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| **INSTITUTION/CONTACT PERSON:** |
|  | **Last Name** | Al-Sa`ed | First Name | Rashed, Ph.D.  |
| **Institution** | Birzeit University [BZU], Institute of Environmental and Water Studies [IEWS] |
| **Role in the institution** | Associate Professor, Director |
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| **INFORMATION ABOUT THE PLANNED PROJECT:** |
| **Erasmus+ International co-operation Activity** (higher education sector) – **type of the project idea** | **Please, tick the appropriate one/ones:** [x] **Erasmus+ KA1: International students and staff credit mobility**[x] **Erasmus+ KA1: Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees**[x] **Erasmus+ KA2: Capacity Building Higher Education in Partner Countries**[ ] **Erasmus+ Jean Monnet programme** |
| **Discipline / Academic field** | Higher Education and research/water science and environmental engineering |
| **Institution’s preferable role[s] in the project[s]?** (applicant OR partner) | [x] **Applicant** [OR][x] **Partner** |
| **Which countries are about to be involved?** | **Erasmus+ Programme Countries** |  |
| **Erasmus+ Partner Countries** |  |
| **Working language of the project consortium = language of the project application** | English |
| **Duration of the project** | **2-3 years** |

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| **PROJECT DESCRIPTION:** |
| **Enhancement of the Center of Excellence for Water Studies (CEWS) at Birzeit University****Main Goal**The CEWS seeks to achieve several strategies in line with the vision and mission of the university. The CEWS work on the development and initiation of research domains in the water sector, inspired by the need of the Palestinian society and enhance communication and interaction and partnership with local institutions, governmental, non-governmental and private. Moreover, efforts will be exerted to improve the courses outline, syllabus, and the teaching methods of these courses.**Objectives derived from the main goal:*** *First objective*: to build the research capacity of Birzeit University in order to enable its staff to conduct original scientific research in the various field of water.
* *Second objective*: to develop the curriculum and quality of the current Master Programs in Water and Environmental Engineering and Sciences
* *Third objective*: to establish a new Master Program in Water and Environmental Management.
* *Fourth objective*: to build a sound enabling environment for cooperation in research and education between Birzeit University and the other Palestinian universities.
* *Fifth objective*: to prepare for establishing a PhD program jointly with a number of Palestinian Universities and international ones, especially the Dutch universities
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| **Activities**1. **Activities to achieve each objective:**

**Activities to achieve the first objective:*** Equipping the laboratories with modern and appropriate instruments and equipment.
* Establishing a number of pilot stations at Birzeit University for wastewater treatment and reuse applying different technologies.
* Refurbishment of the offices and halls as well as upgrading the old equipment.
* Providing a four-wheel-drive car for field work.
* Establish a program for scientific exchange between staff of Birzeit University and other national and international ones.

**Activities to achieve the second objective:*** Conducting a comprehensive assessment of the existing MSc programs and preparing a strategy for upgrading the curriculum of these programs in harmony with the local needs of the water sector on one hand and the needs of the labor market on the other.
* Enhancing the capacity of the IEWS staff through proper training in a number of profound international universities, according to specialization.

**Activities to achieve the third objective:*** Writing a concept note to the University Council followed by a full proposal to the Academic Council.
* Preparing a comprehensive plan for the proposed MSc program in cooperation with other universities.
* Applying to the Palestinian Ministry of Higher Education for accreditation of the new program.
* Training IEWS staff in specific fields based on needs assessment before this stage.
* Collaboration with the other universities to learn from their experiences and involve their staff in the new program.

**Activities to achieve the fourth objective:*** Increasing communication and coordination with all the concerned Palestinian universities in order to create specializations at each of the universities based on the rule “Complete not Compete”.
* Creating electronic media for communication and sharing between the teachers and students of the different Palestinian universities.
* Organizing a number of joint workshops between the Palestinian universities to discuss collaboration potentials.
* Writing research and education proposals jointly with different Palestinian and international universities.

**Activities to achieve the fifth objective:*** Conducting needs assessment for a joint PhD programs at the Palestinian universities.
* Coordination with the Ministry of Higher Education to learn their experiences and instructions.
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| **Results**1. *Self-dependency in covering the operational expenses in the future*: Finding sources of funding for new projects of the Institute is at the heart of the institute's work and it is the most important element of its existence. Therefore, positioning the center of excellence entails:
* Getting long term projects.
* Finding repeated clients in the fields of training and consultancy services.
* Creating strategic relations with the different institutions including the private sector.
* The Institute must infuse a high credibility in terms of quality in relation to the implementation of its services.
* Development and rehabilitation of Institute`s assets, creating a more favorable business environment, and supporting the development of expertise and staff.
1. *b) Anticipated future of the center*:Birzeit University aspires that IEWS becomes a center excellence at local, regional and international levels. On short terms, we aim at establishing new academic programs such as an MSc Water and Environment Management. On the long term, we aim to establish a PhD Water and Environmental Studies.

We wish to have an independent headquarter to the Institute for Environmental Studies and Water Studies so that it contains all the facilities in a one place. 1. *c) Breakeven year (when revenues exceed operational expenses)*: Currently, the IEWS manages to cover all its operational expenses without any deficit. However, these expenses are expected to increase as a result of upgrade and expansion. The IEWS is expected to be able to cover the operational expenses and achieve a surplus within two years. The surplus can be utilized in future development and sustainability of the center.
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**We are searching for:**

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| **Types of institutions** | Academic and research institutions specialized in water and environmental education, research, technology development and testing, professional training, courses development at B.Sc. and M.Sc. levels covering all aspects of water, wastewater and solid waste engineering, environmental auditing and management, hydrology and IWRM, project development and management, air pollution, sustainability and cleaner production principles, watershed management, industrial and municipal water and wastewater facilities |
| **Country/Region** | EU countries, America, Arab countries |
| **Institutions’ profiles** | Academic and research fields, water, sanitation, environment |
| **Other relevant information** |  |