



***« INnovative governance Practices for  
Higher Education Institutions in Iraq »***

**Virtual Partners' meeting  
17 December 2020**

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# **MINUTES**

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|----------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Project</b> | <b>INSPIRE project</b>        |                   |                    |
| <b>Event</b>   | 2nd Virtual Partners' Meeting |                   |                    |
| <b>Date</b>    | 17 December 2020              | <b>Time</b>       | 10:00 am - 12 noon |
| <b>Place</b>   | Zoom platform                 | <b>Minutes by</b> | Elena Cellai       |

### SCOPE OF THE MEETING

Before the end of the year, the coordinator and the partners decided to have a virtual partners' meeting to take stock of the following points:

- Submission to the EACEA of the revised GANTT and the request for the 1-year extension.
- State of the art and next steps of WP 1 – Preparation
- State of the art of the interim financial report

### MINUTES

#### Participants

The 16 partners of the project were all present and connected to the meeting's platform.

The list of participants as well as the meeting's agenda and the pictures are attached to the present document.

*The presentations showcased during the meeting were shared via email with all the participants.*

#### Welcome and opening

The meeting was opened by the Project Coordinator – Professor Riccardo Mussari from the University of Siena - who thanked all the institutions for their presence, underlining that the participation and the commitment of all partners is essential the successful implementation of the project.

Professor Mussari informs that the request for the revision of the GANNT and the 1-year extension of the project was submitted by the Coordinator to the EACEA and acknowledged last November 2020. The EACEA has not given its response yet, but it is essential to go on with the work otherwise the risk is to delay the activities that have to be carried out once more.

This aspect is highlighted also by Dr. Marcello Scalisi – Director of UNIMED - that underlines how the importance of the involvement of all Iraqi partners was fundamental for the project to have been resumed by the EU and to ensure the best execution of it. He also added that the implementation and results of the INSPIRE project are not only important in itself, but for the future of the cooperation between the Iraqi Institutions and the EU and the European Higher Education system. He gives the floor to Martina Zipoli from UNIMED to illustrate the state of the art and next steps of WP 1 – Preparation.

#### State of the art and next steps of WP 1 – Preparation

Mrs. Martina Zipoli introduced herself informing all partners that she is and will be replacing Mrs-

Silvia Marchionne - who is in maternity leave – as Project Manager at P2 UNIMED, that is the leader of WP1 and co-leader of WP7.

She expressed enthusiasm and pleasure for being involved in the INSPIRE project and meeting all the partners, though virtually, and gave the presentation of the working package, that is now a priority in order to go on with the project.

Mrs. Zipoli recalled the general scope of the WP1, being the update of the need analysis of Iraqi Universities, and its specific aims:

- Understand the current situation
- Identify all aspects allowing governance improvement
- Point out both the gaps and the priorities to address
- Jointly define objectives for future developments

And its 5 tasks:

- T1.1 Preliminary desk research, collection of relevant data
- T1.2 Identification of stakeholders
- T1.3 Identification of existing governance frameworks and best practices
- T1.4 Design and preparation of a diagnostic tool
- T1.5 Self-evaluation for a final assessment study

She reminds all that some activities have been already done and consisted in:

- A preliminary activity through the **Focus groups in Siena during the KoM in February 2019**, in order to collect expectations, experiences and perception expressed by the participant universities in relation to the University governance.
- The preliminary **desk research**, that is still ongoing. The whole consortium has expressed the necessity to agree on a common understanding of University governance, so basic concepts and governance models for higher education, as well as best practices that can adapt to Iraqi universities have been defined and collected. At the same time, in collaboration with the Ministry of Higher Education and the University of Baghdad, UNIMED has worked on the understanding of the Iraqi education system through references, document etc. Dr. Sudad from the University of Baghdad is taking care of translating key documents from Arabic to English to allow UNIMED to have a more comprehensive overview of the Iraqi system.
- All Universities have been administered a **survey on the “State of the art of the Higher Education System and its Governance in Iraq”**. This survey was launched in May 2019 and all the answers given by the 10 Iraqi University leaders (Presidents and Vice-Presidents) and Departments, collected by UNIMED in July 2019. The topics were general information on the University governance, funding and autonomy, quality assurance, national and international cooperation, university-industry relations, future strategies.

The work that has to be done now is to complete the desk research and analyze the survey responses.

The tasks to perform in the upcoming months require efficiency, participation of all partners and accurate attention, as the results of this WP will then influence all the rest of project developments, such as the other WPs (2 to 5). The tasks to perform in the upcoming months are:

- Completing **the stakeholders map** by January 2021 (identifying - in a stakeholders register –

all the actors that have interest and influence on the process of improvement of universities, both internal and external; all the institutions that have an influence on the governance system and all the institutions that need to be engaged in a dialogue with the Universities for this improvement.

- Since focus groups in presence in Iraq are no possible due to the pandemic, **virtual focus groups** will be organized with small numbers of participants by splitting the universities in three groups. The scope is to discuss the data of the survey responses, as this was administered over a year ago and some information might need to be updated. In this way the analysis can be validated by all partners involved. The focus groups will also allow to start reflecting on the dimensions of the University governance that need to be addressed, improved and revised. Virtual Focus groups will be held on January 2021.
- Design of the Diagnostic Tool to perform the self-evaluation in late February- March 2021.
- All information will be put together in the Report of WP1, available in late March – April 2021.

Decisions to be made by the Consortium:

1. Approval of the dates for the virtual focus groups (proposal: 18, 19, 20 January 2021, morning sessions of two hours, one group per day).
2. Involvement of the leader of WP2 (University of Evora) in all the activities of WP1, to avoid delays on the definition of the training content
3. Confirmation of February-March for conducting the self-evaluation in about three weeks.

Professor Mussari thanked Mrs. Zipoli welcoming her in the project and group. He underlines the importance of the self-evaluation: the project will not propose a standardized solution to the Iraqi HEIs, but a tool that responds to the necessities of the Universities and that will be effectively used. Also, he stressed the importance to work with the University of Evora along WP1 activities, to find out solutions that are consistent with the necessities of Iraqi institutions.

Professor Ruggiero from the University of Siena underlined the necessity to define the criteria and requisites required to people who will participate in the self-evaluation, in order to have a group that is stable over time as the evaluation is an ongoing activity, as well as to guarantee coherence among the self-evaluations of the different Universities. Mrs. Zipoli confirmed that self-evaluation is an exercise that must continue over time, even after the end of the project so to guarantee its sustainability, agrees on the necessity underlined by Prof. Ruggiero and proposes that the criteria and requisites to select the persons who will take part in the self-evaluation process will be discussed together in the focus groups with the Universities.

Prof. Mussari highlighted the responsibility of the Iraqi universities to be focused on both short and long-time scopes of the project, so to make it sustainable after its end, and make its results usable over time. The tool of self-evaluation must be consistent with the specific objectives of the project and, at the same time, responding to the reality of the Iraqi universities, having in mind that self-assessment is not an external evaluation or a graded exercise, but a way to improve the situation of the actors involved in it, via mutual learning.

Partners approve:

1. The dates for the virtual focus groups (18, 19, 20 January 2021, morning sessions of two hours, one group per day).
2. February-March for conducting the self-evaluation in about three weeks.
3. The University of Evora confirms its availability to be fully involved in all WP1 activities.

### **State of the art of the interim financial report – WP8**

Mrs. Elena Cellai from the University of Siena gave the presentation, thanking all partners to have actively contributed to the report, especially the Iraqi universities that, in many cases experienced for the first time the reporting processes of the EU funded projects.

She informed that the report is not completed yet, because some information still lacks for this task to be finalized.

She underlined that the report was due last July 2020, but considering the suspension of the project, the EACEA did not urge its reception. However, it is very likely that once the project 1-year extension and new GANTT are approved by the EU, this report will be required for the EU institutions to take stock of the work already done, also in financial terms. It is therefore necessary to close the report by the end of 2020.

She illustrated the reporting materials that is necessary to be provided by each partner for the financial report to be concluded and sent to the EU:

1. The summary of staff costs of each partner (to be sent by 3 partners);
2. The timesheets and the joint declarations of each staff person involved and declared in the summary (to be sent by 5 partners);

Other documents are necessary as they can be required in case of an audit:

3. Proof of contractual relationship between the staff persons reported in the summary and their University/Ministry;
4. Pay slips or any other note that proves continuity of the work contract, such as the payment of a salary to the persons involved in the project in the months that have been indicated in the Timesheet;
5. Evidence/track that the salary has been paid via bank wires or cheques, etc.

Partners asked the coordinator to have a template to more easily provide points 3,4,5 documents. UNIMED offered to collaborate to draft these templates, also with the use of former financial documentation used for other EU projects involving MENA countries.

The University of Siena will contact the partners for acquiring all documents in points 1 and 2 so to have them by the end of the year 2020. The coordinator will also provide a template for contractual relationship, salary payments and proof of payment, with the collaboration of UNIMED.

# ANNEX 1 – LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

| n  | Partner Number | Partner Name   | Name and Surname of participant | Email address  |
|----|----------------|--|---------------------------------|--|
| 1  | P1             | Università di Siena                                  | Prof. Riccardo Mussari          | mussari@unisi.it   |
| 2  | P1             | Università di Siena                                  | Prof. Pasquale Ruggiero         | ruggiero@unisi.it  |
| 3  | P1             | Università di Siena                                  | Elena Cellai                    | elenacellai@gmail.com  |
| 4  | P2             | UNIMED   | Marcello Scalisi                | m.scalisi@uni-med.net  |
| 5  | P2             | UNIMED   | Martina Zipoli                  | m.zipoli@uni-med.net   |
| 6  | P2             | UNIMED   | Marco Di Donato                 | m.didonato@uni-med.net   |
| 7  | P3             | Università di Bologna                                | Filippo Sartor                  | <a href="mailto:Filippo.sartor@unibo.it">Filippo.sartor@unibo.it</a>   |
| 8  | P3             | Università di Bologna                                | Valentina Manzato               | <a href="mailto:Valentina.manzato2@unibo.it">Valentina.manzato2@unibo.it</a>   |
| 9  | P4             | University of Évora                                  | Paulo Resende da Silva          | <a href="mailto:pfs@uevora.pt">pfs@uevora.pt</a>   |
| 10 | P4             | University of Évora                                  | Catarina Dias                   | <a href="mailto:cdias@uevora.pt">cdias@uevora.pt</a>   |
| 11 | P5             | Istanbul Aydın University                            | Celal Nazım İrem                | <a href="mailto:celalirem@aydin.edu.tr">celalirem@aydin.edu.tr</a>   |
| 12 | P6             | Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research | Dr. Muhammad Khaleel.           | <a href="mailto:mohammedsh77@yahoo.com">mohammedsh77@yahoo.com</a>   |
| 13 | P7             | University of Baghdad                                | Sudad Amer Dayl                 | <a href="mailto:sudaddayl@sc.uobaghdad.edu.iq">sudaddayl@sc.uobaghdad.edu.iq</a>   |
| 14 | P8             | Al-Furat Al-Awsat Technical University               | Dr. Ali Najah Al-Shamani        | <a href="mailto:ali.alshamani@gmail.com">ali.alshamani@gmail.com</a> ;<br><a href="mailto:alshamani@atu.edu.iq">alshamani@atu.edu.iq</a> |
| 15 | P8             | Al-Furat Al-Awsat Technical University               | Prof. Emad Al-Mulla             | <a href="mailto:almullaemad@gmail.com">almullaemad@gmail.com</a>   |
| 16 | P8             | Al-Furat Al-Awsat Technical University               | Prof. Ahmed Wadday              | <a href="mailto:ahmadghw@gmail.com">ahmadghw@gmail.com</a> ;<br><a href="mailto:ahmadghw@atu.edu.iq">ahmadghw@atu.edu.iq</a>             |
| 17 | P9             | University of Sumer                                  | Dr. Hussein F. Alrubaay         | <a href="mailto:husseinf313@yahoo.com">husseinf313@yahoo.com</a>   |
| 18 | P10            | AL-Qasim Green University                            | Dr.Hadi Yasir Al Janabe         | <a href="mailto:hadiyasir@yahoo.com">hadiyasir@yahoo.com</a>   |
| 19 | P10            | AL-Qasim Green University                            | DR. Hayder Dibs                 | <a href="mailto:Dr.hayderdibs@wrec.uoqasim.edu.iq">Dr.hayderdibs@wrec.uoqasim.edu.iq</a>   |
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|----|-----|--------------------------------|--|--|
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| 33 | P16 | University of Mosul            | Prof .MUNEER SALIM TAHA AL- BADRANI        | <a href="mailto:Msal-badrany@uomosul.edu.iq">Msal-badrany@uomosul.edu.iq</a>   |
| 34 | P16 | University of Mosul            | Assistant .Prof. RAWAA PUTROF POLOS QASHA  | <a href="mailto:rawa_qasha@uomosul.edu.iq">rawa_qasha@uomosul.edu.iq</a>       |
| 35 | P16 | University of Mosul            | Dr. MAZIN SAMI HASAN                       | <a href="mailto:mazensamie@uomosul.edu.iq">mazensamie@uomosul.edu.iq</a>       |

**ANNEX 2 – VIRTUAL PARTNERS' MEETING AGENDA**

## **Virtual Partners' meeting**

**17 December 2020**

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# **AGENDA**

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Zoom <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86919692016>

Meeting ID: 869 1969 2016

\*This meeting will be held in English



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|               |  |
|---------------|--|
|               | <b>Thursday, 17 December 2020</b>  |
|               | <b>10:00 a.m.– 11:30 a.m CET</b>   |
| 10:00 – 10:10 | <b>Welcome and Opening</b><br><i>Prof. Riccardo Mussari, Project Coordinator, University of Siena</i>                    |
| 10:10 – 10:30 | <b>WP1 – Preparation: Planning the next steps</b><br>UNIMED - Mediterranean Universities Union and University of Baghdad |
| 10:30 – 10:45 | <i>Questions and Debate with the partners</i>  |
| 10:45 – 11:00 | <b>WP8 – Management: Update on financial interim report</b><br>University of Siena                                       |
| 11:00 – 11:30 | <i>Questions, Debate with the partners and final remarks</i>   |





## ANNEX 3 - PHOTOS



The INSPIRE logo, consisting of a blue graduation cap icon and the word "INSPIRE" in blue.

### Update on Interim Financial Report

#### WHAT IS NEEDED

- 1. Summary of costs (Excel file): to be sent by 3 partners**
- 2. Joint Declaration (EACEA template)\* - one for each person, for each covered + Time-sheets (EACEA template)\*- one for each person, category covered: to be sent by 5 partners**
- 3. Proof of formal contractual relationship – to be sent by 13 partners**
- 4. Payslips of the months declared in the timesheets (or a note giving staff when get their salary) - to be sent by 13 partners**
- 5. Proof of payments - to be sent by 13 partners**

**Points 1 and 2 are essential for the report to be sent to the EACEA, points 3 to 5 are important to keep track of supporting docs and must have a translation of basic parts from Arabic into English**

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A small Zoom meeting grid showing four participants: a woman, a man, another woman, and a man.

INSPIRE Meeting 17-12-2020 recording

01:33:49 00:07:29

