



## **Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure**

### **PROGRESS REPORT**

#### **Azerbaijan State University of Culture and Arts**

This report evaluates Azerbaijan State University of Culture and Arts' (ASUCA) efforts in alignment with Sustainable Development Goal 9 (SDG 9): Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure. SDG 9 focuses on fostering resilient infrastructure, promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialization, and encouraging innovation. ASUCA has been instrumental in driving innovation within the education sector, fostering industry collaborations, and developing robust infrastructure to enhance learning and research. ASUCA's strategic partnerships with government bodies, private companies, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) contribute to a modern, inclusive educational environment that empowers students and staff.

SDG 9 aims to build resilient infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialization, and foster innovation. Within the context of higher education, these goals emphasize the importance of modern facilities, sustainable campus initiatives, entrepreneurial ecosystems, and industry-relevant training. ASUCA strives to contribute to these global goals by developing innovative programs, upgrading facilities, and creating partnerships with both public and private sectors to expand educational and industrial opportunities.

#### ***ASUCA's Vision for Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure***

ASUCA is dedicated to creating a sustainable, resilient infrastructure that supports both academic excellence and innovative research. Through various strategic partnerships, ASUCA has enhanced its capacity to provide quality education while aligning with national development objectives and global best practices.

#### ***ASUCA Initiatives for Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure***

##### ***Developing Resilient Educational Infrastructure***

ASUCA has made significant investments in educational and research infrastructure, focusing on sustainability, digital innovation, and modernized learning environments. Key initiatives include:

**Green Campus and Environmental Sustainability:** ASUCA actively promotes green campus initiatives to enhance sustainability and reduce environmental impact. These efforts are aligned with the UI GreenMetric World University Rankings, which measure campus sustainability. ASUCA's green policies and environmental campaigns reflect a commitment to eco-friendly infrastructure, from waste reduction programs to energy-efficient facilities.

**Upgrading Digital and Physical Learning Spaces:** In response to evolving educational needs, ASUCA has modernized its classrooms, laboratories, and digital learning platforms. These upgrades provide students and staff with state-of-the-art tools and resources, facilitating hybrid learning models, online research access, and an interactive learning environment.

##### ***Fostering Innovation through Industry Partnerships***

ASUCA understands that university-industry collaborations are essential for fostering innovation and providing students with practical experience. Significant partnerships with industry have included:

The Innovation and Entrepreneurship Center at Azerbaijan State University of Culture and Arts (ASUCA) operates under the University's Vice Rectorate for International Relations. The center was established in October 2023 within the framework of the ENGAGE project, coordinated by Mingachevir

State University, aimed at strengthening the entrepreneurship ecosystem within higher education institutions in Azerbaijan.

The primary goal of the center is to promote sustainable development at the university by implementing innovation development programs. This includes fostering advancements in science, education, and information-communication fields, as well as supporting the commercialization of intellectual property, all within the context of educational system reforms for sustainable growth.

**Entrepreneurship Program Development:** In partnership with industry professionals and private sector entities, ASUCA has launched an entrepreneurship program based on a mentor-mentee system. This program equips students with business skills and provides resources to develop innovative ideas.

**Integration of Industry Experts in Education:** ASUCA invites industry professionals to participate in curriculum development, guest lectures, and mentorship, ensuring that students acquire industry-relevant knowledge and skills. Through collaborations with business leaders and technology experts, ASUCA enhances students' understanding of current industry demands and fosters a culture of innovation.

### ***Collaboration with Government Bodies***

ASUCA has established strong ties with governmental institutions to enhance the university's infrastructure and industry linkages, as well as to secure funding for innovative projects. Key government collaborations include:

**State-Supported R&D Initiatives:** ASUCA is actively involved in research and development (R&D) projects funded by the state, allowing the university to expand its research infrastructure. By participating in state-funded programs, ASUCA gains the resources to pursue projects in fields like digitalization, sustainable development, and cultural preservation, all of which align with Azerbaijan's national priorities.

**Entrepreneurship and Innovation Funding:** With support from the Ministry of Education and other state agencies, ASUCA's entrepreneurship initiatives receive financial backing, allowing students to pursue projects with a broader societal impact. This support underscores the university's commitment to sustainable growth, technological advancement, and industry collaboration.

### ***Cooperation with Legislative Bodies in Education***

ASUCA collaborates closely with legislative bodies to align its educational programs and policies with national education laws and to secure funding for infrastructure development. Key initiatives in legislative collaboration include:

**Advocacy for Sustainable Infrastructure Policies:** ASUCA actively participates in discussions with legislative bodies to advocate for sustainable infrastructure policies in higher education. By working with lawmakers, ASUCA helps shape policies that support green campus initiatives, renewable energy usage, and responsible waste management.

**Funding for Educational Modernization:** ASUCA works with legislative bodies to access state-funded programs for upgrading educational infrastructure. These collaborations enable ASUCA to continually enhance its physical and digital learning environments, ensuring that students and faculty have access to advanced tools and technologies.

### ***Opportunities for Participation in State-Supported Innovation Projects***

ASUCA is well-positioned to leverage state-supported opportunities for expanding its infrastructure and promoting innovation. Potential opportunities include:

**Capacity Building in Research and Development:** State-backed R&D initiatives can provide ASUCA with the resources needed to develop cutting-edge research facilities and support faculty and

student research. This aligns with ASUCA's goal to foster a robust academic research environment that contributes to Azerbaijan's innovation ecosystem.

Within the framework of the Erasmus+ project titled "Strengthening a Sustainable Entrepreneurship Ecosystem in Higher Education Institutions of Azerbaijan" (ENGAGE), coordinated by Mingachevir State University and funded by the European Commission, the rector, vice-rector, faculty members, and other administrative staff of ASUCA are participating in various innovation and entrepreneurship training programs held in Sweden, Portugal, Spain, Poland, and Estonia. They are implementing the best practices from these universities at ASUCA.<sup>1</sup>

**Sustainable Campus Development Projects:** ASUCA apply for government-funded programs focused on creating sustainable campuses, particularly those aimed at energy conservation, waste reduction, and green building practices. By participating in these initiatives, ASUCA improve its sustainability ranking and contribute to environmental protection efforts.

**Technology Integration in Education:** State-supported technology grants are available for universities that aim to incorporate digital and technological advancements into their curriculum and infrastructure. ASUCA can utilize these funds to expand its digital learning platforms, upgrade its IT infrastructure, and enhance online education capabilities.



**Entrepreneurial Initiatives and Innovation Hubs:** State funding for innovation hubs and business incubators presents an opportunity for ASUCA to create spaces where students can develop and prototype ideas. These hubs could serve as interdisciplinary collaboration zones, bringing together students, faculty, and industry professionals to develop innovative solutions for real-world challenges.

Students from Azerbaijan State University of Culture and Arts (ASUCA) successfully participated in the preliminary stage of the international startup competition titled "Finding Innovative and Creative Solutions" held at Azerbaijan Technical University (AzTU).

The Digital Art Team, representing ASUCA, received certificates for their participation, along with their mentor. The project team was composed of students from the Jean Monnet Module.<sup>2</sup>

The goal of the project is to bring the work of individuals in the field of art into the digital economy market. The project will be further developed within the Innovation and Entrepreneurship Center at Azerbaijan State University of Culture and Arts (ASUCA).



<sup>1</sup> <https://admiu.edu.az/admiu-ректорunun-basciligi-il% c9% 99-numay% c9% 99nd% c9% 99-hey% c9% 99ti-lissabonda-s% c9% 99f% c9% 99rd% c9% 99-olub/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://admiu.edu.az/dijital-inc% c9% 99s% c9% 99n% c9% 99t-iqtisadiyyati/>