

For Immediate Release



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AUB partners with EU's Erasmus+ on integrated energy planning project

The American University of Beirut (AUB) hosted the final conference of the ENEPLAN (Developing Skills in the Field of Integrated Energy Planning in Mediterranean Landscapes) project on Integrated Energy and Education in Mediterranean Universities. The two-day conference presented results of integrated energy planning projects and looked at ways to mainstream them in higher education in Mediterranean countries. It served as a culmination of project activities and a primary dissemination tool of ENEPLAN project which cover areas such as curriculum development, university governance, and the relationship between the university and the society.

“As the world moves forward to try and develop sustainable ways of managing our planet, integrated energy planning will be an important dimension of this quest,” said Dr. Yaser Abunnasr, ENEPLAN committee chair and associate professor of landscape architecture at AUB’s Department of Landscape Design and Ecosystem Management. “Even more, the role of higher education institutions in advancing integrated thinking is and will be more underlined today and in the future.”

Financed by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union, ENEPLAN is one of 11 capacity building projects selected to be implemented in Lebanon for the period between 2015 and 2020. It has for the past three years focused on building capacities in integrated energy planning in Mediterranean higher education institutions, developing skills in the field of integrated energy planning in Mediterranean landscapes. Along with technical and engineering dimensions, integrated energy planning takes into account environmental, social, cultural, and policy dimensions as essential parts of the planning process and sustainability.

“This cooperation with universities provides the opportunity to transfer new knowledge and techniques to students and creates a new and additional network among Lebanon, other countries

in the region, and in Europe,” said José-Luis Vinuesa, Head of the Economy and Local Development Section at the EU Delegation to Lebanon. “ENEPLAN was supported by the EU through Erasmus+, given the innovative learning approach it has been proposing. It was also selected given its focus on the energy sector, particularly on energy planning, renewable energy sources, and its consideration of social and environmental impact.”

Eighteen partners gathered at the closing conference, from Europe and the region, with University of Roma Tre (Italy) as leading partner and AUB as a primary partner contributor and organizer of the conference. The conference aimed to converge efforts for the advancement of educational capacities and tools in higher education toward integrated energy planning. Over two days, presentations disseminated activities of projects, focused on the Lebanese context and energy situation, along with case studies on similar projects in Europe. A surveying of universities in Lebanon engaging in this field and a discussion of outputs of all projects wrapped up the conference.

Provost Mohamed Harajli spoke at the opening about AUB’s efforts to become a research-centered institution and ENEPLAN’s multidisciplinary approach in introducing new skills that will foster collaboration between research and applied business in the field.

“This conference comes in continuation of AUB’s efforts to lead in research, in innovation, and in advancement in the field of energy,” said Dr. Harajli. “It is refreshing to see our faculty members and the graduate students working together towards generating innovative ideas and skills with the aim of developing holistic and comprehensive solutions to the problems affecting our communities.”

Dean of the Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences (FAFS), Dr. Rabi Mohtar, in his turn highlighted the significance of holding this ENEPLAN conference for the region at FAFS at this time and referred to the suitability of the faculty as the right place to discuss the issues of the integrated energy planning toward a sustainable future of human security.

“We need to be mindful that any energy planning for the future has impact on land use, on water, on the environment,” said Dean Mohtar. “This faculty deals with natural resource management, ecosystem management, water security, food security, and we need to look at this impact ... I salute you for looking at integrated energy planning and looking at a holistic system approach looking forward.”

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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 900 full-time faculty members and a student body of about 9,100 students. AUB currently offers more than 120 programs leading to 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.

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