

Armenian-Austrian University Cooperation

Information and Networking Meeting
Yerevan State University, Armenia
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Austria's Agency for Education and Internationalisation | OeAD

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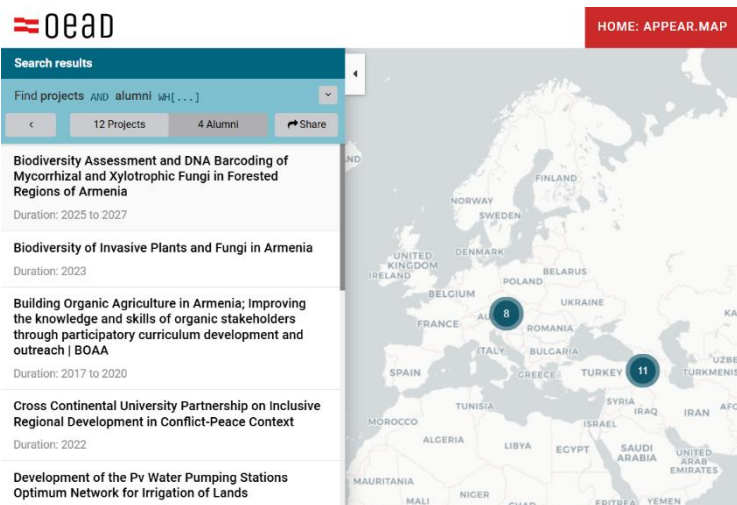
Austrian Partnership Programme in Higher Education and Research for Development | APPEAR

The Austrian Partnership Programme in Higher Education and Research for Development (APPEAR) is a programme of the Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC) and is implemented by OeAD. APPEAR contributes to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Its overall objective is to strengthen the scientific foundation and institutional capacities in higher education, research and management in the partner countries through academic partnerships with Austrian higher education institutions and master's and PhD scholarships. Furthermore, APPEAR aims at increasing the commitment to international cooperation and development at Austrian higher education institutions.

APPEAR started in 2010, which marked the beginning of an intensive cooperation in research, teaching and management between Austrian higher education institutions, universities and scientific institutions in the priority countries of the Austrian Development Cooperation. Since the beginning of the programme, 43 (Advanced) Academic Partnerships in a total of 20 countries have been completed and more than 150 students from the partner countries have graduated with a master's or PhD degree from an Austrian university. The current programme phase of APPEAR III (2021-2027) has a total budget of 18 million euros. Within APPEAR III 31 (Advanced) Academic Partnerships and 34 Preparatory Fundings have been selected, and more than 30 scholarships have been awarded.

Since the start of the second phase of the APPEAR programme in 2015, when Armenia became an eligible partner country alongside Moldova and Georgia, Armenian institutions have demonstrated remarkable commitment and growth in project participation. A total of 11 Preparatory Fundings and Academic Partnerships were funded, of which 6 are ongoing partnerships including institutions such as the Armenian National Agrarian University, Yerevan State University, the National University of Architecture and Construction of Armenia, and the National Academy of Sciences.

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Meeting Programme

Main building of Yerevan State University (YSU)
Meeting Hall of the Scientific Committee, 5th Floor
1 Alek Manukyan St, Yerevan 0025, Armenia

Language of Meeting: English

Event moderated by Sergey Tantushyan, American University of Armenia

09:30 Registration of Participants

10:00 Opening and Welcome Remarks

- + **Welcome Remarks**
Dr. Hovhannes Hovhannisyan, Rector of Yerevan State University
- + **Welcome Remarks**
Ms. Mariam Movsisyan, Vice-rector for International Relations and Education Reforms of the Armenian National Agrarian University
- + **Welcome Remarks**
Ms. Nora Alanakyan, Deputy Head of the Office of the Austrian Embassy Development Cooperation in Armenia
- + **Austrian Development Cooperation in Armenia**
Mr. Vahe Sargsyan, Programme Manager at the Office of the Austrian Embassy Development Cooperation in Armenia
- + **Pathways to Different Research Approaches**
Dr. Andreas Obrecht, Head of the APPEAR Programme, Austria's Agency for Education and Internationalisation

11:00 Group Picture and Coffee Break

11:30 APPEAR Project Examples

- + **Digitally Connecting Real and Virtual Environments | [DEvision](#)**
Dr. Artak Piloyan, Yerevan State University
- + **Strengthening Organic Agriculture in Armenia: Participatory Higher Education and Knowledge Exchange for Development | [SOAA](#)**
Lusine Nalbandyan, Armenian National Agrarian University
- + **Ecosystem Services Assessment through a Participatory Approach for Sustainable Water Resources Management in Armenia | [EcoServ](#)**
Verena Radinger-Peer, BOKU University

Short Break

- + **Strengthening Genetic Biocontrol Capacities under Climate Change in Armenia | [ArmBioClimate](#)**
Dr. Marine Arakelyan, Yerevan State University
- + **Inter- and Transdisciplinary Approach to Revitalizing Former Small Industrial Cities in Armenia to Enhance their Transformative Potential towards**

13:15 Lunch Break

15:00 Panel Discussion with APPEAR Project Partners from Different Institutions

- + Prof. Marine Arakelyan, Yerevan State University
- + Mariam Movsisyan, Vice-Rector for International Relations and Educational Reforms, Armenian National Agrarian University
- + Dr. Tigran Keryan, BOKU University, Vienna
- + Dr. Varazdat Hovhannisyanyan, National University of Architecture and Construction of Armenia
- + Dr. Vardan Asatryan, National Academy of Sciences of Armenia

Guiding questions:

Theme 1: How can we use the results of joint research? What methods offer great potential for sharing scientific discoveries with the scientific community? How can findings be integrated into policy and private sector operations? What methodologies can be employed to facilitate the processing and discussion of results in a manner that informs the generation of actionable outcomes?

Theme 2: How can projects lead to a strong and sustainable institutional partnership? What kind of regional and international networking is needed? What role do young researchers; scholarship holders and alumni play in this respect?

Theme 3: How can projects include cross-cutting issues? What are the possibilities, limitations and challenges in including gender mainstreaming perspectives that go beyond women empowerment measures and in following an inclusive education approach?

16:30 End of the Official Programme

Speakers

Dr. Shushan Abrahamyan

Yerevan State University | shushan.abrahamyan@ysu.am

Shushan Abrahamyan is a sociologist and social anthropologist specializing in food anthropology, sociology of art, and the intersections of memory and urban environments. She is a team member of the TS&D lab and a visiting lecturer at YSU, and a research assistant in the "ReCity" Project. Her research focuses on food practices within urban contexts, exploring how identity is negotiated and social spaces are shaped through everyday interactions. With an emerging interest in diaspora studies, she examines intra- and transnational dynamics linked to food culture. Beyond academia, she contributes to local and regional media as a journalist-writer, committed to interdisciplinarity. She strives to make social sciences more accessible to the public while integrating a social science perspective into her storytelling, bridging the gap between research and broader audiences through engaging and insightful narratives.

Ms. Nora Alanakyan

Deputy Head of the Office of the Austrian Embassy Development Cooperation in Armenia | jerewan@ada.gv.at

Ms. Alanakyan is a seasoned international development professional with over a decade of experience leading donor-funded programs in agriculture, rural development, private sector development, and climate change. She has a strong track record in programme management, policy dialogue, human resources, and stakeholder engagement. Since 2014, she has served as Deputy Head of the Yerevan Office of the Austrian Development Agency. Her international experience includes roles with USDA, ADB, FAO, and UNIDO. She holds an MBA in Marketing and Management from the American University of Armenia and a degree in Applied Mathematics from Yerevan State University.

Prof. Marine Arakelyan

Yerevan State University | arakelyanmarine@ysu.am

Prof. Marine Arakelyan is a distinguished biologist specializing in zoology, evolution, biodiversity, and conservation biology. She holds a Doctor of Biological Science (DSc) degree from the Scientific Center of Zoology and Hydroecology in Yerevan (in 2012) and a PhD in Biological Sciences from the Zoological Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg. With an extensive career in academic research and teaching, she has significantly contributed to the advancement of zoological studies in Armenia and the broader scientific community. Since February 2013, Dr. Marine Arakelyan has served as the Head of the Chair of Zoology at Yerevan State University, where she has played a pivotal role in shaping the university's research direction in zoology. In February 2019, she was appointed as a professor at the same institution. She has coordinated 27 projects focusing on evolution, biodiversity, and conservation biology. Her expertise has been instrumental in leading significant initiatives, including the Caucasus Barcode of Life (CaBOL) and the Strengthening Genetic Biocontrol Capacities under Climate Change in Armenia (APPEAR) projects. These efforts contribute to the global understanding of genetic diversity and the impact of climate change on biological systems.

Dr. Vardan Asatryan

National Academy of Sciences of Armenia | asatryanvardan@gmail.com

Vardan Asatryan is an aquatic biologist and ecologist with 15 years of experience in the National Academy of Sciences, the Scientific Center of Zoology and Hydroecology. In 2024 he was appointed as head of the Scientific group for the study of Aquatic Ecosystem Services. He has been actively engaged in geographic and environmental education for almost 17 years. He was appointed as the head coach of the National Olympic team of Armenia and head of the Republican Olympic Committee on Geography. He also teaches Geography at Quantum College as a member of International Baccalaureate Organisation. As an ecologist, he is actively involved in developing methodologies for assessing and mapping the ecological status of surface waters and their various ecosystem services.

With the extensive experience in more than 50 projects, he is currently coordinating citizen science activities in environment and ecosystem services with local schools and is engaged in the development of an ecosystem services framework for Armenian aquatic ecosystems.

Dr. Hovhannes Hovhannisyan

Yerevan State University

Dr. Hovhannes Hovhannisyan is the Rector of Yerevan State University. He holds a PhD in Philology and has an extensive academic and administrative background. He served as the First Deputy Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of the Republic of Armenia (2018-2019) and member of the National Assembly (2019-2021) and has been actively involved in higher education reforms and policy development. He is an Associate Professor at YSU and has authored numerous scientific articles and educational materials and has participated in various national and international conferences. As Rector of YSU, he is committed to fostering academic excellence, promoting international cooperation, and modernizing the university's educational and research infrastructure.

Dr. Varazdat Hovhannisyan

National University of Architecture and Construction of Armenia / hovhannisyan.hovhannes@ysu.am

Varazdat Hovhannisyan is Associate Professor at NUACA's Department of Engineering Geodesy and Head of the Education Quality Assurance and Development Centre. With 25+ years of teaching experience, he specializes in curriculum development, academic program design, and higher education quality assurance. Since 2006, he has coordinated around 20 Tempus and Erasmus+ projects and currently leads the ERASMUS+ T-GREEN project (2023–2026) and a World Bank-funded initiative to modernize engineering education. He previously served as National Programme Officer at the Swiss Cooperation Office in Armenia (2008–2014) and has collaborated with the EU, UNDP, SDC, ADA, and the Swedish Institute. He was also a Real Estate Management Expert in a UNDP-funded project on sustainability in multi-apartment buildings (2018–2019). Dr. Hovhannisyan co-authored Armenia's first Joint Master's Program with ASUE, NUACA, UPV (Spain), and UNIBO (Italy), as well as the country's first Joint PhD Program with YSU and ANAU in Geo-Information Technologies. He is also an advocate for gender equity and played a key role in developing NUACA's Gender Equality Plan.

Dr. Tigran Keryan

BOKU University / tigran.keryan@boku.ac.at

Tigran Keryan is a postdoctoral researcher at the Institute of Landscape Development, Recreation, and Conservation Planning at BOKU University in Vienna, Austria. He completed his doctoral studies at the Doctoral School Transitions to Sustainability (T2S) at BOKU University, focusing on integrating inter- and transdisciplinary approaches into post-Soviet academic systems.

With postdoc experience at the University of Trás-os-Montes and Alto Douro (UTAD) in Portugal, he is currently involved in developing and implementing participatory research methods, including citizen science in ecosystem services research, and in integrating nature-based solutions and biodiversity into higher education curricula.

His research focuses on fostering collaboration among academics, practitioners, and policymakers to develop practical solutions to real-life sustainability challenges

Vice-rector Mariam Movsisyan

Vice-rector for International Relations and Education Reforms, Armenian National Agrarian University (ANAU) / Movsisyan_mariam@yahoo.com

Ms. Mariam Movsisyan is the Vice-Rector for International Relations and Educational Reforms at the Armenian National Agrarian University (ANAU) and brings more than 15 years of experience in academic leadership, quality assurance, and the internationalization of higher education. She holds a Master's degree in Philosophy from Yerevan State University and began her career at ANAU as a lecturer, later taking on key administrative roles, including Head of the Quality Assessment and Assurance Centre. She has contributed to numerous EU-funded initiatives, including Tempus and Erasmus+ projects, and previously led the agricultural component of the USAID Armenian Workforce

Development Activity. Currently, she is co-coordinating the APPEAR-funded SOAA project, which focuses on strengthening organic agriculture in Armenia.

Lusine Nalbandyan

Armenian National Agrarian University (ANAU) | lusine.nalbandyanin@gmail.com

Lusine Nalbandyan is a dedicated agro-ecologist and sustainable agriculture consultant with over 19 years of experience in organic farming, land management, and rural development. She leads the “Strengthening Organic Agriculture in Armenia: Participatory Higher Education and Knowledge Exchange for Development” (SOAA) project at ANAU in collaboration with BOKU University and serves as President of the “Organic Armenia” Agricultural Association. Lusine has held leadership positions in several multiple organisations, including “ORWACO”, “Nairian” CJSC focusing on ecological practices, biodegradable waste, production of organic fertilisers. Her research explores the efficiency of combined organic and mineral fertilisation, adoption of circular economy practices in small scale organic farms. She actively engages in international projects, policy dialogues, and trainings across Europe and Central Asia.

Dr. Andreas Obrecht

OeAD | andreas.obrecht@oead.at

Dr. Andreas J. Obrecht is a social and cultural anthropologist, writer and sociologist. He was an assistant professor at the Institute of Sociology, University of Vienna (1988–1993) and holds a habilitation in sociology with an emphasis on sociology of development (1997). He was head of the Interdisciplinary Research Institute for Development Cooperation (IEZ), Johannes Kepler University Linz (1998–2009) and was a visiting professor for the thematic focus Sub-Saharan Africa and South Pacific at the Department for Contemporary History, Karl Franzens University Graz (1998–2013). Since 2004, he has been the host of cultural and scientific programs at the Austrian Broadcasting Cooperation (ORF), and since 2009 has been the head of the section “Science and Research for Development Cooperation” at Austria’s Agency for Education and Internationalization (OeAD).

Dr. Artak Piloyan

Yerevan State University | artakpiloyan@ysu.am

Dr. Artak Piloyan is a highly experienced GIS and Cartography specialist with over 15 years in thematic mapping, spatial analysis, and capacity building, focusing on water resources, disaster management, regional development, and urban planning. He holds a PhD in Geography and lectures at the university level. Dr. Piloyan has worked on international donor-funded and research projects across Europe, Africa, and Central Asia. He served as Head of Cartography and Geodesy Department at Armenia’s Cadastre Committee (2019–2020) and is currently Acting Head of the Chair of Cartography and Geomorphology. He is an active researcher and a member of ICA and the International Society of Digital Earth.

Dr. Verena Radinger-Peer

BOKU University | verena.radinger-peer@boku.ac.at

Verena Radinger-Peer is an Assistant Professor at the Institute for Landscape Development, Recreation and Conservation Planning at BOKU University in Vienna. She specialises in sustainable regional development, sustainability transitions, and higher education’s role in societal transformation. Verena holds a Doctoral degree in Regional Planning and Regional Development and has extensive experience in leading and coordinating inter- and transdisciplinary research projects at national and international levels. Her work focuses on knowledge co-creation, regional innovation, and university-society collaboration. She is also involved in teaching and supervision, integrating research findings into academic curricula.

Mr. Vahe Sargsyan

Coordination Office for Technical Cooperation Austrian Embassy, Yerevan | vahe.sargsyan@ada.qv.at

Mr. Vahe Sargsyan is a Programme Manager at the Austrian Embassy's Coordination Office for Technical Cooperation in Yerevan, overseeing local development programmes supported by the Austrian Development Agency in Armenia. He has extensive experience in project development using Austrian, EU, and other funding instruments, as well as in monitoring and managing programme implementation. In addition, he serves as an invited lecturer at the Public Administration Academy, where he designs and teaches the course "Organization and Management of Community Services." He holds a degree in Economic Sciences from the State Agrarian University of Armenia.

Dr. Sergey Tantushyan

American University of Armenia / stantushyan@aua.am

Dr. Sergey Tantushyan is a professor at the American University of Armenia, Harvard-published business case writer, TED speaker and education administrator holding 15 years of deep proficiency in partnership, communication and education consulting. Currently the MBA Program Chair at AUA, he established a number of educational programmes, including Career Orientation and Communications programs. Has 12 years of teaching and training experience in Communication, Managing People, Competitiveness and Strategy. Developed curricula and teaching notes in four academic areas, co-founded zoom-in! career orientation program. Author of a Communications textbook. Provided over 250 trainings to corporate clients incl. the World Bank Group, Asian Development Bank, Peace Corps, US State Department, UNDP, HSBC, Synopsys, Marriott, Contour Global,, Coca-Cola, ACBABank, EvocaBank, AmeriaBank, Oxygen, Caritas Int-l, Ministries of RA, Central Bank of Armenia, Information Systems Agency of Armenia, Black Sea University, U Murcia, U Mons, Skolkovo, Nazarbayev University, etc.



OeAD | APPEAR Office
Ebendorferstraße 7, 1010 Vienna, Austria
appear@oead.at
www.appear.at