Graz														
Submission of Final Draft Workshop with the University of Graz														
Incorporation of comments from RCT at Uni. Graz and submission of final document														

9. Application Process

9.1. Required Documents

1. Cover letter/Expression of interest
2. Full professional curriculum vitae, including full list of academic publications and relevant internationally funded research projects;
3. Outline of research design and methodology;
4. Financial offer (including a detailed breakdown of the use of time in different phases of the research.

9.2. Evaluation Grid

Award Criteria	Weighting
Quality proposed research design & methodology	30%
Financial offer	30%
Qualifications of researchers	40%
Total	100%

Please submit your application in English to both email addresses:

PERFORM-Albania@helvetas.org

PERFORM-Serbia@helvetas.org

Submission deadline is 2 June 2017, at 17:30h.