



Innovative Governance Practices in
the Higher Education Institutions in Iraq

DOCUMENT TITLE:

Consultative center strategy definition



About Inspire

The overarching goal of INSPIRE is to support, through the cooperation of European institutions, the rebuilding, modernization, and internationalization of the governance system of higher education institutions (HEIs) in Iraq with a specific focus on planning and programming systems. Due to the recent crisis and political economic situation, the current higher education system requires a strong intervention to face the weakness of the existing governance system. To institutionalize good governance practices in Iraqi HEIs, which also means enforcing institutional values such as autonomy, accountability, participation, and internationalization, as well as implementing well-structured management systems, will contribute to the development of Iraqi HIEs helping them to meet the international standards. The aim of the project is to support HEIs in Iraq in order to make them capable of establishing a modern governance framework through the adoption of innovative practices. The specific objectives of INSPIRE are the following:

- Enhancing good governance, management and accountability practices in the HEIs
- Establishing a clear governance framework, including well-defined and clear mission and goals through the definition and implementation of action plans
- Strengthening the international relations management within the HEIs
- Improving participation in strategic planning and development activities for non-university actors and non-state actors

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Document Information

Project Title	Innovative Governance Practices in the Higher Education Institutions in Iraq
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Deliverable	D5.1 Consultative center strategy definition
Workpackage	WP5 - Launching of consultative centre in HEIs to coordinate University, state and not-state actor
Date of Delivery	31/12/2022
Abstract (for dissemination)	The Local and International Consultation Units will work in consolidating the consultation and participation process at each university. The current document reports the process of definition of the centers' strategy and the Units goals.

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.

Annex I – Minutes WP5 1st workshop

Date: 08/ 05/ 2022

Meeting method: Zoom

Participants: representatives of all 10 Iraqi HEIs and the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research

WP5 Leader: Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research

The first workshop regarding WP5 has been held on Sunday the 8th of May/2022 by Zoom. The workshop was managed by Dr. Moafaq Samir/ MOHESR and all the INSPIRE participants universities attended.

The purpose of this workshop was to discuss the progress of all WPs, however the main reason was to discuss the start and requirements for WP5 which involves opening Consultation Centers in each university.

The points discussed were:

- 1- This WP will be carried out by the Ministry with partnership with Al-Furat Al-Awsat Technical University.
- 2- The provided equipment will be 2 computers, 2 printers, video conference kit with installation of all software and equipment in the universities.
- 3- The management of those centers will be through 2 lecturers with PhD degrees from the University, as well as 2 from non-state actors, to be chosen carefully and 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.
- 4- These centers work will be facilitated and related directly to the Rector's office in each University.
- 5- The participants discussed the financial issues, timing for start and finishing of all WPs as well as providing the equipment to the universities and decided to raise the case to H E the Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research.

H E agreed to write an official letter to the European partners asking for:

A- Extend the project till June/2023

B- Make a little amendment in the agreement and sign new one only by the Minister of Finance in Iraq and representative of Siena University or EACEA. The amendment means adding one point which states "The Ministry of Finance will open a bank account in Dollar or Euro in the name of Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research to receive the fund from our European partners".

C- Ask the European partners to buy the equipment by themselves and from the project fund and ship them to the universities.

Note: The purchase process will be much easier if the European partners made the deal with trusted companies in Iraq from the private sector, because it will be much cheaper and the provider will be responsible on shipping, installing of the equipment and software, and guarantee.

- 6- A Ministerial Committee will be formed to carry out WP5 from the Ministry as well as Al-Furat Al-Awsat University which will be represented in this committee by the Director of Quality Assurance department.
- 7- Each University will specify a physical place to host the staff of WP5 and 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.