

Project Management

Terms of Reference

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I. Objectives

FOREU4All PM is a cooperation platform for networking and collaborating on project management of the alliances on a coordinators' level. For the Alliances project management is closer to programme management and goes beyond what universities usually consider as project management.

Pioneering the transformation of EU Reporting within EUI Reporting

The alliances are asked to transform EHEA, yet the reporting is also tested and new. EACEA tests new processes so that "classical" EU project management needs to be adapted. FOREU4ALL PM aims to serve to act as an internal role model for project management within our alliances. Alliances' project management addressing a multi-project approach in the future is pioneering EU reporting.

Strengthening communication and cooperation with EACEA, particularly in addressing the complexities of the EUI and its incompatibilities with standard Erasmus+ projects. Discrepancies between objectives of EUI and EACEA reporting requirements need to be solved correctly within reporting and to the purpose of the alliance, e.g., research within the alliances. Reporting and reporting processes thereby become political.

Peer learning to set standards and develop guidelines for EUI reporting

The objectives of FOREU4ALL PM are currently primarily bound to and defined by the requirements of EACEA and EC in general. It is within that scope the FOREU4ALL can provide output by sharing best practices. It is about testing the options and limits to the best possible outcome for the alliances on the highest quality level. FOREU4ALL PM collaborates also on administrative and legal requirements within the alliances that evolve from wider alliance governance issues, such as GDPR regulations, data sharing or use of digital platforms.

Knowledge Transfer into the alliances and other topical groups – relevant EUI project management for non-project managers

Sharing knowledge, know-how and skills will be a focus of this topical group that shares in the major E+ Project the same reporting requirements. The alliances deal with challenges of multi-projects of different funding sources that need to be differentiated yet aligned at the same time. They require not only learning within project management, but within the alliances as a whole (e.g., disclaimers). Looking at data collection and KPIs and how to operationalize them best within the alliances to foster solid decision-making is an example of finding solutions for challenges in transnational cooperation.

Short-Term Goals

- Facilitate the internal exchange of best practices on project management across alliances.
- Strengthen collaboration channels with the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA).
- Promote a collaborative working culture that supports continuous improvement across all European University Alliances (EUAs).
- Coordinate common strategies for meeting reporting requirements efficiently.
- Establish a mentorship network within the Community of Practice (CoP) to build capacity and knowledge-sharing.
- Develop standardized tools and key performance indicators (KPIs) for effective monitoring of European University Initiative (EUI) projects.

Medium-Term Goals

- Disseminate EU project management best practices to stakeholders beyond the EUA network.
- Create a comprehensive repository of project management best practices tailored to higher education contexts.
- Compile and maintain a shared repository of digital project management tools.
- Co-author a joint publication outlining good practices in EUA project management, focusing on approaches beyond individual project reporting.
- Develop clear and actionable guidelines for the financial management of EUA projects, including handling multiple funding sources.

Long-Term Goals

- Advocate for and implement holistic project management frameworks that are adaptable to both individual projects and entire alliances.
- Design and apply improved methodologies for data collection and evaluation across the European Universities Initiative.

Target Audiences

- European University Alliances
- Higher Education Researchers
- The European Commission and national policymakers (especially EACEA & DG EAC)
- Civil Society Organizations

II. Background

Building on Generational Collaboration

Prior to the establishment of FOREU4ALL, Alliances from Generations 1+3 and Generation 2 held regular meetings to exchange best practices, align reporting approaches, and collectively engage with Executive Agencies on shared challenges. These consistent interactions laid a strong foundation of trust, collaboration, and mutual understanding. The FOREU4ALL Project Management (PM) Group builds on this groundwork, leveraging established working modalities to foster a collaborative environment that supports strategic continuity and relevance.

Collecting and Disseminating Knowledge

Project managers within the European Universities Initiative (EUI) face a diverse range of operational and strategic challenges. While many of these are addressed internally within each Alliance, cross-Alliance collaboration has repeatedly proven its added value. Previous joint efforts have demonstrated how the exchange of insights can elevate project management standards, improve reporting accuracy, and provide clarity on complex administrative procedures.

To systematize this process, the FOREU4ALL PM Group is dedicated to collecting, synthesizing, and disseminating knowledge on key project management topics. These include, but are not limited to:

- Project alignment and coordination strategies
- Monitoring and reporting mechanisms
- Seed funding and resource allocation models
- Partner engagement and inclusion strategies

Such knowledge exchange is vital for improving practices across all Alliances and for addressing shared challenges that affect the broader EUI ecosystem.

Strengthening Project Management Representation

Sitting between the management and operational layers of their Alliances, project managers gain valuable insights that can drive improvements both within their universities and beyond. The FOREU4ALL Project Management Group will work closely with the FOREU4ALL main group, ensuring that necessary improvements are identified and collectively represented.

It is essential that project management professionals are adequately represented—not only within FOREU4ALL but also in discussions with the European Commission. This representation is crucial for addressing the complexity and diversity of the European Universities Initiative (EUI) and for proposing viable alternatives when project management requirements prove incompatible with existing structures.

Ensuring high-quality project management becomes thereby even more essential. FOREU4ALL PM aims to share and create the optimal knowledge for the required alternatives which align political intention with their correct operationalisation.

Beyond the European Universities Alliances

The outcomes and impact of FOREU4ALL will extend beyond the European Universities Alliances. The goal is to develop overarching guidelines and white papers that can support professionals across the higher education sector working on European projects.

To foster alignment and ensure continuous improvement, the Project Management Group will also share insights from bilateral discussions with their EACEA Project Officers, enriching the global understanding of the EC requests, and promoting common practices and definitions.

III. Work plan and working modalities

Work Plan and Provisional Timeline

May–June 2025

1st & 2nd Meeting (M2) FOREU4ALL PM Working Group Kick-off (Online)

- Election of Chair and Vice-Chair
- Selection of subgroups
- Discussion of working modalities

June 26, 2025

Meeting with EACEA (M6/M18) Focus: Progress Report Insights

- Review experience of project coordinators
- Learnings from external review of Generation 1+3
- Preparations for final reporting

July–December 2025

1st Physical/Hybrid Seminar (M11) Organized by the FOREU4ALL PM Core Group Possible Elements:

- Workshops & training sessions
- EU project management expert input
- Collaborative EACEA discussions
- Annual ED&I training (via topical group)
- Communication and dissemination outcomes in relation with WP4

Expected outcomes are outlined in the *Impact and Concrete Results* section.

■ **May 2026 / 2027 / 2028 / 2029**

Yearly Reporting Milestones (M12 / M24 / M36 / M48)

- Data collection for annual report
- Initial discussion with GCT and WP2 Lead

■ **May 2027 / 2029**

Bi yearly Project Management Publication (M24/ M48)

- Collection of Best Practices
- Dissemination Activity

Meeting Plan and Working Modalities

The FOREU4ALL PM Group will provide a forum for all Alliances to participate and collaborate. Given the expected participation of 65 representatives, we plan to hold virtual meetings every month, with the ambition of organizing at least one in-person meeting per year. The meetings will last for 1.5 hours and happen every 2nd Wednesday of the month.

To enhance collaboration, the FOREU4ALL PM Group will establish subgroups/ad-hoc groups based on the priorities of the core group. These subgroups will be intergenerational, ensuring a diverse representation of Alliances and fostering a broader exchange of perspectives.

Attributions of the GCT

Group Chairing Team:

1. Create and disseminate Agenda
2. Contact within FOREU4ALL (WP2)
3. External Representation
4. Managing Archive and providing access
5. Minutes
6. Reporting and Communication

The agenda for each meeting FOREU4All PM Core Group will be distributed by the Chair at least two weeks (10 working days) in advance. The Vice-Chair will be responsible for recording meeting minutes, which will be reviewed by the Chair prior to being shared with all participants.

IV. Inputs to WP3 Policy Dialogue & WP4 Communication and Dissemination

Collaboration with WP3 + WP4

The Project Management Group will get in touch with the respective Work Packages on a demand basis. Whenever a position paper or statement would be drafted, the PM topical group will get in touch with Work Package 3 to discuss alignment and avenues to publish it via the banner of FOREU4ALL under Work Package 4. Upon finalising a draft, the document would be submitted to the General Forum & Forum Board for review and approval, ahead of following the process for publication guided by Work Package 4.

Particularly, we would like to disseminate outcomes of the Workshop, best practices every 2 years, and annual reports, together with the guidelines from WP2.

V. Members

Profile of Topical Group members

Each Alliance will appoint one representative to serve in the **core group** of the FOREU4ALL Project Management (PM) topical group. This representative should hold a role equivalent to the **Project Manager or Coordinator** of the Erasmus+ European Universities Initiative (EUI) project.

To ensure flexibility and broaden expertise:

- **One additional member per Alliance** with relevant project management responsibilities may actively participate in the topical group and its subgroups.
- A **backup member** may also be designated to ensure consistent participation in case of absences.

When necessary, **additional participants** may be invited on an ad hoc basis for specific contributions such as:

- Presentations
- Workshops
- Short-term or topic-specific working groups

Number of Participants

- **65 Core Participants**, representing one main and one additional project manager per Alliance
- **Up to 130 Total Participants**, including backups and occasional contributors based on demand

Responsibilities of the participants

Together with the GCT, members of the topical group participate in the joint meetings, and can participate in ad hoc subgroups, where colleagues can work on joint activities, which then can be shared with the complete working group. Participants are encouraged to provide best practices and share their organisational perspective on agenda points.