

An Information Literacy Strategic Project implementation at Universidade Nova de Lisboa: case presentation



Maria Manuela Prates
Isabel Andrade

Universidade Nova de Lisboa



Context: Universidade Nova de Lisboa (Nova)



Public University

- **Students:** 18.233 / **Teachers:** 1.449 / **Non-teaching staff:** 769

- **Course offers:**

29 graduate courses (1st cycle), 107 masters (2nd cycle) and 61 doctoral courses (3rd cycle) and postgraduate courses

Academic Units (AUs):

- **5 Faculties:**

Economics; Law; Medical Sciences; Sciences and Technology; Social Sciences and Humanities

- **3 Institutes:**

Chemical and Biological Technology; Hygiene and Tropical Medicine; Statistics and Information Management

- **1 School:**

National School of Public Health

Located within the Lisbon metropolitan area, although spanning through three councils (Almada, Oeiras and Lisboa)

IL Project at Nova: Background - Librarians' role



- **Nine Libraries** (+ 1 at FE-MBA)
Each responding to their own AU; independent
(in spite of librarians' many proposals for formal university library cooperation)
- **2007: New Rector**
Calls all head librarians
Starts a library and documentation agenda at Nova
Creates a new semi-formal "Librarians" Working Group" (GTB)
- Among many issues, "**user education**" activities:
 - Catches surprised interest and a request for reporting
 - Leads to an invitation to present data at a Senate meeting
 - Opportunity brings about a GTB counter-proposal to go a step forward on the issue of "user education"
 - Presentation becomes not a report account, but a strategic advancement: "Information Literacy at Nova: a strategy for competitiveness" (May 2008)

GTB presents to the Rector memos and a proposal to start an IL Project at Nova (July, October, with a final version in December 2008) and assigns 2 liaison librarians to this task.

IL Project at Nova: Background - Momentum



External factors such as:

- RJIES (2008), new legal framework for the national HE sector, seeking more competitiveness for Portuguese institutions and thus bringing about major changes within this field
- External evaluation (2008-2009) at the own request of Nova - by the European University Association (EUA) - stressing the need for more cooperation inside the university, namely through transversal projects within Academic Units

Added to **internal factors**,
as stated in Nova's self-portrait....

IL Project at Nova: Background - Momentum



- **Nova's reality** (as described in the university's website)

«The singularity of the *Universidade Nova de Lisboa* Project lies in its respect for the **individuality of each academic unit**, each having acquired its image and prestige within the **freedom, diversity** and tolerance that have been the guidelines of Nova.

One further aim of the University is the **strengthening of the cohesion between units** in order to take the best possible advantage of the synergies that can thus be generated and developed.»

From "Courses Catalogue" Web information (accessed 02 June 2010)

<http://www.unl.pt/guia/2010>

IL Project at Nova: Background - Momentum



All previously mentioned factors:

- were crucial for the interest raised at that specific time by this Project
- and also led to major decisions about it:

To have a foreign academic advisor as external consultant (GTB was asked to give a name. Prof Sheila Corrall, University of Sheffield was invited)

To be conducted at top university level, under the Rector's sponsorship

To be designed and implemented to the whole university

Therefore the Information Literacy Project at Nova was initiated as “strategic”

IL Project at Nova: Participants (I)



Planned structures:

- **Rectorate**’s top level sponsorship (the Rector, later delegation in a Pro-rector)
- **Steering Committee** (Senior teachers, representing each AU + Executive Committee)
 - *To name Pilot Project Teams’ teachers and be periodically reported*
- **Pilot Project Teams** (All librarians + One teacher per AU)
 - *To start implementing Pilot Projects at Nova*

Another element to be mentioned:

- The monthly “**College of Deans**” **meeting** (all AUs’ Deans + the Rector and the rectoral team) has been a top university body chosen by the Rector for dissemination and validation purposes of strategic issues of the Project;

Thus it also became an important additional structure contributing to achieve some of IL strategic aims at Nova.

IL Project at Nova: Participants (II)



Unplanned structure:

From the 2 appointed liaison librarians' own initiative a pedagogical expert (teacher) was gradually asked to participate in the project.

Later, the consultant highlighted the interest to link the project to the sole academic structure of LIS at Nova: a "Master Course in Information and Documentation" (at FCSH) . Coordinator (teacher) was also called to collaborate.

- An **Executive Committee** emerges:

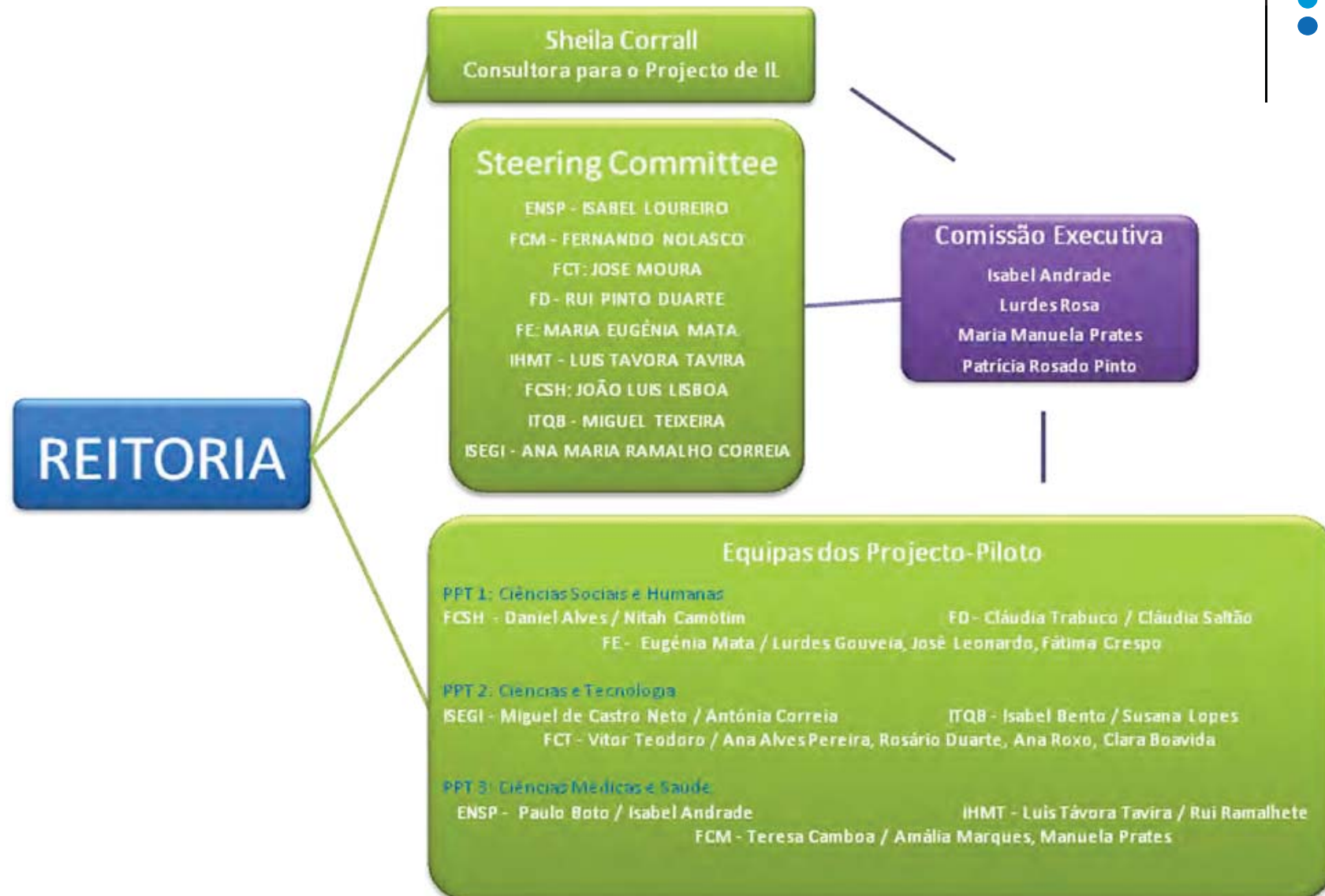
Four persons with 3 main profiles:

- 2 librarians and 2 teachers, one of them being also the pedagogical expert

Core role into the development of this IL Project:

- Coordinating operational activities, linking people and networking...
- Either spanning or focusing...

IL Project at Nova: organizational chart



IL Project at Nova: Description - Phase 1 (March – end July 2009)



a) Knowledge of the context

First purpose:

Providing as many information as possible to the external consultant

Surveys and exercises (applied to all Head librarians)

- Questionnaire 1: characterization of user education practices at Nova
- SWOT analysis: identification of awareness and expectancies towards the IL project . Became a two-step exercise from the consultant's advice
 - First moment: joint brainstorming / group reflection
 - Later moment: individual reflection to rank factors previously identified
- Questionnaire 2: characterization of Nova's libraries focusing on their functional situation in the AU they belonged to plus some managerial information

IL Project at Nova: Description - Phase 1 (March – end July 2009)



b) External consultant's 1st visit

- Meeting stakeholders: The Rector, the interface librarians and GTB.
- Debriefing information provided, highlighting the importance of specific issues
- Planning for the strategic process to start at Nova

Also:

The Rector decided to have a special session at the Rectorate for the consultant to further develop the IL concept to higher level stakeholders and also to present the Project's initial planning steps.

Deans and Heads of Scientific and Pedagogical Council were invited as well as librarians.

IL Project at Nova: Description - (March– end July 2009)



c) Implementation Plan

- **First strategic steps:** adoption of a definition, a model, a vision. Librarians were to choose 1st and 2nd. The 3rd decided at top level.
 - **Definition:** adapted from ACRL"s and CILIP"s *(next slides)*
 - **Model:** adopted from SCONUL"s "7 Pillars Model" *(next slides)*
 - **Vision:** Deans chose among 3 alternatives previously selected and provided by GTB *(next slides)*
- **Concurrent activities:**

Librarians started downloading and sharing their educational tools at one of Nova"s platforms - Moodle (at FCT – Sciences and Technology Faculty)
- **Design of Pilot Projects** *(to be initiated at a later phase)*

From a previous proposed (by the liaison librarians) grouping of all AUs into 3 main clusters - by their scientific domains" affinities - the consultant recommended each group to focus on a specific IL theme, accordind to the 7 pillars" model *(next slides)*

IL Project at Nova: Description – Definition and Vision



Nova's Information Literacy Definition

„Information literacy is a set of abilities requiring individuals to recognise when information is needed, have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information and communicate it in an ethical manner.“

Approved July 2009

Nova's Information Literacy Vision

„We want Information Literacy to create Nova scholars distinctive for their personal development, knowledge and innovation.“

Approved July 2009

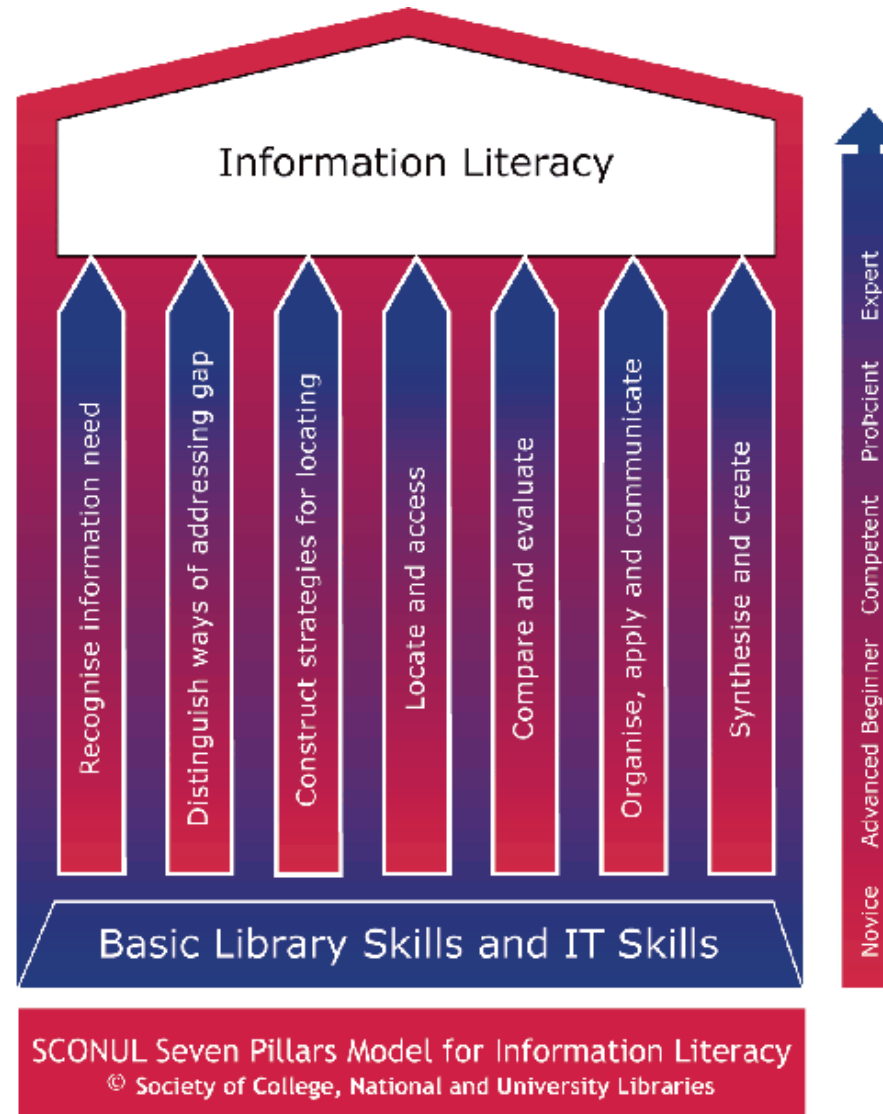
IL Project at Nova: Description - Model



The SCONUL Seven Pillars Model for IL

- Adopted by Nova July 2009

www.sconul.ac.uk



IL Project at Nova: Description - Planned Pilot Projects



PP #	Area/Domain	Acad. Units involved	IL topic
1	Social Sciences & Humanities	FCSH, FD, FE (& MBA)	Information searching <i>[Pillars 3 and 4]</i>
2	Science & Technology	FCT, ISEGI, ITQB	Referencing and citations <i>[Pillar 6]</i>
3	Medicine & Health Sciences	ENSP, FCM & IHMT	Information sources' evaluation <i>[Pillar 5]</i>

By order of appearance in the table

FCSH (Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities)

FD (Law Faculty)

FE (Faculty of Economics)

FCT (Faculty of Sciences and Technology)

ISEGI (Statistics and Information Management Institute)

ITQB (Technology and Biological Chemistry Institute)

ENSP (National School of Public Health)

FCM (Faculty of Medical Sciences)

IHMT (Hygiene and Tropical Medicine Institute)

IL Project at Nova: Description - Phase 2 (Oct.2009- begin. Jan.2010)



a) Delays due to national HE legal framework changes

- Bylaws" changes, Boards" changes and new elections postponed the Project's **Steering Committee** (StC) designation
- Also names for **Pilot Projects'** teachers (one per AU) had to wait as they were to be designated by the StC representatives

⇒ **Executive Committee**"s decision to take advantage of this postponement

b) Team and skills building in the librarians" group (from now on involving all Nova"s librarians, not just the Heads of Libraries)

- Pedagogical Forum, full-day (20th Oct.)
- Formal preparation meetings:
 - (10th Nov.) Further developing on the Project, presenting 3 .ppt "demos" to illustrate possible contents for each of the Pilot Projects, groupwork by PPs, general debate
 - (6th Jan.) Following librarians" work by PP areas: presentation of tools and materials to be offered for potential use at the first real PPT meeting with other partners (teachers)

IL Project at Nova: Description - Phase 3 (end Jan.2010-ongoing)



a) Following the planned nomination cascade

- StC first meeting (27th Jan.)
- PPT first meeting (17th Feb.)
 - Through teamwork, teachers and librarians grouped per 3 PPs worked to find ways by which they could contribute to their specific PPs' IL assigned objectives and themes.
 - Homogeneity of the AUs pertaining to a same group was a factor of easier collaboration; there were proposals both at PP's level and at AU's level.
- PPT second meeting (15th Apr.)
 - Partners presented the activities that had been achieved (some ongoing)
 - Most groups mentioned issues to correct and/or improve
 - Major questions were debated so as to present to the Project's expert

Work was collected, registered and reported ; Assessments could not not be completed by then (class schedules...) ; Analysis not yet undertaken

IL Project at Nova: Diversity of first results achieved



Types of intervention resulting from the first Pilot Projects initiatives

IL intervention type	Application contexts	Participants
Adoption of commonly created instruments (such as questionnaires) either to identify students' IL knowledge level (pre-test) or to evaluate learning for IL (pre and post- test)	FCSH (Library) ^(a) ; FD (Library) ^(a) ; FE (class) ^(b)	^(a) Librarians ^(b) Teachers & Librarians
Readjustment of pre-existing course programmes mostly focusing IL contents so as they become part of the IL Project	ISEGI ^(a) ; FCSH-História ^(b)	^(a) Teachers & Librarians ^(b) Teachers
Specific extra-curricular IL sessions (different types)	ITQB ^(a) ; ENSP/FCM/IHMT ^(b)	^(a) Librarians ^(b) Teachers & Librarians
Integration of IL modules into an existent curricular course	FCT	Teachers & Librarians
Creation of specific IL curricular units integrating the institutional curriculum	ENSP; FCM	Librarians

IL Project at Nova: Example of PPT3 (Health and Medicine)



Workshop

“Avaliação de Fontes de Informação em Medicina e Saúde”

News on the Websites of the participant's AUs



No contexto do “Projecto para uma estratégia de Literacia Informacional (LI) da Nova” foi adoptada a seguinte definição na Universidade Nova de Lisboa (UNL):

Literacia Informacional é um conjunto de capacidades que permitem que um indivíduo saiba reconhecer quando necessita de informação, tenha a capacidade de localizar, avaliar e usar eficientemente a informação necessária e ainda que possa comunicá-la de forma ética.

Para além de facilitar parcerias multidisciplinares, a estratégia de Literacia Informacional da Nova está a promover projectos transversais nas várias Unidades Académicas da UNL.

Especificamente no âmbito de um dos 3 Projectos-piloto do Projecto de IL, as Unidades Académicas do domínio de Saúde da UNL – Escola Nacional de Saúde Pública (ENSP), Faculdade de Ciências Médicas (FCM) e Instituto de Higiene e Medicina Tropical (IHMT) – promoveram em conjunto um Workshop Aberto acerca de “Avaliação de Fontes de Informação em Medicina e Saúde”.

Este Workshop integrado foi destinado a estudantes pós-graduados e de doutoramento das três instituições que o organizaram e divulgaram, tendo decorrido na ENSP, sábado, 10 de Abril, entre as 09:00 e as 13:00 horas.

Participaram estudantes das 3 instituições, distribuídos da seguinte forma: ENSP-9; FCM-4, IHMT-2.

O programa foi orientado sob uma estratégia de aprendizagem colaborativa com componente teórica e exercícios práticos.

No final os participantes manifestaram-se interessados em participar noutros módulos de formação em Literacia Informacional.

Participantes deste Projecto-piloto 3 do “Projecto para uma estratégia de Literacia Informacional da Nova”:

Docentes – da ENSP: Paulo Boto, da FCM: Teresa Gambôa e do IHMT: Luís Távora Tavira e Nuno Rolão;= Bibliotecários – da ENSP: Isabel Andrade, da FCM: Amália Marques e Maria Manuela Prates e do IHMT: Rui Ramalheite.

IL Project at Nova: Description - Phase 3 (end Jan.2010-ongoing)

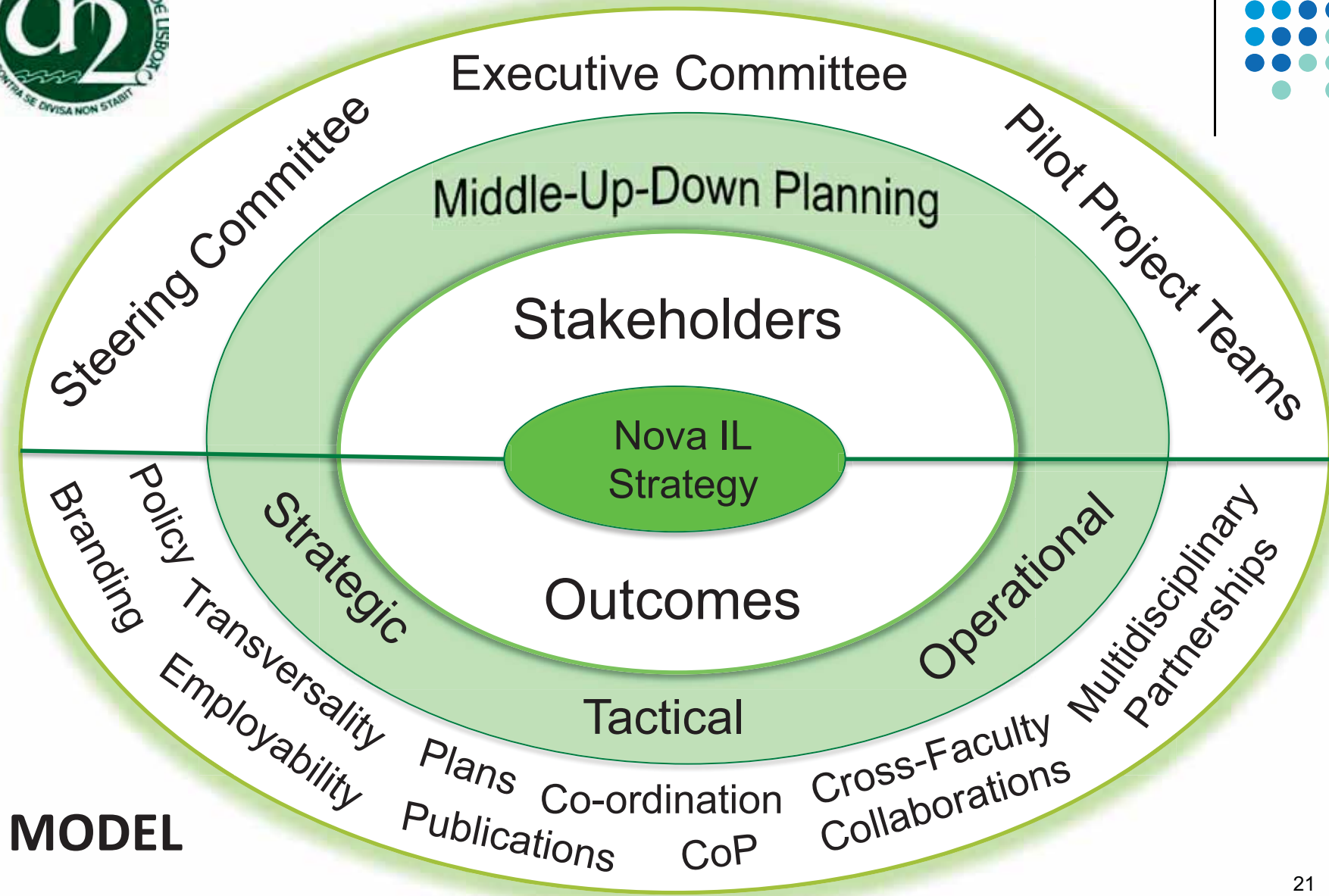


b) External consultants' second visit (May 2010)

- Intensive work with the Executive Committee
 - Presentation of major difficulties commonly agreed, namely issues on: overall evaluation; dissemination and communication; ...
 - Discussion of next steps to achieve wider implementation at Nova;
 - Possible issues of collaboration at LIS level also raised (Master Course on LIS ; scientific papers about the Project)
 - Finally, elaborating on the work undertaken so as to develop its graphic representation: **a Model for Nova's IL strategic Project**
- Meetings with other stakeholders
 - With PPTs partners (May 4th): to propose and discuss future developments
 - To top university leadership, i.e. presentation and debate with the Rector and Pro-Rector at the College of Dean's meeting (May 6th): results, major issues, next steps, Nova's Model



Information Literacy Strategic Project at Nova



MODEL

IL Project at Nova: Main characteristics



Strategic design

- Top sponsorship and evidence of support: Rector and Pro-Rector
- External expert's strategic planning guidelines
- High level coordinating body: Steering Committee, plus tactical and operational Pilot Project Teams
- Strategic procedures: building on IL concepts and using well-known validated definitions and models

Unplanned, flexible design

Emergence and role of an Executive Committee:

- responding to unexpected events with non-planned initiatives
- linking project's developments to operational and tactical as well as to strategic levels
- pushing the top agenda, while also
- looking to raise and integrate all partners' suggestions and remarks

Middle-up-down planning

IL Project at Nova: Main characteristics (II)



Essencial recognitions came out during Nova's project:

- => Acknowledgment of Nova's diverse cultures and contexts
 - respecting different paces, and also
 - incorporating results of different levels and nature in order to achieve wider organizational implementation

- => Acknowledgment of each partner's essencial role into the Project:
 - Wether organizing and transmitting IL contents
 - Or sharing and adapting IL tools
 - Or partcipating in the dissemination, "offering" class time, etc...

Definitely not a librarians' neither a teacher's only entreprise but a true **collaborative endeavour**.

IL Project at Nova: Major weaknesses/difficulties



- Lack of dedicated administrative coordination
 - Executive Committee partners' overload
- Difficulties to attend to own's regular responsibilities
 - Librarians' lack of collaboration (at libraries) = a barrier to the level of desired participation
 - Teachers' difficulties to coordinate project's collaboration with own class schedules
- Insufficient dissemination and marketing
 - Both inside Nova and externally
- Need of overall analysis and evaluation of fragmented results
 - Accepted diversity of experiences still requires global assessment



IL Project at Nova: outcomes and innovative practices

Major outcomes

- Novel awareness of top stakeholders to IL and its potential role at university level
- Improvement of Nova's librarians' skills and competencies
- First librarians' formal cooperation within Nova with new sharing practices (later extended to teachers who also required Moodle access)
- Growing IL contents through a diversity of practices and partners

New organizational dynamics at Nova

- Multidisciplinary team work: Communities of practice associating teachers and librarians (plus pedagogical expertise)
- Novel inter-organizational cooperation: Team work joining together partners from different Academic Units

Such dynamics are envisaged as an effective contribute of the IL Project to the desired transversal articulation in Nova's traditional independent culture

and thus are expected to become explicitly linked to this organizational priority.

IL Project at Nova: some future prospects



- **To disseminate and gather more participants**
 - Website area for the Project (at university and AUs" levels)
 - Roadshow events at each AU (posters, open discussion)
 - Get project champions also among students
- **To develop and spread initiatives** (*to be discussed with PPTs*)
 - Re-allocate the same pilot topics among existing project teams
- **To improve Project's capabilities and results**
 - Appoint Project Coordinator
 - Develop an IL Policy for Nova (establishing learning outcomes, formalising institutional commitments...)
 - Plan overall formal evaluation of the work done

IL Project at Nova: Acknowledgments



Being a collaborative venture, mention has to be made to:

- Nova's **Rector** (now also elected as Head of CRUP, the forum for all Portuguese Rectors) for being the top initial sponsor for this Project and also the external consultant **Professor Sheila Corral** for her knowledgeable support and guidance.
- The other Executive Committee members: **Professor Lurdes Rosa** from the LIS Master Course and particularly **Professor Patricia Rosado Pinto**, who as a pedagogical expert and participant in several university external evaluations was seminal in many discussions and planning of this Project.
- **All Project's partners** (mainly teachers and librarians) without whom this Project could not be undertaken.
- Finally we also wish to mention some other collaborators who usefully helped with secretariat and other supporting tasks.

Besides those closely involved, another stakeholder to be mentioned and thanked is **the Gulbenkian Foundation** who has supported the external consultant's travel and stay.

Thank you!

manuela.prates@fcm.unl.pt

isabel.andrade@ensp.unl.pt

