



Institutional ownership/commitment in CBHE projects

The following intends to contribute to a set of guidelines that we believe the EACEA would produce about an issue deemed instrumental to the objectives of each capacity building project and more particularly to its impact and sustainability.

Institutional ownership of a CBHE project is when the institution in which the project is being implemented applies and uses the results achieved by the project as *its own assets and resources*, ready to be put in the service of the implementation of the institution's development and strategic goals.

Institutional ownership is difficult to measure which makes the development of new accompanying measures more crucial and problematic.

The question about how much the institutional ownership can be measured or evaluated by a certain number of *criteria and indicators* remains a challenge that has to be tackled by both Erasmus+ programme designers and projects implementers. For each of these two categories of actors, institutional ownership has been an issue of concern and a key element for the success of the programme in making a real change at the partner institutions and at their surrounding communities.

Even though *institutional ownership* is very much related to confirming the impact and maintaining the sustainability of a CBHE project results, it remains an issue of its own that needs to be looked at carefully at the submission, selection and implementation phases.

Based on a longstanding observation of the CBHE projects implemented in Lebanese partner institutions, a weakness or a deficiency in *institutional ownership* is reflected by a variety of situations. However, we believe that this observation can easily be extended to situations in other countries. The following are just examples of these situations which should be addressed by any future related guidelines:

- *Lack of knowledge and awareness* about the project's objectives and details by the institution's leadership at the level of Rectorate, Deanships and Heads of departments.
- *Lack of continuity* when a change at an institution's leadership takes place.
- *Unsustainable results* like closing study programmes developed by the projects or closing centres/physical units opened by the projects.
- *Low multiplication effect* with limited number of people involved or benefiting from the projects.
- *Lack of visibility* within the institution and awareness limited to particular departments or faculties.
- *Demotivated staff* due to lack of support (not released from their teaching load to dedicate time for the project or underpaid).

- *Duplication of outputs* from more than one project within the same institution.
- Project results are *marginal* and not integrated into the institution's strategy for development and reform.
- Projects *do not respond* to a well-defined and grounded need.

Remediation

Institutional ownership is a serious commitment and therefore facing the challenge of this issue is based on the fact that entering into a CBHE partnership is much more than a simple engagement taken by the legal representative of any concerned institution.

The following points are expected to contribute to working out a set of *guidelines* for the programme and project designers and implementers.

At proposal phase

- A CBHE proposal should include clear *indicators* that can measure the commitment of the institutions involved in the related partnership. These indicators should address all the deficiencies and shortcomings described above.
- A CBHE project consists of an important package of *legally binding documents*. It should be made sure that the institution involved in the project is aware, and has a good understanding, of the content of every single document submitted in the proposal's package. The mandate and the Partnership Agreement, which are currently the only documents signed by the legal representative of the institution, one at submission and another after the selection, do not guarantee or ensure this awareness and understanding.
- Possessing all the project documents by the beneficiary institution should be *compulsory* for a responsible ownership.
- When evaluated, the proposal should include a proof and evidence supported by indicators on how the partner institutions are going to *integrate the project results into their overall strategies*.
- Indicators on a *minimum number of expected beneficiaries* and on the diversity of the profiles of these beneficiaries should be requested as a *contractual obligation* that leads to legal penalties in case of non respect.
- There should be a *mechanism that protects* the project continuation and the personnel designated in the proposal from any change that might take place in the institution's leadership during the project implementation.
- A CBHE proposal should ensure an institutional commitment to the issue of the *multiplication effect*. The creation of multipliers and the retraining should be guaranteed by the submitted proposal and followed up later during the implementation with the institution's leadership. Indicators for a *minimum number of people retrained* with a diversity of profiles might be envisaged as a plus for awarding the grant. There should be a clear engagement by the beneficiary institution on a genuine plan to maximise the benefits of the project and widen their impact to reach a maximum of beneficiaries at the levels of the university, the faculties and the departments.
- *In case of many projects* implemented at one institution, the proposal should show how the institution's leadership is putting together the results of the different projects into a well targeted strategic objective set by the institution.

- Any set of criteria that might be defined should include, not only the presence of the equipment acquired in the institution's inventory, but the appearance of the project results in all the institution's services, records, registries, catalogues, platforms and any other tool.

At implementation phase

- A policy of *regular communication* at higher level (EACEA and NEO) with the institution's top management should be adopted.
- A mechanism of *proven continuous reporting* by project beneficiaries to their respective institutions' leaderships should be in place.
- A *follow-up system* of all indicators included in the proposal and which are related to the institutional ownership as described above should be worked out.
- The coordinating institution should play a contractual role in ensuring to fulfil the related indicators as set in the proposal.
- The newly adopted policy of *sharing the recommendations* made after the different types of field monitoring visits with the institutions leaderships should be maintained and reinforced.