



World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS)

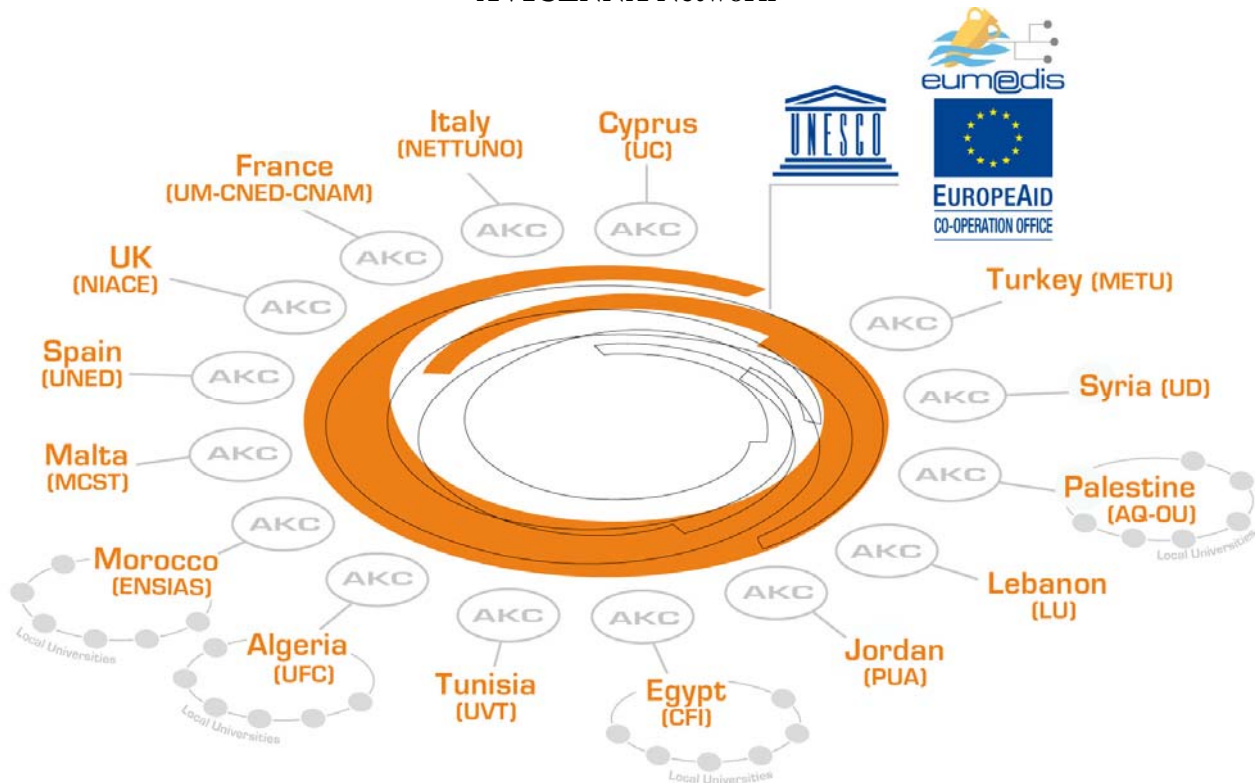
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AVICENNA VIRTUAL CAMPUS SUSTAINABLE MODEL

Named after **Ibn Sina** (981–1037 AD), the most famous philosopher of his time, as well as mathematician, doctor of medicine and astronomer, the AVICENNA VIRTUAL CAMPUS is a network of e-learning centres around the Mediterranean basin.

The project, financed by the European Commission, within the framework of the EUMEDIS Programme and under the aegis of UNESCO (SC/PSD), involves 15 countries: Algeria, Cyprus, Egypt, France, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco, Palestine, Spain, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey and the United Kingdom.

AVICENNA Network



Why launch a Virtual Campus in the Mediterranean basin?

For the past three millennia, the Mediterranean Region has functioned as both infrastructure and network for the civilisation among its shores. Aside from its political unity, the Mediterranean had known, and continues to experience, interconnected perceptions, attitudes and cultures. The Mediterranean Region shares social and economic patterns, modes of representations, which, today,

provide the groundwork for future developments and renewed European interest. Recognizing that co-operation, partnership and dialogue among cultures and civilizations throughout the Mediterranean Region are more necessary than ever in order to promote understanding among them. The Institutions involved work towards a common vision: **creating a new community of Universities sharing best practices and pedagogical innovation as well as a larger community of e-learners across the Mediterranean.** E-learning is a key part of Mediterranean Region development. It may become a force of convergence, a bridge between EU and the Euro-Mediterranean Region.

The Avicenna Virtual Campus objectives:

With the current rapid development of Information and Communication Technologies and their applications, e-learning is becoming a promising way to promote collaboration between regional Research Centres, Universities and institutions of education, in order to produce online courses fitting specific educational needs; to transfer advanced research results directly throughout high quality online courses; to access distributed material available on the Web and to involve Mediterranean users in an international educational network.

In line with the objectives of the Barcelona Declaration (1995) and in the context of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership process, the Avicenna Virtual Campus project aims at creating in the long run, a self-sustainable campus, based on co-operation between institutions of the countries involved. The project also aims at establishing adequate local infrastructures and at transferring best practices and professional know-how within target universities.

The Avicenna Virtual Campus project addresses social objectives: it may bring some answer to the lack of access to higher education of marginalized populations, including BLIND students (by providing adequate technologies) and WOMEN.

Expected achievements *in 2006*:

The Avicenna Virtual Campus has set itself the following goals for the three and a half years pilot period:

- A dynamic network of 15 operational *Avicenna Knowledge Centres* (AKCs) in the Mediterranean basin. Each Avicenna center will be a national resources centre for all universities in the partner country;
- To equip the centres with the Information communication technologies and tools of online production;
- Implementation of the main five pillars of the network (organisational, educational, technological, legal (author's right and intellectual property) and the quality assurance control);
- Production of 156 online modules of 20 hours each at the end of the project (One module= 20 hours = one Avicenna credit) in sciences and technologies, computer sciences, management and diplomacy;
- An Avicenna Virtual Library containing the online courses shared between the Mediterranean partners;
- A common set of charts, standards, norms, best practices and a model framework which are reusable and replicable in the Mediterranean and national context;
- 45 experts trained in online and distance education;
- 310 higher education teachers trained regarding techniques for online course production;
- 600 tutors trained in online teaching methods;

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- 12,000 students trained over this initial period (and 200,000 over a six-year projection period);
- Development of a basic support for pedagogical innovation for the Mediterranean academic institutions through the network.

Preliminary results obtained in this first period of the project:

The implementation of the five pillars of the network (organisational, educational, technological, legal (author's right and intellectual property) and the quality assurance control) allowed us to launch the production process of online courses in very good conditions.

The preliminary results:

- Creation of 14 Avicenna centres in the following countries: Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Syria, Turkey, Cyprus, Italy, France, Spain and Malta;
- The Avicenna portal is operational as well as several web sites of the centres were created. <<http://avicenna.unesco.org>>;
- 11 MED Avicenna centres have been equipped;
- 14 Directors and 28 technical and pedagogical experts trained;
- An e-learning platform installed in the 14 Avicenna centres;
- The Avicenna Virtual Library is operational;
- The Assurance Quality Control system is online and operational;
- A model of author's contract (author's rights and intellectual property) of online courses has been created and approved by the partners and UNESCO;
- During the first phase of the project, 100 higher education teachers were trained regarding techniques for online course production. More than 300 teachers are expected to be trained by June 2006(Official end of the project);
- The process of Assurance Quality Control of the online courses production is in progress;
- Production of 52 online modules of 20 hours each in different programmes and languages;
- During this half-academic year, more than 8,000 students will use the produced online modules;
- We plan a minimum of 50,000 students at the end of the project.

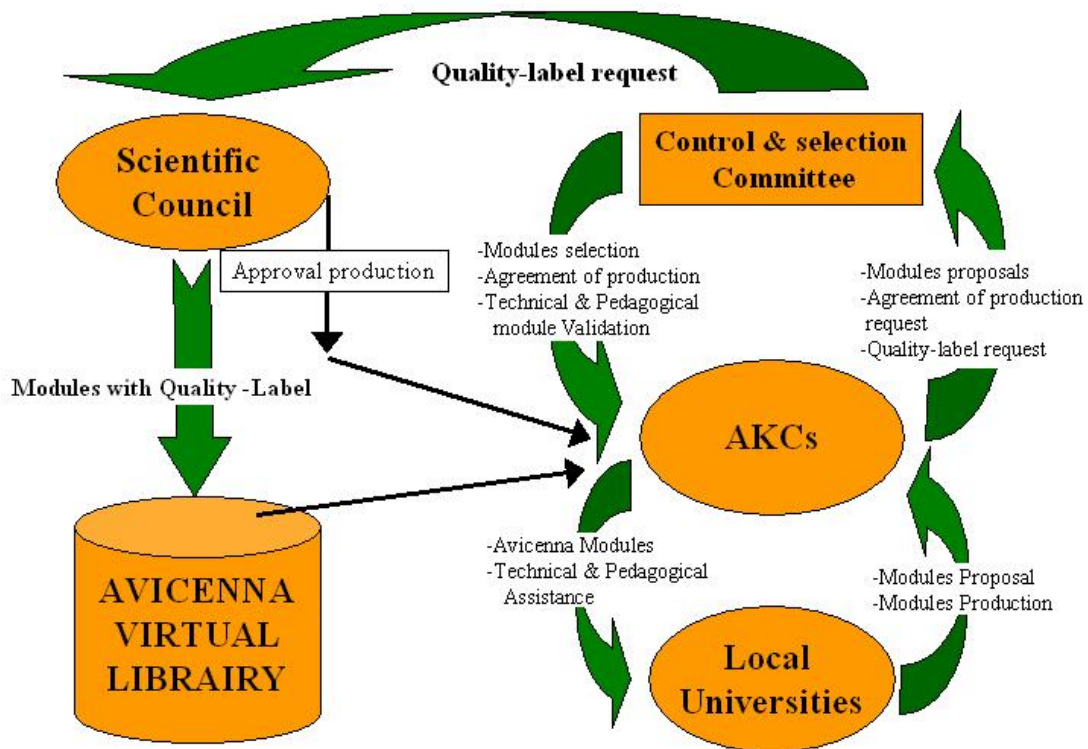
Experts of European Commission have recently evaluated the Avicenna Project and concluded that it represents a **sustainable model** of the EUMEDIS Programme.

Impact of the project:

Using the Avicenna Model is a strategic necessity. It allows promoting effectively:

- real and measurable improvement of the acquisition of knowledge, competences and new working methods;
- access to open online quality training for a large number of users;
- training of a larger number of teachers in real or recorded time than the traditional methods;
- training and retraining of teachers;
- reducing of the costs due to the re-use of human resources and technologies;
- improving of the general level of education in the developing countries.

Decentralised Process Production



Extension of Avicenna Network:

A partnership between **WABT (World Academy of Biomedical Technologies)** and **UNESCO** has been initiated to develop online training in Medical Biotechnologies in the Mediterranean Region through the Avicenna Network.

Demands are in discussion for the creation of new national Avicenna networks in partner countries. These national networks will be the natural extension of the regional network.

Official demands are also in discussion for the creation of new networks (Avicenna Model) in Eastern Europe, Central Europe, and Iraq.

The AVICENNA Partners

