

FEBRUARY -2025

IMPACT MONTHLY

NEWSLETTER



**IMPACT
HE**



Co-funded by
the European Union



Welcome to the IMPACT-HE Project Newsletter!

We're excited to share the latest developments from the IMPACT-HE project, a structural initiative designed to empower African universities as key drivers of local development. Our project aims to enhance the capacity of universities in Kenya and Ethiopia to manage international development cooperation funds and projects, ensuring these investments have deeper institutional and societal impacts.

Each month, this newsletter will bring you updates on our progress, highlighting key activities, milestones, and insights from our work.

We invite you to join us on this journey. We believe that by working together, we can build stronger, more impactful, and more sustainable higher education systems in Africa. Stay tuned for our next update!



Co-funded by
the European Union



IMPACT HE Physical Kick Off Meeting

FEBRUARY 24-26 Barcelona, Spain

The IMPACT HE project held its first in-person Kick-Off Meeting from February 24-26, 2025, in Barcelona, Spain, bringing together partners from Africa and Europe. Hosted at the Universitat de Barcelona, this meeting marked a key milestone in the structured implementation of the project, following its official virtual launch on October 27, 2024. Since the virtual launch, partners have been actively engaged in laying the groundwork for the project, completing key deliverables and initiating critical activities.

The **Barcelona Kick-Off Meeting** was an opportunity for partners to align on next steps, refine work plans, and formally adopt essential tools that will guide project implementation.



Co-funded by
the European Union



Objectives of the KOM

The IMPACT HE Physical kick-off meeting aimed to:

- Refine the work plan and task distribution.
- Present project management guidelines.
- Agree on communication procedures.
- Choose quality monitoring tools.
- Plan dissemination strategy.
- Provide space for small groups on WPs
- Consolidate the Project Management Team (PMT) & quality committee for effective collaboration.

Key Sessions and Technical Discussions

Day 1: Laying the Groundwork and First Deliverables

The meeting opened with a series of strategic discussions and technical presentations:

- A panel discussion featuring representatives from the Donor Harmonisation Group (S-DHG), including DAAD, VLIR-UOS, and EDUFI, exploring strategies for ensuring impactful, mutually beneficial development cooperation.
- Overview of progress to date, highlighting that several foundational deliverables had already been completed prior to this meeting, allowing partners to focus on refining methodologies and adopting next-phase tools.
- State of Play sessions on Work Package 1 (WP1) and Work Package 2 (WP2), covering project management guidelines, risk management strategies, and the quality monitoring framework.
- Bilateral meetings with Ethiopian university partners, addressing institutional needs related to project administration, financial management, and reporting.



Co-funded by
the European Union



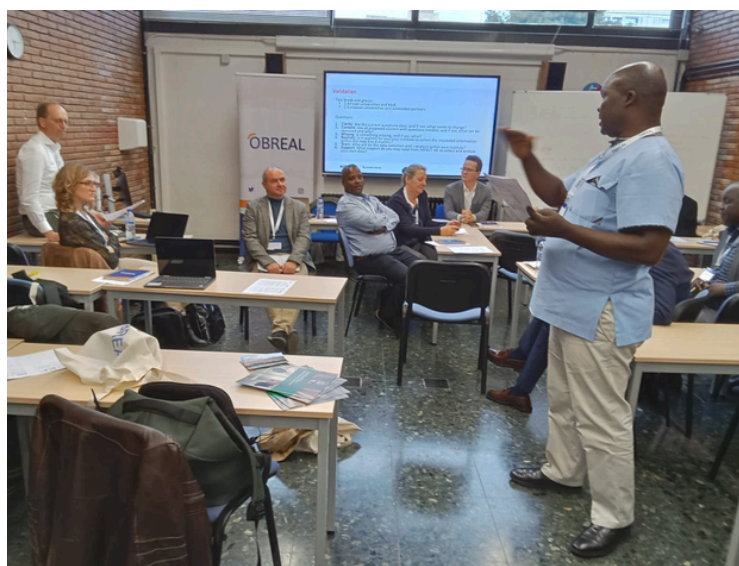
State of Play: Advancing WP2 and Adopting Key Tools

One of the most critical technical sessions focused on Work Package 2 (WP2): Mapping HE Development Cooperation Investments and Monitoring Mechanisms. This session built on initial groundwork already undertaken before the physical meeting, allowing partners to review, refine, and formally adopt standardised tools for the mapping exercise.

The mapping and assessment templates—developed under T2.1, T2.2, and T2.3 of the project proposal—were presented, discussed, and adopted:

- T2.1: EU Partners' Mapping Template – This tool enables European agencies and universities to systematically map ongoing development cooperation initiatives in Kenya and Ethiopia, identifying funding streams, objectives, and existing approaches to impact assessment frameworks.
- T2.2: African HEI Internal Mapping Template – Designed to help African university partners consolidate information on their international partnerships, funding sources, and institutional capacities, ensuring a more structured approach to project management.
- T2.3: National Policy Situation Analysis Template – A tool for ministries of education in Kenya and Ethiopia to assess higher education development cooperation at a national level, providing a clearer picture of how funding streams interact with national policies.

These tools play a crucial role in the next phases of the project:



- They will guide data collection efforts across partner universities and ministries, forming the foundation for a comprehensive mapping of international funding and institutional capacity.
- They will serve as reference points for developing training modules, ensuring that capacity-building efforts are aligned with the actual needs and structures of the participating HEIs.
- The collected data will support the creation of self-assessment tool.

The final versions of the **mapping tools and templates** will be put to use by the respective partners to develop the mapping reports envisaged in WP2.



Co-funded by
the European Union



Day 2: Capacity Building, Planning, and Financial Management

The second day focused on practical implementation strategies and institutional capacity building:

- Communications and key messaging workshop, aimed at aligning outreach strategies across partners.
- Development of the 2025 work plan, detailing deliverables, working groups, and upcoming milestones.
- Financial management training, equipping university finance teams with best practices for managing international project funding.
- Bilateral meetings with Kenyan university partners, addressing country-specific administrative and operational challenges.

Day 3: Synergies, Partnerships, and Policy Engagement

A key feature of the final day was the Synergies Session, which brought together external stakeholders, associated agencies, and policymakers to explore alignment opportunities.

Discussions included:

- Collaboration with associated partners and partners beyond the project, including OBREAL members from Argentina, to exchange insights on impact assessment and sustainable higher education partnerships.
- Bilateral meetings with European and associated partners.
- The Projects Steering Committee Meeting: between the ministries, Associated Partners and the Coordinator facilitating deeper integration of university-led projects into national higher education policies.
- A mapping exercise on synergy opportunities, identifying ways to better coordinate existing development cooperation initiatives and maximize collective impact.
- Decisions on ways forward



Co-funded by
the European Union



Way forwards and Important Dates

The Kick-off meeting concluded with the adoption of the Work Plan through 2025. This included:

- Agreeing the dates for the next physical consortium meeting to be hosted by Jimma University
 - **September 22–24, 2025**
- First sixth Month WP report due after 31st **March, 2025.**
 - this is an integral part of the internal monitoring process
 - WPLs will report progress using the **reporting format** prepared for this purpose
- Agreeing the dates for the recurring meetings of the Project Management Team
 - Occurs **every other Month**, on the last Friday of the Month, except December, which will be held on the second Friday.
 - Calendar invite has already been sent starting from **April 25th 2025**
 - All partners are strongly advised to save the date on their calendars
- Agreeing the dates for the recurring meetings of the Quality Monitoring Committee
 - occurs **every other month**
 - calendar invites are sent out starting as of **March 27th**
 - The QMC has held its first regular meeting on 27 March 2025
- Agreeing the dates for the Recurring meetings of the Steering committee
 - Composed of Obreal, the Ministries of Education of Kenya and Ethiopia and the Associated Partners (DAAD, VLIR-OUS and EDUFI).
 - occurs **every trimester**
 - upcoming meetings in **May, August and November**



Co-funded by
the European Union



Way forwards and Important Dates

- Agreement on the timeline for the finalisation of the mapping tools and templates (T2.1, T2.2 and T2.3 of WP2) – **March 31st** – Completed
- Timeline for all partners and associated partners to convene internal mapping teams to produce mapping reports based on guidelines and template – **April 2025**
- The Mapping exercise will be launched on 22 April 2025 in a virtual meeting of all Partners and Associated Partners (APs).
 - This is an onboarding meeting for the **finalised self-assessment tools**
 - Calendar invite has been sent for the meeting.
 - All partners and APs are expected to respond affirmatively for the invite.
 - Please make sure at least one participant per institution attends the meeting.
- Timeline for the mapping exercise and delivery of the final mapping reports by partner institutions (WP2 Deliverables)
 - D2.1 EU partners mapping of funding mechanisms and projects in targeted African countries, including regulations and their existing approaches to impact assessment: **Aug 2025**
 - D2.2 African partner universities internal mapping of international funding and projects/ Knowledge gap assessment: **Aug 2025**
 - D2.3 Policy situation analysis: International development cooperation funding map for higher education and research: **Aug 2025**
 - **NB: These reports are distinct from the Impact Assessment Reports envisaged in WP4.**



Way forwards and Important Dates

- Agreeing on workplan for the first tasks of WP3 (T3.1, T3.2)
 - T3.1 and T3.2 – **April to August 2025**
 - T3.3. and T3.4 – **September to December 2025**
- These tasks in WP3 involve:
 - T3.1: Preparation of training programme syllabus and online modules.
 - This task involves the Training Programme Development Team (TPDT) preparing the syllabi and course materials.
 - With the support of the OBREAL Training Platform, they will develop the online training modules that will form the virtual component of the course.
 - The modules will include videos and learning materials based on case studies and good practices from the partners, as well as content from associated partners.
 - HWST, JKUAT, and JU are the lead beneficiaries, along with OBREAL as the coordinator and ANIE, and EDUFI, DAAD, and VLIR-UOS as associated partners.
 - T3.2: Nominations for participation of staff of African partner universities in training programme and development of Learning Plans.
 - African university staff members from international offices, quality units, and other relevant services will be nominated by their institutional leadership to participate in the training programme.
 - There will be a minimum of 4 staff members per university.
 - Each participant will develop a learning plan related to their professional development and desired learning outcomes.
 - All African universities are the participating beneficiaries.
 - T3.3: Execution of hybrid training programme, including organisation of 1 presential workshop.
 - The training programme will be conducted over 6 months and will include one intermediary presential workshop in Kenya.
 - This workshop will be a one-week interactive activity with coaching opportunities between EU partners and African staff members.
 - Participants will be asked to evaluate their training experience and learning outcomes and report back to their institutions on future actions, which will be discussed at the leadership workshop.
 - JKUAT is the coordinator, and all African university partners, all EU partners and associated partners providing training inputs, and OBREAL (Training Platform) are participating.
-



Way forwards and Important Dates

- T3.4: Organising staff shadowing and mentoring with EU partners and between African partners.
 - In parallel to the training programme, African partner university staff will have the opportunity for a 4-day staff shadowing activity at a partner EU university.
 - Two staff members from each African partner university can be funded for this action.
 - They will prepare an additional Learning Plan and evaluate the activity for their professional development.
 - All African partner universities and all EU partner universities are participating.

