

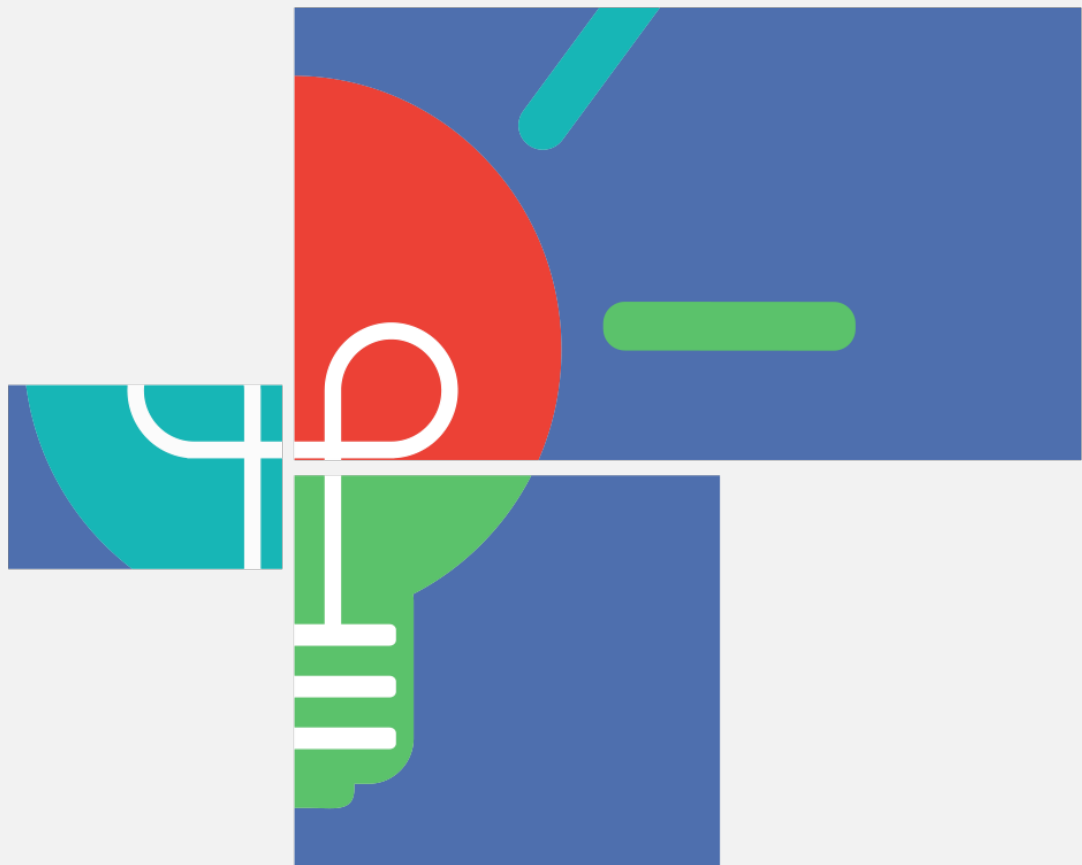


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FINAL CONFERENCE OF IBTIKAR PROJECT

October 2024



Project Title	PROMOTING RESEARCH AND INNOVATION ENVIRONMENT IN THE LIBYAN HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM
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Overview of the event

On October 8th 2024, IBTIKAR partners gathered in Tripoli for the IBTIKAR Final Conference hosted by the University of Tripoli.

The purpose of the event was to present the main project results, and to highlight the opportunities that the Libyan Higher Education sector offers to young researchers, for joint collaborations both nationally and internationally. The Conference has been the occasion to present a number of shared recommendations to stakeholders, in the joint continuous attempt to improve the Libyan research environment.

Indeed, the project IBTIKAR, promoting research and innovation environment in the Libyan higher Education System aimed to enhance the research capabilities of Libyan Higher Education Institutions and their capacity to produce and manage high-quality research activities, by increasing the competencies and skills of their academic and administrative staff. IBTIKAR involved 11 Libyan Higher Education Institutions and 4 European Partners willing to develop skills and capacity in research and innovation, and network with peer researchers internationally.

Participation

In total, 60 participants attended the final event.

Besides the participation of the partners, the event has seen the participation of national and international high-level attendees, such as representatives from the Libyan Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, the Libyan Authority for Scientific Research, the European Delegation to Libya and the Italian Embassy in Libya.

The final conference has been organised in the following way:

- **Opening speeches:** by the Ministry of HE, the university of Tripoli, European Union Ambassador to Libya and UNIMED
- **Key note speech:** by Boğaziçi university
- **Key presentations by** DG Research and Innovation - European commission & the Libyan Authority for Scientific Research & UNIMED
- **4 round-tables** involving all IBTIKAR partners

Some inspiring outcomes

Opening speeches

- From the Ministry of Higher Education: Our ministry has long been dedicated to supporting education, advocating for peace and learning despite the nation's differences. We are striving to heal our wounds, particularly through initiatives like IBTIKAR, which fill us with pride. Our goal is to collaborate with other stakeholders and ministries to develop new projects. Additionally, we aim to create alternative resources beyond oil, relying on higher education institutions to shape the country's future. We look forward to the European Union's support in revitalizing our youth with hope and opportunities for the future.
- From UNIMED: Thanks to the European Union for its invaluable support, particularly through the Erasmus program and its commitment to fostering cooperation with Libyan universities. The presentation of projects over the past years reflects the EU's strong focus on academic collaboration with Libya. Despite the various crises in the region, the European Commission continues to prioritise cooperation in the Southern Mediterranean, recognizing research as a crucial element in this effort. IBTIKAR stands as the first project coordinated by UNIMED in Libya, marking a significant milestone as it also engages smaller institutions in an international initiative for the first time.

Roundtables

The Capacity Building Action: IBTIKAR at institutional level

We recognize that managing this project was a challenging task for the International Relations Offices (IROs), especially for newer/smallest universities. However, such initiatives provide valuable learning experiences on how to navigate these processes.

Positive Impact: IBTIKAR has fostered collaborations, enabled joint research. It has also highlighted key areas like the Environmental one that, when addressed and well disseminated, should lead to significant research achievement (example of Zliten).

The most important takeaway is the strengthened collaboration between Libyan universities, from the 2 sides.



The Research Agenda and the White Paper: IBTIKAR at national level

Process, Challenges, and Strengths

Teachers' Experience: Essential for capacity building and knowledge transfer.

Funding: A critical factor affecting the sustainability of research projects.

Impact: The ability to generate meaningful outcomes for academia and society.

Infrastructure: Necessary to support research activities and innovation.

Challenges:

- Limited funding and infrastructure.
- Insufficient collaboration with the private sector and industries.
- Need to encourage research groups to apply for higher education (HE) projects.
- The role of local authorities in supporting research groups to maximize impact.

“The project has been highly dynamic, with a significant impact. One major achievement was involving stakeholders in defining strategies at the national level, which was a great advantage for our university. The analysis conducted by the University of Tripoli (UoT) during their visit to our RCC was particularly insightful. While we initially believed we were performing well, the visit helped us identify areas for further growth.

Currently, we are working in isolation, and it has become evident that our strategy needed to be updated. We must refine our approach to setting priorities, structuring the research agenda, and evaluating the impact of training. Strengthening networking opportunities is crucial, and internal university regulations must also evolve to better support research.”

Research must bridge the gap between academia and society.

Establishing a platform to connect higher education institutions (HEIs) with industry should be a priority and included in the white paper.

Developing Technology Transfer Offices (TTOs) to analyse market needs and adapt curricula accordingly.

“The Value of IBTIKAR: the most important contribution of IBTIKAR has been the opportunity to pause and reflect on our higher education system. This has been invaluable, marking a new era at the university level. In the past, scientific research was primarily focused on teaching, but now there is a shift towards supporting research and establishing proper legislation.

Legislation remains a significant challenge for HE and scientific research. While many problems exist, even the solutions come with their own challenges. There is growing pressure to push forward and enhance research support, yet current legal efforts still place too much emphasis on teaching and not enough on research. Addressing this imbalance will be crucial for future progress.”

The collaboration between the Libyan RCC and the impact of research for the development of Libya: IBTIKAR at national level

“There are great ideas but they are stuck because then we face the reality. In other countries RCC are activated and value more. We are trying to do the same, we talk, but we cannot do much on the ground. The government tries to provide universities with what they can, but they cannot do everything. So why can’t we complete each other and put our own resources and start the first step making the cooperation. Making the cooperation for real. Let’s make collaborations among us, being visible among us, sharing equipment’s, making researchers with what they need for the benefit of scientific research, to public in journals, to raise the level.”

Universities are not defined by their age but by their achievements. We had our priorities and a clear strategy, yet this journey has been a profound learning experience. We gained valuable insights from our colleagues, learned to think differently, embraced an international perspective, and deepened our understanding of collaboration. This process has led us to reconsider our approaches and refine the way we operate.

Strong governance is the foundation—when governance is solid, everything else follows. We need to strengthening our collaborations: expanding agreements and initiating joint projects, sharing facilities to maximize resources, organizing joint conferences and workshops, encouraging student and faculty exchanges, as these initiatives are both feasible and highly impactful, reviewing and updating curricula to align with evolving needs.

Furthermore, incentives and government support should not be limited to public universities alone; private institutions must also be included to ensure a well-rounded and sustainable higher education ecosystem.



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Libya in the international scenario: IBTIKAR at regional level

Universities are not all at the same level in terms of capacity, competence, and context. While some institutions are still in the early stages of development, others have made significant progress. Strengthening cooperation between higher education institutions (HEIs) through student exchanges and collaborative initiatives will generate substantial benefits, leading to greater collective success.

We must adopt a more proactive approach—national efforts are possible, and the Ministry has already taken steps to support both research and online education. Leveraging knowledge from other universities is essential, as infrastructure alone is not enough to drive progress.

Our relation with UNIMED has still some shortcomings, so how to get to the program, still no project on how to find partners, also in other areas and not south-med only, we shall look for the financing and work with HEIs in Europe. We do have an issue to get external funds but we shall lobby to the MoHE to solve it and tackle it. We can benefit from the experience of UNIMED and boost cooperation.





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Annex I Agenda



IBTIKAR

promoting research and innovation environment in
the libyan higher Education System

IBTIKAR Final conference

8 October 2024

Hosted at the University of Tripoli

Agenda





IBTIKAR Final conference in Tripoli

09.30 - 10.30 Opening session

Welcome speeches from

- Khaled Mohamed Oun, Rector of the University of Tripoli
- Nicola Orlando, European Union Ambassador to Libya
- Representative of Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research in Libya, TBC
- Marcello Scalisi, UNIMED Director

10.30 - 10.50 Research and Innovation Cooperation in the Mediterranean region

- Heba Gaber, DG Research and Innovation - European commission - (online)

10.50 - 11.10 The role of the Libyan Authority for Scientific Research in promoting innovation

- Majdeddin Al Ghadban, Libyan Authority for Scientific Research

11.10 - 11.30 Keynote speech

- Mehmed Ozkan, Former Rector, Boğaziçi University, Turkey

11.30 - 11.45 Presentation of the IBTIKAR project

- Anne-Laurence Pastorini, UNIMED
- Martina Zipoli, UNIMED

11.45 - 12.15 Coffee Break



12.15 - 14.00 Lessons learnt and perspectives

The Capacity Building Action: the impact of IBTIKAR at institutional level

Moderator: Anne-Laurence Pastorini, UNIMED

Speakers:

Alfitouri Jellah, Bani Waleed University

Saleh Ben Khayyal, Alasmarya Islamic University

Mohamed Elkamuria, Sirte University

Nuha Muftah, University of Ajdabya

From the Research Agenda to the White Paper

Moderator: Martina Zipoli, UNIMED

Mohamed Elrawemi, Elmergib University

Ruwida Omar, University of Benghazi

Ahmed Baaiu, Misurata University

The collaboration between the Libyan RCC and the impact of research for the development of Libya

Moderator: Marcello Scalisi, UNIMED

Jamal Abubaker, Sebha University

Emad Khalfalla, Zawia University

Salma Bukhatwa, LIMU

Libya in the international scenario: research cooperation beyond borders

Marcello Scalisi, UNIMED

Khaled Mohamed Oun, University of Tripoli

14.00 – 14.30 Final Remarks

14.30 Closure and farewell lunch



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Annex II Flyer

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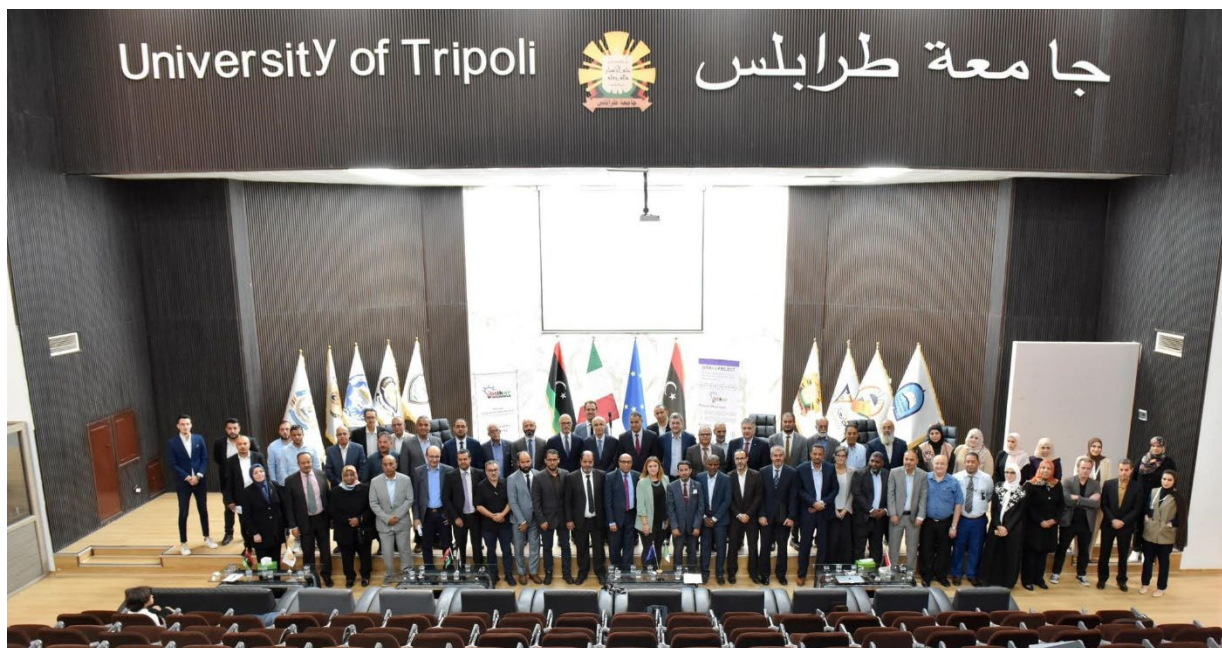
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Annex III Pictures





























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