



**PACTUM**

## **Internal Report 2023**

**Erasmus+ Programme**

**Key Action 2 "Capacity Building for Higher Education"**

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JP**



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## Project information

<b>Acronym</b>	<b>PACTUM</b>
<b>Full name</b>	Projecting Academic Capacities with Tunisian Universities through Master courses
<b>Project No</b>	618888-EPP-1-2020-1-IT-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP
<b>Programme</b>	EPPKA2 - Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices
<b>Action</b>	CBHE-JP - Capacity Building in Higher Education - Joint Projects
<b>Coordinator</b>	USIENA
<b>Project start date</b>	15/01/2021
<b>Project duration</b>	36 months

## Document Control Sheet and Classification

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## 1. Introduction

PACTUM has been a capacity-building project aiming to develop a high-quality, multi-disciplinary and stimulating program in social, political and behavioural sciences. The target country of this project has been Tunisia, a key partner for European Union Higher Education Institutions. At the beginning of the project, Tunisian universities had recently undergone a remarkable transformation, which was bound to, and complemented, the processes of modernisation and democratisation of the political system. Academic cooperation in a delicate and rapidly evolving field like that of social sciences - and in particular those disciplines which are central to the formation of future ruling classes and higher civil servants - is a crucial test for prospective cooperation among Tunisian HEIs and European HEIs engaging with capacity-building activities.

The goals of the project - exchange of degree planning experiences in the field of social sciences, organisation of preparatory summer schools, design of a vocational master's course and involvement of social actors and public administration - converged on the crucial need to boost positive impact on students and mutual enrichment between European and Tunisian academics.

This Internal Report offers an overview of the organization, implementation and dissemination of the activities carried out during the year 2023 and aims to thoroughly describe the solutions adopted by the consortium for communication, reporting, and managing activities.

In particular, this third report comes after two years of blended activities and meetings. Indeed, due to the Pandemic, the network could not organize activities in presence since the very beginning of the project (January 2021). This has determined a difficult and somehow frustrating situation, with consequent delays in all the activities of the project. Nevertheless, the network could organize a first meeting in person in Tunis (May 2022). This has allowed a positive reprise of the activities and much more efficient socialization among all the people involved and within the team, thus influencing some results of the activities carried out in the third and last year of the PACTUM project which will be illustrated in the following sections.

Nevertheless, one important negative aspect must be explained in this premise. A different orientation in terms of priorities and regulations has been adopted by the Tunisian Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research which has had a strong impact on the workflow of the PACTUM project during its third and last year. Due to such a changing attitude from the Tunisian central institution involved in the project, the two-year master's program (the main objective of this project) has not been launched by any of our Tunisian partner institutions. Despite the late approval, from the Tunisian Ministry, of at least one PACTUM Master's proposal (the one at the University of Kairouan), the delay in officially communicating the approval has been significant, thus hindering the launch of the master's program at the right time. Consequently, this has resulted in a shortage of available students since, in the





meantime, they have enrolled in other activities. In this scenario, the deliverables included in WP3 have not been completed by the natural end of the project nor will be in the future.

However, in light of these considerations, the PACTUM partnership requested a 6-month extension to complete the remaining activities of the project and to provide it with an added value to compensate for the unmet goals. This request did not include any budget revisions or changes in task allocations. The partnership just engaged in the finalization of all necessary preconditions to launch the PACTUM Master’s program even after the end of the project.

The request has been rejected by the EACEA thus implying that the final date of the PACTUM project was set on January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

*The present document has been drafted by the coordinating team, with the active participation of all the partners. All beneficiaries will therefore comply with the procedures agreed upon within the network and described in the Pactum handbook*

## 2. PACTUM Consortium

Programme countries’ Institutions		
UNIMED	UNIMED	Italy
University of Granada	UGRA	Spain
Univeristy of Montpellier	UMON	France
University of Siena	USIENA	Italy
Partner countries’ institutions		
Ministry of Higher Education and Research	MHESR	Tunisia
University of Carthage	UCAR	Tunisia
University of Kairouan	UNIK	Tunisia
University of Sfax	USF	Tunisia
University of Sousse	US	Tunisia
The University of Tunis El Manar	UTM	Tunisia

## 3. Year 3 Activities

The third year of activities has involved the organization of a second in-person training session in Sousse (Feb 2023), a round of online training sessions which have also been recorded and Live-streamed on the PACTUM Facebook account, the opening and implementation of an Instagram account for the PACTUM project and the making of two editions of a PACTUM newsletter. Also, two further dissemination events and the third and last edition of summer schools have been carried out, giving the coordination team the chance to meet a large number of students seriously motivated and enthusiastic about enrolling in the PACTUM Master’s program.



## Activities carried out in 2023

### WP1 Update needs analysis and review of good practices

UNIMED, the PACTUM partner responsible for this WP has conducted background research needed to draft the *Position Paper on policy reforms in social, political and behavioural sciences at the academic level*, Deliverable 1.3, whose first draft has been already produced and discussed (the final version will be made available in the next weeks, in time before the closing of the reporting activities of the project). The task will be carried out with the collaboration of the Tunisian partners of the PACTUM consortium in an attempt to design the most realistic scenario.

### WP2 Summer School and Master Course's Co-Design

All planned deliverables under WP2 were completed as planned by the project schedule. In particular, the preparation of the Summer School for the year 2023 and the completion of the Master's course info package (Del. 2.3), the Professor Working Package (Del. 2.4) and the Recruitment Strategy Guidelines (Del. 2.5) were carried out in time and after a vivid participation of the partners.

Furthermore, under the suggestion made by EACEA and the coordination provided by the staff of the University of Siena, the PACTUM consortium unanimously agreed to integrate the Co-Design of the PACTUM Master with a series of training sessions. The sessions aimed at providing further insights and inputs to the teaching staff of the five Tunisian partner universities on the topics included in the PACTUM MA's study plans. The sessions mentioned above brought new teaching perspectives, tools and teaching approaches to the topics covered by the MA program's study plan. The training sessions organised and carried out were three:

1. Siena, Italy, November 2022
2. Sousse, Tunisia, February 2023
3. Online series April/May 2023 (7 sessions)

### WP4 Summer Schools (Development)

The coordinators of WP4 finalized the expected deliverables completing the Summer School intermediate evaluation, in collaboration with the WP5 leaders, analysing each Tunisian university's evaluation questionnaires (students/teaching staff/administrative staff) and including them in the intermediate Quality evaluation report.

Starting in June 2023, the last cycle of summer schools took place with the added specific objective to target professionals from the Tunisian Public Administrations, junior academic staff, and NGOs/CSO representatives and to include a new kind of intervention focused on



new teaching and learning approaches. The outcome of this cycle of summer schools, in comparison to the previous one, was not just the completion of a full series of participated events (with the participation of a good number of students in all the venues), but also the opportunity to foster interactions among academic trainers (both European and Tunisian), civil society and higher civil servants from Tunisia and students. The opportunity to make purely «in-person» events allowed the organization of restitution sessions and design thinking analyses among the participants. We can therefore argue that the growth was not only quantitative (number of mobile instructors, number of attending students) but even qualitative. The responses from the students (collected via evaluation questionnaires were also very positive.

During the summer schools, informal meetings with prospective master students and disseminative events (*infra*) were organized to socialise the actors and enhance their impact on students. Bilateral agreements were signed between the five Tunisian universities and USIENA in the perspective of the next International Credit Mobility call. One PhD student from Sousse was accepted in Siena for two months to visit the *Centre for the Study of Political Change*, supervised by the PACTUM project coordinator.

At the same time, the objective to promote the PACTUM master's in social and behavioural sciences was pursued. For this purpose, the coordination team of the University of Siena has visited and taught in three of the summer schools provided by the Tunisian partners: Kairouan, Tunis El Manar, and Carthage. The chance to meet a large number of enthusiastic students has been unique and seemed to pose a strong basis for the development of the PACTUM Master's program. On this occasion, the Siena team presented them with some of the innovative teaching and learning approaches which would have been adopted in the MA program: a more practice-oriented approach made of workshops, simulation games and project works to engage both students and instructors in a proactive mutual exchange of knowledge and ideas, rather than focusing on the traditional theoretic method. The instructors have been involved in this kind of pilot activity on the occasion of our training sessions (in person and online) to develop familiarity with this kind of content and activity.

Moreover, before each Tunisian institution launched the call for applications to the third edition of the summer schools, the coordination team prepared a guidelines document indicating all the necessary steps, tasks and material to be produced before, during and after the end of summer schools, such as a post on their social account, pictures, videos, PPT presentation, attendance sheets, satisfaction questionnaires and so forth. The document has been realised with the collaboration of the Pixel team and the indication given by the EACEA in their midterm evaluation.

## **WP5** Project Quality Plan (Quality)

The coordinators of this WP finalized the intermediate evaluation report and shared their work with the external evaluators subcontracted by the University of Siena in the framework of the PACTUM project. Their intermediate report was discussed in a General Assembly called for this purpose. During the assembly, new recommendations and guidelines were set



to facilitate the work conducted by the quality team and to comply with the suggestions and recommendations made by the EACEA, especially concerning the summer schools. As mentioned in the previous paragraph, we tried to improve the quality of the summer schools' results after a careful analysis of the midterm quality evaluation. To make an example, **before** the beginning of summer school we asked our partners to provide us with a document indicating:

1. Place, date, and detailed program of the course.
2. Short caption about the Objective of the training (to be uploaded on our website).
3. Short bio for each expert intervening in your summer school. Please previously check if their bio is/is not already uploaded in the "Our Experts" section of our website.

Then, **during** the summer schools:

4. Take at least 10 pictures of the participants (both students and staff)
5. Record at least 5 videos of the activities carried out.
6. Record at least 1 interview with one of your experts (both EU/TU academic staff). Preferably, CSOs and NGO representatives would be the best choice.
7. Prepare a list of participants and attendance sheets to be signed daily.

**After** the summer school:

8. Send us information on the participants (name, role, affiliation, education level)
9. Attendance sheets duly signed by all the participants (staff and students)
10. Circulate the materials (PPT Presentations, documents, Journals) used during the course.
11. Paragraph about the skills acquired by the participants.
12. Once signed, upload the certificates recognised to the participants.
13. EVALUATION OF PARTICIPANTS. Please remind participants and staff to fill in the questionnaires provided by the University of Granada for the quality assessment. This is mandatory.
14. GENERAL REPORT ON THE EVENT to be provided within one month from the end of the summer school.

## **WP6** Dissemination and Exploitation Strategy (Dissemination)

Dissemination activities, including webinars and events, were conducted both online and in presence as the table below will show. As part of a dissemination strategy, and following the suggestions and recommendations made by the EACEA when providing us with an intermediate evaluation, the above-mentioned training sessions went Live on the PACTUM Facebook account. For the same reason, we have implemented and managed an Instagram Account where all our meetings and activities have been sponsored to then presented in the two Newsletters created for this purpose.

, As such, they are included in the following table:



DATE	EVENT
12/2022	Newsletter, Issue 01
02/2023	Dissemination event, University of Kairouan
28/04/2023	Online training session 1
08/05/2023	Online Training Session 2
11/05/2023	Online training sessions 3 & 4
23/05/2023	Online Training Session 5
25/05/2023	Online training sessions 6 & 7
08/2023	Newsletter, Issue 02
10/2023	Dissemination event, University of Carthage
11/2023	Meetings with Tunisian local NGOs/CSOs

The coordination team of the PACTUM consortium decided to extend the activities of the disseminative package, engaging in a wide operation targeting Tunisian local NGOs and CSOs to be included in the study offer of the Tunisian Universities' PACTUM masters with four purposes:

1. Disseminate the activities carried out in the framework of the PACTUM project.
2. Create new partnerships involving all the members of the PACTUM consortium.
3. Open new paths and innovative approaches to classical teaching during the PACTUM MA.
4. Research the networking procedures/abilities/weaknesses throughout interviews with the interested organizations.

**WP7** Operational and financial management, coordination, problem-solving and reporting with funding Agency and European Commission (Management)

The coordination team, in charge of the WP7 development, has conducted the requested activities of management, monitoring and reporting. Regular online calls, General







Assemblies (online and in presence) and bilateral meetings have been carried out. Please find some of the most important calls as follows:

- [PACTUM online meeting, 23 January 2023](#)
- [Sousse meeting, 19 February 2023](#)
- [Coordination meeting, 17 March 2023](#)
- [Pixel evaluation of PACTUM progress, 26 May 2023](#)
- Bilateral meeting/UCAR, 5 June 2023
- Bilateral meeting/UTM, 6 June 2023
- Bilateral meeting/USFAX, 12 June 2023

Three internal reports, concerning the three years of the project, have been redacted as well as the intermediate technical and financial reports expected by the Grant Agreement. As concerns the financial management of the project's funds, *Equipment* delivery and installation were delayed due to both COVID-19 pandemic restrictions and the local political instability but were eventually completed in October.

## Conclusion

As anticipated in the introduction of this report, the PACTUM consortium has collected several delays in the entire project's lifespan. More than one year of lack of real mobility among partners and a long lack of communication from the Tunisian governmental actor involved may explain to a large extent such delay. However, the coordination team (USIENA) and all the partners have honestly recognized limits and underperformances, thus paving the way to a process of learning and mutual collaboration that has produced a good number of outcomes, academic cooperation, some examples of mobility and significant organizational capacity. Nevertheless, the main objective of this project which consisted of a two-year vocational Master's program on social, political and behavioural sciences will not see the light by the natural end of the project.

A different orientation in terms of priorities and regulations has been adopted by the Tunisian Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research which has had a strong impact on the workflow of the PACTUM project during its third and last year. Due to such a change, the two-year master's program will not be launched by any of our Tunisian partner institutions. Despite the approval of at least one PACTUM Master's proposal at the University of Kairouan, the delay in officially communicating the approval has been significant, thus hindering the launch of the master's program at the right time. Consequently, this has resulted in a shortage of available students since, in the meantime, they have enrolled in other activities.

In light of these considerations, the PACTUM partnership has requested a 6-month extension to complete the remaining activities of the project and to provide it with an added value to compensate for the unmet goals. This request did not include any budget revisions or changes in task allocations, nevertheless, it has been rejected.



However, due to our strong commitment and consideration of the power of the ideal pursued in these three years, the partnership engages in the finalization of all necessary preconditions to launch the PACTUM Master's program even after the end of the project. A special focus will be devoted to the finalization and implementation of each Tunisian University's Master proposal to meet the new requirements of the Tunisian MHESR and to comply with the contents of the engagement statement enclosed in this proposal and suggested by the MHESR itself. WP leaders will thus operate to overcome any bureaucratic and organizational issues we may face in the final stages of the project to achieve the most positive results possible and to pave the way for the future development of the PACTUM master's program.

