



Innovative Governance Practices in the Higher Education  
Institutions in Iraq

**Meeting with MOHESR**

**03 May 2022**

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**MINUTES**

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## Participants

Name	Pn.	Acronym	Institution	Country
Riccardo Mussari	P1	UNISI	University of Siena	Italy
Simona Caramia	P1	UNISI	University of Siena	Italy
Daniela Sorrentino	P1	UNISI	University of Siena	Italy
Martina Zipoli	P2	UNIMED	Mediterranean Universities Union	Italy
Silvia Marchionne	P2	UNIMED	Mediterranean Universities Union	Italy
Moafaq Samir	P6	MOHESR	Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research	Iraq

Takes Notes: Martina Zipoli, UNIMED

## Purpose of the meeting

- Bank transfer to Iraqi Partners
- Activities related to WP5

## Additional Topics

- Visa application
- Workshops foreseen at the Ministry in Baghdad

## Main points of the discussion

### Bank transfer to Iraqi Partners

- PA were signed, but according to the Iraqi regulations they are not sufficient for universities to open bank accounts. The staff at the Ministry have analyzed the Partnership Agreement but the current national legislation does not allow universities to follow what is indicated in the PA. The only way to transfer funds to Iraq is to transfer the funds to the Ministry of Finance, the only one entitled to receive foreign grants. There is the need to sign an agreement with the Ministry of Finance, so that funds can be transferred then to the Ministry of Higher Education and later to the universities.
- Prof. Mussari underlined that regulations and conditions were set straight and clear since the very beginning. Right now, it is very unlikely that EACEA will approve such a contract and the transfer of funds to a not-Partner institution, but if a written proposal is submitted to the University of Siena, the University of Siena in its role of coordinator of the INSPIRE project can submit the proposal to the Project Officer following INSPIRE on behalf of EACEA.
- Dr. Moafaq guaranteed to submit the request to the Ministry, so that a formal proposal is formalized and sent to Prof. Mussari, to be later submitted to the EACEA for approval.
- Prof. Mussari also underlined that the representatives of the Ministry who were involved before refused all proposals shared by the University of Siena and UNIMED, and did not come with an alternative. And he thanks Dr. Moafaq for its proactive and reactive position.
- Dr. Moafaq underlines that the people representing the Ministry before him left a completely blank situation so he had to start from scratch, as nothing was done or known in the project.
- UNIMED proposal: we continue with the activities, and in parallel we work with the Ministry, EACEA and the EU Delegation in Iraq to get the contract signed and the institutional bank accounts open.
- UNIMED also proposes another complementary action: there is the need to change the system in Iraq to allow universities to open bank account, in a long-term strategy, to facilitate cooperation with European universities and with the EACEA. A step towards this goal may be to ask for the authorization for the Ministry of HE to open a bank account and receive international grants. The project works on governance, accountability, autonomy, and it is important for the Iraqi system to have the possibility to receive international funds. The Ministry of HE should ask for the authorization to open a bank account and receive directly the funds from the project, it is also important for future cooperation arrangements. The other proposal is a temporary one, but a permanent solution will support and boost cooperation in the future.
- Dr. Moafaq asked if it is possible to further extend the project of 6 months to allow the resolution of the financial issue.
- Dr. Mussari replied that, since the project has been already extended for 1 year, it is not possible to extend it again. However, the transfer of staff costs can be also done after the project ends. The financial and administrative management of the project will not end with the formal project end, but it will take

some months to close all the administrative and financial issues related to the project implementation. This does not apply to the equipment purchase of other budget lines (e.g. subcontracting). This gives us some flexibility in the financial management of the bank accounts issue.

### Visa application

- Dr. Moafaq asks for the intervention of UNIMED and the University of Siena to solicit the Italian Embassy in realizing the missing visa. He also underlines how disappointing is to receive single-entry short visa, which do not allow for continuity in the activities to be performed in Europe.
- UNIMED agrees with the disappointment, and confirms that – despite the request to extend the visa to include other foreseen project activities in the coming months – the Embassy still decided to grant a visa only sufficient to participate in the training week in Bologna.

### Activities related to WP5

- Equipment purchase: it is not possible for the University of Siena to transfer funds to the Iraqi universities, neither to pay directly a local provider (according to the national regulations). We might explore the possibility of purchasing the equipment in Europe and ship it to Iraq but we need to check with our financial officers whether this option is viable.
- Dr. Moafaq confirms that the Ministry is committed in the implementation of the WP5 Consultation Centers, and will dialogue with the Partner universities before the meeting in Bologna to elaborate a plan of action and explain to every Partners why and how to open the centers. The idea is to have 1-2 rooms dedicated to the consultation.
- UNIMED proposed to develop an office plate with the INSPIRE logo for the centers.
- Dr. Moafaq also underlines the willing of the Ministry to extend the experience to other Iraqi universities in the country and encourage them to open similar centers and replicate the INSPIRE experience.
- UNIMED underlines that the best occasion would be the WP4 Workshop to be held at the premises of the Ministry, where we can invite other Iraqi universities not partners of the project and present the activities implemented, the achievements, the challenges and encourage transferability of results.
- The University of Siena will finalize a calendar for the remaining project activities, and proposed to have the WP4 workshop, the WP5 workshop and the final conference in Baghdad in December, as a INSPIRE big event where Iraqi universities (partners and not partners) are invited, together with local stakeholders and local authorities, international stakeholders and all European partners will be invited to attend and to discuss achievements, lessons learnt, transferability of results and sustainability.

## Recapitalizing on what is expected from participants

- Dr. Moafaq will submit to the Ministry the Minutes of the meeting and ask for a written proposal for the back accounts issues, to be sent to the University of Siena
- The University of Siena will submit the proposal to EACEA for approval
- UNIMED will contact the Italian Embassy to further discuss the extension of visa for the Iraqi colleagues
- Dr. Moafaq will follow-up on the WP5 activities with Partners for the opening of the centers
- The University of Siena will finalize the calendar of the remaining INSPIRE activities, including scheduling the events to take place at the Ministry to allow Dr. Moafaq to arrange these with a sufficient notice, and organise a meeting with the Ministerial team.