

# LEAD-MENA Newsletter

## #1 - May 2026



**Lead-MENA**  
Launch of an Advanced Educational and  
Development Access Hub in MENA Region



**Kick-off Meeting**  
Cairo, 28-29 April 2026

Introducing

## Kick-off Meeting

CAIRO, 28-29 APRIL 2026

The seven project partners gathered for the first time in a hybrid format at AASTMT. Each Work Package was presented by its leading institution, while the communication strategy, quality plan, and 2026-2028 roadmap were collectively validated. On 29 April, the first Quality and Risk Committee session brought together all partners to map project risks and define mitigation strategies.

The meeting was evaluated by participants and received an overall score of 4.72 / 5. Key strengths highlighted included the richness of discussions, the collaborative atmosphere, and the quality of the venue.

## The Project Has Officially Started !

### Message from the Coordinator

Dear partners and friends of the LEAD-MENA consortium,  
It is with great pride that we present the first issue of our newsletter. The first six months of the project have been intense and highly constructive. The Kick-off Meeting held on 28-29 April 2026 at AASTMT in Cairo marked a decisive milestone: seven institutions, four countries, one shared ambition. We are now moving forward together.

**Dr Sourour Chtourou** ,  
Project Coordinator - ISAMK - University of Kairouan (UNIK)

### Lead-MENA objectives

The Lead-MENA initiative seeks to establish a sustainable and innovative educational hub where students and graduates can benefit from academic support, skill development, simulation activities, and collaborative projects. By integrating modern industrial practices such as sustainable packaging solutions, VR/AR technologies, logistics and supply chain software, and energy monitoring systems into educational programs, the project connects universities, industry experts, and students to address complex challenges in sustainability and innovation. It emphasizes hands-on learning through case studies, simulations, and real-world industrial projects, particularly in Egypt and Tunisia, while strengthening student employability by encouraging them to present business cases and solutions to real industrial problems. LeadMENA also promotes interdisciplinary and international collaboration, with a strong focus on ethics and global perspectives, aiming to engage more than 200 students and professionals along with 20-30 professors, ensuring practical application of knowledge and meaningful contributions to the logistics and industrial sectors.





# Progress of the Work Packages

## WP1 COORDINATION (UNIK)

Project management plan and communication strategy finalized. Kick-off Meeting successfully organized.

## WP2 HUBS (UMA / ESSTED)

Stakeholder mapping for the packaging sector completed. Gender and inclusion action plan currently being finalized.

## WP3 CURRICULUM (AASTMT)

Industry-academia collaboration strategy defined. Labour market workshops scheduled to begin in August 2026.

## WP4 MOBILITY (IHU)

Capacity-building workshop and mobility arrangements were discussed in preparation for Deliverable 4.1, 'Capacity-Building Workshop Materials', due on 30 September 2026

## WP5 QUALITY (UNIFI)

Quality Assurance Plan submitted on 30 April 2026, based on ISO 9001:2015 standards. Deliverable validation procedures established.

## WP6 DISSEMINATION (CCK)

Multilingual website online at [lead-mena.rnu.tn](http://lead-mena.rnu.tn) since February 2026. LinkedIn and Facebook pages active.



## LEADMENA Team Building



The consortium’s risk management workshop and the cultural visit to the Egyptian Museum both played a pivotal role in strengthening team cohesion within the LEAD-MENA project. The workshop fostered structured collaboration, as representatives from all partner institutions jointly identified operational, engagement, and external risks, and co-developed mitigation strategies. This collective exercise not only produced a comprehensive Risk Register but also reinforced trust, transparency, and shared accountability among partners. Complementing this formal activity, the museum visit offered an informal setting for cultural exchange and personal connection. Experiencing Egypt’s heritage together created shared memories, encouraged mutual appreciation of diversity, and deepened interpersonal bonds beyond the professional context. Together, these activities balanced professional collaboration with cultural bonding, building a resilient and united consortium prepared to navigate challenges while maintaining strong interpersonal relationships.

## Upcoming Key Activities

### May - June :

Educators and industry forums in Tunisia · Signature of stakeholder agreements

### July - August :

Finalization of the mobility framework · Launch of external evaluator selection · Labour market workshops

### October - November :

In-person capacity-building workshop (IHU) Delivery of hub equipment

### November :

Online training on updated systems · First Internal reports

## Project Partners



- **UNIK** - UNIVERSITE DE KAIROUAN - Tunisia
- **UMA** - UNIVERSITE DE LA MANOUBA - Tunisia
- **AASTMT** - ARAB ACADEMY FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND MARITIME TRANSPORT - Egypt
- **BADR** - BADR UNIVERSITY - Egypt
- **UNIFI** - UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI FIRENZE - ITALY
- **IHU** - DIETHNES PANEPISTIMIO ELLADOS - Greece
- **CCK** - CENTRE DE CALCUL EL-KHAWARIZMI - Tunisia



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