Project Title: Online Platform for Academic TEaching and Learning in Iraq and Iran

Project acronym: OPATEL

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FOREWORD

Instituto Superior de Paço de Brandão (ISPAB), carrying responsibility for the Work Package 7 "Sustainability and Exploitation of Results", is certain that the sustainability plan will play a very important role in sustaining the functions and impact of the project outcomes.

The following Exploitation and Sustainability plan is an official document, which reflects the vision of project partners about the project results, LMS centres' functions, further direction, and potential impact. It will complement the dissemination materials produced in WP6 and set the targets, indicators and milestones for ensuring the centres continue to function after the completion of project. It will also specify the parameters, targets beneficiaries, and actions for the exploitation and transfer of project results outside the original project network and duration.

This standard document for the Sustainability & Exploitation of project results has been created jointly by the WP committee and was presented for a joint discussion with all partners. The presentation and the discussion that followed have contributed numerous ideas and proposals for the detailed sustainability plan.

It is difficult to overestimate the importance of all the joint meetings and workshops of the partners that take place during the project lifetime. They are seen as bricks that make the future existence of the developed centres efficient and sustainable. The sustainability committee has set indicators for sustainability of the project outcomes. The development of multimedia and information technologies (e.g. ICT), as well as the use internet as a new technique of teaching, has made radical changes in the traditional process of teaching, where E-learning is one of the most representative. The following actions were deemed crucial for the sustainability of the centre operations post-project life:

- **Trained faculty and centre staff:** 72 faculty and centre staff were trained on modern education modules, e.g. problem-based learning and LMS. Also, the joint-program, shared case-studies and best practices on how to use LMS and E-learning to improve the quality of the Service/Experience - adjunct, blended e-Learning and online. For each category of E-learning, was given the state-of-the-art on the Learning Management Systems (LMS).
- **Study visits:** Many of those who participated in the training were involved in study tours to European partner's universities for exposure EU universities experience in designing

and implementing teaching methodologies for eCourses and E-learning platform development, and strategies (e.g. E-learning business model, how to be marketing eCourses) that are deemed useful for modernizing education in Iran and Iraq.

- **Training module materials:** The developed modules for faculty training on LMS, especially on eCourses/LMS, were collected as resources to be used in the centres for future training. Focusing on finding the best tools (how-to disseminate and evaluate trainees knowledge), to solve the common teaching problems, following the industry high-demand professional specialization, such as creative and critical thinking.

- **The equipment installed at the centres in Iran and Iraq**: the centres will work as hub for using best practices in using of LMS and ICT for education, as well as raising competencies of lectures and teachers by enhancing the learning processes for students in both countries.

These actions have been designed based on the framework proposed by Alexandre (2001, p. 247)[1]:

- *A vision for e-learning at the institution*
- *A technology development plan*
- *Development of faculty workload policies which relate to e-learning*
- *Maintenance of a reliable technology network*
- *Facility for providing technology support to staff and students*
- *Market research support*
- *Faculty development opportunities in student learning, good practice in course design, development and implementation, project management, team- work, evaluation and time management*
- *Provision of time release for faculty engaged in e-learning developments*

The sustainability plan will account for all these direct outcomes and explain how they can be used post project life, to serve the higher education institutions in the two countries once the grant agreement ends with the European Commission.

STRUCTURE

We begin by reinstating the essential links between sustainability, dissemination, and

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[1] Alexander, S. (2001). E-learning developments and experiences. Education + Training, 43(4/5), 240-248.

exploitation concepts and definitions. Then we define the sustainability strategy objectives; and finally, we provide the sustainability plan as the core component in this document. It contains the identification of the main project results and their relation to the sustainability actions. Such results are identified so far as:

- efficient work with target groups (Training for professors, training for trainers, other HEIs);
- Means to be used for Exploitation and Sustainability (indirect and direct);
- Activities to ensure the future motivation of all the partners of the project "OPATEL" to continue the productive work after the end of the project lifetime (website, development of the new courses, training workshops, national seminars, international conferences, online strategies and possibilities for the future joint projects and private investments)
- Evaluation of project activities in terms of sustainability using the relevant tools and methodologies (questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, etc.)

We provide for each element a brief description together with sustainability and exploitation activities.

SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY OBJECTIVES

This sustainability & exploitation plan is constructed around three axes, all of which are linked together by our three central sustainability objectives. These axes are: (a) a set of sustainability mechanisms, accompanied by a division of labour between partners; (b) the identification of institutions and groups, which the sustainability strategy is primarily aiming to reach; (c) a timeline for progressive implementation of the mechanisms.

Sustainability requires the model to be complemented by a <u>distributed implementation and support approach that advocates true partnerships between academic and support staff</u> thus providing the capacity for students or staff to initiate and participate in the technological transformation of an institution.

SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

The Online Platform OPATEL centres has had a successful start in 2017; their trainers are well trained and motivated to continue working on their own professional development and on planning and running seminars and workshops for other colleagues on campus. During the project life, the centres have built a solid network of associates in 5 Iraq and 3 Iran universities; the centre trainers have conducted high quality professional development activities in Iran and Iraq. The two centres have well-equipped locations in University of Baghdad, Salahaddin University-Erbil, Duhok Polytechnic University campuses, and the three centres are open for business every working day.

All the partners of the "OPATEL" project, are well aware of the idea, that to build sustainable academic networks between partners, means to make the transfer and the development of knowledge and new eCourses at the ICT centre successful for a long period of time in the future.

Part of academic partners Innovation plan and project sustainability, the reuse of student-generated resources, which are added to a digital repository following review and addition of meta-data by specialist staff, is an example of pedagogical innovation cited by Breslin et al (2007)[2]. Another concern, that target markets must be understood, and demand realistically forecast, converging on pedagogical, technical, interface design, evaluation, management and support, and ethical and institutional issues to elaborate the point.

Key points to consider on the pedagogy dimension include support for an appropriate instructional methodology, integration, interaction, efficiency, effectiveness, value added and feasibility.

To help plan for sustaining and expanding centre services and activities, the sustainability team designed a sustainability strategy table, which explains the needed actions for each of the project major outcome, the target groups who will benefit from the actions, the target values for each action in the first year after the project is concluded.

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[2] Breslin, C., Nicol, D., Grierson, H., Wodehouse, A., Juster, N., & Ion, W. (2007). Embedding an integrated learning environment and digital repository in design engineering education: Lessons learned for sustainability. British Journal of Educational Technology, 38(5), 805

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SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

Activity	Objective	Target groups	Target Value	Timeframe
Sharing learning objects of diverse clusters	To ensure that diverse clusters in different disciplines will continue to be used in collaboration among partners and that those who use them will utilize best practices in LMS in education.	• Internal: Teaching staff, Students, Trainees, Technical staff; • External: Other national, regional and international HE, representatives of other universities.	100 staff + 2000 students 20 staff+ 500 students	Years 1,2,&3
Project's website and newsletters	The project's website is maintained and fully operated after the end of the funding period.	• Designating contact person from each partner institution for web update. • Posting materials (Slides, templates, rubrics and links) to be used as education resources • Posting news of the centers • Linking website to social media • Online workshop registration	1 contact person 20 education resources in the first year. 1 1 1	Years 1,2,&3
Training Material	Create eTraining courses on an ongoing basis and Define practitioners' recruitment tools and policies.	• Use existing modules developed during project life to recruit and train more practitioners • Define faculty training needs • Develop a high-quality training program. • Create new modules on modern education practice and assessment.	10 new practitioners Training need assessment tool Training menu 3 new modules	Years 1,2,&3 Year 1 Year 1 Years 1,2,&3
Project Dissemination and exchange of experiences	To exchange information and experiences exchange between students and staff, teachers and trainers and to disseminate education innovation within and among the HEIs	• **Indirect channels**: social networking media like Facebook, Linkedin, Twitter, discussion groups, mailing lists, common collaboration online space using Dropbox, Google Drive, Trello/Asana and e-Twinning platform, Networking and external cooperation • **Direct channels**: Trainings, conferences, workshops,	Documentation of exchanges within and among institution and any other evidence on dissemination One national workshop and work exhibition	Years 1,2,&3 Year 1,2 &3

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Activity	Objective	Target groups	Target Value	Timeframe
		exhibitions, seminars, information sessions		
Management of autonomous LMS centre	One of the key tasks of the whole project is to establish an ICT centre at each university. The autonomous training centre will continue to provide services to support good practices utilizing LMS in education for new staff as well as senior staff after the end of the project. Activities should be taking into consideration.	• Centre integration into the university structure • Sign agreement with all partners to use the services of the centre in the future for the training on using LMS in education. Agreement will guarantee free access for all Iran and Iraq partners to the materials and equipment at the centre. • Provide training for trainers so the experience that was gathered through the workshops during the project time will be transferred to other centre trainers. • Increase the number of online materials on the LMS and expertise within the centre in areas like assessment of learning and course and program design	Centre director+ staff+ reporting channels 8 agreements A minimum of 2 trainers per module affiliated with the centre. 2 modules in assessment of learning+ 1 module in course design+ 1 in program design	Years 1,2,&3
Funding	Finding sources of funding to sustain and expand centre operations.	• HEI own fund through annual budget (director load reduction+ salary increase) (trainers per hour pay). • Joint projects in teaching and learning • Joint projects in curriculum or program design.	1 director+4 trainers 1 project in the first year of operations. 1 project in the first year of operations.	Years 1,2,&3
Evaluation	To periodically evaluate the services provided by the centre to inform future actions.	• Design evaluation tools for staff training workshops • Design evaluation tools for the courses on the portal	1 1	Years 1,2,&3

EVALUATION OF SUSTAINABILITY AND EXPLOITATION

In order to measure the quality of the sustainability and exploitation activities the partners will use these criteria:

- Education Leadership regarding Exploitation activities;
- Number of events (training, workshops) to sustain and to exploit the project and its results and intellectual outputs;
- Number of teachers and students attending these event;
- The number of teaching modules uploaded to the Online Platform centers;
- The number of new courses uploaded to the Online Platform centers;
- Visibility of the centers in the HEIs
- Quality and impact of the Sustainability and Exploitation activities
- Adequacy of exploitation methods and techniques
- The Network between partners and ICT centers, collaboration between partners in exploiting the project outputs
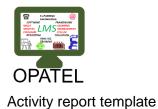- Final results dissemination activities in the HEIs

These questions can guide the evaluation work:

- Are the developed materials helpful and useful for the teachers and students?
- Are the developed materials always under the process of updating?
- Do the developed materials correspond to actual needs of the teachers and students?
- Are the materials and resources easy to access by all the partners and by the target audience?
- Are they to be find in most suitable digital formats?

PROPOSED DOCUMENTATION AND EVALUATION TOOLS

Questionnaires and interviews are used to assess the sustainability and exploitation activities conducted by each partner. Each partner has to produce a short report on each of the sustainability and exploitation activity conducted.

Report for evaluation the sustainability and exploitation	
Sustainability and exploitation activity: Type	
Date and place:	
Name and title of the person who participated	
Short description of the sustainability and exploitation event:	
Feedback from participants:	

Activity evaluation template

Sustainability and Exploitation evaluation					
	Completely Negative/ Unsatisfied	*Partially Positive/ Satisfied*	*Fully Positive/ Satisfied*	*Exceeded Expectations*	*Not Applicable*
Is/Was the coordinating partner active and supportive?					
Is/Was the foreseen timetable respected?					
Is/Was the partnership cooperative in achieving the WP objectives?					
IS/Was the tasks sharing well distributed between partners?					
Are/Were the deliverables duly accomplished?					
Are/Were working methods and techniques adopted appropriate?					
Is/was the Number of events (training, workshops) respected?					
The number of teaching materials on the E-Portal					
The number of staff and students attending the training					
The panel of the project in each partner					
The Network between partners and ICT centers					
Overall satisfaction:					

Informal conversations with participants must be used to evaluate the impact of the sustainability and exploitation activities.

SUSTAINABILITY AND EXPLOITATION TOOLS

The objective of the exploitation strategy is to ensure the sustainability of the project and its results beyond its lifetime. The exploitation strategy contains recommendations and guidelines for the continuous usage of the project's results also after the end of the project. The exploitation strategy is designed to reach broader publically than the target group, namely to ensure that relevant stakeholders at all levels (Jordanian and Palestinian) are informed about the project results and ready to recommend and use the results.

According to the project proposal, sustainability and exploitation strategy is based, on two essential tools, ICT-based tools and networking, splatted into further parts, listed in this table:

Tool	Partners
Website	TUMS, INT@E
Development of a Facebook page	HTWK and INT@E
Technical Workshops	Each partner
National Seminars	Each partner
Network database	Each partner
The project (all information about the Project and project results, Newsletter,…)	Int@E, TUMS, UoB-Basra
International conference	Each partner
Online Strategy	Each partner
Intellectual Property Rights	HTWK
Joint projects and private investments	Each partner