



# FOREU4ALL

EUROPEAN UNIVERSITIES ALLIANCES



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## *European University Alliances Good Impact Assessment Practices*

### CASE STUDIES

APRIL 2026  
IMPACT TOPICAL GROUP

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## INTRODUCTION

The European University Alliances (EUA) aim to transform the higher education landscape by fostering long-term structural and strategic cooperation among higher education institutions (HEIs). Collectively, all alliances are anticipated to contribute to European-wide transformations, like improving competitiveness of European higher education institutions, or further promoting European values and identity. Although, individual EUAs also have expected outcomes and impacts, like increased visibility of individual institutions, or more sustainable collaborations with alliance partners.

As EUAs continue to develop and progress, the need for evidence of results, outcomes and impact progress as well and as such impact is a key priority in higher education and implicit in the transformative mission of the EUAs. In line with this ideology, **the Impact Topical Group**, a community of practice that brings together impact practitioners and managers from EUAs, has been developed under the [FOREU4ALL initiative](#).

The Impact Topical group has three main objectives:

- **Raising impact awareness** to contribute to a deeper understanding of the concept of impact to foster the internationalisation of its importance in the higher education and research sectors.
- **Building impact literacy** to increase capacity by equipping the EUAs and their partner HEIs with knowledge, competencies, methodological approaches, and tools to support enhance and systematically capture, assess, communicate and manage impact.
- **Enhancing impact readiness** to support EUAs in creating the necessary conditions- strategies, structures, and processes – to proactively foster and manage their impact.

In pursuit of these objectives, the Impact Topical Group as developed the EUAs Good Impact Assessment Practices. This set of good practices outlines 15 EUA's impact assessment approaches in terms of:

- Stage of development of impact assessment frameworks
- Overall methodology and approach to impact assessment
- Challenges faced in implementation
- Potential solutions that have been developed
- Lessons learnt so far in developing and implementing

This collection of self-reported good practices will help to empower alliances by promoting common approaches to impact assessment and to further support tin embedding impact as a core element of EUAs strategic and operational frameworks.

## CASE STUDIES

### Across

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**Across** – European University for Cross-Border Knowledge Sharing

**Alliance Wave:** 2024

**Stage of Development:** Exploratory and Development Phase

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#### Alliance Description

Across stands for a stronger, more innovative future for around 200 million citizens in Europe's border regions. The alliance harnesses cultural, linguistic and economic potential while addressing legal and infrastructural barriers that hinder mobility, education and innovation.

As a European University Alliance, our nine universities from European border regions are working together to drive forward the transformation of these regions through education, research and innovation. Across empowers students, staff and regional stakeholders to actively shape the future of border regions.

<https://www.across-alliance.eu/>

#### How the Alliance Assesses Impact

##### *Across Alliance Impact Assessment Approach*

The objective of each task within Across is to design and implement activities that contribute to measurable impacts for our target groups. Impacts may result from the implementation of individual tasks, from the combined effect of several tasks implemented in parallel, or from the cumulative effect of Across as a whole. The alliance explicitly recognises that impact is achieved through contribution and synergy across activities rather than through isolated interventions.

Following the principle of sustainability, Across distinguishes between short-term, medium-term, and long-term impacts. This approach ensures that project outcomes are not only achieved during the four-year funding period but are also sustained and further developed beyond the project lifetime.

The primary tool for assessing impact during the funding period is a comprehensive indicator framework. Indicators were initially defined during the proposal development phase and further specified during the first months of project implementation through an aligned process involving alliance experts, the Across Coordinator together with the Across management team. This ensured consistency, feasibility, and shared ownership across all partners.

All indicators follow a **harmonised structure**, including:

- A clear description of the indicator
- Baseline values (start of the funding period)
- Target values (end of the funding period)
- Definitions of all relevant terms
- Measurement methodology, including data sources and reporting procedures
- Illustrative example cases and non-applicable examples
- Required proof or evidence

In total, 67 indicators are monitored across the four work packages: management and coordination, innovative teaching, cross-border research, and communication and dissemination. Together, these indicators reflect the alliance's performance development and progress toward its strategic objectives over the project period.

Indicators are designed not only for accountability and reporting but also as a management and learning tool. They support a step-by-step assessment of how defined actions contribute to desired outcomes and enable evidence-based adjustments where necessary.

**Data collection and validation** are coordinated at work package level, with partners responsible for collecting data related to their activities using agreed templates and definitions. The Across Coordinator together with the Across management team ensure consistency, completeness, and quality control of reported data. A Data Management Plan and a dedicated DM Team is been implemented to ensure consistency in collecting and reporting data.

**To ensure transparency**, alignment, and shared ownership of impact monitoring, all key performance indicators (KPIs) will be visualised through the Across eCampus. A dedicated dashboard provides Across members with structured and up-to-date access to aggregated KPI data across work packages. This dashboard supports continuous monitoring of progress, facilitates cross-alliance learning and comparison, and ensures that impact evidence is accessible to work package leads, management bodies, and alliance members, thereby strengthening evidence-based steering and impact governance.

**Impact governance** is ensured through clear roles and responsibilities. An impact coordination function (Project lead, alliance coordinator and WP leads) within the project oversees indicator tracking, reporting cycles, and synthesis of results. In addition Impact data are regularly reviewed by the Data Management Team and Executive Board and feed directly into strategic and operational decision-making processes, ensuring continuous learning and improvement across the alliance.

### Main Outcomes/ Impacts Observed

The desired impacts extend beyond the project duration and include sustainable institutional cooperation, enhanced quality and internationalisation of education and research, strengthened capacity of staff and students to operate in a European academic environment, and the long-term embedding of alliance-driven practices within partner institutions.

These outcomes and impacts are monitored through a coherent set of indicators, which are visualised via the Across eCampus dashboard. This enables the alliance to assess how defined actions contribute to the desired outcomes and to make evidence-based adjustments where necessary

### Challenges and Good Practices

Reaching a consensus on the indicator takes a lot of time. To ensure alignment between the expected outcomes based on the proposal and the practical benefits and use of the indicator, we suggest joint development between the Alliance Coordinator, the management team and university experts.

### Recommendations

In order to achieve a joint understanding of the indicator — i.e. what needs to be measured, how, when, and by whom — it is useful to have a clear definition. This will also be useful for future reporting.

In addition, an explanation of the overall goal and benefit of the indicators should be provided. This will help to ensure that they are understood as a tool for tracking development and enabling quick adjustments to be made in order to achieve the desired impact on the universities.

## Arqus

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**Alliance Wave:** 2019

**Stage of Development:** Implementation Phase

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### Alliance Description

Arqus brings together nine well-established prestigious comprehensive research universities: Granada, Graz, Leipzig, Lyon 1, Maynooth, Minho, Padua, Vilnius and Wrocław, and two associate partners; Durham and the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla. As internationalised institutions with deep regional engagement the Alliance aims to achieve an advanced level of integration across policies, education, research and innovation, and societal engagement to become a truly European campus.

The Alliance was approved under the first pilot call of the European Universities Initiative in 2019 and defines itself as a sustained, structural collaboration extending beyond individual funding schemes and project-based approaches.

<https://arqus-alliance.eu/>

### How the Alliance Assesses Impact

#### *Framework*

Assessment in Arqus is structured around six strategic issues that constitute the Alliance's long-term priorities and provide the thematic reference points for monitoring progress and change.

The framework is currently being implemented the Arqus Impact Matrix, that links activity pillars (e.g. Teaching & Learning, Research & Innovation, Societal Engagement) to four impact levels: institutional & internal development, local & regional ecosystem, national system level and European and global level. This Impact Matrix is under progressive development and discussion within Arqus governance bodies, with the aim of strengthening coherence between strategic objectives, indicators and impact analysis beyond immediate outputs.

#### *Indicators and system*

The Arqus Strategic Development Dashboard (ASDD), developed and implemented by the Development Unit, consolidates the Alliance strategic monitoring. The system includes 87 indicators collected annually and aggregated into Key Progress Indicators (KPIs): 14 quantitative and 13 qualitative KPIs embedded in the long-term strategy. A dedicated handbook includes definitions, criteria for data collection, and guidance to support comparable interpretation across partner universities. The ASDD also integrates complementary monitoring streams, including Erasmus+ funding indicators, the Arqus Mobility Observatory, and internal surveys.

#### *Strategy planning cycle and stakeholder involvement*

The Development Unit (bringing together data experts and strategic planning officers from all partner universities) coordinates an iterative planning and review cycle. Strategic priorities were shaped in regular strategic meetings with Rectors and translated into an KPI set, with was consulted with the Arqus Boards (Education, Research & Innovation and Societal Engagement) and the Executive Council and then ratified by the Arqus Rectors' Council. This cycle continues over time, with periodic review of KPIs to ensure their ongoing relevance.

#### *Data collection process*

Data collection follows an annual cycle with shared standards and distributed responsibilities. At the institutional level, designated member of the Development Unit in each partner university coordinate completion of data gathering in collaboration with the Institutional Coordinator. In parallel, Work

Package Co-leads contribute activity-level evidence for indicators linked to the delivery of Alliance activities. Submissions are consolidated centrally, supported by the Data Officer, with basic completeness and consistency checks and follow-up queries where needed, enabling consistent aggregation and longitudinal comparison.

#### *Informed and evidence-based decision making*

Prior to Rectors' Council meeting, the Coordination Team and Development Unit prepare background brief on major internal and external policy issues. These briefs draw on internal strategy, policy and framework documents, relevant evidence from the European higher education landscape (including inputs from other European University alliances and federating initiatives as FOREU), and the Alliance's consolidated monitoring data. In parallel, the annual Progress Report on the Strategic Development of Arqus analyses the KPI performance and formulates recommendations for future development. The underlying information is consolidated in the ASDD as a single reference point for KPI analysis and the Alliance-level reporting.

#### *Progress report workflow*

The Progress Report follows a structured annual workflow:

1. Confirmation and review of qualitative and quantitative KPIs
2. Identification of data availability, sources, data owners and technical tools
3. Data collection and consolidation, including progress status and survey inputs
4. KPI analysis and drafting of evidence-informed recommendations
5. Discussion of the draft with the Boards and the Executive Council
6. Finalisation and submission of the report
7. Publication and follow-up through ASDD visualisations in Arqus Plaza for internal monitoring

#### **Main Outcomes/ Impacts Observed**

Arqus has observed tangible organizational outcomes arising from the establishment of a dedicated development function and the systematic use of evidence in governance. The introduction of regular progress reporting, including recommendations, has strengthened strategic dialogue across the Alliance: Councils, Boards and working structures now have a shared reference point for discussing performance, emerging regulation and operational constraints using comparable information.

A second outcome is broader participation in the strategic making. The process of compiling evidence and drafting recommendations has involved multiple governance layers, including Boards, working groups and Communities of Practice, with student representation contributing to interpretation and prioritisation. This has supported a more Alliance-wide perspective, reducing reliance on informal reporting and enabling issues to be discussed and addressed through established governance channels.

Decision-making routines have also become more structured. The Rectors' Council (meets one or two times per year) is now supported by background briefs and monitoring outputs, allowing strategic discussions to be more focused and action oriented. Where appropriate, external input from representatives of the Arqus International Advisory Board complements internal evidence.

The increase of numbers of the KPIs indicates an growing strategic focus and success at all levels, and also the Rectors Council is demanding much more challenging impact of the Alliance. Additionally, the transition of Arqus activities into the partners internal operations and strategies is at stake.

#### **Challenges and Good Practices**

*Challenge 1:* Methodological, technical and governance related. First, when defining KPIs for the ASDD, the key difficulty was ensuring that indicators rely on data that are both available and comparable across partner universities such as shared definitions, reference period and disaggregation. A good practice has been an iterative KPI design and approval process, where successive drafts were discussed with the Boards and the Executive Council, and a first full data-collection round was used to test feasibility in practice.

*Challenge 2:* Once the KPIs were agreed, selecting a single technical solution for data collection, analysis and visualisation proved challenging, as no tool fully met functional requirements, affordability and institutional constraints across the Alliance. As an interim solution, data are collected via standardised spreadsheet templates and consolidated centrally, with visualisations produced in Looker Studio under the coordinating university's licence. A good practice here has been to separate the "data governance layer" (definitions, ownership, validation, traceability) from the "tool layer", ensuring continuity while technical options evolve.

*Challenge 3:* Arqus faces indicator fragmentation due to multiple, partly overlapping reporting demands such as European Universities Initiative monitoring, Erasmus+ reporting, work plan tracking and internal strategic goals. A good practice has been to address this through an indicator architecture consisting of a stable Alliance-level KPI set for strategic steering, complemented by project-level indicators for operational delivery. Existing reporting requirements are mapped against the indicators used in the ASDD so that existing data can be reused, avoiding parallel reporting processes.

### Recommendations

A lesson from Arqus is that impact assessment in an alliance requires both technical capacity and governance embedding. Indicator systems work best when they are treated as part of strategic steering rather than as an add-on reporting exercise.

To Alliances. Build a cross-alliance team that brings together all data officers and strategic planners and impact specialists from full and associate partners. Allocate dedicated staff capacity for data collection and analysis. Integrate the impact assessment into the governing structures so that evidence is regularly discussed and leads to decisions and follow-up actions.

Furthermore, avoid both extremes in indicator design. Too many indicators can dilute attention and shift effort towards administration, while too few indicators can hide progress and make it harder to identify where support is needed. What is not recorded cannot be analysed systematically. A practical approach is a stable, limited set of indicators for strategic oversight, complemented by project-level indicators for operational delivery.

To Impact Topical Group. Work towards a shared glossary with a common indicator set for alliance impact, aligned with existing reporting cycles. Provide templates and examples that alliances can adopt without extensive customisation.

To funders (European Commission). Prioritise a small number of core impact categories and keep reporting requirements proportionate. Data collection is not an end itself. Its value lies in supporting assessment of progress and informed decisions. Streamlined, stable reporting expectations would enable alliances to focus more on interpreting results, identifying what works and improving delivery.

## Circle U.

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**Alliance Wave:** 2020

**Stage of Development:** Implementation Phase

**Contact Person:**

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### Alliance Description

Circle U. (CU) is a European University Alliance founded in 2020. It unites nine leading, research-intensive universities (Aarhus Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, King's College London, Università di Pisa, Universität Wien, Université Catholique de Louvain, Université Paris Cité, Universiteit i Oslo and Univerzitet u Beogradu) working collaboratively to develop the university of the future.

CU aims to take internationalisation to a new stage and further diversify our curricula, to develop unique, innovative and creative teaching and learning formats that focus on research-based, interdisciplinary knowledge and societal engagement and to create a unique learning and research environment with transferrable knowledge for societal change.

<https://www.circle-u.eu/>

### How the Alliance Assesses Impact

To best identify the challenges to implementing educational initiatives and innovative research while simultaneously understanding the positive results and outcomes CU. has adopted a monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) strategy. MEL is a continuous process of planning, review, evidence-informed reflection and revision to measure progress and generate knowledge and insights needed for ensuring both learning and accountability to both internal and external stakeholders.

The main ambitions of the MEL Strategy are:

- Establish robust monitoring, evaluation and learning frameworks for measurement. These frameworks should utilise diverse methodologies to collect both qualitative and quantitative information.
- Work collaboratively to establish a broader, alliance-wide **evaluative culture** to ensure the engagement of all project coordinators and teams to support the **collection, communication, and use of M&E evidence**.
- Creative models of management and governance that allow the alliance to learn from results to iteratively improve and adapt.
- Dissemination of results and learnings to internal and external stakeholders.

CU has a designated MEL Officer (based in the CU Office/ legal entity) who manages the MEL framework/ tools, supports WPs in data collection, leads data analysis and reporting/ evaluations for the alliance.

The CU MEL Strategy uses the following *methodology and framework*:

- Theory of Change (ToC) and Logic Model (LM) (including a list of risks and assumptions)
- Results Framework
- A set of indicators linked to activities, outcomes and impacts for both reporting externally (mainly to European Commission) but also internal for the alliance's own evaluations.
- Various tracking tools and databases to collection and store data.

*Data collection tools include:*

- Activity and Initiative Tracking tool (excel tool managing all offers in CU)
- Mobility Tracking Tool (and survey) (excel tool based on annual survey of mobilities that shows various data points of mobility)
- Seed Fund data database (tracking outputs and outcomes of CU seed funding scheme)

- Data Collection Guidelines (document outlining quantitative and qualitative needs of the alliance)
- External Applications tracker (database to track applications for additional funds by CU partners (underdevelopment))
- Results Framework (fed into by other the above tools linked to specific indicators of the alliance)

*Data collection processes include:*

- Annual reporting of mobility figures by university
- Bi-annual (every 6 months) reporting linked to CU activities by WP
- Regular monitoring of internal funding schemes.
- Annual reporting against Results Frameworks (alliance KPIs and outcome/ impact indicators)

*Evidence-based decision-making:*

Based on the data collected in the above tools and processes, the MEL Officer analyses data. This is utilised in the project reporting of the alliance but also for internal use. Every 6 months, the MEL Officer develops an “Internal Evaluation Report” linked to a particular key area of theme of the alliance (past reports include evaluations of the CU Academic Chair Programme, the CU Seed Fund scheme, the SwafS project: ERIA, end of phase one assessment and more). These are presented at WP, Management Board and General Assembly (Rectors and Presidents) who utilise this to make reflections on progress of the alliance and influence any necessary decision-making.

### Main Outcomes/ Impacts Observed

*Expected outcomes and desired impacts include:*

*Impacts:*

- Diverse Circle U. alumni contribute to solutions and policies that tackle European and global challenges to ensure a more democratic, healthy, and prosperous world.
- Higher education institutions beyond Circle U. are influenced by appropriate Circle U. approaches and innovations in higher education.

*Outcomes (Tier 2-external)*

- Students, academics, and professional staff have been empowered with the skillset and values to engage meaningfully with society across disciplines, sectors, and national borders, to innovate and contribute to sustainable futures for Europe and the wider planet.
- Both policies and solutions designed to contribute to sustainable futures for Europe, and the wider plants are created through Circle U. collaborations and input.
- European Education and European Research Area are influenced by new approaches to mobility, pedagogy, and education and research cooperation successfully trialled through Circle U.

*Outcomes (Tier 1- internal)*

- More inclusive Circle U. student communities.
- Increase in international exposure of students and staff, physically and virtually, and short and long-term.
- Increase in inter- and transdisciplinary, collaborations within and across universities and with outside sectors within and outside Europe.
- Circle U. is a catalyst for change in that it provides high-quality, inclusive, shared, and diverse international teaching and learning experiences.
- Increase in cooperation in research support with a specific focus on education and research models incubated by Circle U. being widely adopted in partner institutions.
- Circle U. is a transformative and embedded alliance in Europe and beyond and had developed the international positions and visibility of its member institutions.

### Challenges and Good Practices

*Main challenges linked to impact assessment for CU include:*

- Ambitious, long-term goals that take time and resources to track and collect evidence for, especially in the context of “project-minded” funding and reporting linked to the European Commission funding.
- Impact assessment from an educational perspective (which differs from impact assessment from a research perspective) takes time to embed across research-intensive universities.
- Creating an alliance with a thriving “evaluative culture” requires ownership. Aligning data collection processes and procedures at nine universities is complex and requires an “all-hands-on deck” approach, which is difficult to implement (i.e. aligning data collection processes when all universities don’t have access to or collect the same data linked to various activities).
- Activities are diverse and often require different data collection approaches. This means it’s difficult to create a centralised, “one-size-fits” tool for data collection tools, and even survey collection. This also increases the number of tools needed to thoroughly monitor all alliance activities.

*Good Practices:*

- Establishment of Impact Taskforce made up of some WP1 members to better address the challenges mentioned above. This is also to further establish ownership and buy-in of the MEL Strategy beyond only those responsible for data collection and evaluation (WP Coordinators and the MEL Officer) and better embed the MEL approach at university level.
- Further develop tools and processes to improve collection and analysis. For example, the Mobility Tracking tool/ survey approach was improved during the second phase of CU and has improved the alliance’s ability to track and calculate necessary mobility data.

## Recommendations

*Lessons learnt and recommendations for other alliances:*

- Completing a mapping exercise of the different data collection capabilities from individual universities ensures that indicators (for outputs, outcomes and impacts) are measurable across the alliance. This also can help ensure tools and processes for data collection are fit for purpose.
- Ensure tools are accessible and easy to use/ access for all partners.
- While impact is “long-term”, it is dictated by the everyday. Ensuring that all work packages/ universities understand the long-term vision and the importance of measuring and assessing this is crucial.
- Ensure that methods, frameworks and tools are working toward the collection of meaningful data, which supports the “impact narrative” of the alliance. Sometimes data is collected for the sake of having data but doesn’t lead to evidence-based decision-making or indicator reporting.

*Recommendations to funders:*

- Project reporting processes need to be better aligned with the expectations the European Commission has for alliances (project-type funding/ reporting vs. long-term, extensive expected impact).
- More coordinated and realistic (while also flexible as to take into account the diversity of alliances) monitoring and evaluation expectations (i.e. clearer definitions, meaningful measurement requirements, etc.) that are linked to long-term outcomes and impacts.

*Recommendations for impact topical groups:*

- Once alliances have the opportunity to share best practices linked to broad impact assessment approaches, the group could also try to share more practical/ technical best practices or tools. For example, sharing how some alliances manage mobility counting or how some provide specifically methodologies to monitor outcome and impact indicators.

## EC2U

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**EC2U:** European Campus of City Universities

**Alliance Wave:** 2020

**Stage of Development:** Development Phase

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### Alliance Description

The European Campus of City Universities (EC2U) is a multicultural multilingual Alliance of engaged, education- and research-driven European Universities. EC2U shares common values and empowers its community to become actors of change via a pan-European Campus. EC2U increases cooperation to co-create a wide range of joint activities. These activities have been guided by United Nations Sustainable Development Goals: Good-Health & Well-Being, Quality Education, Sustainable Cities and Communities, and Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions allowing EC2U to lead actions that respond to societal needs. EC2U is more than an Alliance, it is a network of opportunities, friendships and new experiences.

<https://ec2u.eu/>

### How the Alliance Assesses Impact

*Methodological approach, framework:* The EC2U Alliance has, in its consolidation phase, developed an overarching framework called the “Quality and Impact Monitoring Mechanism” – QIMM. Within this framework various tools and resources have been put in place, including an EC2U Logic Model which lays out the activities of each Work Package, as well as their associated outcomes and desired impacts per target audience (students, staff, universities, Associated Partners, etc.). The EC2U Logic Model itself was created in collaboration with all EC2U Work Packages, as well as the EC2U Governing Bodies, notably the EC2U Quality Council (c.f. below). The EC2U Logic Model allowed the Alliance to define a set of KPIs for impact assessment. Beyond the EC2U Logic Model, the EC2U Alliance emphasises the importance of continual improvement, from monitoring to action (MEL-inspired) and has developed various mechanisms to ensure transparent information sharing, in a timely manner.

*Indicators:* The KPIs are based on the EC2U Logic Model, and include a set of impact assessment related indicators. KPIs are both common indicators to all Work Packages, notably those related to EC2U events and mobilities, as well as Work Package-specific.

*Data collection processes:* The EC2U Alliance has developed an in-house monitoring tool to collect all data related to the KPIs. The data is collected by the members of the EC2U Work Packages, in liaison with the EC2U Local Coordinators. The idea of ownership is key. In addition, qualitative information is collected through various mechanisms (locally and globally) including via feedback surveys and impact interviews.

*Stakeholder involvement:* A broad range of stakeholders are involved in the impact assessment framework, from data collection to decision-making (as specified in the EC2U Management Handbook and QAP). Their involvement is fully supported with a set of tools and resources; online and in-person workshops and training sessions are also organised on a regular basis to further contribute to a shared culture of impact / impact assessment.

*Information to decision-making bodies / Impact governance:* While the EC2U Impact assessment framework can be considered as managed by the EC2U Global Coordination Team, the link with the EC2U Governance is multi-fold. For example, the QIMM is an integral part of WP10 whose Board is the Executive Committee, the decision-making body of the EC2U Alliance. Regular reports are made to the Executive Committee and, in consequence, the members are fully involved in any decisions related to

the overall impact assessment of the EC2U Alliance. In addition, the EC2U Quality Council composed of internal and external members of the EC2U Alliance (including Associated Partners, members of other Alliances, and individual experts), act as a consultative body to all matters related to Quality Assurance and Impact Assessment, hence guiding the overall development of the QIMM. They, for example, played a key role in the EC2U Logic Model.

*Impact team:* The Quality and Impact Coordinator, an integral member of the EC2U Global Coordination Team, guides the overall strategy of the QIMM. In addition, they are supported by a network of Local Coordinators that fully supports EC2U's approach to impact assessment.

### Main Outcomes/ Impacts Observed

#### *EC2U Events – community-centred outcomes*

Between 2023 and 2025, EC2U organised 60 events, with over 2 000 student and staff participants, and over 120 Associated Partner participants. Feedback mechanisms such as feedback surveys (average response rate of 70%) and impact-oriented interviews highlight that, thanks to EC2U events,

- 86% of respondents (all profiles combined) have an increased sense of belonging to a European Campus; 80% claim to be more likely to promote European values
- 90% confirm an increase in soft and/or hard skills. Newly developed skills are applied; a staff member states *“I have applied the skills I developed through EC2U in several aspects of my personal and professional life”*
- 85% are more likely to connect with European Networks in future personal and professional development.

#### *Institutional impact – an overview*

A concrete example: Long-term mobility in key figures

Since the creation of EC2U, there has been an increase of 208% in the number of semester-long mobilities among universities, with a sustained annual increase, further strengthening their cooperation.

#### *Changes in practices: sharing stories*

The EC2U Alliance is embedded in institutional practices and strategies. A Pro-Rector for international affairs states that EC2U has *“strengthened academic collaborations, and enabled new pathways for international engagement”*; another university claims many strategic decisions are *“made through the prism of the Alliance.”* Moreover, staff members confirm shifts in practices stating EC2U impulses *“new ways of doing things”* by bringing *“very disruptive issues”*.

#### *Societal impact at the cornerstone*

EC2U has a clear multiplier effect that is capitalised via its network of Associated Partners and its capacity to address relevant societal issues. An example is CHARME, an initiative led by the EC2U municipalities.

For more information, access [EC2U's Yearly Public Report](#).

### Challenges and Good Practices

#### *Challenges*

The QIMM is a relatively new framework (two years) and it has required an exploratory phase (which can be argued is still ongoing). The development of the in-house monitoring tool was a challenge and it still requires improvement, notably to be able to track additional activities that go beyond the Alliance work plan.

#### *Best practices*

When defining the EC2U Logic Model, work with mobility experts led to the development of an “Impactful mobility framework” which allowed the EC2U Alliance to define the desired outcomes and

potential impacts of short-term mobility on its targeted audiences. This framework guides the questions in the feedback survey and allows for comparative analysis across activities, and timeframes.

### Recommendations

The sharing of best practices with other Alliances, notably thanks to the FOREU4ALL impact topical group, is of utmost importance. Due to this group, the EC2U Quality and Impact Coordinator had the opportunity to partake in a three-way job-shadowing with other Alliances and this contributed to an overall up-skilling of all members involved. All Alliances share the same challenges and it is valuable to be able to exchange best practices.

## ENLIGHT

**ENLIGHT:** European university Network to promote equitable quality of Life, sustainability and Global engagement through Higher education Transformation.

**Alliance Wave:** 2020

**Stage of Development:** Implementation Phase

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### Alliance Description

ENLIGHT is a European University Alliance of ten leading research-intensive universities aiming to establish an open integrated space for learners, teachers and researchers.

It is a second-wave alliance (2020) and brings together: University of the Basque Country (Spain), University of Bern (Switzerland), University of Bordeaux (France), Comenius University Bratislava (Slovakia), University of Galway (Ireland), Ghent University (Belgium), University of Göttingen (Germany), University of Groningen (Netherlands), University of Tartu (Estonia) and Uppsala University (Sweden).

It strives to transform the way we address global challenges by developing new models for education and research across six domains: Health and Well-being, Digitalisation, Energy and Circular Economy, Climate, Culture and Creativity, and Equity.

<https://enlight-eu.org>

### How the Alliance Assesses Impact

ENLIGHT's impact assessment work dates back to 2020, with the objective of developing its own methodological framework to assess the impact of HE activities, including those of the alliance. The initial framework was tested through [3 pilot case studies](#) (2023) - challenged-based education, mobility and regional academies, selected for their relevance to alliance's transformational role. Lessons learned informed the development of the [ENLIGHT Methodology for Impact Assessment](#), operationalised through the [ENLIGHT Impact Toolkit](#), and continuously improved based on own assessment exercises and exchanges with peer experts. The methodology was used for the [first Alliance-wide impact assessment in 2025](#).

### Methodological Approach

The [ENLIGHT Methodology for Impact Assessment](#) follows a sequential and circular process structured in six interconnected phases:



1. *Purpose setting*: define why the impact assessment is conducted and its purpose.
2. *Scope definition*: identify key stakeholders, the aspects to assess, and relevant and viable indicators.
3. *Data collection & analysis*: determine data sources (quantitative/ qualitative), collect and analyse the information.
4. *Assessment*: evaluate and categorise observed outcomes and impacts.
5. *Communication & contrast*: share findings and validate them with stakeholders.
6. *Management*: implement strategies to respond to and manage identified impacts.

#### *Indicators and Data Collection*

Each [pilot case study](#) (2023) included 40-65 quantitative and qualitative indicators defined based on ENLIGHT performance indicators, partner universities data, action-line specific indicators, and stakeholders' suggestions. Data was collected through the project coordination team, WPs leaders, and partner universities, complemented by an Impact Survey and targeted consultations.

For the 2025 [alliance-wide impact report](#) data were collected for 120 quantitative and qualitative indicators across six outcome areas:

- ENLIGHT open and integrated space is established
- Learners become more empowered
- Academics become more connected
- Staff become more empowered
- A vibrant, green and inclusive ENLIGHT community is established
- ENLIGHT impact-driven culture is created and disseminated

Using similar data sources, an alliance-wide Impact Survey collected 403 responses from learners, academics, staff and societal stakeholders. Results are presented as a [narrative of change](#).

#### *Stakeholder involvement*

ENLIGHT Impact Assessment is a co-creation exercise involving the ENLIGHT Student Network, Work Packages, and the coordination team in defining the expected outcomes, designing meaningful indicators, collecting data, validating findings, and discussing management actions.

Learners, academics, non-academic staff and societal stakeholders are also consulted on the desired impacts, suggestions for evidence of these, for data collection and contrasting of findings.

#### *Impact governance and information for decision-making*

ENLIGHT impact-related activities are coordinated by the ENLIGHT Impact Task Force, led by the University of the Basque Country and composed of representatives from all partner universities. The Task Force is supported by a dedicated working group of impact assessment experts. ENLIGHT Student Network is represented in all groups.

Coordination team and WPs representatives are regularly consulted on the major outputs, including expected outcomes and desired impacts, indicators dashboards, data collection, findings and proposed management actions. Bilateral meetings are held to review these elements and guide decision-making. ENLIGHT liaisons actively contribute to data collection, while the Directors Board is informed and proposed impact-driven actions.

#### **Main Outcomes/ Impacts Observed**

The [ENLIGHT Impact Narrative \(December 2025\)](#) provides quantitative and qualitative evidence that the alliance is transforming into an integrated European ecosystem for teaching and learning, research, innovation, and societal engagement. What began as a project-based collaboration has evolved into a more cohesive University Alliance, ground in shared values of sustainability, inclusiveness and diversity. This transformation is generating tangible benefits across partner institutions and stakeholders.

*Learners* are increasingly empowered, gaining future-proof, international, intercultural and transdisciplinary skills that broaden their academic, personal and professional horizons. They experience greater access to flexible international learning, that is progressively embedded in curricula and adapted to diverse needs.

*Academics* are more connected across institutions, co-developing challenge-based and interdisciplinary initiatives in education, research and service to society. Through ENLIGHT bottom-up call they launch new collaborations that often extend beyond ENLIGHT's direct funding, reinforcing a durable culture of cooperation.

*Non-academic staff* are strengthening their skills and professional networks, improving their capacity to support joint initiatives and contribute to alliance-level collaboration.

At the *institutional level*, ENLIGHT is catalysing structural and cultural change. Its education model is increasingly reflected in partner universities' programmes and pedagogical practices. ENLIGHT international learning experiences are made visible and embedded within curricula and mobility. Sustainability, inclusion and accessibility principles are gaining visibility and uptake. Bottom-up cooperation is generating concrete initiatives for greener and more inclusive campuses.

For *societal stakeholders*, ENLIGHT opens new channels for engagement through joint learning, research and innovation addressing real-world challenges, strengthening ENLIGHT's contribution to sustainability, inclusion and regional development

## Challenges and Good Practices

### Challenges

ENLIGHT's experience highlights the **challenges of embedding impact within European Higher Education**, where an impact culture is still emerging. These challenges include:

- **Internalising the importance of impact.** While impact is increasingly required, it is not always internalised as a strategic priority and is often approached as a compliance exercise.
- **Conceptual challenges.** Impact is interpreted differently across institutions and is often confused with performance monitoring, activities or outputs reporting. This creates concerns about additional comparative assessments and reveals tensions between project-based requirements and alliance-level impact logics.
- **Data collection challenges.** Project timelines are often misaligned with the time needed for impact to materialise, while ENLIGHT-specific terminology is not consistently understood. Capturing stakeholder perspectives – particularly from societal actors – is demanding, with survey fatigue and varying levels of institutional commitment affecting data quality.
- **Governance and management challenges.** Translating impact assessment findings into actionable management decisions that effectively inform strategy remains a challenge.

### Good practices

To address these challenges, ENLIGHT applies a **comprehensive impact approach** built on people, capacities, resources, commitment and leadership. An Impact Task Force works in close coordination with the project coordination team, Work Packages, universities' liaisons and the Student Network, while actively engaging with the learners, academic and non-academic staff, and external stakeholders throughout the impact assessment, building trust-based cooperation.

This is supported by capacity-building actions through training, rewarding and recognition mechanisms. Dedicated resources – including an impact assessment online toolkit – provide guidance, support learning and enable the systematic embedding of impact across the alliance.

## Recommendations

ENLIGHT impact assessment exercise revealed key learnings that we recommend alliances to take into consideration in their exercises:

- **The clarity of purpose is foundational.** Clearly define from the outset the “*why*” and “*what for*” of the impact assessment. It will condition all the exercise, in particular, the scope, methods and use of findings.
- **Stakeholder engagement is crucial.** Involve stakeholders early in the process to identify desired (and undesired impacts), develop indicators and collect evidence of change. Engagement should be genuine and trust-based, avoiding perceptions of instrumentalisation.
- **Combining qualitative and quantitative approaches** enriches the assessment and helps build compelling narratives of change.
- **Prioritising meaningful and realistic indicators.** Distinguish between ideal indicators and those that are realistic, viable for data collection, proportionate and useful for decision-making.
- **Aligning impact assessment with other evaluation exercises** (e.g., performance and quality assurance) allowed us to build on existing data and avoid duplication of efforts.
- **Actively communicating findings, contrasting perspectives and translating conclusions into concrete management actions.**
- **Impact assessment is a continuous learning process**, not a one-off exercise.
- **Using assessment to build capacity.** Leveraging the process to raise impact awareness and literacy within the wider Higher Education sector.
- **Exchanging practices:** Engage with peers through communities of practice (such as the FOREU4ALL Impact Topical group), bilateral exchanges, participation in advisory board and impact-related events to learn and co-develop shared approaches.

## ERUA

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**ERUA:** European Reform University Alliance

**Alliance Wave:** 2020

**Stage of Development:** Implementation Phase

**Contact Persons:**

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### Alliance Description

**ERUA** is a second wave alliance uniting the University of Paris 8 (France), European University Viadrina (Germany), Mykolas Romeris University (Lithuania), SWPS University (Poland), New Bulgarian University (Bulgaria), the University of the Aegean (Greece), the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (Spain), and the University of Macerata (Italy).

Rooted in the social sciences, humanities and arts, and complemented by natural sciences and engineering, ERUA pursues three Specific Objectives: building a renewed ERUA community with an interconnected green campus; consolidating a student-centred and reformist educational framework; and serving global societal challenges to shape a more just, open, and inclusive society.

<https://erua-eui.eu/>

### How the Alliance Assesses Impact

ERUA's impact assessment model designed to embed evaluation, learning, and continuous improvement into all levels of the alliance's work. This model is based on a seven-step methodological process: (1) purpose setting, (2) scope definition, (3) theory of change, (4) data collection, (5) assessment, (6) communication, and (7) reflection. This process ensures that the alliance maintains clarity about its objectives, identifies relevant beneficiaries, collects meaningful evidence, interprets its progress, and adjusts actions based on shared insights.

Purpose and scope setting establish ERUA's internal and external impact dimensions while identifying target groups such as students, staff, higher education institutions, regional stakeholders, and society at large. This methodology integrates qualitative and quantitative techniques, aligning monitoring, quality assurance and impact evidence into a coherent approach. Workshops, surveys, and progress reviews reinforce collective understanding of impact goals and foster a culture of evidence-based decision-making. The backbone of the impact process is ERUA's Theory of Change which serves as a general guideline to link our inputs, activities to our outputs, our outcomes and impact goals.

The ERUA impact framework organizes indicators across nine categories aligned with ERUA's three Specific Objectives and European Commission priorities. More than 20 indicators combine quantitative measures (e.g. mobility growth, joint degree implementation, employability, research collaboration) with qualitative evidence such as institutional reforms, stakeholder satisfaction, and societal partnerships.

ERUA uses a mixed-method data collection system tailored to different impact categories. Quantitative data are collected through structured forms linked to specific KPIs. Qualitative data are gathered through surveys, interviews etc. Institutional records and activity level documentation help track progress across work packages and beneficiaries. Data collection has been integrated with quality assurance processes; for example, biannual progress reviews now include dedicated discussions on impact findings.

Stakeholder engagement is embedded at every stage of the process. WP Leaders, Local Coordinators, Vice-Rectors, students, and members of the Steering Committee all participate in designing and reviewing the impact process, i.e. via dedicated impact workshops.

Impact governance involves the Quality Assurance and Impact Manager (QAIM), WP leaders, the Steering Committee, and external evaluators (our external evaluation team composed of 4 selected critical friends). This multilayered governance ensures both internal reflection and external validation.

The results of the impact assessment aim to support the decision making of ERUA's governance structures. QAIM coordinates analysis and supports WP leaders in interpreting results, while Management and Steering Committees discuss implications for future planning. This ensures that impact results inform strategic adjustments, resource allocation, and activity redesign.

### Main Outcomes/ Impacts Observed

The main achievements of the first reporting period reflect measurable outcomes that strengthen the alliance's capacity to address EU policy priorities.

Notable early outcomes include:

- increased student and staff mobility opportunities;
- the consolidation of student participation in governance structures and beyond;
- cross-university collaboration in teaching and research on social challenges;
- and growing visibility of ERUA as a model for socially engaged, regionally rooted European universities.

### Challenges and Good Practices

During the first reporting phase of ERUA2, one of the main challenges was that partners did not all have the same understanding of what "impact" means. This is linked to different institutional cultures and levels of experience with impact assessment. As a result, impact was not always embedded in governance and decision-making in the same way across the alliance. Another challenge was the definition of indicators. Several reporting frameworks coexist (EUI monitoring, Erasmus+ reporting, work plan follow-up, and internal strategies), which created overlaps and sometimes fragmented data. Data collection was also demanding, as it relied mainly on manual processes and Excel files. Finally, keeping all partners equally engaged in data collection and reflection required continuous coordination, effort and support.

To address these challenges, ERUA developed several good practices. Capacity-building was key, with training sessions, workshops, and ongoing support from the QAIM to build a shared understanding of impact. ERUA also worked on clearly linking its specific objectives with European policy priorities, using outcome and impact mapping to go beyond project outputs. Impact discussions were gradually integrated into bi-annual progress reviews and governance meetings, helping results feed into decision-making. Finally, recognition mechanisms, such as showcasing achievements and awards during the annual ERUA Summit, helped motivate partners and strengthen a shared culture of learning and continuous improvement across the alliance.

### Recommendations

ERUA's experience shows that impact assessment should be embedded early in the life of an alliance, if possible, in the grant proposal even. Starting too late makes it harder to align activities, indicators, and governance structures. Alliances are therefore encouraged to define their impact objectives and basic framework from the outset, even if the system is refined over time. A shared understanding of impact among partners is essential and requires continuous capacity-building, not only technical tools.

For other alliances, a key lesson is to keep impact frameworks pragmatic. A limited number of meaningful indicators is more effective than complex systems that are difficult to maintain. Aligning impact monitoring with existing quality assurance and reporting processes helps reduce administrative

burden and increases ownership. Strong links between impact assessment and governance are also crucial, so that results inform strategic decisions rather than remaining a reporting exercise.

For funders and policy-makers, ERUA's experience highlights the need for greater coherence between different reporting and monitoring requirements. Better alignment between EUI monitoring, Erasmus+ reporting, and impact expectations would significantly reduce fragmentation and improve what we report. Dedicated support for impact-related roles and tools would also strengthen alliances' capacity to demonstrate long-term change.

For the Impact Topical Group, continued peer exchange is highly valuable. Sharing concrete tools, indicators, and lessons learnt across alliances helps build common standards while respecting diversity. Joint reflection spaces allow alliances to move collectively toward more mature, realistic, and policy-relevant impact assessment models across the EUI.

## EULiST

**EULiST:** European Universities Linking Society and Technology Alliance

**Alliance Wave:** 2023

**Stage of Development:** Development Phase

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### Alliance Description

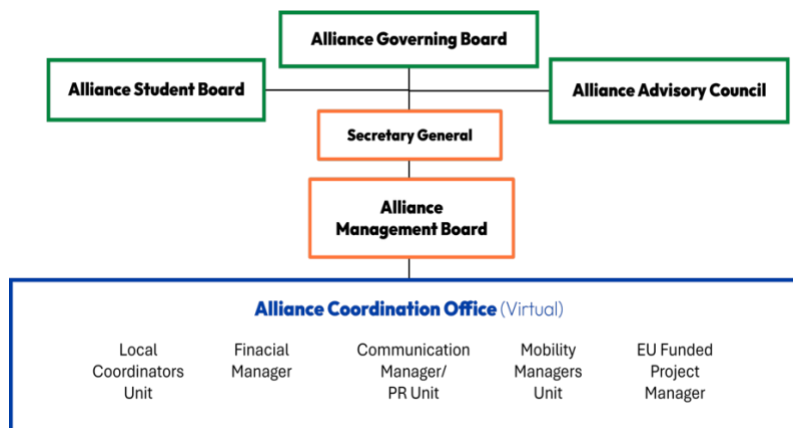
EULiST – European Universities Linking Society and Technology **Alliance** was established in 2020 and was funded at the ERASMUS + Call 2023, for the period 2023-2027. EULiST is a transnational EU partnership of ten leading technical universities: Lappeenranta- Lahti University of Technology LUT (Finland), Jönköping University (Sweden), Rey Juan Carlos University (Spain), Leibniz University Hannover (Germany), Institut Mines-Télécom (France), Brno University of Technology (Czech Republic), Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava (Slovakia), Technische Universität Wien (Austria), University of L’Aquila (Italy), and National Technical University of Athens (Greece). United by the mission “Linking Society and Technology” and the vision “Our Present, Your Future,” EULiST fosters excellence in education, research, and innovation in cocreation with society.

<https://eulist.university/>

### How the Alliance Assesses Impact

Based on the data compiled to the present to report EULiST activities and monitor their impact within Partner universities and towards the network of stakeholders, the Alliance is presently developing a structured methodology to assess its short term, mid- term and long-term impacts, starting from the primarily influence at institutional level to the effect on societal ecosystems. This methodology is being developed taking also into account best practices developed by other alliances of previous funding waves and presented at the Impact Working Group of FOREU4All where EULiST representatives are active participants.

The Impact Assessment methodology, presently under development, is linked with the new EULiST Governance Model approved by the Governing Board in late 2025. This Model entailing Strategic, Executive and Operational levels, see Figure below, was developed in response to the evolving challenges and needs of the Alliance.



The model aims to ensure greater efficiency, transparency, and shared ownership while structurally embedding students, staff, and external stakeholders into decision-making and implementation processes, enhancing thus the impact of the Alliance.

Within this Governance model, tools have been developed, and continuously updated, to monitor, assess and enhance, where needed, the impacts of the Alliance activities. To that end activities and events conducted within the Alliance and the EU funded project including data on the subsequent synergies, and cooperations catalysed by these events are being systematically recorded and reported. Moreover, a number of KPIs included in the Grant Agreement of the EULiST funded project, 2023-2027, is being monitored on a local and alliance level, to assess the impact and visibility of the EULiST activities.

In parallel, EULiST is currently developing its Strategy 2035, which will further define the Alliance's long-term objectives and impact ambitions. This strategy will also provide a comprehensive methodological framework for further assessing, in a qualitative and quantitative manner impact across education, research, innovation, and societal engagement. Using the experience from the already existing monitoring and reporting system, this framework will further define, where needed, additional key performance indicators (KPIs) at both Alliance and institutional levels, establish data collection processes, and clarify reporting mechanisms.

Overall, the revised governance model and the forthcoming Strategy 2035 aim to position EULiST as a coherent, accountable, and impact-driven European University Alliance, firmly grounded in its shared mission: Linking Society and Technology.

#### Main Outcomes/ Impacts Observed

On the Alliance and funded project level the main outcomes achieved so far are linked with the formulation of joint strategies and the development and pilot applications of tools for a Digital Campus, Flexible education forms, Framework for Innovative Research cooperation, Mobility and Outreach that provide the basis for the role that EULiST aims to play as an Alliance Linking Society and Technology. Moreover, another main outcome is the establishment of the new governance model and the accompanying internal communication protocol that strengthens coordination among partner institutions, and ensures more structured and thus impactful involvement of students and external stakeholders.

The detailed methodology to assess the Impacts of the Alliance, will be formally outlined by the end of the first semester of 2026 along with the EULiST Strategy 2035. This IA defines both qualitative and quantitative indicators to assess progress in governance performance, collaboration intensity, mobility, joint initiatives, and overall societal impact. It will also establish monitoring mechanisms to ensure that results inform future planning and continuous improvement processes.

#### Challenges and Good Practices

*The main challenges* already encountered and expected to be encountered for the development of an effective IA methodology include

- Different perception of parties involved on the concept of impact and the necessity for its assessment. This process is often taken as reporting of events
- Lack of a common tools amongst partners to systematically and uniformly assess, and manage impact
- Consistency and Quality of data compiled within the partner HEIs and on Alliance level that would allow the identification of most impactful areas of activities and their further support
- Use of IA results in the update, when needed, of Strategic and Operational priorities.

*Good practices* to develop the IA methodology include

- Strengthened involvement of students and external stakeholders in governance processes, which enhances transparency resulting in an impactful alliance
- Evaluation of the Alliance processes to ensure that IA is mainstreamed and linked with Governance Structure.

#### Recommendations

- Need for the development of an IA methodology at the first steps of the Alliance activities implementation
- Selection of a manageable number of quantitative and qualitative KPIs that meet the RACER Criteria, i.e. Relevant, Accepted, Credible, Easy to compute and understand and Robust.

## EUNICE

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**EUNICE:** European University for Customised Education

**Alliance Wave:** 2020

**Stage of Development:** Implementation Phase

**Contact Person:**

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### Alliance Description

EUNICE – European University for Customised Education is a transnational alliance of ten human-scale universities participating in the second wave of the European Universities Initiative. It brings together Brandenburg University of Technology (Germany), Poznan University of Technology (Poland), Universidad de Cantabria (Spain), Université de Mons (Belgium), Università di Catania (Italy), Université Polytechnique Hauts-de-France (France), University of Vaasa (Finland), Instituto Politécnico de Viseu (Portugal), Karlstad University (Sweden), and the University of the Peloponnese (Greece).

EUNICE aims to strengthen European integration in education, research, innovation, and regional development through personalised learning pathways, digital interconnection, and strong territorial engagement, while allowing students and staff to remain rooted in their home institutions within a shared European university ecosystem.

<https://eunice-university.eu/>

### How the Alliance Assesses Impact

EUNICE has developed a structured approach to impact assessment, designed to move beyond activity monitoring towards a shared culture of evidence-based learning and accountability. The methodology combines a conceptual framework, a comprehensive indicator system, and participatory governance mechanisms, aligned with the European Universities monitoring rules.

#### *Methodological approach and framework*

At the core of EUNICE's impact assessment lies a logic model, co-created with all partner institutions. This model articulates how inputs (resources, expertise, partnerships) are translated into activities (education, mobility, research, governance, societal engagement), and how these activities generate outcomes and long-term impacts at individual, institutional, regional, and European levels. The logic model functions as a shared reference point across Work Packages, ensuring coherence between project implementation and strategic objectives. It also serves as the backbone of the alliance's summative evaluation, enabling cumulative impact analysis rather than isolated reporting.

#### *Indicators and measurement system*

EUNICE assesses impact through a robust framework of 75 indicators, including 32 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), organised across nine strategic domains (e.g. Customised Education, Experiential Learning, Mobility, Governance, Open Science, Research, Innovation). Indicators cover both outputs and changes in practices, capacities, and collaboration patterns.

Target values are defined at alliance level and, where relevant, at institutional level, allowing comparability while respecting contextual diversity. Indicators are reviewed periodically to ensure relevance and alignment with evolving strategic priorities.

#### *Data collection process*

Initially, data collection relied on manual Excel-based processes. Since September 2025, EUNICE has transitioned to a dedicated Indicators IT Tool, developed by Poznan University of Technology. This digital platform automates data collection, ensures secure authentication via eduGAIN, and provides real-time dashboards for monitoring progress.

The system supports a mixed-methods approach:

- Quantitative data are collected through structured forms linked to specific KPIs.
  - Qualitative data are gathered through surveys and narrative inputs, capturing perceptions, experiences, and transformational effects.
- Data undergo validation at institutional level and are subsequently reviewed within the alliance to ensure consistency and quality.

#### *Stakeholder involvement*

Impact assessment in EUNICE is participatory by design. Work Package leaders, task coordinators, and institutional contact points (including teachers) are actively involved in defining indicators, validating data, and interpreting results. Students and staff contribute primarily through surveys and feedback mechanisms, while external stakeholders (e.g. regional partners, enterprises) provide qualitative insights on societal impact.

Participatory methods such as the Most Significant Change approach are used to complement quantitative evidence and highlight unexpected or transformative outcomes.

#### *Use in decision-making and governance*

Impact results are not treated as standalone reporting outputs. They are systematically discussed within the Project Management Team (PMT) and the Quality Committee, where findings inform strategic adjustments, risk mitigation, and priority setting. Impact governance is embedded in existing alliance structures, ensuring that evaluation results feed directly into decision-making processes.

Through this integrated approach, EUNICE positions impact assessment as a tool for collective learning, strategic steering, and European knowledge sharing, rather than a compliance-driven exercise.

#### **Main Outcomes/ Impacts Observed**

At outcome level, EUNICE generates observable changes in practices, capacities, and collaboration patterns within and across partner institutions.

Key outcomes include enhanced educational practices, through the development of co-created courses, joint curricula, and innovative pedagogical approaches such as challenge-based learning. EUNICE also contributes to increased and more inclusive mobility, expanding access to physical, virtual, and blended mobility formats for students and staff.

The alliance strengthens inter-university collaboration by fostering systematic cooperation in education, research, and support services, supported by shared digital infrastructures. At institutional level, EUNICE promotes improved governance and quality culture, including joint governance mechanisms, shared quality assurance approaches, and evidence-based decision-making practices.

Finally, EUNICE encourages greater engagement of students and staff, increasing their participation in alliance activities, governance structures, and co-creation processes. Overall, these outcomes reflect changes in how universities collaborate and operate, rather than only what they produce.

#### **Main Impacts (long-term and systemic)**

At impact level, EUNICE aims to contribute to sustainable transformation at institutional, regional, and European scales.

Key impacts include the long-term institutional transformation of partner universities, through the integration of European collaboration into core missions, governance structures, and strategic planning beyond the project lifecycle. EUNICE also contributes to a more inclusive and interconnected

European Higher Education Area, enabling students and staff to benefit from a shared multi-campus university ecosystem while remaining rooted in their home institutions.

At regional and societal level, the alliance strengthens engagement with innovation ecosystems and public actors, aligning activities with societal and sustainability challenges. In parallel, EUNICE supports policy learning and European knowledge sharing by generating transferable practices and evidence, notably through FOREU4ALL and the European Universities Monitoring Framework. Finally, the alliance fosters a shared culture of impact and evaluation, embedding transparency, learning, and accountability as long-term strategic assets.

### Challenges and Good Practices

A first major challenge for EUNICE was the initial reliance on manual data collection, mainly through Excel files and decentralised reporting practices. While effective at an early stage, this approach proved difficult to sustain at alliance scale. It was time-consuming, prone to inconsistencies, and limited the ability to consolidate, compare, and reuse data across institutions.

Another key challenge concerned the definition of indicators. Moving beyond a strictly project-based perspective towards indicators capable of capturing institutional change and long-term transformation required extensive discussion. Partners had to collectively reflect on what constitutes meaningful impact, beyond easily quantifiable outputs, while ensuring comparability across diverse institutional contexts.

Impact assessment also remains resource-intensive, even with improved tools. Data validation, interpretation, and coordination still require significant human effort and engagement from Work Package leaders and institutional contact points. Ensuring that impact assessment is perceived as a strategic activity rather than an administrative burden continues to be an ongoing challenge.

#### *Good practices and solutions*

To address these challenges, EUNICE progressively developed and deployed a dedicated Indicators IT Tool, replacing manual processes with an integrated digital solution. The tool automates data collection, improves traceability, and provides shared dashboards, significantly reducing fragmentation and increasing transparency.

The adoption of a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative indicators with qualitative narratives (e.g. Most Significant Change), helped capture dimensions of impact not visible through data alone.

Finally, embedding impact discussions within governance bodies such as the Quality Committee and the Project Management Team ensured that results are used for learning and strategic steering, strengthening the alliance's long-term culture of impact.

### Recommendations

One of the main lessons from the EUNICE experience is that impact assessment must be embedded early in the life of an alliance. Developing an indicator framework from the outset for example helps align expectations, reduce fragmentation, and create a common language across institutions.

A second key lesson is that tools alone are not sufficient. While digital platforms significantly improve efficiency and transparency, impact assessment remains a human and organisational process requiring time, coordination, and trust. Engagement of partners is essential to move from compliance-driven reporting to meaningful learning.

EUNICE also learned that qualitative evidence is indispensable. Indicators and KPIs capture scale and trends, but narratives, stakeholder feedback, and participatory methods are crucial to understanding institutional and cultural change.

Finally, impact assessment is most effective when it is closely linked to governance. When results are discussed within management and quality bodies, evaluation becomes a driver for strategic reflection rather than an isolated reporting exercise

*Recommendations*

- For other alliances, EUNICE recommends investing in co-creation of impact frameworks and combining quantitative and qualitative methods from the start.
- For funders, greater recognition of the time and resources required for impact assessment would support more realistic and sustainable evaluation practices. Flexibility in indicators and encouragement of learning-oriented approaches are key.
- For the Impact Topical Group, continued sharing of methodologies, tools, and lessons across alliances will be essential to building a coherent and comparable European culture of impact.

## EUTOPIA

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**EUTOPIA:** European Universities Transforming to an Open Inclusive Academy

**Alliance Wave:** 2019

**Stage of Development:** Implementation Phase

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### Alliance Description

EUTOPIA is an alliance of ten like-minded European universities alongside six global partners spanning all continents. Through collaborative endeavour with students, academics, and staff, we are collectively committed to reimagining higher education and embracing the considerable challenge of creating the European university of tomorrow—an institution that unites communities across Europe in pursuit of solutions to our society’s most pressing challenges. It’s our shared vision, our collective ambition.

<https://eutopia-university.eu>

### How the Alliance Assesses Impact

EUTOPIA’s approach to impact assessment focuses on measurable transformation at multiple levels:

- *Individual level:* skills development, career progression, confidence building
- *Institutional level:* adoption of new policies, processes, and organizational practices
- *Alliance level:* strengthening of cross-institutional collaboration and governance
- *Societal/European level:* contributions to regional development, policy dialogue, and openness in education and research.

EUTOPIA measures impact across nine complementary areas:

- *Core Focus Areas:* Students, Staff & Faculty Development | Institutional Transformation | Alliance Governance & Integration
- *Strategic Enablers:* Equity & Diversity | Science Diplomacy | Open Education, Open Science & Citizen Science
- *Broader Societal Contributions:* Economy & Society | European & Global Challenges | EU Sustainability Agenda

This framework ensures that measurement intensity matches strategic significance, avoiding both indicator inflation and the neglect of emerging impact domains.

EUTOPIA combines multiple measurement approaches:

- A focused set of Key Performance Indicators capturing outcomes rather than activity
- Qualitative evidence including case studies and contribution analysis
- Longitudinal tracking to demonstrate sustained change over time
- Transparent methodology distinguishing between what EUTOPIA contributes to versus what it directly causes

### Governance and practical use

Work Packages collect evidence. Project Coordinator and Central Office consolidate the data.

Governance bodies (Board of Presidents, Management Board) use it to:

- scale what works
- institutionalise successful practices
- redesign or stop what does not deliver

- strengthen EUTOPIA's voice in European policy

In short: we create change we can see, prove and sustain – together.

### Main Outcomes/ Impacts Observed

Internally, EUTOPIA's activities generate impact by transforming learning models, research collaboration practices, governance structures, and professional cultures. Students, staff, and faculty benefit from enhanced internationalisation, skills development, and improved career pathways. Member universities undergo structural changes in processes, recruitment practices, and organisational culture, while the Alliance itself evolves towards a stable and effective confederal governance model.

Externally, EUTOPIA acts as a catalyst for regional engagement, societal innovation, science diplomacy, and policy dialogue. Through strategic partnerships with public authorities, civil society, and global institutions, the Alliance contributes to addressing European and global challenges, advancing sustainability agendas, and promoting openness in both education and research.

The interplay between these internal and external dynamics forms the foundation for defining EUTOPIA's Areas of Impact and for structuring a SWOT analysis. It ensures that the Alliance's interventions are targeted, measurable, and relevant both within member institutions and across broader societal and policy domains.

EUTOPIA's impact logic is based on a cumulative and systemic concept of change. Alliance-level activities (joint education formats, research collaboration, governance innovation, stakeholder engagement) generate immediate outputs (programmes, tools, policies, networks), which in turn produce outcomes (behavioural change, institutional adaptation, new practices). Over time, these outcomes lead to durable impacts at individual, institutional, regional, and European levels.

Impact is therefore not conceived as a direct or linear consequence of single actions, but as the result of reinforcing dynamics across Work Packages and governance layers. This approach recognises *the complexity of transformation processes in higher education systems* and avoids attributing impact to isolated interventions.

### Challenges and Good Practices

#### *Challenges Encountered:*

As multi-institutional alliances scale impact assessment, common challenges emerge: balancing measurement depth with administrative feasibility, managing uneven institutional capacity, ensuring data comparability across diverse systems, and avoiding both indicator inflation and premature impact claims.

#### EUTOPIA's Emerging Approach:

Through 2025-2026 implementation, EUTOPIA is testing several approaches that may be valuable for other alliances:

- Prioritisation of measurement depth to match strategic importance of different impact domains
- Explicit use of contribution analysis rather than attribution claims
- Integration of qualitative evidence standards with quantitative tracking
- Embedded governance decision-making based on evidence
- Phased implementation roadmaps enabling continuous learning and refinement

## Recommendations

### Lessons from EUTOPIA's Impact Strategy Development

- *Proportionality and risk of indicator inflation.* Prioritise measuring core strategic areas in depth, with lighter monitoring of broader contribution areas.
- *Contribution versus attribution.* Impact assessment as contribution (using temporal sequencing, multi-source evidence, and stakeholder validation).
- *Impact governance as decision-support.* Explicit links between evidence and decision triggers.
- *Qualitative evidence as analytical material.* Case studies, contribution narratives, and stakeholder accounts as essential items for understanding how and why transformation occurs.
- *Co-creation with stakeholders.* Impact definitions and assessment methods are more robust and legitimate when developed with students, staff, partners, and regional actors.
- *European policy positioning.* Not only following but proposing. Alliances are laboratories for institutional innovation and can contribute with evidence and tested models.
- *Continuous learning through phased implementation.* We use a phased roadmap: validation → capacity building → evidence generation → interim evaluation → refinement → consolidation.

Note: EUTOPIA's Impact Strategy remains under development and testing through 2026. These considerations reflect current thinking and will be further calibrated based on implementation experience and feedback.

## HEROES

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**HEROES:** Higher Education for Resilience-Oriented and Empowered Societies

**Alliance Wave:** 2024

**Stage of Development:** Development and Implementation Phase

**Contact Person:**

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### Alliance Description

HEROES (Higher Education for Resilience-Oriented and Empowered Societies) is a European University Alliance of nine professional, regionally embedded higher education institutions in Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Portugal and Sweden. Serving 120,000 students from associate to PhD with an applied sciences profile, the alliance focuses on smart regional resilience for people, business, and nature through digital innovation. HEROES is structured around three flagships:

- EDUCATION4HEROES – focusing on joint educational offerings
- HEROES4REGIONS – focusing on Challenge-based learning, research, and innovation
- HEROES4EVER – focusing on lifelong learning, especially micro- credentials

The three flagships are supported by shared governance, stakeholder engagement, mobility services and an innovative virtual campus.

<https://heroesuniversity.eu/>

### How the Alliance Assesses Impact

#### *Approach and scope*

HEROES assesses impact through a SIAMPI-inspired lens that emphasizes productive interactions—sustained, meaningful engagement with external actors—and traces how these interactions generate value in society. The observatory monitors short-term outcomes and credible signs of change across three interlinked levels of analysis: institutional, transnational and societal.

#### *Framework and indicators*

The Impact Observatory operationalises 24 indicators formulated during the application process, spanning outputs and outcomes. Indicators are mapped to the alliance objectives and to specific work packages, ensuring ownership and feasibility. To aid usability, the full set of indicators is presented on a single, colour-coded page with condensed labels and a timeline showing which indicators are collected at which times. Annual impact monitoring reports summarise progress on outputs/outcomes, reflect on impact pathways, and present examples of narrative impact case stories to provide textured examples of change linked to concrete activities. The annual impact monitoring reports are presented to and discussed with the Steering Committee.

#### *Data model, sources and governance*

A mixed-methods design combines quantitative datasets (institutional statistics, work-package submissions, virtual-campus traces) with qualitative material (interviews, testimonials, video statements, case stories). Data flows from three primary sources—institutions, work packages and the virtual campus—via Microsoft Forms/Excel into a central repository. Harmonised datasets are prepared for dynamic visualisation in Power BI, enabling slicing by time, country, partner, and indicator. A shared metadata framework defines indicator scope, collection method and format to ensure coherence and comparability across partners.

### *Roles, stewardship and quality*

Each partner retains ownership of its institutional data; alliance-level datasets are co-managed through the observatory. In the first data collection, only limited personal data were handled; from 2026 onwards, identifiable participant lists (with fixed fields) are collected for the impact observatory and processed in accordance with the HEROES data processing agreement. Institutional Coordinators (ICOs) at each institution and WP leads submit data using predefined templates and written guidance. Validation rules, routine quality checks and feedback loops are coordinated centrally; procedures for virtual-campus data quality will be finalised in 2026. The observatory is implemented in synergy with project quality-assurance monitoring and with communication/dissemination activities to maximise learning and uptake.

### *Implementation roadmap*

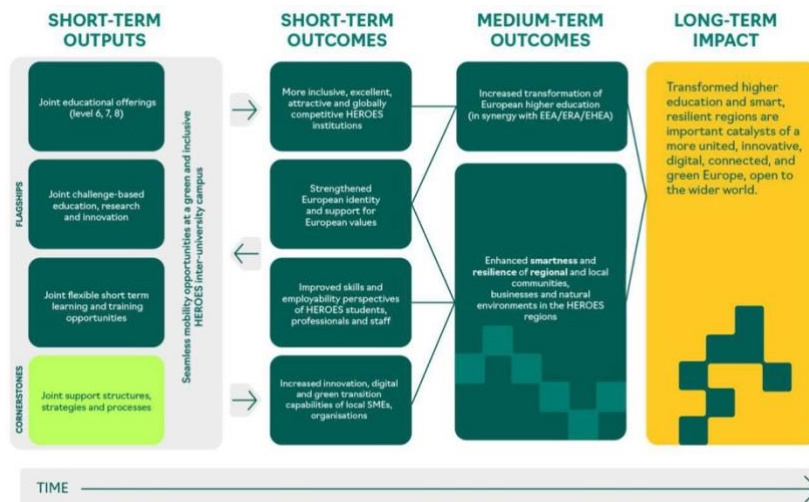
In 2025, the observatory piloted a manual pipeline for submission and validation in Teams folders during a first collection window (3 July–15 September 2025), covering a subset of indicators that were measurable at this stage. From the second half of 2026, the ambition is to automate ingestion via the Virtual Campus and the HEROES website and to provide a smoother submission interface for indicators that cannot be captured from the shared infrastructure.

### Main Outcomes/ Impacts Observed

#### *Observed and expected outcomes (early stage)*

HEROES has just finalised its first year, and empirical findings are just emerging. The observatory, therefore, has established internal procedures under which WP-leads report every second month on early signs of change across the three levels (institutional, transnational, and societal). The aim is to raise awareness, create space for impact discussions across the alliance, and capture input for narrative impact cases supported by quantitative and qualitative data collected by the impact observatory. The first short impact case story, originating from CBL activities, was presented in the first annual impact monitoring report.

Overall expected outcomes and desired impact are presented in the figure below:



### Challenges and Good Practices

#### *Challenges*

- Data heterogeneity across institutions and work packages necessitates rigorous metadata, shared definitions and guidance to maintain comparability.

- Privacy and compliance: the absence of a signed data-processing agreement for the first data collection limited the data that could be collected during the first data collection.
- Administrative burden: manual collection of data requires training, validation cycles and careful coordination; ensuring quality for data is a live task.

#### *Good practices*

- SIAMPI-inspired approach that foregrounds productive interactions and makes room for narrative evidence (impact case stories) alongside quantitative indicators.
- Clear analytical architecture and jointly developed definitions and discussions of the 24 indicators mapped to objectives and WPs; tested during alliance-wide discussion (e.g., World Café sessions at semiannual meetings), builds buy-in.
- Metadata standards, fixed templates reduce ambiguity; central validation and feedback loops catch inconsistencies early.
- Human-centred design: single-page, colour-coded indicator overview and Power BI dashboards enhance understanding and decision-making.

#### **Recommendations**

##### *For other European University Alliances*

- Start with co-design: engage WP leads and data owners early to define feasible, decision-relevant definitions and operationalisations of the indicators;
- Start from day one. Include a piloting phase, e.g. prototype a manual collection to surface practical issues before automating.
- Reduce burden by reusing existing infrastructures and definitions (e.g., Erasmus+ Participant Reports) and by aligning with the EUJ monitoring framework; publish concise guidance and examples.
- Combine numbers with narratives: pair indicator dashboards with rigorously curated impact case stories to make mechanisms of change visible.
- Invest in metadata and IDs (courses, participants, organisations)

##### *For funders and the impact topical group*

- Recognise the value of qualitative evidence and allow space for SIAMPI-type interactions in reporting cycles.

## KREATIVEU

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**KreativEU:** Knowledge and Creativity European University

**Alliance Wave:** 2024

**Stage of Development:** Development Phase

**Contact Persons:**

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### Alliance Description

KreativEU (Knowledge and Creativity European University) is a European University Alliance funded under the Erasmus+ ERASMUS-EDU-2024-EUR-UNIV call with a total 48-month duration (January 2025 – December 2028). The consortium comprises 11 higher education institutions from Portugal (IPT, coordinator), Bulgaria (TAE), Czechia (USB), Italy (UNICAM), Germany (UG), the Netherlands (BUAs), Poland (OUTech), Romania (VUT), Slovakia (TUT), Sweden (SH), and Türkiye (ATU), supported by over 80 associated partners. The Alliance places the creative potential derived from Europe's cultural heritage at the heart of its teaching, research and knowledge transfer activities, implementing an ecocultural vision across 8 work packages covering governance, education, research, culture and society, smart sustainability, a heritage European campus, mobility, and communication.

<https://kreativeu.org/>

### How the Alliance Assesses Impact

KreativEU adopts a multi-level impact assessment framework rooted in its governance structure and aligned with the Erasmus+ programme requirements. The methodological approach is based on “logical chains” linking each of the 8 work packages to expected results, outputs and long-term impacts, measured through a provisional set of Key Results Indicators defined in the Grant Agreement. The framework distinguishes between internal impacts (on partner institutions, staff and students) and external impacts (on regional, national and European communities). The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Platform establishes data collection methods and analysis techniques to track progress and measure effectiveness across the Alliance. This platform is complemented by the Quality Control Plan, which sets procedures for evaluating the quality of activities and deliverables, and the Financial Plan for tracking expenditures. A dedicated M&E Team, led by a Project Officer, is responsible for periodical data collection (every six months), review, and submission of monitoring reports to the Steering Committee. A Midterm Monitoring and Evaluation Report and Midterm Financial Report are foreseen for mid-project assessment. The Quality Control Team evaluates produced deliverables and activities, issuing formal opinions including recommendations and minority reports. The impact governance structure comprises three levels: the General Assembly, the Steering Committee and the Key Project Team (day-to-day coordination across all WPs). The Advisory Board, composed of Associated Partners and Honorary Partners, provides consulting input. Stakeholder involvement is embedded across work packages – over 80 associated partners (municipalities, museums, ministries, NGOs, enterprises) participate in the co-creation of activities and provide feedback for assessment. Impact indicators cover a broad spectrum: number of students educated, programmes initiated, transnational courses developed, mobility levels, Art and Heritage Incubator outputs, AI systems developed, and stakeholder engagement. These indicators feed into a results-based management cycle informing both periodic reporting to EACEA and strategic decision-making by the General Assembly. Each WP assess the impact by evaluating reports prepared after each tasks and deliverables are completed.

### Main Outcomes/ Impacts Observed

As the project is in its early implementation phase (15 months into the 48-month period), full outcomes are not yet available. However, the following expected outcomes and desired impacts are

defined in the Grant Agreement. In education (WP2): we achieved indicators in student education in culture, heritage and ecocultural identity through jointly prepared events and the creation of Centre of Excellence for Digital Education and AI. In research (WP3): we involved our staff and local society and local and regional authorities in organisation of variety of different events. (WP4): we started to develop Art and Heritage Incubator which would support at least 40 individuals/start-ups across the consortium, with a Territorial and Transnational Observatory of Cultural and Creative Industries. In smart sustainability (WP5): the aim is to develop a challenge-based approach to societal problems while supporting the development of at least 12 AI systems at various stages of early development. In infrastructure (WP6): we are putting our efforts to operate KreativEU Inter-University Heritage Campus with shared digital and physical infrastructure, and a Seed Funding Initiative supporting 22 innovative inter-university projects and 12 student competitions. In mobility (WP7): we have already encouraged our students and staff for transnational mobility. In communication (WP8): we broad dissemination through activities and engagement with stakeholder organisations. The long-term impact targets (2029–2033) should include 40,000 students participating in KreativEU activities, 100 transnational courses offered, 8 joint Master’s programmes, 12 doctoral training programmes, and the formalisation of KreativEU as a legal entity.

### Challenges and Good Practices

The main challenges anticipated and already being encountered include: (1) Administrative barriers: The preliminary assessment conducted during the first 15 months identified significant differences in administrative procedures, academic calendars, and regulatory frameworks across 11 countries and their respective HEIs. Harmonising quality assurance standards, credit recognition systems, and micro-credentials certification across different national contexts requires extensive negotiation and legal research. (2) Legal and regulatory diversity: Creating a common legal act for the European University involves navigating diverse national higher education laws, especially regarding joint degree accreditation and the European Degree label. (3) Stakeholder coordination: Engaging and aligning over 80 associated partners – from municipalities and ministries to museums, enterprises, and NGOs – across 11 countries requires significant communication effort. (5) Digital infrastructure: Building a shared Inter-University Heritage Campus with common digital tools across institutions with different IT systems and cybersecurity standards.

Good practices include: the “logical chains” approach linking each WP to measurable impact indicators; the establishment of a dedicated Quality Control Team with formal evaluation procedures; embedding stakeholder co-creation from the outset (including students via the Student Union and the career centre); the Diversity and Inclusion Plan ensuring gender balance and social inclusion; and regular six-monthly data collection cycles enabling adaptive management.

### Recommendations

Lessons learnt and recommendations: For other Alliances: (1) Invest early in a comprehensive M&E Platform with clearly defined indicators and data collection methods – KreativEU’s experience shows that having the M&E Platform ready is essential for baseline data collection. (2) Establish a dedicated Quality Control Team separate from the project management structure to provide independent evaluation of deliverables. (3) Conduct a preliminary assessment of administrative barriers at the outset to identify coordination obstacles before they impact implementation. (4) Embed stakeholder involvement from the beginning, not just as beneficiaries but as co-designers of activities, particularly through advisory boards and incubation schemes. (5) Adopt a “logical chains” approach connecting each activity cluster to both internal and external impact indicators, distinguishing short-term outputs from long-term impacts.

## UNINOVIS

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**UNINOVIS:** Data for L.I.F.E.

**Alliance Wave:** 2024

**Stage of Development:** Implementation Phase

**Contact Person:**

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### Alliance Description

UNINOVIS – Data for L.I.F.E. is a wave 2024 alliance that brings together eight universities: University Sorbonne Paris Nord, Kauno kolegija, Tampere University of Applied Sciences, Würzburg-Schweinfurt Technical University of Applied Sciences, University of Málaga, University of Tirana, The Hague University of Applied Sciences, and University of Campania Luigi Vanvitelli.

It delivers a long-term, integrated strategy for education in Applied Data Science (ADS), evolving from an alliance into a leading European University in ADS. UNINOVIS fosters regional, European, and global innovation ecosystems, builds strong international partnerships, and addresses societal challenges while promoting entrepreneurship, European values, diversity, inclusion, and sustainability.

<https://uninovis.eu/>

### How the Alliance Assesses Impact

Rooted in a commitment to harnessing the power of data, UNINOVIS Alliance envisions a transformative impact that resonates across economic, social, environmental, and policy landscapes. The Alliance uses a structured and evidence-based impact assessment system designed to track progress in building a leading European University in Applied Data Science. The system measures progress across education, research, innovation, mobility and sustainability. The impact is assessed across short-, medium-, and long-term horizons, capturing both immediate outputs and sustained system-level change.

UNINOVIS clearly defines internal and external target groups to be impacted. A multi-stakeholder approach evaluates benefits for students, staff, institutions, regional ecosystems and society.

A comprehensive KPI framework aligned with UNINOVIS specific objectives combines quantitative indicators (participation rates, mobility flows, joint programmes, start-ups, research outputs) and qualitative indicators (satisfaction, collaboration effectiveness, excellence perception).

Governance bodies - including the Quality Assurance Board, Advisory Board, Students' Council and Accreditation Body - ensure evidence-based, participatory impact monitoring. A PDCA cycle (Plan-Do-Check-Act) supports continuous learning, while a shared digital platform should enable unified data collection and real-time monitoring.

### Main Outcomes/ Impacts Observed

UNINOVIS expects concrete outcomes that establish a strong European University in Applied Data Science. These include a joint inter-university campus, harmonised governance processes, a comprehensive educational offer from micro-credentials to joint degrees, and eight Excellence Hubs integrating regional innovation ecosystems. Already after the first year of its implementation the Alliance tracks the enhanced student and staff mobility, supporting challenge-based learning. It will strengthen green and digital transition capacities through ESG frameworks and shared digital

infrastructures. The expected long-term impacts include a highly skilled, data-literate workforce, stronger European innovation ecosystems, increased regional competitiveness, and broad societal inclusion. UNINOVIS aims to foster environmental sustainability, support research-informed policymaking and reinforce European values. Ultimately, the Alliance acts as a catalyst for transforming European higher education, improving quality, resilience, inclusiveness and global attractiveness.

### Challenges and Good Practices

As a young Alliance, UNINOVIS is still in the process of harmonizing its internal processes, including those related to impact assessment.

Key challenges include measuring long-term institutional transformation, harmonising diverse administrative and digital systems, and capturing interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral outcomes that do not align easily with traditional KPIs. In addition, flexible learning formats and micro-credentials generate rich qualitative outcomes that are difficult to quantify, while sustaining the engagement of students, staff, SMEs, and regional actors requires continuous communication and trust-building.

To address these challenges, UNINOVIS is implementing several good practices. These include the development of a unified KPI framework aligned with strategic objectives, participatory governance structures involving students, partners, and external experts, and continuous improvement supported by the PDCA cycle.

A shared digital platform to be launched in the future will enable consistent monitoring and reporting, while embedding impact creation into everyday activities - such as Excellence Hubs, challenge-based learning, micro-credentials, and ecosystem collaboration - will help make impact both tangible and scalable

### Recommendations

Building on the experience of UNINOVIS, the following recommendations are proposed:

- Impact should be embedded from the early stages of the Alliance's development, ensuring that objectives, activities, and governance structures are designed with measurable impact in mind.
- A comprehensive impact measurement system should be embedded within the Alliance's leadership, reflection, and quality assurance mechanisms, supporting evidence-based decision-making, continuous improvement, and strategic steering in line with EU priorities.
- The Alliance should designate responsible persons or structures to oversee impact monitoring and evaluation, coordinate data collection, and ensure the consistent application of a shared impact measurement framework across partner institutions.

## UNITA

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**UNITA:** Universitas Montium

**Alliance Wave:** 2020

**Stage of Development:** Development Phase

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### Alliance Description

UNITA (Universitas Montium) is a European University Alliance of 10 comprehensive research universities from Portugal (Beira Interior, Guarda), Spain (Zaragoza, Pública de Navarra), France (Pau, Savoie Mont Blanc), Italy (Torino, Brescia), and Romania (Timișoara, Brașov), plus two university associated partners from Switzerland (HES-SO) and Ukraine (Chernivtsi), gathering nearly 250,000 students and 21,000 staff. Located in rural, mountain, and cross-border regions (Serra da Estrela, Pyrenees, Alps, Carpathians), UNITA promotes linguistic diversity through Romance languages and intercomprehension. The alliance focuses on three main thematic areas: Cultural Heritage, Circular Economy, and Renewable Energy, aiming to transform cooperation in education, research, and innovation while contributing to territorial development and European integration through the GEMINAE network.

<https://univ-unita.eu>

### How the Alliance Assesses Impact

UNITA has implemented a comprehensive impact assessment framework grounded in the Theory of Change combined with Impact Pathways methodology. This approach maps causal links between the alliance's daily operations and long-term institutional transformation, tracing the progression from Inputs and Activities through Outputs and Outcomes to ultimate Impacts for every Task. The framework ensures UNITA moves beyond simple activity monitoring to measure genuine institutional transformation and territorial impact.

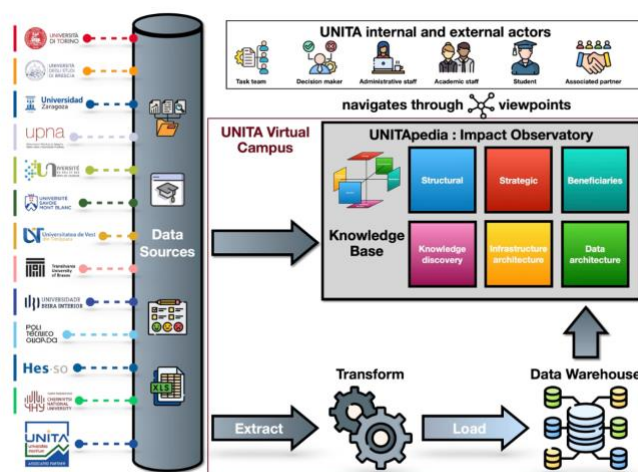
The assessment operates through two complementary observatories. **The Internal Observatory** (UNITAPedia) is a data-driven platform integrated into the virtual campus enabling real-time monitoring and evaluation. **The External Observatory** benchmarks UNITA's performance against global standards through international university rankings focused on sustainability and societal impact. This dual structure ensures rigorous internal tracking while validating contributions against other institutions worldwide.

UNITAPedia measures and evaluates the alliance's impact across all stakeholders: students, academic staff, administrative staff, institutions, and external partners. The definition of indicators follows a rigorous bottom-up methodology through structured interviews with co-leaders of all 21 Tasks, mapping specific Impact Value Chains for each. This process resulted in consolidated indicator matrices including Primary Indicators from the Description of Action and Secondary Indicators identified during implementation. Technical datasheets define calculation methods, collection frequency, responsible parties, data sources, baseline values, and 2027 targets for each indicator. UNITA Offices at each university facilitate data collection, interfacing between alliance systems and institutional sources.

The External Observatory aims to validate UNITA's impact through independent external evaluation and to benchmark the alliance's performance against global standards in sustainability and societal contributions. To achieve this objective, UNITA is conducting comprehensive analyses of multiple

international university rankings, including the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings, QS Sustainability, UI GreenMetric, the European Higher Education Sector Observatory (EHESO), and Webometrics, among others.

The ultimate objective of UNITA's dual observatory approach is to supply comprehensive, evidence-based information that directly informs strategic and operational decision-making processes. Drawing from both the Internal Observatory (UNITAPedia) and the External Observatory (international rankings), impact data flows into decision-making through multiple channel



### Main Outcomes/ Impacts Observed

Across ten European universities and their surrounding mountain and peripheral territories, UNITA is generating measurable and lasting change for students, researchers, staff, and communities. What began as a cross-border university project has evolved into a cohesive, legally structured, and democratically governed European University, grounded in shared values of inclusion, multilingualism, and territorial solidarity. This transformation is producing tangible benefits for all stakeholder groups, from individual learners to regional ecosystems.

#### *Education — Flexible and personalised learning pathways*

UNITA is changing how students experience higher education. Through the UNITA à la carte model, 271 study programmes now offer personalised international learning paths, removing traditional barriers to mobility and co-constructed knowledge. 18 labelled micro-credentials are expanding access to lifelong learning, while 347 teachers trained in innovative pedagogies are embedding a lasting culture of educational excellence across partner institutions.

#### *Research & innovation — Funded interdisciplinary teams anchored in territories*

UNITA is turning scientific networks into real impact. 80 jointly funded research projects (52% success rate) have transformed ad-hoc academic connections into structured, territorially engaged interdisciplinary teams. 42 PhD students hosted through the MSCA-COFUND CHORAL programme are deepening transnational scientific excellence, while 52 projects submitted to Horizon Europe and Erasmus+ demonstrate a growing multiplier effect on the alliance's research capacity.

#### *Internationalisation — Reaching every student, every territory*

UNITA is making international experience a reality for all. 2,287 students participated in mobility programmes (34% increase), with 417 engaging in innovative virtual and rural formats specifically designed for mountain and peripheral territories. 30 Geminae partner universities across the

Americas and Africa extend this vision globally, building a distinctive and replicable model of inclusive internationalisation.

#### *Community building — A living European community*

UNITA is building democracy, belonging, and shared purpose. Over 15,000 students voted in the first alliance-wide Student Assembly elections, making student governance a structural reality. 102 European citizenship events strengthened shared values across partner regions, while the active involvement of local governments, NGOs, and private sector partners confirms that UNITA has become a genuine engine of territorial cohesion and European identity.

#### Challenges and Good Practices

The definition of indicators has proven complex, as insufficient documentation in initial proposals generated ambiguities and interpretation difficulties across Task Teams. Additionally, some indicators are correlated, creating redundancies that complicate meaningful analysis.

The data collection process requires careful definition of roles and responsibilities: identifying data owners, validators, and registrars to avoid duplications and ensure accountability. Coordinating data collection across 10 diverse institutions with different administrative systems, languages, and data management practices adds significant operational complexity.

A fundamental conceptual challenge is translating metrics into meaningful impact assessment—moving beyond simply counting activities to understanding genuine institutional and societal transformation.

Regarding the External Observatory, relying on private international rankings poses sustainability risks, as providers frequently change methodologies, introduce participation fees, or discontinue services entirely, threatening long-term continuity and comparability of benchmarking data.

#### Recommendations

The most critical lesson is to start impact assessment early in the project lifecycle, not as an afterthought. Invest time in collaborative indicator definition with all Task Teams—rushed definitions create ambiguities that complicate data collection later. Create technical datasheets for every indicator specifying owners, validators, calculation methods, and frequencies—clarity prevents duplications and accountability gaps. Plan for iterative development; your first indicator matrix will need refinement based on implementation realities.

Based on UNITA's experience, quality impact assessment requires dedicated resources—both human and technical—that should be explicitly budgeted and recognized in funding schemes from the project's inception. Supporting inter-alliance learning communities where alliances can share methodologies, challenges, and solutions accelerates collective progress and prevents duplication of effort across the European Universities Initiative.

## UIREKA SHIFT

**UIREKA SHIFT:** Urban Research and Education Knowledge Alliance for Sustainable, Human, Inclusive and Future-proof Transition

**Alliance Wave:** 2023

**Stage of Development:** Implementation Phase

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### Alliance Description

UIREKA European University consists of six universities of applied sciences, i.e. Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences (AUAS), HOGENT University of Applied Sciences and Arts, Frankfurt University of Applied Sciences, Metropolia University of Applied Sciences, Polytechnic Institute of Lisbon (IPL), and VSB – Technical University of Ostrava, and focuses on sustainable urban transitions, with strong alignment to the EU Mission on Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities.

The alliance cooperates with 24 associate partners, including cities, regional authorities, NGOs and European networks, and pursues three main objectives: establishing a sustainable European campus based on good governance; becoming a lighthouse for challenge-based and collaborative education; and shaping future-proof urban professionals contributing to Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities.

<https://ureka.eu/alliance/>

### How the Alliance Assesses Impact

UIREKA's impact assessment approach is grounded in a shared Theory of Change (ToC), developed at an early stage of the project and continuously refined. The ToC articulates how inputs (governance structures, joint frameworks, infrastructures, staff capacity building) lead to outputs (joint courses, mobility formats, Centres of Expertise, research collaboration), which in turn generate short-term outcomes (institutional learning, behavioural change, strengthened collaboration) and ultimately long-term structural impact (durable integration of governance, education, mobility and research; contribution to Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities; future-proof graduates).

The impact framework is structured around six Specific Objectives (SO1–SO6), each linked to concrete activities, outputs and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). KPIs serve both accountability and learning purposes. They track quantitative progress (e.g. number of courses, mobility experiences, governance structures, joint projects, solutions generated) while also supporting reflection on sequencing and sustainability. Lower mid-term values are interpreted considering phased implementation and enabling conditions rather than treated as underperformance.

### **Impact monitoring combines:**

#### *Quantitative KPI Monitoring*

Each Work Package lead has distributed ownership of relevant KPIs. Data are collected on a rolling basis and consolidated centrally under WP7 (Communication & Dissemination) through shared reporting frameworks ("U! Let's Report"). Mid-term KPI values are compared against baseline figures and end-of-project (M48) targets.

#### *Qualitative Monitoring and Complementary Evidence*

Recognising that structural transformation cannot be captured solely through numbers, UIREKA integrates qualitative evidence such as surveys (Steering Committee, Student Council, Advisory

Council), workshops (e.g. cross-governance workshops), interviews, narrative reports and stakeholder reflections. These are systematically stored and triangulated with KPI data.

#### *Continuous Monitoring and Learning Cycle (PDCA)*

Impact monitoring is embedded in governance and management processes using a Plan–Do–Check–Act logic. Monitoring outcomes feed into Steering Committee and Executive Committee discussions, enabling adaptive management, risk mitigation and strategic steering. Impact assessment is therefore not a stand-alone reporting exercise but part of institutional learning.

#### *Governance of Impact*

WP7 coordinates the overall methodology, ensuring coherence across Specific Objectives. However, impact responsibility is shared: Work Packages collect and interpret data; governance bodies review results; student and stakeholder representatives are involved in reflection processes. This distributed model strengthens ownership and impact awareness across the alliance.

#### *Mid-term Assessment Approach (M24)*

The mid-term report explicitly acknowledges that many long-term outcomes (e.g. graduate impact, durable institutional change) extend beyond the project timeframe and cannot yet be fully evidenced. At mid-term, the focus is not on demonstrating final impact but on assessing “readiness and direction of travel”: *Are governance structures operational? Are infrastructures in place?; Is collaboration increasing? and, are enabling conditions for scaling established?*

Overall, U!REKA’s impact framework tries to balance strategic ambition with pragmatic monitoring, embedding impact awareness into governance, operations and institutional transformation.

### **Main Outcomes/ Impacts Observed**

**Governance (SO1):** All core governance bodies are operational, including a Steering Committee with full student and stakeholder representation, a Student Council and an Advisory Council. A Joint Toolbox for Good Governance strengthens transparency, role clarity and shared learning.

**Campus and Education (SO2 & SO5):** The U!REKA campus platform was launched at the end of 2025 with an initial portfolio of 50 open courses across sustainability, digitalisation and transversal skills. Staff capacity building and joint educational formats such as Blended Intensive Programmes are scaling, laying groundwork for flexible study paths and micro-credentials.

**Mobility (SO3):** A shared Exchange Concept and multilateral Erasmus+ agreement are in place. Mobility is increasingly embedded in curricula, especially at Bachelor level through a shared sustainability course. Over 3,000 students have already benefited from physical, virtual or blended mobility formats.

**Research & Innovation (SO4):** Three Centres of Expertise are operational with adopted research agendas. Six joint externally funded projects have been awarded, and over 30 proposals submitted. A Joint Cross-border Knowledge-creating Community links universities and local ecosystems. Forty-four climate-neutral solutions have been registered, with scaling expected in the second phase.

### **Challenges and Good Practices**

#### *Main Challenges*

Among the main challenges, there are:

- Sequencing vs. Expectations: Structural change requires foundation-building before large-scale quantitative outputs become visible.
- Governance complexity and turnover: Role clarity and continuity, especially in student representation, require constant attention.

- Stakeholder engagement: Cities and external partners face capacity constraints and prioritise short-term deliverables.
- Definition and tracking of “solutions”: Harmonising definitions across institutions proved complex.
- Technical interoperability: Integration of campus systems and European Student Card components varies across institutions.

### *Good Practices*

As good practices, we list:

- Early development of a shared Theory of Change, providing strategic coherence.
- Distributed ownership of KPIs, increasing alliance-wide responsibility.
- Systematic integration of qualitative evidence alongside KPIs.
- Cross-governance workshops to test governance principles in practice.
- Bottom-up design of Centres of Expertise, ensuring researcher ownership.
- Linking alliance-level engagement to existing local ecosystems rather than creating parallel structures.
- Embedding mobility directly into curricula to normalise international experience.

A key lesson is that participatory governance and institutional transformation require continuous facilitation, structured onboarding and a trust-based culture.

### *Recommendations*

*To other alliances:*

- Invest heavily in enabling conditions (governance, IT systems, staff capacity) before scaling outputs.
- Embed mobility and collaboration into curricula rather than treating them as optional add-ons.
- Align alliance activities with existing local partnerships to increase stakeholder relevance.
- Developing a shared Theory of Change early can support the alliance development by functioning as a governance tool.
- Combining KPI accountability with qualitative monitoring can capture structural change of the alliance.

*To Funders (EC, National Authorities, etc.):*

- Recognise that structural transformation requires phased implementation and foundation-building before impact becomes visible.
- Provide flexibility in interpreting mid-term KPI results in light of sequencing strategies.
- Encourage long-term sustainability mechanisms beyond project funding cycles.
- Support interoperability of digital systems (e.g. European Student Card Initiative) across diverse institutional contexts from an early stage.

*To Impact Topical Groups:*

- Develop shared definitions for complex outputs (e.g. “solutions”).
- Facilitate exchange of good practices on Theory of Change-based monitoring.
- Promote peer-learning on qualitative impact assessment methods.
- Encourage alignment between project management, communication, dissemination and impact monitoring.
- Durable impact depends on institutional embedding, participatory governance and continuous learning rather than short-term numerical performance.

## YUFE

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**YUFE:** Young Universities for the Future of Europe

**Alliance Wave:** 2019

**Stage of Development:** Implementation Phase

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### Alliance Description

YUFE is a European University alliance from the first wave of alliances, selected in 2019. It comprises ten young, research-driven universities from across Europe. It aims to create a student-centred, non-elitist, and inclusive European University through virtual and physical mobility. Its core values are centred around equity, diversity and inclusivity, promoting multilingualism, and fostering collaboration with local communities.

The focus areas of YUFE are diverse and include topics such as digital societies, citizen well-being, European identity, and sustainability. To transform higher education by creating a flexible, interdisciplinary, and accessible European ecosystem.

<https://www.yufe.eu/>

### How the Alliance Assesses Impact

In 2025, YUFE conducted its first comprehensive impact assessment at alliance level, marking an important milestone in its development as the exercise went beyond the classical project assessments. The assessment was designed to evaluate whether Alliance activities are generating the desired and sustainable effects for learners, staff, institutions, and wider society, while also supporting evidence-based decision-making and continuous improvement.

From a governance perspective, the assessment was initiated by a dedicated impact task force, gathering representatives from the Central Office, work package leaders, and institutional coordinators, as well as external advisors from alliances having already carried out impact assessments. This distributed model reinforces ownership across the Alliance while ensuring methodological coherence. This task force defined together the theoretical framework and the indicators to be considered in the assessment. The exercise is meant to be recurring, with future editions planned to deepen analysis, refine indicators, and track long-term transformation.

The methodological approach is grounded in a Theory of Change framework, which articulates the causal pathways linking Alliance activities and outputs to short- and medium-term outcomes and, ultimately, long-term impact. Impact is defined as the evidenced, sustainable, and desired effects generated by the Alliance on individuals, institutions, and communities, acknowledging that impact in education and research is complex, non-linear, and often unfolds over time. This framework allows the Alliance to move beyond activity reporting and focus on meaningful changes.

The impact assessment is structured around four core impact areas reflecting the Alliance's strategic priorities:

- Culture (institutional transformation and shared values)
- Talent (education, learning, and mobility)
- Society (civic engagement and external partnerships)
- Research & Innovation

For each area, a dedicated pathway of change was developed, identifying intended impacts, expected outcomes, relevant target groups, and measurable indicators. Indicators combine quantitative and

qualitative evidence to capture both scale and depth of change. Data collection followed a mixed-methods approach, drawing on multiple complementary sources. Quantitative data were extracted from internal systems such as the Virtual Campus, Quality Assurance surveys, and participation and mobility statistics. These data were complemented by qualitative evidence gathered through interviews, surveys, and questionnaires involving a broad range of stakeholders. In total, the assessment included 35 interviews, two Alliance-wide surveys, and targeted questionnaires addressed to institutional coordinators and quality assurance teams, ensuring triangulation of findings.

Stakeholder involvement was a central element of the process, though it will require further improvement in future assessments. Internal stakeholders; particularly staff, were consulted in this assessment, via interviews and surveys. They shared their perspectives on how Alliance activities influence practices, collaboration, and institutional change. External stakeholders and students' insights were collected from past satisfaction surveys and quality assurance processes but not consulted specifically in interviews or surveys made for the 2025 exercises.

Findings were presented to governing bodies to inform strategic discussions, support prioritization of resources, and guide adjustments to programs and policies. The exercise should help in the prioritization of activities, particularly in relation with the +2 funding period, and marks a baseline to monitor the alliance's progress.

#### Main Outcomes/ Impacts Observed

The 2025 impact assessment highlights that meaningful changes taking place because of YUFE, although the maturity and depth of impact vary.

The Alliance has contributed to institutional transformation by promoting shared values, governance models, and policy frameworks. Several partner universities reported concrete changes inspired by Alliance-level policies, particularly in ED&I, recruitment, staff development, and multilingualism. The exchange of best practices has strengthened institutional learning, even if uptake remains uneven due to contextual and capacity-related constraints.

YUFE has expanded innovative educational offerings, flexible learning pathways, and inclusive mobility opportunities. Evidence shows growing participation in joint courses, blended formats, and mobility schemes, alongside high levels of learner satisfaction. The Alliance has also supported skills development for students and staff, reinforcing international collaboration and professional growth.

The Alliance has strengthened connections with external stakeholders through civic engagement activities, challenge-based learning, and regional partnerships. These initiatives enhance students' civic competences and contribute to addressing societal challenges, although long-term impact measurement in this area remains an evolving task.

Research & Innovation impacts are emerging but less mature. The Alliance has laid important foundations through research development programs, postdoctoral initiatives, and innovation activities. Participation is increasing, yet structural barriers, such as limited incentives, fragmented recognition systems, and resource constraints, continue to limit broader engagement.

Overall, the assessment demonstrates that the Alliance delivers clear added value by fostering collaboration, innovation, and institutional learning. It provides a strong baseline for future monitoring and strategic refinement as the Alliance moves from experimentation toward consolidation and long-term impact.

#### Challenges and Good Practices

*Setting up an initial, reusable impact framework.*

Establishing a common structure, pathways of change, and indicators required substantial time and collective reflection. Several methodological choices were debated during and after the publication of results, illustrating the evolving nature of impact assessment. For instance, the dual status of early-career researchers, positioned between learners and staff, complicated the consistent categorisation of target groups. Similarly, clustering activities into distinct impact areas inevitably involves simplification and remains open to refinement. The key challenge moving forward will be to maintain a framework that is sufficiently stable to allow monitoring on the long term, while remaining flexible enough to adapt to the Alliance's evolution.

*Duality between Alliance-level impact and project-based reporting.*

From the start, the assessment aimed to go beyond the boundaries of the core Erasmus+ project and capture the Alliance's broader transformation. However, European Commission monitoring remains largely project-focused. As the Alliance increasingly operates through a portfolio of EU-funded and self-funded initiatives, distinguishing between project-only impact and Alliance-wide impact becomes artificial and risks fragmenting a reality that is inherently interconnected.

*Target Groups consultation*

Stakeholder consultation emerged as both a challenge and a good practice. While not all stakeholder groups could be engaged due to capacity constraints, the exercise confirmed the importance of plural perspectives. Embedding systematic impact tracking and stakeholder feedback into future activities will be essential to better capture observed change, mitigate blind spots, and strengthen the credibility and relevance of future assessments.

## Recommendations

*Build on existing knowledge and peer experience.*

Draw inspiration from established impact frameworks and from Alliances that have already conducted similar exercises. Participation in Impact the Impact topical group is particularly valuable to hear peer presentations and exchange practices. Bilateral exchanges with alliances implementing approaches you find relevant can accelerate learning. Informal peer support or light mentoring can be useful.

*Engage decision-makers early and throughout the process.*

Involving institutional leadership and Alliance governance bodies in defining desired impacts and outcomes ensures strategic alignment, reinforces ownership, and increases the likelihood that impact findings will inform decision-making, prioritisation, and resource allocation.

*Collaborate closely with activity owners.*

Work with those responsible for delivering activities to identify meaningful indicators and realistic methods for data collection. Their involvement helps ensure that impact measurement reflects operational realities, focuses on learning and improvement, and avoids overly complex or burdensome reporting requirements.

*Communicate transparently and inclusively.*

Clearly explain the objectives, methodology, and evolving results of the impact assessment as it develops. Engaging colleagues from different roles and perspectives strengthens buy-in, enriches interpretation, and fosters a shared understanding of what impact means at Alliance level.

*Treat the first exercise as a learning opportunity.*

Use initial assessments to progressively embed impact tracking into routine activities and link it to existing quality assurance and monitoring processes. Leveraging existing data, tools, and workflows helps diversify evidence sources as well as limiting additional workload and "survey fatigue", in turn, it supports a sustainable long-term impact culture.

## CONCLUSIONS

The collected good impact assessment practices clearly showcase that many Alliances have already developed and implemented impact assessment practices. Additionally, methodologies overlap across EUAs, indicated a foundation for shared approaches.

One of the crucial points made in many of the good practices is **that impact assessment is not an end in and of itself**. But rather, the value lies in how the findings are communicated and used to foster learning and support strategic decision-making.

Many Alliances use the Theory of Change framework as a *methodological approach* to articulate the causal pathways linking alliance activities and outputs to outcomes and long-term impacts at individual, institutional, regional and European levels. Several case studies also highlight that the focus should not necessarily be on demonstrating final impact, but rather on understanding and evidencing the Alliance's contribution to long-term impacts.

From a *governance perspective*, several Alliances have a dedicated team or person responsible for the impact assessment process, embedded within the broader governance and management structures. In many cases, the process is designed as participatory, involving the active engagement of Work Package leaders, task coordinators and institutional contact points, as well as the direct beneficiaries of the Alliances' actions, including learners, academic and non-academic staff, and external stakeholders.

Regarding *data collection*, most Alliances adopt mixed-method approaches combining quantitative datasets with qualitative evidence. Some Alliances are also moving from manual processes towards the use of digital tools, although these still require significant human effort and coordination.

Among the most relevant *challenges* identified, Alliances highlight difficulties in reaching a shared understanding of what "impact" means across the Alliance, achieving consensus on impact indicators, and addressing data collection challenges, particularly given the heterogeneity of data systems across institutions and work packages. Additional challenges include the definition of roles and responsibilities within the impact assessment process and the tension between alliance-level impact assessment and project-based reporting logics.

In terms of *lessons learned and recommendations*, most case studies emphasise the importance of starting impact assessment early in the project lifecycle, rather than treating it as an afterthought. Impact assessment in the Alliance context requires both dedicated staff capacity and appropriate technical tools, as well as strong embedding within governance structures. Methods, frameworks and tools should support the collection of meaningful and actionable data. Greater coherence between different reporting and monitoring requirements, as well as better alignment with existing quality assurance and institutional reporting processes, also emerge as key recommendations.

For the Impact Topical Group, recommendations include further strengthening peer learning on concrete tools, indicators and lessons learned. In particular, Alliances expressed interest in exchanging practices related to qualitative impact assessment and Theory of Change-based approaches. One case study also suggested developing a shared glossary and a set of potential impact indicators.

As the Impact Topical Group progresses, there is the intention to update existing impact assessments as Alliances further evolve, and to document other Alliance's impact assessment approaches as they are developed. The documentation of these impact assessment practices only solidifies the need for the continuation of the shared knowledge, practices, tools, competencies and more. As EUAs

continue to develop and grow, the importance of the impact they have-on students, researchers, academics, HEIs, local and regional communities, Europe, and beyond- only become more crucial.

The case studies will be presented in detail, with an exchange on the main findings, in a **public webinar** organised by the FOREU4ALL Impact Topical Group on 18 May, from 13:00 to 14:30. More information is available [here](#).