

Strategy for the Consultative Centers

Rationale

Voice and accountability are key elements for good governance, as access to information on the government's decisions and participation in policy development are important elements to take into account in a process of definition of its own university governance system. Increasing awareness and participation of civil society help improve governments' accountability, in particular on outcomes and quality of public services delivery. Stakeholder participation in the decision-making is crucial at this stage of the project following the process of self-evaluation of WP1, the capacity building activities in WP2 aimed at reinforcing competences of university staff in strategic planning and the process of redefinition of institutional action plans (WP3).

The ability of academic staff to participate in decisions concerning the university is one critical factor to not only improving democratic practices but also to determining academic excellence. Not only the role of academic staff is pivotal in the decision making of university, but also non-university actors should be taken into account as civil society, private sector, students and alumni. Moreover, the role of the State and the participation of other stakeholders in a good governance framework is crucial: there is a need for a shift in the role of the State since new players (funding councils, quality assurance and accreditation agencies) can be charged of tasks and responsibilities. Private sector stakeholders have gained also a new role in the HEIs governance.

Thus, the matter of governance covers a broad spectrum of topics and each HEI is faced with several decisions and is supposed to make choices among different aspects to carry forward. There is a need to finalize priorities before starting organizational change of governance arrangements.

Therefore, the aim of the WP5, led by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research and Al-Furat University as co-leader, is to accompany the Iraqi universities in this process of definition of the strategy for the creation of a consultative body in each university for a better coordination of university and non-university actors.

Background

Partners met in May 2022 for the definition of a strategy for the creation of a consultative center in each university for a better coordination of state, university and non-university actors. Decisions were made on the physical places, human resources as well as objectives of the consultative centers.

Identification

The foreseen centers will be named Local and International Consultation Units.

Scope of action

The Local and International Consultation Units will work in consolidating the consultation and participation process at each university. Starting point for each institution will be the stakeholders map drafted at the beginning of the project, where target groups for each institution are identified. Participation of external actors will be strengthened to improve the university governance. The consultative centers will assure the sustainability of these activities beyond the project lifetime.

Location

All universities plan to dedicate a space to the center: one or two rooms.

Management

The management of those centers will be done by 2 internal and 2 external actors:

The internal actors will be lecturers with PhD degrees from the University. These internal staff members should be among those participating in the training activities of WP2 and WP4.

The external actors will be 2 from non-state organizations. They must be well-known people who have a very impressive CV such as previous MPs, our previous Ministers or retired professors who have a good vision in terms of local and international relationships.

Position in the institution

These centers work will be facilitated and related directly to the Rector's office in each University.

Evaluation

A Ministerial Committee will be formed to carry out WP5 from the Ministry as well as Al-Furat Alawsat University, which will be represented in this committee by the Director of Quality Assurance department. The work of this centers will be checked every three months by writing reports from them to the Ministry and raised to the Ministry to make sure this project is sustainable.