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## HEIDA PROJECT

*Data driven decision making for internationalization internationalization of Higher Education:  
Bridging the gap between faculty and admin using effective communication platforms*

Project reference number: 2014-1-TR01- KA203-13128

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# HEIDA Project – Evaluation Report

## INTRODUCTION

This report is part of the third and last phase of the HEIDA project following the design of an open access tool to support the internationalization of higher education institutions (HEIDA Tool) and an online training module on the topics of data and decision making for internationalization.

The purpose of the document is to provide a summary of observations from the launch and initial feedback received from higher education institutions in the three project countries, a reflection on the feasibility of scaling up the use of the tool and online training module to a wider group of institutions in Europe, and recommendations for its implementation in different higher education institutional contexts.

### **1. Iterations and feedback on the HEIDA Online Tool and training module**

Below is a summary of the different iterations in the design of the HEIDA online tool and training module that were done as the project progressed during 2015-2016 as a result of consultation and feedback sought from internal and external stakeholders through an online questionnaire, meetings, events, the HEIDA project conference and other activities.

#### *1.1 HEIDA online questionnaire of European higher education institutions*

The HEIDA online questionnaire was completed by 117 universities across Europe, with most respondents belonging to institutions in Turkey and Slovenia. The questionnaire design and completion process was thought by the project team to help test a “proxy” version of the HEIDA online tool in a questionnaire format. The aim was to evaluate if the order of steps, number of questions and data management criteria questions for each internationalization indicator would be considered easy to understand and useful to its users.

The online questionnaire was also meant to gather feedback from future potential users about whether they considered such a tool a way to add value to their internationalization activities and strategic decision makings. To this end, the questionnaire included questions asking for feedback on how should the tool work in terms of access, users, “look and feel” and elements to include or exclude.

The feedback received from questionnaire respondents has been summarized in the tables below:



**Table 1. Elements to add to the HEIDA tool from HEIDA Online questionnaire**

<b>Types of Indicators</b>
- Questions or indicators about the policy of the institutions about specific internationalization dimensions
- Including indicators or questions that allow for measurement of qualitative/intangible/unconventional internationalization dimensions
- Example: contribution and/or level of knowledge of academic staff about the university's internationalization
- Include indicators related to international student activities
- Definitions of indicators should be culturally integrated in different policy practices
<b>Tool functions</b>
- Import of data to be as automatic as possible. Example: importing data from the Erasmus+ Mobility Tool for indicators related to academic mobility of students, faculty and staff
- Export of data to use in different reports, presentations or other formats
- Visualization of the data or indicators as a must
<b>Access, users and data input process</b>
- Each department or unit should be able to determine its own internationalization strategy and thus choose the goals and indicators most relevant, rather than a single set of goals for the whole institution
- Tool should allow different departments to see the indicators of other departments to work collaboratively
- Database should be user friendly with not too many indicators
- It should be a centralized online tool or based on an intranet rather than a desktop based application

**Table 2. HEIDA tool elements that should be reconsidered or solved from HEIDA Online questionnaire**

<b>Elements that were not considered useful or understood</b>
- Repeating same criteria questions for each indicator
- Easy to complete but requires a thorough knowledge of internationalization at the institution

**Table 3. Overall assessment of HEIDA tool from HEIDA Online questionnaire**

<b>Online questionnaire was considered:</b>
- Clear or easy to fill/understand/follow
- Relevant/Useful
- Good starting point
- Useful to learn more about the institution
- Useful for benchmarking across departments and with other universities if the indicators are public
- Long but understandably as there might be many relevant indicators for an institution
<b>Tool should be free of charge</b>



## 1.2 Stakeholder consultation events and training sessions in Slovenia, Turkey and Spain

Between 2015 and 2016 the project team organized a total of 7 consultation and training events with national stakeholders in each project country with the aim of presenting the development of the HEIDA tool and training module and to gather feedback on how it could benefit their institutions in the best possible way.

Stakeholders included colleagues from different departments at each of the project member's institutions, colleagues with responsibility for international activities or data management/institutional research at universities in each country or representatives from national agencies charged with quality assurance or internationalization of the higher education system.

At these small, open discussion led events feedback was gathered through notes and the overall recommendations are summarized in the tables below:

**Table 4. Stakeholder workshop Slovenia feedback about the HEIDA tool and data management process (Celje, 14 April 2016)**

Descriptive vs predictive analytics: universities are comfortable in doing descriptive analysis but much less so in predicting behaviours and using this insight to take preventive action.
Need to invest in training people first to use existing database tools such as Excel or others properly as this might affect the quality of the data that is recorded on the HEIDA tool
Each university has faculty members with expertise in data, statistics and related topics, they can be a useful asset in ensuring the HEIDA tool is used in the best way possible or how units collect the raw data needed for the indicators
The data input for units should also include "Faculties" as in Slovenia the bigger public universities are structured in this way and within Faculties there are Departments that also collect their own data.

**Table 5. Stakeholder workshop and training event Spain - feedback about the HEIDA tool and data management process (Barcelona, 27 October 2015 and 10 October 2016)**

The indicators are mainly quantitative but there is a need to also collect qualitative data in order to ensure a holistic approach.
Through a discussion about the provision of courses in a foreign language (English) as a common indicator of internationalization the participants opened up to considering other elements that should also be measured regarding internationalization of the curriculum (IoC) such as the international dimensions of teaching and relevance of curriculums to international employer demands.
Indicators should be distinguished between undergraduate studies, master and PhD studies according to their specificity.



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- For example at Master and PhD level there is more mobility at European and international level and the teaching includes more international references and courses.</li> </ul>
<p>Indicators referring to internationalization of teaching are recognised as a complex issue, because when contents are defined the internationalization is not considered and always is related to the language of teaching despite this is not the only aspect defining internationalization.</p>
<p>Need to clarify the purpose of the internationalization indicators: if the internationalization addresses the international profile of students or their local profile. This duality should be balanced in order to make correct decisions. In this line, the incorporation of a more practical perspective is needed in order to ensure this national- international approach in the selection of indicators.</p>
<p>Mechanisms of quality assurance are needed especially in order to monitor and audit the process of data collectio.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Example: usually only data related to funding is verified, but the same does not happen with qualitative data.</li> </ul>
<p>Need for coherence or alignment between indicators proposed by local and national bodies (as Catalonian government) and each university.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Example: some of the indicators that are chosen by each institution through the HEIDA tool should be the same as the ones collected already by the regional or national government</li> </ul>

**Table 5. Stakeholder workshop and training event Turkey - feedback about the HEIDA tool and data management process (Istanbul, 28 April 2015, 10 October 2016)**

<p>Expectation of the HEIDA tool was many-folded and included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to make better use of existing data or help individuals at the institution to discover data, however, it should be done as much as possible using existing data systems (a number of examples of systems used in different Turkish universities were mentioned by participants)</li> <li>- help to improve services with data that would not be previously accesible</li> <li>- supporting the embedding of internationalization across the university or at least for individuals and senior decision makers to have broader understanding</li> </ul>
<p>Some of the challenges or current issues faced by the Turkish universities present at the event and that were raised as possible elements to consider in the roll-out of the HEIDA tool in institutions included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Existence of different priorities in the same institution might also mean there is not common set of data or indicators that can be collected regularly. There will be different data priorities/perspectives</li> <li>- Sometimes there is resistance to adopt new or adapt data management systems. Also there can be issues of institutional memory in that data might already be available but staff are not aware due to insufficient documentation or how the data is stored (eg individual's computers)</li> <li>- Moving beyond widely used indicators – eg.Campus services for international students also mean there will need to be clear definitions of indicators such as what international students are to avoid counting different things in each unit. A glossary that accompanies the tool would be useful.</li> </ul>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- One of the most difficult data types to collect are those related to student's satisfaction or perception of services and dimensions of internationalization. For example, questionnaire design should be very carefully considered and student questionnaires as an embedded element of all services across the university (not only for outgoing or incoming exchange students)</li> </ul>
<p>Who is the champion or lead of HEIDA at each institution?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There was debate as to whether this should fall under the responsibility of the International Office or similar unit or rather an Institutional Research Office/Planning and Evaluation Office or similar.</li> <li>- Very few universities in Turkey have such units and the monitoring, evaluation and reporting of "facts and figures" related to internationalization mostly happens on an ad-hoc basis</li> </ul>
<p>Indicators related to prospective students is not always considered in planning activities but should be also included in the list of indicators of the HEIDA tool</p>

### *1.3 HEIDA Conference and other dissemination events of the project*

As part of the project activities the HEIDA tool in its almost final version was presented to an international audience at the HEIDA Conference in Istanbul on September 22, 2016. Feedback received from participants through a post conference questionnaire was mostly positive in terms of the perceived relevance and usefulness of the online tool and the overall topic of using data for measuring internationalization.

The HEIDA tool and online training module was also presented to international higher education audiences as sessions in the following European conferences: HEIR Conference 2016 (UK), UK NARIC 2016 Conference (UK), MakeLearn and TIIM International Joint Conference 2015 and 2016 (Italy and Romania respectively), ISSBS Conference on Quality and E-learning in Education 2016 (Kosovo), IV International EDO Congress (Spain), NAFSA 2016 Annual Conference - ITRU Reception (United States), Coimbra Group Annual International Seminar 2016 (Italy). Through these interactions the project team also gathered informal feedback from potential users to help shape in more detail the functions of the tool and the training or guidance needed to implement such a tool in different types of institutions.

For example, through sessions held at the UK conferences it became evident that in that national context there is already a very regulated higher education data system and so, a tool such as HEIDA would be perceived as an additional load of work for international offices. However, the online training module and content related to how to use internationalization data for specific dimensions such as international students would be useful for UK institutions.



## 2. Feasibility of scaling up the use of the HEIDA Online Tool and Training Module

As the HEIDA online tool is a free and open-software product there is high potential for adoption amongst higher education institutions in Europe and elsewhere. Some of the advantages for adoption include:

- Open software and online installation guide that can be accessed by IT teams in HEIs anytime through Github.com and dedicated IT support hosted at Koç University to provide help for institutions using the tool
- Available in English, Turkish, Slovenian and Spanish. Other language versions can be developed by institutions to adapt to their national languages.
- It features an easy to navigate interface and three types of users (Admin, Editors, View-Only) that each institution can tailor based on their needs
- All the features of the online tool (indicators, criterias, questions, groups and sub-groups) can be tailored so that institutions can add specific items that are unique to their context or data and information needs

The use of the HEIDA Online Tool across a significant number of European Higher Education Institutions in the long term can be achieved through further dissemination in the following channels:

- European Union projects database
- Inclusion as a recommended tool in the Erasmus+ Mobility Tool (MT) dashboard
- Erasmus+ National Agencies online or printed guides related to good practice/useful resources for management of internationalization
- Sessions and posters at well-known international higher education conferences in Europe (eg EAIE, UK NARIC)
- Sessions at well-known higher education conferences whose audience is senior university leaders (eg Times Higher Education Summits, national conferences)
- Sessions at national institutional or educational management academic conferences
- Inclusion of information about the HEIDA tool in commercially available software targeted at universities for data management (SAP for Education, QS Intelligence, national companies)

Further dissemination or training events can be organised after the end of the HEIDA project to interested institutions using remote working tools such as skype or webinars.



### 3. Recommendations on how to adapt the HEIDA Online Tool and Training to different institutional contexts

Throughout the HEIDA project the team was able to gather feedback from European higher education that varied in size, age, mission and institutional cultures.

The following table summarizes some of the key recommendations the team can provide for institutions interested in using the HEIDA Tool and Online Training Module as a way of improving their decision making for internationalization activities.

**Table 6. Key recommendations for different types of institutions**

Type of institution	Recommendations
<b>Small and young institution</b>	<p>Aim to agree with academic and relevant administrative units on a set of limited (no more than 10-15) indicators that reflect the whole institution's mission and strategic aims and work to ensure these indicators are properly understood and collected each year by relevant staff.</p> <p>Work with communications department to increase the use of these indicators in internal and external materials as appropriate</p> <p>In some cases, the international office will be 1 person or a very small team so decide early on if the task of collecting these indicators and dissemination will fall on the "international" team or another unit.</p>
<b>Large and old institution</b>	<p>Use existing internal communication channels to raise awareness of the tool being available and if possible, include as agenda item in meetings with senior leadership to gain "champions" in each academic unit.</p> <p>Don't fixate on common indicators unless some are required by national regulation agencies.</p> <p>Invest time and effort in training staff on data management as part of professional development opportunities and use the HEIDA tool as a practical starting point.</p>
<b>Large and new institution</b>	<p>As above but also consider when purchasing or developing data systems for student records, faculty reporting, project databases and others that they should be able as much as possible to differentiate</p>



	international dimensions for easier reporting on the HEIDA tool. For example: if purchasing a new system always ask the question “can this report based on national/international location/nationality/scope etc”
<b>Research intensive institution</b>	The suggestions found before also apply but in these institutions there could be a specific interest from senior decision makers about measurement of impact of international research activities beyond citation impact. Work with relevant stakeholders internally to choose or develop your own internationalization of research indicators that best meet your needs.
<b>Teaching intensive institution</b>	The suggestions found before also apply but in these institutions there could be a specific interest from senior decision makers about measurement of internationalization of the curriculum activities beyond teaching in a foreign language and employability of graduates based on the internationalization opportunities available to students. Work with relevant stakeholders internally to choose or develop your own internationalization indicators that best meet your needs.
<b>Institution beginning or developing internationalization activities or plans</b>	Invest in training people and their skills for data analysis and interpretation before aiming a complete roll-out of the tool. Don’t aim for perfection as it will be difficult at first to have “buy-in” from some units about the value of monitoring and measuring internationalization. Gain “champions” and develop incentives for staff and faculty to make it easier for them to spend time in using the tool and receiving training.

The list above is not exhaustive and there are many other institutional contexts that could be included but were not part of the case studies or stakeholder experiences that the team was able to engage with during the lifetime of the project.

END OF REPORT