

Protocol on the Establishment and Oversight of
“Méndez Centres for Investigative Interviewing”
under COST Action 22128 ImpleMéndez

Introduction

COST Action 22128 ImpleMéndez has at its core the objective of enabling the implementation of the Mendez Principles on Effective Interviewing for Investigations and Information Gathering. With this as an underpinning aim, the Management Committee of the ImpleMéndez Action will oversee the establishment of a number of “Méndez Centres for Investigative Interviewing”.¹

These Centres will seek to identify and foster good practice, undertake high-quality research, enhance co-operation between academics, practitioners and policy-makers, and create a global network of engaged peers. A Centre may be based in one jurisdiction or may be cross-jurisdictional. Each Centre will aim to strengthen relationships between academics, practitioners and policy-makers; to organise workshops, meetings or other events related to effective investigative interviewing within the meaning of the Mendez Principles; to design and deliver appropriate training in this context; and to conduct related research. It is expected that the core activities of each Centre will be focused on investigative interviewing of suspects in criminal cases, though additional activities relating to interviews with witnesses and/or victims can also be organised.

Application

Proposals for the establishment of a Méndez Centre for Investigative Interviewing can be made by members of COST Action 22128 ImpleMéndez.² Proposals should not be made on behalf of consultancy firms or agencies. A minimum of two members must propose the establishment of a Centre and form part of the leadership team of such Centre. The Core Management Group of the ImpleMéndez Action will consider applications. Applications will be assessed every two months and a response will be issued. This may agree to the creation of the proposed Centre; seek additional information or clarification; or, refuse to sanction the establishment of the Centre with clear reasons provided. Agreement to the establishment of a Centre does not guarantee the provision of funding for Centre events – this needs to be sought separately within the budget of the ImpleMéndez Action.

All applications should be emailed to fiona.walsh@dmu.ac.uk with the subject title “Application to establish Méndez Centre”. A one-page document should be submitted outlining:

1. the names, affiliations and relevant expertise of the proposers;

¹ Hereafter referred to as “Centres” or a “Centre”. Juan Méndez has been consulted by the Action Chair and Vice Chair and has kindly agreed to the use of his name as a designation on these Centres.

² To become a member see <https://www.cost.eu/actions/CA22128/>



2. the leadership arrangements of the proposed Centre;
3. the current situation in relation to investigative interviewing and the Mendez Principles in the relevant jurisdiction(s);
4. the proposers' vision for the Centre and how it could lead to (greater) implementation of the Mendez Principles;
5. details of agreements reached with police and/or other relevant investigative agencies;
6. plans for first events; and,
7. a statement of agreement to the oversight arrangements set out below.

Oversight

Méndez Centres for Investigative Interviewing must provide bi-annual reports to the Core Management Group of the ImpleMéndez Action. These reports must include:

1. A detailed description of events held within the reporting period including lists of attendees, details on topics covered/presentations made etc;
2. Information on any engagement undertaken by Centre members, such as meetings with police or other investigative bodies, conference presentations under the banner of the Centre, discussions with policy-makers etc;
3. Details on any relevant publications of Centre members in the reporting period;
4. Details on any relevant teaching activities of Centre members in the reporting period;
5. Plans for the next 6-month period.

These reports will be reviewed by the Core Management Group and a written response will be provided. The Core Management Group may seek additional information or clarification, and/or make suggestions to the Centre leadership. If it considers that the Centre could/should be doing more both in terms of its own activities and in the context of networking (see below), the Core Management Group (or a delegation from that Group) may meet with the Centre leadership to review progress, discuss challenges, and find a positive way to move forward. The local context of each Centre will be considered as part of this review process and it is understood that in some jurisdictions it may be more difficult than others to achieve engagement, that this may take more time in certain circumstances, and that what works well in one jurisdiction may not work as well elsewhere.

Where, following discussions with the Centre leadership, the Core Management Group is not satisfied that a Centre is making sufficient progress or engaging in sufficient activity it may require the Centre leadership to prepare a renewal plan. This plan will be reviewed by the Core Management Group with a view to ensuring that the interests of all stakeholders are protected. It may be necessary in such circumstances to put new leadership in place in the relevant Centre, for the Core Management Group to engage directly with relevant stakeholders, and/or to end the designation of the Centre as a Méndez Centre for Investigative Interviewing under the ImpleMéndez Action. A review of any such decision by the Management Committee of the ImpleMéndez Action can be sought by the Centre leadership. The decision of the Management Committee thereafter shall be final.



Networking

The Centres established under this protocol will be expected to engage with one another as well as conducting their own activities. This could take the form of a regular webinar series where each Centre takes the lead on a session in rotation, and/or through facilitating research visits (applications for Short-Term Scientific Missions would need to be made separately under the ImpleMéndez Action in order to fund this), and/or sharing training materials and best practice findings, and/or in other ways.

Visibility and Communication

Each Centre established under this protocol will be expected to provide up-to-date content for dissemination on the implemendez.eu website and on the ImpleMéndez social media channels. The ImpleMéndez logo and COST logo must be used on Centre documentation.

Sustainability

COST Action funding for ImpleMéndez runs until October 4 2027. It should be the goal of the individual Centres established under this protocol and the network of such Centres to sustain beyond the COST Action. Centre leadership teams should endeavour to work towards this through applying for additional funding opportunities, seeking formal, long-term partnership agreements with investigative agencies, legacy planning for future leadership etc.

