

LEADHER Programme (2007-2008) Activity & Financial Report

1. Goal and Objectives of the Project

The primary goal of the International Islamic University Malaysia's (IIUM) participation in the LEADHER Programme was to develop and enhance research planning management and output of engineering-based and medical-based projects. The targeted aspects of reform, which are research planning management and output, specifically aimed to:

- a. examine the strategic performance, in terms of the vision, missions and initiatives undertaken by the University of Aleppo (AU) in engineering-based and medical-based research planning management and output,
- b. determine a workable organizational structure, and human resource and financial management for the IIUM's engineering-based and medical-based research planning management and output premised upon the University of Aleppo's experience, and
- c. establish sustainable networking and linkages among engineering-based and medical-based researchers of both institutions for research collaboration and sharing of ideas and information.

2. Summary of Activities (Learning Visit 2)

The Learning Visit 2 took place at the University of Aleppo (13 March — 19 March, 2008). The activities of the visit are summarized as follows.

Date	Visit/Site	Focus of Discussion
Sunday 14 March	Institute of Arabic History & Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefing on the functions of the Institute • Possibility of joint conference with ISTAC of IIUM • Co-supervision of PhD research
	University Library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefing on the function of the central library • Sharing of published journals and books, including online materials
Monday 15 March	University Research Board Meeting Chair: Prof Abed Yakin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of LEADHER Programme • Overview of the IIUM • Briefing of IIUM's 10-year Strategic Planning in Research

	Faculty of Education Chair: Dean Faculty of Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefing on the organization & programmes at the Faculty • Overview of IIUM • Invitation as guests of IIUM to the ICTEM Conference (July, 2008)
	University Publication House	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefing on the activities of the Publication House • Visit to the “on-demand publication” facilities and equipment of Arabic books • Joint-publication AU-IIUM Arabic books/journals
Tuesday 16 March	Medical-Based Faculties Chair: Dean of Faculty of Dentistry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of aims, structure and programmes of the various faculties • Overview of IIUM • Collaborative research in medical sciences
	Engineering-Based Faculties Chair: Dean of Mechanical Engineering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of aims, structure and programmes the various faculties • Overview of IIUM • Formulation and implementation of joint masters degree in engineering • Co-supervision of PhD research
Wednesday 17 March	Directors of the 6 hospitals Chair: Prof Abed Yakin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefings on the management and research-related functions of the six AU’s hospitals • Management and research support for the establishment of IIUM’s hospital • Free short-term subspecialty training for IIUM’s faculty members
	Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) Chair: Director of QAU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of the AU strategic planning, which has recently been developed • Sharing of IIUM experience and expertise in the establishment of quality management and ISO 9000:2001 certification in teaching and learning

	<p>Courtesy Call: President of AU Prof Mohamad Nizar Akil in the presence of the AU Vice President (academic)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of progress of LEADHER Programme activities: Learning Visit 1 & 2 • Kick-off/initiation of follow-up activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jointly funded research in niche areas • Joint masters degree in engineering • Admission of AU faculty members in IIUM's postgraduate programmes in engineering • To secure funding (e.g. IDB, Jeddah) for training in quality assurance and management for continuous improvement • Jointly organized conferences on research results and outcome • Publication of Arabic books and journals • Collaboration in medical-related research and management
Thursday 18 March	Teachers' Day	Unofficial Visits

3. Key Individuals Involved (IIUM)

1. Prof. Dr. Syed Arabi Idid
Rector
International Islamic University Malaysia
2. Prof. Dr. Azmi Omar
Deputy Rector (Academic & Research)
International Islamic University Malaysia
3. Prof. Dr. Mohamad Sahari Nordin
Dean
Research Management Centre
International Islamic University Malaysia
4. Prof. Dr. Nik Ahmad Kamal Nik Mahmud
Dean
Centre for Postgraduate Studies
International Islamic University Malaysia
5. Prof. Dr. Ahmad Faris Ismail
Dean
Kulliyah of Engineering
International Islamic University Malaysia
6. Prof. Dr. Aziz Bergout
Deputy Director
Quality Assurance Unit
International Islamic University Malaysia

4. Specific Results & Lessons Learnt

The Learning Visit 2 has clearly achieved all its objectives.

a. AU's Strategic Performance in Engineering- and Medical-Based Programmes

The AU has deliberately started to embark on strategic planning, resulting with the formulation of institution-wide vision and missions of the institution. The vision and missions are expected to guide the AU's short-term and long-term directions and plan of actions, which are to be developed and implemented at the kulliyah (faculty), department and individual levels by the end of the year. The establishment of the Quality Assurance Centre is a manifestation the AU's concerns in continuous improvement. This reformation of AU, driven by quality-laden agenda includes the management of research and research outputs.

A somewhat similar pattern of reformation has been evolving at the IIUM for the past 10 years. The IIUM adopts the "blue ocean" strategy and balanced scorecard tools to plan, deliver, monitor, evaluate, and revise its research planning management and output. The day-to-day management of research activities and outputs, including those of engineering- and medical-based research are ISO-certified. A set of key performance indicators specific to the engineering- and medical-based faculties have been recognized and are in use in order to transform the university into a research-intensive institution.

Clearly the creation of quality-assured research planning management and outputs is shared by the two institutions. This development is in keeping with the prevailing efforts toward quality research in the institutions of higher education (HEIs) in the region, and those in European countries. This commonality offers room for continuous collaborative engagement that would include exchange of personnel, sharing of experience and benchmarking.

b. Organizational Structure and Human Resource and Financial Management

The management of research planning and output at the AU is decentralized. Every faculty has been empowered with the rights and responsibilities to manage its research planning and implementation. It is similar to most HEIs in the Middle East nations and European countries, in which a centralized managing agency (such as, the Research Management Centre of IIUM) is not institutionalized. Thus, the human resource and financial management of the engineering-based and medical-based kulliyahs depends on each kulliyah's development agenda. To oversee the overall research development, the university has established the AU Research Board, chaired by the Vice President (Research & Postgraduate Studies) and serves as the policy-making body for the university's research.

The AU has a highly organized and productive Publication House. Equipped with the state-of-the-art facilities and technology, it has been producing more than 5000 books since 1983, mainly in Arabic. Currently, more than 1000 titles of university textbooks published by the unit are marketed in the region. Thus, the Research Management Centre of IIUM seeks to substantiate co-operation with the AU Publication House, specifically in the following areas:

- appointment of expert reviewers for Arabic books written by IIUM faculty members
- on-demand printing of IIUM books
- marketing of books published by IIUM Press, and vice versa
- co-publication of selected titles

c. Sustainable Networking and Linkages among Researchers

The LEADHER Programme, supplemented by the commitment of the CEOs of the two institutions contributes substantially to the initiation of the following activities (which are already in-progress):

- Preparation of three inter-disciplinary (1 engineering-based and 2 medical-based) research proposals to be funded jointly by both institutions; each proposal involves researchers from both institutions.
- Admission of AU's faculty members into the IIUM postgraduate programmes in engineering.
- Discussions on the process and procedure for the establishment of a Joint Masters Degree in engineering.
- Discussions on the process and procedure of co-supervision of PhD research.
- Short-term training projects for IIUM's faculty members at AU's medical schools and hospitals.
- Joint conference between ISTAC (IIUM) and Institute of Arabic History and Heritage (AU).
- Application by the IIUM's experts to Islamic Development Bank for the funding of quality management program at AU.

5. Unanticipated Results & Follow-Up Activities

There are several unexpected, yet noteworthy results of the Learning Visit 2. The activities and meetings were well-organized and attended by receptive and constructive groups of audience. The collaborative atmosphere within the meetings have resulted in the likelihood of lasting academic and research co-operation between the two institutions, some of which are beyond what were planned during the application to the LEADHER Programme. The following list summarizes the additional activities to be acted upon within a one-year time frame:

- Management of faculty members' involvement in consultancy, intellectual property rights and commercialization.
- Establishment of "Matching Research Grant" at each institution to jointly fund researchers in areas of common interest.
- Exchange of faculty members and undergraduate students (and transfer of credits) in the areas of languages, social sciences and humanities, particularly in Arabic and English.
- Co-supervision of PhD research in social sciences and humanities.
- Continuous quality improvement through knowledge and technology sharing, and benchmarking.

6. Assessment of the Collaboration

The activities that have been supported and sponsored by the LEADHER Program succeeded to facilitate kick-off meetings between personnel of the two institutions. The visits deepened understanding and trust among the key players of the two institutions. The institutions are now in the position to strategize and concretize beneficial collaborations in research.

7. Conclusion