

4th Meeting of the Advisory Board of the DIGEP

“Department of Excellence” project.

Torino, 21/01/2022

The 4th meeting of the Advisory Board (Alexandre Dolgui, Aldo Geuna, Alexis Tsoukiàs, Raquel Xalabarder) took place on-line (due to the sanitary restrictions holding) the 21/01/2022. The meeting was organised on the following schedule:

- 09.00am Welcome and presentation by the Project Coordinator and the Department Head.
- 09.20am Presentations of the project achievements by the team leaders.
- 10.40am Meeting of the Advisory Board.
- 11.30pm Meeting between the Advisory Board, the Project Coordinator and the head of Department.

1. General Comments

The year under examination remains an exceptional one. For the 2nd consecutive year, the COVID-19 pandemic keeps heavily impacting all activities, but specially all those related with research and teaching. It is certainly the case for the Department and the project under assessment.

Despite this premise, the committee, for the 4th year, has been positively impressed by the quality and volume of the research conducted within the Department of Management and Industrial Production (DIGEP) of Politecnico di Torino.

It is now possible start observing the project's benefits as far as the research oriented human resources are concerned: large part of the planned recruitments have been done, there is a clear sign of innovation, external recruitments have been promoted and gender balance has been followed within the limits of the existing offer.

Despite some delays, due to unforeseeable reasons, the technological investments have been finished and the department is now fully equipped with the instruments, labs and robots necessary to conduct their projects. Although some of these are relatively recent it is once again possible to observe the positive impact of such an investment. We would like to congratulate the coordination committee and the coordinator himself for the accountable presentation of the whole project activities.

All that said, the committee wants to emphasise a few critical points:

1. The grant received allowed to renovate and expand the research staff of the department, but there is a clear demand now for strengthening the administrative and technical staff which is critically low with respect to the needs. This was expected to be a university's commitment, but for the time being has not been transformed into a policy.

2. From the presentations and the discussions with the team leaders it appeared to the committee that there is an expansion of the teaching activities of the department's members up to an unsustainable point. There is a clear risk that an uncontrolled further expansion of teaching could jeopardise the results obtained with this project, and this should be carefully assessed by the Department and the University administration.
3. Despite the efforts conducted until now, we consider that the interdisciplinary research developed within this project is below our expectations and the potentiality offered. We really think this should be an opportunity not to miss.

Besides the above comments and related recommendations, the advisory board considers that the Department should improve the communication about the impact of the technology investment and how this is used to improve research, teaching and consultancy. We also suggest that it is time to establish a fund-raising policy, improving the existing competitiveness, in order to consolidate the investments done.

As the project starts the last year of activities and since the next year meeting of the Advisory Board will be the last one, we renovate our proposal about organising a DIGEP day (a whole day of scientific exchanges among the Department groups), hoping this will be compatible with the overall sanitary conditions. The Advisory Board will be glad to attend (if possible) and formulate our last recommendations.

Torino, 05/02/2022