

MARCH-APRIL -2025

IMPACT MONTHLY

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# NEWSLETTER



**IMPACT  
HE**



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## 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!



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## Feedback on IMPACT HE Kick Off Meeting

The IMPACT HE Kick-Off Meeting held in Barcelona from February 24-26, 2025, left some learnings for the host, Obreal, thanks to the responses from the participants' surveys.

The **overall evaluation of the meeting** reflects a successful and well-received event across all key areas, based on 19 responses. The overall satisfaction averaged 4.79 out of 5, indicating that the majority of participants rated their experience as excellent. The quality of discussions and presentations scored a 4.82, highlighting the effectiveness, clarity, and relevance of the content delivered. The coordination among project partners received a 4.78, demonstrating solid collaboration and communication, while logistical arrangements such as venue, travel, and accommodation earned a 4.89, reflecting smooth and supportive organization. Beyond the scores, the meeting marked a successful kick-off of the project, fostering **networking, capacity building**, and a shared understanding of objectives, roles, and responsibilities. Key outcomes included the **approval of the 2025 work plan**, alignment on **work packages (WPs)**, agreement on **financial and communication strategies**, and active knowledge exchange. Overall, the meeting laid a strong foundation for effective collaboration and the successful implementation of project activities moving forward.



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# Project Management Updates

## Advancing Internal Monitoring and Reporting Frameworks

- Following discussions during the project launch in Barcelona, the **Quality Monitoring Committee** (QMC) of IMPACT-HE convened to refine internal monitoring tools and align reporting processes across Work Packages (WPs). The meeting was held virtually on the **10th of March** and proven essential in preparation for the first WP reports.
- Agenda Focus:
  - Reporting timelines, roles, tools, and internal communication
  - Overview of the M&E Plan and internal reporting guidelines
  - QMC roles, meeting scheduling, and reporting deadlines
  - Review of the M&E Matrix and suggestions for improvement
  - Enhancement of WP reporting templates
  - Use of the log frame and adaptive monitoring approaches
  - Agreement on next steps and internal deadlines
- Internal Communication:
  - A WhatsApp group was set up for QMC coordination, led by ANIE (QMC Chair), to ensure fluid internal communication of the QMC.
- Communication with Partners:
  - Obreal, as Project Coordinator, will facilitate partner communications. However, QMC will initiate and tailor requests to align with its own workflows.
- QMC Membership and Planning:
  - The three partners forming the QMC nominated individual members for the QMC.
  - All QMC nominees are expected to participate actively and consistently.
  - Date and time for the recurring meeting of the QMC was agreed.
  - The 2025 Work Plan and the previously distributed M&E Plan will serve as key references in guiding the work of the QMC for the coming year.



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## Project Management Updates

- A **new EACEA Project Officer** has been assigned to the project, replacing the previous contact person. The first brief introductory meeting with the new officer took place on **March 14, 2025**. To ensure ongoing alignment and support, regular meetings have been scheduled every two months, reinforcing the importance of consistent communication for the effective implementation and oversight of project activities.
- On **April 4, 2025**, the IMPACT-HE consortium held its second meeting with Work Package Leads (WPLs) to prepare for the submission of the first six-month progress reports. The session was a follow-up to the initial discussions held in Barcelona, where the project's Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Plan was introduced and adopted. This meeting focused on familiarising WPLs with the reporting template and ensuring a clear understanding of the process.
- First **sixth-month WP reports** have been **submitted** by the WP leaders as part of the internal monitoring process, using the reporting format provided.
- The **Project Management Team** meeting took place on **April 25**. The meeting aimed to review progress across the different work packages following the project launch, coordinate upcoming activities (especially the WP2 mapping exercise), discuss planning for the September Jimma Workshop, and ensure effective communication and collaboration among partners.



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## WP 1: Deliverables submission

Work Package 1 (WP1), titled **Management, Quality Assessment, and Monitoring**, is led by OBREAL and focuses on establishing the foundational structures of the project. The following deliverables were submitted on February via the Funding and Tenders Portal and are currently pending formal approval by the EACEA:

**D1.1** Management Guidelines and Operational Plan

**D1.2** Risk management strategy

**D1.3** M&E Plan

**D1.5** Communication Plan

**D1.6** Project Website



Together, these outputs form the backbone of project management, ensuring quality, accountability, and transparency throughout the project lifecycle.

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## State of Play: Finalizing WP2 Key Tools

The **Mapping exercise** was launched on **22 April** 2025 in a virtual meeting with all Partners and Associated Partners (APs), led by MSM and Hawassa.

In this onboarding meeting, the finalized self-assessment tools developed under **T2.1, T2.2, and T2.3** of the project proposal were presented, discussed, and shared with all consortium partners:

- **EU Partners' Mapping Template**
- **African HEI Internal Mapping**
- **National Policy Situation Analysis Template**

During the meeting, a timeline was agreed for all partners and associated partners to prepare mapping reports using the guidelines and template shared by MSM. To support this process, progress meetings were scheduled for the first week of June to help monitor the work and ensure that some of the collected data could be shared by mid-June.

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## WP 2: Deliverables

**Deadline** 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: **Oct. 2025**
- **D2.2** African partner universities internal mapping of international funding and projects/ Knowledge gap assessment: **Oct. 2025**
- **D2.3** Policy situation analysis: International development cooperation funding map for higher education and research: **Oct. 2025**

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## Preparing for the Jimma Workshop



As part of **Task 2.7: Organise Project Consortium Meeting**, the **EI.2 Consortium Meeting** is scheduled to take place from 22 to 25 September in Jimma, Ethiopia, hosted by Jimma University. The meeting will bring together at least one representative from each partner institution and is aimed to:

- present the results of the three WP2 key deliverables (mapping reports)
- agree upon the identified training needs
- launch the Training Programme Development Team (TPDT)

To support logistical coordination, Obreal will centralise the booking of flights and accommodation for the African partners. A detailed logistics document—including travel arrangements, accommodation information, and the meeting agenda—will be shared with partners to facilitate preparation.



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## WP 2: Updates

### IMPACT-HE Team Engages Ethiopian Ministry of Education

- On March 21, representatives from the IMPACT-HE project—Kibrome Mekonnen (OBREAL, Project Coordinator) and Huub Mudde (MSM-Maastricht University, WP2 Lead)—met with officials from Ethiopia’s Ministry of Education in Addis Ababa.
- Chaired by Dr. Eba Mijena, CEO for Academic Affairs, a team of seven ministry experts was introduced to the draft mapping instrument developed by MSM, aimed at assessing institutional capacities in both Ethiopia and Kenya. The session clarified the objectives and methodology of the exercise, and the Ministry committed to appointing a focal point to coordinate the process in the coming months.
- The discussion also served as an opportunity to update the Ministry about outcomes of the Kick Off meeting and highlighted the Ministry’s strong interest in future capacity-building initiatives, particularly in soft skills development—one of the focus areas of the mapping exercise.

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## WP3

### Training, Capacity Building and networking for enhanced project management and impact assessment

During March and April, progress was made on Work Package 3 (WP3), led by HSWT. Initial internal meetings were held to begin coordination and define the direction of activities. Although initial networking efforts have begun, they are still in the early stages and need further development.

So far, no formal outcomes have been achieved, as the focus has primarily been on laying the groundwork through early coordination and concept development.

As next steps, the team plans to engage with MSM for input on the mapping exercise and to organise a virtual meeting to decide on the next actions—either developing a WP3-specific questionnaire or compiling the funding ideas that have already been discussed.



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Although WP3 is officially scheduled to begin in August, initial activities have already started to ensure strong coordination with the other work packages.

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## WP4

### **A self- assessment tool for project monitoring, impact assessment and synergies**

Work Package 4, led by MOI and UCM, aims to create a self-assessment tool for project monitoring, impact evaluation, and identifying synergies. So far, only part of the initial work has been completed, with key foundational tasks—such as the needs analysis and subcontracting—still underway.

Progress on essential activities like software development and pilot testing have been delayed, as they depend on these preliminary steps. As a result, the main deliverables (D4.1–D4.3) are still in the early stages and need further development. The next steps are to complete the needs analysis, finalize the framework, and begin software development to allow the rest of the work package to move forward.

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## UPCOMING DATES AND MEETINGS

- **Project Management Team (PMT) meeting:** June 27
- **Steering Committee meeting:** August (date TBC)
- **EI.2 Consortium Meeting:** September 22 – 25



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