

## **2021 Operational Plan for SUITS, the Stockholm University Institute for Turkish Studies**

### **Introduction – pandemic and organizational changes**

This operational plan is drafted during a period of unusual flux. The pandemic has affected all operations at the university and SUITS is no exception. SUITS faculty has remained very active and are publishing, teaching, and contributing to online events and discussions as well as providing expert commentary in the media, but much of this is done in new ways. Activities during much of 2021 will likely continue to be held online, and the institute will remain adaptive to the changing circumstances.

Moreover, according to the university President's decision on 11-26 2020 (SU FV-1.2.1-4373-20), SUITS shall move to the Department of Economic History and International Relations starting from January 1, 2022. The details of the outcome of the move are not yet clear as planning for the changes are ongoing at the time of writing. However, it is clear from the existing plans that the intention is for SUITS to emerge on a firmer financial footing and in an academic setting that is more suited to the institute's faculty and activities.

Given these many uncertainties, the aims and objectives for the institute during 2021 outlined in this operational plan will be kept briefer and more general than usual.

### **Mission statement**

The Stockholm University Institute for Turkish Studies (SUITS) is an independent, interdisciplinary research institute in the humanities and social sciences. It is a part of the Department of Asian, Middle Eastern and Turkish Studies. SUITS is primarily a research institute, but may also provide education in its field of activity. The Institute's education and research will mainly focus on issues related to international relations and diaspora studies; society, politics and history, and human rights and democracy. The research should maintain high international standards.

SUITS should contribute to a deep and nuanced understanding of Turkey among researchers, opinion leaders, business leaders, and the general public in Scandinavia, Europe, and beyond.

In addition to research and education, SUITS will engage in outreach activities such as open lectures, conferences, and workshops.

### **Vision**

## **Institutet för Turkietstudier (SUITS)**



Stockholm University's strategy document for 2019-2022 establishes the following:

Stockholm University aims for its research and education to be of the highest international quality.

Building on this ambition, SUITS' long-term vision is as follows:

*SUITS should be an internationally leading centre of excellence that attracts researchers from all over the world and from a wide range of disciplines. This research environment will conduct specialist research in the humanities and social sciences, convey a deeper and more nuanced understanding of Turkey and Europe to a global audience, and serve as the hub of a global network of researchers with a special interest in Turkey.*

## Research

During 2021, SUITS will be preparing for the move to its new home: The Department of Economic History and International Relations. Those preparations will entail thinking deliberately about how SUITS will fit into this new research environment. The department's research strategy for International Relations prioritises three broad themes: global security issues, global political economy questions, and cooperation in international affairs.

Much of the research currently conducted at SUITS fits quite naturally within the first and second of the department's themes. SUITS publications explore issues pertaining to conflicts such as the Kurdish issue or the conflict in Syria, which have broader regional and international implications, Turkish foreign policy and relations with global powers, Turkey's relations with international institutions such as the European Union, or Turkey's presence and influence in the Balkans. Some of the research at SUITS has an IPE dimension, but this is one area in which recruitment could strengthen SUITS and improve its fit with the new research environment in which it will be located from January 2022.

Thanks to a three-year grant from the German Mercator Foundation, a grant from the Swedish Institute, and support from Granholms Stiftelse, SUITS has taken the helm in leading the Consortium for European Studies on Turkey (CEST) during the period 2020-23. SUITS Director Paul T. Levin is also the Consortium Director, and Professor

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Jenny White is Deputy Director for CEST. SUIT is responsible for distributing funds to members of the consortium who arrange annual winter symposia and summer schools.

SUITS leadership of CEST solidifies its role as a leading international actor when it comes to research in our field, a role that will require that significant time and resources are devoted to this task. The pandemic caused the two CEST events planned for 2020 to be postponed while SUITS faculty worked with faculty representatives for University of Duisburg-Essen and University of Naples "L'Orientale" to move their respective events online during 2021.

#### *Prioritized objectives for 2021*

1. *Primary objective:* To maintain a high-quality, international, and productive research environment for interdisciplinary Turkish Studies at Stockholm University.
  1. *Subsidiary objective:* Work to secure research funding continues.
  2. *Subsidiary objective:* Continued high publication output level.
2. *Primary objective:* SUITS solidifies its position as a leading actor in the field of Turkish Studies in Europe.
  1. *Subsidiary objective:* SUITS continues leadership of the Consortium for European Studies of Turkey (CEST) that it took over in 2020.
3. *Primary objective:* A plan is drafted for establishing SUITS as a dynamic research environment located at the Department of Economic History and International Relations.

#### *Activity*

- SUITS obtained and will disburse Mercator and Swedish Institute funding for online "summer" school in Turkish Studies in Europe within the framework of CEST 2021, to be organized by Prof. Kader Konuk at the University of Duisburg Essen.

SUITS obtained and will disburse Mercator

- SUITS obtained and will disburse Mercator and Swedish Institute funding for one hybrid online/in person winter symposium in Turkish Studies in Europe within the framework of CEST 2021, to be organized by Prof. Lea Nocera at the University of Naples "L'Orientale".

## **Staff & Faculty**

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There were plans for several visiting senior researchers to spend time at the institute during 2021 but travel restrictions and the severity of the spread of the novel Coronavirus in Sweden during the pandemic forced a pause in those plans. The decision by the Swedish Institute to transform its Turkish scholarship program to a grant program may come to have a significant impact on the size of our visiting postdoctoral program in the future, since funds will cover fewer positions than in the past. SUITS was successful in securing grant funding in the very first round of applications for the new program but the changes will likely begin to have consequences for SUITS in the second half of 2021, when existing postdoctoral funding runs out. Planning for the organizational transformation of the institute will be ongoing during the year, which means that it is difficult to set out any longer-term ambitions at the moment, since this plan is in the process of being drafted.

*Prioritized objectives for 2021*

4. To continue to attract high quality visiting scholars to the institute for when the pandemic allows.
  1. *Subsidiary objective:* To entice high quality researchers to allocate external funding to, or spend a paid sabbatical at, SUITS, when the pandemic subsides.

**Management, funding, administration, and facilities**

*Facilities:* The Institute is currently located in Kräftriket, building 4a. The old brick building is located near Brunnsviken, overlooking the water. From January 1, 2022, SUITS will instead be located on the 9<sup>th</sup> floor of the A building on the Southern Frescati campus area and will thus be able to tap into the bustle and activity of the main campus. The physical move is likely to happen toward the end of 2021.

*Funding:* The planned move to the Department of Economic History and International Relations in 2022 will be associated with a wholesale revamping of the institute's funding structure, with the aim of ensuring that the institute will operate on a balanced budget. Despite successful recent efforts to secure new funding to support the institute's activities and to manage costs, there will be a continued need to raise additional funds in the foreseeable future.

*Management and administration:* The administration will be restructured during 2021, in preparation for the move. The institute will be provided with new statues and the institute's management as well as the board should provide input into that process.

## Institutet för Turkietstudier (SUITS)

*Prioritized objectives for 2021*

5. Primary objective: To plan for a stable and sustainable administrative structure from 2022 on.
6. *Primary objective:* To secure additional funding for the Institute's activities.

*Activity*

- Provide the planning department with proposed new statutes for the institute.
- Continue to apply for external funding.

**Communication & collaboration**

The outreach task is important for SUITS. The institute shall continue to maintain a high profile with public outreach activities grounded in research and the expertise of its faculty. SUITS will work with the members of the board of the Consortium for European Symposia on Turkey (CEST) to develop its visibility.

SUITS shall also continue its successful collaboration with the Swedish Institute for International Affairs (Utrikespolitiska institutet), organizing joint seminars on topics of common interest. A collaboration with the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute around a series of expert roundtable discussions on Turkey and European security initiated in 2020 will continue.

*Prioritized objectives for 2021*

7. *Primary objective:* To establish SUITS in public discourse beyond Sweden as an important and unbiased source of knowledge in matters relating to Turkey.
  1. *Subsidiary objective:* To continue reaching a broad audience beyond Sweden by maintaining the visibility of SUITS in international media.
  2. *Subsidiary objective:* To reach an academic audience beyond Sweden by maintaining the visibility of SUITS in international scholarly forums.
8. *Primary objective:* To profile SUITS as the dynamic, interdisciplinary research institute that it is: one producing relevant, unbiased, and reliable research of high quality.
  1. *Subsidiary objective:* Successfully employing a range of communication channels, including research publications, lectures and teaching as well as SUITS' home page and social media, to communicate this profile.

**Institutet för Turkietstudier (SUITS)**

9. *Primary objective:* To establish and maintain a communications platform for CEST.

*Activity*

- Live-stream and record public events.
- Organize book launches and publicize SUITS publications on social media.
- Take over maintenance of the CEST Facebook page.
- Develop a website for CEST.

**Education**

SUITS is primarily a research institute, but currently also provides education in its field of activity. The focus is on courses and programmes provided in collaboration with the Section for Middle Eastern and North African Studies at the Department of Asian, Middle Eastern and Turkish Studies. Teaching will continue during 2021 but the planned move to a new department is likely to involve a re-evaluation of the educational component. SUITS continues its collaboration with the Doctoral theme *Space and Place in the Humanities*, with the Department of History, the Department of Archaeology and Classical Studies, the Department of Culture and Aesthetics, the Department of Ethnology, History of Religions and Gender Studies, and the Department of Swedish Language and Multilingualism. This includes contributing to the teaching of seminars for Ph.D. students taking courses within the theme.

*Activity*

- Collaborate with the Department of Asian, Middle Eastern and Turkish Studies to ensure a high-quality educational provision for students interested in Turkey.
- Contribute to the evaluation of the educational component of the institute, including SUITS's potential role in teaching at the Department of Economic History and International Relation.
- Contribute lectures to courses within the Doctoral theme *Space and Place in the Humanities*.

**Institutet för Turkietstudier (SUITS)**