Digital Innovation Gateway or Kosovo (DIG-4K)

Digital Europe Programme

This project has received funding from the European Commission’s Digital Europe Programme

Project number: 101191620

Start date: 2025-01-01 Duration: 48 Months

https://itp-prizren.com/dig-4k/

Deliverable Name:
Funding and Investment Guide

Co-funded by the Kosovo Government

Co-funded by the European Union

Document Title	Funding and Investment Guide
Author(s)	Diana Lekaj
Number of pages	40
Document type	Deliverable
Work Package	WP5
Document number	D5.2
Issued by	Edutask
Date of completion	30/06/2026
Dissemination level	Public

Summary

Disclaimer

DIG-4K DIGITAL INNOVATION GATEWAY FOR KOSOVO

edutask

FUNDING & INVESTMENT GUIDE · DIG-4K EDIH KOSOVO · 2026

A Founder's Guide to

Grants, Investment, and Financing

in Kosovo

Navigating the Funding Landscape for Micro, Small, and Medium-sized Enterprises

Practical guidance across 10 funding windows — from national grants and bank guarantees to EU programmes, private investment, and the DIG-4K digital innovation ecosystem.

Prepared by Edutask / DIG-4K Digital Innovation Gateway for Kosovo
June 2026 · First Edition · edu-task.com

10 FUNDING WINDOWS COVERED

01 KCGF · 02 KIESA & MINT · 03 EBRD · 04 Commercial Financing · 05 Horizon Europe · 06 Digital Europe
07 Erasmus+ · 08 IPA III · 09 EIC Accelerator · 10 Private Investment ·

150+ Newsletter subscribers	**54** Organisations supported	**10** Funding windows mapped

Co-funded by the Kosovo Government

Co-funded by the European Union

Contents

Introduction-A Founder's Guide to Grants, Investment, and Financing in Kosovo

Practical guidance for MSMEs, startups, universities, NGOs, and public institutions

DIG-4K · Digital Innovation Gateway for Kosovo · Edutask · June 2026

PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

This guide has been developed by Edutask as part of the DIG-4K Digital Innovation Gateway for Kosovo, Kosovo's first European Digital Innovation Hub, co-funded by the European Union and the Kosovo Government under the Digital Europe Programme (Grant Agreement 101083994).

Its purpose is threefold:

1. Map the full financing architecture available to Kosovo organisations, from national grants and bank guarantees to EU programmes and private investment channels.
2. Strengthen investment readiness and absorptive capacity, helping organisations prepare stronger applications, more compelling business cases, and more strategic financing pathways.
3. Integrate with the DIG-4K funding support ecosystem, connecting readers to personalised advisory services, the Grant Radar newsletter, the EU Funding Readiness Assessment, and AI-powered funding matching.

The guide will provide a comprehensive overview of various funding and investment opportunities available to stakeholders, including grants, venture capital, government programs, and private sector investments. It will outline eligibility criteria, application processes, funding amounts, and specific requirements for each opportunity, tailored to different sectors and project types.

The guide will also include advice on how to prepare successful applications and secure funding. Periodic updates will be included to reflect changes in funding programs, new opportunities, and evolving eligibility criteria, ensuring stakeholders have access to the most current and relevant information.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide is structured as a series of standalone Funding Windows, one per major financing source. Each window can be read independently or in sequence. Use the table below to navigate directly to the most relevant window for your organisation type.

If you are...	Start with...	Also explore...
An SME or startup needing a loan	Window 01 -KCGF and Window 04 Commercial Financing-Banks	Window 03-EBRD · Window 04-Commercial Financing Window 08-EIC
An SME investing in digital tools	Window 03-EBRD Go Digital	Window 06-Digital Europe via DIG-4K
A startup with a breakthrough idea	Window 09-EIC Accelerator	Window 05-Horizon Europe
An NGO or civil society organisation	Window 08-IPA / EU Delegation	Window 07-Erasmus+
A university or VET provider	Window 07-Erasmus+	Window 05-Horizon Europe
A municipality or public institution	Window 08-IPA / EU Delegation	Window 06-Digital Europe
Any organisation-exploring all options	Section 2-Eligibility at a glance	All 8 Funding Windows

THE DIG-4K FUNDING SUPPORT ECOSYSTEM

This guide is one component of a broader DIG-4K funding support system developed by Edutask. The full ecosystem includes five interconnected tools-all free for eligible clients:

	Tool	What it does for you
📖	**Funding & Investment Guide (this document)**	A practical reference for all 8 major funding sources available in Kosovo-with step-by-step application guidance for each.
📊	**EU Funding Readiness Assessment**	A free 3-minute online assessment that scores your organisation's funding readiness and delivers a personalised action plan. Take it at: edu-task.com/assessment
📬	**Grant Radar Newsletter**	A monthly email curated by Edutask featuring, the most relevant open funding calls for Kosovo organisations, delivered to your inbox. Subscribe free.
🤝	**One-to-One Funding Consultations**	A personalised 30-minute session with our funding experts to map the best opportunities for your sector and goals. Book via Google Calendar.
🤖	**AI Matching Engine (under development)**	An AI-powered system that reads your organisation's profile and the funding database, then surfaces the 3–5 most relevant open calls for you automatically.

Use this section as your quick-reference navigator before diving into individual funding windows. The tables below answer two questions: which programmes can Kosovo organisations access, and which types of organisations are eligible for each.

2.1 WHICH EU PROGRAMMES CAN KOSOVO ACCESS AND HOW?

Kosovo's EU programme access is determined by its legal status-it is in the process of EU accession and has signed specific association agreements. The table below summarises the current position for each programme.

Programme	Kosovo status	How to access	Access level
Horizon Europe	Associated country-full eligibility for all Pillars and EIC	*Direct application-no EU entity needed (exception: EIC Accelerator lead applicant)*	**✓ Full**
Digital Europe Programme (DEP)	Associated country-full eligibility for all SOs including SO4, SO5	*Direct application or access via DIG-4K EDIH (free)*	**✓ Full**
Erasmus+	Eligible in all key actions (KA1, KA2, KA3) managed by Kosovo National Agency	*Apply through Kosovo NA-erasmusplus-ks.org*	**✓ Full**
IPA III	Pre-accession instrument-Kosovo is a direct IPA beneficiary	*Apply to EU Delegation Pristina or national authority as designated*	**✓ Full**
EU Delegation calls	Calls managed directly from Pristina for Kosovo civil society and public sector	*Monitor EU Delegation Kosovo website-apply in Albanian or English*	**✓ Full**
LIFE Programme	Environment and climate-Kosovo has partial access via specific calls	*Consult the Kosovo NCP; some calls require EU partnership*	**~ Partial**
Creative Europe	Limited access-Kosovo not currently associated	*Can apply for Cultural strand as lead; limited to other strands*	**~ Partial**
EU4Health	Kosovo can access some targeted calls via IPA health components	*Consult EU Delegation; limited direct access*	**~ Limited**
Invest EU / EIF instruments	Access through Western Balkans financial intermediaries (e.g. EBRD, EIB)	*Apply via partner banks or financial institutions*	**~ Via intermediary**
Cohesion/Structural Funds	Only for EU Member States-Kosovo not eligible	*Not applicable*	— Not eligible

2.2 WHICH ORGANISATIONS CAN ACCESS WHICH FUNDING WINDOW?

Funding Window	SME / Startup	NGO / Civil Society	University / VET	Municipality / Public	EU entity needed?
01-KCGF	✓	~	—	—	No-Kosovo-registered entity
02-KIESA / MINT	✓	~	—	~	No-Kosovo-registered entity
03-EBRD	✓	—	—	—	No-Kosovo-registered entity
04-Commercial Financing	✓	—	—	—	No-Kosovo registered businesses
05-Horizon Europe	✓	✓	✓	✓	EIC Accelerator lead only
06-Digital Europe	✓	✓	✓	✓	No-Kosovo associated country
07-Erasmus+	~	✓	✓	✓	No-Kosovo NA manages calls
08-IPA / EU Delegation	~	✓	✓	✓	No-apply locally
09-EIC Accelerator	✓	—	—	—	Strongly recommended for lead
10-Private Investment: AC, VC, Diaspora Investement	✓	~	✓	—	No-startups, individuals with innovative ideas

✓ Eligible · ~ Eligible in some cases · -Not typically eligible

A consolidated reference for the main institutions, portals, and contacts mentioned throughout this guide. Use this section as your first port of call when looking for information or support.

Edutask / DIG-4K-Your first point of contact

Website	edu-task.com
Email	info@edu-task.com
Funding consultation booking	edu-task.com (Google Calendar link in the Services section)
Funding Readiness Assessment	edu-task.com/assessment
Newsletter signup	mailchi.mp/edu-task/edutask-newsletter-signup-form
DIG-4K EDIH portal	itp-prizren.com/dig-4k
Social media	facebook.com/edutask · LinkedIn: Edutask

Kosovo national institutions

Institution	Website	Relevant for
Kosovo Credit Guarantee Fund (KCGF)	kcgf-kosova.com	Bank loan guarantees for MSMEs
KIESA	kiesa-ks.com	National grants-innovation, exports, machinery
MINT	miet.rks-gov.net	National grant calls and economic policy
Kosovo Erasmus+ National Agency	erasmusplus-ks.org	All Erasmus+ calls for Kosovo
Kosovo NCP for Horizon Europe	ncp-ks.org	Horizon Europe guidance and partner search
Kosovo Pre-Seed Programme MINT/KIESA	Check MINT/KIESA websites	Early-stage startup grants

EU funding portals

Portal	URL	Use it to
EU Funding & Tenders Portal	*ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders*	Find and apply to all EU calls (Horizon, DEP, EIC)
EIC Accelerator Portal	*accelerator.eic.ec.europa.eu*	Submit EIC Accelerator applications
Erasmus+ Application Portal	*erasmus.eacea.ec.europa.eu*	Apply to all Erasmus+ actions
EU Delegation Kosovo	*eeas.europa.eu/delegations/kosovo*	IPA calls, EU Delegation direct grants
CORDIS	*cordis.europa.eu*	Find active Horizon projects to join (Hop-on)
SNS JU Brokerage	*sns-brokerage.eu*	Find consortium partners for 6G / Telco-AI calls
Hop-on Facility Portal	*ec.europa.eu → search 'Hop-on'*	Join an existing funded Horizon project from Kosovo

Development partners and finance institutions

EBRD in Kosovo	ebrd.com/where-we-are/kosovo-Go Digital, Go Green, Youth in Business, Women in Business
World Bank in Kosovo	worldbank.org-key funder of KCGF capital
KfW (German Dev. Bank)	kfw.de-supports KCGF and agricultural finance
European Investment Bank (EIB)	eib.org-credit lines to Kosovo banks for SME lending
Swedish SIDA	sida.se-re-guarantor for KCGF (increases risk capacity)
GIZ Kosovo	giz.de-bilateral development cooperation grants and technical support
Luxinnovation (Luxembourg NCP)	luxinnovation.lu-free EIC Accelerator advisory for Luxembourg-registered entities

Ready to take the next step?

Book a free 30-minute consultation with our funding experts. We will help you identify the right opportunities, assess your readiness, and prepare a clear funding roadmap-at no cost for eligible DIG-4K clients.

📧 **info@edu-task.com**

🌐 **edu-task.com**

📬 Subscribe to the Grant Radar: mailchi.mp/edu-task/edutask-newsletter-signup-form

Edutask · DIG-4K Digital Innovation Gateway for Kosovo · Co-funded by the European Union and the Kosovo Government under the Digital Europe Programme · Grant Agreement 101083994 · Views and opinions expressed are those of the authors only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Commission.

FUNDING WINDOW 01 OF 10 - Kosovo Credit Guarantee Fund

KCGF · National · Debt Instrument

National · Guarantee · Debt

KEY FACT

Since its establishment, the Kosovo Credit Guarantee Fund (KCGF) has supported more than 13,349 businesses, facilitating over €1.101 billion in approved loans backed by €566 million in credit guarantees through its partner financial institutions.

WHAT IS IT?

The KCGF does not lend money directly. Instead, it provides partial credit guarantees to partner banks and microfinance institutions, sharing the credit risk and making it easier for eligible MSMEs to access financing. In practice, this may reduce the amount of collateral required by the lender and improve access to credit for viable businesses.

WHO CAN APPLY?

- Registered businesses in Kosovo-micro, small, and medium enterprises
- Start-ups (via the Start-Up Window-up to 80% guarantee coverage)
- Women-led businesses, diaspora investors, agribusinesses, green-tech companies
- Businesses without sufficient collateral for standard bank loans

HOW MUCH FUNDING?

Guarantee coverage varies by window: 50–80% of the loan principal. Loan size depends on the partner bank-not directly capped by KCGF. Co-financing is not required.

TIMELINE

Processing time depends on the partner bank-typically 2–6 weeks from application.

WINDOWS & INSTRUMENTS

Window / Instrument	Purpose	Max Guarantee Coverage
Standard Window	General MSME lending for long-term investments	Up to 50%[1]
Start-Up Window	New businesses and early-stage enterprises	Up to 80%
Diaspora Window	Diaspora-owned or supported businesses	Up to 80%
Women in Business	Women-owned or managed businesses	Up to 70%
GROW Window	Energy efficiency and renewable energy investments	Up to 70% (max €1M)
Agro Window	Agricultural businesses and farmers	Up to 60%
Export Window	Export-oriented companies	Up to 50%

HOW TO APPLY-STEP BY STEP

1. Visit a partner bank or microfinance institution in Kosovo
2. Apply for a business loan as usual-tell the bank you want KCGF guarantee support
3. The bank assesses your application and applies to KCGF on your behalf
4. KCGF approves the guarantee and the bank issues the loan
5. You repay the bank-the KCGF guarantee activates only if you default

[1] Kosovo Credit Guarantee Fund (KCGF). (2026). Prezentimi për EDU TASK, April 2026.

Co-funded by the Kosovo Government

Co-funded by the European Union

🎯 HOW EDUTASK / DIG-4K CAN HELP

Edutask / DIG-4K helps MSMEs identify the most suitable KCGF guarantee window, assess financing readiness, and prepare the documentation required for discussions with partner financial institutions. Eligible SMEs can also benefit from investment readiness support and tailored guidance through the DIG-4K Access to Finance service.

CONTACT & USEFUL LINKS

Kosovo Credit Guarantee Fund (KCGF) · www.fondikgk.org

Partner Financial Institutions: ProCredit Bank, Raiffeisen Bank Kosovo, TEB Bank, Banka Ekonomike, BKT, BPB, PriBank, NLB Bank, together with partner microfinance institutions and registered financial institutions.

✓ BEST FOR

Any Kosovo MSME that wants a bank loan but struggles with collateral requirements.

DIG-4K · Digital Innovation Gateway for Kosovo · Edutask · edu-task.com · Co-funded by the European Union and the Kosovo Government under the Digital Europe Programme · Grant Agreement 101083994 · Views expressed are those of the authors only and do not reflect those of the European Union.

DIG-4K DIGITAL INNOVATION GATEWAY FOR KOSOVO

edutask

FUNDING WINDOW 02 OF 10 -KIESA & MINT Grant Programmes

Kosovo Investment and Enterprise Support Agency

National · Grant · Non-dilutive · Competitive

KEY FACT

KIESA grants operate on co-financing-your own investment signals commitment and increases your evaluation score.

WHAT IS IT?

KIESA, operating under the Ministry of Industry, Entrepreneurship and Trade (MINT), implements national grant schemes to improve the competitiveness of Kosovo's private sector. Grants are non-dilutive-you do not give up ownership. They are awarded through competitive calls published periodically throughout the year.

WHO CAN APPLY?

- Registered Kosovo businesses-micro, small, and medium enterprises
- Export-oriented companies
- Businesses investing in technology, innovation, or digital transformation
- Companies seeking certification or international market access

HOW MUCH FUNDING?

Typical ranges: €10,000 – €50,000 per grant. Co-financing usually required-business contributes 20–60% of project cost. Grants typically cover 40–80% of eligible costs.

TIMELINE

Calls open 1–3 times per year. Application processing: 4–12 weeks after deadline. Implementation: typically, 6–18 months.

WINDOWS & INSTRUMENTS

Grant Scheme	Purpose	Typical Amount
Manufacturing & Machinery Grants	Purchase of production equipment and modernisation	€20,000 – €50,000
Innovation Grant Scheme	Development of digital products, services, or solutions	€15,000 – €40,000
SME Competitiveness Grants	Technology adoption and productivity improvement	€10,000 – €30,000
Export Promotion Grants	Certification, trade fairs, international market access	Varies
ICT Sector Grants	Software and digital product development	Varies

HOW TO APPLY-STEP BY STEP

1. Monitor MINT and KIESA websites for open calls-published periodically throughout the year
2. Review eligibility criteria carefully-each call specifies eligible sectors, business size, and activity types
3. Prepare your application: business registration, financial statements, investment plan, co-financing evidence
4. Submit online or at KIESA offices before the deadline
5. Await evaluation-competitive scoring based on project merit, employment impact, and innovation level

🎯 HOW EDUTASK / DIG-4K CAN HELP

Co-funded by the Kosovo Government

Co-funded by the European Union

Edutask / DIG-4K monitors KIESA calls through the Grant Radar and can notify you when relevant calls open. We also provide proposal writing support for KIESA applications. Free for eligible DIG-4K clients.

CONTACT & USEFUL LINKS

KIESA · kiesa-ks.com · MINT · miet.rks-gov.net

✓ BEST FOR

Kosovo SMEs investing in machinery, digitalisation, or export expansion who can contribute part of the project cost.

FUNDING WINDOW 03 OF 10 EBRD Programmes for SMEs

European Bank for Reconstruction and Development

International · Blended Finance · Debt + Grant Incentives

KEY FACT

The Go Digital cash-back grant is disbursed after you implement the digital investment-keep all invoices and evidence of installation.

WHAT IS IT?

The EBRD has supported private sector development in Kosovo since 1999 and, according to EBRD programme data presented in April 2026, has invested more than €900 million across 148 projects, with approximately 73%[2] of investments directed to the private sector. Rather than lending directly to most SMEs, the EBRD works through partner financial institutions, combining financing with risk-sharing instruments, grant incentives, and technical assistance to improve businesses' access to finance

WHO CAN APPLY?

- Kosovo SMEs investing in digitalisation, green technology, or energy efficiency
- Young entrepreneurs (under 35)-Youth in Business Programme
- Women-led or women-managed businesses-Women in Business Programme
- Export-oriented SMEs using trade finance facilities
- Agribusinesses and food processors

HOW MUCH FUNDING?

Varies by programme. Grant incentives typically 10–15% of investment value. Loans via partner banks at improved terms. Women in Business: approx. €21M across 3,000+ businesses in Kosovo. Youth in Business: approx. €9M across ~130 businesses[3].

TIMELINE

Depends on partner bank processing-typically 3–8 weeks. Grant incentives disbursed post-implementation: 4–8 weeks after evidence submission.

WINDOWS & INSTRUMENTS

Programme	Investment Focus	Support Type
Go Digital Programme	Automation, cloud, digital management systems	Financing + ~10% investment incentive (cash-back)
SME Go Green	Energy efficiency, renewables, sustainability	Financing + ~15% grant incentive
Youth in Business	SMEs led by entrepreneurs under 35	Financing + advisory support + risk sharing
Women in Business	Women-owned or managed SMEs	Financing + advisory + risk sharing
Trade Facilitation	Import/export businesses needing trade finance	Guarantees + liquidity support
Portfolio Risk Sharing	General SME lending portfolio de-risking	EBRD absorbs up to 50% of losses

[2] European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) (2026) BERZH në Kosovë: Mbështetja e bizneseve përmes institucioneve financiare partnere. PowerPoint presentation delivered at the Edutask Matchmaking Event, Kosovo, 30 April 2026.

Co-funded by the Kosovo Government
Co-funded by the European Union

HOW TO APPLY-STEP BY STEP

1. Identify which EBRD programme fits your investment-Go Digital, Go Green, Youth, or Women in Business
2. Contact a partner bank in Kosovo (ProCredit, Raiffeisen, BKT, TEB) and ask about EBRD-supported products
3. Prepare your investment plan-eligible costs, timeline, expected outcomes
4. Apply through the partner bank-they manage the EBRD relationship on your behalf
5. If eligible for a cash-back grant incentive, this is disbursed after implementation upon verification of purchase

🎯 HOW EDUTASK / DIG-4K CAN HELP

Edutask / DIG-4K can help you identify which EBRD programme fits your investment and prepare your documentation for the bank consultation. We also connect eligible businesses with EBRD advisory services.

CONTACT & USEFUL LINKS

EBRD Kosovo · ebrd.com/where-we-are/kosovo · Partner banks: ProCredit, Raiffeisen, TEB, BKT

✓ BEST FOR

SMEs investing in digitalisation, green technology, or export who want better loan terms and a partial grant cash-back on top.

DIG-4K · Digital Innovation Gateway for Kosovo · Edutask · edu-task.com · Co-funded by the European Union and the Kosovo Government under the Digital Europe Programme · Grant Agreement 101083994 · Views expressed are those of the authors only and do not reflect those of the European Union.

FUNDING WINDOW 04 OF 10- Commercial Financing

Banks, Microfinance & Digital Financial Services in Kosovo

National · Debt Instrument · Bank-oriented financial system

KEY FACT

Kosovo's banking sector held approximately €9.7 billion in assets and over €6.6 billion[4] in outstanding loans by the end of 2025 — commercial banks remain by far the dominant financing channel for businesses in Kosovo.

WHAT IS IT?

Kosovo's financial system remains strongly bank-oriented. While grants and public guarantee schemes provide important non-dilutive finance, the majority of business financing continues to come through the commercial financial sector such as: commercial banks, microfinance institutions, leasing companies, and an increasingly active digital financial services and fintech sector. For most MSMEs, this is the first and most direct route to external capital.

Commercial banks generally favour businesses with stable cash flows, formal financial histories, and sufficient collateral, which can create real barriers for early-stage businesses, innovation-driven firms, and micro-enterprises still formalising their operations. In response, Kosovo's financing ecosystem has increasingly evolved toward blended and risk-sharing mechanisms, combining commercial lending with public guarantees (see Window 01 — KCGF) and donor-backed credit lines (see Window 03 — EBRD).

WHO CAN APPLY?

- Registered businesses in Kosovo — micro, small, and medium enterprises
- Established SMEs with predictable turnover and clear collateral structures (best positioned)
- Rural businesses, family-owned enterprises, and micro-enterprises (via microfinance)
- Innovation-driven and startup businesses (typically need blended financing — see KCGF and EBRD windows)
- Export-oriented and digitalising businesses (specialised bank products increasingly available)

HOW MUCH FUNDING?

Loan size depends on the institution, business profile, and collateral. Average interest rates on new loans remained below 7% as of 2025–2026. Banking sector liquidity is strong, supporting continued lending capacity.

TIMELINE

Commercial bank loans: typically, 2–6 weeks. Microfinance: faster, often days to 2 weeks given simplified procedures.

FINANCING CHANNELS & TYPICAL BANK PRODUCTS

Channel / Product	Purpose	Most Suitable For
Working Capital Loans	Operational expenses and liquidity	Trading and service businesses
Investment Loans	Machinery, expansion, infrastructure	Manufacturing and agribusiness
Overdrafts	Short-term cash flow support	Established SMEs
Leasing	Equipment and vehicle financing	SMEs requiring asset financing
Trade Finance	Import/export transactions	Export-oriented firms

[4] Central Bank of the Republic of Kosovo (CBK). Banking Sector Statistics 2025. Available at: https://bqk-kos.org

Co-funded by the Kosovo Government
Co-funded by the European Union

Channel / Product	Purpose	Most Suitable For
Green and Digital Loans	Technology and sustainability investments	Businesses modernising operations
Microfinance Loans	Small loans, simplified procedures, fast processing	Micro-enterprises, rural and family businesses
Digital Financial Services	Payments, transactions, record management	SMEs engaging in e-commerce and digital markets

WHERE BANK LENDING IS CONCENTRATED

The structure of Kosovo's business lending portfolio closely reflects the composition of the domestic economy. Businesses in these sectors generally have the most predictable access to standard lending products, due to more conventional business models and clearer collateral structures[5].

Sector	Approx. Share of Lending	Collateral Profile
Services	~37%	Variable — depends on sub-sector
Agriculture	~24%	Land and equipment-based
Construction	~16%	Asset and contract-based
Trade	~12%	Inventory and turnover-based
Industry	~10%	Machinery and infrastructure-based

By contrast, startups and innovation-driven enterprises often face more complex financing conditions, since their business models may depend on intangible assets, future scalability, or technology-driven growth rather than traditional collateral. These businesses frequently rely on blended financing, combining bank loans with guarantees (KCGF), grants, or donor-supported facilities (EBRD).

WHICH FINANCING OPTION FITS YOUR SITUATION?

Business Situation	Most Relevant Option	See Also
Microbusiness with limited collateral	Microfinance institution or KCGF-backed bank loan	Window 01 — KCGF
Established SME seeking expansion	Commercial bank investment loan	—
Innovation-driven startup	Grants + guarantee-backed financing	Windows 01, 02, 08,09
Digitalisation investment	Go Digital + regular bank loan	Window 03 — EBRD
Green investment	Green credit lines / SME Go Green	Window 03 — EBRD
Women-led business	Women in Business programmes	Windows 01, 03, 04
Young entrepreneur	Youth in Business programmes	Window 03 — EBRD
Export-oriented company	Trade finance instruments	Windows 01, 02, 04

HOW TO APPLY — STEP BY STEP

1. Determine the right channel for your business profile: commercial bank for established SMEs with collateral, microfinance for smaller or first-time formal financing needs

[5] Central Bank of the Republic of Kosovo (CBK). Financial Stability Report 2025. Available at: https://bqk-kos.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/CBK_FSR_21.pdf?utm_source=chatgpt.com

2. Prepare core documentation: business registration, financial statements, tax records, and a clear investment or working capital plan
3. Approach one or more licensed institutions — Kosovo has approximately 10–11 commercial banks and 10 microfinance institutions supervised by the Central Bank of Kosovo (CBK)[6]
4. Ask specifically about specialised products — green loans, digital loans, women- or youth-targeted products, or EBRD-supported lines — these often carry better terms
5. If collateral is a barrier, ask the bank about KCGF guarantee support before being declined (see Window 01)
6. Maintain transparent, well-organised financial records throughout — this is consistently the strongest predictor of approval and favourable terms

HOW EDUTASK / DIG4K CAN HELP

Edutask / DIG4K can help you assess which financing channel — commercial bank, microfinance, or a guarantee-backed product — best fits your business stage and sector, and can help you prepare the documentation banks expect to see. Free for eligible DIG4K clients.

CONTACT & USEFUL LINKS

Central Bank of the Republic of Kosovo (CBK) · bqk-kos.org · Licensed commercial banks: ProCredit, Raiffeisen, TEB, BKT, NLB, and others · Licensed microfinance institutions: regulated and listed via CBK

✓ BEST FOR

Established SMEs with predictable cash flow and collateral seeking working capital, investment, or trade finance — and micro-enterprises or first-time borrowers best served by microfinance institutions.

DIG4K · Digital Innovation Gateway for Kosovo · Edutask · edu-task.com · Co-funded by the European Union and the Kosovo Government under the Digital Europe Programme · Grant Agreement 101083994 · Views expressed are those of the authors only and do not reflect those of the European Union.

[6] Central Bank of the Republic of Kosovo (2026). List of Licensed Financial Institutions. CBK Licensed Financial Institutions 2026

FUNDING WINDOW 05 OF 10-Horizon Europe

EU Research & Innovation Programme · €95.5B · 2021–2027

EU · Grant · Non-dilutive · Consortium required · Kosovo eligible

KEY FACT

Kosovo is eligible for Horizon Europe as an associated country. However, for the EIC Accelerator, you may need an EU-registered entity to apply as lead applicant.

WHAT IS IT?

Horizon Europe is the EU's flagship programme for research and innovation with a total budget of €95.5 billion (2021–2027)[7]. It funds everything from frontier research to market-ready scaling. For Kosovo organisations, the most accessible entry points are Pillar II collaborative projects, the EIC Accelerator for innovative SMEs, and the Hop-on Facility for joining existing funded projects.

WHO CAN APPLY?

- Research institutions and universities (all Pillars)
- SMEs and startups with validated innovations (Pillar II and EIC Accelerator)
- Consortia of at least 3 organisations from 3 different countries (Pillar II)
- Individual innovative companies with breakthrough potential (EIC Accelerator)
- Kosovo organisations-eligible as associated country

HOW MUCH FUNDING?

Pillar II: €2M – €15M+ per project. EIC Accelerator: up to €2.5M grant + up to €10M equity. Hop-on Facility (WIDERA): €200,000 – €500,000. MSCA Staff Exchanges: €100K–€1.5M.

TIMELINE

EIC Accelerator: rolling. Next full proposal cut-offs in 2026: 8 July, 2 September, 4 November. Hop-on deadline: 24 September 2026. Pillar II: annual fixed deadlines-check portal.

WINDOWS & INSTRUMENTS

Instrument / Pillar	Purpose (TRL)	Funding Range
Pillar II-Collaborative R&I	Consortia testing and validating innovations (TRL 4–7)	€2M–€15M per project
EIC Pathfinder	Early-stage breakthrough research (TRL 1–4)	Up to €4M
EIC Transition	From proof-of-concept to pilot (TRL 4–6)	Up to €2.5M
EIC Accelerator	Scale-up for high-impact SMEs (TRL 6–9)	Up to €2.5M grant + €10M equity
MSCA Staff Exchanges	Researcher and staff exchanges across sectors	€100K–€1.5M
Hop-on Facility (WIDERA)	Join an existing funded project (widening countries)	€200K–€500K · Deadline: 24 Sept 2026
Twinning (WIDERA)	Institutional partnerships with top EU organisations	€1M–€2M

HOW TO APPLY-STEP BY STEP

1. Find open calls at ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders-filter by Horizon Europe and your topic area
2. Register your organisation and obtain a PIC number (Participant Identification Code) on the portal
3. For Pillar II: build a consortium of 3+ partners from 3+ countries using the partner search tools

[7] European Commission (2021). Regulation (EU) 2021/695 establishing Horizon Europe.

4. For EIC Accelerator: submit a short proposal (3 pages + deck + 3-min video)-no fixed deadline for Step 1
5. For Hop-on: find an eligible active project on the portal and approach the coordinator directly for agreement
6. Prepare your proposal following the Excellence / Impact / Implementation evaluation framework
7. Submit electronically before the deadline-evaluation takes 3–5 months

🎯 HOW EDUTASK / DIG-4K CAN HELP

Edutask / DIG-4K provides full Horizon Europe support: opportunity identification, consortium building, proposal writing, and review. We maintain connections to Kosovo's National Contact Point (NCP) for Horizon Europe and can support Hop-on applications.

CONTACT & USEFUL LINKS

EU Funding & Tenders Portal · ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders · EIC · eic.ec.europa.eu · Kosovo NCP · ncp-ks.org

✓ BEST FOR

Organisations with validated innovations seeking large-scale EU funding and international partnerships. Also ideal for institutions wanting to join European research networks.

DIG-4K · Digital Innovation Gateway for Kosovo · Edutask · edu-task.com · Co-funded by the European Union and the Kosovo Government under the Digital Europe Programme · Grant Agreement 101083994 · Views expressed are those of the authors only and do not reflect those of the European Union.

FUNDING WINDOW 06 OF 10 Digital Europe Programme

DEP · SO1–SO5 · €7.5B · 2021–2027 · Kosovo associated

EU · Grant · Digital Transformation · Kosovo full associate

KEY FACT

As a fully associated country, Kosovo can participate in the Digital Europe Programme under the same conditions as EU Member States, subject to the eligibility requirements of each call.

WHAT IS IT?

The Digital Europe Programme (DEP) is the European Union's €8.3 billion programme (2021–2027)[8] that supports the deployment of advanced digital technologies, digital skills, and digital innovation across Europe. Businesses can participate directly in eligible calls or benefit from services provided through the European Digital Innovation Hub (EDIH) network, including DIG-4K.

WHO CAN APPLY?

- SMEs and public institutions seeking to adopt digital technologies (SO5)
- Training providers and educational institutions developing digital skills programmes (SO4)
- Consortia building AI testing environments, data spaces, or cybersecurity infrastructure (SO1–SO3)
- Kosovo organisations-full DEP associated country, directly eligible
- Organisations working through DIG-4K for "test before invest" services-free of charge

HOW MUCH FUNDING?

Funding under the Digital Europe Programme varies by topic and action. Most projects are collaborative and funded through lump-sum grants. Based on the 2026 work programme, indicative budgets include:

Digital solutions for regulatory compliance through data (SO2 – AI & Data): €4.25 million per project (topic budget: €8.5 million).

EdTech Accelerator (SO4 – Advanced Digital Skills): €2.7 million topic budget.

Advanced Digital Skills for AI Uptake in Health (SO4): €10 million topic budget.

Research Support Framework for Situational Awareness on Information Integrity (SO5): €4 million topic budget.

Funding levels and eligibility conditions vary by call and should always be verified in the official call documentation.

TIMELINE

EdTech Accelerator and National Coalitions open calls: deadline 1 October 2026. Other calls: check portal. DIG-4K services: available now, on a rolling basis.

WINDOWS & INSTRUMENTS

Strategic Objective	Focus Area	Relevance for Kosovo
SO1-High Performance Computing	Access to supercomputing infrastructure	Specialised-limited direct SME access
SO2-Artificial Intelligence	AI tools, data platforms, testing environments	High for tech SMEs and AI developers
SO3-Cybersecurity	Security infrastructure, threat intelligence	Relevant for ICT and service providers
SO4-Advanced Digital Skills	Training programmes for AI, cloud, data, cybersecurity	Training providers, VET, EDIHs

[8] European Commission (2021). Regulation (EU) 2021/694 establishing the Digital Europe Programme

Co-funded by the Kosovo Government

Co-funded by the European Union

Strategic Objective	Focus Area	Relevance for Kosovo
SO5-Deployment & Best Use	Digital transformation across sectors via EDIHs	Most accessible for Kosovo SMEs via DIG-4K
EdTech Accelerator (SO4)	Consortium managing accelerator for EdTech SMEs	Open call · Deadline 1 October 2026
National Digital Skills Coalitions (SO4)	Build Kosovo's national coalition for digital skills	Open call · Deadline 1 October 2026

HOW TO APPLY-STEP BY STEP

1. For SMEs: contact DIG-4K (Edutask)-many digitalization services are delivered free through the EDIH network
2. For direct applications: monitor ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders-filter by Digital Europe
3. For SO4/SO5 calls: build a consortium of 4+ partners from 4+ countries
4. Register on the portal and get a PIC number before applying
5. Prepare a proposal aligned with the specific call's expected outcomes and scope
6. Submit before the deadline-DEP calls typically have 4–6-month application windows

🎯 HOW EDUTASK / DIG-4K CAN HELP

DIG-4K is a DEP-funded initiative. Through DIG-4K, Kosovo SMEs can access digital maturity assessments, AI and cloud testing, skills training, funding advisory, and investor matchmaking-all free for eligible clients. Contact Edutask to register.

CONTACT & USEFUL LINKS

EU Funding & Tenders Portal · ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders · DIG-4K · DIG-4K.com · Edutask · edu-task.com

✓ BEST FOR

SMEs wanting to adopt digital tools and technologies. Training providers developing digital skills programmes. Organisations ready to form EU consortia for digital deployment projects.

DIG-4K · Digital Innovation Gateway for Kosovo · Edutask · edu-task.com · Co-funded by the European Union and the Kosovo Government under the Digital Europe Programme · Grant Agreement 101083994 · Views expressed are those of the authors only and do not reflect those of the European Union.

FUNDING WINDOW 07 OF 10-Erasmus+ Programme

KA1 · KA2 · KA3 · €26.2B · 2021–2027

EU · Grant · Education & Training · Kosovo eligible · Most accessible

KEY FACT

KA2 Small-Scale Partnerships are specifically designed to make Erasmus+ cooperation projects more accessible for newcomers, with a simplified application process and a minimum partnership of only two organisations.

WHAT IS IT?

Erasmus+ is the European Union's programme supporting education, training, youth, and sport, with an estimated budget of €26.2 billion for the 2021–2027[9] programming period. It promotes learning mobility, cooperation, innovation, and capacity building across Europe and beyond. Kosovo organisations can participate in a wide range of Erasmus+ actions, particularly in higher education, vocational education and training (VET), school education, adult learning, and youth. For organisations seeking project-based cooperation, the most relevant actions are Key Action 1 (Learning Mobility of Individuals) and Key Action 2 (Cooperation among Organisations and Institutions).

WHO CAN APPLY?

- Schools, universities, and higher education institutions
- Vocational Education and Training (VET) providers
- NGOs and civil society organisations
- Youth organisations and non-formal education providers
- Businesses involved in apprenticeships or work-based learning (KA2 VET)
- Kosovo organisations-eligible in all Erasmus+ actions, managed by Kosovo National Agency

HOW MUCH FUNDING?

KA1 – Learning Mobility: Funding varies depending on the action, number of participants, duration, and eligible activities. KA2 – Small-Scale Partnerships (KA210) €30,000 or €60,000 (lump-sum grants) KA2 – Cooperation Partnerships (KA220) €120,000, €250,000 or €400,000 (lump-sum grants)

TIMELINE

Main KA2 deadline: typically, late March each year. KA1 deadlines vary by action type. Results announced 3–4 months after the submission deadline.

WINDOWS & INSTRUMENTS

Action	Purpose	Funding Range
KA1-Learning Mobility (Higher Education)	Staff and student exchanges for universities	€15K–€400K (varies, depending on the action)
KA1-Learning Mobility (VET)	Learner and staff mobility for VET providers	€15K–€200K (varies, depending on the project)
KA1-Youth Mobility	Youth exchanges and volunteering	€15K–€150K (varies, depending on the project)
KA2-Small-Scale Partnerships	Simple 2-year cooperation between 2+ organisations	€30K–€60K
KA2-Cooperation Partnerships	Innovation and capacity-building projects	€100K–€400K (varies, depending on the project)
KA2-European Partnerships (VET)	Sector-level VET development projects	Up to €4M

[9] European Commission. (2025). Erasmus+ Programme Guide 2026. Brussels: European Commission. Available at the official Programme Guide: Erasmus+ Programme Guide

Action	Purpose	Funding Range
KA3-Policy Reform Support	Support for national education policy development	Varies

HOW TO APPLY-STEP BY STEP

1. Contact the Kosovo Erasmus+ National Agency (NA)-they manage all Erasmus+ calls for Kosovo
2. Attend the NA's information sessions before each call deadline (usually February–March)
3. For KA2: find 2+ partner organisations from different countries-the NA has partner search tools
4. Develop your project concept: what problem does it solve, what will you produce, what is the impact?
5. Complete the online application through the official Erasmus+ application portal
6. Submit before the annual deadline-typically late March for most KA2 actions

🎯 HOW EDUTASK / DIG-4K CAN HELP

Edutask has experience supporting Erasmus+ applications. We can help Kosovo organisations identify the right action, find partners across Europe, and write competitive proposals-particularly for VET and digital skills partnerships.

CONTACT & USEFUL LINKS

Kosovo Erasmus+ National Agency · erasmusplus-ks.org · EU Erasmus+ Portal · erasmus.eacea.ec.europa.eu

✓ BEST FOR

Schools, universities, NGOs, VET providers, and youth organisations seeking international cooperation, staff development, or innovation projects in education and training.

DIG-4K · Digital Innovation Gateway for Kosovo · Edutask · edu-task.com · Co-funded by the European Union and the Kosovo Government under the Digital Europe Programme · Grant Agreement 101083994 · Views expressed are those of the authors only and do not reflect those of the European Union.

FUNDING WINDOW 08 OF 10 - IPA III & EU Delegation Calls

Instrument for Pre-Accession · EU Office in Kosovo· Managed from Pristina

EU · Pre-Accession · Managed locally · Highest success rate for Kosovo

KEY FACT

IPA III supports political, institutional, legal, social, and economic reforms that help beneficiary countries align with EU standards and advance their European integration process.

WHAT IS IT?

IPA III is the European Union's main financial instrument supporting reforms and socio-economic development in candidate and potential candidate countries during the 2021–2027 programming period. It finances projects that strengthen governance, the rule of law, competitiveness, digital and green transition, education, employment, and civil society, supporting Kosovo's alignment with EU standards and its European integration process. Funding is delivered through both nationally managed programmes and grant opportunities published by the EU Office in Kosovo, as well as regional and centrally managed EU programmes.

WHO CAN APPLY?

- Civil society organisations (NGOs, associations, foundations)
- Public institutions (municipalities, ministries, public enterprises)
- Private sector organisations in specific calls (less common)
- Consortia of local organisations, sometimes with EU partners
- Media, education, rule of law, and digital governance organisations

HOW MUCH FUNDING?

Varies significantly: smaller civil society grants from €10,000 to sector support projects over €1M. Most open calls managed by the EU Delegation range from €50,000 to €500,000. Funding rate: typically, 80–90% (10–20% co-financing required).

TIMELINE

Calls open throughout the year with 4–8-week application windows. Results: 2–4 months after deadline. Project implementation: typically, 12–36 months.

WINDOWS & INSTRUMENTS

IPA Window	Focus Area	Typical Amount
Window 1 – Rule of Law, Fundamental Rights & Democracy	Justice reform, human rights, media freedom, civil society, democratic governance	Varies by call
Window 2 – Good Governance, EU Acquis Alignment & Strategic Communication	Public administration reform, institutional capacity building, alignment with EU legislation	Varies by call
Window 3 – Green Agenda & Sustainable Connectivity	Environment, climate action, energy, transport, digital connectivity, sustainable infrastructure	Varies by call
Window 4 – Competitiveness & Inclusive Growth	SME competitiveness, innovation, digitalisation, education, employment, skills development, private sector growth	Varies by call
Window 5 – Territorial & Cross-Border Cooperation	Regional cooperation, municipalities, tourism, local development, cross-border partnerships	Varies by programme

Note: Funding amounts under IPA III are not standardised across thematic windows. Grant sizes, co-financing rates, and eligibility requirements are determined by each individual call for proposals and are published in the relevant call documentation by the EU Office in Kosovo or the European Commission.

Co-funded by the Kosovo Government

Co-funded by the European Union

SPECIALISED IPA III PROGRAMME: IPARD III

Programme	Focus Area	Typical Support
IPARDIII	Farm modernisation, food processing, rural businesses, agri-food value chains, rural tourism	Up to 60–70% co-financing for eligible investments (varies by measure and call)

IPARD III is the European Union's rural development programme under the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance. In Kosovo, it supports investments in agricultural holdings, food processing, rural businesses, and agri-food value chains through competitive grant calls managed nationally. Funding typically covers 60–70% [10]of eligible investment costs, depending on the measure and applicant category. Current calls and eligibility requirements are published by the Agency for Agricultural Development (AZHB) under the Ministry of Agriculture.

HOW TO APPLY-STEP BY STEP

1. Monitor the EU Delegation Kosovo website regularly-calls are announced with 4–8 week application windows
2. Subscribe to EU Delegation Kosovo newsletters and social media channels for new call announcements
3. Read the call guidelines carefully-IPA calls have strict eligibility and activity requirements
4. Prepare your organisation profile: registration documents, audited accounts, experience evidence
5. For civil society calls: develop your concept note first (usually a 2-stage process: concept note → full application)
6. Submit to the EU Delegation Pristina before the deadline-late applications are never accepted

HOW EDUTASK / DIG-4K CAN HELP

Edutask monitors IPA III calls through the Grant Radar. We provide application support for eligible organisations and can connect you with the EU Delegation's technical team for guidance before applying.

CONTACT & USEFUL LINKS

EU Delegation to Kosovo · eeas.europa.eu/delegations/kosovo · Call announcements on EU Delegation website and Facebook page

✓ BEST FOR

NGOs, public institutions, and municipalities seeking EU funding for governance, civil society, education, or digital transformation-without the complexity of large EU consortium applications.

DIG-4K · Digital Innovation Gateway for Kosovo · Edutask · edu-task.com · Co-funded by the European Union and the Kosovo Government under the Digital Europe Programme · Grant Agreement 101083994 · Views expressed are those of the authors only and do not reflect those of the European Union.

[10] EU in Kosovo (2026) IPA III funding for businesses. Available at: https://euinkosovo.eu/ipa-iii-funding-for-businesses/ (Accessed: 30 June 2026).

FUNDING WINDOW 09 OF 10-EIC Accelerator

European Innovation Council · Horizon Europe Pillar III

EU · Grant + Equity · SME only · Highly competitive · High reward

KEY FACT

The EIC Accelerator is the European Union's flagship funding instrument for breakthrough, market-creating innovations, combining grant funding with optional equity investment to help innovative SMEs scale globally.

WHAT IS IT?

The EIC Accelerator is the EU's flagship instrument for breakthrough innovative SMEs. It combines a non-dilutive grant (up to €2.5M) with optional equity investment (up to €10M) from the EIC Fund[11]. It is highly competitive (approximately 3% end-to-end success rate) but the impact is transformative for companies that win. Companies must meet the eligibility requirements set out in the EIC Work Programme. Kosovo innovators may participate through an eligible legal entity established in an EU Member State or Horizon Europe associated country.. The Open call has no topic restrictions-any technology, any sector.

WHO CAN APPLY?

- SMEs and startups with a breakthrough innovation and strong market potential
- Companies at TRL 6–9 (validated and ready to scale)
- Single companies-not consortia (unusual for EU funding)
- Kosovo companies with an EU-registered entity
- Spin-offs from universities or research organisations with commercial potential

HOW MUCH FUNDING?

Grant: up to €2.5M (non-dilutive-you keep full ownership). Equity: up to €10M from the EIC Fund (minority stake-founder-friendly). Blended: grant + equity combined. Grant-only option available if equity is not desired.

TIMELINE

Step 1: rolling (any time). Step 2 full proposal cut-offs in 2026: 8 July, 2 September, 4 November. Full process from Step 1 to funded: typically, 6–10 months.

WINDOWS & INSTRUMENTS

Instrument	Stage & Focus	Funding
EIC Accelerator Open	Any technology, any sector-highest flexibility (TRL 6–9)	Up to €2.5M grant + up to €10M equity
EIC Accelerator Challenges	Specific technology challenges defined by EC	Same funding levels
EIC Pathfinder	Deep tech research-early stage (TRL 1–4)	Up to €4M (consortium)
EIC Transition	From lab to pilot stage (TRL 4–6)	€2.5M

HOW TO APPLY-STEP BY STEP

1. Step 1-Short proposal: 3 pages + pitch deck + 3-minute video. Submit anytime-rolling deadline. Evaluated within 4–6 weeks.
2. Step 2-Full proposal (Part B): detailed document submitted only if Step 1 receives a GO decision from evaluators.
3. Step 3-Jury interview: pitch in Brussels or online. Applicants receiving a positive evaluation are invited to a jury interview before the final funding decision.

[11] European Innovation Council. (2026). EIC Work Programme 2026. European Commission. EIC Work Programme 2026

4. For Kosovo companies: Ensure your company meets the eligibility requirements regarding legal establishment before applying.
5. Contact Kosovo's NCP for Horizon Europe-free proposal review service before submission.
6. Attend EIC Info Days and pitch coaching events-extremely valuable for first-time applicants.

HOW EDUTASK / DIG-4K CAN HELP

Edutask provides EIC Accelerator preparation support: framing the innovation narrative, structuring the business case, preparing the pitch deck and 3-minute video, and coordinating with Luxinnovation (Luxembourg NCP) for companies with EU entities.

CONTACT & USEFUL LINKS

EIC · eic.ec.europa.eu · EIC Accelerator portal · accelerator.eic.ec.europa.eu · Kosovo NCP · ncp-ks.org · Luxembourg NCP · luxinnovation.lu

✓ BEST FOR

Ambitious innovative SMEs with a technology breakthrough ready to scale-especially those that cannot find adequate venture capital in their home market.

DIG-4K · Digital Innovation Gateway for Kosovo · Edutask · edu-task.com · Co-funded by the European Union and the Kosovo Government under the Digital Europe Programme · Grant Agreement 101083994 · Views expressed are those of the authors only and do not reflect those of the European Union.

KOSOVO ELIGIBILITY AT A GLANCE

Which organisations can access which funding window?

Funding Window	SME / Startup	NGO / Civil Society	University / VET	Municipality / Public	Requires EU entity?
01-KCGF	✓	~	—	—	No
02-KIESA / MINT	✓	~	—	~	No
03-EBRD	✓	—	—	—	No
04-Commercial Financing	✓	~	~	~	No
05-Horizon Europe	✓	✓	✓	✓	For EIC lead
06-Digital Europe	✓	✓	✓	✓	No
07-Erasmus+	~	✓	✓	✓	No
08-IPA / EU Delegation	~	✓	✓	✓	No
09-EIC Accelerator	✓	—	—	—	Recommended
10- Private Investment: Angel, VC, and Diaspora Capital	✓	✓	✓	—	No

✓ Eligible · ~ Eligible in some cases · -Not typically eligible

FUNDING WINDOW 10 OF 10 -Private Investment: Angel, VC, and Diaspora Capital

A practical guide to equity and relationship-based financing for Kosovo startups and SMEs

Private · Equity & Quasi-Equity · Risk capital · Relationship-driven

> Kosovo's startup ecosystem continues to attract increasing attention from regional investors, diaspora networks, and international development partners. While institutional venture capital remains limited, private investment opportunities are gradually expanding.

WHAT PRIVATE INVESTMENT IS-AND WHY IT MATTERS

Private investment means exchanging a share of ownership (equity) in your business for capital from an individual or fund. Unlike grants or loans, equity investors become co-owners-they share the risk and the reward. For Kosovo startups and innovative SMEs, private investment is increasingly important because it fills the gap that grants and bank loans cannot: patient, risk-tolerant growth capital for businesses whose value is in their ideas, software, or future potential rather than in physical assets.

UNDERSTANDING THE INVESTMENT STAGES

Different investors back different stages of a company's development. Understanding where your business sits on this journey is the first step to identifying the right investors.

Stage	Focus	Typical investors	Funding range
Pre-seed	Problem-solution fit, MVP, team formation	Founders, family, grants, pre-accelerators	€10K–€200K
Seed	Product-market fit, first customers, model testing	Business angels, accelerators, seed funds	€100K–€1M
Series A	Scaling, user acquisition, KPI establishment	Venture capital firms	€1M–€5M
Series B+	Market expansion, internationalisation	VC, corporate VC, private equity	€5M+

Angel Investors

Business angels are high-net-worth individuals who invest personal capital-typically between €10,000 and €500,000-in early-stage companies in exchange for equity. Beyond capital, the most valuable angels bring mentorship, sector expertise, and introductions to the next round of investors or customers.

What angels look for

- A strong, coachable founding team
- A clear and scalable market opportunity
- Early evidence of customer demand or traction
- A realistic but ambitious valuation expectation
- Alignment between the founder's vision and the angel's experience

In Kosovo's context

- ICK (Innovation Centre Kosovo) maintains the most active angel-adjacent network in Kosovo
- Diaspora angels-Kosovars based in Germany, Switzerland, Austria, the UK-are the most realistic near-term source
- Regional angel networks in Albania, North Macedonia, and Croatia are increasingly active across the Western Balkans
- DIG-4K Matchmaking Events connect founders with regional investors directly

Co-funded by the Kosovo Government
Co-funded by the European Union

Venture Capital

Venture capital firms are professional investors that manage pooled funds from institutions, pension funds, and high-net-worth individuals. They invest in high-growth companies with the expectation of a significant financial return, typically through a sale or IPO within 5–10 years. VC investment in the Western Balkans is growing but remains concentrated in more mature ecosystems. Kosovo-based companies are most likely to access VC through:

South Central Ventures
Regional VC active in the Western Balkans-has invested in Kosovo-adjacent companies. Focus: tech SMEs, SaaS, digital services.

Fil Rouge Capital
Croatia-based VC backing Western Balkans startups at seed and Series A.

EIC Fund (EU)
The European Innovation Council Fund provides equity up to €10M alongside the EIC Accelerator grant. Most accessible route to EU-backed VC for Kosovo companies with an EU entity.

WBEDIF
The Western Balkans Enterprise Development and Innovation Facility-equity and quasi-equity for growth SMEs. Has funded Kosovo companies including Labbox Education.

International VC (via EU entity)
Companies registered in Luxembourg, Germany, or the Netherlands can access a wider pool of European early-stage VC funds.

Diaspora Investment

For Kosovo, diaspora investment represents one of the most realistic and accessible sources of private capital, particularly for start-ups and growing SMEs. Beyond providing financing, diaspora investors often contribute international business experience, market access, professional networks, and strategic partnerships that can help businesses expand beyond the domestic market. Diaspora investment is particularly active in sectors such as ICT, manufacturing, tourism, services, construction, and export-oriented businesses[12]. Entrepreneurs are generally more successful in attracting diaspora investors when they can demonstrate a viable business model, market traction, sound financial management, and a clear growth strategy.

For many businesses, diaspora investment is most effective when combined with other financing instruments, such as KCGF-backed loans, commercial finance, grants, or development programmes, creating a diversified financing strategy that supports long-term growth and internationalisation.

> The KCGF Diaspora Window provides up to 80% loan guarantees specifically for businesses established or supported by diaspora investors-significantly reducing the risk for diaspora family members who want to back a Kosovo enterprise.

How diaspora capital flows

- Direct equity investment in a family or known founder's business
- Loan or quasi-equity on personal terms (often informal)
- Partnership or co-founding with local team
- KCGF-backed bank loan with diaspora guarantor
- Property or asset contribution enabling collateral for bank finance

Where to connect

- Kosovo Investment and Finance Network (Facebook group-active community)
- Kosovo Diaspora Agency-government body facilitating diaspora investment
- Chamber of Commerce Kosovo-regular diaspora business events
- DIG-4K Matchmaking Events-diaspora investors invited as participants
- Startup Kosovo-events connecting diaspora and local ecosystem

---

[12] World Bank. Western Balkans Regular Economic Reports. World Bank Western Balkans Reports
European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. Transition Reports and SME Competitiveness

Co-funded by the Kosovo Government
Co-funded by the European Union

Accelerators, Crowdfunding & Other Instruments

Startup Accelerators

Time-limited programmes (3–6 months) combining mentoring, workspace, and seed investment (typically €20K–€100K) in exchange for 5–10% equity. In Kosovo: ICK Accelerator, Cacttus Education. Regionally: Rockstart, Seedstars. Note: DIG-4K partners with Cacttus for investment readiness workshops.

Crowdfunding

Raising small amounts from many individuals via online platforms. Equity crowdfunding (Seedrs, Crowdcube) is available to Kosovo companies if they have an EU-registered entity. Reward crowdfunding (Kickstarter, Indiegogo) access depends on the platform's eligibility rules and the country of establishment.

Convertible Notes & SAFE

Flexible instruments used between angel and formal VC rounds-the investor lends money that converts to equity at the next round. Simple Agreement for Future Equity (SAFE) is increasingly used in Kosovo's growing startup ecosystem for speed and simplicity.

Edutask / DIG-4K connects Kosovo entrepreneurs with regional and diaspora investors through regular Matchmaking Events. Register on the DIG-4K platform to be considered for the next investor engagement event.

✓ BEST FOR

Innovative startups and growth-stage SMEs with scalable business models seeking equity capital, mentorship, and market access-particularly those already validated with early customers or traction.

Edutask · DIG-4K EDIH · edu-task.com · Co-funded by the European Union and the Kosovo Government under the Digital Europe Programme · Grant Agreement 101083994

Investment Readiness

How to prepare your organisation to attract and successfully manage grants, loans, and private investment

Self-assessment · Business planning · Investor preparation · Application quality

Investment readiness is not a box to tick-it is the single most powerful lever available to Kosovo organisations seeking finance. Our data shows that organisations that complete the DIG-4K Funding Readiness Assessment and one advisory session have significantly stronger application outcomes.

WHY INVESTMENT READINESS DETERMINES YOUR SUCCESS

Access to finance depends not only on the availability of funding opportunities but on the capacity of organisations to present themselves credibly and manage financing effectively. Across grants, commercial loans, EU programmes, and private investment, funders consistently assess the same core qualities:

What ALL funders assess

- Credibility of the business model and team
- Financial transparency and governance standards
- Quality of planning and ability to execute
- Evidence of market demand or customer traction
- Realistic and justified use of funding
- Capacity to absorb and manage finance responsibly

What varies by funder type

Grant evaluators

- Innovation quality and societal impact

Bank lenders

- Collateral, cash flow, repayment capacity

Equity investors

- Scalability, market size, team strength, exit potential

Step 1-Self-assessment: Are you ready to apply?

Before approaching any funder, use this checklist to identify gaps that could weaken your application or consultation.

Readiness question	Why it matters	Your answer
Is your organisation formally registered and legally compliant?	*Required for most grants and all commercial finance*	☐ Yes / No
Do you have up-to-date, audited financial statements?	*Demonstrates credibility and transparency to all funders*	☐ Yes / No
Do you know exactly how much funding you need and for what?	*Shows realistic and specific planning*	☐ Yes / No
Can you explain clearly how the funding will generate measurable results?	*Funders invest in outcomes, not activities*	☐ Yes / No
Do you have evidence of customer demand, users, or market validation?	*Reduces perceived risk for investors and evaluators*	☐ Yes / No
Can you provide co-financing if required (for grants)?	*Many grants require a 20–40% own contribution*	☐ Yes / No
Do you have a realistic implementation and work plan?	*Demonstrates organisational capacity to deliver*	☐ Yes / No
Is your team complete and capable of executing the project?	*Weak teams are the most common rejection reason*	☐ Yes / No

Readiness question	Why it matters	Your answer
Have you researched the funder's priorities and past-funded projects?	*Misalignment with call objectives is a top failure reason*	☐ Yes / No

Step 2-Prepare your documentation

Different funders require different documents, but the following set covers most grant applications, bank loan applications, and investor due diligence processes. Prepare them in advance-not the night before a deadline.

Document	Required for	Key contents
Business plan	All funders	Business model, market analysis, team, financials, growth strategy, competitive landscape
Financial statements	Banks, investors, most EU grants	3 years of audited accounts (or since founding if newer)
Cash flow projections (3 years)	Banks, investors, EU programmes	Monthly forecast showing revenues, expenses, and runway
Investment / project plan	Grants, banks	Specific use of funds, timeline, expected outcomes and KPIs
Market analysis	Investors, EU innovation grants	TAM/SAM/SOM, customer segments, competitive positioning
Team CVs and org chart	All funders	Key team members, relevant experience, organisational structure
Legal registration documents	All funders	Certificate of incorporation, tax ID, ownership structure
Proof of co-financing	Grants requiring co-funding	Bank statements, investor letters, or confirmed own contribution
Pitch deck (for investors)	Angel and VC investment	12–15 slides: problem, solution, market, traction, team, ask
Data room	VC and angel due diligence	IP, contracts, cap table, HR records, customer evidence

Step 3-Build a strategic financing pathway

The most successful Kosovo organisations do not rely on a single source of finance. They sequence different instruments as the organisation grows and matures. Below are four illustrative financing pathways.

🚀 Pathway A-Technology Startup

Idea validation → Innovation Grant (KIESA) → KCGF Start-Up Window → Angel investor → EIC Accelerator → Series A VC

🏭 Pathway B-Manufacturing SME

Machinery investment grant (MINT) → Commercial bank loan with KCGF guarantee → Export Window → EBRD Go Green → International market expansion

💻 Pathway C-Digital Business

Digital transformation grant → EBRD Go Digital → Horizon Europe collaboration (Pillar II) → EIC Accelerator → Strategic investment

🌿 Pathway D-Green Enterprise

KCGF GROW Window → EBRD SME Go Green → EU Green credit lines → International climate and sustainability funds

Co-funded by the Kosovo Government
Co-funded by the European Union

Common reasons applications and financing requests fail

Grant application failures	Investment request failures
• Misalignment with the call's scope and priorities • Weak or missing impact narrative • Unrealistic or unjustified budget • No co-financing when required • Incomplete documentation • Applying too early before the technology or project is mature • Weak consortium with undefined partner roles	• No clear evidence of market demand or traction • Unrealistic or inconsistent financial projections • Founder cannot articulate the business model clearly • Market size is too small for investor return expectations • Lack of IP protection or defensible competitive advantage • No clear exit pathway for the investor • Missing or incomplete data room

> Take the free DIG-4K EU Funding Readiness Assessment at edu-task.com/assessment to get a personalised score and action plan across three dimensions: funding identification, application quality, and strategic alignment.

✓ BEST FOR

Every organisation seeking any type of external finance-whether a first-time grant applicant or a startup preparing for a VC round. Investment readiness is not a one-time task; it is an ongoing organisational capability.

Community Building, Matchmaking & B2B Events

How Edutask connects Kosovo organisations with investors, partners, and collaborators through curated events

Matchmaking · B2B meetings · Consortium building · Community · Networking

Finding the right partner or investor can be as critical as finding the right funding call. Edutask organises regular matchmaking and community events as part of the DIG-4K WP5.4 Matchmaking Events mandate-8 events across the project lifetime, open to eligible clients free of charge.

WHY COMMUNITY AND MATCHMAKING MATTER

In Kosovo's emerging ecosystem, many EU funding opportunities require international partners (Horizon Europe, Erasmus+, Digital Europe). Many private investment processes begin with a warm introduction. Many grant applications succeed because the consortium was built from a trusted relationship rather than a cold search. Edutask's community-building and matchmaking programme is designed to create those connections systematically-for organisations across Kosovo that would otherwise have no route into European networks.

Edutask / DIG-4K events programme

All events are free for eligible DIG-4K clients (Kosovo-registered SMEs, NGOs, universities, and public institutions). Events are held in Pristina and online, and are promoted through the Grant Radar newsletter and social media.

🎯 **Investor Matchmaking Events** · **Quarterly**

Curated speed-dating format connecting Kosovo entrepreneurs with regional and diaspora investors. Investors are pre-screened; founders submit a 1-page profile in advance. Maximum 10 companies per event to ensure quality interactions.

Best for: Startups and SMEs at seed to Series A stage seeking equity investment
Frequency: 4 events per year

🔗 **B2B Partner Search Meetings** · **Bi-monthly**

Structured one-to-one meetings between Kosovo organisations and potential EU project partners-for Horizon Europe, Erasmus+, and Digital Europe consortium applications. Each meeting is 20 minutes, prepared in advance with a shared organisational profile.

Best for: Any organisation building or joining an EU-funded consortium
Frequency: 6 events per year

🏛 **Sector-Specific Community Events** · **Quarterly**

Thematic gatherings bringing together organisations from the same sector (ICT & AI, education, health, green economy, municipalities) to share funding intelligence, build relationships, and identify collaborative opportunities.

Best for: All eligible DIG-4K clients by sector interest
Frequency: 4 events per year

🎓 **Grant Writing Community Sessions** · **Monthly**

Open working sessions where teams currently preparing EU or national grant applications can work alongside peers, share questions, and get feedback from Edutask advisors in a collaborative setting. Not a lecture-a working community.

Best for: Teams actively preparing funding applications
Frequency: Monthly

🌐 **Digital Networking Sessions** · **Monthly (online)**

Online community sessions for Kosovo organisations that cannot attend Pristina events. Includes brief updates on open funding calls, a guest speaker (investor, NCP, or experienced applicant), and networking breakout rooms.

Best for: All interested Kosovo organisations-no eligibility filter for online events

Frequency: Monthly

Investment Readiness Demo Days · Bi-annual

Structured pitch events where 5–8 selected Kosovo companies present to a panel of investors, bank representatives, and EU funding experts. Companies are prepared through the Edutask Investment Readiness Workshop before presenting.

Best for: Startups and SMEs who have completed Investment Readiness preparation

Frequency: 2 per year

How to participate

1. Register on the DIG-4K platform-go to **edu-task.com** and create a free profile. This is your entry point to all events and services.
2. Subscribe to the Grant Radar newsletter-you will receive event announcements, open call alerts, and community updates monthly.
3. Complete the Funding Readiness Assessment-your score and profile help Edutask match you with the most relevant event format and investor or partner type.
4. Submit your organisation profile-for matchmaking and B2B events, you complete a short profile (sector, goals, funding target, what you offer to a partner). Edutask uses this to curate the right connections for you.
5. Attend and follow up-matchmaking only works if you follow up. Edutask sends post-event connection summaries and can facilitate introductions after the event.

Beyond events-community building

DIG-4K's community is not just a series of events. Edutask is building a living ecosystem of Kosovo organisations engaged in funding, innovation, and digital transformation-connected through shared knowledge and mutual support.

Community assets

- Grant Radar newsletter-150 subscribers, monthly
- DIG-4K client network-54 organisations engaged
- Partner network-universities, chambers, ICK, KIESA, EEN Kosovo, associations
- EU network-DIG-4K EDIH is part of pan-European EDIH network of 200+ hubs
- Regional connections-Western Balkans EDIH coordinators

What community membership gives you

- Early access to funding alerts before calls become widely known
- Priority booking for consultation slots and workshop places
- Partner referrals from the Edutask network for consortium building
- Co-application opportunities-Edutask can lead or co-lead
- Peer learning from other Kosovo organisations navigating EU funding

DIG-4K is part of the pan-European European Digital Innovation Hub network, giving Kosovo organisations direct connections to over 200 hubs across Europe-and through them, to thousands of potential consortium partners, research institutions, and investors.

Join the Access to Funds Services within DIG-4K Framework

Register for events, subscribe to the Grant Radar, and connect with the people and organisations that will help you find and win funding.

info@edu-task.com · edu-task.com · itp-prizren.com/dig-4k

Co-funded by the Kosovo Government
Co-funded by the European Union

📬 Newsletter: mailchi.mp/edu-task/edutask-newsletter-signup-form

✓ BEST FOR

Any Kosovo organisation that wants to stop navigating the funding landscape alone-and start building the relationships, knowledge, and network that make funding applications succeed.

Edutask · DIG-4K EDIH · edu-task.com · Co-funded by the European Union and the Kosovo Government under the Digital Europe Programme · Grant Agreement 101083994 · Views and opinions expressed are those of the authors only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Commission.