

## Modernisation of Institutional Management of Innovation and Research in South Neighboring Countries/MIMIr

<b>Region</b>	South Neighboring Countries
<b>Beneficiary Country</b>	Morocco, Jordan
<b>Sector (as defined in CSP/NIP)</b>	Higher Education – Erasmus+ Capacity Building Projects (KA2)
<b>Project number</b>	561548-EPP-1-2015-1-ES-EPPKA2-CBHE-SP
<b><i>External Evaluation Report</i></b>	
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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The overall assessment of the performance of the project has been accomplished paying attention to the impact of the project activities at the level of the partner universities but also more broadly in the two countries involved in the Project.

In the regards, the report finds that the Project has served for the partners institutions to implement significant improvements in their research and innovation policies at the institution level. Furthermore, in the case of both Morocco and Jordan, the involvement of relevant stakeholders from the labour market and the ministry implies that the goal of having an impact in a more broadly contexts has been largely achieved.

A particular emphasis on the sustainability of the project has been made throughout its development. The successful engagement of the governing bodies of the partners shows that the project has linked its objectives to the strategic mechanism of the institutions. This allows not only strengthening the management capacities concerning research and innovation but also ensuring that these initiatives will be part of the strategic plans of the institutions and its sustainability. The platform designed and implemented in the project clearly contributes to its sustainability as well as to provide the institutions with indicators and information to carry out the follow-up of the actions and for the governing bodies to make decisions based on data.

The conclusions of the project and the mechanisms for improving the management of innovation and research as a powerful impact to be shared and disseminate among other higher education institutions and relevant stakeholders not only of Morocco and Jordan but in the South Neighbouring Countries. This capacity allows the partners of MIMIR, and particularly those more intensively involved, to become key actors in providing capacity building and good practices at the regional level through their international partnerships.

Therefore, the main outcome of the external evaluation of the MIMIR Project, beyond a more detailed analysis and conclusions, is highly positive in three dimensions: the commitment of the partners in the project and their individual contributions to the objectives of the different work packages and the appropriate use of the activities identified



in the project to meet the identified objectives; the relevance of the outcomes of the project and their direct influence in the improvement of the individual management strategies and governance of the partners institutions; and its regional impact in the South Neighbouring Countries by means of the appropriate involvement of key regional actors at the multilateral level such as UNIMED and AAARU.

## INTRODUCTION

MIMIR is primarily designed to aid, assist and help partner universities in South Neighbouring Countries to understand the status quo of their innovation and research mentality, performance, efficacy, and practices and devise pathways to overcome impediments, hindrances, fiascos and pitfalls that prevent them from achieving recognised stature in the international landscape.

The main way to accomplish this goal is to measure existing innovation and research activities, to gauge regulatory framework management, administration and tools, and to scope opportunities for overcoming bureaucratic obstacles, stimulating conditions and elevate mind-sets.

The wider objective of the project is to modernise institutional management of innovation and research, promote excellence and propose actions at universities in South Neighbouring Countries that allows setting up a strong link with the European Research Area. The specific objectives of the project are to:

- Measure innovation and research in partner universities, provide comparative analysis to European processes, identify areas for change and assist in setting targets for improvement, and provide appropriate knowledge and means to improve actions that contribute to sustainability,
- Develop an institutional management model of innovation and research at Moroccan and Jordanian partner institutions to best align their performance to the European Research Area,



- Pilot the new model in partner universities to inform its completion, support its sustainability through targeted dissemination, and monitor and evaluate its uptake and early impact,
- Improve procedures to enhance innovation and research within university hierarchy, set up an appropriate administrative and legal framework and the required infrastructure, and extend services and training in collaboration with local and regional industries and community,
- Improve the human capacity of partner universities by providing training and upgrading opportunities in the EU especially for aspiring young and women researchers, and develop professional training programmes to promote the model and enhance its impact,
- Utilise ICT tools and database to enhance and consolidate the new management model of innovation and research,
- Disseminate good practices and share practical experience in university management of innovation and research and promote and support the foundation of a research and innovation network across South Neighbouring Countries and Europe.

The project main output – namely the Management Model of Innovation and Research – has to be beneficial to the Jordanian and Moroccan University Partners in the immediate, but it also has to have a wider and further impact on the researchers, students, academic and administrative staff, policy makers and HE organisations in both countries and in the region.

For the purpose of this evaluation, a variety of methods for data collection and analysis were used to triangulate findings and provide a complete picture of the program. Data were collected using the following methods:

- Analysis of the in-progress reports
- Personal on-site and Skype Interviews
- Review of all Project Deliverables

The focus of this evaluation has been to collect data that would help assess the project and document its successes and challenges. The purpose of the external evaluation is twofold: to ensure that the Projects has been developed according to the proposal meeting the various



objectives and submitting the agreed deliverables and, secondly, that the partners involved have played an active and significant role in their corresponding tasks within the different Work Packages and that they have been benefited from the collective effort and participation in the project.

A relevant external evaluation should focus on both the fit-for-purpose of the achievements and objectives of the project, as well as the enrichment of the partners after taking part in the project contributing to strengthening strategic alliances among the European partners.

The overall assessment of the performance of the project has been accomplished paying attention to the impact of the project activities at the level of the partner universities but also more broadly in the two countries involved in the Project.

In this regards, the report finds that the Project has served for the partners institutions to implement significant improvements in their research and innovation policies at the institution level. Furthermore, in the case of both Morocco and Jordan, the involvement of relevant stakeholders from the labour market and the ministry implies that the goal of having an impact in a more broadly contexts has been largely achieved.

The main outcome of the external evaluation of the MIMIr Project, beyond a more detailed analysis and conclusions, is highly positive in three dimensions: the commitment of the partners in the project and their individual contributions to the objectives of the different work packages and the appropriate use of the activities identified in the project to meet the identified objectives; the relevance of the outcomes of the project and their direct influence in the improvement of the individual management strategies and governance of the partners institutions; and its regional impact in the South Neighbouring Countries by means of the appropriate involvement of key regional actors at the multilateral level such as UNIMED and AAARU.

A particular emphasis on the sustainability of the project has been made throughout its development. The successful engagement of the governing bodies of the partners shows that the project has linked its objectives to the strategic mechanism of the institutions. This allows not only strengthening the management capacities concerning research and innovation but also ensuring that these initiatives will be part of the strategic plans of the



institutions and its sustainability. The platform designed and implemented in the project clearly contributes to its sustainability as well as to provide the institutions with indicators and information to carry out the follow-up of the actions and for the governing bodies to make decisions based on data.

The challenges identified throughout the length of the MIMIR Project by the partners deal with three main issues:

- A slight delay in starting the Project due to the late transfer of the first pre-financing installment which prevented the Coordinator in setting in advance the date for the organization of the kick-off meeting, which is duly corrected and recuperated.
- An uneven participation of the different partners ('sleeping partners' according to the terminology of one of the partners) which, although it has not had an impact in the achievements of the project at all, shows that there is room for improvement in terms of partner's involvement mechanisms.
- Some delay regarding the equipment purchase procedure.

The Project MIMIR has been fully reached its goals in terms of producing all the deliverables included in the various work packages and the achievements of the objectives included in the proposal. A particular emphasis on the quality of the coordination accomplished by the Quality Committee should be made. The Quality Committee has been chaired by the UNIMED and composed of the University of Milano, University of Barcelona, the European University Association (EUA), the Association of Arab Universities (AArU) and the University Mohammed V of Morocco.

## METHODOLOGY

The methodology of the external evaluation has merged various complementary approaches to ensure that the project MIMIR was completed successfully regarding the proposal submitted and approved.

The purpose of the analysis focuses not only on the deliverables and landmarks identified throughout the implementation of the project (which can easily be numbered and controlled during the deployment of the project, but also on the leadership of the coordinator and the



chair organisations of each Work Package and the engagement of the partners members of the consortium to be sure that every partner has taken part according to its particular mission and has contributed individually to the collective effort and results of the project.

The external evaluator has had the opportunity to work closely with the project's coordinator in order to design the evaluation to make sure that the evaluation report and conclusions will be useful for the assessment of the Project MIMIR and its results.

For that purpose, the external evaluation has to provide the project consortium with information to:

1. make an overall independent assessment about the performance of the project, paying particular attention to the impact of the project activities at the level of the partner universities but also more broadly in Jordan and Morocco
2. provide recommendations for the enhancement of the project results in the next immediate future and also with regards to its sustainability
3. identify key lessons and propose suggestions for possible follow-up actions to the entire consortium, its individual members or a group of partners wishing to go ahead with the results

The external evaluation has to work for the purpose of the WP6 "QA Tools in Management of Innovation and Research" and therefore it has to respond to the needs of the Project as a sort of an "external Follow-up" for enhancement purposes and, eventually, as a final analysis of the outcomes of the project in terms of challenges, strengths and opportunities.

A dialogue between the WP6's chair and the Quality Committee has necessarily to be established in order to identify possible issues that could either cause troubles in the development of the project or could help to reorient it.

The external evaluation should not be seen or perceive as an "inspection exercise" but rather as a combination of an "enhancement-led mechanism" and an "accountability tool" for the sake of the project's purposes and success of the internal management and the correct development of the project's three-year plan.



There should be a necessary feedback between the “unit” in charge of the management of the project as a whole (Quality Committee plus coordinator) and the person/team in charge of the external evaluation which has to address those questions appropriate and fit for the purpose of the completion of the different parts of the project and the involvement of the partners.

It is important to emphasise that the methodology chosen for the external evaluation has been complementary to the tools designed and defined within the WP6 to show the correct implementation of the various WPs and deliverable. Such mechanisms were related to the Quality Plan of the project which included a set of tools and indicators to monitor the deployment of the project.

From that perspective, the role of the external evaluation should provide a cross-sectional view to the project focusing on qualitative-based evidences by means of on-site and on-line interviews on specific issues of the project, paying particular attention to “how the processes” took place rather than focusing exclusively on the results. The outcomes can be easily traced throughout the project along with the fulfilment of the deadlines defined in the project, therefore, using this approach, the interviews allows the external evaluation to play a much active role on identifying leadership, coordination, levels of interaction and engaged of the different partners taking part in each WP.

The WP6 checks and monitors the accomplishment of the various WPs by means of a wide range of tools, where the circulation of surveys and questionnaires among the partners is a regular and effective instrument.

The “Mid Term Report” and the “Second Evaluation Report on Evaluation of the Training Sessions” prepared by the Quality Committee within the Deliverable 6.4 “Quality and Evaluation Reports” have been particularly useful as they provided with the feedback of the partners about the questionnaires conducted by the Quality Committee.

The external evaluation has gone intensively through these surveys and questionnaires, as well as the progress and final report produced to show how the meetings, group interaction and the different steps of the project were reached and the documents and deliverables submitted.



The interviews focused also on getting information about how the Moroccan and Jordanian partners of the project thought that their expectations of the project, in terms of getting out of the project the know-how and the capacities on institutional management of innovation and research, were met.

## THE EVALUATION APPROACH/PROCESS

The evaluation consists of

1. A Desk Phase, which includes a review of project documentation.
2. A Field Phase: Observation of three project meetings and interviews with relevant partners and participants.
3. A Synthesis Phase: The results will be summarised in a final report that will be presented to the Project Management Team (PMT) of the project. The PMT will disseminate this to all partners and to the European Commission/EACEA.

### 1. Desk Phase

In the Desk Phase, the background information on the project, including the proposal and subsequent interim reports, outcomes reports from events, presentations, publications, and survey results have been duly reviewed, as well as documents shaping the wider strategy/policy framework.

As the interim reports have showed, the logical framework of the project was adequately designed and allowed the different WPs to be deployed according to the plan in both sequentially and simultaneously where necessary.

It has been mentioned that the project started with a slight delay due to the late transfer of the first pre-financing instalment, which affected the organisation of the Kick-off meeting. However, the coordinator and the partners recuperated soon the initial delay and it had no further impact in the rest of the project.

The project met the time schedule included in the proposal with an adequate fulfilment of the deliverables foreseen.

### 2. Field Phase



During the Field Phase the evaluator attended 3 events of the project where he could meet with partners and participants and conduct interviews with the different partners of the consortium paying particular attention to the Moroccan and Jordanian partners. The meetings allowed meeting also with other stakeholders invited to the different seminars and meetings having the opportunity to explore viewpoints from representatives of research organisations, employers and innovation bodies. Besides, a series of interviews by different means have been accomplished.

## ANSWERED QUESTIONS/ FINDINGS

- a) Questions focusing on the projects ‘fit for purpose’ on innovation and research.
  - Does the project provide to the institutions involved with the effective tools, capacities and know-how to help the advancement of research and innovation?
  - Can the project contribute to establish (or strengthen if it already exists) a structure for research and innovation or technology transfer?
  - Did the project provide enough support to set up the necessary infrastructure in each partner institution to effectively and efficiently managing innovation and research activities?
  - Is this framework useful for the context of higher education institutions in Jordan?
  - Is this framework useful for the context of higher education institutions in Morocco?
  - Have the partner institutions put into practice the ‘impact indicators’ of quality related to each ‘strategic objective’ identified by the model?
  - Have these ‘impact indicators’ contribute to steer the activities of the offices in charge of innovation and research?
- b) Questions dealing with the particular achievement of the objectives of the field visits in Jordanian and Moroccan Universities.
  - Were the agendas of the study tours well designed in order to achieve the objectives established in the project?
  - What is your opinion about the response of the higher education institutions in Jordan and Morocco to the study tours?

- Do you think that the institutions chosen the appropriate profile of the staff to attend the visits with regard of the expected objectives?
- c) Questions related to the Platform for Innovation and Research Information
- How is your general opinion about the Platform implemented in the context of the MIMIR Project?
  - Do you find the platform handy and manageable for the representatives of the institutions?
  - Do you think that it requires a specific and complex training to get familiar with it?
  - Do you think that the project has devoted enough time and resources to facilitate the access and use of the platform?
  - Will your institution use and maintain the platform after the completion of MIMIR Project?

The first set of question related to the ‘fit for purpose’ of the project and the achievement of the expected outcomes was supported by all the interviewers. The representatives of the partner institutions of Jordan and Morocco were very positive and emphasise the idea of a very careful organisation of the different steps and deliverables of the project in order to get a balance between the uneven situation of research and innovation offices and structures in the different institutions represented and the opportunity given by the project to share transferable good practices from the European partners institutions and setting.

To such purpose, the second set of questions allowed to identify a very positive opinion of the Jordanian and Moroccan institutions about the success of the practices in the European universities, that took place in la University Sapienza in Rome, la Katholieke Universiteit Leuven in The Netherlands and the University of Milano to develop the transferable innovation and research model of the project, and the Study Tours in Roma, Leuven and Barcelona, all of them related to WP2.

### **Problems and needs (Relevance)**

The relevance of the project can be easily traced in the different WPs and also in the outcomes of the project regarding the “visible” deliverables. The first deliverables dealing with the state-of-play of innovation and research management in the partner universities,



focus groups, study visits and field visits, showed the relevance of the discussion and the partners involved.

The interaction between European and South Neighbouring Countries universities in MIMIR project has effectively promoted another strand of collaboration between both regions in higher education matters putting in contact other regional relevant stakeholders such as EUA and AARu introducing a clear amplifier positive effect in future policy regarding research and innovation.

### **Achievement of purpose (Effectiveness)**

The effectiveness criterion has been met according to the results obtained and the project's specific objectives achieved. The responses of the partners clearly show it. There is a strong perception of the results obtained in terms of benefits by the partners, especially concerning the deliverables related to study visits, participation in training and the development of the Platform. Furthermore, the Jordanian and Moroccan partners have played a very active role in the WPs related to the development of the Platform and the policy documents, Model and Handbook, related to Research and Innovation.

This participation will certainly contribute to the further implementation of the Research and Innovation model at the regional level.

### **Sound management and value for money (Efficiency)**

The management of the MIMIR project has been mentioned as a positive contribution in the interviews and questionnaires throughout the length of the project. Despite the initial delay in starting the project due to funding issues, the partners consider that the management of the project has been led, conducted and completed very professionally and following the Work Plan for the three years.

Processes and methods used to reach outcomes and their relevance/inclusiveness (project activities utilised to achieve results, such as workshops, focus groups, management meetings, research, etc. The various activities transformed the resources put in place into achieved results in terms of the deliverables compromised and the quality of the documents,

platform and training activities according to the judgement of the partners in the questionnaires and interviews. All of that within the time line of the project.

### **Achievement of wider effects (Impact)**

The impact of MIMIR project shown by the achievement of wider effects can be traced in the interviews and the answers to the various questionnaires completed in the meantime. The Jordanian and Moroccan universities have stressed the relevance and impact of the some of the main documents and deliveries of the project. This would be the case of the following three outcomes of the project:

- The document “New Innovation and Research Management Model”, which shows an updated and evidence-based state of the art in the countries and institutions involved;
- “The innovation and Research Information Platform”, which is one the main asset of the project in terms of continuity and sustainability, as well as and the document about its “Technical Specification” which supported the training sessions and meeting on the Platform;
- The training sessions in the European partner universities. It is worth notice that the representatives of the partner institutions of Jordan and Morocco stated that the training sessions held in the three European universities matched their expectations, meaning the planning of the Agenda and the delivery was appropriate and well designed in regards to trainees’ needs. The partners emphasise the strong impact of the training sessions in Europe as one of the most positive outcomes of the project in terms of both the content of the courses and their relevance for the issues discussed.

### **Likely continuation of achieved results (Sustainability)**

The strong involvement of stakeholders related to the core topics of the MIMIR project accomplished by the coordinator and the intensive partnership built among the universities of Jordan and Morocco between both countries and also with most of the European institutions, ensures a stable sustainability if the partners maintains a light-touch approach in maintaining the channels opened throughout the development of the project.



Stakeholder involvement went beyond the mere invitation to representatives of the relevant sectors related with research and innovation, to become a constant in the conferences, seminars and meetings in the project.

The presence of both ministries of higher education and research of Jordan and Morocco contributes also to help in the necessary governmental support to this endeavour.

Furthermore, the active role played by the MIMIR coordinator and Dissemination committee during the AECHE Conference in 2017 in Rabat, allows having a broader impact among a big variety of sectors and stakeholders in many Arab and European countries with similar interests on innovation and research.

From this particular viewpoint, it is possible to see and recognise the huge value for money that the MIMIR project has had in terms of making the most of the budget of the project for the particular objectives of the partners concerning the project, as well as for the European Commission to get the most of the money allocated to this project.

If the project sustainability concerning the goals of the proposal is ensured, the financial sustainability has been also achieved because the project allowed preparing not only the technical structure of the Platform for Innovation and Research Information to be used and 'put in value' for the benefit of the partners, but also to be active in the future connecting those who shared the work in the project.

The MIMIR project also allowed training the representatives of the universities to get familiar with the Platform, giving autonomy to the partners and avoiding a rigid dependence on third parties in terms of technical support and backing.

### **Mutual reinforcement (coherence)**

The active participation and involvement of the Ministry of Higher Education and Research of Morocco and the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research of Jordan ensures that the work accomplished and the outcomes of the project reach directly to the decision-making bodies in charge of Research and Innovation in both countries. This fact will certainly have a direct impact in the policies related to these topics. The participation of the higher education institutions guarantees that all key stakeholders are involved.

### **Visibility**



The visibility of the project can be analysed in two different times: (i) during the implementation of the project with regard to the abilities of the project to attract and involve stakeholders related to the goals of the project but not directly involve as partners or associated partners; (ii) the policy of visibility in terms of dissemination of the results and the mechanisms developed to promote synergies with other projects in the region and outside the region.

The first approach has been accomplished throughout the project as it has been shown in the evaluation reports as well as in the questionnaires to the partners. The meetings in the project include the participation of representatives of sectors involved in the project but not members of the consortium. The presence of UNIMED, AARu, EUA and the ministries of higher education of Morocco and Jordan have made possible a cross-sectional approach in terms of the involvement of other sectors related to Research and Innovation such as employers and industry.

The second approach has also been successfully achieved as it can be seen in the agendas of the public acts and events where the project has summoned a wide range of stakeholders and organisations relevant to the topics of the project at both the European and the Southern Bordering countries involved.

Two examples of the interest shown by the coordinator of MIMIR project on disseminating the work and the outcomes of the project can be seen in two different moments of the implementation of the project: in April 2017 in its second year and the final conference of the project.

The first case is the “Fourth Arab-Euro Conference on Higher Education (AECHE 4)” held at the University Mohammed V in Rabat on 25-26 April 2017, where the coordinator of MIMIR took advantage of its role in AECHE and organised a dissemination event Project. This important and very high level event gave the MIMIR project a large outreach in Europe and in the Arab world. This conference had the participation of more than 150 rectors, vice-rectors, deans, researchers, and representatives from Ministries of Higher Education from different countries in the above-mentioned regions.



The second example is the final conference of the project held in Rome on 9<sup>th</sup> October 2018 was organised jointly with the closing conference of another project dealing with employability in the Mediterranean “Resume” showing the potential synergy of both initiatives and the fact that some partners took part in both projects.

## Overall assessment

Therefore, the main outcome of the external evaluation of the MIMIM Project, beyond a more detailed analysis and conclusions, is highly positive in three dimensions: the commitment of the partners in the project and their individual contributions to the objectives of the different work packages and the appropriate use of the activities identified in the project to meet the identified objectives; the relevance of the outcomes of the project and their direct influence in the improvement of the individual management strategies and governance of the partners institutions; and its regional impact in the South Neighbouring Countries by means of the appropriate involvement of key regional actors at the multilateral level such as UNIMED and AAARU.

## Conclusions and recommendations

The findings presented in this report provide evidence that the MIMIR project has been successful for improving the management of innovation and research as a powerful impact to be shared and disseminate among other higher education institutions and relevant stakeholders not only of Morocco and Jordan but in the South Neighbouring Countries. This capacity allows the partners of MIMIR, and particularly those more intensively involved, to become key actors in providing capacity building and good practices at the regional level through their international partnerships.

Analysis of the evidences confirm that the MIMIR project was effective in helping the partner institutions build their capacity and empowering them with references and guidelines in alignment to EU practices. The study tours and the practices host by the European partners have shown a big impact on the Moroccan and Jordanian institutions in terms of good practices with an obvious and immediate effect in the future development of



partnerships not only with the European partners but also among the Moroccan and Jordanian ones strengthening the South-South cooperation through alliances.

A particular emphasis on the management and coordination of the project has to be made. Despite the large number of partners involved, the management was very smooth and that the initial delay of the project didn't affect the progress of the project. Mostly all the partners were highly satisfied with the overall progress and the outputs of the MIMIR project, because it was proven to be quite beneficial for all of them. Throughout the interviews, there have been many mentions and comments on the effective way of management of the project shown by the coordination with a shared perception of a combined of strong leadership conducted in a fairly considered way in terms of communication and responsiveness to inquiries and issues raised during the project. This point has been highly appreciated by the partners for Europe and particularly from Jordan and Morocco.

A short list of recommendation gathered in both the reports and the interviews for future actions is included:

- The perception of partners in regards to workload and resources has been positive, tasks have been clearly defined and distributed, activities were implemented with sufficient guidance and means. A reflection needs to be made on the project schedule and on the time foreseen for the activities, since the general perception is that there is room for improvement.
- The mutual confidence of Partners can be an element of strength, on which building a more effective collaboration in terms of support by others, engagement in the project activities and in the discussions, as well as in regards to a more balanced collaboration within the partnership. Partners suggested, in order to improve collaboration: to get involved in all project's activities even when a direct contribution is not requested; work in core groups; create a climate that allows everyone to participate; more stability for the participants in the project.
- Internal communications can be improved in regards to effectiveness and regularity. Suggestions by respondents: having a chat/group linked by email or other means of

contact for providing constant updates on each activity and on a daily basis; more regular meetings, including bilateral meetings.

- A reflection should be made on enhancing the participation of all institutions in the project activities, strengthening interactions and capitalizing on the added value of sharing practices and experiences. Suggestions emphasise the need to engage the “sleeping partners” of the project in order to strengthen collaboration and participation.
- The evaluation of the Study Visits was very positive, especially in regards to the effectiveness, relevance and content of the visits. It has been assessed as a great opportunity by Moroccan and Jordanian Partners, to learn on Research and Innovation management and better understand challenges, opportunities and best practices. It is recommended for Partners Institutions in Jordan and Morocco to exploit this knowledge at its best, to ease and facilitate the implementation of the new Research and Innovation management model. On behalf of the European partners, support must still be granted on applying the regulations and procedures related to supporting innovation, and on how to sustain effective Research and Innovation management tools and make the best of it among different entities within the institution.
- Concerning the sustainability strategy of the project after its conclusion, the partner institutions showed a positive attitude towards the project and the collaboration and cooperation put in place during these months of activities. This means a strong opportunity for the Consortium to build upon this strong cooperation spirit a base for the development of a sustainability strategy and future cooperation arrangements.



## Annexes

1. The Terms of Reference of the evaluation
2. The name of the evaluator (CVs should be shown, but summarised and limited to one page per person)
3. Questions for the MIMIR External Evaluation Interviews.



# Annex 1

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

<b>Modernisation of Institutional Management of Innovation and Research in South Neighboring Countries/MIMIr</b>	
<b>Region</b>	<b>South Neighboring Countries</b>
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<b>Sector (as defined in CSP/NIP)</b>	<b>Higher Education – Erasmus+ Capacity Building Projects (KA2)</b>
<b>Project number</b>	<b>561548-EPP-1-2015-1-ES-EPPKA2-CBHE-SP</b>

### 1. Background

The Barcelona Declaration has played an instrumental role in the development of a strategic Euro-Mediterranean partnership with South Partner Countries with the objective to turn the Mediterranean into a common area of peace, stability and prosperity through the reinforcement of political dialogue, security, economic, financial, social and cultural cooperation. Research and innovation is one major priority of this Euro-Mediterranean partnership that aims to open the European Research Area (ERA) to the research community in South Partner Countries thereby supporting capacity building activities needed to guarantee a successful integration of partner countries within the ERA. However, the 2010 UNESCO Science report had revealed that university research in South Partner Countries often served purely academic purposes with very weak linkages between academia and industry. Researchers in the region often find themselves isolated and unable to access sufficient resources for their research or to compete internationally because of the scarcity of a professional institutional support and poor research and innovation management. While pockets of research excellence certainly exist, the relative lack of opportunities for scientific research and poor dissemination to policy makers are reasons for serious concern. This grim situation is amplified in the light of findings of the recent 2012 report: “Determinants and Consequences of Migration and Remittances” which states that expatriates from South Partner Countries who acquire skills and obtain higher degrees abroad, especially graduate-level degrees, are less likely to return home. This emigration trend contributes to a severe brain drain in South Partner Countries and is threatening the future of higher education development and scientific progress in the south Mediterranean. In fact, Arab countries lose 50% of their newly qualified medical doctors, 23% of engineers and 15% of



scientists each year to Western countries which are the greatest beneficiaries of 450,000 Arabs with high scientific qualifications. Between 2003 and 2008, for example, over 700 Moroccan researchers at the doctoral level work at France’s national research centre, according to a 2012 report entitled: “Youth Brain Drain Continues in the Maghreb”. The cost for Morocco of training those experts was around \$120,550 each.

Europe presently has a unique opportunity to champion a major advance in research excellence throughout the world starting with its South Neighbouring Countries which share common values and aspirations and enjoy striven spirit and open mentality. A fresh initiative can indeed make a real contribution to improving the quality, performance and depth of capability in research and innovation management throughout South Neighbouring Countries to enable them embrace the knowledge in the economy and sustainable development. Universities, in particular, could help to offset major pitfalls and shortcomings through the implementation of proactive policies to promote and develop research excellence and propose actions that will develop or improve existing research and innovation management models. The model may be based on three main pillars: education, communication and exploitation, in order to raise the level of skills in project management and resources, in addition to managing research strategy in general and enhance the institutional management processes of research and innovation through establishing governance procedures that consolidate research within the university hierarchy of partner institutions, building their capacity, empowering them with references and guidelines in alignment to EU practices and encouraging them to share best practices and develop strong partnership with EU partners.

Communication is another vital component for the proper function within an organisation and increasingly critically with other organisations nationally, regionally and internationally. Managing the exploitation of results is yet another indispensable and fundamental agent of success to deliver the benefits of research to societies and nations. The model will thus be based on analyses of needs and capacities in partner HEIs and the experiences and best practices from EU partner institutions. This will then lead to producing a set of principles, priorities, guidelines and procedures to support HEIs to improve management of research and innovation processes at the institutional level. The project will first road map and measure the degree of research and innovation in partner universities and hence identify areas for improvement, set guidelines and create the required infrastructure for the implementation of a clear research and innovation strategy, including virtual tools, transferring resources, technology and knowledge via research collaborations along with developing partnerships and networks between scientists and research institutions.

## 1.1 General Objective

MIMIR is primarily designed to aid, assist and help partner universities in South Neighbouring Countries to understand the status quo of their innovation and research mentality, performance,



efficacy, and practices and devise pathways to overcome impediments, hindrances, fiascos and pitfalls that prevent them from achieving recognised stature in the international landscape. The core thread to accomplish this goal is to measure existing innovation and research activities, to gauge regulatory framework management, administration and tools, and to scope opportunities for overcoming bureaucratic obstacles, stimulating conditions and elevate mindsets. Coupled to provision of comparative analysis to European processes, practices and state-of-the-art, the consortium will identify areas for change, targets for improvement, and a trajectory to excel. Accordingly, partner universities will be informed on the organisation of management of innovation and research in European universities, understand present model, principles, and standards, and embrace and partake the opportunity for support, guidance and corroboration from European partners.

The wider objective of the project is to modernise institutional management of innovation and research, promote excellence and propose actions at universities in South Neighbouring Countries that will align them with the European Research Area. The specific objectives of the project are to:

- Measure innovation and research in partner universities, provide comparative analysis to European processes, identify areas for change and assist in setting targets for improvement, and provide appropriate knowledge and means to improve actions that contribute to sustainability,
- Develop an institutional management model of innovation and research at Moroccan and Jordanian partner institutions to best align their performance to the European Research Area,
- Pilot the new model in partner universities to inform its completion, support its sustainability through targeted dissemination, and monitor and evaluate its uptake and early impact,
- Improve procedures to enhance innovation and research within university hierarchy, set up an appropriate administrative and legal framework and the required infrastructure, and extend services and training in collaboration with local and regional industries and community,
- Improve the human capacity of partner universities by providing training and upgrading opportunities in the EU especially for aspiring young and women researchers, and develop professional training programmes to promote the model and enhance its impact,
- Utilise ICT tools and database to enhance and consolidate the new management model of innovation and research,
- Disseminate good practices and share practical experience in university management of innovation and research and promote and support the foundation of a research and innovation network across South Neighbouring Countries and Europe.

## 1.2 Specific Objectives/Activities

The specific objectives are to:



- Measure innovation and research in partner universities, provide comparative analysis to European processes, identify areas for change and assist in setting targets for improvement, and provide appropriate knowledge and means to improve actions that contribute to sustainability.
- Develop an institutional management model of innovation and research at Moroccan and Jordanian partner institutions to best align their performance to the European Research Area.
- Pilot the new model in partner universities to inform its completion, support its sustainability through targeted dissemination, and monitor and evaluate its uptake and early impact.
- Improve procedures to enhance innovation and research within university hierarchy, set up an appropriate administrative and legal framework and the required infrastructure, and extend services and training in collaboration with local and regional industrial and community.
- Improve the human capacity of partner universities by providing training and upgrading opportunities in the EU especially for aspiring young and women researchers, and develop professional training programmes to promote the model and enhance its impact.
- Utilise ICT tools and database to enhance and consolidate the new management model of innovation and research,
- Disseminate good practices and share practical experience in university management of innovation and research and promote and support the foundation of a research and innovation network across South Neighbouring Countries and Europe.

## 2. Selection of The Evaluator

The external evaluator will conduct constructive evaluation by working according to the terms of reference and ‘rules of engagement’ set by the project quality manager and the manager of the project. The external evaluator will advise and train partner universities to use suitable tools of evaluation for the sustainability of the program quality. This mixture of the local and international evaluators will add value to the evaluation process. The evaluators will conduct the evaluation beginning of 2016, to give the project consortium time for improvement and adaptation. Evaluation will include an impact and a benchmarking study to evaluate the quality of the resulting innovation and research management model.

An external evaluator in the fields of research and innovation, as well as TEMPUS and Erasmus+ projects will be selected by the quality committee. She/he will evaluate the results of each WP based and project as a whole on the mid-term and final report as well as on audits with the project participants at one project meeting.

To monitor progress in the establishment and implementation of the innovation and research management model within South Neighbouring Partner Countries’ partner institutions and to identify early impacts, successes and areas for improvement.

Project partners have been invited to suggest suitable candidates.



Rafael Llavori de Micheo, Head of Unit for Institutional and International Relations of the National Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Spain has been appointed, due to his extensive experience in higher education project management, as well as in coordinating projects at the international level on quality assurance, internationalisation and innovation of higher education in different regions of the world.

### 3. Evaluation Objectives

The external evaluation, which has been foreseen in the project proposal and the budget, will provide the project consortium sufficient information to:

- a. make an overall independent assessment about the performance of the project, paying particular attention to the impact of the project activities at the level of the partner universities but also more broadly in Jordan and Morocco
- b. provide recommendations for the enhancement of the project management, and also for the final actions of the project and its closing in 2018, also with regards to sustainability
- c. identify key lessons and propose suggestions for possible follow-up actions – to the entire consortium, its individual members or groups of them

### 4. Issues to be studied

The evaluator – using his professional judgement and experience to provide an independent and unbiased opinion - shall verify, analyse and assess in detail the issues outlined in the project proposal and workplans, which will be provided to him in the initial Desk Phase/Inception Phase. The list of issues is not intended to be exhaustive:

- Dynamic of the partnership: Quality and efficiency of the partnership structure and communication channels with relation to achieving project objects, prospects for continued cooperation of partner beyond project time-line, capacity development of partners
- Regional outputs: Quality and relevance of conclusions, recommendations and final products produced/under production; in particular, the further implementation of a regional innovation and research management model in the South Neighboring Countries and its potential national impact
- Processes and methods used to reach outcomes and their relevance/inclusiveness (project activities utilised to achieve results, such as workshops, focus groups, management meetings, research, etc)
- Visibility of outcomes and the commitment of partners to articulate and promote them towards stakeholders and policy makers.
- Actual and potential impact of the project, with regards to:
  - national associations and their members
  - within the academic community of the university partners
  - beyond the university partnership – reaching other universities in the region
  - possibilities to enhance EU- South Neighboring higher education collaboration
  - benefits for students and the quality of their higher education

- the general contribution of the project to the higher education and development priorities in the sub-regions and countries involved
- Contribution of European expertise and experience to the project and added value for European partner participation
- Follow-up and sustainability plans

## 5. Methodology

The evaluation will consist of

- A Desk Phase, which includes a review of project documentation (project proposal, including logframe, reports, websites, event documentation such as programmes and presentations, etc)
- A Field Phase: Observation of three project meetings and interviews with relevant partners and participants. The external evaluator will draft interview templates for project visits and conduct interviews with consortium partners and event participants in order to analyse and assess the integration and impact of the project results that have been achieved so far.
- A Synthesis Phase: The results will be summarised in a final report that will be presented to the Project Management Team (PMT) of the project. The PMT will disseminate this to all partners and to the European Commission/EACEA.

### 5.1 Management and steering of the External Evaluation

The evaluation will be managed by **University of Barcelona/** the project coordinator (Dr. Marina Solé), which will provide the evaluator all necessary support with regards to accessing documentation, contacting partners, and arranging visits.

### 5.2 The evaluation approach / process

The evaluation approach should be implemented as follows:

#### **5.2.1 Desk Phase**

In the Desk Phase, the background information on the project, including the proposal and subsequent interim reports, outcomes reports from events, presentations, publications, and survey results should be reviewed, as well as documents shaping the wider strategy/policy framework. On the basis of the information collected the evaluator should:

- Comment on the information sources provided, in particular the logical framework and the interim reports that the consortium prepared
- Review and if necessary revise the evaluation questions as suggested by the consortium in view of the goals and relevance of the project.
- Draft interview templates for the Field Phase
- Confirm the final time schedule for the Field Phase and Synthesis Phase

### 5.2.2 Field phase

The Field Phase should start immediately and happen in parallel with the Desk Phase. The evaluator will schedule visits to attend 3 events (2-3 days each), meet with partners and participants and conduct interviews. This will entail approximately 20 days in total, including travel.

In cooperation with UB, the evaluator should prepare:

- an indicative list of people to be interviewed, surveys to be undertaken, general itinerary, and name of the project partner in charge of event. This plan has to be applied in a way that is flexible enough to accommodate for any last-minute difficulties in the field.
- Ensure adequate contact and consultation with the different stakeholders, in close cooperation with the organising partners during the site visits/project meetings

### 5.2.3 Synthesis phase

This phase is mainly devoted to the preparation of the final report. The evaluator will make sure that:

- his assessment is objective and balanced, affirmations accurate and verifiable, and recommendations realistic.
- challenges, weaknesses and uncertainties are described as clear as possible and in a contextual fashion.

The evaluator will then circulate the draft report for comments to the Project Management Team. The Project Management Team will be able to provide comments and clarifications at the discretion of the evaluator, who on this basis will prepare the final report

The report should be in English.-

## 6. Reporting Requirements

The evaluator will submit the following reports in Spanish with a short executive summary in English:

- 1. Inception report** of maximum 4 pages to be produced after the desk research phase of the evaluation (May 2017). It should indicate any remaining questions to be explored and potential foreseen difficulties in conducting the evaluation.
- 2. Draft final report** (of maximum 15 pages) using the structure set out in **Annex 2**. Besides answering the evaluation questions, the draft final report should also synthesise all findings and conclusions into an overall assessment of the project/programme. The Draft final report should be submitted to the PMT within 30 days of the last field visit.
- 4. Final report** with the same specifications as mentioned under 3 above, incorporating any comments received from the concerned parties on the draft report, to be presented within 3 weeks of the receipt of these comments.



## ANNEX II

### Curriculum Vitae of the external evaluator

Rafael Llavori.

Graduated in History by the Complutense University of Madrid (1988), has a postgraduate qualification in Modern Languages and Translation (1996).

He joins ANECA in January 2003 y since 2005 is Head of the Unit for Institutional and International Relations and Communication.

He has been Board Member of the European Association for Quality Assurance (ENQA) for two consecutive terms between 2009 and 2015. Among other tasks, he has represented ENQA in the Bologna Follow-up Group for Recognition (2009-2012) and has taken part in the Erasmus Mundus Project “Quality Assurance of Cross-border Higher Education” (QACHE) between 2013 and 2016.

He represented ANECA in the working group set up by the Ministry of Education of Spain in 2008 for the implementation of the Spanish Qualifications Framework for Higher Education

He has coordinated in ANECA several European projects on mutual recognition of accreditation decisions, joint-programmes, the implementation of internal quality assurance systems in institutions of higher education in the Middle East and North African Region, as well as Latin America. Furthermore, he has taken part in projects focusing on the internationalisation of quality assurance practices of transnational higher education.

As part of the ordinary activities accomplished in ANECA within his Unit, he is in charge of the procedure for the evaluation of foreign qualifications in coordination with the Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities of Spain.

He has taken part in projects coordinated by the World Bank aiming at the higher education reforms in Chile (2014) and Colombia (2016).

Between 2016 and 2018 has represented ANECA in the Working Group on the development of the Ibero-American Quality Assurance System of Higher Education, which has been created by the Ibero-American Secretary (SEGIB) in February 2019.

In July 2015 he was appointed member of the Collège of the “Haut Conseil de l'évaluation de la recherche et de l'enseignement supérieur, HCERES”, of France.



## ANNEX II

### Questions for the MIMIR External Evaluation Interviews

- a) Questions focusing on the projects 'fit for purpose' on innovation and research.
- Does the project provide to the institutions involved with the effective tools, capacities and know-how to help the advancement of research and innovation?
  - Can the project contribute to establish (or strengthen if it already exists) a structure for research and innovation or technology transfer?
  - Did the project provide enough support to set up the necessary infrastructure in each partner institution to effectively and efficiently managing innovation and research activities?
  - Is this framework useful for the context of higher education institutions in Jordan?
  - Is this framework useful for the context of higher education institutions in Morocco?
  - Have the partner institutions put into practice the 'impact indicators' of quality related to each 'strategic objective' identified by the model?
  - Have these 'impact indicators' contribute to steer the activities of the offices in charge of innovation and research?
- b) Questions dealing with the particular achievement of the objectives of the field visits in Jordanian and Moroccan Universities.
- Were the agendas of the study tours well designed in order to achieve the objectives established in the project?
  - What is your opinion about the response of the higher education institutions in Jordan and Morocco to the study tours?
  - Do you think that the institutions chosen the appropriate profile of the staff to attend the visits with regard of the expected objectives?
- c) Questions related to the Platform for Innovation and Research Information
- How is your general opinion about the Platform implemented in the context of the MIMIR Project?
  - Do you find the platform handy and manageable for the representatives of the institutions?

- Do you think that it requires a specific and complex training to get familiar with it?
- Do you think that the project has devoted enough time and resources to facilitate the access and use of the platform?
- Will your institution use and maintain the platform after the completion of MIMIR Project?

