



AUB to lead consortium of academic and industry partners in EU-funded project on developing research and promoting innovation

Beirut, Lebanon- 06/12/2012 - The American University of Beirut (AUB) has been awarded a grant of 904,877.49 Euros from the European Union Tempus Programme to implement a project that supports academic research while promoting innovation and enhancing partnerships with industries.

Entitled Innovation and Development of Academic-Industry Partnerships through Efficient Research Administration in Lebanon (IDEAL), the project was officially launched at AUB during a two-day meeting December 6-7, 2012, hosted by the University's Office of Grants and Contracts with the participation of AUB's academic and industry partners and representatives of the EU Tempus program.

The IDEAL project seeks to augment inputs and outputs for research, development and innovation (RD&I) in Lebanon to improve the country's economic strength and global competitiveness.

The meeting gathered a consortium of 15 partners from Lebanon and Europe to launch the project activities and discuss the three-year scope of work. Partners from Lebanon include the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, the National Council for Scientific Research, Lebanese University, Beirut Arab University, University of Balamand, Modern University of Business and Science, as well as the Lebanese Industrial Research Achievement Program (LIRA), and INFOPRO (publisher of Lebanon Opportunities). European partners include Staffordshire University; United Kingdom; University of Joanneum, Austria; University of Alicante, Spain; University of Bari, Italy; Technological Educational Institute of Larissa, Greece; and the Mowgli Foundation, United Kingdom.

The participating Lebanese institutions represent over two-thirds of the Lebanese landscape of higher education. The target beneficiaries of this project are Lebanese researchers, students, non-profit organizations, and society at-large who will benefit from improved systems for research, development and innovation (RD&I) designed to grow Lebanon's economic strength and global competitiveness.

AUB Provost Ahmad Dallal quoted the 2003 Arab Human Development Report, saying, "Local innovation... [is] a necessary complement to harnessing knowledge and technology from abroad."

Mohamad Oueidat, representing the Lebanese Directorate General of Higher Education, emphasized the Ministry of Education and Higher Education's commitment to advancing knowledge transfer and promoting partnerships that help to improve national capacity for education and research.

Diego Escalona Paturol, head of cooperation from the EU Delegation to Lebanon, pointed out the many virtues of the EU Tempus Program. "Tempus has helped Lebanese universities to

modernise curricula and teaching methods, create new masters and doctoral programs and, overall, has assisted the Lebanese higher education to keep up with the new demands of the globalized world.”

AUB Director of the Office of Grants and Contracts Fadia Homaidan has high hopes for the project’s outcomes. “The partnership is strong, drawing on the expertise of our European partners in order to transmit best practices to our region,” she said. “The goal is that all participating Lebanese universities will have established offices of research support by the end of the project. AUB, which already has a strong office of research support, is looking forward to creating new links with industry and increasing the number of research projects that succeed in commercialization and licensing.”

Aref El Soufi, national Tempus office coordinator, encouraged all partners to fully benefit from the cooperation. “With IDEAL, you are going to establish a structured relationship between university and industry to make research more relevant to the country’s needs,” he added.

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Note to Editors

About AUB

Founded in 1866, the American University of Beirut bases its educational philosophy, standards, and practices on the American liberal arts model of higher education. A teaching-centered research university, AUB has more than 600 full-time faculty members and a student body of about 8,000 students. AUB currently offers more than 100 programs leading to the bachelor’s, master’s, MD, and PhD degrees. It provides medical education and training to students from throughout the region at its Medical Center that includes a full service 420-bed hospital.