



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

Virtual Partners' meeting
15 June 2021

MINUTES





Project	INSPIRE project		
Event	Virtual Partners' Meeting		
Date	15 June 2021	Time	09:30 am – 13:30 pm
Place	Zoom platform	Minutes by	Simona Caramia – Zahra Zeinali

SCOPE OF THE MEETING

After the resumption of the INSPIRE project and the progression of the related activities, the virtual partners' meeting had the following scopes:

- To review and confirm the project work plan and its deadlines;
- to present and validate the results of the WP1 elaborated by UNIMED and the University of Baghdad;
- to present and validate the plan for the implementation of the WP2 training activities proposed by the University of Evora and Basrah University;
- to approve the Project Quality Plan (WP6) drafted by Al Furat Al-Awsat Technical University and the University of Evora;
- to present the enrichments made to the project website by UNIMED and to approve the project Dissemination Plan drafted by the University of Baghdad and UNIMED (WP7);
- to present the Project interim Report submitted by the University of Siena to the EACEA (WP8);
- to present the state of the art of the rest of WPs (WP3, WP4, WP5), with a special concentration on the tasks and deliverables to be implemented in this year 2021.

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 partners for their presence, underlining that the participation and the commitment of all partners is essential for the implementation of the project's activities.



General updates and illustration of upcoming activities and deadlines

Professor Mussari, after recalling the original timetable of the project that was approved by the EACEA at the beginning of the project, presented the actual implementation of the activities performed; in November 2020 a 1-year project extension was requested, and approved by the EACEA in February 2021. Professor Mussari reminded all the partners that the project's activities need to be implemented in compliance with the deadlines and with the contribution and coordination of all project partners.

Update on WP 1 – Preparation

Mr. Marcello Scalisi – Director of UNIMED, that is the leader of WP1 – introduced the presentation of WP1 results by stating that they offer good hope for the future development of the project; moreover, he recalled the importance of starting to carry out some of the project activities in presence, in Europe or in Iraq, in the coming months, to improve and speed up the coordination process between all the partners.

Mrs. Martina Zipoli and Mrs. Silvia Marchionne from P2 UNIMED – gave the presentation of the WP1 report, whose first version was released in May 2021, also on behalf of the University of Baghdad, co leader of the working package. After thanking the Iraqi institutions for their cooperation during the implementation of WP1 activities, Mrs. Zipoli presented the update of the needs analysis of the Iraqi HEIs performed by UNIMED; she explained that the identification of the needs and the priorities for intervention in the Iraqi HEIs flows from:

- a literature review on the governance frameworks and models;
- a desk research on the sources of Iraqi legislation;
- a dialogue with the Iraqi University to identify their experiences, perceptions, and goals.

Mrs. Marchionne presented more in detail the different sections and some of the preliminary results obtained after the focus group conducted with the Iraqi universities, such as the need for a focus on mobility and international relationships, the absence of a common understanding on what “autonomy” means, and their higher orientation on teaching rather than on research activities.

Mrs. Zipoli presented the stakeholder mapping included in the report, and the main outcomes coming from the self-assessment evaluation (T1.5) conducted through the diagnostic tool (T1.4) prepared by the University of Siena. The main outcomes of the WP1 tasks, that have been translated in emerging needs are:

- the partial autonomy in decision-making of Iraqi HEIs;
- all decisions are defined/approved by the MOHESR;
- HEI's limited knowledge of the regulatory framework;
- Quality assurance and Internationalization as priorities to be addressed;

- the University's Third mission (called "Social role" in Iraq) as an important issue needing extra attention.

Dr. Mazin Sami Hasam from University of Mosul pointed out that some of the results of the self-assessment do not reflect the real situation of Iraqi Universities.

Mrs. Marchionne and Mrs. Zipoli offered their availability to discuss with him and to make any change to the report, as the main goal of the self-assessment evaluation is to identify different perceptions and needs coming from Iraqi Universities. Dr. Hussein from the MOHESR pointed out that the diversity showed in the Report and the different perspective presented are the richness of the result.

Professor Mussari suggested having a discussion between Dr Mazin Sami Hasam and UNIMED to update the content of the report accordingly.

Apart from these possible changes, the partners approved the general content of the WP1 report.

Update on WP2 – Development

Professor Paulo Resende da Silva from the University of Evora – leader of WP2 –, on behalf also of the University of Basrah – co leader of WP2 –, gave the presentation. When proposing the design work of the WP2's activities, he recalled the need for collaboration from the other partners, both the European ones (who will deliver the training activities planned in WP2), and the Iraqi ones (who will receive the training activities). Prof. Resende da Silva pointed that the main aim of the meeting was to confirm the decisions on T2.1 (Designing of training content and programme) and T2.2 (Development of training methodology and didactic material).

Prof. Resende da Silva presented the 4 pillars of the WP2 training activities, i.e. the main topics of the training activities chosen in accordance with the needs expressed in the WP1:

1. Strategy and Leadership;
2. Quality Assurance;
3. Governance and Autonomy;
4. Accountability and Results.

Then he presented the details of the activities to be performed (schedule, methods, target groups, topics). As for the schedule, the virtual session will be performed from July 2021 to December 2021, while local training and conferences are scheduled for the first months of 2022.

Professor Nazar Samir Abd Al Wahab Haddad from the University of Basrah – co leader of WP2 – underlined the importance of the commitment and the participation of all the target groups for the success of WP2.

The partners approved the proposals and the general schedule for WP2.

Update on WP3 – Development

Professor Celal Nazim Irem from Istanbul Aydin University – also on behalf of Sumer University, co leader of WP3 –, gave the presentation. He underlined the strict link on the working package with WP2,

as the content of the training activities of WP2 will be the starting point of the strategic planning for Iraqi HEIs.

Professor Celal Nazim Irem recalled the main tasks of WP3:

- T3.1 Development of a specific action plan for each HEI in Iraq;
- T3.2 Piloting the Implementation of the action plans in each Iraq HEIs;
- T3.3 Drawing up of a general guideline handbook for strategic planning and governance for HEIs;
- T3.4 Assessing and refining the governance framework at each university.

He also presented the next steps to undertake:

- draft a format for the action plans;
- collect information on best practices.

And reminded that the activities related to WP3 should be concluded by July 2022.

Professor Mussari thanked Professor Celal Nazim Irem and stated that the programme for WP3 is very ambitious and consistent with the plan that EACEA has approved; moreover he pointed that efforts should be done as from now to achieve the outcomes by the approved deadlines.

Update on WP4 - Development

Mr. Filippo Sartor from University of Bologna, the leader of WP4, also on behalf of University of Mosul, co-leader of the working package, gave the presentation. He presented the working plan, whose main deadlines are:

- selection of training participants by December 2021;
- conclusion of the working package's activities by November 2022.

Mr. Sartor presented the 4 main blocks of activities of WP4:

1. fine tuning of the WP on the basis of baseline study (WP1);
2. implementation of a "train the trainers" event on International Relations Strategies at University of Bologna;
3. writing/updating the university international relation strategic plan in each Iraqi Universities;
4. Organization of a national workshop at the Ministry of Higher Education.

After presenting the main indicator used to measure internationalization, Mr. Sartor showed the University of Bologna's commitment in identifying the impacts of Covid19 on the universities' internationalization agenda.

Update on WP5 – Launching Consultative Centres in Iraqi HEIs

Mrs Huda Abdullah Hamad Al-Mijbilee from the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, leader of WP5, introduced the topic, informing that the Ministry proposes to establish the consultative Centres and make them part of the department of international relations as a unit, in each University. This is the first task of WP5 whose deadline is mentioned in the work plan to be January 2021. She asked if this date is confirmed and in this case proposed October 2021 as a new deadline. Elena Cellai from the University of Siena informed that the work plan had an oversight and the actual deadline of this task is 31 January 2022. This deadline is confirmed as feasible by the Ministry. Silvia Marchionne from UNIMED commented that this part of the INSPIRE project is crucial to confer sustainability to the results of INSPIRE.

Update on WP6 – Quality Plan and Evaluation

Mr. Hussein Jaaz from Al-Furat Al-Awsat Technical University, leader of WP6, gave the presentation. First, he asked the partnership to validate the Internal Committee components as they were appointed in 2019 and their roles might have changed. Then, he presented the two aims of this WP g: to evaluate the outcome and achievement of the objectives of the project (WP1-5); to measure success of the project by real execution of tasks and their effect on Iraqi Universities. He said that after finishing WP4 and WP5, the quality plan for each package will be validated by doing the cycle of quality and showing the best implementation solution for each work package. This quality cycle includes:

- Identification of needs
- Define a tool for activities
- Implementation & evaluation of results
- Quality control of activities

The Quality Plan of this project will be organized in two level:

- The first level: Focus on achievement based on the schedule and the deadline respect for all tasks and activities.
- The second level: Focus on the delivered outputs and defined indicators in the project

Also, he said that WP6 6 has two processes for monitoring and evaluation:

1. Internal process: project management, management and coordinator, partnership and collaboration, and project meeting.
2. External process: learning activities, online activities, events communications, and dissemination overall, all levels.

Quality management cycle and the main point of the Quality Plan were presented, and all partners confirmed their commitment in the implementation of this WP. At the end, he showed that the first evaluation of WP1 results had to be done in May 2021, therefore this will be addressed as soon as possible.

Update on WP7 – Dissemination & Exploitation Plan

Mr. Sudad Amer Dayl from University of Baghdad, the leader of WP7, gave the presentation. He presented the WP, whose main aims are:

- Establishing and running dissemination activities of the project
- Define priorities of communication, exploitation & sustainability

Mr. Sudad Amer Dayl presented the 4 main blocks of activities of WP7 with deadlines:

1. Design of dissemination and exploitation plan (Feb 2019);
2. Creation and management of the project website (Oct 2019);
3. Preparation of dissemination and branding materials (Multiple dates);
4. Deployment of dissemination and sustainability campaign in Iraq (Nov 2021);
5. Organization of final conference (Dec 2022).

He said that this WP has multiple target groups including: leaders of the HE institution of Iraq, Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research in Iraq, top manager, leaders and academic staff, administrative staff, international educational community and researchers on governance, general audience.

Mr. Sudad Amer Dayl presented dissemination tools (project logo, use of Erasmus+ logo and programme disclaimer and project templates) and described the project website. He presented an exploitation policy and its different activities. At the end, he showed the report of dissemination activities. He said that for the next steps, we will translate the website in Arabic; all HEIs will put INSPIRE on their institutional websites and partners will look for dissemination opportunities. Also, he proposed to apply to the call for interest to present most relevant results and inspiring outputs in the CBHE virtual fair in October 2021, funded by Erasmus Plus Programme.

WP8 – Management (Update on Financial Issues and Interim Report)

Prof. Riccardo Mussari from the University of Siena, leader of WP8, gave the presentation. Prof. Mussari commented about the interim report transmitted to the EACEA in February 2021. EACEA comments arrived in late May 2021. Prof. presented EACEA's main remarks including:

- necessity to establish regular meetings among the partners on a monthly basis;
- necessity to update the quality plan to the project new work plan;
- necessity to have the project website available also in Arabic.

Overall, the general evaluation given by EACEA is “fair”, so Prof. Mussari highlighted that this not-so-high evaluation must constitute a source of challenge for improvements that can be achieved only if all partners are committed and act in collaboration with each other. He stated that if the partnership will be consistent in the adhesions to the actions and tasks discussed and approved during the meeting, and if deadlines will be met, these remarks will be solved in compliance with the work plan.

Anyway, upon request of the same EACEA, a meeting is scheduled on 23 July with the EACEA Project Officer, in order to clarify and discuss all the remarks made. Prior to the meeting, an official and detailed



written response to the comments made by EACEA will be shared with all partners and sent to the EACEA PO.

Prof. Mussari pointed out the importance of the partners' responsibility for the working packages' activities and of the evaluation of everything that is done; to this end, he encouraged the partners to send any kind of comments about the activities they perform, so as to enable the improvement of the work plan and the upcoming activities, especially those of WP2 that are going to be implemented in the near future.





ANNEX 1 – LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

VIRTUAL PARTNERS' MEETING				
15 June 2021				
	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	P1	Università di Siena	Simona Caramia	simona.caramia@student.unisi.it
5	P1	Università di Siena	Zahra Zeinali	zahra.zeinali@phd.unipi.it
6	P2	UNIMED	Marcello Scalisi	m.scalisi@uni-med.net
7	P2	UNIMED	Martina Zipoli	m.zipoli@uni-med.net
8	P2	UNIMED	Silvia Marchionne	s.marchionne@uni-med.net
9	P2	UNIMED	Marco Di Donato	m.didonato@uni-med.net
10	P2	UNIMED	Federica De Giorgi	f.degiorgi@uni-med.net
11	P3	Università di Bologna	Filippo Sartor	Filippo.sartor@unibo.it
12	P4	University of Évora	Paulo Resende da Silva	pfs@uevora.pt
13	P4	University of Évora	Catarina Dias	cdias@uevora.pt
14	P5	Istanbul Aydın University	Celal Nazım İrem	celalirem@aydin.edu.tr
15	P5	Istanbul Aydın University	Nazli Akyuz	nakyuz@aydin.edu.tr
16	P6	Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research	Dr. Hussein Al-Rubaiey	alrubaiey@gmail.com
17	P6	Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research	Dr. Muhammad Khaleel.	mohammedsh77@yahoo.com
18	P6	Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research	Huda Abdullah Hamad Al-Mijbilee	iraminusmus@mohesr.gov.iq
19	P6	Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research	dr. Ghufran Abdul-Hameed	iraminusmus@mohesr.gov.iq
21	P7	University of Baghdad	Sudad Amer Dayl	sudaddayl@sc.uobaghdad.edu.iq
21	P8	Al-Furat Al-Awsat Technical University	Dr. Ali Najah Al-Shamani	ali.alshamani@gmail.com ; alshamani@atu.edu.iq





22	P8	Al-Furat Al-Awsat Technical University	Hussein Jaaz	husseinjaaz@atu.edu.iq
23	P9	University of Sumer	Hussein Fadhil Khlaif	husseinf313@yahoo.com
24	P9	University of Sumer	Mansour Aldanani	mansournask@yahoo.com
25	P10	AL-Qasim Green University	Dr.Hayder Abd AlRazzaq Abd Dibs	haiderdibs@yahoo.com
26	P11	Basrah University for Oil and Gas	Emad Hassan Al-Khersan	emad.alkhersan@buog.edu.iq
27	P11	Basrah University for Oil and Gas	Dr. Firas Albadran	albadran.f@buog.edu.iq
28	P11	Basrah University for Oil and Gas	Wael Hasan	wael.hasan@buog.edu.iq
29	P12	Al-Karkh University of Science	Sohaib Kamal Mahmood Al-Kamal	sohaibalkamal@yahoo.com
30	P13	Southern Technical University	Akeel Mohammed A. Morad	akeel@stu.edu.iq
31	P13	Southern Technical University	Aymen Al-Mayyahi	Aymen.abdulali@stu.edu.iq
32	P14	University of Basrah	Dr. Nazar Samir Abd Al Wahab Haddad	nazar.haddad@uobasrah.edu.iq
33	P15	Wasit University	Dr. Muntadher Ali Al Saidi	malsaidi@uowasit.edu.iq
34	P15	Wasit University	Husam Al Zuwayny	hhameed@uowasit.edu.iq
35	P15	Wasit University	Alnujaimi aws saeed mirdan	awsmrdan35@gmail.com
36	P16	University of Mosul	Rawaa Qasha	rawa_qasha@uomosul.edu.iq
37	P16	University of Mosul	Dr. Mazin Sami Hasam	mazensamie@uomosul.edu.iq





ANNEX 2 – VIRTUAL PARTNERS' MEETING AGENDA, 15 June 2021

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

Virtual Partners' meeting

15 June 2021

AGENDA

Venue:

Zoom <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89382051805>

Meeting ID: 893 8205 1805

Co-funded by the
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*This meeting will be held in English

	Tuesday 15 June 2021
	9:30 – 13:30 CEST
9:30 – 9:40	Welcome and Opening Prof. Riccardo Mussari, Project Coordinator, University of Siena
9:40 – 9:50	General updates and illustration of upcoming activities and deadlines University of Siena
9:50 – 10:20	Update on WP1 – Preparation <i>Presentation of the report's results on the needs analysis of the Iraqi HEIs</i> UNIMED - Mediterranean Universities Union and University of Baghdad
10:20 – 10:50	Update on WP2 – Development <i>Presentation of the training content, programme and methodology</i> <i>Presentation of the criteria for the selection of training participants</i> University of Evora and University of Basrah
10:50 -11:20	Coffee Break
11:20 – 11:40	Update on WP3 – Development <i>Presentation of the proposed working plan</i> Aydin Istanbul University and Sumer University
11:40 - 11:50	Update on WP4 - Development <i>Presentation of foreseen activities</i> University of Bologna and University of Mosul
11:50 – 12:00	Update on WP5 - Development <i>Presentation of foreseen activities</i>





	MOHESR and Al-Furat Al-Awsat Technical University
12:00 – 12:30	Update on WP6 - Project Quality and Evaluation <i>Presentation, discussion, and approval of the Quality Plan</i> <i>Presentation of the external evaluator1</i> Al-Furat Al-Awsat Technical University and University of Evora
12:30 – 13:00	Update on WP7 - Dissemination and Exploitation <i>Presentation, discussion, and approval of the Dissemination Plan</i> University of Baghdad and UNIMED - Mediterranean Universities Union
13:00 – 13:15	Update on WP8 – Management <i>Presentation and update on financial issues and interim report</i> University of Siena
13:15 – 13:30	Questions and closure of the meeting Consolidation of the next steps to be undertaken (Action Plan)



ANNEX 3 – PHOTOS





