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Transfer of Good Practices  
& Reinforcement of  
Internationalisation Strategies  
in Kurdistan

Erasmus+ - Key Action 2  
Capacity Building within the Field of Higher Education

## **TIGRIS Project**

### ***External Evaluation – Final Report***

CM CONSULTING

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## Table of Contents

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>DESIGN</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>RESULTS PER UNIVERSITY</b>	<b>5</b>
01 CHU	5
02 DPU	7
03 EPU	9
04 KISSR	10
05 SPU	12
06 SU	14
07 UoH	15
08 UoR	17
09 UoS	19
<b>RESULTS ACROSS ALL KURDISH UNIVERSITIES</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>EX-POST ANALYSIS ON PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION ACCORDING TO 5 DAC CRITERIA</b>	<b>25</b>
1. RELEVANCE	25
2. EFFECTIVENESS	28
3. EFFICIENCY	29
4. IMPACT	32
5. SUSTAINABILITY	35
<b>CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>37</b>

## List of figures

Figure 1 Data Collection Tool, example of UoS .....	4
Figure 2 Results all Kurdish Partner HEIs clustered by areas of analysis (factors). .....	21
Figure 3 Results all Kurdish Partner HEIs: Outbound Mobility .....	21
Figure 4 Results all Kurdish Partner HEIs: Inbound Mobility .....	22
Figure 5 Results all Kurdish Partner HEIs: Other Activities .....	22
Figure 6 Comparison of three key qualitative indicators across the individual HEIs .....	24
Figure 7 Perception variables in implementation .....	27
Figure 8 Achievement of Objectives .....	29
Figure 9 Results from 5 DAC criteria .....	40

## List of tables

Table 1 Results CHU .....	5
Table 2 Results DPU .....	7
Table 3 Results EPU .....	9
Table 4 Results KISSR .....	10
Table 5 Results SPU .....	12
Table 6 Results SU .....	14
Table 7 Results UoH .....	15
Table 8 Results UoR .....	17
Table 9 Results UoS .....	19
Table 10 Results of all Kurdish Partner HEIs: overall development across all sectors .....	23
Table 11 Attainment of tasks .....	31

## Introduction

The final evaluation can be seen as an essential component of the quality monitoring and control process of the Erasmus+ Key Action 2 CBHE TIGRIS project coordinated by Georg-August Göttingen Universität (UGOE). The present assessment is an ex-post normative evaluation which complements the internal monitorings and peer reviews conducted by the internal quality control committee.

The final evaluation has paid attention to two distinctive areas of project development. On the one hand, the assessment compares the progress in the implementation of internationalisation strategies before the start of the project until the present time. Data obtained from the quantitative tools developed by the GII as well as peer review results were used for the first task. On the other hand, the evaluation uses the 5 DAC criteria (relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability) to measure the project implementation. Data was obtained through virtual interviews to Kurdish partners and questionnaires.

The present report should be seen as integral part of the Quality Plan designed at the beginning of the project.

## Design

The assessment of the overall progress in internationalisation at the Kurdish partner universities during the lifetime of the TIGRIS project is based on the data collection tool developed by GII (see figure 1), the peer reviews implemented by EU partners as part of internal quality assurance and the interviews and questionnaires carried by the external consultant by the end of the project.

Figure 1 Data Collection Tool, example of UoS

Data collection on the activities carried out by Kurdish International Relations Offices from 2017-2020 to establish performance indicators for final reporting									
Name of partner:	UoS								
		2017	2018	2019	2020				
OUTGOING									
Number of outgoing students advised & serviced (incl. B.A., M.A., PhD)*		65	72	93	88	3	19%		
Number of outgoing administrative staff advised & serviced		18	21	23	31	79	2		
Number of outgoing academic staff advised & serviced		36	39	50	55	180	3		
TOTAL g.p.		117	132	172	174				
INCOMING									
Number of incoming students advised & serviced (incl. B.A., M.A., PhD) exchange students and degree-seeking students		4	7	4	3	21	4		
Number of incoming administrative staff advised & serviced		0	0	0	0	0	0		
Number of incoming academic staff advised & serviced		13	21	24	6	64	6		
TOTAL g.p.		17	28	28	9				
ACTIVITIES									
Number of MoU and other cooperation agreements signed		7	7	5	1	20	7		
Number of international workshops and meetings (hosted and sponsored)		28	12	12	6	42	8		
Number of staff participants in int. staff weeks, trainings, workshops abroad		35	41	43	18	137	9		
Number of summer programmes / courses offered		2	2	13	6	23	10		
Number of int. conferences hosted and/or sponsored		7	11	13	1	32	11		
Number of int. delegations (incl.) received		21	28	30	10	89	12		
Number of visits to foreign universities sponsored		9	13	14	1	47	13		
Number of project proposals (applications) with int. partners submitted		7	8	11	1	27	14		
Number of B.A./M.A./PhD requests with int. universities (B.A. incl. double programme)		28	18	12	1	59	13		
Number of joint programmes with foreign universities established		3	4	1	1	9	13		

Since each university pursued different goals with different activities, it made sense to allow for some selection. Thus, while all universities were expected to provide data for the first 6 indicators<sup>1</sup>, they were originally free to choose from the 10 activity indicators but had to provide data for at least 2 indicators. In the end, all universities delivered data for these 16 indicators except for one. Data was collected for 2017-2020, however, due to the fact that the 2020 data would not be complete by the time of the final data collection and many Kurdish partners accordingly could not report correct values for this year, only the years 2017 to 2019 were taken into account. For these years then, for each university the following results were calculated:

- Average annual development in %
- Average development over the entire period in %

<sup>1</sup> If data was not provided for one of these indicators (outgoing and incoming), it was assumed that the value is "0" and the respective value was added to the cell in red.

- Share of indicators with an increase over the entire period in %
- Monitoring of satisfaction: this was a yes/no and only in case of a yes, related indicators would be analysed.

A development from 0 to 1 was calculated as +100%, and a development from 1 to 0 as -100% in order to avoid the problem of division by 0.

Besides the quantitative analysis, this report also includes two additional aspects. Firstly, it incorporates the findings from the peer reviews which took place during the summer of 2020 (online, due to the COVID-19 crisis). The external evaluator participated in one of the sessions as participant observer in order to assess the validity of the peer-review instrument. Herein, we consider that the peer reviews carried out are an important corrective measure to the self-reported data. The peer review report covered four areas:

1. General institutional setup for the internationalisation of the Higher Education Institution (HEI) (8 sub-aspects)
2. The organisation of and resources available at your International Relations Office (5 sub-aspects)
3. The scope and mode of operation of the International Relations Office (3 sub-aspects)
4. Experience of students and staff with internationalisation at the university and services offered by the International Relations Office (7 sub-aspects).

Although the number of criteria and indicators are adequate, they could have been extended as well - for example analysing transversal issues like gender balance and inclusive approach to internationalisation in each institution. Each aspect was checked for being established and rated "yes", "no" or "partial". It was decided that a university was successful if not more than overall 3 aspects were rated "no" and not more than 40% "partial".

Secondly, the final evaluation focuses on whether the partners had developed an implementation plan for their internationalisation strategy, since this strongly supports the sustainability of the project results. Interviews and questionnaires were conducted among EU and Kurdish partners to verify such status and to elaborate a swot analysis on the project implementation itself.

## Results per University

### 01 CHU

Table 1 Results CHU

	2017	2018	2019	2020	TOTAL	Average increase per yr	Overall increase	% of improved indicators
<b>OUTGOING</b>								
Number of outgoing students advised & serviced (incl. B.A., M.A., PhD)*	0	0	0	20	20	0.0%	0.0%	0
Number of outgoing administrative staff advised & serviced	0	0	0	5	5	0.0%	0.0%	0
Number of outgoing academic staff advised & serviced	0	0	0	5	5	0.0%	0.0%	0
<b>TOTAL p.a.</b>	0	0	0	30		0.0%	0.0%	0
<b>INCOMING</b>	2017	2018	2019	2020	TOTAL			

Number of incoming students advised & serviced ( <i>incl. B.A., M.A., PhD; exchange students and degree-seeking students</i> )	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%	0
Number of incoming administrative staff advised & serviced	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%	0
Number of incoming academic staff advised & serviced	0	0	0	5	5	0.0%	0.0%	0
<b>TOTAL p.a.</b>	0	0	0	5		0.0%	0.0%	0
<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	2017	2018	2019	2020	TOTAL			
Number of MoUs and other cooperation agreements signed	3	3	3	5	14	0.0%	0.0%	0
Number of international workshops and trainings hosted/or and sponsored	1	1	1	0	3	0.0%	0.0%	0
Number of staff participated in intl. staff weeks, trainings, workshops abroad	0	0	0	5	5	0.0%	0.0%	0
Number of summer programme / courses offered	1	1	1	1	4	0.0%	0.0%	0
Number of intl. conferences hosted and/or sponsored	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%	0
Number of intl. delegations (visits) received	0	0	3	0	3	150.0%	300.0%	1
Number of visits to foreign universities organized	0	0	2	4	6	100.0%	200.0%	1
Number of project proposals (applications) with intl. partners submitted	0	0	0	4	4	0.0%	0.0%	0
Number of M.A./PhD cotutelle with intl. universities ( <i>e.g. incl. Split-Site Programme</i> ) *	0	0	2	2	4	100.0%	200.0%	1
Number of joint programme with foreign universities established	0	0	0	1	1	0.0%	0.0%	0
<b>Overall</b>						<b>20.5%</b>	<b>38.9%</b>	<b>16.7%</b>

CHU provided data for all 16 indicators. 16.7% of these indicators show an increase between 2017 and 2019. The average increase per year is 20.5% and the average development from 2017 to 2019 is 38.9%. It has to be said that CHU is a special case since all its outbound and inbound activities only seem to have really started in 2020. For this year we see a huge increase in both areas but due to the approach chosen for this evaluation, they do not show in the assessment.

Satisfaction was not measured.

The monitoring and peer review showed no negative areas in implementation. Three indicators in the first area (no. 5, 6, 7) were considered partially achieved and all other indicators were fully achieved. Several recommendations were considered herein. The peers highlighted the role of students as both main target group and stakeholder in internationalisation and suggested to enhance student participation and consultation in future developments by CHU. For the control and assess the implementation of the international strategy and internationalisation as a whole, the reviewers gauged that CHU would require to set up institutional monitoring as well as formal and regular reporting procedures. They suggest that reporting should not only be addressed to the institutional leadership but all stakeholders. Employing the University Council in this regard seems an advisable first step. Moreover, while the reviewers acknowledged that recognition of studies taken abroad is reportedly established, they encouraged CHU to verify whether formal procedures and standards for recognition are in place and properly implemented, and whether they include an invitation to revisit the respective training conducted during the workshop held in March 2020 at the UGOE. They also recommend that CHU should reinforce and formalise its collaboration arrangement with affiliated colleges. In addition, the reviewers encouraged CHU together with other KRG HEI partners, e.g. through the newly established Network of Kurdish Internationalisation Practitioners, to launch an initiative lobbying for national action to develop a National Qualifications Framework. Regarding the organisation of the IRO, the reviewers had 2 suggestions: firstly, given that retaining sufficient

personnel resources at the IRO is a clear requirement at CHU, this HEI should also be prompted to allocate more resources in order to accommodate increased workload and complexity of tasks that go along with higher levels of internationalisation. Secondly, the reviewers encouraged CHU to invest in continuous staff development whereas enhancing the language proficiency levels of IRO staff. For newly recruited staff, language requirements should be set upon. Regarding the experience of students and staff with internationalisation, two recommendations were made: since CHU shows a clear demand for internationalisation, the reviewers suggested that CHU should invest more in building partnerships and joining networks that would allow for more opportunities to engage in international activities and provide equal opportunity to participate in these ones. Finally, they encouraged CHU to invest in continuous staff development at its IRO, for which some resources are available internationally, e.g. via participation of IRO staff in international staff weeks, coupled with proper post-exploitation sharing information and knowledge gained with other staff members allowing for institutional learning.

CHU also developed an implementation plan for their internationalisation strategy.

After the intermediate report, therefore, we could infer that during the time of TIGRIS the internationalisation at CHU has improved notably. CHU is but one case in which we can observe the direct impact of TIGRIS as an incubator of internationalisation, since both mobility areas were non-existent before and during the first years of TIGRIS but are now flourishing. This clearly indicates a direct positive and substantial effect of the TIGRIS project. However, the peer review exercise also shows that CHU is indeed still in the first stages of internationalisation and it will have to invest a substantial amount of resources and time to achieve a sustainable level of internationalisation in the near future.

## 02 DPU

Table 2 Results DPU

	2017	2018	2019	2020	TOTAL	Average increase per yr	Overall increase	% of improved indicators
<b>OUTGOING</b>								
Number of outgoing students advised & serviced ( <i>incl. B.A., M.A., PhD</i> )*	8	11	29	0	48	100.6%	262.5%	1
Number of outgoing administrative staff advised & serviced	0	0	0	1	1	0.0%	0.0%	0
Number of outgoing academic staff advised & serviced	0	1	1	0	2	100.0%	100.0%	1
<b>TOTAL p.a.</b>	8	12	30	1		100.0%	275.0%	1
<b>INCOMING</b>	2017	2018	2019	2020	TOTAL			
Number of incoming students advised & serviced ( <i>incl. B.A., M.A., PhD; exchange students and degree-seeking students</i> )	24	16	0	0	40	-66.7%	-100.0%	0
Number of incoming administrative staff advised & serviced	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%	0
Number of incoming academic staff advised & serviced	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%	0
<b>TOTAL p.a.</b>	24	16	0	0				
<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	2017	2018	2019	2020	TOTAL			
Number of MoUs and other cooperation agreements signed	7	3	4	1	15	-11.9%	-42.9%	0
Number of international workshops and trainings hosted/or and sponsored	2	2	0	0	4	-50.0%	-100.0%	0
Number of staff participated in intl. staff weeks, trainings, workshops abroad	0	18	1	6	25	1705.6%	100.0%	1

Number of summer programmes / courses offered	0	1	0	0	1	0.0%	0.0%	0
Number of intl. conferences hosted and/or sponsored	0	2	1	0	3	100.0%	100.0%	1
Number of intl. delegations (visits) received	5	13	5	0	23	49.2%	0.0%	1
Number of visits to foreign universities organised	3	5	6	4	18	43.3%	100.0%	1
Number of project proposals (applications) with intl. partners submitted	3	2	3	0	8	8.3%	0.0%	1
Number of M.A./PhD cotutelle with intl. universities (e.g. incl. Split-Site Programme) *	12	0	0	0	12	-1200.0%	-1200.0%	0
Number of joint programmes with foreign universities established	0	1	1	0	2	100.0%	100.0%	1
<b>Overall</b>						<b>54.9%</b>	<b>-42.5%</b>	<b>50.0%</b>

DPU provided data for all 16 indicators but 2 of the incoming indicators showed no cases in any of the years. 50% of these indicators show an increase between 2017 and 2019, while 4 indicators (25%) effectively decreased.

The average increase per year is 54.9% and the average development from 2017 to 2019 is -42.5% but this mainly due to a substantial outlier: the number of M.A./PhD cotutelles started at a rather high number of 12 in 2017 and then decreased to zero – following our logic to avoid division by zero resulting in a -1200% development. If this outlier is taken out, the average development is an average increase of 34.6%.

Satisfaction was not measured.

The peer review analysis showed no negative indicators while three indicators in the first area (no.4, 5, 7), 2 in the second area (2,3) and one in the third (3) area were partially achieved. All other indicators were considered as achieved. Accordingly, several recommendations were made. For section one, the reviewers suggested to strengthen the participatory element and overall inclusiveness of the internationalisation process at DPU, specifically addressing the students. They also recommended to strengthen the monitoring and reporting procedures for internationalisation. A possibility hereby would be to expand the reporting to a broader audience informing all relevant stakeholders and involving the University Council. The reviewers suggested that DPU could work further on ensuring a solid understanding and implementation of recognition procedures for studies taken abroad, since recognition is an important element in student mobility and joint international education. To this end a further suggestion would be revisiting the trainings conducted during the workshop held in March 2020 at UGOE. They also recommended to continue with the implementation of the Bologna process and related reforms thereby ensuring a proper implementation throughout the university, its colleges and departments and to continue with the involvement of international experts. For the second area of study, they suggested to allocate more staff in the future and closely monitoring whether personnel resources at the IRO were sufficient to steer the increasing workload that comes with increasing levels of internationalisation. Herein, retraining the current number of staff available at the IRO should be a priority. They also recommended DPU to invest in continuous staff development and as part of this enhance the English language proficiency of current staff while setting language requirements for new staff to be recruited. Finally, the reviewers pointed out that for future development of the IRO, DPU should ensure a clear functional differentiation between units and consider renaming the unit “Cultural Relations” in order to make the structure more relatable and accessible for third parties, especially potential international partners. Recommendations for the third area of monitoring included supporting staff members to accommodate to their new roles as promoters and managers of internationalisation by ensuring a clear understanding of the IRO’s mission and business as well as related responsibilities and investing in continuous staff development to contribute to the professionalisation of IRO staff. Looking for further training opportunities is highly encouraged, from which some are available internationally (e.g. through participation in international staff weeks). For

the fourth area, the reviewers only recommended to verify its dissemination channels for distributing information on internationalisation and to identify potential areas of improvement.

DPU has also prepared an implementation plan for their internationalisation strategy.

Compared to the intermediate report, the internationalisation at DPU has improved during the time of TIGRIS but with mixed results and the peer review exercise clearly reflect this observation.

### 03 EPU

Table 3 Results EPU

	2017	2018	2019	2020	TOTAL	Average increase per yr	Overall increase	% of improved indicators
<b>OUTGOING</b>								
Number of outgoing students advised & serviced ( <i>incl. B.A., M.A., PhD</i> )*	0	22	24	0	46	1104.5%	2400.0%	1
Number of outgoing administrative staff advised & serviced	6	6	41	1	54	291.7%	583.3%	1
Number of outgoing academic staff advised & serviced	4	13	9	1	27	97.1%	125.0%	1
<b>TOTAL p.a.</b>	10	41	74	2		195.2%	640.0%	1
<b>INCOMING</b>	2017	2018	2019	2020	TOTAL			
Number of incoming students advised & serviced ( <i>incl. B.A., M.A., PhD; exchange students and degree-seeking students</i> )	14	17	39	0	70	75.4%	178.6%	1
Number of incoming administrative staff advised & serviced	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%	0
Number of incoming academic staff advised & serviced	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%	0
<b>TOTAL p.a.</b>	14	17	39	0		75.4%	178.6%	1
<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	2017	2018	2019	2020	TOTAL			
Number of MoUs and other cooperation agreements signed	7	12	8	5	32	19.0%	14.3%	1
Number of international workshops and trainings hosted/or and sponsored	0	0	4	2	6	200.0%	400.0%	1
Number of staff participated in intl. staff weeks, trainings, workshops abroad	16	43	108	20	187	160.0%	575.0%	1
Number of summer programmes / courses offered	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%	0
Number of intl. conferences hosted and/or sponsored	1	1	3	2	7	100.0%	200.0%	1
Number of intl. delegations (visits) received	0	2	9	2	13	275.0%	900.0%	1
Number of visits to foreign universities organised	9	22	21	2	54	69.9%	133.3%	1
Number of project proposals (applications) with intl. partners submitted	3	2	3	3	11	8.3%	0.0%	1
Number of M.A./PhD cotutelle with intl. universities ( <i>e.g. incl. Split-Site Programme</i> ) *	1	1	2	2	6	50.0%	100.0%	1
Number of joint programmes with foreign universities established	0	0	1	1	2	50.0%	100.0%	1
<b>Overall</b>						154.0%	362.7%	83.3%

EPU provided all 16 indicators. 83.3% of these indicators show an increase between 2017 and 2019, no indicator decreased.

The average increase per year is 154% and the average development from 2017 to 2019 is 362.7%.

Satisfaction was not measured.

The peer review monitoring showed no negative indicators, only 1 indicator in the first section (no. 7) was partially achieved while all other indicators were fully achieved. Yet, the reviewers made a number of important observations. For area 1 of monitoring, they suggested to appoint staff responsible for internationalisation at college level since this might yet increase EPU's capacity to engage in and implement internationalisation throughout the university. Also, they encouraged EPU to strengthen the participatory process and inclusion of students in domains of internationalisation, since they represent both the main target group and stakeholders. Although DPU affirmed that recognition of studies taken abroad is reportedly established, reviewers still recommend to check once more whether formal procedures and standards for recognition are in place and properly implemented throughout the university. As with most partners, the EU reviewers suggested to double check the respective training conducted during the workshop held in March 2020 at UGOE. Additionally, the reviewers recommended to continue with the implementation of the Bologna process and related reforms thereby ensuring a proper implementation throughout the university, its colleges and departments as well as with the involvement of international experts. For area 2, the reviewers suggested considering renaming – similar to the case of DPU - the unit “Cultural Relations” in order to make the structure more relatable and accessible for third parties, especially potential international partners. In area 3 of monitoring, the only recommendation was to consider how to develop capacities for engaging in international marketing exploring both physical and virtual means, although the peers concede that this aspect is neither a priority nor mandatory requirement at the current stage of development. Finally, the reviewers only made one recommendation in area 4 of monitoring referring to putting a selection process in place that is based on the principles of openness, transparency and competitiveness.

EPU – like previous HEIs - has developed an implementation plan to support the realisation of its internationalisation strategy.

We can observe, since the intermediate report that during the period of TIGRIS project the internationalisation at EPU has improved measurably and arguably more than at any other Kurdish HEI in the project. The peer review also reflects the good status achieved during the project with nearly all indicators fully completed.

## 04 KISSR

Table 4 Results KISSR

	2017	2018	2019	2020	TOTAL	Average increase per yr	Overall increase	% of improved indicators
<b>OUTGOING</b>								
Number of outgoing students advised & serviced (incl. B.A., M.A., PhD)*	50	175	240	145	610	143.6%	380.0%	1
Number of outgoing administrative staff advised & serviced	20	30	50	25	125	58.3%	150.0%	1
Number of outgoing academic staff advised & serviced	5	12	17	15	49	90.8%	240.0%	1
<b>TOTAL p.a.</b>	75	217	307	185		115.4%	309.3%	1
<b>INCOMING</b>	2017	2018	2019	2020	TOTAL			

Number of incoming students advised & serviced ( <i>incl. B.A., M.A., PhD; exchange students and degree-seeking students</i> )	6	5	7	3	21	11.7%	16.7%	1
Number of incoming administrative staff advised & serviced	25	18	25	20	88	0.0%	0.0%	0
Number of incoming academic staff advised & serviced	25	8	30	16	79	103.5%	20.0%	1
<b>TOTAL p.a.</b>	56	31	62	39		27.7%	10.7%	1
<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	2017	2018	2019	2020	TOTAL			
Number of MoUs and other cooperation agreements signed	8	18	16	20	62	56.9%	100.0%	1
Number of international workshops and trainings hosted/or and sponsored	12	17	24	22	75	41.4%	100.0%	1
Number of staff participated in intl. staff weeks, trainings, workshops abroad	35	46	56	32	169	26.6%	60.0%	1
Number of summer programmes / courses offered	6	6	8	8	28	16.7%	33.3%	1
Number of intl. conferences hosted and/or sponsored	3	2	2	2	9	-16.7%	-33.3%	0
Number of intl. delegations (visits) received	22	24	26	22	94	8.7%	18.2%	1
Number of visits to foreign universities organised	8	12	11	14	45	20.8%	37.5%	1
Number of project proposals (applications) with intl. partners submitted	45	68	60	75	248	19.7%	33.3%	1
Number of M.A./PhD cotutelle with intl. universities ( <i>e.g. incl. Split-Site Programme</i> ) *	1	2	14	14	31	350.0%	1300.0%	1
Number of joint programmes with foreign universities established	6	6	7	7	26	8.3%	16.7%	1
<b>Overall</b>						<b>58.8%</b>	<b>154.5%</b>	<b>87.5%</b>

KISSR provided all 16 indicators. 87.5% of these indicators show an increase between 2017 and 2019, only one indicator decreased (Number of international conferences hosted).

The average increase per year is 58.8% and the average development from 2017 to 2019 is 154.5%.

Satisfaction was not measured.

As in previous cases no indicator resulted negative, only 1 indicator in the first area of analysis (no.7) and one in area 2 (no.1) were partially achieved and all other indicators were fully completed. However, the EU reviewers still recommended some important recommendations. Firstly, according to them KISSR needs to invest considerable effort in setting up formal and standardised institutional procedures for the recognition of studies taken abroad, especially in regard to the recognition of periods of study in the near future. According to the reviewers, KISSR requires building both a comprehensive understanding of and in-house expertise on the recognition of studies and build transparent institutional procedures on that. As with other Kurdish partners, the reviewers suggested revisiting the respective training conducted at the UGOE in March 2020 and clarifying open questions on applicable regulation with the relevant ministry of higher education. On area 2, they made 3 recommendations: first, to try to retain current full-time employees available at IRO and closely monitor if further staff is needed; second, to ensure the availability of staff with English language proficiency at the IRO and improve existing proficiency levels by training and via setting language requirements for future staff; third, to review the organisational structure of the IRO and see through the organisational transformation started thereby addressing any shortcomings identified. The recommendations for the third section are to ensure that clear responsibilities and points of contact are clearly available for both students and staff as well as external partners and to increase training and recruitment in order to build up a core of well-trained and self-dependent IRO staff thereby

achieving a higher functional differentiation while lessen the workload of higher management, even though the resources seem sufficient at the moment. For the fourth area, the reviewers have four recommendations: first, to check whether the current dissemination channels as well as information offered are appropriate in ensuring its students and staff have all relevant information, especially since surveying the satisfaction of students and staff serviced is key in this area and could point to potential shortcomings; second, due to the visible demand for internationalisation, to now invest in building partnerships and joining networks that allow for more opportunities to engage in international activities (e.g. mobility, training, research etc.); third, to ensure an open, transparent and competitive selection process for engaging in international activities is in place that provides equal opportunity and benefits a wide range of people; fourth, to invest in continuous staff development at its IRO, for which some resources are available international, e.g. via participation of IRO staff in international staff weeks. Such participation should be coupled with proper post-exploitation sharing information and knowledge gained with other staff members allowing for institutional learning.

KISSR provided a detailed implementation plan for their internationalisation strategy.

From the intermediate report and during the lifespan of TIGRIS project we can infer that the internationalisation at KISSR has improved satisfactorily. However, since KISSR is in a leading position already in Kurdistan, the recommendations of the reviewers should be taken into account in order to build further on the already good pillars of internalisation established.

## 05 SPU

Table 5 Results SPU

	2017	2018	2019	2020	TOTAL	Average increase per yr	Overall increase	% of improved indicators
<b>OUTGOING</b>								
Number of outgoing students advised & serviced ( <i>incl. B.A., M.A., PhD</i> )*	7	11	29	0	<b>47</b>	110.4%	314.3%	1
Number of outgoing administrative staff advised & serviced	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>	0.0%	0.0%	0
Number of outgoing academic staff advised & serviced	0	2	5	0	<b>7</b>	100.0%	100.0%	1
<b>TOTAL p.a.</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>0</b>		123.6%	385.7%	1
<b>INCOMING</b>	2017	2018	2019	2020	<b>TOTAL</b>			
Number of incoming students advised & serviced ( <i>incl. B.A., M.A., PhD; exchange students and degree-seeking students</i> )	8	12	2	0	<b>22</b>	-16.7%	-75.0%	0
Number of incoming administrative staff advised & serviced	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>	0.0%	0.0%	0
Number of incoming academic staff advised & serviced	0	5	11	0	<b>16</b>	0.0%	1100.0%	0
<b>TOTAL p.a.</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>0</b>		44.5%	62.5%	1
<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	2017	2018	2019	2020	<b>TOTAL</b>			
Number of MoUs and other cooperation agreements signed	12	9	9	0	<b>30</b>	-12.5%	-25.0%	0
Number of international conferences, workshops and trainings hosted/or and sponsored	11	39	55	22	<b>127</b>	147.8%	400.0%	1
Number of staff participated in intl. staff weeks, trainings, workshops abroad	8	17	19	3	<b>47</b>	62.1%	137.5%	1

Number of summer programmes / courses offered	0	0	3	0	<b>3</b>	0.0%	0.0%	0
Number of intl. delegations (visits) received	22	27	39	0	<b>88</b>	100.0%	100.0%	1
Number of visits to foreign universities organised	9	7	19	0	<b>35</b>	74.6%	111.1%	1
Number of project proposals (applications) with intl. partners submitted	2	1	0	0	<b>3</b>	-75.0%	-100.0%	0
Number of M.A./PhD cotutelle with intl. universities (e.g. incl. <i>Split-Site Programme</i> )	0	0	1	0	<b>1</b>	0.0%	-50.0%	0
Number of joint programmes with foreign universities established	1	2	2	0	<b>5</b>	50.0%	100.0%	1
Number of papers that have impact factors	9	17	40	0	<b>66</b>	112.1%	344.4%	1
<b>Overall</b>						<b>45.2%</b>	<b>161.4%</b>	<b>55.6%</b>

SPU also provided all 16 indicators. 55.6% of these indicators show an increase between 2017 and 2019, 3 indicators decreased.

The average increase per year is 45.6% and the average development from 2017 to 2019 is 161.4%.

Satisfaction was not measured.

The peer review monitoring showed no negative indicators. However, a substantial number of indicators were achieved partially: 4 in the first area of analysis (no.4-7), 3 in the second (no.1-3), and 1 in area 3 (no.3), while all indicators of area 4 were fully achieved. This translates into a percentage of 32% of only “partially” met criteria and thus nearly reaches the 40% benchmark set by the internal QA Committee. The peer review for SPU is therefore among the more critical ones, stating in general that while the level achieved up until now meets the basic requirements, SPU will have to make substantial efforts in the future to develop internationalisation to a more appropriate level. Across the four areas of analysis, the reviewers made a rather extensive list of recommendations:

- Closely monitor its internationalisation process in order to establish whether the current institutional arrangements allow for internationalisation on an institutional scale.
- Formalise intra-institutional cooperation arrangements and procedures in order to render internationalisation an integral and systemic part of higher education at SPU guaranteeing its long-term sustainability
- Continue with the implementation of Bologna Process reform elements, best by developing its in-house expertise and with continued support from (international) experts in the field
- Guarantee a proper understanding of the Bologna Process, its elements and implementation by all relevant stakeholders to this process as a *conditio sine qua non*.
- Ensure that proper procedures for the recognition of studies abroad are in place rendering recognition an institutional norm
- Invest in building partnerships with institutions beyond the region - despite the acknowledged difficulty to achieving that.
- Follow through with increasing the number of staff available at the IRO and to engage in continuous staff development, e.g. by offering language training, thereby solidifying the IRO and increasing its capacity to implement internationalisation at SPU
- Strengthen the IRO and its role in implementing internationalisation while reviewing the organisational structure of the IRO. This could be done by introducing clear individual areas of responsibilities and achieving a higher level of functional differentiation, which in turn can improve efficiency while also helping staff members to accommodate to their new roles as promoters and managers of internationalisation

- Launch – together with other KRG HEI partners and through the newly established Network of Kurdish Internationalisation Practitioners - an initiative lobbying for a revision of regulations that prevent KRG HEIs from recruit staff autonomously
- Think on how and where to establish international marketing and promotions services
- Arrange a formalised, transparent and competitive selections process in place to cope with a potential increasing mobility of students and staff (especially in exchange with European institutions and within the framework of Erasmus+ KA107),
- Revisit the IRO's current setup in order to sharpen its scope and mode of operation, thereby clearly defining its core services and tasks, especially when employing a rather decentralised approach
- Review its approach to staff mobility and its exploitation in regard to utilising information and knowledge gained. Using staff mobility strategically for staff development and capacity building will greatly facilitate SPU's future development.

SPU established an implementation plan to realise its internationalisation strategy

In sum, although SPU improved its internationalisation process during the project it is still very much at the start of internationalisation and will especially have to revise its structures and internal political approach in order to open a path for deeper internationalisation.

## 06 SU

Table 6 Results SU

	2017	2018	2019	2020	TOTAL	Average increase per yr	Overall increase	% of improved indicators
<b>OUTGOING</b>								
Number of outgoing students advised & serviced ( <i>incl. B.A., M.A., PhD</i> )*	50	66	55	0	171	7.7%	10.0%	1
Number of outgoing administrative staff advised & serviced	11	15	21	0	47	38.2%	90.9%	1
Number of outgoing academic staff advised & serviced	36	40	50	0	126	18.1%	38.9%	1
<b>TOTAL p.a.</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>0</b>		14.4%	29.9%	1
<b>INCOMING</b>	2017	2018	2019	2020	TOTAL			
Number of incoming students advised & serviced ( <i>incl. B.A., M.A., PhD; exchange students and degree-seeking students</i> )	15	22	18	0	55	14.2%	20.0%	1
Number of incoming administrative staff advised & serviced	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%	0
Number of incoming academic staff advised & serviced	25	23	24	2	74	-1.8%	-4.0%	0
<b>TOTAL p.a.</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>2</b>		2.9%	5.0%	1
<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	2017	2018	2019	2020	TOTAL			
Number of MoUs and other cooperation agreements signed	15	18	12	0	45	-6.7%	-20.0%	0
Number of international workshops and trainings hosted/or and sponsored	5	7	6	0	18	12.9%	20.0%	1
Number of staff participated in intl. staff weeks, trainings, workshops abroad	40	52	46	6	144	9.2%	15.0%	1
Number of summer programmes / courses offered	3	2	4	0	9	33.3%	33.3%	1
Number of intl. conferences hosted and/or sponsored	3	5	6	0	14	43.3%	100.0%	1
Number of intl. delegations (visits) received	15	22	18	0	55	14.2%	20.0%	1

Number of visits to foreign universities organized	10	13	12	4	<b>39</b>	11.2%	20.0%	1
Number of project proposals (applications) with intl. partners submitted	12	13	6	2	<b>33</b>	-22.8%	-50.0%	0
Number of M.A./PhD cotutelle with intl. universities (e.g. incl. Split-Site Programme) *	20	16	15	0	<b>51</b>	-13.1%	-25.0%	0
Number of joint programmes with foreign universities established	6	4	2	2	<b>14</b>	-41.7%	-66.7%	0
<b>Overall</b>						<b>7.4%</b>	<b>13.2%</b>	<b>66.7%</b>

SU provided data for all 16 indicators but 1 showed no cases in any of the years (incoming administrative staff). 66.7% of these indicators show an increase between 2017 and 2019, while 5 indicators decreased effectively.

The average increase per year is 7.4% and the average development from 2017 to 2019 is 13.2%.

Satisfaction was not measured.

The peer review showed that three indicators in the first area (1, 4, 5) were considered partially developed while all other indicators were fully achieved. Very few recommendations were made. For example, a suggestion from the EU reviewers was to continue the internationalisation process with the support of dedicated staff for internationalisation at college level; to strengthen monitoring and reporting procedures in order to develop a more inclusive and collaborative process when it comes to the development of international strategy and policies. The reviewers also suggest that SU could consider revising the structure and designations of the IRO in order to make its organisation more relatable and accessible for outsiders who do not possess detailed knowledge on the office's organisation.

SU also developed an implementation plan for their internationalisation strategy.

In sum, after the intermediate report we would conclude that during the time of TIGRIS, the internationalisation process at SU has improved overall.

## 07 UoH

Table 7 Results UoH

	2017	2018	2019	2020	TOTAL	Average increase per yr	Overall increase	% of improved indicators
<b>OUTGOING</b>								
Number of outgoing students advised & serviced (incl. B.A., M.A., PhD)*	11	12	19	0	42	33.7%	72.7%	1
Number of outgoing administrative staff advised & serviced	0	0	0	2	2	0.0%	0.0%	0
Number of outgoing academic staff advised & serviced	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%	0
<b>TOTAL p.a.</b>	11	12	19	2		33.7%	72.7%	1
<b>INCOMING</b>	2017	2018	2019	2020	TOTAL			
Number of incoming students advised & serviced (incl. B.A., M.A., PhD; exchange students and degree-seeking students)	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%	0
Number of incoming administrative staff advised & serviced	1	1	0	0	2	-50.0%	-100.0%	0

Number of incoming academic staff advised & serviced	0	2	4	4	10	200.0%	400.0%	1
<b>TOTAL p.a.</b>	1	3	4	4		116.7%	300.0%	1
<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	2017	2018	2019	2020	TOTAL			
Number of MoUs and other cooperation agreements signed	6	4	4	2	16	-16.7%	-33.3%	0
Number of international conferences, workshops and trainings hosted/or and sponsored	0	4	5	2	11	250.0%	500.0%	1
Number of staff participated in intl. staff weeks, trainings, workshops abroad	4	8	4	17	33	25.0%	0.0%	1
Number of summer programmes / courses offered	1	0	0	0	1	-50.0%	-100.0%	0
Number of intl. conferences hosted and/or sponsored	1	3	2	0	6	83.3%	100.0%	1
Number of intl. delegations (visits) received	3	6	5	6	20	41.7%	66.7%	1
Number of visits to foreign universities organised	1	5	3	2	11	180.0%	200.0%	1
Number of project proposals (applications) with intl. partners submitted	0	0	1	0	1	50.0%	100.0%	1
Number of M.A./PhD cotutelle with intl. universities (e.g. incl. Split-Site Programme)	1	0	0	0	1	-50.0%	-100.0%	0
Number of joint programmes with foreign universities established	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%	0
<b>Overall</b>						<b>46.9%</b>	<b>82.2%</b>	<b>55.6%</b>

UoH provided all 16 indicators. 55.6% of these indicators show an increase between 2017 and 2019, 4 indicators decreased.

The average increase per year is 46.9% and the average development from 2017 to 2019 is 82.2%.

Satisfaction was not measured.

Although no indicator was negative, three indicators in the first area of analysis (no.4, 6, 7), and 1 in the fourth area (4) were partially achieved. All other indicators were fully completed. Nonetheless, substantial recommendations were made by the reviewers. For area 1, they suggested to consolidate the institutional setup and arrangements developed, especially in regard to ensuring an inclusive process for further developing internationalisation and collaboration with the colleges and other decentral units and supporting this process by monitoring the internationalisation process closely in order to establish if the achieved setup and arrangements are working and produce desirable results in bringing about the internationalisation of UOH. Under the condition of future increased levels of internationalisation, the reviewers saw the necessity to have dedicated staff at the colleges managing internationalisation. They also argue for the development of both a comprehensive understanding of and an institutional framework for the recognition of studies abroad, including the development of formal procedures for the recognition of studies abroad at UOH in order to render it a standard element of student mobility. In addition, they encouraged UOH to reinforce its efforts to implement the Bologna Process and related reforms, which requires UOH to disseminate and apply gained knowledge throughout the institution, while partners should also look for ways to include international expertise and advice in the process. As example, the latter statement could be achieved by launching a joint initiative with other KRG HEIs through the newly formed Network of Kurdish Internationalisation Practitioners providing the benefits of wider impact and reduction of costs. For area 2 of analysis, we found the following recommendations: first, acknowledging possible temporary limitations, UOH should check that appropriate personnel resources are available at the IRO at all times and should not

let the number of active staff members drop further; second, regarding the progression of internationalisation, UOH should be ready to allocate additional personnel resources to the IRO in order to accommodate for the additional administrative workload that comes with increased internationalisation, especially considering the importance of planning ahead; third, to invest in continued staff development and implementing English language training for IRO staff as a first step; fourth, to look for further training opportunities is highly encouraged, of which some are available internationally, e.g. through participation in international staff weeks. In section 3, the peers focus on two recommendations: first, although neither a priority nor mandatory requirement at the current stage of development, to consider how to develop capacities for engaging in international marketing and the pro-active recruitment of international students and staff; second, to regard the development of recognition procedures and implementing recognition of studies abroad for returning students as a standard feature of student mobility as a future must for UOH. In the final section, the peers focus on efforts on building relations and partnerships with foreign institutions in order to satisfy the demand for more internationalisation activities, especially in regard to international exchange. As long as the current COVID-19 pandemic is impeding on international mobility, virtual exchange formats could be explored. Also, recognising that establishing partnerships can be challenging, they suggest focusing on regional partners as a suitable approach, with supporting relations and partnerships with institutions from a wide range of countries and regions remaining the ultimate goal. Lastly, the reviewers encouraged UOH to continuously invest in staff development and training, since having good qualified staff is considered to certainly amplify the internationalisation process of the university, and they point out that in this process some resources for training (both in terms of knowledge and funding) might be available internationally, rendering internationalisation itself to be one instrument to address this demand.

UoH has developed an implementation plan to support the realisation of its internationalisation strategy.

After the intermediate report and during the lifespan of the TIGRIS project, the internationalisation at UoH has improved adequately. Nevertheless, the detailed comments of the reviewers show room for further improvement after the end of the TIGRIS project.

## 08 UoR

Table 8 Results UoR

	2017	2018	2019	2020	TOTAL	Average increase per yr	Overall increase	% of improved indicators
<b>OUTGOING</b>								
Number of outgoing students advised & serviced ( <i>incl. B.A., M.A., PhD</i> )*	3	10	35	30	78	241.7%	1066.7%	1
Number of outgoing administrative staff advised & serviced	7	10	15	15	47	46.4%	114.3%	1
Number of outgoing academic staff advised & serviced	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%	0
<b>TOTAL p.a.</b>	10	20	50	45		125.0%	400.0%	1
<b>INCOMING</b>	2017	2018	2019	2020	TOTAL			
Number of incoming students advised & serviced ( <i>incl. B.A., M.A., PhD; exchange students and degree-seeking students</i> )	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%	0
Number of incoming administrative staff advised & serviced	3	5	5	0	13	0.0%	0.0%	0
Number of incoming academic staff advised & serviced	5	7	7	0	19	20.0%	40.0%	1

<b>TOTAL p.a.</b>	8	12	12	0		25.0%	50.0%	1
<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	2017	2018	2019	2020	TOTAL			
Number of MoUs and other cooperation agreements signed	4	4	4	1	13	0.0%	0.0%	0
Number of international workshops and trainings hosted/or and sponsored	1	3	3	1	8	100.0%	200.0%	1
Number of staff participated in intl. staff weeks, trainings, workshops abroad	2	4	10	3	19	125.0%	400.0%	1
Number of summer programmes / courses offered	3	3	3	0	9	0.0%	0.0%	0
Number of intl. conferences hosted and/or sponsored	1	1	2	1	5	50.0%	100.0%	1
Number of intl. delegations (visits) received	1	5	7	1	14	220.0%	600.0%	1
Number of visits to foreign universities organised	2	2	4	1	9	50.0%	100.0%	1
Number of project proposals (applications) with intl. partners submitted	1	3	6	3	13	150.0%	500.0%	1
Number of M.A./PhD cotutelle with intl. universities (e.g. incl. Split-Site Programme)	0	0	0	1	1	0.0%	0.0%	0
Number of joint programmes with foreign universities established	1	0	0	0	1	-100.0%	-100.0%	0
<b>Overall</b>						<b>56.4%</b>	<b>188.8%</b>	<b>56.3%</b>

UoR provided all 16 indicators. 56.3% of these indicators show an increase between 2017 and 2019, one indicator decreased (number of joint programmes).

The average increase per year is 56.4% and the average development from 2017 to 2019 is 188.8%.

Satisfaction was not measured.

The peer review exercise showed excellent results similar to EPU. No indicators were negative and only 1 aspect in the second area of analysis (no.2) was partially achieved. All other indicators were fulfilled. Correspondingly, the recommendations of the reviewers were short. In area 2 of analysis, they suggested to advance further with plans to increase the number of staff available at the IRO in order to ensure that sufficient capacity is available to manage and promote internationalisation; with increasing levels of internationalisation, allocating addition staff to the IRO in order to accommodate for increased workload and complexity; fully formalising the position for grants and scholarships; investing in continuous staff development and actively looking for further training opportunities, of which some are available internationally, e.g. through participation in international staff weeks; launching an initiative lobbying for a revision of regulations that prevent KRG HEIs from recruit staff autonomously, together with other KRG HEI partners and through the newly established Network of Kurdish Internationalisation Practitioners. The only recommendation in area 3 of analysis was to develop dedicated capacities for international marketing as part of the future development plans at UOR - although this is not a requirement for now. For area 4 of analysis, they had more elaborate recommendations:

- Collect information from students and staff having returned from stays abroad and use this information for future consultation as well as for improving its own services
- Follow-up with the partner institution in question in case certain information are found to be lacking
- Provide more opportunities for mobility and exchange, engage in translating its achievements in creating the necessary preconditions and capacities to successfully engage in internationalisation into tangible results by building partnerships and relations with international partners

- Explore specifically virtual exchange formats - as long as the current COVID-19 pandemic is impeding on international mobility.
- With staff reporting on additional bureaucratic hurdles when engaging in international mobility, launch an initiative together with other KRG HEIs through the newly formed Network of Kurdish Internationalisation Practitioners lobbying with the ministry for a revision of existing regulations and reduction of said bureaucracy.

As with the other Kurdish partners, UoR also established a good implementation plan for the realisation of their internationalisation strategy.

Consequently, we can state that from the intermediate report and until the end of the project, the internationalisation process at UoR has improved reasonably. The peer review showed that UoR is among the most advanced Kurdish partners with regard to the realised structures and procedures and has benefitted substantially from the TIGRIS project.

## 09 UoS

Table 9 Results UoS

	2017	2018	2019	2020	TOTAL	Average increase per yr	Overall increase	% of improved indicators
<b>OUTGOING</b>								
Number of outgoing students advised & serviced (incl. B.A., M.A., PhD)*	65	72	91	37	265	18.6%	40.0%	1
Number of outgoing administrative staff advised & serviced	18	21	25	11	75	17.9%	38.9%	1
Number of outgoing academic staff advised & serviced	34	39	56	24	153	29.1%	64.7%	1
<b>TOTAL p.a.</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>72</b>				
<b>INCOMING</b>	2017	2018	2019	2020	TOTAL			
Number of incoming students advised & serviced (incl. B.A., M.A., PhD; exchange students and degree-seeking students)	4	7	8	2	21	44.6%	100.0%	1
Number of incoming administrative staff advised & serviced	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%	0
Number of incoming academic staff advised & serviced	13	21	24	8	66	37.9%	84.6%	1
<b>TOTAL p.a.</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>10</b>				
<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	2017	2018	2019	2020	TOTAL			
Number of MoUs and other cooperation agreements signed	7	7	9	2	25	14.3%	28.6%	1
Number of international workshops and trainings hosted/or and sponsored	10	12	15	4	41	22.5%	50.0%	1
Number of staff participated in intl. staff weeks, trainings, workshops abroad	36	41	43	18	138	9.4%	19.4%	1
Number of summer programmes / courses offered	2	2	5	0	9	75.0%	150.0%	1
Number of intl. conferences hosted and/or sponsored	7	11	13	1	32	37.7%	85.7%	1
Number of intl. delegations (visits) received	21	28	30	19	98	20.2%	42.9%	1
Number of visits to foreign universities organised	9	13	14	6	42	26.1%	55.6%	1
Number of project proposals (applications) with intl. partners submitted	7	8	11	3	29	25.9%	57.1%	1

Number of M.A./PhD cotutelle with intl. universities (e.g. incl. Split-Site Programme)	18	16	13	2	49	-14.9%	-27.8%	0
Number of joint programmes with foreign universities established	3	4	6	2	15	41.7%	100.0%	1
<b>Overall</b>						<b>25.4%</b>	<b>55.6%</b>	<b>87.5%</b>

UoS provided all 16 indicators. 87.5% of these indicators show an increase between 2017 and 2019, only one indicator decreased (Number of M.A./PhD cotutelle with intl. universities (e.g. incl. Split-Site Programme) and the explanation was that the funding has been stopped recently.

The average increase per year is 25.4% and the average development from 2017 to 2019 is 55.6%.

Satisfaction was not measured.

The peer review showed very good results. No indicator was negative and only 2 indicators in the fourth area of analysis (no. 1, 4), were partially achieved. Accordingly, only few recommendations were done by the reviewers:

- Strengthen monitoring and reporting lines and to ensure the future involvement of all relevant stakeholders in the process of internationalisation
- Continue with the implementation of Bologna Process reform elements, best by developing its in-house expertise and with continued support from (international) experts in the field
- Review the recognition procedures to identify potential issues that could impede on the recognition of studies abroad. Assessing existing communication channels for identifying potential blind spots could also be considered.

UoS also provided a well-developed implementation plan.

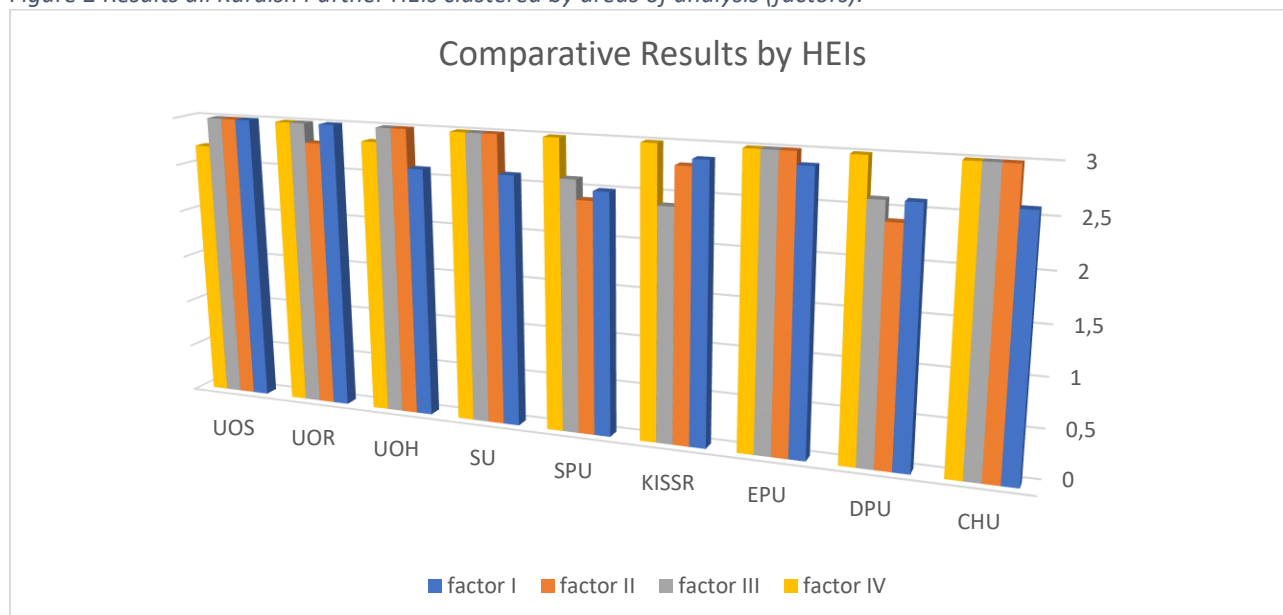
As with other HEIS, we can state that UoS improved the internationalisation during the 3 years of TIGRIS project. Considering the rather outstanding results in the peer review, UoS seems to be especially well-positioned to act as a role model for other Kurdish universities with regard to the well established structures and procedures.

## Results across all Kurdish Universities

Based on GII data tool results and EU peer reviews we can compare HEIs qualitative and quantitatively. Qualitatively, and based on the threshold established by the internal QA Committee, all 9 HEIs have improved their internationalisation process from the beginning of the project being UoS, UoR, EPU, SU and CHU the leading ones by the end of the project.

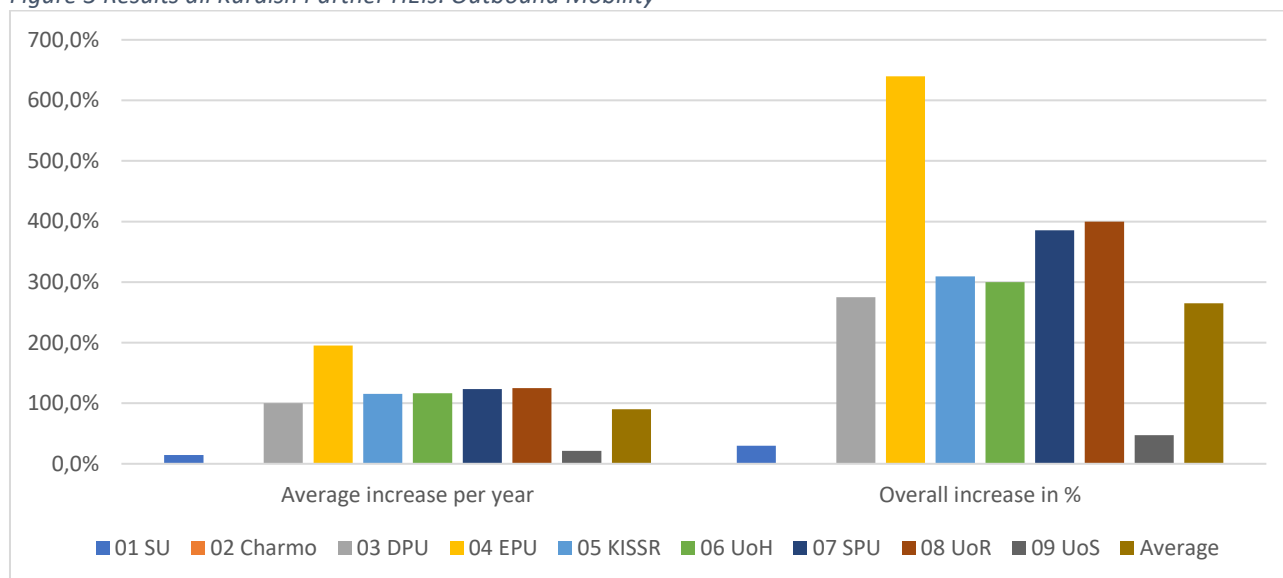
Results all Kurdish Partner HEIs clustered by areas of analysis (factors).

Figure 2 Results all Kurdish Partner HEIs clustered by areas of analysis (factors).



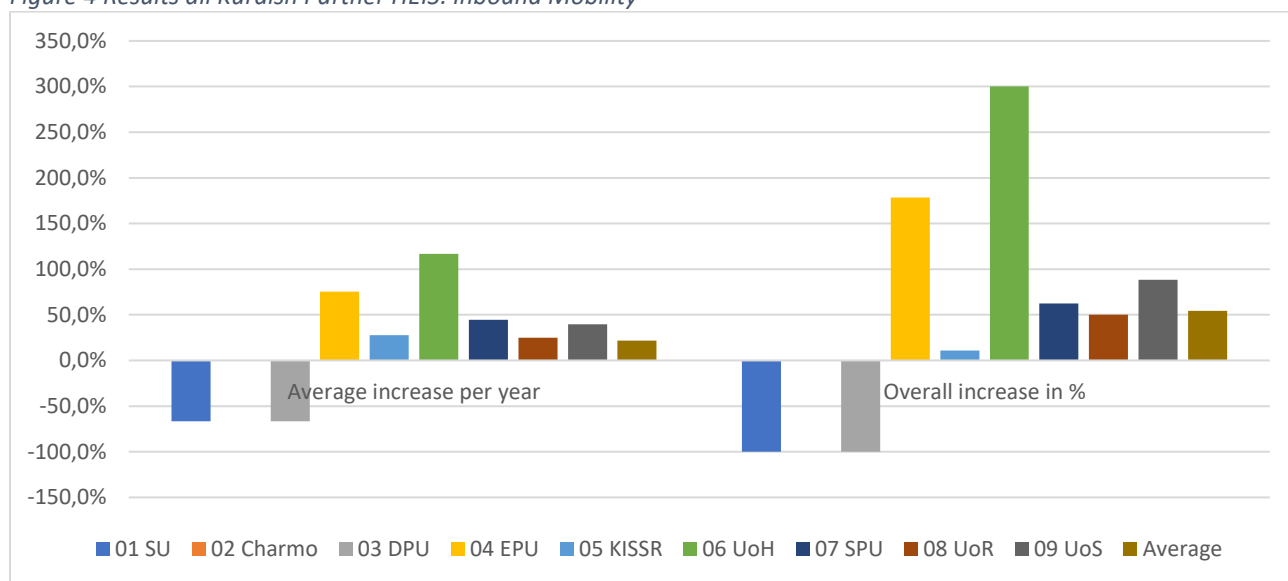
If we compare all the three key quantitative indicators (inbound, outbound mobility and activities) across the Kurdish partner universities, we can assess whether the universities made progress during the time of the TIGRIS project.

Figure 3 Results all Kurdish Partner HEIs: Outbound Mobility



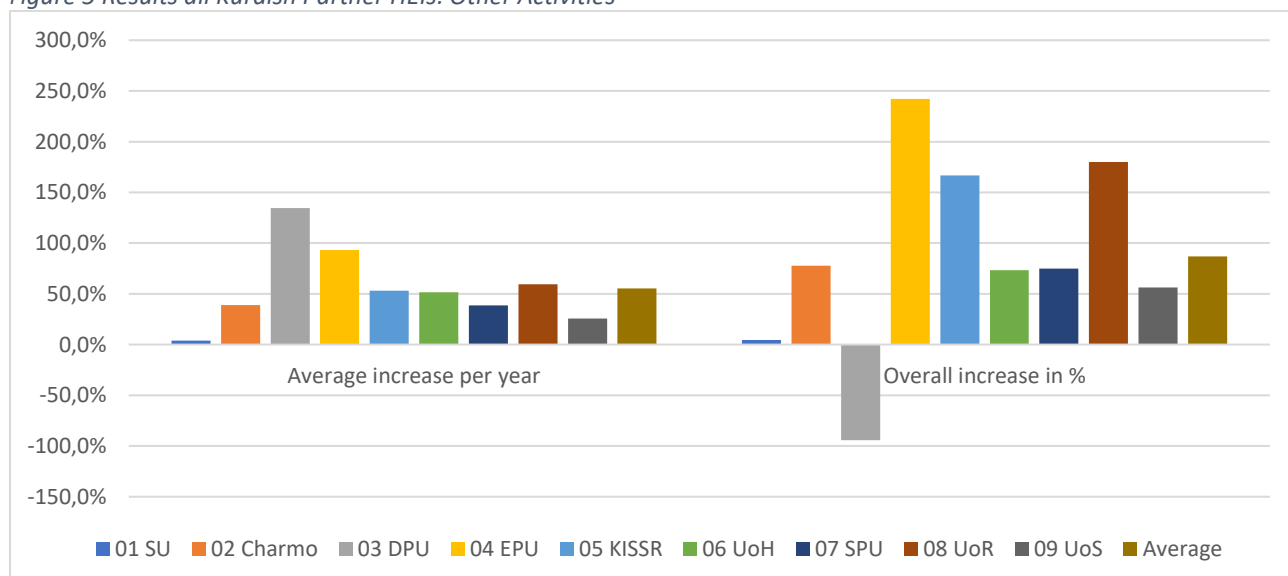
We see a fairly similar annual increase across all partners except for CHU with EPU being a positive outlier at nearly 200% and UoS being more modest at 21.6%. Similarly, most Kurdish universities show substantial growth overall, logically again with the same outliers: EPU at more than 600% and UoS at 47%. Consequently, the average development in outbound mobility during the TIGRIS phase across all Kurdish partner universities is very positive at 90.2% average annual increase and 265.2% overall increase. 8 out of 9 of the Kurdish TIGRIS partners improved in this area.

Figure 4 Results all Kurdish Partner HEIS: Inbound Mobility



The results for inbound mobility are much more mixed for both, the annual and the overall development. We see universities with a substantial decrease (SU and DPU) and others with outstanding increase (again EPU and UoH). For the others, the increase ranges between 10.7% (overall increase for KISSR) and 88.2% (overall increase for UoS), CHU again shows not development during that time range. The average is consequently much lower than for the outbound mobility with 21.7% for annual and 61.3% for overall increase. However, still overall 54.4% of the Kurdish universities also managed to improve the incoming mobility, which was much more difficult for them than outbound mobility due to problems of attracting exchange and degree students. 6 out of 9 of the Kurdish TIGRIS partners improved in this area.

Figure 5 Results all Kurdish Partner HEIS: Other Activities



The results for other activities are again much more evenly distributed. Only DPU shows a negative result despite a good annual average growth of 134.5% (putting it on place 1 in this category) but an overall substantial decrease of -94.3%. This is mainly due to an immense growth of staff participating in staff weeks from 2017 (0) to 2018 (18) which then again dropped to 1 case in 2019, limiting the overall development to 100%. For the annual increase, this immense growth from 2017 to 2018

compensated for a large decrease in cotutelles (1200%) from which DPU never recovered, therefore generating a massive overall loss of -1200% regarding the overall development. Otherwise, EPU is again the strongest performer for overall development (242.3%) followed by UoR (180%) and KISSR (166.6%). Thus, the average annual increase is 55.5% and the overall development is an increase of 86.8% during the time of the TIGRIS project. 8 out of 9 of the Kurdish TIGRIS partners improved in this area.

*Table 10 Results of all Kurdish Partner HEIs: overall development across all sectors*

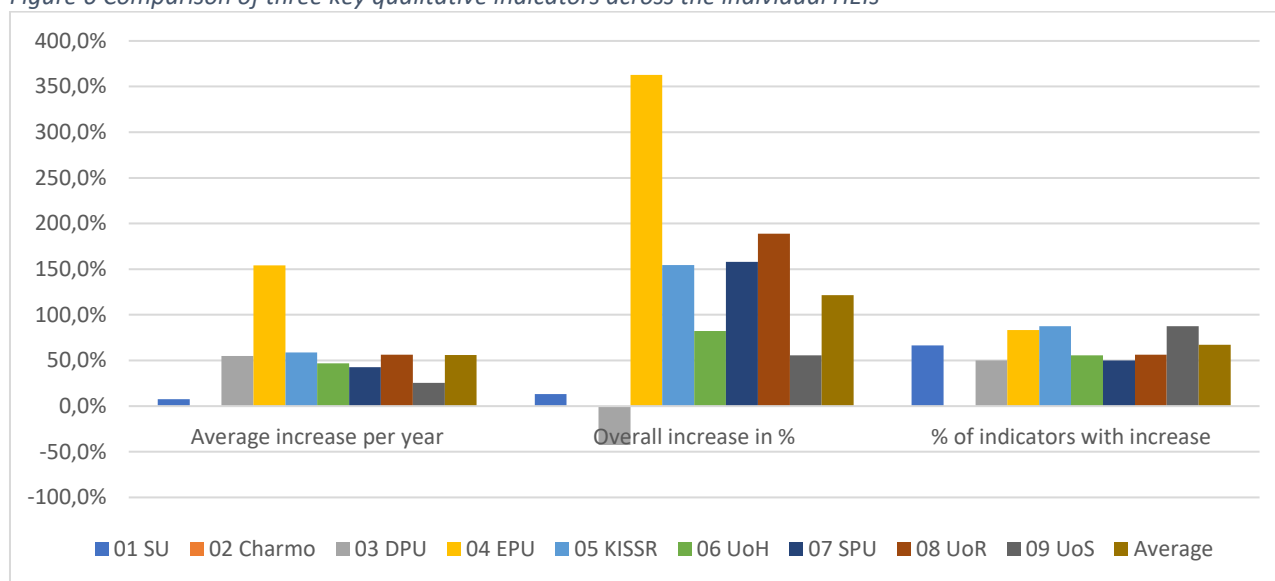
Name	Average increase per year	Overall increase in %	% of indicators with increase	Monitoring of satisfaction done (yes=1, no=0)
01 SU	7.4%	13.2%	66.7%	0
02 Charmo	20.5%	38.9%	16.7%	0
03 DPU	54.9%	-42.5%	50.0%	0
04 EPU	154.0%	362.7%	83.3%	0
05 KISSR	58.8%	154.5%	87.5%	0
06 UoH	46.9%	82.2%	55.6%	0
07 SPU	45.2%	161.4%	55.6%	0
08 UoR	56.4%	188.8%	56.3%	0
09 UoS	25.4%	55.6%	87.5%	0
<b>Average</b>	<b>52.2%</b>	<b>112.8%</b>	<b>62.1%</b>	<b>0</b>

Finally, we compare the overall results across all three areas (outbound, inbound, other activities). We can observe that 8 out of 9 TIGRIS partners (all except DPU) perceived positive average overall development in their key performance indicators for internationalisation. Across all partners, the average increase per year across all indicators is 52.2% and the average overall development is very positive at 112.8%. Results are also fairly evenly distributed across indicators, since on average 62.1% of the indicators showed an improvement.

This does not prove causality, i.e. we cannot be sure that the increase is a direct effect of the TIGRIS project, but we can state a correlation between the time of the project and the perceived effect. However, the peculiar case of CHU gives a strong indication that TIGRIS might have had direct positive effect - especially for the area of internationalisation – in previously less or not developed universities. None of the Kurdish universities, however, monitored satisfaction of staff and students. This is an aspect that we would strongly suggest implementing after the TIGRIS phase.

We also compare the overall performance between the individual HEIs:

Figure 6 Comparison of three key qualitative indicators across the individual HEIs



We see only one considerable outlier in the average increase per year (EPU) and none regarding the number of indicators showing an increase. Nonetheless, a few universities outperform the others regarding the overall development with overall increases beyond 100%. These are EPU, KISSR, SPU and UoR. EPU is outperforming all other Kurdish partner university by far with a more than 3-fold average increase of internationalisation during the project phase. DPU is the only institution showing an overall decrease.

An additional very positive and sustainable outcome is the fact that all Kurdish partner universities also produced implementation plans for their internationalisation strategy.

Furthermore, the results for the peer reviews have to be considered a success across the project and are very much in line with the quantitative findings. We see younger and smaller universities who started their process of internationalisation and already benefitted substantially, but still need more time and effort to further improve and consolidate. We also see already quite established institutions which however still need to focus on other aspects of internationalisation and sometimes have to reflect on the functionality of their established structures. And we seem to be able to identify a role model for procedures and structures (UoS) which can help other Kurdish universities (both younger ones and well-establish ones) in improving their internationalisation infrastructure. Particular areas for improvement are to establish a framework for recognition of studies across all institutions; to improve monitoring process of internationalisation and sustain institutional arrangements for collaboration with the colleges (schools or faculties) on internationalisation.

In the case of DPU, EPU and UOR, they should work forward towards guaranteeing appropriate personnel resources at the International Relations Office while all its staff is proficient with English language.

To sum up, the TIGRIS project has definitely achieved a measurable and positive internationalisation effect amongst the participating HEIs. Unfortunately, we have not been in a position to assess the strategy of the Ministry of Higher Education for Internationalisation due to its scrutiny at legal and policy level.

## Ex-post analysis on project implementation according to 5 DAC criteria

When evaluating programme and projects for capacity building it is useful to consider the OECD framework called DAC (Development Assistance Committee) Criteria, as laid out in the DAC Principles for Evaluation of Development Assistance. Evaluation is very difficult unless the objectives which the evaluated project/programme were to achieve have been clearly defined and the project agreements and operational plans and arrangements for obtaining relevant baseline data had been made. To what extent were the original objectives achieved? Or are likely to be achieved? What were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of objectives? Should objectives not have been stated clearly enough to allow for an evaluation of goal achievement, an assessment of impact and effects of the activities undertaken should still be attempted.

The evaluation focuses on project documentation and feedback from stakeholders, mapping the existing processes identified during the implementation phase. The data obtained provides a qualitative and quantitative approach that embraces both formal and informal elements obtained through questionnaires and interviews with coordinators and participants. The evaluation used the following data-collection methods to assess the results and outcomes of the work of the project: (a) Desk review and secondary data-collection analysis of project documentation, the project document, annual progress reports, workshop and meeting reports and evaluation surveys and other project documentation, such as project presentations, internal reports, consolidated reports and the project web page; (b) Self-administered surveys (c) Semi-structured interviews were used to validate and confirm information and findings from the surveys and desk reviews.

In the wake of the EACEA's ROM monitoring and following the model developed by OECD, 5 criteria are taken into account to evaluate the TIGRIS project; that is, relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability with a scale of 1 to 4 according to the scale used to rate UNDP-assisted programmes and projects through monitoring and evaluations: Highly satisfactory, satisfactory, unsatisfactory with positive elements, unsatisfactory.

### 1. RELEVANCE

According to the current definition of the criteria provided at the OECD/DAC (2006) website, relevance refers to the extent to which the objectives of a development intervention are consistent with beneficiaries' requirements, country needs, global priorities and partners' and donors' policies. Retrospectively, the question of relevance may also become a question as to whether the objectives of an intervention or its design are still appropriate given changed circumstances. In our case, we are interested to find out to what extent are the objectives of the programme supported?

One of the first elements to analyse is whether the delivered activities and outputs were aligned with the priorities of the targeted country and also with the proposed Erasmus+ CBHE programme. Likewise, we were interested to understand whether the project was adequately managed to deliver the expected outcomes and outputs and whether cross-cutting issues like gender balance and equal opportunities were respected. Moreover, It is worth remembering that Erasmus+ CBHE programme attempts to promote educational cooperation involving the European Union and Third Countries while focusing on the reform and modernization of higher education systems in Partner Countries- in this case the autonomous region of Kurdistan.

## Findings

The project's relevance was assessed in terms of its importance to beneficiary countries and their specific needs, the alignment of the project activities with Government priority areas in terms of support of internationalisation of HEIs and development of adequate strategies. An interesting finding is that the project has not been only relevant for Kurdish partners – as would have been expected – but also for European members of the TIGRIS consortium. For KU Leuven, it was one of the first projects with the region. Local staff involved in the project learned how Kurdish universities operate referring beyond just cultural aspects of collaboration. As the local coordinator recognised – “it was a humbling experience, coming from a relatively rich university, to work with universities that work in a very specific situation and conditions that are not so friendly for the academic business. It draws the attention directly to the most important aspects in internationalisation”.

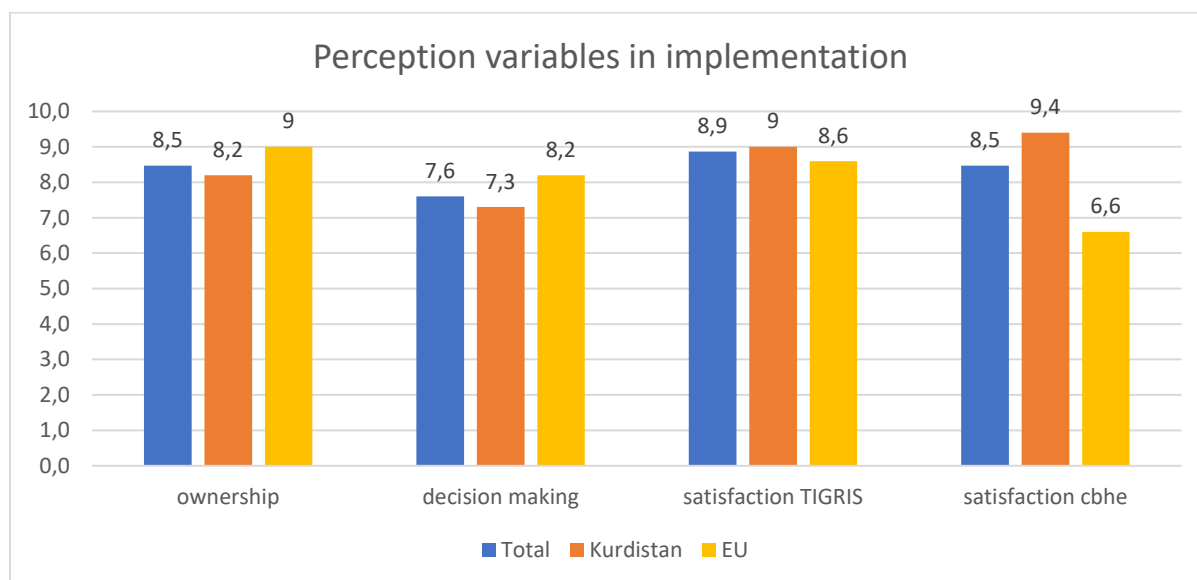
For RUG, it was very stimulating to see the Kurdish partner universities in the different stadia of developing internationalisation, and the many differences between the HE sector in the region and in the Netherlands. Looking at the different internationalisation plans and the process through which they were developed also made Dutch members to look at our own processes of writing a strategic plan. They realised about the importance of thinking about internationalisation in a more structured way. The cooperation in the TIGRIS project also provided important new contacts and insights, both in the cooperation with the other EU partners as in the cooperation with the Kurdish partners. RUG now cooperates with one of the Kurdish partners in an ICM on archaeology, which would likely not have happened if not for the TIGRIS project. Also one of RUG's researchers has increased his contacts with another Kurdish TIGRIS partner in his field of expertise (spatial science). The contacts with the Iraqi embassy in the Netherlands have intensified. Similarly, at MU the project represented the first experience and collaboration with partners from Kurdistan. Based on TIGRIS project new Erasmus cooperation was established and the connections between MU and different Kurdish universities were established. UGOE had already well established contact with KISSR but the project allowed this institution to develop an extensive network of local contacts, also beyond the immediate project partners, and to build regional expertise that enables us to better understand the context and conditions HEIs from the Kurdistan Region/Iraq operate in. Herein, this project has provided the foundation for the currently ongoing cooperation that RUG, MU and UGOE developed with selected partners during the project (e.g. in KA107) and also other joint PhD education and additional capacity building workshops and trainings for Kurdish partners that were organised outside of the project's scope. TIGRIS has been relevant for the GII, because it learned how it has to be developed strategies and plans for a region with such specific conditions, how to train people to understand the concepts and values are pursued and how to better adapt to needs and limitations. In sum, TIGRIS probably more than many other projects engaged EU partners in teaching them that however good their concepts are they can still be better adapted to other individual situations.

A second element we analysed was the contribution to the Erasmus+ programme. The project facilitated indeed the cooperation between EU and non-EU partners as previously described. According to participants, the relevance for partners to participate in this programme were the following:

- Internationalisation of education via collaboration with partners in the projects
- Improvement of the Education Quality via introduction of novelties in the educational process (content and organization)
- Professional Development of the academic and administrative staff
- Implementation of Bologna principles
- Implementation of EU best practices in research cooperation and development of international relations

Overall speaking, most partners have been very satisfied with the contribution of the Erasmus+ programme although EU partners were more critical of it. One of the reasons could lie in the novelty of participating in a CBHE project for all Kurdish members. Some of them had previous experience in the Erasmus Mundus programme (e.g. SU or UoS).

Figure 7 Perception variables in implementation



Another element to consider herein is the management itself of the project. A good image on the programme is delivered by the good running of those Erasmus+ projects that support the programme. Since the activities and outputs of the programme have to be consistent with the overall goal of the project and the attainment of its objectives, the management performance – third sub-criterion - within the consortium has been considered as well. Are the activities and outputs managed in the project consistent with the intended impacts and effects?

Despite the difficulties to conceptualize and operationalise the strategies for internationalisation in 10 institutions, the stability and commitment of the project management unit has been fundamental to obtain good results in the implementation of the project. Most partners were very satisfied with the management of the project. Partners have been developing an increasing range of activities and own initiatives which allowed them a great sense of ownership. The collaborative approach in TIGRIS also led partners to feel they have a say in decision-making process. Herein, the diversity is fundamental to obtain diverse perspectives of future developments in internationalisation strategies adapted to the needs of each institution.

A 4th sub-indicator to take into account was cross-cutting issues like gender balance or equal opportunities. The project did not present any particular policy for equal opportunity or gender balance although institutions endorse general principles towards this end. The main criterion for defining the participants of the training was professional competence of participants. We did not report any issue of brain-drain or bad practices in terms of cross-cutting issues. One of the features is that several female coordinators were present at EU universities (UGOE, RUG and MU) but only 3 among Kurdish partners (MHESR, CHU, UOH). We could not find more than around one third of female staff participating in project activities related to internationalisation. Therefore, we can conclude that still Internationalisation is a very much male dominated process in Kurdistan - specially at top management level - contrary to what we perceive in Europe. This is perhaps not surprising given the cultural context of Arab countries.

Assessment for Relevance criterion:

	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory with positive elements	Satisfactory	Highly satisfactory
Support of national priorities				X
Support of Erasmus+ programme				X
Management of the grant			X	
Gender balance and equal opportunities		X		

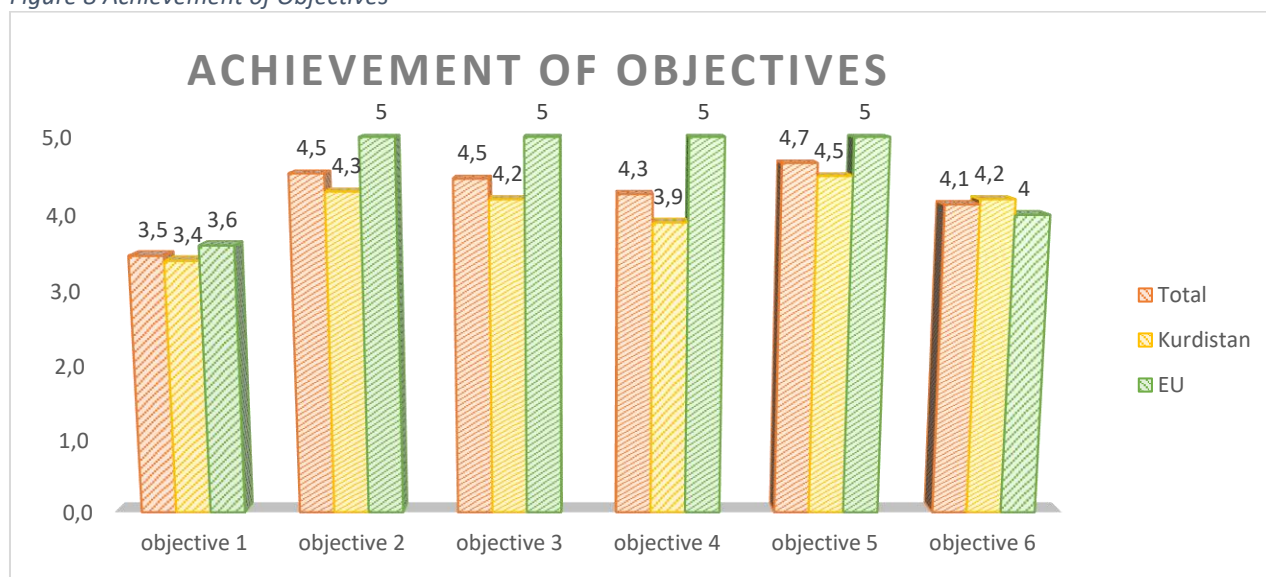
## 2. EFFECTIVENESS

Effectiveness is usually understood as the extent to which an activity attains its objectives. In evaluating the effectiveness of the project, it is useful to consider to what extent were the objectives achieved or what were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the objectives. Our natural departure point is the logical framework and the project objectives expected to be achieved. Therefore, we have concentrated in the 4 major objectives as described in the proposal plus transversal objectives related to each work package:

1. To enhance regional educational legislation that contributes to the process of internationalisation of higher education and research in Kurdistan region by facilitating the recognition of studies and study credits.
2. To build integrative institutional policies at each HEI for the internationalisation of education, research, mobility and services.
3. To reinforce existing and/or to establish new university structures and services in the areas of international relations.
4. To establish a professional workforce in areas related to Internationalisation and IaH that sustain in the long-run the internationalisation process of the partner HEIs.
5. To bring a strategy and culture for quality of internationalisation
6. To develop a network to facilitate EU-Kurdish (Iraqi) joint educational and research cooperation.

When we posed the question to all coordinators both the contribution of them towards achieving these objectives as well as their vision on the achievement of these six project objectives was rather positive being the first objective (towards new legislation that contributes to the process of internationalisation in higher evaluation) the most underrated followed by objective 6 (towards the development of a EU-Kurdish network for mobility and research cooperation).

Figure 8 Achievement of Objectives



An interesting observation was that Kurdish partners were more critical on the achievement of objectives than EU counterparts. The six objectives could be assessed in terms of importance and achievement as indicated in the table below. Overall speaking, we can argue that most of primary objectives in the proposal were largely achieved except the goal of having the right legislation in place which perhaps was out of scope of the project in first place.

Assessment for Effectiveness criterion:

Objectives	Importance	Achievement
Enhancing legislation	High	Partially achieved (3,5)
Institutional policies	High	Largely achieved (4,5)
University structures in IR	High	Largely achieved (4,5)
Professional workforce	High	Largely achieved (4,3)
Strategy and culture for quality of internationalisation	Medium	Largely achieved (4,7)
Network for internationalisation	Medium	Largely achieved (4,1)

### 3. EFFICIENCY

Efficiency according to the DAC methodology measures the outputs—qualitative and quantitative—in relation to the inputs. While effectiveness refers to the achievement of project objectives, efficiency refers to the use of resources toward the achievement of those project goals. Ideally, this generally requires comparing alternative approaches to achieving the same outputs, to see whether the most efficient process has been adopted. When evaluating the efficiency of a programme or a project, it is useful to consider the following questions: Were resources used? Were the number of foreseen trainings implemented? Were objectives achieved on time?

3.1 In terms of budget and use of the grant the final distribution is as follows:

## Original budget

Action	Structural Project						
Duration number of months	36						
Project Acronym	TIGRIS						
Project Title	Transfer of Good (IR) practices & Reinforcement of Internationalisation Strategies in Kurdistan						
EU GRANT REQUESTED FROM THE EUROPEAN UNION (in EUR)							
1. Staff Costs	374 209,00	Cannot exceed 40% of total A.					
2. Travel Costs	112 655,00						
3. Costs of Stay	213 480,00						
4. Equipment Costs	176 500,00	Cannot exceed 30% of total A.					
5. Subcontracting Costs	79 000,00	Cannot exceed 10% of total A.					
A. Grant for Project Activities	955 844,00	Should be equal or above EUR 500.000,00 and cannot exceed EUR 1.000.000,00					
B. Additional Grant for Special Mobility Strand	0,00	Value cannot exceed 80% of total A	Students from Partner Countries	Amounts (in EUR)	0,00	Number of Participants	0
			Students from Programme Countries		0,00		0
			Staff from Partner Countries		0,00		0
			Staff from Programme Countries		0,00		0
Total Grant requested from the European Union (A + B)		955 844,00					

DISTRIBUTION OF THE GRANT BY ORGANISATION (in EUR)										
Partner N°	Name of Partner	Country	PR/PA	1. Staff Costs	2. Travel Costs	3. Costs of Stay	4. Equipment Costs	5. Subcontracting Costs	B. Special Mobility Strand	Total Costs (in EUR)
P1	UGOE	Germany	Programme Countries	71 542,00	9 305,00	10 320,00	-	45 000,00	-	136 167,00
P2	KULeuven	Belgium	Programme Countries	44 965,00	5 935,00	7 200,00	-	-	-	58 100,00
P3	MUJ	Czech Republic	Programme Countries	24 776,00	5 680,00	7 200,00	-	-	-	37 656,00
P4	RUG	Netherlands	Programme Countries	44 951,00	4 765,00	8 400,00	-	-	-	58 116,00
P5	CHE consult Prague	Czech Republic	Programme Countries	28 300,00	4 140,00	7 200,00	-	-	-	39 640,00
P6	KISSR	Iraq	Partner Countries	21 180,00	7 680,00	11 760,00	18 500,00	34 000,00	-	93 120,00
P7	UOS	Iraq	Partner Countries	17 025,00	9 120,00	17 520,00	16 000,00	-	-	59 665,00
P8	SPU	Iraq	Partner Countries	15 990,00	9 120,00	17 520,00	21 000,00	-	-	63 630,00
P9	UOR	Iraq	Partner Countries	15 990,00	6 560,00	21 360,00	21 000,00	-	-	64 910,00
P10	UoH	Iraq	Partner Countries	15 990,00	9 280,00	21 360,00	21 000,00	-	-	67 630,00
P11	CHU	Iraq	Partner Countries	15 990,00	9 280,00	21 360,00	21 000,00	-	-	67 630,00
P12	DPJ	Iraq	Partner Countries	15 990,00	10 200,00	20 880,00	21 000,00	-	-	68 070,00
P13	EPJ	Iraq	Partner Countries	15 990,00	7 500,00	15 720,00	21 000,00	-	-	60 210,00
P14	SU	Iraq	Partner Countries	15 806,00	7 500,00	15 720,00	16 000,00	-	-	54 826,00
P15	MHES	Iraq	Partner Countries	9 924,00	6 590,00	9 960,00	-	-	-	26 474,00

## Budget incurred

Project Number	586290-EPP-1-2017-1-DE-EPK2-CBHE-SP (2017-3474/001-001)			Co-financing (for information only)	342 756,17
Budget Headings		1. Grant Awarded (in EUR)	2. Budget Spent (in EUR)		
1. Staff Costs		374 209,00	411 617,00		
2. Travel Costs		112 655,00	97 025,00		
3. Costs of Stay		213 480,00	150 600,00		
4. Equipment Costs		176 500,00	169 604,09		
5. Subcontracting Costs		79 000,00	50 002,80		
A. Grant for Project Activities		955 844,00	878 848,89		
B. Additional Grant for Special Mobility Strand		0,00	0,00		
Total Grant requested from the European Union (A + B)		955 844,00	878 848,89		

DISTRIBUTION OF THE GRANT BY ORGANISATION (in EUR)									
Partner N°	Name of Partner	Country	PR/PA	1. Staff Costs	2. Travel Costs	3. Costs of Stay	4. Equipment Costs	5. Subcontracting Costs	Total Costs (in EUR)
P1	UGOE	Germany	Programme Countries	113 823,00	5 075,00	6 000,00	-	28 002,80	152 900,80
P2	KULeuven	Belgium	Programme Countries	21 961,00	815,00	1 440,00	-	-	24 216,00
P3	MUJ	Czech Republic	Programme Countries	24 776,00	2 255,00	3 600,00	-	-	30 631,00
P4	RUG	Netherlands	Programme Countries	44 951,00	2 055,00	3 360,00	-	-	50 366,00
P5	Global Impact Institute	Czech Republic	Programme Countries	42 312,00	1 800,00	2 280,00	-	-	46 392,00
P6	KISSR	Iraq	Partner Countries	25 619,00	7 680,00	11 280,00	18 435,00	22 000,00	85 014,00
P7	UOS	Iraq	Partner Countries	17 025,00	8 930,00	12 720,00	16 078,25	-	54 753,25
P8	SPU	Iraq	Partner Countries	16 047,00	8 590,00	12 360,00	19 763,00	-	56 760,00
P9	UOR	Iraq	Partner Countries	16 221,00	8 060,00	14 640,00	18 834,81	-	57 755,81
P10	UoH	Iraq	Partner Countries	15 990,00	7 510,00	13 920,00	21 000,00	-	58 420,00
P11	CHU	Iraq	Partner Countries	15 454,00	8 620,00	14 760,00	18 759,34	-	57 593,34
P12	DPJ	Iraq	Partner Countries	16 008,00	9 980,00	15 240,00	20 939,07	-	62 167,07
P13	EPJ	Iraq	Partner Countries	15 390,00	9 120,00	14 400,00	19 901,08	-	58 811,08
P14	SU	Iraq	Partner Countries	16 116,00	9 195,00	13 920,00	15 893,54	-	55 124,54
P15	MHESR	Iraq	Partner Countries	9 924,00	7 340,00	10 680,00	-	-	27 944,00

The present observations do not reflect the results of the audit or whether the items declared are eligible or not. Based on the data obtained we can infer that 91,4% of the budget was used. A normal good practice would be to have used 95% of the grant or over. Furthermore, staff costs were higher but within the threshold allowed (10%). The main items underused were cost of stay (70,5% used) and travel costs (86,6% spent). The major reason has been the Covid-19 Pandemic affecting all mobilities in 2020. This could have not been avoided or mitigated in any normal way since all international travel has been disrupted for most of the year besides institutional and national mobility interdictions and partial lockdowns. According to the project coordinator, other variations in Travel Costs and Costs of Stay result from decisions of the consortium to adopt a rotation system for implementing project management and dissemination activities in the Kurdistan Region as well as from the actual implementation of the capacity building programme, which saw some changes in hosts and therefore location of training workshops, which led to altered distribution of costs compared to the original budget. One possibility could have been to invest more in equipment although we acknowledge the difficulty of planning and requesting that in the third year - in particular for 2020 within the context of the pandemic.

In relation to the distribution between partners, most institutions had a deviation in budget of around +/-10%. Some partners like the MHESR incurred increased Travel Costs and Costs of Stay since it participated in more activities than originally foreseen in the original budget. In other cases, a higher workload justified more staff costs (e.g UGOE or GII). In the case of KUL which only used roughly 50% of the allocated grant, its staff costs decreased since they were less involved in organizing activities compared to other EU partners. Additionally, KUL had travel restrictions in place during the whole project. Hence, their use of Travel Costs and Costs of Stay was severely limited from the start.

A good practice is the amount of co-financing declared which is about a third of the total grant (i.e. 342.756,17 EUR). Although the use of the budget is efficient to certain extent, in relation to the accomplishment of tasks and delays in achievement of outcomes, most of the Work Packages were completed without major delays. A minor issue related to the implementation of the Management Information System (MIS) and network platform partly delayed because of covid-19 procedures, internal lockdowns and also because of internal bureaucratic procedures. A major issue was related to the strategy for internationalisation at Ministry level. A draft was deposited for government approval but changes in government and internal politics substantially delayed the approval of such strategic paper which is now in place.

*Table 11 Attainment of tasks*

Task Nr	Task	Completed	Delayed
1.1.	Analysis of existing national legislatives underpinning internationalisation in EU partners and Kurdistan		
1.2.	Formulation of standards for the accreditation of joint and double degrees in Kurdistan.		
1.3.	Identification of criteria to formulate a quality plan for internationalisation		
1.4	Identification of conditions for the recruitment of foreign students, PhD students, teachers and researchers at Kurdish HEIs		
2.1.	Study visits to EU and trainings for MHESK and HEI authorities		
2.2.	Organisation of trainings for members of Kurdish partner HEI for strategic development of internationalisation		
2.3.	Organisations of workshops and seminars to facilitate the scope and quality of international projects and strategic (research) partnerships		
2.4	Organisation of capacity building programme for IRO manager and administrative staff and reinforcement of IRO structures.		
3.1.	Development of national strategy on academic mobility and recognition of degrees and internationalisation.		

3.2.	Develop of institutional strategy on internationalisation of Kurdish higher education and research.		Delayed at Ministry level
3.3	Development of QA for internationalisation		
3.4	Development of management practices at IROs		
4.1.	Internal monitoring of project activities		
4.2.	Evaluation of national and institutional strategies; standards, action plans and sets of recommendations		
4.3.	Internal peer review and fine tuning of IRO practices and student services		
4.4	External evaluation on project implementation		
5.1.	Development and maintenance of website		
5.2.	Organisation of promotional activities to advertise Kurdish higher education and research in the country and abroad.		
5.3.	Organisation of annual dissemination conferences and regular press conferences		
5.4.	Network of internationalisation practitioners established at KISSR to support IRO management systems for both incoming and outgoing mobility of students, teachers and researchers.		Delayed
6.1.	Appointment of Steering Committee and Elaboration of Management Plans (QPLN, DISS & EXPL)		
6.2.	Organisation of national (n) and international project management meetings		
6.3	Project reporting and financial and administrative management		

Assessment for Efficiency criterion:

	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory with positive elements	Satisfactory	Highly satisfactory
Use of the grant			X	
Distribution among partners			X	
Completion of activities			X	
Delays in project implementation			X	

#### 4. IMPACT

Impact analysis usually refers to the positive and negative changes produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended through the life of a project. Generally

speaking, this involves the main impacts and effects resulting from the activity on the local social, economic, environmental and other development indicators. The evaluation should be concerned with both intended and unintended results and must also include the positive and negative impact of external factors, such as changes in legislation that may facilitate the strengthening of EU- third country partners academic cooperation. When evaluating the impact of this project, it is useful to consider the following issues. What has happened as a result of the project in terms of increase in individual capacity, institutional building (e.g. internationalisation), research or mobility opportunities?

There are several tangible impacts at institutional level in the project – some of which have been already addressed and quantified in the first section of this evaluation when analysing and assessing the progress on the implementation of the strategies. For some universities like UOR or SU the main impact has come about by the implementation and application of Bologna process and ECTS system at university level step by step. As result of the project and agreed by the project coordinator we can state that Kurdish partners are actively addressing the recognition of periods of study that come with student mobility. This was less of a concern in the past since they had limited number of student mobilities recognition generally was hindered by outdated regulations and incompatibility with other HE systems. The transition to a Bologna-style system that was supported by TIGRIS has solved this issue partly and nearly all Kurdish HEIs have stated to recognise periods of study now and have developed an institutional process for it. Another positive impact in the institutional arena, as briefly assessed in the Relevance section, is that all Kurdish partners feel a great sense of ownership of the project, its results, their own strategies and plans and the added value of the TIGRIS project.

Secondly, in terms of capacity building, the participation in the project allowed a number of staff from the lower or midlevel to promote and prove themselves thereby breaking up some of the prevalent top-down structure and hierarchical element of Kurdish Higher Education. According to interviews and questionnaires, participants that benefitted from trainings and mobilities within the frame of the project are now more confident to perform tasks that enhance internationalisation, while senior management has understood that complex processes such as internationalisation need professional, self-dependent staff that is able to operate and execute tasks autonomously. According to the main project manager at UGOE, TIGRIS also had an impact beyond the immediate project partners in that it advanced the understanding of relevant stakeholder in public administration of the Erasmus+ programme, its requirements and especially its financial administration. During the project, all Kurdish HEIs were audited by public authorities. For this, KISSR together with the MHESR prepared and translated documentation for Erasmus+ (CBHE) projects for use in training of staff from the KRG Ministry of Finance and held a training workshop for them. As part of this, authorities established how to treat third party funding in HE, which will only become more relevant in the future. Furthermore, the project introduced some new dynamics among partners where smaller and younger HEIs have adjusted their relations to older and more established institutions like SU or UoS partly in terms of internationalisation since all HEIs were confronted with the same or similar issues. Based on the analysis of the strategies for internationalisation we can argue that the Kurdish partners all have considerably improved their knowledge of strategies, plans, and measuring concepts. All understand now better how to carry out plans for internationalisation, what are pitfalls and how to circumvent them. Logically, some are better in this than others and what could be perhaps surprising is that sometimes small institutions who did not have any experience before learned faster and got a deeper understanding than some of the bigger more established institutions. Many of these small HEIs have increased their professionalization to a very good level throughout the project and are well-equipped for the future. Interesting enough is that peripheral universities like CHU or UOR have tried to take a leading role in ECTS formulation and Bologna standard development. Some of these small HEIs have established themselves as drivers for change pushing the MHESR into further action for reform in higher education. Conversely, a common feature noted and mentioned by some of the local coordinators has been the resistance of some academic staff used to old system of education (i.e.

teacher oriented) unwilling to follow the modernization of higher education towards a compatible model with Bologna and the EHEA. Training and workshops were conducted for particular teaching groups so as to overcome these problems providing more understanding and information. At large, we can affirm that the project has contributed to the modernization of higher education in Kurdistan. What constituted a problem first, as stated above, turned into a positive impact, that is, the way the universities helped the ministry to formulate its strategy of internationalisation for Kurdistan. The project has supported a strengthening of the interaction between HEIs and the MHESR which hopefully may generate a strong international structural orientation within the Ministry at educational level.

In terms of research and mobility outputs, as described in the first section of the evaluation (see Results across Kurdish HEIs) the average development in outbound mobility during the TIGRIS phase across all Kurdish partner universities has been very positive at 90.2% average annual increase and the number of inbound mobility more modest. In terms of research outputs, 4 universities have seen progress in the last 3 years (SPU, KISSR, EPU and CHU). Herein, we also need to take into consideration that the Covid-19 has had a negative effect during 2020.

According to the local coordinators, the project had emphasized the following general institutional benefits for the partner members:

Institution	Results
CHU	Experience of students and staff with internationalisation at the university and services offered by the International Relations Office
DPU	Internationalisation strategy plan.
EPU	The development of IRO and enhancing the relationship with international institutions
KISSR	Enhanced cooperation between the EHEA and Kurdistan Growing interest and acknowledgement of the role of internationalisation in the growth of student and staff Better understanding of Bologna process
SPU	New vision to organize international events – facilitated by online technologies
SU	Staff exchange and agreement with RUG and UGOE
UOH	Improvement of quality education through internationalisation process
UOR	Internationalisation strategy plan and set up of IRO office
UOS	Dedicated International office thanks to TIGRIS and implementation of aspects of Bologna system

With the demand for internationalisation clearly visible, Kurdish HEIs should now invest in building partnerships and joining networks that allow for more opportunities to engage in international activities and provide equal opportunity to participate in these ones. European partners encouraged them to invest in continuous staff development at their IROs, for which some resources are available international, e.g. via participation of IRO staff in international staff weeks. Such participation should be coupled with proper post-exploitation sharing information and knowledge gained with other staff members allowing for institutional intra-learning.

The power of collaboration and value of those from different countries working and learning together has been evident, highlighting the value of diversity of experience and perspectives. The dimensions such as scale and scope have been notable across the different international and institutional contexts providing interesting lessons for those from contrasting environments. A valuable experience for partners has been the possibility to observe a diversity of working styles amongst teachers, IRO managers and other staff from contrasting international and institutions contexts, with recognition of

the positive contribution of varied approaches. Experiencing different environments has prompted reflection on one's own approaches, perceptions and ways of thinking which are healthy for innovative thinking and modernization of services offered by IROs. The experience of intercultural collaboration and communications is also valuable for working on other projects and programmes – not only within Erasmus+. The output of this collaboration can be seen in the following section (sustainability).

Assessment for Impact criterion:

	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory with positive elements	Satisfactory	Highly satisfactory
<b>Institutional building</b>				X
<b>Individual capacity building</b>			X	
<b>Modernisation of higher education</b>				X
<b>Research and mobility outputs</b>			X	

## 5. SUSTAINABILITY

According to DAC criteria, sustainability pertains to the continuation of benefits from a development intervention after major development assistance has been completed. That is, whenever possible is prominent to assess the probability of continued long-term benefits. Some questions we need to pose ourselves are: are the positive effects of the project/programme sustainable? How is the sustainability or the continuity of the intervention and its effects to be assessed? To what extent will activities, results and effects be expected to continue after donor intervention has ended?

The mix of the results in terms of sustainability is very promising: all universities have now good strategies, working implementation and quality plans, all have established the key infrastructures, trained staff and harmonized approaches. More importantly, the MIS will help to keep track across the system. The strongest instrument for sustainability is without a shred of doubt the network of experts. This will grow and keep the individuals – who in the end do the work, not the institutions – up to date, linked and engaged. International Relation Offices have been equipped with desk computers, server, laptop, Printer. Literature materials and textbooks on internationalisation were purchased. Furthermore, the installation of a Management Information System (MIS) on the server in year 3 should help dealing electronically with international students and staff recruiting. The MIS and database for Internationalisation' developed for Kurdish partners as a tool to digitally administer and manage internationalisation is one of the elements that supports the sustainability of the project. It will facilitate the task in all Kurdish partner HEIs of collecting, managing and visualising information on internationalisation of Higher Education in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq and overall represents an important achievement in the digitalisation of Kurdish Higher Education. It is developed as a distributed software solution that runs on local but networked servers, which were purchased and set up within the TIGRIS project. Hence, in the future only limited costs will be incurred by running the system (e.g. electricity, internet access etc.). Additionally, since the MIS is owned by the partners, no licensing fees are incurred. The contract awarded also includes free maintenance & help desk service for 2 years for all partners, which further reduces costs for the near future and also contributes to the long-term sustainability of the result in question. Furthermore, the fact that a local company developed the system means that it can be developed/adapted further easily and to local market prices and therefore cheaper and more cost-efficient compared to products or services provided by international providers. The MIS itself will help partners to administer, monitor and strategically manage the internationalisation of their institution while also providing data to the MHESR to manage internationalisation at a regional level.

Herein, one crucial aspect for sustainability would be the sponsorship of the MHESR to guarantee financially the update and continuation of the database in the medium-long run.

In terms of cooperation between EU and Kurdish partners not all members have been particularly active. However, RUG and MU have signed a good amount of KA107 agreements with institutions like SU, UoS, UoR or CHU while UGOE has consolidated the cooperation with KISSR where he has a liaison office as well as signing new MoUs (e.g. SPU). UoS and RUG successfully obtained International Credit Mobility under the KA107 scheme of Erasmus plus programme, which was direct result of the contact between the two universities as part of the TIGRIS project. MU has 4 Erasmus+ ICM agreements with project partners from Kurdistan and the practical change in the understanding of internationalisation activities, administration of mobilities and study recognitions is significant. KISSR has increased also cooperation with Germany establishing cooperation with other 10 German institutions during the period of the TIGRIS project.

Of particular interest for this project is also the cooperation strengthened among Kurdish partners especially through NKIP9+ agreement. During the third year of the TIGRIS project, the Agreement to establish the Network of Kurdish Internationalisation Practitioners (NKIP9+) was signed. Through the development of this network, Kurdish HEI partners funded by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research will work together to foster the internationalisation of higher education in Iraqi Kurdistan and thereby guarantee the long-term impact and sustainability of the results of the TIGRIS project. Within this context, much attention has been paid to not only developing the internationalisation strategies, but also embedding them in the institutions and connecting other parts of the university, from faculties to the leadership. During the selection of participants for the trainings for staff members of the international officers or those working with the Bologna process, extra attention was paid to selecting the right staff members, who are and will be working on these topics. The many staff trainings during the project thus improved the 'human capital' in the KRG in the area of internationalisation. The newly formed ties between the participants of the project have been formalised into the network of internationalisation practitioners. An element that has not been exploited and was mentioned in the original proposal was the edition and publication of a journal for internationalisation to support such network. This is an activity that could provide some additional resources for the network in the future.

Assessment for Sustainability criterion:

	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory with positive elements	Satisfactory	Highly satisfactory
<b>Permanent structures at institutional level</b>				X
<b>Using network platform to measure internationalisation</b>			X	
<b>Promoting partnerships at regional level</b>			X	
<b>Promotion cooperation EU-Kurdistan</b>			X	

## Conclusions and recommendations

As result of the information obtained from interviews and questionnaires during the final evaluation, the following SWOT analysis has been elaborated.

INTERNAL FACTORS	
WEAKNESSES	STRENGTHS
<b>IDENTITY AND COMMUNICATION</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. It took a bit of time for partners to understand the nature of the project and solve cultural differences</li> <li>2. Unclear role of KISSR during first half of the project</li> <li>3. Role of MHESR as project driver</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Strong experience of EU institutions in development and management of internationalisation</li> <li>2. Workshops and trainings for experts, their quality and content. Well-developed trainings helped university experts explore EU experience in supporting internationalisation processes and now use new skills in practice;</li> <li>3. Intercultural, academic and practical exchange gain by the end of the project</li> </ol>
<b>KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Challenges facing old teachers</li> <li>2. Unclear role of MHESR in supporting the MIS in the long run – if necessary.</li> <li>3. Financial management of project not always easy to carry out due to lack of experience in Erasmus+ procedures</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Partner countries eager to develop the mechanisms and conditions for development of internationalisation</li> <li>2. IROs formally established and strategies for internationalisation established in 9 HEIs</li> <li>3. Good network established</li> </ol>
<b>COOPERATION</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Not everybody has been actively involved in promoting cooperation</li> <li>2. Limited internal resources to support parallel activities (e.g. academic, professional exchanges)</li> <li>3. Links between applied research opportunities and internationalisation not thoroughly explored.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Good example of cooperation between some partners (e.g. KISSR and UGOE)</li> <li>2. Signature of Network of Kurdish Internationalisation Practitioners</li> </ol>
<b>ORGANIZATION, HR and MANAGEMENT</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Some groups like female staff and student representation could have been more visibly involved in the project activities.</li> <li>2. Quality processes is an area to improve among Kurdish partners and quality culture and monitoring might be an area to improve</li> <li>3. Lack of knowledge by some partners concerning the management of the grant</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Retrained university staff in Bologna process, ECTS, etc</li> <li>2. Institutional support at partner universities</li> <li>3. Appreciation of good work done by EU partners and MHESR</li> <li>4. Adequate strategy towards financial management by main project coordinator</li> </ol>

EXTERNAL FACTORS	
THREATS	OPPORTUNITIES
<b>GENERAL ENVIRONMENT</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The legal framework regarding the approval of reform of higher education (lengthy bureaucratic process)</li> <li>2. Partners might be affected by global uncertainty and economic crisis in a country dependant on fossil energy.</li> <li>3. Covid-19 and new modes of teaching-learning</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Priority and support from MHESR.</li> <li>2. The educational system in Kurdistan tries to converge with EHEA and Bologna. New advancements on modernization of HE through cooperation with EU partners.</li> <li>3. New legislation may offer more independence to universities.</li> <li>4. New technologies may offer new venues for cooperation with EU partners (e.g. shared lecturers through virtual classrooms, etc)</li> </ol>
<b>KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Not many specialists to transfer knowledge on internationalisation</li> <li>2. Lack of journal on internationalisation to support Kurdish community of practice</li> <li>3. Lack of Bologna Follow Up Group or similar although set as objective in Ministerial strategy.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Interest from other HEIs to benefit from results of TIGRIS project</li> <li>2. Internationalisation part of national strategy which can benefit other non-partner HEI institutions</li> <li>3. Increasing importance of internationalisation in educational process in Kurdistan</li> </ol>
<b>COOPERATION</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Financial and Human Resources available.</li> <li>2. Risk of dependency on EU educational programmes</li> <li>3. Lack of public-private funds to increase international cooperation.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Closer cooperation EU-Kurdistan</li> <li>2. Interest by EU progress and models in the area of internationalisation by Kurdish partner members</li> <li>3. Signature of agreements between some EU and Kurdish beneficiary partners.</li> </ol>
<b>ORGANIZATION, HR and MANAGEMENT</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Lack of Kurdish/Arab language in project website.</li> <li>2. External risks not considered in contingency plans by Kurdish partners.</li> <li>3. Need of more investment to support language skills for internationalisation where language barriers have been observed among technical staff at IROs.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Visibility of website and accessible to all partner countries.</li> <li>2. Experience of coordinator useful in conflict resolution processes.</li> <li>3. Low turnover in the core team</li> </ol>

To sum up, the project lay out the pillars to succeed but in order to excel Kurdish partners should consider the following recommendations:

1. Strengthen the communication process at decision-making level between beneficiary HEIs of the project with special attention to risk analysis and mitigation measures given the current changes in education (i.e. accelerated move to more blended and e-learning) and society (i.e. due to covid 19).

2. Support and alignment to Bologna process with increased cooperation with Europe that goes beyond the project partners.
3. Improve quality management and quality assurance mechanisms (e.g. monitoring processes).
4. To plan and develop network plans well in advance so that the Network is fully functional and profitable in the long term. This is also linked to recommendation 1. The lack of a thorough risk assessment may pre-empt the fulfilment of this particular output.
5. To disseminate the project outputs, models and guidelines on Bologna and Internationalisation Strategies for colleges, faculties and other to other private and public HEIs at national/regional levels.
6. Develop strategic plans for 3, 5, 10 years with track on targeted goals and impact analysis on local, regional institutional and socio-economic development (e.g. impact of internationalisation on employability).
7. Keep active role of IROs within structures of university to ensure the sustainability of the programme.
8. Fostering cooperation at formal level between EU partners and beneficiary countries and encouraging new initiatives within Erasmus + KA1 or other schemes that may appear in the new frame of Erasmus or Horizon Europe 2020-2027.

According to DAC criteria, we can state that the project is very relevant for the donors, the EACEA and has been a game changer for the beneficiary institutions. The project is reasonable effective in terms of achieving its objectives and a bit less efficient with delays in some of the work packages and use of the grant. In terms of impact and sustainability efforts the project has attained very good standards where established IROs are taking a more prominent role within the structure of universities. This is particularly the case of smaller and younger HEIs like CHU or UOR. The creation of an active network as indicated in the proposal is a surplus. Few weaknesses can be stated among which we can find the delay in legislation to formalise recent changes in higher education (e.g. alignment with Bologna system, recognition of ECTS) although the transition to Bologna was decreed by the MHESR in August/September 2018. Moreover, new regulations issued by the MHESR as direct result of the TUNING training at RUG in March 2020. Unfortunately, we do not know the scope and content of this regulation. Another weakness is the lack of journal for internationalisation by the end of the project as originally intended.

In function of the observations and assessment described in the previous pages, the final results for the project could be summarized as follows.

Figure 9 Results from 5 DAC criteria

