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## The Faculty of Islamic Studies (FSI)

### Strategic Plan of the Faculty of Islamic Studies 2026-2030



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## List of Abbreviations

<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Description</b>
FIS	Faculty of Islamic Studies
MASHTI	Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation
EHEA	European Higher Education Area
KPI	Key Performance Indicators
WG	Working Group
CMSI	Commission for Monitoring and Strategy Implementation
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
SHER	Sustainable Higher Education and Research in Kosovo
BIK	Islamic Community of Kosovo
ESG	European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance
EQAR	European Quality Assurance Register
UP	University of Prishtina
KAA	Kosovo Accreditation Agency
SIMS	Student Information Management System
IT	Information Technology
Erasmus+	EU Programme for Education, Training, Youth and Sport
Horizon Europe	European Union Programme for Research and Innovation

## Executive Summary

The Strategic Plan 2026-2030 of the Faculty of Islamic Studies (FSI) in Prishtina presents the new developmental direction of the FIS for the next five years, defining its vision, mission, values, and key strategic priorities for the modernization and strengthening of its role in higher education and society. The document has been developed through a comprehensive process led by the FSI Working Group and supported by the SHER project, combining institutional analysis, extensive consultations, and international best practices in strategic planning.

The Plan is grounded in the three fundamental pillars of higher education institutions: quality teaching, scientific research, and community service. To realize these pillars, the strategy defines five development objectives:

1. **Enhancement of academic quality and innovation in teaching** - through curriculum modernization, integration of digital learning, strengthening staff training, and increasing student engagement.
2. **Development of research capacities and scientific publications** - by increasing research productivity, involving students in research activities, supporting publications, and strengthening scientific research.
3. **Internationalization and institutional cooperation** - through new international agreements, academic and student mobility, participation in European projects, and the organization of international activities.
4. **Strengthening the link with the community and the labor market** - by expanding partnerships with the Islamic Community of Kosovo (BIK), schools, municipalities, and public organizations, and by enhancing the role of FIS in interfaith dialogue, professional ethics, and civic education.
5. **Institutional development and sustainability** - through digitalization, infrastructure modernization, strengthening internal quality assurance, diversifying funding sources, and enhancing staff capacities.

The strategy defines concrete measures and measurable indicators for each objective, enabling a systematic approach to evaluating progress while ensuring institutional transparency and accountability. From a financial perspective, the plan foresees a combination of internal resources with external funding through international programs, partnerships, donor funds, and self-generated revenues. This approach aims to ensure long-term sustainability and support the achievement of development objectives.

The Strategic Plan 2026–2030 positions the FIS toward a sustainable academic and institutional transformation, aiming for higher quality, deeper societal impact, broader international outreach, and modern functioning grounded in the principles of integrity, innovation, and inclusiveness.

# 1. Introduction

The Faculty of Islamic Studies (FIS) is an independent educational and academic-scientific institution, established by Decision No. 443 of the Assembly of the Islamic Community of the Republic of Kosovo, dated 15 August 1992. FIS is a higher education institution in Kosovo with a long-standing tradition in the academic and professional training of cadres in the field of Islamic studies, humanities, and community service. As an institution that directly contributes to the educational, cultural, and social development of the country, FIS plays an important role in preparing qualified professionals for religious, educational, and community institutions.

Recent changes in the higher education system, increasing demands for academic quality, the need to modernize teaching methods, the strengthening of scientific research, and trends of internationalization require a new strategic approach to the development of FIS. Furthermore, the continuous transformation of the labor market, digitalization, and socio-cultural dynamics present both challenges and opportunities that require a clear strategic orientation.

In this context, the Strategic Plan 2026–2030 has been developed to guide institutional development, improve academic, administrative, and research performance, and strengthen the role of FIS in society.

The diagram below presents the managerial structure of FIS, illustrating the main governing bodies and the relationships between them.

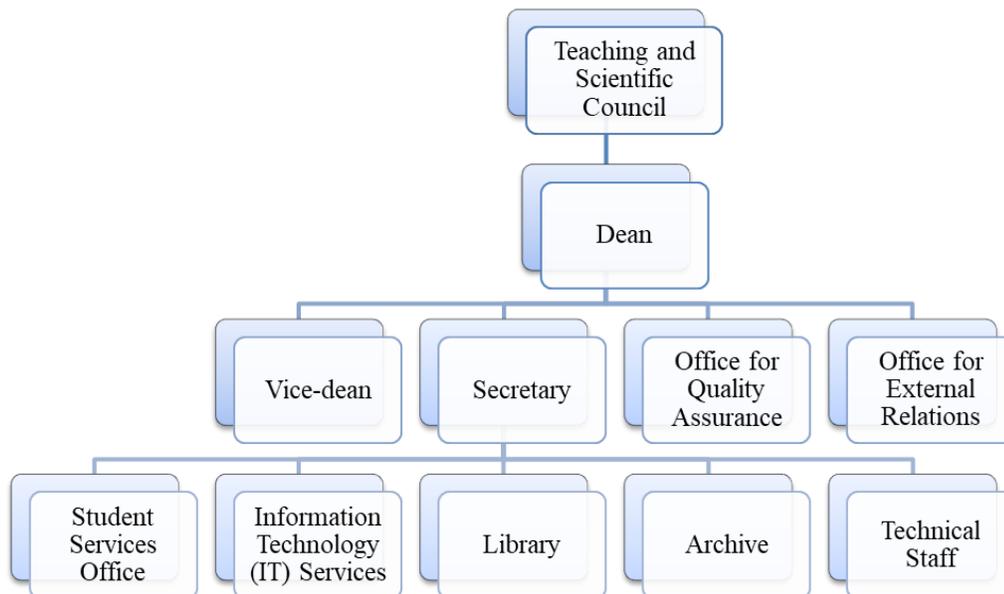


Figure 1: Management Structure of the Faculty of Islamic Studies

The governance structure of FIS is based on two main authorities: the Academic-Scientific Council and the Dean.

The Academic-Scientific Council is the highest decision-making body, responsible for the academic, financial, and infrastructural policies of the faculty. The Dean, as the academic and administrative leader, ensures the efficient functioning of the Faculty and reports to the Council. The Dean is supported by the Vice-Dean, the Secretary, and the Quality Assurance Office.

Within FIS the Student Union also operates, which facilitates communication between students and staff and contributes to improving the quality of teaching. The Faculty consists of an academic unit with two study programs (BA and MA in Islamic Theology) and several organizational units that support daily operations, including the Dean's Office, the Secretary's Office, the Student Services Office, the Library, the Quality Office, the International Relations Office, and the IT Service. The Faculty is also supported by an Advisory Board composed of international experts.

This organizational structure ensures efficiency, transparency, and alignment with the academic, research, and community mission of FIS.

### **1.1. Academic Infrastructure, Resources, and Institutional Capacity**

The Faculty of Islamic Studies offers studies in two accredited programs: Bachelor's and Master's in Islamic Theology. Currently, approximately 410 full-time and part-time students are enrolled at FIS, while the academic process is supported by 26 members of academic staff and 6 administrative staff.

FIS possesses modern and well-maintained infrastructure, with a total area of 3,474.08 m<sup>2</sup>. Classrooms are equipped with smart boards and internet access, while the amphitheater and computer laboratory provide advanced conditions for teaching and learning. The facility is fully accessible to persons with disabilities through ramps and an elevator.

The faculty library is one of the main academic assets, with approximately 10,000 books and 3,500 titles, as well as hundreds of thesis papers. It offers literature in Albanian and foreign languages, electronic access for cataloging and resource management, and extended working hours to support students throughout the academic year. FIS also maintains international cooperation with the Bibliotheca Alexandrina in Egypt, facilitating access to advanced research resources.

FIS implements regular quality assurance mechanisms, including semester questionnaires, meetings with students, and systematic collection of feedback. Equipment inventory is conducted annually to ensure effective resource management, while technical staff provide continuous support for the use of technology in teaching and research.

## **1.2.Importance of Strategic Planning for FIS**

Strategic planning is an essential process for FIS, as it ensures a clear long-term direction, improves the quality of decision-making and resource utilization, ensures alignment with national and international standards of higher education, promotes transparency and accountability, enhances the effectiveness of academic and administrative services, and helps the institution respond adequately to rapid social, technological, and economic developments.

For FIS, strategic planning holds particular importance as it enables the improvement of teaching quality, the development of scientific research, the strengthening of the faculty's role in the community, the modernization of institutional capacities, the expansion of internationalization and cooperation, and the assurance of sustainable financial and organizational development.

## **1.3.Objectives and Guiding Principles of the Plan**

This document aims to define the new vision and mission of FIS, identify priority areas for institutional development for the period 2026–2030, establish clear and measurable development objectives, present measures and indicators for monitoring each objective, and ensure a sustainable system for the implementation, monitoring, and reporting of progress.

The guiding principles for the development and implementation of the plan are:

1. **Academic quality** – meeting academic standards and ensuring a high-quality student experience.
2. **Integrity and professionalism** – adherence to academic ethics and transparency in decision-making.
3. **Inclusiveness** – continuous consultation with internal and external stakeholders.
4. **Alignment** – harmonization with the legal framework of MASHTI, the standards of KAA, and the European Higher Education Area.
5. **Sustainable development** – responsible resource management and long-term planning.
6. **Innovation** – application of contemporary teaching and research methods.
7. **Community engagement** – strengthening the faculty's social role.

## **2. Methodology for the Development of the Strategic Plan**

The methodology for developing the Strategic Plan 2026–2030 for FIS is built on the principles of modern strategic planning in higher education. The methodological approach has been designed to ensure that the document is comprehensive, realistic, implementable, and based on accurate analyses of the current situation and real institutional needs.

The strategy development process was based on three fundamental principles:

- institutional participation,
- full ownership by FIS, and
- data- and evidence-based decision-making.

These principles ensure not only the creation of a high-quality strategic document, but also increase the likelihood of its successful implementation by involving all relevant stakeholders within and outside the institution.

The process was led by a Working Group (WG), established by the decision of the Dean of FIS. This group, with support from a SHER program expert, had primary responsibility for designing the methodology, coordinating data collection, facilitating workshops, and drafting the document. The involvement of the WG ensured institutional ownership at every stage, guaranteeing that the strategy reflects the perspectives of academic staff, administrative staff, students, and other stakeholders.

The development process was carried out in several interrelated phases:

First, the Working Group developed and approved the methodology and format of the strategic document, defining the structure of the plan, the analytical tools to be used, and the approach to organizing consultations. This phase also served to establish the main categories of data to be collected for the initial analysis, including academic, administrative, financial, and demographic data.

Second, the collection and analysis of baseline data were conducted. This included the historical development of FIS, academic programs, staff capacities, student profile, the status of internationalization, and research activities. Particular attention was given to the state of infrastructure, the quality assurance system, and the positioning of FIS within the broader context of higher education in Kosovo.

Third, the second workshop was organized, focusing on SWOT analysis, review of the initial data, and the formulation of the first version of the vision, mission, and development objectives.

Fourth, following the second workshop, the Working Group began drafting the first version of the Strategy, including the proposed objectives, expected results, and initial proposals for measures and indicators. The preparation of this draft served as the basis for further refinement.

Fifth, the third workshop was held, focusing on the finalization of development objectives, the definition of key measures, and the formulation of measurable Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). This phase was essential in ensuring the feasibility and relevance of the strategy.

Subsequently, the Working Group refined the advanced version of the Strategy by incorporating all comments and suggestions gathered from the workshops and consultations. It was ensured that the final draft was coherent, aligned with national strategies, and in compliance with accreditation standards.

The final phase included a process of validation and broad consultation, during which the draft Strategy was presented to the academic community of FIS, alumni, and institutional partners. The feedback

received was analyzed and, where necessary, reflected in the final version of the plan prior to its approval by the governing bodies of FIS.

This structured and comprehensive methodology ensures that the Strategic Plan 2026–2030 is an evidence-based, implementable document aligned with the current needs and long-term aspirations of FIS.

## **2.1. Participatory Process and the Role of the Working Group**

The process of developing the Strategic Plan was led by the Working Group (WG), established by FIS and supported by the engaged expert and the SHER project team. The WG consisted of the Dean, as well as representatives of the academic and administrative staff.

The Working Group held key responsibilities at every stage of the process, including:

- approving the structure and methodology of strategic planning;
- contributing to the situational analysis and data collection;
- actively participating in consultative workshops;
- proposing and evaluating development objectives;
- reviewing draft versions of the plan;
- validating the final document for submission to the governing bodies.

This participatory process ensured full institutional ownership and guaranteed that the final document clearly reflects the priorities, capacities, and vision of FIS.

The methodology is built on the following fundamental principles:

- **Participation** – inclusion of all relevant stakeholders;
- **Transparency** – documented and open decision-making;
- **Data-driven analysis** – strategic decisions supported by evidence;
- **Sustainability** – long-term orientation and focus on sustainable development;
- **Alignment with national and international standards** – ensuring full integration with the legal framework of higher education in Kosovo and with European standards.

### **3. Situation Analysis**

Chapter 3 provides a structured and comprehensive overview of the current state of FIS, which serves as the fundamental basis for formulating development objectives and strategic measures for the period 2026–2030. The analysis is built on a review of key institutional documents, such as the Strategic Plan 2021–2025, the FIS Statute, Self-Evaluation Reports, and the Institutional Self-Evaluation Report 2024, as well as on SWOT analysis and other data collected from academic and administrative structures.

This analysis also incorporates national and international trends in higher education, developments within the legal framework of education in Kosovo, and the orientations of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). This approach ensures that the assessment of FIS’s current situation is integrated and aligned with modern academic standards and the requirements of the national education system.

The main objective of the analysis is to present a clear, balanced, and evidence-based picture of the institutional reality of FIS. This includes an assessment of the legal and institutional framework in which the faculty operates, the demographic structure of students and staff, academic and administrative capacities, infrastructural resources, as well as the positioning of FIS in relation to accreditation standards and quality assurance processes.

SWOT analysis has been a key instrument for identifying internal and external factors affecting the performance of FIS, highlighting strengths, challenges, opportunities for growth, and areas requiring immediate strategic intervention.

The analytical process has been strengthened through various methods, including stakeholder analysis, analysis of trends in teaching, scientific research, digitalization, and labor market developments, as well as structured interviews with leadership and academic staff. Consultative workshops with the Working Group and other institutional and community participants have helped identify priorities and key directions for the future development of the faculty.

These combined elements constitute the factual and analytical foundation upon which the Strategic Plan 2026–2030 has been built, ensuring that the new strategy is evidence-based, realistic, and aligned with higher education standards in Kosovo and international best practices.

### **3.1. Legal and Institutional Framework in Kosovo**

The Faculty of Islamic Studies (FIS) operates as an independent educational and academic-scientific institution, established by Decision No. 443 of the Assembly of the Islamic Community of Kosovo on 15 August 1992, and regulated by its Statute as well as by national legislation on higher education. Based on its Statute, FIS has a clear mandate to provide higher education in the field of Islamic studies, to develop scientific research, and to contribute to community service, while adhering to the principles of academic integrity, professionalism, and alignment with contemporary standards.

At the state level, FIS operates within the framework defined by Law No. 04/L-037 on Higher Education, administrative instructions of MASHTI, the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ESG), and the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). These documents provide the legal basis for institutional functioning, accreditation, program development, institutional transparency, and public accountability. The Education Strategy in Kosovo 2022–2026 and sectoral policies for higher education guide FIS toward digitalization, quality enhancement, research development, and modernization of pedagogical approaches, ensuring alignment with national priorities and European trends.

As an accredited institution, FIS is required to maintain a functional internal quality assurance system, conduct the annual cycle of self-evaluation, and report regularly to the Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA). These processes ensure systematic monitoring of academic performance, alignment of programs with Bologna standards, curriculum development in line with contemporary requirements, and the mobility of staff and students.

The governing bodies of FIS, namely the Academic-Scientific Council and the Dean's Office, support the structure of academic and administrative governance, policy development, resource management, program development, and the functioning of quality systems. These structures, grounded in the Statute and legislation, establish the institutional foundations upon which the Development Strategy 2026–2030 is built.

### **3.2. Students, Staff, and Academic Programs**

Students constitute the core of FIS's academic development and reflect the diversity of the broader community in Kosovo. In recent years, the number of students has remained relatively stable, with approximately 410 active students across both levels of study. Students come from various municipalities in Kosovo and diverse socio-economic backgrounds, reflecting the mission of FIS as a public institution with an important social role. A continuing challenge remains the lower participation of women compared to other higher education institutions, a phenomenon partly related to the theological nature of the programs, but one that requires targeted approaches to increase the inclusion of girls and women.

The academic staff consists of 26 lecturers engaged in Bachelor's and Master's programs, with a mix of Master's and PhD degree holders. The staff has extensive experience in teaching and community engagement, while participation in scientific research is increasing but still limited. Despite this, FIS has demonstrated progress by encouraging publications in indexed journals, participation in conferences, and capacity building through international cooperation. The teaching workload remains high, which requires

periodic assessment of the balance between teaching and research, particularly in light of FIS's strategic objectives to enhance academic quality and research output.

The administrative staff, composed of 6 employees, ensures the daily functioning of institutional processes, supporting student administration, archiving, the library, IT services, and quality assurance. While committed, the administrative staff requires further development in areas such as digitalization, data management, and the use of the SIMS platform, which is currently being upgraded to enable comprehensive online academic services.

The study programs at Bachelor's and Master's levels are accredited and focus on Islamic theology, Islamic jurisprudence, social sciences related to religion, Islamic history and culture, as well as religious education.

Regarding academic performance, institutional data show that the pass rate at the Bachelor's level ranges between 78% and 85%, while at the Master's level, it remains at 100%. The dropout rate is low, indicating academic stability and consistent monitoring of student progress by the staff.

FIS infrastructure includes adequate spaces for teaching, research, and student activities, although some facilities require modernization. The Faculty has invested in the gradual improvement of lecture halls, professors' offices, and student spaces. The library, rich in theological and scientific literature, requires full digitalization and expansion of collections in foreign languages. Technological equipment (computers, laptops, smart boards, projectors) is available and continuously utilized by academic staff to enhance teaching delivery. The SIMS platform, which manages all academic processes, is in an advanced phase of development to integrate modules for evaluation and quality management.

Financial resources at FIS remain limited and largely depend on the Islamic Community of Kosovo (BIK), with low capacity for securing international research projects and external funding. This creates constraints in the development of research capacities, technological modernization, and the expansion of international mobility. Nevertheless, the Faculty has taken steady steps toward developing partnerships, including international Erasmus+ agreements and cooperation with counterpart institutions in the region, which represent significant potential for further improvement of academic quality.

### **3.3.Challenges and Opportunities of the Environment**

The political environment in which FIS operates is characterized by continuous changes in the legal framework for higher education institutions, requiring ongoing adaptation and increased transparency and accountability. In the social and cultural context, there is a growing interest in study programs related to ethics, culture, education, and social dialogue, while the role of Islam in society enhances the potential of FIS to exert a positive influence and contribute to the cultural and spiritual development of the community.

From an economic perspective, the labor market demands qualified religious professionals, while also requiring contemporary skills such as technology, communication, and interpersonal competencies. Budget constraints remain a challenge, affecting the development of institutional capacities, research, and innovation. Meanwhile, the technological environment is rapidly evolving, creating new opportunities for integrating digital platforms into the teaching process, developing smart classrooms, and expanding modern teaching approaches. This transformation represents a significant opportunity for FIS to enhance the quality of academic delivery and meet the expectations of students and the labor market.

### **3.4.SWOT Analysis**

The SWOT analysis provides a comprehensive assessment of internal and external factors affecting the functioning and development of the Faculty of Islamic Studies. This analysis, supported by official faculty documents and consultations with institutional stakeholders, serves as the foundation for formulating the objectives and strategic measures of the Strategic Plan 2026–2030.

#### **Strengths:**

The strengths of FIS constitute the strategic foundation upon which the institution's long-term development is built. FIS offers unique study programs in Kosovo, positioning itself as the leading institution in the field of Islamic studies. The academic staff consists of qualified professors with extensive national and international experience, while students come from various regions of the country and the wider region, contributing to cultural and academic diversity.

FIS benefits from modern infrastructure, including a well-equipped library, an amphitheater, contemporary classrooms, and supporting facilities such as a dormitory and canteen, providing optimal conditions for study, teaching, and scientific research. FIS degrees are recognized both nationally and internationally, enhancing the institution's credibility and attractiveness.

The regional and international reputation of FIS is built upon its academic tradition, long-standing contribution to community service, and active role in promoting interfaith and intercultural dialogue. FIS preserves Islamic heritage in Kosovo while integrating contemporary approaches to higher education. Continuous funding from the Islamic Community of Kosovo (BIK), support for scientific research, the organization of conferences, and merit-based scholarships for high-achieving students position FIS as a stable institution oriented toward quality and continuous development.

**Weaknesses:**

Although FIS has considerable potential for development, several internal weaknesses present structural challenges that require direct and strategic intervention. Research productivity remains low, with an insufficient number of publications in high-impact and internationally indexed journals (Scopus, WoS). The engagement of academic staff in research projects is limited, as is the institution's participation in international projects and initiatives, reducing opportunities for collaboration and academic advancement. The lack of professors with a sufficient volume of scientific publications poses an obstacle to the introduction of new study programs and the expansion of the academic portfolio. Furthermore, administrative capacities are insufficient to support institutional expansion and growing processes, while the digitalization of services and procedures remains incomplete.

From an academic perspective, the absence of courses in education and pedagogy creates gaps in preparing students for teaching professions, affecting the development of their didactic competencies. Another challenge is the lack of structured and regular dialogue between FIS, the Islamic Community of Kosovo, and state institutions, which limits institutional coordination and the ability to influence relevant policies.

**Opportunities:**

FIS operates in a dynamic external environment that offers a wide range of strategic opportunities for academic, institutional, and societal development. Digital transformation and the growing demand for online learning create significant space for modernizing the teaching offer and integrating flexible forms of learning. There is considerable potential for the development of short-term non-formal courses, new programs, and specializations, including the possibility of introducing a doctoral program, which would further enhance the academic profile of the faculty.

International initiatives and programs, such as Erasmus+, staff and student mobility schemes, as well as regional and global cooperation projects, provide substantial opportunities for strengthening professional capacities, academic exchange, and the internationalization of FIS. At the national level, the inclusion of religious education in Kosovo's schools creates new demand for qualified professionals in religious and ethical education, positioning FIS as the leading institution for preparing this profile.

The operationalization of the Academy for Leadership and Islamic Studies represents an important opportunity for developing advanced training programs and strengthening the impact of FIS within the professional and societal community. The growing interest in fields such as ethics, culture, interfaith dialogue, and religious leadership opens new avenues for cooperation, projects, and cross-border initiatives that can advance the mission and role of FIS at both national and international levels.

**Threats:**

FIS faces a range of external threats that may potentially affect its functioning and long-term development. Continuous population migration and the declining number of high school graduates create pressure on new enrollments and the demographic sustainability of the student body. Frequent legal changes and increasing requirements from the Kosovo Accreditation Agency impose ever-higher standards for

academic staff, programs, and internal quality systems, requiring continuous investment in capacities and documentation.

Difficulties in the employment of students and graduates in the local labor market remain a structural challenge, influencing the perceived value of studies and the attraction of new applicants. Uncertainties regarding the legal status of FIS as a higher education institution with a long-standing tradition, yet positioned outside the regular public system, create limitations in cooperation, funding, and long-term planning. Furthermore, increasing competition from private higher education institutions, as well as from online learning platforms, adds pressure for innovation, academic differentiation, and continuous improvement in the quality of educational offerings.

#### **4. Vision, Mission, and Values**

This chapter defines the strategic identity of FIS for the period 2026–2030 and presents the guiding foundation for all objectives, priorities, and development measures outlined in this plan. Through its vision, mission, and values, FIS clearly articulates its institutional direction, long-term expectations, and the principles upon which its academic, research, and societal functions are built.

The mission, vision, and values have been formulated by reflecting the academic tradition of FIS, its role within the higher education system in Kosovo, and its historical and contemporary responsibility in preparing professional cadres in the field of Islamic studies. These guiding elements are the result of a broad and consultative process involving academic and administrative staff, students, alumni, and institutional partners, ensuring that the strategic identity is grounded in the real needs of the institution and the expectations of the wider community.

Overall, this chapter establishes the conceptual framework upon which the entire Strategic Plan is built. It ensures internal coherence and an organic linkage between institutional identity and strategic objectives, enabling FIS to advance as a modern, sustainable institution with lasting academic and societal impact.

##### **4.1. Vision of FIS**

*FIS aspires to be a center of academic and research leadership that provides high-quality education, integrating Islamic tradition with modern needs, and shaping conscious intellectuals who contribute to the ethical, cultural, and social development of local and international communities.*

This vision reflects FIS's aspiration to position itself as a leading reference institution in the field of Islamic studies and related social sciences. It emphasizes high academic standards, a strong orientation toward scientific development and innovation, the necessity of modernization and digitalization, as well as the important role of the Faculty in social, ethical, and cultural dialogue. It also underscores the need for internationalization, broad institutional cooperation, and the enhancement of FIS's societal impact.

## 4.2.Mission of FIS

*FIS has the mission to provide high-quality and inclusive higher education, to develop scientific research with academic and societal impact, and to serve the community with Islamic, ethical, and human values, by preparing professional cadres.*

The mission of FIS is to provide high-quality and inclusive higher education, to develop scientific research with academic and societal impact, and to serve the community through the promotion of Islamic, ethical, and human values, by preparing competent and responsible professionals.

Grounded in the three fundamental pillars of modern universities-quality teaching, scientific research, and community service-FIS aims to educate capable and ethical professionals, contribute to the advancement of knowledge in the field of Islamic studies and the humanities, and play an active role in Kosovo's institutions and society through professional expertise and civic engagement.

## 4.3.Values of FIS

FIS is guided by an institutional culture grounded in academic values that ensure integrity, quality, and professionalism across all dimensions of its functioning. These values represent the foundation upon which the Faculty's identity is built and its strategic direction for the period 2026–2030 is shaped.

The values that guide FIS are:

### 4.1.a. Academic Quality

Commitment to high standards in teaching, scientific research, and professional development.

### 4.1.b. Academic Integrity

Adherence to professional ethics, intellectual honesty, and the principles of academic responsibility.

### 4.1.c. Professionalism

Commitment of staff and students to act with competence, responsibility, and ethics in all academic and administrative activities.

### 4.1.d. Inclusion and Equality

Building an open, fair, and inclusive academic environment where every individual is treated with respect and without discrimination.

### 4.1.e. Innovation in Higher Education

Application of contemporary pedagogical methods and the use of digital technologies to enhance the quality of teaching and learning.

### 4.1.f. Social Responsibility

Commitment to promoting civic values, community well-being, and interfaith dialogue as part of the institutional role.

### 4.1.g. Collaboration

Fostering sustainable academic, institutional, and international partnerships that enable shared development and knowledge exchange.

These values form the foundation of the institutional culture of FIS and guide the implementation of its

mission and vision, steering the Faculty toward becoming a modern, open institution with a sustainable societal impact.

## **5. Development Objectives**

The development objectives of FIS for the period 2026–2030 represent the main strategic directions that the institution aims to pursue in order to strengthen its academic, research, and societal role. These objectives have been formulated based on an in-depth analysis of the current situation, which included the assessment of internal capacities, structural challenges, environmental opportunities, as well as the expectations of internal and external stakeholders, guided by the principles of inclusiveness, transparency, and evidence-based decision-making, reflecting a modern approach to strategic planning.

Through the five defined objectives, FIS aims to create an academic environment that promotes high-quality teaching, sustainable scientific output, international mobility, an integrated approach to the development of religious and social policies, as well as an institutional culture based on efficiency, transparency, and continuous development. The objectives are designed to ensure measurability through clear indicators, implementability through defined measures, and long-term impact in fulfilling the Faculty’s mission.

At their core, the development objectives constitute the strategic architecture of the plan and serve as a guiding mechanism for all academic, administrative, and research processes of the institution during the period 2026–2030, ensuring that FIS advances toward a modern and consolidated model of higher education.

### **List of Development Objectives:**

1. Enhancement of academic quality and innovation in teaching
2. Development of research capacities and scientific publications
3. Internationalization and institutional cooperation
4. Strengthening the link with the community and the labor market
5. Institutional development and sustainability

#### **1. Enhancement of Academic Quality and Innovation in Teaching**

This objective aims to strengthen the academic foundations of FIS by modernizing program offerings, advancing pedagogical approaches, and integrating digital technologies into the teaching process. Improving academic quality requires FIS to continuously align its curriculum with contemporary labor market developments, scientific trends, and community needs, ensuring that students acquire relevant and applicable knowledge and competencies. The objective also seeks to create conditions for the continuous

professional development of academic staff through training, the exchange of best practices, and the use of innovative teaching methods.

Through these actions, FIS aims to build a dynamic, innovative, and quality-oriented academic culture that not only enhances the level of teaching but also strengthens the professional and ethical preparation of students, equipping them with the necessary skills to become valuable contributors to society and to the institutions in which they will be engaged.

<b>Development Objective 1: Enhancement of Academic Quality and Innovation in Teaching</b>	
<b>Goal:</b> To improve academic quality and modernize teaching through pedagogical innovation, digitalization, and active student engagement.	
<b>Expected Results:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Study programs are regularly modernized and aligned with labor market demands.</li> <li>• The use of digital learning and online platforms increases sustainably.</li> <li>• Academic staff benefit from continuous pedagogical and professional training.</li> <li>• Student satisfaction and active engagement in the learning process increase.</li> <li>• Student and staff participation in research projects and academic activities increases.</li> </ul>	
<b>Measures</b>	<b>Indicators</b>
1.1. Annual review and evaluation of study programs and their alignment with labor market needs.	1. All study programs reviewed at least once by 2030. 2. At least 80% of courses aligned with labor market requirements by 2030.
1.2. Integration of digital learning and online platforms into the academic process.	1. At least 50% of courses supported by digital platforms by 2030. 2. By 2030, at least 20% of courses in the Master’s program are offered in a hybrid format. 3. Syllabi for all courses are published online every academic year.
1.3. Professional development of staff in contemporary pedagogy and innovative teaching methods.	1. A minimum of 2 pedagogical trainings per year for academic staff. 2. Up to 5 subsidized trainings per year for academic and administrative staff. 3. An annual staff professional development report is prepared and approved each year.
1.4. Increasing student engagement in the learning process and strengthening feedback mechanisms.	1. ≥90% of students express satisfaction with teaching (annual survey).
1.5. Encouraging students and staff to participate in	1. Up to 3 subsidized research projects per year. 2. A 20% increase in student papers/projects presented in academic

research projects.	activities by 2030. 3. By 2027, the Regulation on Scientific Research Activity is updated to include provisions on research projects.
1.6. Expanding academic literature through translations and digital resources.	1. At least a 50% increase in the Albanian-language literature collection in the library by 2030. 2. A functional digital platform for access to updated literature established by 2027.

## 2. Development of Research Capacities and Scientific Publications

This objective aims to build a sustainable research culture within FIS and significantly enhance the institution's scientific impact at both national and international levels. Considering the importance of scientific research in modern higher education, FIS seeks to create an environment where research, analysis, and knowledge production become central components of the academic work of both staff and students. Through the development of research infrastructure and the provision of financial support for publications and conferences, the Faculty aims to increase both the quality and quantity of publications, encouraging submissions to indexed journals (Scopus, Web of Science) and international scientific forums. This approach not only strengthens the academic credibility of FIS but also contributes to the advancement of Islamic studies and the humanities in Kosovo and beyond.

An important element of this objective is the active involvement of students, particularly those at the second cycle level, in research projects, publications, and conferences. This engagement not only enhances their academic capacities but also fosters a new generation of professionally prepared and research-oriented scholars.

The expansion of research collaborations with universities, institutions, and research centers at regional and international levels is expected to create new opportunities for joint projects, grants, professional exchanges, and further staff capacity development. In this way, FIS aims to position itself as a significant actor on the academic map of the region and to contribute to the development of knowledge and contemporary discourse in Islamic studies.

<b>Development Objective 2: Development of Research Capacities and Scientific Publications</b>
<b>Goal:</b> To strengthen the research culture and scientific impact of FIS at the national level
<b>Expected Results:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased number of scientific publications with higher quality and impact.</li> <li>• Greater involvement of second-cycle students in research activities.</li> <li>• Increased participation in conferences, research projects, and academic networks.</li> <li>• Establishment of sustainable support structures for scientific research.</li> </ul>

Measures	Indicators
2.1. Promotion of publications in indexed journals (Scopus, WoS) and participation in scientific conferences.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Up to a 50% increase in the number of indexed publications by 2030.</li> <li>2. Up to 5 indexed publications per year by academic staff.</li> <li>3. At least 2 presentations at international conferences per year.</li> </ol>
2.2. Involvement of Master's students in research projects.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. At least 1 student research project per year.</li> <li>2. At least 10 student papers presented at conferences or published in internal or similar FIS journals by 2030.</li> </ol>
2.3. Financial support for participation in conferences and publications.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Subsidies provided for publications in journals indexed in Scopus/WoS and for participation in international conferences.</li> <li>2. At least 1 annual application for national and international research grants.</li> </ol>
2.4. Establishment of the Student Research Group.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Student Research Group is active and fully operational by 2027.</li> <li>2. Support for the organization of a Student Research Conference by 2030.</li> </ol>
2.5. Publication of the FIS scientific journal " <i>Bulletin.</i> "	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Scientific journal indexed in CEEOL.</li> <li>2. Publication of 2 issues of the journal annually.</li> <li>3. Indexing in EBSCO by 2028.</li> </ol>

### 3. Internationalization and Institutional Cooperation

This objective aims to strengthen and expand the international dimension of FIS, positioning it as an active and recognized actor in regional and global academic networks through structured cooperation and broad participation in international initiatives. A key component of this objective is the promotion of staff and student mobility through Erasmus+ programs, bilateral agreements, and other international platforms. FIS also seeks to enhance its international profile through the organization of scientific conferences, international forums, and academic symposia that bring together distinguished scholars from the region and around the world. One of the most significant initiatives within this objective is the development of a joint doctoral program with Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM), marking an important step toward consolidating the global identity of FIS. This joint program creates an advanced platform for international research, enhances the quality of higher education, and provides new opportunities for students and staff. Through these actions, FIS aims not only to expand its international presence but also to contribute sustainably to the improvement of the quality of education, research, and academic development within the institution.

**Development Objective 3: Internationalization and institutional cooperation**

**Goal:** To expand academic and research cooperation with regional and international institutions.

**Expected Results:**

- Increased international partnerships and participation of FIS in academic networks.
- Expanded mobility of staff and students.
- Regular organization of international conferences and activities.
- Operationalization of the joint doctoral program with UTM.
- Improved academic and institutional reputation of FIS at the regional and international levels.

<b>Measures</b>	<b>Indicators</b>
3.1. Signing new international agreements (Erasmus+, partner universities).	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Participation in at least 3 Erasmus+ projects by 2030.</li><li>2. Signing of a minimum of 10 new international agreements by 2030.</li><li>3. At least 5 active agreements involving mobility and joint activities.</li></ol>
3.2. Membership in international higher education associations.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Membership in at least 3 international associations by 2030.</li><li>2. Staff participation in a minimum of 5 association activities by 2030.</li></ol>
3.3. Promotion of staff and student mobility.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Up to 10 staff mobilities and 10 student mobilities by 2030.</li></ol>
3.4. Organization of international conferences and forums.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Organization of one international conference per year.</li><li>2. Organization of 2 panels, forums, or academic symposia each year.</li><li>3. Participation of at least 30 international participants in annual activities.</li></ol>
3.5 Establishment of a joint doctoral program with Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM).	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Joint doctoral program implemented starting from 2026.</li><li>2. Enrollment of at least 10 students per year.</li></ol>
3.6. Advancement of the Office for International Relations.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Preparation of an Annual Internationalization Report.</li></ol>

	2. Up to a 50% increase in institutional contacts and partnerships by 2030.
3.7. Participation of staff in international research activities and joint projects.	1. At least 3 applications for international projects by 2030. 2. At least 3 staff participations in regional or international academic activities by 2030.

#### 4. Strengthening the Link with the Community and the Labor Market

This objective aims to expand and deepen the societal impact of FIS, positioning it as an active, open institution closely connected to community needs and professional developments in the labor market. Through structured cooperation with the Islamic Community of Kosovo, educational institutions, municipalities, and public organizations, FIS aims to provide professional training, awareness programs, and activities that address real community needs. Training for imams, teachers, and staff of religious institutions contributes to strengthening professional capacities and improving community services, while programs in ethics, leadership, and civic education help build a more aware and inclusive society.

Through interfaith and intercultural dialogue activities, FIS strengthens its role as a promoter of peace, understanding, and coexistence in a society striving for stability and harmony. A key component of this objective is strengthening links with the labor market through the establishment of sustainable partnerships with religious, educational, and public institutions.

Through these mechanisms, FIS aims to reinforce its role as an institution with a strong societal impact, contributing to the professional development of students and supporting the building of a strong, active community oriented toward ethical and civic values.

#### Development Objective 4: Strengthening the Link with the Community and the Labor Market

**Goal:** To expand the societal impact of FIS through structured partnerships with religious, educational, and public institutions, enhancing students' professional relevance and the faculty's community role.

#### Expected Results:

- The Academy for Leadership and Islamic Studies is operational.
- Increased impact of FIS in the community and public institutions.
- Students are better professionally prepared and have improved access to the labor market.
- Sustainable cooperation with the Islamic Community of Kosovo (BIK), schools, municipalities, and public institutions.

- Improved public perception of FIS as an active, service-oriented institution with a positive societal role.
- Promotion of interfaith dialogue, professional ethics, and civic education.

Measures	Indicators
4.1. Operationalization of the Academy for Leadership and Islamic Studies.	1. The Academy is operational and begins activities by 2027.
4.2. Provision of short training programs for imams and BIK staff.	2. Up to 3 training sessions per year offered for BIK staff and the community. 3. At least 100 participants annually.
4.3. Development of short training programs in civic education, professional ethics, and religious leadership.	1. Development of 2 new programs by 2028. 2. $\geq 100$ participants in programs by 2030. 3. Publication of supporting materials and manuals.
4.4. Provision of professional internships for students.	1. 100% of Bachelor students engaged in internships before graduation. 2. At least 30 partner institutions for internships by 2030. 3. Annual internship report including student performance evaluations.
4.5. Organization of interfaith dialogue and civic engagement activities.	1. Organization of 1 interfaith forum by 2030. 2. At least 4 civic engagement activities per year. 3. Involvement of $\geq 500$ citizens in community activities.
4.6. Strengthening links with the labor market and employers.	1. $\geq 10$ new partnerships with employers by 2030. 2. Establishment of a Career Corner by 2027. 3. $\geq 30\%$ increase in graduate employability by 2030.
4.7. Establishment and activation of the FIS alumni network.	1. Alumni platform functional by 2027. 2. Registration of $\geq 300$ alumni on the platform by 2030.

	3. Organization of an Annual Alumni Meeting each year.
4.8. Development of community projects in cooperation with the Islamic Community of Kosovo (BIK), schools, and NGOs.	1. Implementation of $\geq 5$ community projects by 2030. 2. Publication of the annual report “ <i>FIS for the Community.</i> ”

## 5. Institutional Development and Sustainability

This objective aims to strengthen the organizational, technological, and financial foundations of FIS, guiding the institution toward a modern, efficient, and sustainable long-term operation. The digitalization of academic and administrative processes is one of the key pillars of this objective. Through the development and advancement of information systems such as SIMS, and the provision of online services, FIS aims to enhance efficiency, transparency, and access for students and staff to high-quality services. Furthermore, this objective includes the modernization of physical infrastructure, the renovation of the library, the expansion of digital collections, and the improvement of teaching and learning environments. It also emphasizes the development of an internal quality assurance system that ensures compliance with accreditation standards and supports continuous improvement in institutional performance. This includes updating regulations, standardizing processes, and conducting systematic evaluations of academic and administrative performance.

Another essential dimension of this objective is ensuring financial sustainability. Through the diversification of funding sources, the development of international projects, the increase of self-generated revenues, and strategic partnerships, FIS aims to establish a stable financial base that enables the implementation of development initiatives and long-term investments.

At its core, this objective seeks to transform FIS into a more empowered, modern, and sustainable institution that operates according to advanced organizational and financial standards and is fully prepared to respond to the future demands and challenges of higher education.

<b>Development Objective 5: Institutional development and sustainability</b>
<b>Goal:</b> To strengthen the organizational, financial, and technological capacity of FIS, ensuring efficient functioning, transparency, quality, and long-term sustainability.
<b>Expected Results:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The FIS Statute is revised and aligned with contemporary standards.</li> <li>• Academic, administrative, and technological capacities of the institution are enhanced.</li> <li>• Academic and administrative services are digitalized, improving efficiency and user access.</li> </ul>

- Physical infrastructure is modernized and the library is fully functional as a supportive academic center.
- Financial resources are diversified and the financial stability of FIS is strengthened.
- Staff performance is improved and transparency is increased.

Measures	Indicators
5.1. Review of the FIS Statute.	1. FIS Statute revised by 2027.
5.2. Digitalization of academic and administrative processes.	1. $\geq 80\%$ of services provided online by 2030. 2. Advancement of SIMS through the integration of new services. 3. Implementation of an electronic archive by 2028.
5.3. Modernization of infrastructure and library resources.	1. Renovated library and fully functional online open-access library system by 2027. 2. $\geq 50\%$ increase in digital collections.
5.4. Strengthening of the internal quality assurance system.	1. Annual self-evaluation report prepared and submitted each year. 2. Advancement of SIMS software to enable evaluation of course and lecturer performance. 3. Update of the Quality Assurance Regulation by 2026.
5.5. Establishment of mechanisms for long-term financial sustainability.	1. At least 3 new funding sources secured by 2030. 2. $\geq 2$ approved international projects by 2030.
5.6. Professional development of administrative staff.	1. $\geq 3$ annual trainings for administrative and support staff. 2. $\geq 90\%$ of administrative staff trained by 2030.
5.7. Improvement of institutional communication and transparency.	1. Publication of the annual institutional report each year. 2. $\geq 80\%$ of documents and decisions publicly available online. 3. Communication Regulation approved by 2027.

## 6. Implementation, Monitoring, and Evaluation of the Strategy

This chapter presents the institutional mechanisms that ensure the effective implementation of the FIS Strategic Plan 2026–2030. The achievement of strategic objectives requires clear coordination among faculty structures, defined responsibilities, and sustainable processes for monitoring and reporting. The implementation approach is based on transparency, accountability, and a well-organized distribution of responsibilities among functional units.

### 6.1. Implementation Mechanisms

The implementation of the strategy is supported by a clear institutional structure that ensures effective direction, coordination, and execution of strategic measures. The Dean plays the primary role in leading the process, overseeing implementation, and ensuring that actions are aligned with the decisions of the Academic-Scientific Council (ASC). The ASC remains the highest decision-making body, responsible for approving annual planning and evaluating institutional progress. Operational implementation responsibilities are distributed among the functional units of FIS, which include:

- academic departments,
- the Secretary's Office,
- the Quality Office,
- administration and technical services.

Each unit is responsible for implementing measures and indicators related to its area, as well as for periodic reporting of progress.

The implementation process is operationalized through annual planning. Each year, an Annual Action Plan is prepared and approved, containing concrete measures, timelines, performance indicators, and responsible units for implementation. In parallel, an annual budget for strategic measures is developed to ensure financial support for achieving the objectives. At the end of each year, an Annual Implementation Report is prepared, reflecting the level of achievement of objectives, challenges encountered during implementation, and recommendations for improvement.

### 6.2. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting

Monitoring, evaluation, and reporting of the Strategic Plan constitute a central component of the

strategic management of FIS, ensuring that the defined objectives and measures are implemented in a consistent, effective manner and in alignment with institutional developments and higher education standards. This process is based on continuous data collection, systematic analysis of performance indicators, and full transparency in decision-making.

The Commission for Monitoring and Strategy Implementation (CMSI), established by decision of the Dean, is responsible for periodic monitoring of progress and reviewing the achievement of objectives. The CMSI holds semi-annual meetings to analyze the attainment of indicators, assess the progress of functional units, and propose corrective measures when deviations from the plan are identified. Monitoring findings are submitted to the Academic-Scientific Council for review, ensuring institutional coordination and accountability.

At the end of each academic year, an Annual Strategy Monitoring Report is prepared, including an assessment of achievements based on indicators, key results of the year, challenges encountered, and recommendations for improving processes and measures. This report serves as the main reference document for annual planning and mid-term evaluation of the strategy. The evaluation process ensures an in-depth analysis of the effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability of the implemented measures, with the aim of maintaining coherence and relevance of the 2026–2030 strategy. Annual evaluation examines whether the measures have produced the planned results, while mid-term evaluation identifies the need to update objectives and indicators, reflecting changes in higher education and the broader social context.

Feedback mechanisms play an important role in this process, ensuring the involvement of students, academic staff, administrative staff, the Islamic Community of Kosovo (BIK), alumni, and institutional partners. Annual surveys, periodic meetings, and focus groups contribute to the collection of detailed information that enriches the evaluation process and informs decision-making.

Since the Strategic Plan is built on clearly defined measures and measurable indicators, the monitoring and evaluation process will primarily rely on the analysis of the achievement of these indicators. Each measure is associated with specific indicators that reflect the level of implementation and can be easily monitored on an annual basis.

This approach enables:

- simple and measurable monitoring based on concrete evidence;
- progressive evaluation of objectives through the aggregation of measure indicators;
- early identification of deviations and the implementation of corrective actions;

- clear and transparent reporting to governing bodies.

Within this framework, the evaluation of the strategic plan will be structured across six dimensions, which are interpreted and implemented directly through the indicators of the measures:

5.1.a. **Relevance** – Assessed by examining whether the indicators of the measures effectively address the real needs of students, the labor market, the community, and national policies.

5.1.b. **Effectiveness** – Measured through the percentage of achieved indicators, evaluating whether the planned outputs are being realized and whether they contribute to achieving the expected results of the objectives.

5.1.c. **Efficiency** – Evaluated by linking the achievement of indicators with the resources used (budget, staff, time), in order to determine whether measures have been implemented productively and in a cost-effective manner.

5.1.d. **Implementation** – Analyzes the functioning of implementation processes, adherence to timelines, and the quality of execution of measures, based on indicator evidence (reports, documents, statistics).

5.1.e. **Impact** – Assesses the cumulative effects of achieved indicators on teaching, research, community service, and internationalization, distinguishing between direct and long-term impacts of the measures undertaken.

5.1.f. **Sustainability** – Examines whether the achieved indicators generate results that can be maintained in the long term (e.g., digital platforms, increased staff capacities, new partnerships, and quality assurance systems).

This evaluation model ensures a practical, measurable approach that is fully aligned with the structure of objectives and indicators of the strategic plan, guaranteeing real, implementable, and reliable monitoring of institutional progress.

## 7. Budgetary Impact of the Strategy

This chapter presents the assessment of the financial impact of implementing the Strategic Plan 2026–2030 and outlines the sources of funding, methods of budget allocation, and mechanisms to ensure the long-term financial sustainability of the Faculty. The budgetary impact is designed realistically, based on the current financial capacities of FIS and the possibilities of internal and external funding.

The implementation of the strategic objectives requires a stable and predictable budget. The financial resources that will support the strategy are divided into several main categories. The annual institutional budget provides the core funding for teaching, administration, academic services, and staff professional development. It covers essential operational expenses and supports part of the development activities.

Strategic measures for the period 2026–2030 require dedicated funding for curriculum modernization, staff training, digitalization of academic and administrative processes, organization of international conferences, mobility programs, and further development of the library and electronic resources. A detailed financial assessment for each measure will be prepared annually, prioritizing those that are feasible and have immediate impact.

Budget allocation will be guided by the principle of prioritization and feasibility. Measures related to teaching quality, the accreditation process, and scientific research will receive high priority. The digitalization of academic and administrative processes is considered a necessary investment for improving institutional efficiency and transparency. High-cost measures, such as infrastructure improvement and digitalization, will be financed gradually through annual investment plans.

### **7.1. Sources of Funding**

Internal funding sources include the budget that FIS receives from the Islamic Community of Kosovo (BIK) to finance personnel, administrative services, and the accreditation process. Self-generated revenues from academic services, such as trainings, certification programs, and scientific publications, represent an important potential for increasing financial independence. BIK remains a key partner in supporting academic and research activities.

External sources constitute a key component of financial sustainability. FIS will aim to increase access to international funding programs such as Erasmus+, Horizon Europe, Visegrad Grants, as well as projects funded by GIZ, ADA, and USAID in the field of education. In addition, FIS will seek partnerships with international foundations and explore opportunities to secure further donations to support infrastructure, scholarships, and academic projects. Cooperation with international universities will be utilized as a source of co-financing for conferences, mobility programs, and research projects.

### **7.2. Financial Sustainability**

The financial sustainability of FIS will be built on a structured and long-term approach. FIS



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will work to diversify funding sources, increase self-generated revenues from academic activities, strengthen project management, and improve institutional efficiency in order to reduce operational costs. Through careful investment planning, FIS aims to ensure financial stability and sustainable capacities for the implementation of strategic objectives.

FIS will expand its network of academic and financial partnerships to secure sustainable support for strategic projects. At the national level, FIS will seek partnerships with MESTI, municipalities, and schools for joint educational and professional development initiatives. Cooperation with the Islamic Community of Kosovo (BIK) will focus on supporting imam training programs and research projects.