



7th EUA Funding Forum 2026
Brno, Czechia
October 14-16, 2026

view of the EU alliance's effectiveness and sustainability

*assumptions, conditions and indications for assessing the
functional and financial effectiveness and sustainability of
European University Alliances*

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former chair of the EULiST alliance governing board and the rector
the Brno University of Technology,





aims of the presentation

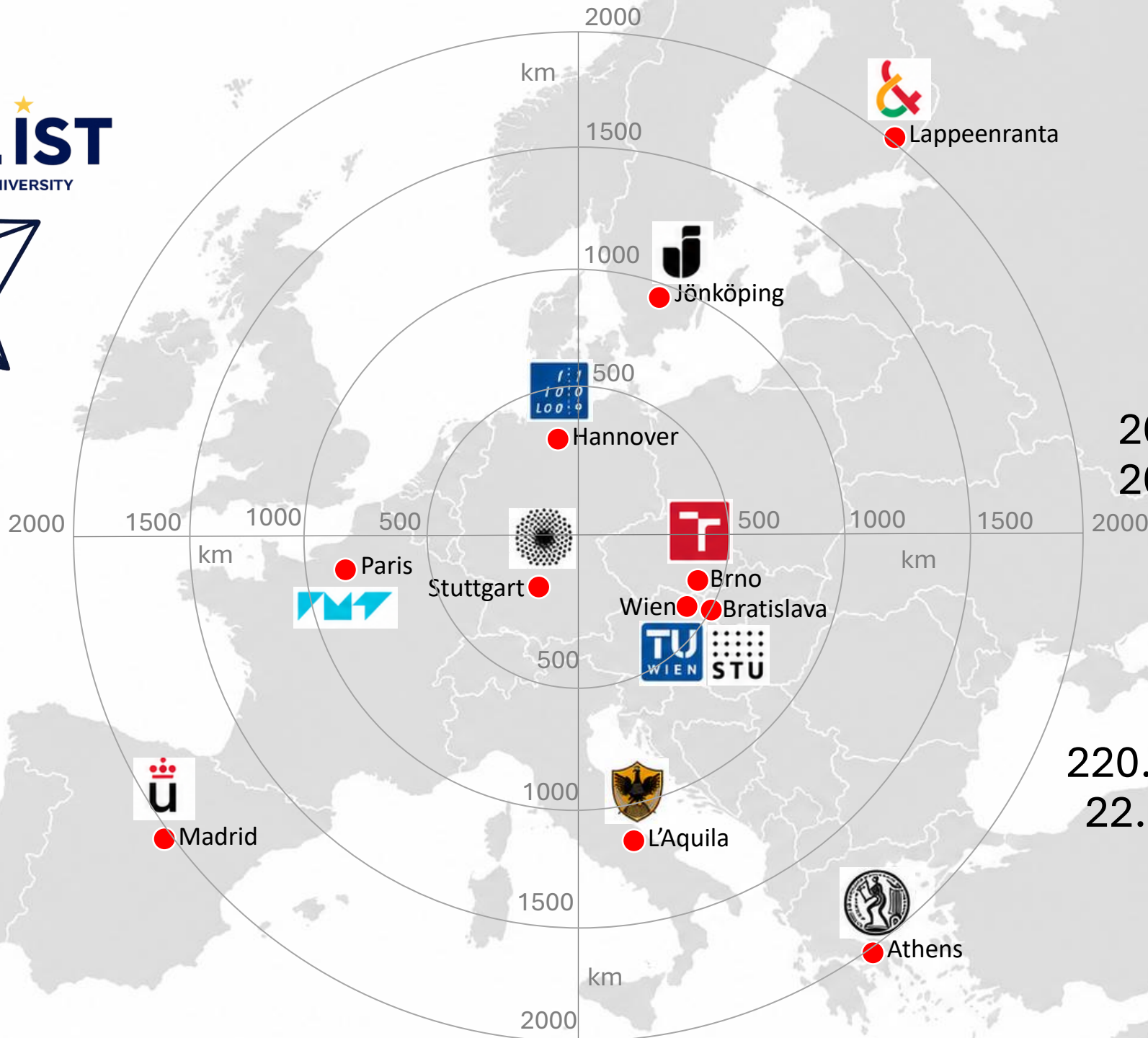
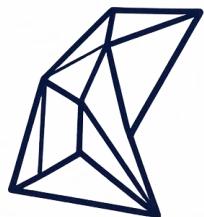
- share experiences gained from the privilege of chairing a European University alliance.
- discuss the challenges encountered during the chairmanship in implementing the alliance project and developing the EULiST university alliance.
- compile the indicators most commonly used to assess achievements across alliances and propose a methodology for measuring alliance maturity and progress.



european university initiative

- **73 | 65 | 8 Alliances | European Universities | Seal of Excellence - in CR 16 | 13 | 3**
 - ~650 higher education institutions involved in EUI
 - 36 countries of EEA (EHEA and EEA)
- **bring changes to traditional concepts** and paradigms of higher education
- **enlarges opportunities** for both learning, research and innovations
- **intensifies internacionalization** – exchanges of students, teachers, researches
- **develops synergy** in human capacity, expertise and infrastructure
- **builds competitive capacity** through sharing and developing best practices
- **helps to balance** proportions between global, national, regional and local focus in reflection of societal needs

EULiST European University – 2-year experience in chairing the Governing Board



European Universities Linking Society and Technology

2020 launched
2023 funded

11 member universities of technological profile

220.000 students
22.000 staff



remembering why EUI?

societal challenges

- **societal and EU|national economies needs**, qualified labour & skills gap (STEAM) applicable research for transfer & innovation, industry–academia cooperation
- **reflection of EU reports 2024** (Draghi, Letta, Heitor), productivity & competitiveness: slowdown and legging behind US, China,...
- **the EU five freedoms**, goods, services, persons, capital + knowledge research, innovation, knowledge incl. education plus data & competence;
- **the expected role of the EU universities** integration of distributed excellence strengthening cooperation in EHEA|ERA – next stage of internationalisation for sharing capacities, infrastructure, expertise;

- **Enrico Letta**, The 5th freedom to enhance RI&E in the Single Market
- **Manuel Heitor**, Align, Act, Accelerate. RT&I to boost EU competitiveness;
- **Mario Draghi**, The future of European Competitiveness,

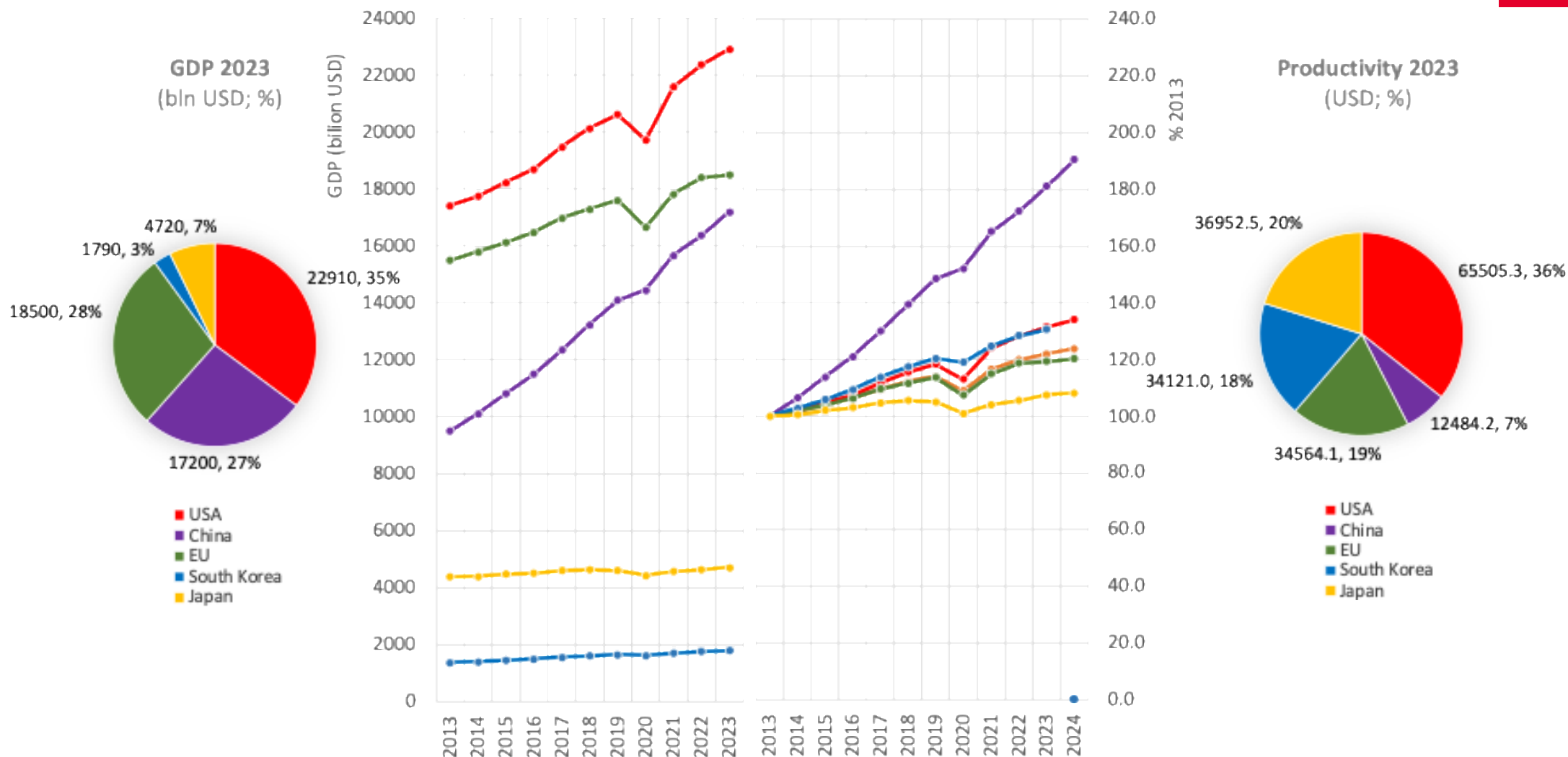
key words:

economy with added value based on knowledge & innovations
RDI *research, development & innovations* + sustainability, defence,

productivity



Gross Domestic Product (bln USD) Productivity (2013=100%)
Source: WB WDI Source: WB WDI

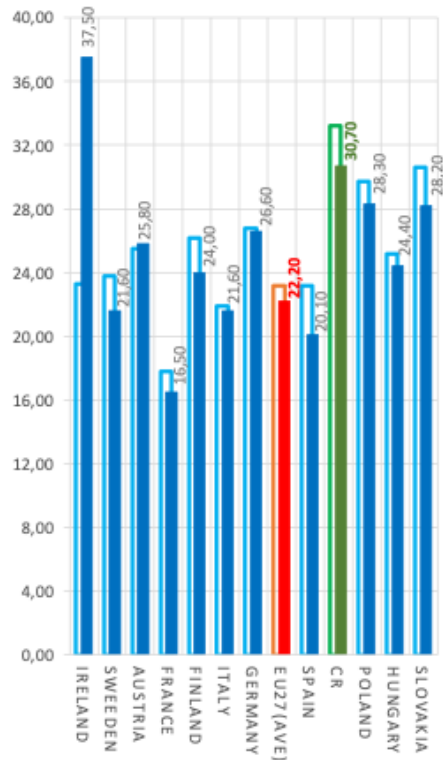


skills gap

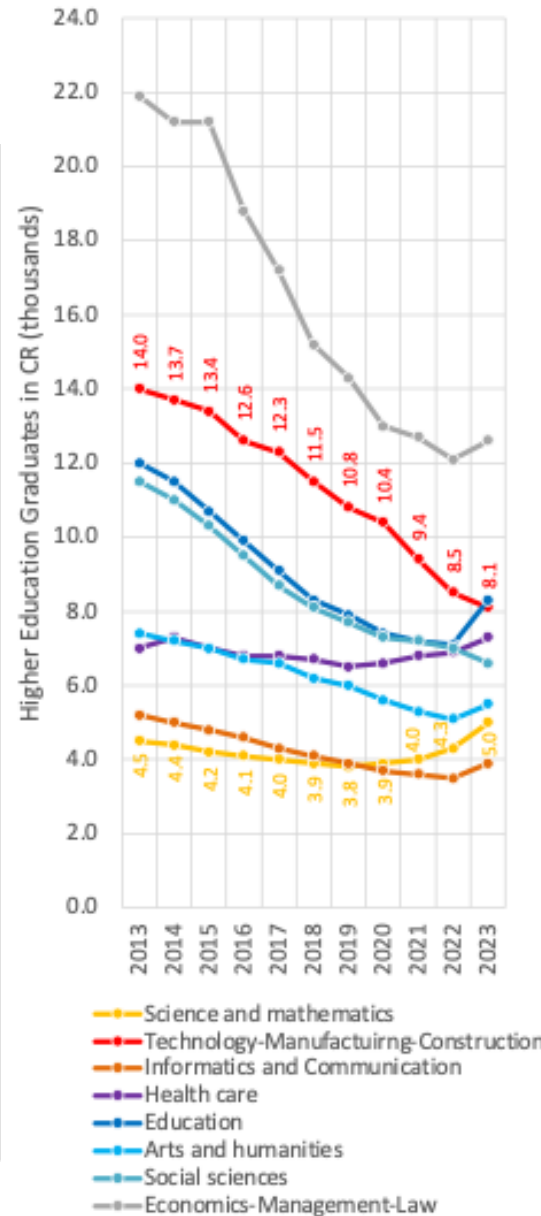


INDUSTRY SHARE AS PERCENTAGE
OF GDP 2011 | 2021

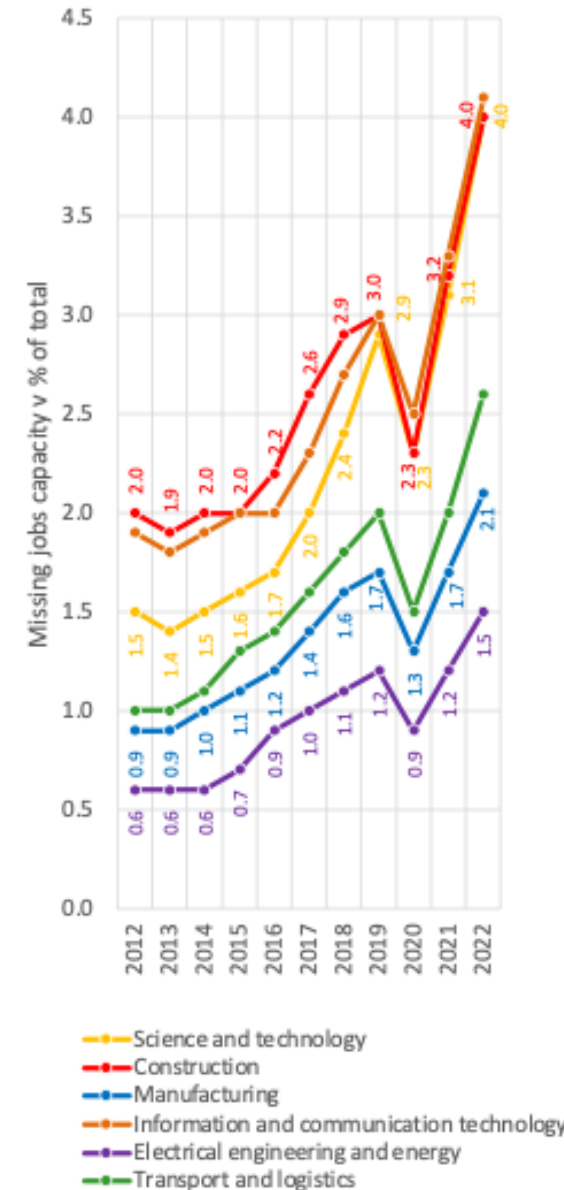
ZDROJ: WB 2023



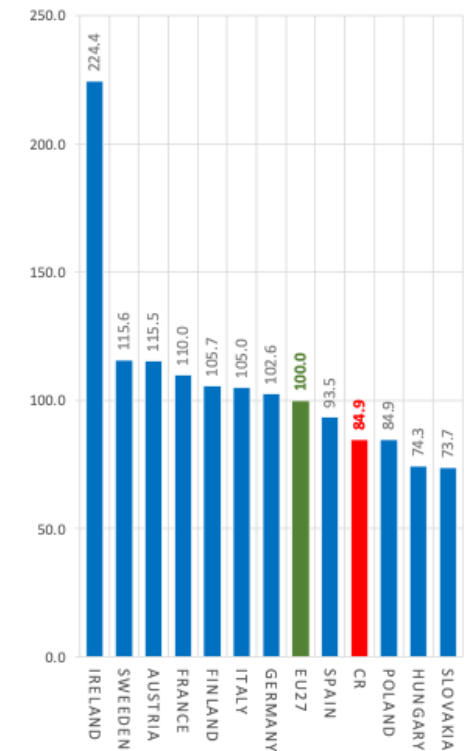
Higher Education Graduates CR
Source: MoE CR



Skills gap in EU
Source: Eurostat



PRODUCTIVITY AS GDP
PER EMPLOYED POPULATION 2022
EU27 2020 = 100,0
ZDROJ: EUROSTAT 2023





european university initiative

key findings from the evaluations of the EUI available to date

- *“too early to assess impact | a long-term perspective is needed”. EUI “is operating in a quite “unsustainable” and “disjointed” way...”*
- primarily individual alliances are evaluated than the initiative as a whole,
- missing methodology and criteria,
- predominantly outputs and processes evaluation focus,
- need to combine quantitative and qualitative methods (case studies, theory of change, contribution analysis)
- impacts still barely measured,



european university initiative

evaluation resources

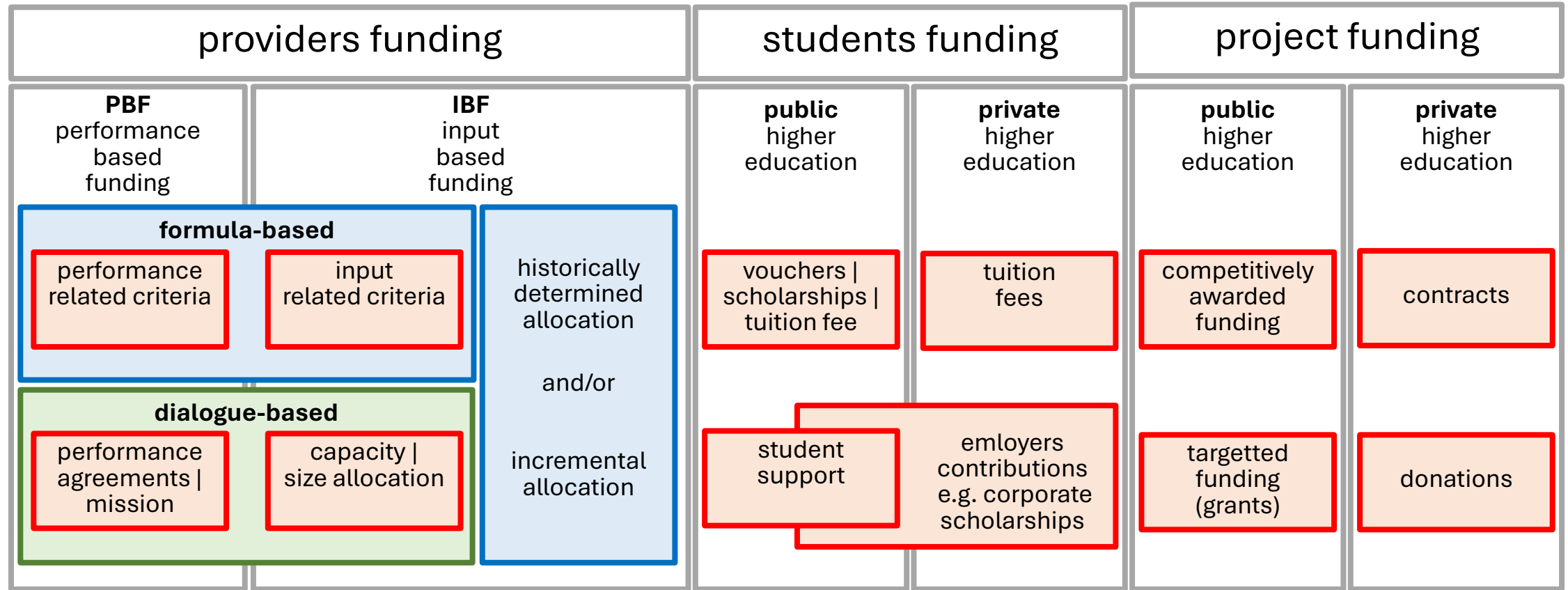
- [EC – Outcomes and potential of the European Universities initiative](#)
- [PPMI team for EC – Report on the outcomes and transformational potential \(2025\)](#)
- [EC – Funding of the European Universities initiative](#)
- [EP – Research for CULT: The EUI, first lessons, main challenges and perspectives \(2023\)](#)
- [Research Professional News – study for CULT \(EP committee for Culture and Education\) on funding alliances í](#)
- [EP – A new vision for the European Universities alliances \(Resolution 2025\)](#)
- [EUA – Judge European Universities by added value \(2023\)](#)
- [CESAER – Position on alliance performance and impact assessment \(2026\)](#)
- [Qualitative assessment of the transformative effect for six French HEI \(2026\)](#)
- [EUA – First European Universities alliance completes EUA-IEP evaluation](#)
- [Corazza a kol., Scientific Reports 2024 – Societal impact evaluation framework](#)
- [Higher Education 2024 – The EUI: between status hierarchies and inclusion](#)

challenges in implementing the EUI

differences in alliance partners' setups that need to be addressed

- **variations of expectations, motivations and involvement**
 - **variations in higher education law** and general legislative framework,
 - **legal set up of HEIs governance:** self-governance vs. Corporate model,
 - **cultural diversity:** history, experience, culture
 - **accreditation and QA systems,** including affiliation with EQAR and ENQA
 - **credit system:** despite the stated compliance with ECTS
 - **research assessment:** different national methodologies, approaches, and emphasis
- and last but not least
- **different funding mechanisms** and sustainability concerns
 - tuition fee or no-tuition fee
 - student financial support mechanisms (vouchers, scholarships)
 - proportions of normative – project (competitive) – commercial
 - etc.

variations in funding mechanisms for HEIs



formula based funding: indicator driven (performance, quality), algorithmic, transparent → backward looking

performance agreements: bilateral agreements (contracts) negotiated between governments and HE provider setting up specific goals to be achieved in a given time period → tied to (part of) institutions' grant

dialogue based funding: customised to reflect institutional mission → forward looking

capacity funding: funding based on negotiation on the capacity, that the institution is expected to need or maintain to provide education and/or conduct research over a certain period (e.g. number of publicly funded study places, etc.)

alliance partners' expectations

general challenges in successfully implementing the alliance's projects

survey summary

- **the Alliance's benefits and added value as the primary motivation**
- **trust, open borders and overcome competitive barriers**
- **translate projects into practical and beneficial activities**
- **foster excellence, differentiation and competitiveness** of the alliance members
- **support missions and goals** of individual members' and understand one another's needs
- **build a distinctive culture**
- **address and balance national and cultural constraints**
- **establish clear structures and communication mechanisms**
- **rethink educational paradigms** for the next 20–30 years and beyond

and in particular

- **keep the student-centred approach in mind** and actively involve students

what alliance partners value most?

partners' recognition of the added value and benefits of alliances

survey summary

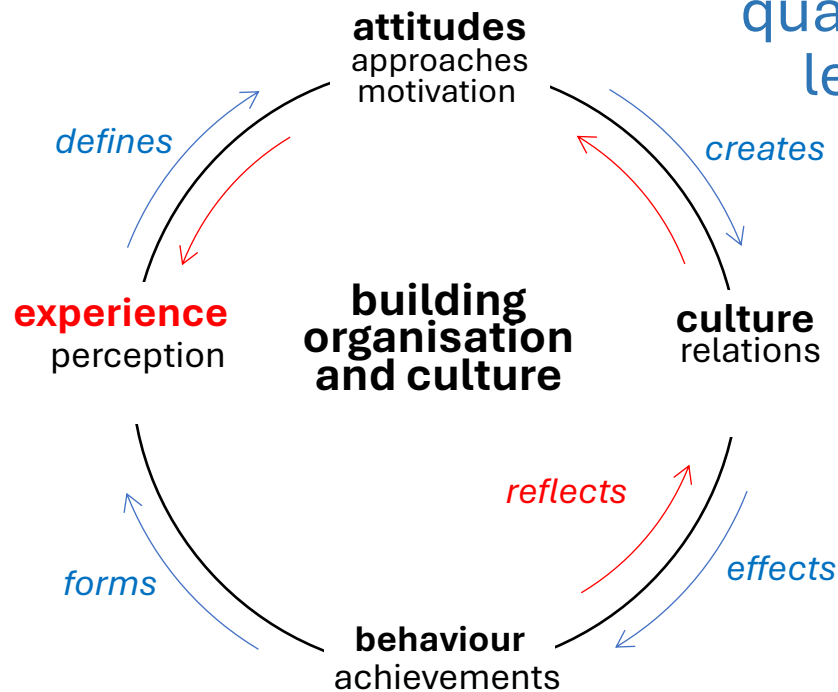
- supporting alliance partner universities:
 - **competitive positioning** and their mission, vision and goals
 - **internationalisation** *exchanges, mobilities, etc.*
 - **expertise**: *teachers and researchers*
- serving as a **reference for partner universities' governance**
- bringing and sharing:
 - **best practices** and learning from each other
 - **resources** (*infrastructure*)
 - **know-how and expertise** (*knowledge, information and/or data*)
 - **experience** in approaches and solutions
 - **courses** (and recognise them mutually) – a shared pool of strengths
- **enlarging opportunities** of learning, research and knowledge transfer
- **building competitive capacity** and power of expertise
- **inspiring ourselves**

this requires to create a pool of strengths and resources: expertise, infrastructure, human, offer it and making them available to others

alliance organisation & culture

communication & decision-making structures

- project **X** alliance
- university alliance **X** alliance university?
status and difference
- positions | bodies | roles

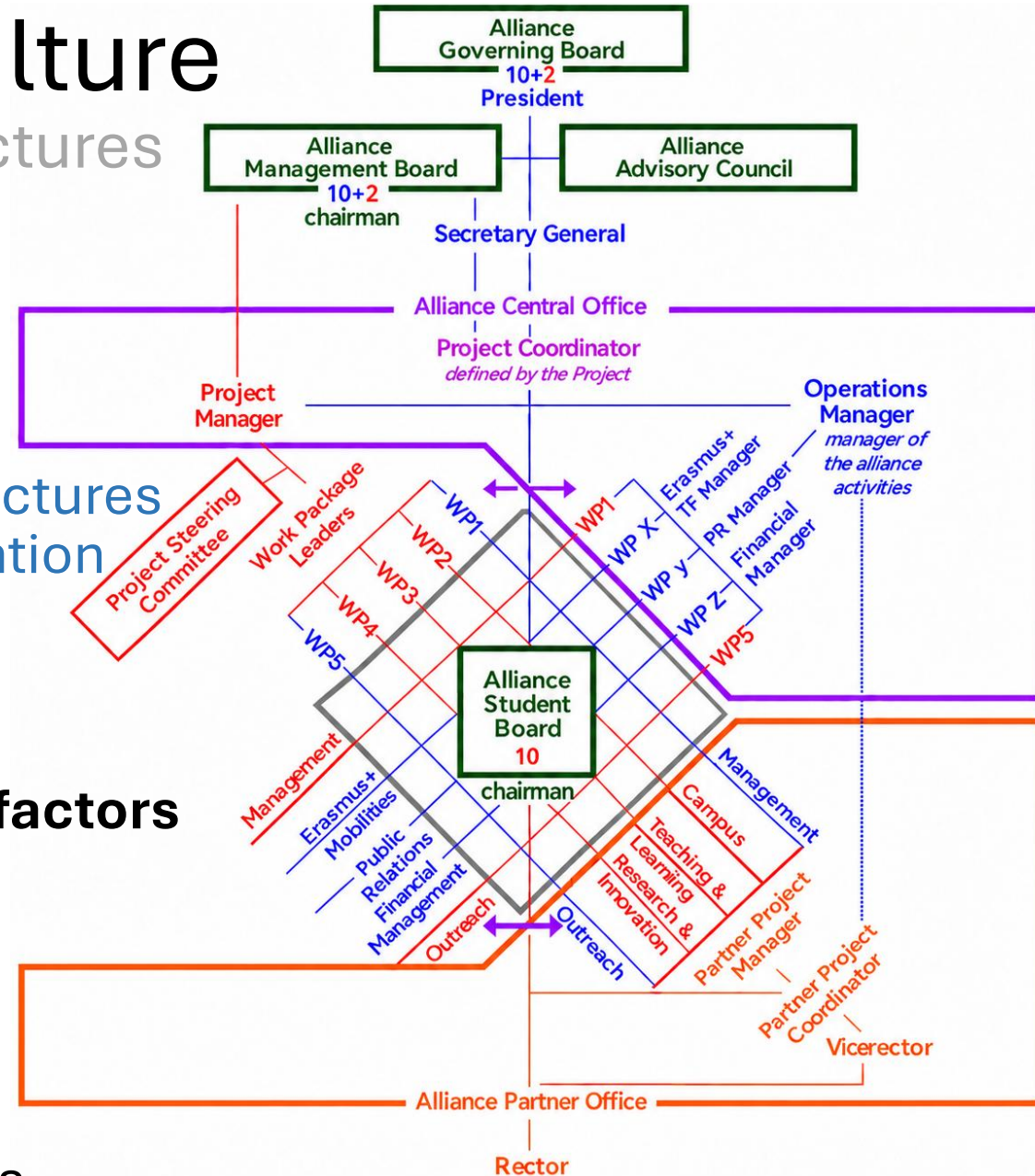


challenges

quality assurance structures
legal institutionalisation
added value

$\Delta G = \Delta H - T\Delta S$
critical success factors

Legitimacy
Vision
Leadership
Trust
Motivation
Cost/Benefits



models of university cooperation

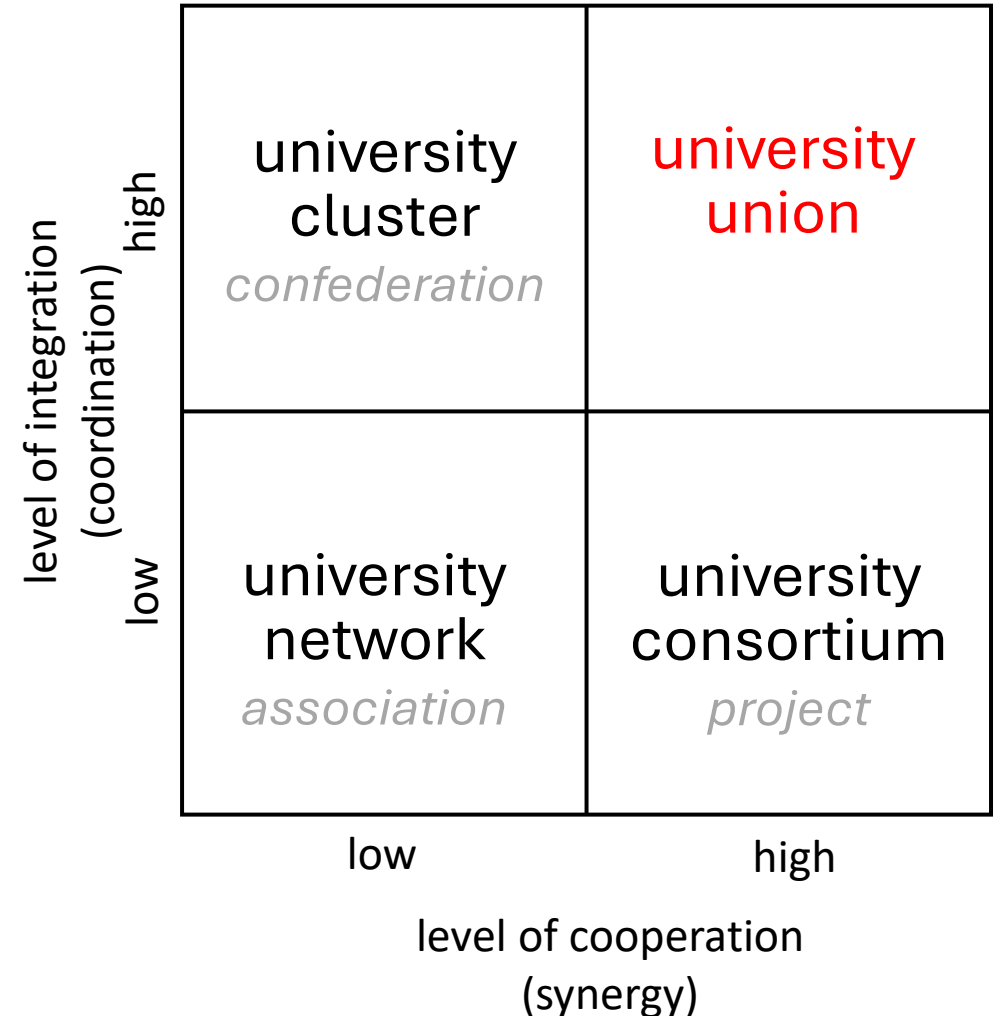
variety of cooperation modes

alliance as a confederation
of independent
universities, which makes
possible to empower
expertise by cooperation of
expert capacities and
infrastructure of its
members.

alliance of centrally
coordinated universities
achieving synergy by putting
together the infrastructure
and leading expertises based
from partner universities.
researchers and
infrastructure.

an alliance consisting of
**universities building
cooperation on
networking and/or
association principles in
specific areas** of common
interest

a horizontally (peer
partners) or vertically
(contract based) operation
universities cooperating in
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education or research on
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project or licence |
franchise based operation
limited in time and
budgets.



models of university cooperation

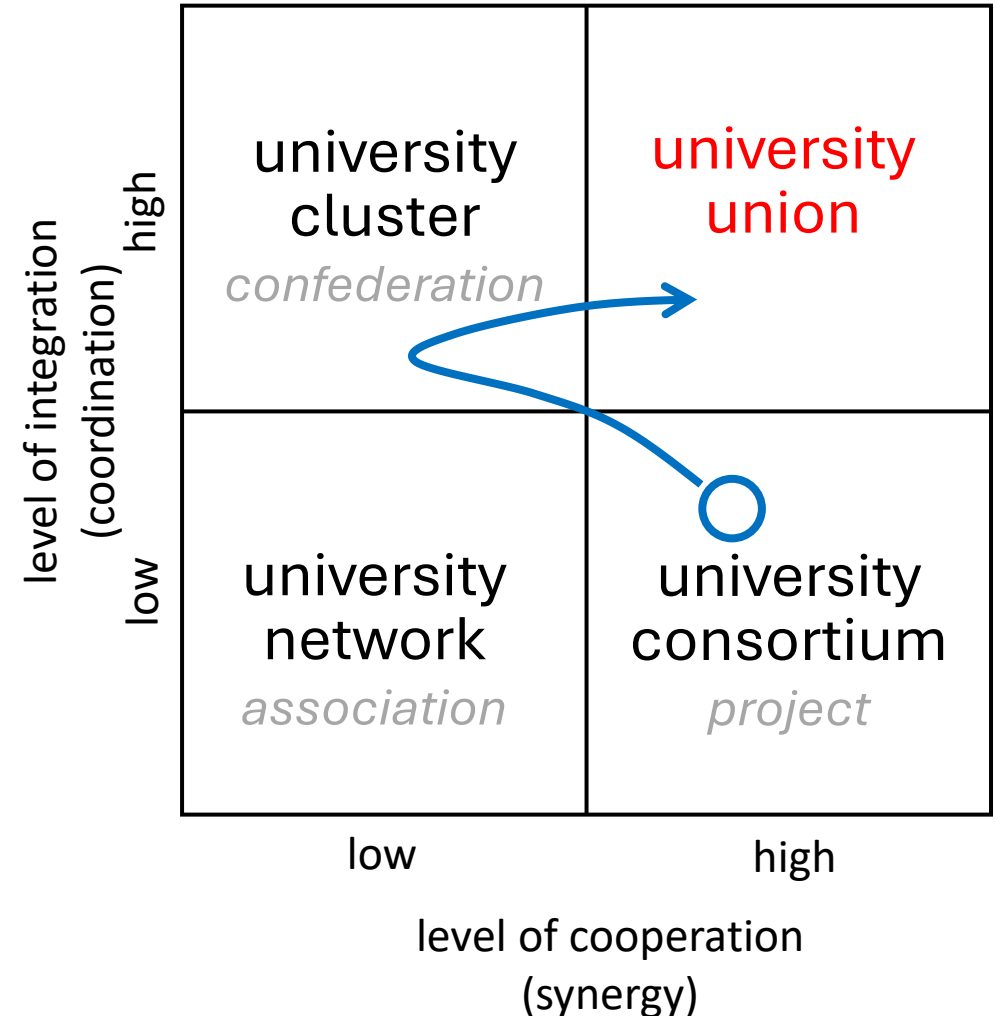
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measuring alliance progress maturity

indicative analysis . criterion function

1. **relevancy**, i.e alignment with societal needs, expectations and preferences reflected and adopted in the alliance project objectives
2. **efficiency** measured by
 - a. **maturity**, i.e. *the degree of alliance integrity and synergy as well as perceived added value and benefits*
 - b. **sustainability** *as an adjusted measure of investment efficiency.*

Relative Efficiency Value $REV = \frac{^{\circ}F}{^{\circ}S}$ where

- ° **F** the degree of fulfilment of functions, level of alliance synergy,
- ° **S** the degree of economic sustainability

measuring alliance progress maturity

indicative analysis. function categories

A. alliance integrity *measured by the level of integration and level of partners interconnectedness: (orderliness – coordination – information | data-drivenness - integration):*

1. institutional setup & integrity definition – w=25%
2. joint-services in operation – w=15%

B. alliance academic outputs *measuring intensity of alliance academic symbiosis, i.e. joint academic operations and outputs like: mutual academic exchanges, evidence of joint academic outputs and academic events organised.*

3. intensity of academic outputs in education – w=25%
4. intensity of academic outputs in research and innovations – w=15%
5. intensity of academic networking – w=25%

$$^{\circ}\text{F} = \sum_{i=1}^n \sum_{j=1}^m w_i \frac{p_{ij}}{m}$$

measuring alliance progress maturity

indicative analysis. economic sustainability

sustainability as an adjusted measure of investment efficiency measured by degree of dependancy on the alliance Project funding and level of self-sustainability measured by degree of self-generated funding cofinancing & extra-project funding intensity:

1. alliance Project funding – P
2. alliance self-generated incomes – SGI
 - level of co-funding by partners
 - self-generated revenues from joint activities

$$^{\circ}S = P - SGI = c_1 - \sum_{j=1}^m \frac{c_{2j}}{m}$$

Scale of the level of sustainability:

3 dominant Project funding | 2 minor self-generated funding | 1 major self-generated funding |
0 sustainable self-generated funding

measuring alliance progress maturity

indicative analysis. overall evaluation

REV could provide

- the opportunity to compare alliances' progress maturity
- the indication of the alliance progress maturity in the given development stage

$$REV = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n \sum_{j=1}^m w_i \frac{p_{ij}}{m}}{c_1 - \sum_{j=1}^m \frac{c_{2j}}{m}}$$

Scale of the level of progress maturity (overall assessment):
3 – advanced | 2 – developing | 1 – emerging | 0 – undeveloped

If $REV < 0$ means, that at the given stage of development the alliance appears unsustainable, and the investment not performing. Indicative application of the method to the available sample shows the level between 1-2, only not many 2+.

measuring alliance progress maturity

potential performance parametres

alliance integrity

w=25% 1. institutional setup & integrity definition p11

frequency of coordination events, assemblies and meetings

p12 documented mission (cross-cutting topic), strategy & specific policies adopted

p13 standardisation of coordination and communication mechanisms & processes

p14 documented application of joint and agreed quality assurance mechanisms

p15 institutionalisation status

w=15% 2. documented evidence provided

p21 joint students & staff support services in operation

p22 infrastructure sharing and cooperation contracts signed

economic sustainability

alliance project funding P

c1 alliance project funding

alliance self-generated incomes SGI

c21 co-funding by partners

c22 self-generated revenues from joint activities

alliance academic outputs

w=25% 3. intensity of academic outputs in education

(2 alliance partners at minimum),

p31 joint accredited courses & studies - #

p32 joint microcertified CPD courses - #

p33 joint courses and studies students | graduates - #
#|#diploma awarded

p34 joint international PhD school(s) established and operated

w=15% 4. intensity of academic outputs in R&I,

p41 joint research and other academic projects implemented - #

p42 joint IP outputs - # activated-transferred

w=25% 5. intensity of academic networking

p51 intensity of mutual academic mobilities – students & staff - #|# attendees

p52 intensity of academic staff active assignments - #

p53 intensity of academic events organised - conferences, seminars...

measuring alliance progress maturity

scaling potential parameters

Performace levels:

Documented evidence:

0 – not applicable | 1 forming - *learning to live together* | 2 norming - *defined processes* | 3 performing - *outputs evidence*

Frequency and regularity occurence:

0 – not applicable | 1 – occasional - *ad hoc-accidental* | 2 – repeated - *defined* | 3 regular – *standardised*

Process standardisation:

0 – not applicable | 1 – accidental | 2 – defined | 3 – introduced

Outputs quantity:

0 – none | 1 – few | 2 – several | 3 – many

Status maturity:

0 – not established | 1 – initiated | 2 – in-progress | 3 – registered - *legal status achieved*

Funding levels:

3 – dominant | 2 – major | 1 – minor | 0 – none

what perspectives we have?

from planning and forming to performing...

- **focus on achieving the alliance projects' KPIs** and completing the implementation of current Projects in 2027 successfully;
- **secure approval and funding for the bridging project covering 2027–2028,**
- develop and **adopt a new Alliance strategy for 2028+**, aligned with current societal priorities and needs, **in particular competitiveness and resilience** in the current geopolitical context,
- identify, develop and adopt distinctive cross-cutting themes that define the spirit of a successful alliance,
- build excellence and competitiveness based on differentiation, distributed expertise and internationalization,
- **clearly demonstrate the Alliance's added value and achievements to date,**
- **develop a new pragmatic project proposal** for 2027 and beyond, drawing on experience gained,



thank you

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