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European University for Smart Urban Coastal Sustainability

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Alliance sustainability and continuity plan

D1.4

WP1 Alliance Management, Coordination and Support

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Alliance sustainability and continuity plan

Strategy, institutional commitment and operational continuity
2026–2030

Contents and reading guide

Executive summary	4
1. Purpose, scope and evidence	5
2. Strategic foundation and baseline	6
3. Comparative evidence and transferable lessons	8
4. Governance and the common service model	10
5. Financial sustainability and resource allocation	12
6. Mission, people and community sustainability	15
7. Digital and knowledge continuity	18
8. Continuity scenarios and response	19
9. Implementation roadmap, 2026–2030	22
10. Indicators, quality and evidence of value	25
11. Risk register and operating tools	27
12. Adoption and conclusions	29
References and source notes	30
Annex I. Strategic Plan 2026–2030	32

Reading the plan

Sections 1–3 establish the evidence and strategic basis. Sections 4–8 define the proposed operating, financing and continuity approach. Sections 9–11 set out owners, milestones, indicators, risks and practical records. Section 12 identifies the adoption and publication arrangements.

> The strategy remains the governing strategic reference. D1.4 translates it into recommendations; it does not itself approve budgets, impose contributions, change statutory powers or establish new grant commitments. Proposed controls and targets require validation before implementation.

Annex I is the complete supplied 94-page strategy, not a summary. The PDF preserves the original pages and searchable text; the Word version contains a page-for-page facsimile to retain the approved layout. Internal evidence, detailed cash schedules, personal data and technical incident information are not included as public annexes.

Executive summary

EU-CONEXUS's sustainability depends on its ability to maintain valuable cooperation between its member universities, fulfil commitments to its communities and adapt its activities to available resources. This plan translates the Strategic Plan 2026–2030 into recommendations for institutional continuity, a sustainable operating model and a managed transition beyond EU-CONEXUS Plus. It covers all Alliance missions and supporting services, rather than financial sustainability or environmental performance alone. [1–4]

The strategic foundation is already defined: five axes—Mission & Identity, Education, Research, Internal Community and External Community—supported by subsidiarity, institutional autonomy, differentiated participation, continuity and use of existing structures. D1.4 does not replace that framework, introduce a sixth strategic axis or turn the non-legally-binding strategy into a funding obligation. The full Strategic Plan is reproduced as Annex I. [2, PDF pp. 6–19]

The recommended operating model

Maintain a clearly costed common core, delivered through the Alliance coordination arrangements, EU-CONEXUS AISBL/EU-CONEXA and member-hosted services as appropriate. Around this core, retain a differentiated portfolio of academic, research and societal activities. Every continuing activity needs an accountable institution or service owner, an agreed funding basis, a review date and an alternative delivery or closure arrangement. Not every partner must participate in every activity; shared commitments that have already been accepted nevertheless require explicit follow-through.

The immediate priorities

Before the current funded phase closes, prepare an output-and-obligation handover register; identify the essential service package and its full cost; verify staffing, hosting and contract continuity; and connect D1.4 with the Quality Policy and the legal-entity consolidation measures. During 2027, establish the financial baseline, test continuity arrangements, review the educational and service portfolio and use external evaluation to inform improvements. During 2028, make the next continuation decision early enough to protect people and provision; continue strategic implementation and review through 2030.

The planned LevelUP phase provides a transition opportunity, not a substitute for longer-term planning. The public announcement records successful evaluation and entry into Grant Agreement Preparation for 2026–2028. This deliverable does not treat that announcement as evidence of a signed agreement, unrestricted resources or secured funding after 2028. The final issue must use the operative agreement and confirmed implementation arrangements. [7–8]

Financial discipline and continuity

The plan distinguishes institutional cash and staff-time contributions, common-core resources, restricted project funding and prospective income. It recommends a rolling three-year resource forecast, a monthly cash view, transparent allocation principles and stress tests for delayed, reduced or discontinued funding. Existing learner commitments, employment and contractual obligations, records and essential services take precedence over discretionary expansion. Growth proceeds only when mandate, delivery capacity and resources are clear.

> Decision requested: endorse the continuity approach; mandate completion of the costed core, responsibility map and handover register; and require a consolidated annual sustainability review. Specific contributions, staffing changes, service standards and contingency thresholds remain subject to the competent bodies' approval.

1. Purpose, scope and evidence

1.1 Contractual purpose and planning horizon

D1.4 is the Alliance sustainability and continuity plan under WP1 of EU-CONEXUS Plus (project 101089709), led by La Rochelle Université, classified as a report and intended for public dissemination. Its contractual description requires recommendations for Alliance development and sustainability and publication on the website. It is due in month 48. The current action runs from 1 November 2022 to 31 October 2026. [1; 4, section 1]

The plan addresses the 2026 transition, the planned 2026–2028 consolidation period and implementation through the end of the Strategic Plan in 2030. The post-2028 pathway is scenario-based. Funding calls, budgets and awards that are not confirmed are not used as operating guarantees.

1.2 Scope and terminology

Sustainability means the capacity to maintain mission-relevant cooperation with appropriate institutional commitment, people, resources, quality and legitimacy. Continuity means preserving essential functions and accepted obligations during a change of project, personnel, service provider, funding or membership. Resilience means the capacity to adjust provision without losing the Alliance's purpose or exposing participants to unmanaged disruption.

EU-CONEXUS denotes the long-term Alliance. EU-CONEXUS AISBL, also called EU-CONEXA, denotes its Belgian international non-profit association. EU-CONEXUS Plus and EU-CONEXUS LevelUP denote distinct funded or proposed actions. The Alliance, association and project consortia are not interchangeable. Institutional and statutory responsibilities remain with the competent bodies. [4, sections 2–3]

1.3 Evidence and status of recommendations

The primary basis is the supplied Strategic Plan, the D1.3 Quality Policy and D1.6 legal-entity report, the contractual description, and selected planning and endorsement records. FOREU4ALL's discussion paper and the internal account of the April 2026 coordinators' retreat provide policy context. Published material from six comparison cases supplies specific organisational lessons. References distinguish these source types; internal material is not reproduced as a public annex. [1–16]

The supplied D1.3 and D1.6 documents remain proposals. Their proposed policies and consolidation measures are used for alignment, not reported as already adopted. Comparator publications describe their own arrangements; they are not independent demonstrations of effectiveness. The measures, owners, dates and controls proposed in D1.4 are recommendations for validation, not evidence of implementation or new contractual deliverables.

> Evidence limitation: no validated, consolidated 2026 cost baseline, multi-year contribution schedule, complete staffing register or signed LevelUP agreement was available in the material reviewed. Accordingly, the plan specifies the decisions and records needed to establish financial readiness; it does not certify that continuity is already fully financed.

Strategy citations use PDF page numbers, not the document's printed folios. Numbered action references reproduce the strategy's identifiers. Annex I preserves the supplied document without editing or reconciling its wording.

2. The strategy as the foundation

The Strategic Plan 2026–2030 is the reference framework for this deliverable. Available institutional endorsements identify its adoption by the Governing Board in December 2025. The plan's sustainability objectives concern both sourcing resources and allocating them effectively, supported by institutional collaboration and governance. Its operational action lines explicitly provide for a funding model with annual revision. [2, PDF pp. 24–25, 50–55; 9]

Strategic axis	Sustainability contribution	D1.4 application
Mission & Identity	Institutional commitment; diversified funding; fair resource allocation; effective governance.	Institutional embedding, a costed common core, clear delegation and annual resource review (sections 4–5).
Education	Consolidation of proven provision; recognition; a coherent student journey; relevant teaching and learning.	Portfolio review, cohort-level continuity and recognition safeguards (section 6.1).
Research	Challenge-aligned collaboration; research support; knowledge transfer; early-career capacity.	Sustainable collaboration and support functions, with separate funding for research delivery (section 6.2).
Internal Community	Belonging; student participation; mobility; staff professional development.	Resourced participation, succession and institutional recognition of work (section 6.3).
External Community	Public awareness; policy engagement; co-creation with local ecosystems.	Reciprocal partnerships, reuse of results and evidence of public value (sections 6.2 and 10).

2.1 Boundaries that remain unchanged

Participation remains aligned with institutional governance and priorities. Differentiated involvement is a design principle, not a deficiency to be eliminated. Universities retain authority over their own budgets, staffing, academic decisions and statutory obligations. Alliance-wide planning therefore records who has accepted a contribution rather than assuming that a strategic endorsement authorises every operational commitment. [2, PDF pp. 6–7, 52]

Implementation should use existing councils, boards, coordination functions and institutional services. References in the strategy to developing a framework, office or other function are not treated here as proof that it has been created. Any organisational change needs its own mandate, resources and decision. This plan does not establish an additional standing sustainability committee. [2, PDF pp. 7, 44–45, 68–69, 85]

> Three complementary questions: the Strategic Plan sets the direction; D1.3 defines how quality is assured and improved; D1.4 identifies what must be sustained, by whom, with which resources and what happens when conditions change. D1.6 informs how the common legal entity can support that model. [2–4]

2. Baseline and transition priorities

The evidence supports a platform for continuity, but not a claim that all strategic ambitions are operational or fully funded. The following baseline distinguishes documented foundations from the further records needed to make a continuation decision.

Foundation in the evidence	Implication for continuity	Completion or verification needed
A common strategy and thematic focus on Smart Urban Coastal Sustainability. [2]	Retain a stable mission across project cycles; use the five axes to test new initiatives.	Record local strategy links, accountable sponsors and each institution's accepted contributions.
An operating common association and experience of collective contracting and resources, reported in D1.6. [4]	Build on the existing instrument rather than restart organisational design.	Validate service mandates, delegations, funding restrictions, costs and actual staffing arrangements.
A strategic portfolio including joint education, minors, micro-credentials, the Teaching Academy, research collaboration and stakeholder engagement. [2]	Assess continuation at service, programme and cohort level—not only by work package.	Confirm current activity status, users, quality findings, full cost, owner and next review date.
A draft Alliance-wide Quality Policy and proposed improvement cycle. [3]	Combine sustainability with quality, risk and strategic review.	Complete approval and align operating procedures; avoid reporting proposed cycles as established practice.
LevelUP passed evaluation and entered grant preparation; a 24-month bridge is described. [7–8]	Plan a managed handover, while retaining a delay or funding-gap scenario.	Confirm the signed agreement, duration, eligible activities, contribution schedule and service continuity.

2.2 The transition challenge

The main planning risk is not simply that a project ends. It is that ownership of a useful activity, its recurrent cost, its records or the responsibility towards participants becomes unclear at that boundary. A service may remain available technically but lose its support team; an educational offer may remain visible but lack the teaching allocation or recognition route needed for another cohort.

D1.6 identifies functional clarity, funding separation and institutional memory as consolidation needs. The internal retreat synthesis points to prioritisation, institutional transformation and usable evidence of value. The operational response is to document continuation deliberately: retain, improve, transfer, pause or discontinue each activity, with explicit protection for existing commitments. This is an analytical recommendation, not a finding that all current services are at risk. [4, sections 4 and 7; 6, sections 6–9]

3. Learning from other alliances

The comparison is selective and functional. It identifies practices relevant to EU-CONEXUS, not a preferred universal model or a ranking. Eucor is a long-standing cross-border grouping rather than an Erasmus+ European Universities project directly equivalent to EU-CONEXUS. Its experience is used with that distinction in view.

3.1 A sector framework: start with institutional value

EUA's February 2026 briefing places institutional purpose and added value at the foundation of financial sustainability. It identifies full-cost awareness, income diversification, efficiency and leadership/governance as four interdependent pillars. For EU-CONEXUS, the useful implication is that another successful application is not, by itself, a sustainability strategy: universities need to understand what cooperation contributes to their missions and what continuing participation requires. [10, pp. 6–12, 23–27]

3.2 Eucor: distinguish coordination from collaborative activity

Eucor's published financing model separates member contributions for the secretariat, coordination and common activities from contributions to its Seed Money instrument. It also describes regional, national and European funding. The transferable feature is the separation of funding purposes, not its contribution amounts or formula. Its geographically concentrated cooperation and regional funding environment differ from those of EU-CONEXUS. [12]

> Proposed application: show the common-core requirement separately from activity budgets and seed funding. A university should be able to see what maintains the cooperation infrastructure and what finances a particular initiative. Define any fee arrangement through EU-CONEXUS's own cost base and approvals.

3.3 Arqus: connect the shared strategy with institutional investment

Arqus's Mission Statement and Joint Long-term Strategy 2026–2035 links sustainability to alignment with each partner's institutional strategy and investment within financial possibilities. It sets a phased direction in which consolidation precedes deeper integration and identifies diversification and sustained research cooperation as development priorities. These are strategic commitments and directions, not evidence that every intended result has been achieved. [11, PDF pp. 23, 46–48]

For EU-CONEXUS, this supports a locally owned implementation record: the institutional objective served, the responsible senior sponsor, the services and departments involved, the staff-time or cash commitment, and the evidence used to review benefit. Differentiated participation can remain coherent where each institution's contribution is visible and accepted.

3.4 What these examples do not justify

The comparison does not justify importing another alliance's membership fee, assuming that external projects can pay unrestricted core costs, or requiring uniform integration across institutions. The appropriate test is whether a measure solves a defined EU-CONEXUS need within the Alliance's strategic principles and resources.

3. Learning from other alliances

3.5 CHARM-EU: make outputs usable in ordinary university practice

CHARM-EU's Service Portfolio presents examples of member universities applying Alliance innovations locally, with supporting documents, guides and a route to request assistance. Its scope includes educational innovation, mobility, research and innovation, community engagement and internal dissemination. The relevant feature is practical transfer: results are packaged for use, not only recorded as project outputs. [13]

Proposed application: each retained EU-CONEXUS output should have a receiving service or academic owner, a usable guide, an update responsibility and a clear support route. The Teaching Academy and institutional services can support adoption without creating a separate transfer structure.

3.6 Una Europa: distinguish enduring and project responsibilities

Una Europa describes a Belgian non-profit association supporting the Alliance and identifies project-specific governance for Una.Futura. Its published arrangements distinguish organisational responsibilities and the funded project while seeking alignment between them. This illustrates why continuity requires an explicit relationship between permanent cooperation and successive grants. [14]

Proposed application: decision papers and minutes should identify whether the Alliance, the AISBL or a grant consortium is acting. Shared membership or an overlapping meeting does not make those capacities interchangeable. Retain the institutional history across changes of project terminology.

3.7 4EU+: a legal entity's grant role is an organisational choice

The 1CORE project is coordinated by the 4EU+ association, while university partners lead other work packages. Its work plan includes both common campus services and sustainable governance. The example demonstrates a possible division of responsibility, not a requirement that every alliance entity become coordinator. EU-CONEXUS Plus retains La Rochelle Université as coordinator. [15; 1]

Proposed application: assess each future coordination or common-service role against capacity, liabilities, costs and member agreement. Centralisation is worthwhile only when it improves delivery or resilience; a sustainable member-hosted arrangement may remain preferable.

3.8 ECIU/ESEU: test functions before expanding structures

ECIU's ESEU project used eight practical use cases to examine cooperation needs and legal instruments, including staffing, finance, learning and shared resources. EU-CONEXUS participated in this comparative policy experimentation, as recorded in D1.6. Its useful contribution is a function-led assessment rather than an assumption that legal incorporation alone resolves cross-border barriers. [16; 4, section 5]

> Synthesis for EU-CONEXUS: sustain useful functions, embed them locally, distinguish common and activity resources, make results reusable, and preserve clear decision rights. Adopt practices selectively; do not copy another organisation's structure, scale or funding assumptions.

4. Governance and institutional commitment

4.1 Institutional embedding without additional bureaucracy

Each university should maintain a concise EU-CONEXUS implementation statement within an existing strategic or annual-planning process. It should identify its governance-level sponsor, local coordinator, participating academic and professional services, accepted resource commitments and priority benefits. Existing institutional approvals should be referenced, not repeated through a new procedure. The commitment should be reviewed when leadership or the institutional strategy changes. [2, actions 1.1.1.2, 1.4.1.1 and 1.3.2.2]

Institutional participation is more durable when faculties, research groups, finance, human resources, digital services, quality services and student representatives can identify their role. The local record should therefore go beyond an international-office contact. It should also identify an alternate for continuity and a route for resolving issues that cannot be settled locally.

4.2 Responsibility follows the activity and legal capacity

Level or function	Recommended responsibility
Governing Board	Endorse strategic priorities, the common service envelope and the annual sustainability review; refer binding institutional commitments to the competent authorities.
Competent AISBL statutory bodies	Approve association budgets, contributions, contractual powers and employment decisions within the statutes; ensure that continuity measures respect the entity's obligations.
Executive Council and Management Board	Maintain strategic coherence and operational coordination within their existing remits; reconcile cross-institutional dependencies and escalate unresolved resource gaps.
Executive Director and coordination team	Maintain the service and obligation registers, consolidate forecasts and evidence, coordinate handover and implementation, and prepare decision papers.
Academic and Research Councils; service and activity owners	Review portfolio quality and continuation requirements; identify owners, dependency risks and participant protections in their areas.
Member universities and representative bodies	Confirm accepted commitments; provide institutional services and evidence; involve students and staff in decisions affecting provision and participation.

These assignments implement the logic of the strategy and proposal Quality Policy. They do not amend the governing agreements, create a new statutory office or transfer academic authority to the association. Each decision must identify its approving body and legal or institutional effect. [2, actions 1.4.1.1–1.4.1.6; 3, section 6; 4, section 3]

4.3 Delegation and change control

Maintain a current decision-and-signature map, with reserved decisions, delegated operational authority and escalation routes. Changes to a service's scope, annual cost, host, funding source or staffing arrangement should be recorded and approved before implementation where required. An urgent response may use existing delegated powers, but cannot create an unfunded commitment on behalf of another institution.

4. The common service model

The common core is the minimum useful cooperation infrastructure, not merely the minimum cost of keeping the AISBL legally in existence. Its proposed scope below must be validated and costed. A service can be delivered centrally, jointly or by a designated member institution; the responsible legal organisation must always be identifiable. [2, actions 1.3.1.3, 1.3.3.1–1.3.3.2; 4, sections 4.1 and 4.9]

Core function	Continuity requirement	Proposed lead/interface
Governance and institutional coordination	Accessible decision records; current delegations; meeting and renewal calendar; local contacts and alternates.	Executive Director; existing governing bodies; institutional coordinators.
Financial and contractual administration	Entity-level budgets and cash visibility; funding conditions; authorisations; contract and obligation register.	Responsible finance functions; AISBL and university contracting authorities.
Essential digital access and records	Agreed hosting and support; secure access; maintained records; tested restoration and export routes.	Smart Campus/digital leads and the responsible institutional IT services.
Academic and participant coordination	Accurate programme information; recognition and certification contacts; coordination of active cohorts and mobility commitments.	Academic Council; programme institutions; relevant student and mobility services.
Quality, risk and strategic monitoring	A common evidence calendar, improvement tracking and annual synthesis drawing on existing institutional information.	Executive Director with quality expertise, councils and activity owners.
Community and external communication	Current website and contact channels; essential participant notices; maintenance of the common identity and public outputs.	Joint Communication Unit and local communication teams.
Knowledge and partnership continuity	Retained service guides, reusable outputs and partnership records with an accountable receiving owner.	Relevant activity and service leads; institutional coordinators.

4.4 A service agreement proportionate to the task

For each core function, record users, service scope, owner, delivery host, funding period, staff allocation, dependencies, review arrangements and fallback. For a member-hosted function, agree access for other partners and the notice and handover process before the host can change or stop the service. These arrangements should make expectations clear without duplicating detailed institutional procedures.

An activity outside the core is not unimportant. Joint programmes, research initiatives, stakeholder projects and events retain dedicated budgets and academic responsibilities. Their participation and expansion may vary, but their accepted commitments cannot be suspended merely by reclassifying them as non-core. The continuity classification in section 8 takes precedence where participants or existing obligations are affected.

> Approval test for an additional common service: a demonstrated shared need; a responsible delivery organisation; a realistic cost and funding route; acceptable legal and operational arrangements; and evidence of expected user value. Otherwise, retain or improve a coordinated local model.

5. A sustainable financial architecture

5.1 Three complementary financial views

The strategy calls for a diversified funding model, fair allocation and annual review while preserving institutional budget authority. The recommended architecture therefore combines three views without presenting them as a single legal set of accounts. [2, actions 1.3.1.1–1.3.1.3 and 1.3.2.1–1.3.2.2]

View	What it records	Boundary
AISBL/common-service view	Cash resources, staff and contracts legally managed by the association, plus the specific services entrusted to it.	The AISBL budget is not the total Alliance budget.
Member-institution view	Staff time, cash, facilities and services each university commits to Alliance participation.	In-kind capacity is valuable, but is not cash available to another organisation.
Whole-Alliance management view	An analytical consolidation of core and activity resources, their original sources, restrictions and dependencies.	Eliminate intra-Alliance transfers to avoid double counting. This view does not transfer ownership of funds.

5.2 Identify the full cost before deciding the funding mix

Cost the retained service portfolio using existing payroll, budget and workload information. Distinguish recurring operating costs from one-off transition and development costs. Include academic and professional staff time, digital maintenance and licences, support and accessibility, quality assurance, communication, specialist advice, contractual obligations and any justified replacement or handover provision. Estimate unrecorded staff time proportionately and disclose the method; do not invent precision.

Separate costs paid centrally from costs carried by universities. Identify the institutional service providing each in-kind contribution and the period for which that capacity is genuinely available. Where an activity replaces existing expenditure, record the avoided cost only with a comparable baseline. The plan does not assume that integration will automatically reduce costs or staff workload.

5.3 Four resource categories

Common-core resources maintain the approved cooperation infrastructure. Activity resources finance particular programmes or initiatives. Development resources support time-limited improvement or experimentation. Contingency resources, where lawfully established and approved, protect specified obligations or recovery needs. Restricted grants must retain their restrictions in all four categories.

The financial baseline should identify the amount, source, recipient, permitted use, availability period and decision status of every contribution. A membership contribution, project allocation and anticipated sponsorship cannot be treated as equivalent evidence of financial security. The model should also distinguish an accounting balance from liquid funds that can actually be used when a payment falls due. [4, sections 4.3–4.4 and 4.9]

5. Diversified funding: a selective portfolio

The funding roadmap should assess these source families against strategic fit, eligibility, full delivery cost, timing, administrative capacity and contribution to continuity. They are routes to examine—not a statement that funds have been awarded, that the AISBL is eligible for every scheme or that post-2027 programmes will retain current rules. [2, actions 1.3.1.1–1.3.1.6]

Source family	Appropriate use to assess	Conditions for relying on it
Institutional contributions and member-hosted resources	The accepted share of core services; staff time; facilities; teaching and support allocations.	Approval by each competent institution; clear cash/in-kind distinction; period, purpose and continuity recorded.
Erasmus+ European Universities support	Eligible coordination, institutional cooperation and educational consolidation within the relevant funded action.	Use the signed agreement and approved work plan. The proposed grant ceiling is neither available cash nor unrestricted core funding.
Other educational and mobility programmes	Eligible joint education, Erasmus Mundus, mobility, cooperation, flexible learning and professional development.	Check the specific call, beneficiaries and activity rules; avoid duplicate support for the same costs or obligations.
Research and innovation funding	Challenge-aligned research, doctoral cooperation, research infrastructure and innovation through suitable EU, national or other instruments.	Researchers and host institutions lead eligible delivery. Do not assume educational bridge funding pays for research or proposal preparation.
National, regional and local public support	Institutional transformation, strategic partnerships, skills and place-based responses to coastal challenges.	Map availability separately in each country and region; multi-year support requires an express commitment, not a policy aspiration.
Professional learning and commissioned services	Demand-led continuing education, training or advisory services aligned with the mission.	Test demand and full costs; agree academic responsibility, price, access, contracting, tax and rights before launch.
Philanthropy and responsible partnerships	Restricted scholarships, access support, community activity or specific innovation, where compatible with institutional policies.	Due diligence, academic independence, conditions and net contribution must be clear. Prospective donations do not support guaranteed core expenditure.

5.4 Avoid mission drift and false diversification

Prioritise a manageable funding pipeline rather than maximising the number of applications. Record the original funding source as well as the recipient: a national grant transferred through a university to the AISBL is one source, not two. Additional project income may increase activity without improving the security of the common core. Assess the recurrent obligations created after the funding ends.

Commercialisation and a possible consultancy appear in the strategy as development lines. D1.4 treats them as subject to feasibility and approval, not as established revenue streams or an instruction to constitute a new company. [2, actions 1.3.1.4, 3.2.2.2–3.2.2.3]

5. Financial management and decision rules

5.5 Rolling forecasts and the commitment boundary

Prepare a rolling three-year resource forecast, with a separate monthly cash forecast for at least the next twelve months for the AISBL and any other organisation carrying a critical shared obligation. Consolidate the management picture quarterly. Show committed resources separately from submitted proposals, identified opportunities and other assumptions; use no probability-weighted pipeline to demonstrate that an unavoidable payment is covered.

For each service and period, show the full delivery cost, confirmed cash support, confirmed in-kind capacity, unfunded cash requirement and remaining capacity gap. Include the contractual notice periods and the dates by which a continuation decision is necessary. The relevant finance authority validates the forecast for its own organisation.

5.6 Transparent allocation and contribution principles

The preferred approach is a clearly explained common-core contribution arrangement, alongside activity-specific funding accepted by participating institutions. Compare equal, capacity-related and mixed options before proposing a formula. Any variable allocation should be connected to transparent purposes or service demand and assessed for its effect on smaller or less-resourced partners. Additional financial support must not be assumed to confer additional governance rights. [4, sections 3.2 and 4.3]

Recognise in-kind contributions consistently and do not charge a university twice for an agreed hosted service. Do not count unapproved future staff time as secured delivery capacity. Common funding must not imply that a non-participating institution finances every optional activity or that participating institutions can leave accepted liabilities without agreement.

5.7 Proposed indicators and stress tests

Measure or test	Definition / decision use
12-month core cash coverage	Confirmed cash funding assignable to the agreed core over the next twelve months ÷ forecast core cash costs for the same period. Report in-kind capacity separately.
Available liquidity and cash low point	Cash legally usable for the relevant obligations, with confirmed receipts and dated outflows. Identify the first forecast negative balance; do not net inaccessible funds across institutions.
Income concentration	Largest original source family ÷ total cash funding in the same defined perimeter and period. Explain reliance on the underlying programme, not only the paying organisation.
Stress tests (illustrative planning assumptions)	Recalculate a six-month payment delay, a 20% reduction in the main grant-supported envelope and no successor award. These are tests, not forecasts or negotiated cuts.

A reserve or bridging arrangement may be proposed once its permitted funding source, size, holder, release authority and replenishment conditions are documented. This deliverable does not prescribe a funded reserve or authorise borrowing. Proposal-development support must have its own valid funding basis: D1.6 records that specific external proposal-preparation support was removed from the relevant Plus tasks in the 2026 amendment. [4, section 4.4]

6. Sustainable delivery across all missions

6.1 Consolidate provision before expanding it

The strategy prioritises reviewing current and past academic offerings, scaling proven formats and improving recognition and the student journey. The continuation decision should therefore be made at programme or offer level, with academic leadership and students, rather than inferred from the existence of a work package. [2, actions 2.1.1.1–2.1.1.6 and 2.1.2.1–2.1.2.3]

For the Joint Master Programme in Marine Biotechnology and other continuing joint provision, distinguish protection of already admitted cohorts from approval of a new intake. The cohort-level plan should identify teaching and assessment, mobility, student support, quality-assurance validity, recognition and certification, and the institution responsible at each stage. An Alliance-level communication function cannot replace academic responsibility.

Portfolio decision	Evidence required before approval
Continue and embed	Documented demand and educational value; academic owner; recognised learning route; delivery and support resources; inclusion and quality findings.
Improve or redesign	A specific problem and an achievable improvement plan, with participant input, funding, ownership and a review date.
Scale to more learners or partners	Demonstrated capacity to support the larger cohort; local approvals; recognition routes; accessible provision; sustainable marginal and recurrent costs.
Pause new recruitment	A clear reason, accurate public information and a separate plan protecting learners already admitted or holding accepted commitments.
Transfer or discontinue	Approval by the responsible institutions; lawful and academically valid completion arrangements; participant communication; records and rights retained.

Recognition and shared provision

Record which institutions recognise each minor, micro-credential or other shared offer, under what conditions and within which curricula. Do not treat a common label, online listing or digital credential as proof of automatic academic recognition. The strategy's proposed joint recognition statement needs translation into usable local procedures and accurate learner information. [2, action 2.1.1.3; 3, sections 3 and 5]

Teaching capacity and lifelong learning

Embed repeat delivery in ordinary teaching allocations, course catalogues and support services wherever possible. Retain the Teaching Academy's materials, trainer capacity and local interfaces, rather than relying only on centrally organised events. Continuing education requires a demand and cost model; a low-margin or socially valuable offer may still be justified through explicit support, but not by assuming that fee income will sustain the wider Alliance. [2, actions 2.2.1.1–2.2.1.5 and 2.1.1.6]

> No new cohort should be approved solely on the expectation of a future grant. Where an offer spans a funding boundary, its completion and support arrangements should be agreed before recruitment.

6. Research, innovation and societal engagement

6.2 Challenge-aligned research cooperation

The strategy connects research networks, early-career development, shared expertise and knowledge transfer with EU-CONEXUS challenges. It calls for review of the Joint Research Institute model, the Project Development Support Office and the research information platform. These are directions for consolidation; D1.4 does not assume that every proposed service or organisational form is already implemented. [2, actions 3.1.1.1–3.3.2.2]

Sustain the cooperation infrastructure—expertise mapping, matchmaking, access information, common training and agreed support—separately from the financing of research itself. A challenge-related research project remains subject to its own scientific leadership, ethics, funding and host responsibilities. The educational contribution of research-informed teaching and doctoral skills training must not be conflated with paying for research activity under an unrelated grant.

For seed funding, record the purpose, eligible participants, selection process, outputs, follow-on responsibilities and evaluation. Continued support should consider collaboration quality, researcher development and societal usefulness as well as follow-on funding. Unsuccessful applications can still generate learning, but the cost of preparing them requires an appropriate source and cannot be retrospectively reassigned to an ineligible activity. [4, section 4.4]

Research assets and talent

For shared facilities, clarify whether EU-CONEXUS coordinates access, purchases a service or participates in investment. Identify the owner, operator, access conditions, maintenance funding and liability arrangements. The existence of the AISBL does not establish ownership of facilities or intellectual property. Joint doctoral and cotutelle activity should preserve supervisory responsibility and institutional recognition when a supervisor, partner or funding stream changes. [4, sections 4.7–4.8; 2, actions 3.3.1.1–3.3.1.2]

Co-creation with coastal ecosystems

Prioritise a limited portfolio of collaborations that connect education, research and societal needs. Ports, municipalities, enterprises, schools and civil-society organisations should have a defined role in identifying the problem and assessing the usefulness of the result. Each collaboration needs an academic or service owner and an external contact, an agreed contribution, a usable output and a continuation or handover point. [2, actions 5.2.2.1–5.2.2.4]

For example, a partner-defined coastal adaptation challenge could connect a short educational module, researcher collaboration and a public-facing evidence brief. This is an illustrative design, not a reported EU-CONEXUS result. Participation should follow relevant expertise rather than require all nine universities in every action.

Policy engagement and transferability

Use the regulatory-barrier map and existing national and European channels to distinguish internally solvable obstacles from those requiring public action. Share practical methods and evidence with other institutions, including those outside alliances. Public-value reporting should show what changed for a partner or community and what can be reused, not simply count events or agreements. [2, actions 5.2.1.1–5.2.1.4; 5, pp. 3–9]

6. People, belonging and responsible operations

6.3 Stable capacity and succession

For each essential role, record the employer or hosting institution, reporting line, funded time allocation, contract horizon, alternate and handover requirements. Distinguish a common management role from direct employment by the AISBL. The staffing development described in D1.6 remains a function-by-function decision, not an automatic transfer of every coordination post. [4, sections 3.3 and 4.7]

Avoid depending on unrecognised work performed alongside unrelated duties. Participating universities should connect accepted Alliance tasks with workload planning and professional development. A staffing option should be assessed on total cost, supervision, continuity, working location and the necessary specialist advice, rather than on apparent payroll simplicity. [2, actions 4.3.1.1–4.3.1.5]

Maintain induction material, a decision history, open-obligation lists and a secure contact directory. Overlap or a structured handover should be planned before a critical contract ends. Where overlap is not possible, identify the accountable receiving colleague and test access to records and systems before departure.

Student participation and inclusive belonging

Student Board and ambassador participation should be supported through accessible information, induction, realistic time expectations and the applicable recognition or incentive arrangements. Annual turnover makes transfer of contacts, decisions and active initiatives particularly important. Student-led activity requires proportionate support and reporting, not reliance on a single volunteer's memory. [2, actions 4.2.2.1–4.2.2.7]

Review participation by institution and relevant learner or staff groups using appropriate, privacy-respecting data. Offer physical, blended and virtual opportunities according to educational purpose and access needs. Do not count every online interaction as equivalent to mobility or count repeat participation as additional unique people. For continuity decisions, consider who would be excluded by changes in fees, travel support, language provision, accessibility or digital requirements.

Environmental responsibility

Smart Urban Coastal Sustainability should also inform how the Alliance operates. Retain and use the validated outputs of relevant environmental and campus work; assess travel and event formats, procurement, digital-resource use and material reuse in relation to their purpose. Where campus-level monitoring already exists, build on it rather than impose a second Alliance-wide system. [2, mission and thematic focus; 3, sections 4–5]

Agree the scope and method before reporting environmental performance. Distinguish the footprint of Alliance-funded activity from the whole university estate. Do not infer net-zero performance, certification or quantified savings from the existence of a sustainability-themed strategy. Accessibility, geographic constraints and the value of in-person cooperation should be weighed alongside environmental impacts.

> Organisational continuity is not achieved by maintaining every activity at the expense of staff capacity. Sustainable implementation requires prioritisation, recognised work and supported participation.

7. Digital services, assets and institutional memory

The strategy prioritises digitalisation and improved research collaboration tools. D1.6 also highlights the need to distinguish contracting, ownership, user access and data responsibilities. The continuation plan should therefore identify the service behind each platform or output, not merely retain a web address. [2, actions 1.3.3.2 and 3.2.1.3; 4, section 4.8]

7.1 The minimum asset and service record

Asset or dependency	Information to retain
Platforms, catalogues and shared repositories	Accountable service owner; hosting and support organisation; users; contract period; operating and renewal costs; export and restoration route.
Identity, access and participant records	Authorised administrators and alternates; access continuity on staff departure; data responsibilities; retention rules; secure reconciliation of emergency records.
Educational materials and methods	Academic owner; version; rights to use, adapt and share; accessible formats; update responsibility; receiving local service.
Research outputs and expertise information	Owner or steward; consent and access conditions where relevant; update frequency; repository location; agreed reuse and preservation arrangements.
Contracts, domains, licences and external services	Contracting entity; permitted users; rights and service scope; renewal and notice dates; provider dependency; exit and handover provisions.
Governance and project knowledge	Approved decisions, delegated powers, rationale for choices, evidence records, outstanding obligations and the person receiving each handover.

7.2 Interoperability and realistic alternatives

Prefer maintainable interfaces and reuse of institutional systems where they meet the need. Assess the full cost of a new common platform, including support, identity management, accessibility, updates and exit. A vendor's ability to host a system does not ensure that universities have rights to use all content or that information can be transferred safely.

Define an operational alternative for each essential process. Examples include an authorised institutional helpdesk, a protected export of the current catalogue, or an agreed temporary process for urgent participant support. These are contingency options to be designed and tested; they are not a recommendation to bypass security or circulate personal records through informal channels.

7.3 Preserve value after project completion

Allocate a destination to every significant Plus output: maintained operational service; incorporated institutional practice; reusable published resource; restricted archive; or documented closure. Retention of a final report alone is not sufficient for a tool that needs updates. Conversely, a completed time-limited pilot need not be kept operational indefinitely if its learning and usable outputs have been preserved.

The sensitive IT ecosystem documentation and detailed security arrangements should inform the internal schedule without being annexed to this public report. Publish service descriptions, access routes and reusable outputs where appropriate, but retain credentials, incident contacts, vulnerabilities and confidential contractual details in controlled records. Align the arrangements with the responsible institutions' information-security and data-protection procedures.

8. Continuity priorities and essential services

The recommended classification below is a starting point for a business-impact assessment. It is not a tested recovery commitment. Service owners must validate dependencies, maximum tolerable disruption, recovery objectives and necessary resources. The importance of a function rises where an individual deadline, safety concern or accepted obligation would be affected.

Priority / service	What must be protected	Proposed continuity approach
P1: Participant welfare and time-critical support	Urgent safety, accessibility, mobility and learner support; clear referrals and information.	Use existing institutional emergency and welfare procedures immediately. Maintain an alternative Alliance contact route.
P1: Active cohorts and academic deadlines	Teaching, assessment, recognised progress, certification and records for existing learners.	Responsible institutions activate agreed alternative delivery or completion arrangements; pause new recruitment if necessary.
P1: Legally due payments and commitments	Payroll, due contractual payments and time-bound grant or statutory obligations.	Use authorised financial and legal procedures; escalate a forecast inability to pay before the due date.
P1: Essential access and records	Availability and integrity of the information needed for current participants and obligations.	Institutional IT response, secured backups and authorised workarounds; confirm data integrity before normal operation resumes.
P2: Core coordination and essential communication	Decision-making, current contact details, partner coordination and accurate service-status information.	Use delegated alternates and existing meeting channels; maintain a documented decision trail.
P2: Ongoing research and stakeholder commitments	Agreed access, supervision, project duties and partner handovers.	Project and host institutions maintain their responsibilities; reassign support functions only through accepted arrangements.
P3: Discretionary development	New calls, pilots, optional events, platform upgrades and expansion not yet committed.	Defer or reduce before compromising protected obligations; preserve reusable work and document the restart conditions.

8.1 Scope of minimum continuity

Minimum continuity means a funded and staffed package capable of maintaining priority obligations and essential cooperation for a defined period. It is not an indefinite promise to maintain every service. A reduced-operation decision must identify what continues, what changes, who bears the cost and when the position will be reviewed.

> No service may be treated as safely transferable until the receiving organisation has accepted the responsibility, the relevant resources and rights are available, and participants have been informed where their arrangements change.

Detailed recovery targets, technical dependencies and named incident contacts belong in the controlled operational schedule. They should be validated and tested before being represented publicly as service guarantees.

8. Funding and operational scenarios

Scenario and signal	Proposed response	Decision and safeguard
A. Planned transition proceeds	Transfer accepted outputs and obligations to the confirmed next-phase arrangements; retain only the agreed portfolio and prepare later continuation decisions.	Verify operative agreements and resource availability. A successful transition does not settle post-2028 funding.
B. Signature or payment is delayed	Use a time-limited reduced-operation plan and any expressly approved bridging resources; defer uncommitted activity.	Receiving or employing bodies approve their own obligations. No automatic use of another partner's cash or restricted funds.
C. Funding or capacity is lower than planned	Re-cost the portfolio; protect priority obligations; adapt participation, delivery format and scope; seek agreed alternative support.	Compare options on quality, inclusion and full cost, not uniform percentage cuts across all activities.
D. No successor award after 2028	Maintain the approved core and viable institutional or separately funded cooperation; stop unfinanced expansion; activate programme completion arrangements.	Decide early whether a smaller Alliance operating model is viable. No presumption that competitive grants will replace the lost support.
E. A partner, critical colleague or service provider withdraws	Activate alternates; negotiate an accepted handover or replacement; review access, rights, costs and affected commitments.	Apply governing agreements, employment and contract provisions. Grant-related changes go through the competent process.
F. Even the protected minimum cannot be financed	Escalate an orderly reduction or closure plan for the affected activity or entity, with legal, financial and academic advice.	Protect participants, staff rights, records and creditor obligations. Closure of an entity or project does not automatically terminate every inter-university cooperation.

8.2 Proposed early-warning rules for validation

An amber review is triggered when the forecast cannot demonstrate coverage of agreed core obligations over the following six months, when renewal of a critical role or service is unresolved at its decision date, or when a material resource assumption changes. The Executive Director coordinates an options paper with the responsible finance and service functions.

A red escalation is triggered by a forecast inability to meet a due obligation within the next three months, loss of a critical service without an adequate alternative, or a serious threat to participant rights, safety or records. The responsible authority acts under existing powers; the Alliance's competent bodies consider the operational consequences without waiting for the annual review.

The six- and three-month periods are proposed management thresholds, not existing EU-CONEXUS policy or legal deadlines. Any shorter statutory, contractual, academic or safety deadline takes precedence. The governing bodies must validate thresholds against actual notice periods and cash-flow patterns.

8. Response, recovery and participant protection

8.3 A proportionate response protocol

Identify and assess. The service owner records the event, affected users, expected duration, deadlines and dependencies. Urgent safety, cyber, legal or financial matters are referred immediately through the relevant institutional procedures. The Executive Director is informed of cross-Alliance implications; this does not replace the responsible authority's own duties.

Coordinate. The Executive Director brings together the relevant existing functions and institutional contacts. Identify one operational response lead and alternates, a decision log and the body competent for each approval. Convening colleagues for an incident does not establish a new standing governance body or transfer powers.

Decide and communicate. Prepare options with cost, duration, participant effects and risks. Communicate verified information through official channels, distinguishing interruption, temporary alternative, recovery and any lasting change. Provide a next update point even where the recovery date is uncertain. Funding bodies and other parties are informed when the governing agreements require it.

Restore or transition. Confirm that the receiving or restored service works, authorised access is correct, records are reconciled and participants can use the arrangement. Close outstanding payments and academic decisions through the competent institutions. Resume expansion only after the relevant conditions have been met.

Review and improve. Record the cause, response, service effects, costs and lessons. Allocate follow-up actions and verify that they address the problem. Preserve the evidence without unnecessarily exposing personal or commercially sensitive information.

8.4 Learner completion and fair treatment

Where educational provision is interrupted or discontinued, the academically responsible institutions should agree a cohort-level completion plan. It should address teaching and supervision, assessment and reassessment, access to resources, mobility already committed, recognition, certification, fees or support arrangements where relevant, and complaints or appeals. Transfers are not presumed acceptable or academically equivalent without the necessary approvals and learner involvement.

Communicate separately to current participants and prospective applicants. Correct catalogues and recruitment material promptly. Preserve access to the records needed to demonstrate learning after a platform, project or host changes. Students should have a clear institutional contact rather than being referred indefinitely between partners.

8.5 Testing and orderly closure

Run at least one annual tabletop exercise after the continuity arrangements are approved, alternating funding-gap, critical-person and digital-service scenarios. Test the handover and communication route, not only whether a document exists. Technical restoration exercises remain with the responsible IT services. Record limitations and changes to recovery objectives.

If closure is necessary, agree the authority, scope, costs, participant protection, employment and contract actions, asset destination, records custodian and final communication. Distinguish closure of a project-funded service from withdrawal of a university or dissolution of the AISBL; each follows its own competent process. No unfunded residual duty should be left without an identified responsible organisation.

9. Implementation roadmap: the 2026 handover

The roadmap operationalises the strategy rather than creating new EU-CONEXUS Plus deliverables. Dates are proposed management milestones for validation. Where approval occurs later, responsibilities and timing must be re-baselined, prioritising any existing contractual or participant deadline. “Lead” denotes coordination, not automatic authority to bind another body.

Action / proposed timing	Coordinating lead and work required	Evidence / decision gate
R1. Confirm scope and responsibility **By the final M48 issue**	Executive Director with the Management Board, councils and competent statutory bodies: validate the common-core scope and decision map.	Endorsed service perimeter; named institutional owners and alternates; list of approvals still required.
R2. Capture outputs and obligations **Before 31 October 2026**	Current work-package and service leads with receiving owners: record each significant output, contract, cohort, funding restriction and continuing duty.	Handover register with an accepted destination; no unassigned priority obligation.
R3. Confirm transition readiness **Before any next-phase commitment**	Coordinator and responsible finance/HR/IT functions: check operative funding, role continuity, contracts, access and hosting.	Readiness decision distinguishing confirmed arrangements from gaps and an approved fallback where required.
R4. Initiate the financial baseline **By December 2026**	Finance functions and institutional coordinators: cost the agreed core and retained activities; separate cash, staff-time and restricted sources.	Initial common-core cost schedule; contribution status; forecast gaps; clear ownership of the full forecast.
R5. Align quality and public information **At adoption and publication**	Executive Director and Joint Communication Unit: reconcile D1.4 with approved D1.3/D1.6 outcomes and the website.	Version-controlled deliverable, intact strategy annex, accurate contact and review information; controlled internal schedules retained separately.

Critical dependency: a completed handover is accepted, not merely sent

The receiving service or institution should confirm what it is taking on, from which date, with which staff, resources and rights. Outstanding Plus reporting and record-retention obligations remain distinguishable from future operational delivery. Project close-out must not be assumed to transfer responsibilities to LevelUP or to the AISBL.

Initial coordination priorities

Use the remaining period first to protect active provision, critical staff knowledge and services with approaching renewal dates. A fully quantified long-term model may take longer to complete; where a decision cannot wait, document the minimum evidence, limitation, approving authority and review date. The absence of a complete aggregate baseline is not a reason to leave an imminent obligation unmanaged.

Strategic alignment: actions 1.1.1.2, 1.3.1.3, 1.3.2.1–1.3.2.2, 1.3.3.1–1.3.3.2 and 1.4.1.1–1.4.1.4. See also D1.6, section 7, for complementary functional consolidation measures. [2; 4]

9. Implementation roadmap: consolidation in 2027

Action / proposed timing	Coordinating lead and work required	Evidence / decision gate
R6. Approve the resource model First quarter 2027	Finance functions, Management Board and competent institutional/AISBL bodies: validate the three-year forecast and the contribution approach.	Confirmed core commitments, remaining gaps, cash forecast and stress-test results; no new fee assumed without approval.
R7. Review the continuing portfolio First half of 2027	Academic and Research Councils, service leads and institutional coordinators, with students and relevant partners: assess value, cost, capacity and access.	Retain/improve/scale/pause/transfer decisions; learner completion safeguards; receiving owners for reusable outputs.
R8. Test continuity and succession By mid-2027	Executive Director with responsible HR, finance and digital leads: validate the business-impact assessment and run the first tabletop exercise.	Accepted recovery and escalation arrangements; current alternates and handovers; tested actions and improvement record.
R9. Integrate independent evaluation During the agreed 2027 cycle	Executive Director, quality expertise and existing bodies: connect planned EUA-IEP evaluation with strategy, quality and sustainability evidence.	Self-evaluation, independent findings and a documented response; timetable and contractual details validated separately.
R10. Review value and set 2028 priorities Last quarter 2027	Governing Board, supported by the Executive Director and Management Board: consider the consolidated annual review.	Approved priorities, updated resource envelope, institutional change cases and the decision timetable for post-2028 continuity.

9.1 Build one evidence cycle

Use the same service, cost, participation and improvement records for strategic monitoring, quality review and relevant project reporting. Keep project-specific eligibility and deliverable requirements visible, but avoid parallel surveys and incompatible definitions. The Quality Policy's annual review and at-least-biennial self-evaluation provide the proposed common rhythm, subject to adoption. [3, sections 7–10]

The planned EUA Institutional Evaluation Programme engagement should be used as an opportunity for institutional learning, not presented as programme accreditation or as proof that sustainability has been secured. Its final arrangements must follow the agreed timetable, contract and applicable project scope. Its findings should inform decisions while there is still time to change the operating model before the next transition.

9.2 Funding acquisition is a separate managed activity

The funding pipeline should identify accountable proposal leads, prospective partners, capacity needs and permissible preparation resources. Decisions on a successor application follow the published call and competent institutional approvals; this roadmap does not assume a confirmed 2028 deadline or award. Preparation should be early enough to support a credible continuation choice even if the eventual funding calendar changes.

Strategic alignment: actions 1.3.1.1–1.3.1.6, 2.1.1.1–2.1.2.3, 3.2.1.1–3.2.1.4 and 4.3.1.1–4.3.1.2. Planned LevelUP monitoring and learning outputs should be mapped to this cycle using the operative agreement. [2–3; 8]

9. Implementation roadmap: 2028–2030

Action / proposed timing	Coordinating lead and work required	Evidence / decision gate
R11. Agree the post-2028 options **First half of 2028**	Governing Board and competent institutional/AISBL bodies, supported by finance and service leads: compare full, reduced and minimum-core scenarios.	Costed options, accepted institutional commitments and protected obligations; dependence on any pending award explicit.
R12. Update the handover and response plan **At least six months before the confirmed funding end**	Executive Director and service owners: revisit contract/role horizons, cohort commitments, systems, rights and alternatives.	A time-bound continuity plan for each priority service and an escalation decision for every uncovered obligation.
R13. Decide the next operating envelope **Before unavoidable commitments arise**	Competent bodies: decide continuation, adaptation or discontinuation against confirmed funding and capacity; update public offers.	Signed or otherwise valid funding and hosting decisions; learner protection; grant changes handled through applicable procedures.
R14. Deepen proven cooperation **2029, subject to resources**	Academic and Research Councils, institutional services and stakeholder owners: expand only demonstrated, sustainable practices.	Evidence of local embedding and cross-partner value; recurrent costs and access conditions verified before scale-up.
R15. Review the strategy and prepare its successor **2029–2030**	Governing Board with the Alliance community and external perspectives: assess results, relevance, participation and the operating model.	2030 strategic review and recommendations for the next framework, including what should change or stop.

9.3 Different horizons require different decisions

The 2030 strategy horizon should not be shortened to the end of a grant. Equally, it cannot itself guarantee expenditure beyond the period covered by approved commitments. Institutions may sustain a programme or service through their own accepted arrangements while other activities remain conditional on external support.

The July 2026 public communication describes LevelUP as a planned 2026–2028 phase following successful evaluation. It does not establish the design or award of a later funding instrument. In the final D1.4 issue, the timeline should reflect the signed next-phase agreement and the most current confirmed end date; the six-month preparation point should be calculated from that date. [7]

> By the post-2028 decision point, the Alliance should be able to answer: which functions remain essential; which institutions will sustain them; which activities have a credible continuation route; and which changes are necessary if external support is not renewed. A pending application is not an answer to those questions.

No action in this roadmap authorises expenditure or changes a contractual deadline. Programme, employment, grant and statutory decisions remain with the competent organisations.

10. Monitoring sustainability

Use the Strategic Plan's indicators wherever adequate, adding only measures needed to judge continuity. The Quality Policy calls for clear definitions, meaningful baselines, qualitative evidence and proportionate collection. The following dashboard is proposed; no unverified baseline or achieved value is assigned. [2, PDF pp. 43–93; 3, section 8]

Indicator / strategic link	Definition and source	Proposed owner / interpretation
S1. Institutional embedding 1.1.1; 1.4.1	Number of members with an explicit strategy link, senior sponsor and current implementation record. Evidence: approved institutional records.	Institutional coordinators / Management Board. Record each component separately; an endorsement alone is not full operational embedding.
S2. Core cash coverage 1.3.1	Confirmed cash assignable to the next twelve months' core ÷ the core cash cost for the same period. Evidence: validated schedules.	Finance leads. Proposed readiness criterion: full coverage of accepted core obligations; report gaps and in-kind capacity separately.
S3. Liquidity exposure 1.3.2	First projected cash shortfall and minimum usable cash balance by responsible entity. Evidence: monthly cash forecast.	Responsible finance authority. No pooling across institutions without a valid arrangement; use the section 8 early-warning rules.
S4. Funding concentration 1.3.1	Share of the largest original source family within a consistently defined cash perimeter. Evidence: reconciled funding register.	Finance leads. Distinguish diversification of activity income from funding available for common-core continuity.
S5. Service continuity readiness 1.3.3	Share of priority services with accepted owner, cost/funding, alternate, fallback and last test or review. Evidence: service register.	Executive Director / service owners. Report missing elements, not only an aggregate completion percentage.
S6. Staff-capacity continuity 4.3.1	Essential functions with confirmed capacity and a succession or handover route across the next transition. Evidence: validated HR/host records.	Employing/hosting institutions. Do not publish individual employment details; identify uncovered functions.

10.1 Baseline and targets

Complete the first baseline during the financial and service review in early 2027, or earlier for urgent obligations. Every indicator needs a reference date, reporting perimeter, definition and named data steward. Initial priorities are full coverage of accepted obligations and no unassigned critical function. Numerical growth or revenue targets should be set only after the baseline, resource envelope and intended benefit are understood.

Where a denominator is zero or the dataset incomplete, report "not applicable" or "not yet available" with an explanation; do not manufacture a percentage. Indicators support judgement and decisions rather than substitute for them.

10. Quality, outcomes and public value

Additional evidence	Definition and use	Proposed owner
S7. Continuity and recognition of provision 2.1.1–2.1.2	Continuing offers with academic ownership, an agreed delivery basis and documented recognition where relevant; active cohorts with completion arrangements.	Academic Council and programme institutions; student services verify the journey.
S8. Reach, participation and inclusion 4.1–4.3	Unique participants and repeat participation by appropriate group/institution; barriers, non-participation and feedback interpreted alongside volumes.	Activity owners, Student Board and institutional services.
S9. Useful research and ecosystem cooperation 3.1–3.3; 5.2	Examples of sustained collaboration, knowledge reuse or partner-validated benefit; follow-on resources distinguished from attributable impact.	Research Council and stakeholder-facing owners.
S10. Institutional adoption and improvement 1.2.1; 1.4.1	Changes embedded in ordinary practice; priority improvements completed and subsequently checked for effectiveness.	Management Board, quality expertise and institutional coordinators.

10.2 One annual quality and sustainability review

The Executive Director should consolidate an annual review for the Management Board and Governing Board, with the Academic and Research Councils, Student Board, responsible finance functions and relevant external perspectives. It should cover the strategy, resource position, service and programme portfolio, risks, inclusion, environmental considerations and the effectiveness of improvements. The review should lead to decisions and an updated work plan, not a second narrative activity report. [3, sections 6–10]

The proposed rhythm is monthly cash and critical-dependency monitoring, quarterly management review, six-monthly learning where required by the operative project, and one annual consolidated decision cycle. A more comprehensive self-evaluation should follow the adopted Quality Policy. External evaluation findings and advice should feed the same improvement record. [3; 8, WP1 monitoring and learning provisions]

10.3 Evidence of transformation

Each university should contribute a small number of concise change cases, drawing on existing records. A useful case explains the initial problem, the Alliance contribution, the institutional change, the evidence of use, the resources required and what remains uncertain. Examples might concern recognition becoming routine, a joint offer entering a faculty's regular provision, or a support process improving across partners; these are examples of evidence to seek, not reported results.

Interpret outcomes in context. More applications are not the same as successful collaboration; greater participation is not automatically equitable participation; satisfaction is not sufficient evidence of learning or societal impact. Record contribution rather than claiming sole causation when several projects, institutions or public policies were involved.

> The annual review should conclude with explicit choices: continue, improve, scale, transfer, pause or discontinue. Publish an accessible synthesis of the main findings and decisions, with confidential operational and personal information excluded.

11. A consolidated sustainability risk register

These risks are derived from the planning dependencies identified in this report. They should be incorporated into the existing risk process, with owners validating likelihood, impact, controls and residual exposure. No numerical score or claim of effective mitigation is assigned without that assessment. [2–4]

Risk / early signal	Preventive control and contingency	Proposed owner
RISK 1. Funding gap or concentration **Core coverage falls; award or payment remains uncertain.**	Separate restricted and usable resources; dated forecasts and stress tests; prioritised reduced-operation plan.	Finance leads; Executive Director; competent budget bodies.
RISK 2. Weak institutional embedding **Repeated unconfirmed contributions or unresolved local decisions.**	Senior sponsor and local implementation record; escalate barriers; adapt differentiated participation while respecting accepted commitments.	Member leadership and Management Board.
RISK 3. Loss of key capacity **Critical role lacks a funded horizon or alternate.**	Recognised workload, succession and timely handover; accepted member-hosted alternative or scoped service reduction.	Employing/hosting institution and service owner.
RISK 4. Portfolio overextension **New offers lack support capacity; recurrent costs rise without coverage.**	Evidence-led entry and review gates; preserve existing cohorts; stop uncommitted expansion before core degradation.	Academic/Research Councils; Management Board.
RISK 5. Digital or information discontinuity **Contract renewal unresolved; export/restoration untested.**	Asset and dependency register; secure backups and authorised alternatives; independent confirmation before transfer.	Responsible IT and data functions.
RISK 6. Academic or recognition failure **Learners encounter inconsistent credit or completion routes.**	Verified local recognition and programme responsibility; cohort-level resolution and appropriate appeals or completion arrangements.	Programme institutions and Academic Council.
RISK 7. Funding, procurement or legal non-compliance **Mandate, eligibility or signature authority unclear.**	Transaction-specific verification; separate project conditions and statutory duties; specialist advice and correction before commitment.	Contracting/employing entities; finance/legal functions.
RISK 8. Loss of trust or unequal access **Partner complaints, persistent participation gaps or inaccurate claims.**	Reciprocal partnership agreements; accessible participation; proportionate feedback; accurate reporting and corrective communication.	Activity owners; Student Board; communication leads.

11.1 Review and escalation

Review the register quarterly and whenever a material change occurs. Record the control actually in place, the next decision date and the body able to accept residual risk. A proposed control is not a completed mitigation. Concerns affecting rights, safety, integrity or time-critical obligations bypass routine review and follow the competent urgent procedure.

11. Operating tools for implementation

11.2 The service and handover record

Field group	Required entry
Identity and strategic fit	Service/output ID and title; related strategic action; intended users; continuing purpose; links to relevant Plus or next-phase obligations.
Accountability and delivery	Academic/service owner; responsible legal organisation; host; local interfaces; alternate; receiving owner's acceptance date.
Resources and authority	Full recurring and transition cost; confirmed cash and in-kind support; funding restrictions; period; competent approval and decision reference.
Dependencies and protection	Staff, platform, contract and rights dependencies; active participants/cohorts; critical dates; records and support arrangements.
Continuity and review	Priority class; fallback; tolerable disruption and validated recovery objective; test/review date; unresolved gap and escalation owner.
Disposition	Continue, improve, scale, transfer, pause or discontinue; effective date; communication; rights and record-retention arrangements.

11.3 Financial schedule: minimum columns

Use one row per responsible organisation, service/activity, resource source and period. Record: full cost; cash cost; in-kind capacity and valuation method; original funder; recipient; permitted use; approval status; cash receipt date; obligations and payment dates; uncovered balance; forecast assumption; responsible validator. Maintain the link to institutional accounts and remove internal transfers in the whole-Alliance analytical view.

11.4 Worked example of a continuity entry

Illustrative service: maintaining information and support for a continuing joint learning offer. Owner: the academically responsible institution, with an identified Alliance interface. Critical dependency: a current catalogue, student records, support capacity and the applicable recognition route. Minimum response: preserve verified information and access to an authorised support contact while the responsible institution activates any alternative process. New recruitment remains separate from the protection of existing learners.

The actual names, costs, permissions, recovery targets and approval references must be completed by the responsible institutions. This example deliberately does not assign ownership or funding to a particular university without its agreement.

> A register is complete only when its entries support action. An unnamed "Alliance owner", a possible funding source or an untested fallback should remain visible as a gap, not be marked as resolved.

12. Adoption, publication and conclusions

Turn the framework into approved, resourced arrangements

12.1 Approval and implementation

The recommended approval route is Governing Board endorsement of D1.4 as the Alliance-wide continuity framework, following consideration by the Management Board and relevant councils and representative bodies. Decisions on association budgets, contributions, employment, contracts or institutional academic commitments require the separately competent authorities. Adoption of this deliverable does not itself impose new fees, transfer staff, authorise a reserve or establish another legal entity.

The Executive Director should coordinate implementation and maintain the public version and controlled operational schedules. The first implementation package should contain the core-service perimeter, decision map, handover register, initial financial baseline and the list of unresolved approval or capacity gaps. The bodies taking the decisions should accept those gaps expressly and assign a date for resolving them.

12.2 Public dissemination and review

Publish the approved deliverable with Annex I on the EU-CONEXUS website, as required by D1.4. State version, evidence cut-off, approval date, coordinating responsibility and planned review date. Make the strategic and operational recommendations understandable to students, staff, institutions and external partners. Keep the service-status and contact information current through the existing communication arrangements. [1]

Update implementation annually and review the plan earlier after a significant funding, governance, service or membership change. Publish an accessible summary of material changes. Operational records containing personal information, sensitive employment details, cash vulnerabilities, security arrangements or confidential contracts are maintained internally and do not become public merely because D1.4 is a public deliverable.

12.3 Overall conclusion

EU-CONEXUS has a shared strategic direction and an organisational basis on which to build continuity. The next task is not to preserve every project activity indefinitely, but to make durable choices about cooperation that creates value: embed it in institutions, assign responsibility, identify its full resource requirement, assure quality and protect participants when circumstances change. [2–4]

The comparison with other alliances reinforces a practical approach: separate core and activity funding, connect shared goals to local institutional decisions, make outputs usable, and assess legal and organisational instruments by the services they support. The recommended model combines a reliable common core with differentiated, mission-led activities. It allows ambition to continue beyond a particular grant without treating unconfirmed future income as security.

> Sustainability will be demonstrated when the Alliance can show not only what it intends to do, but which institutions and services will carry it forward, with which accepted resources, how the benefits will be reviewed and what will happen if the original plan can no longer be delivered.

References and source notes

Alliance documents and planning evidence

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[9] Klaipėda University (14 July 2026) and South East Technological University (13 July 2026). Institutional endorsements of the EU-CONEXUS Joint Mission Statement and Strategic Plan 2026–2030, for proposal 101330940. Signed institutional records retrieved from the document archive. These records establish the stated endorsements, not the status of every member's separate internal approvals.

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Source handling and limitations

Public sources are used for the specific practices described, not to rank alliances or independently certify their performance. References [3], [4], [6] and [8] include draft or internal material; those statuses are retained in the analysis. The financial architecture, continuity controls, roadmap and operating templates are recommendations developed for this plan. No unverified current account balance, contribution amount, staffing transfer or post-2028 funding award is asserted.

The public release should cite the final adopted versions of related EU-CONEXUS documents when available, confirm the operative next-phase arrangements and clear the use of internal strategic insights. Source-page dates do not substitute for confirmation of a current legal or financial obligation.

Annex I

EU-CONEXUS Strategic Plan 2026–2030

Full reproduction of the supplied strategy

This annex reproduces the complete 94-page Strategic Plan supplied as Conexus-strategy-plan-2026-02-17.pdf. Its wording, tables, priorities, indicators and original pagination are retained. Institutional endorsements identify the Governing Board's adoption of the strategy in December 2025. [2; 9]

The recommendations in D1.4 are complementary implementation proposals. They do not amend the strategy, silently reconcile its provisions or convert its non-legally-binding framework into a contractual obligation. Where an operational decision requires further specification, that decision must be taken through the competent existing bodies.

Navigation within the original strategy	Original PDF pages
Mission, thematic focus and general principles	1–7
Overview of main action lines	8–16
Approved strategic axes	19
Strategic objectives	21–40
Detailed action lines, responsibilities and indicators	43–93
Member institutions and funding acknowledgement	94

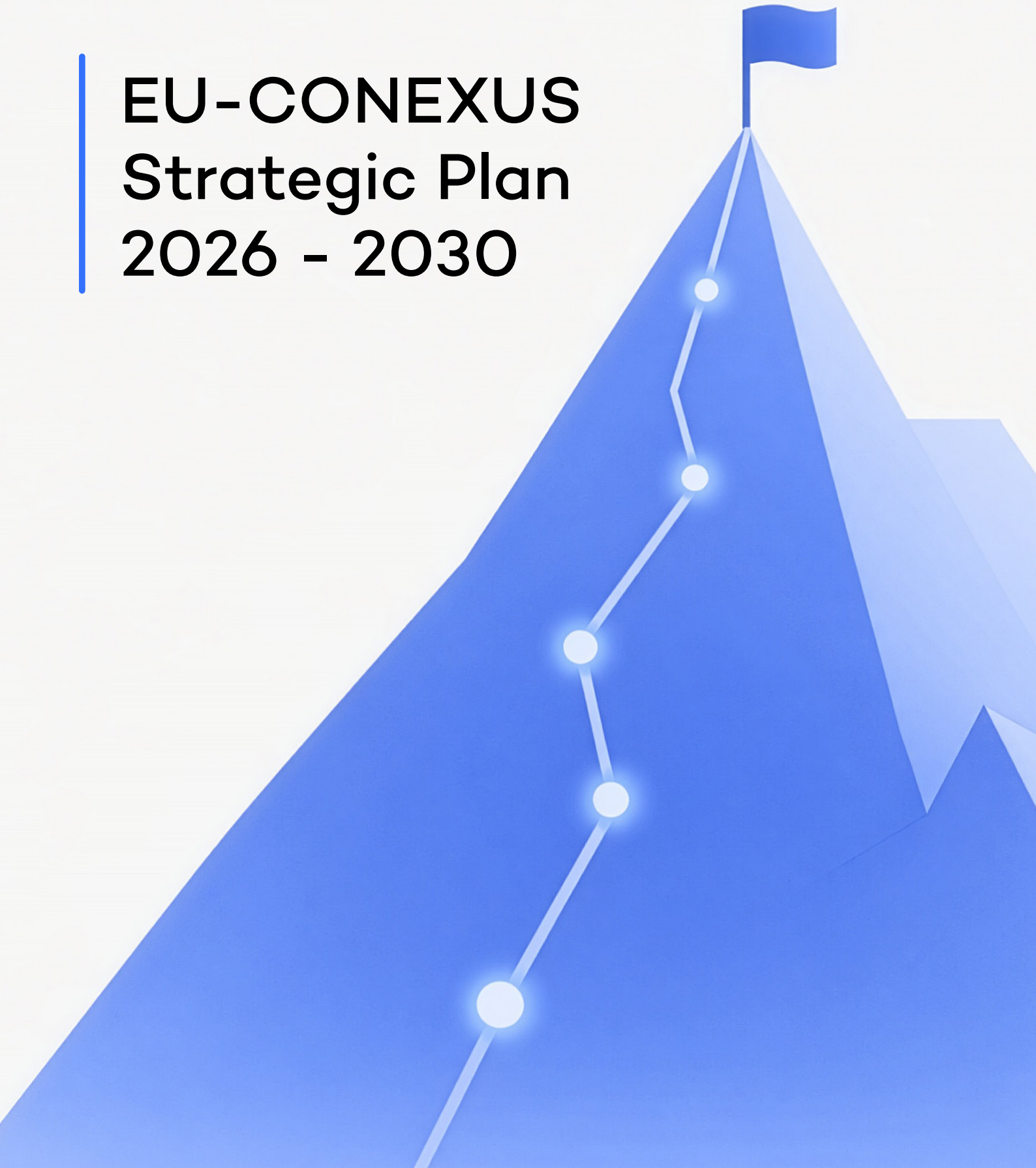
Edition and reproduction note

The attached PDF preserves the original strategy as searchable PDF pages. In the Word version the same pages are included as high-resolution facsimiles, so the report body remains editable without reformatting the strategy. The strategy's printed page numbers differ from its PDF page sequence; references in D1.4 use PDF page numbers.

EU CONEXUS

Co-funded by the European Union

EU-CONEXUS Strategic Plan 2026 - 2030



9 Universities are building together a European University for Smart Coastal Sustainability

9
Partner Universities

4
Core pillars: Education, Research, Innovation, Society

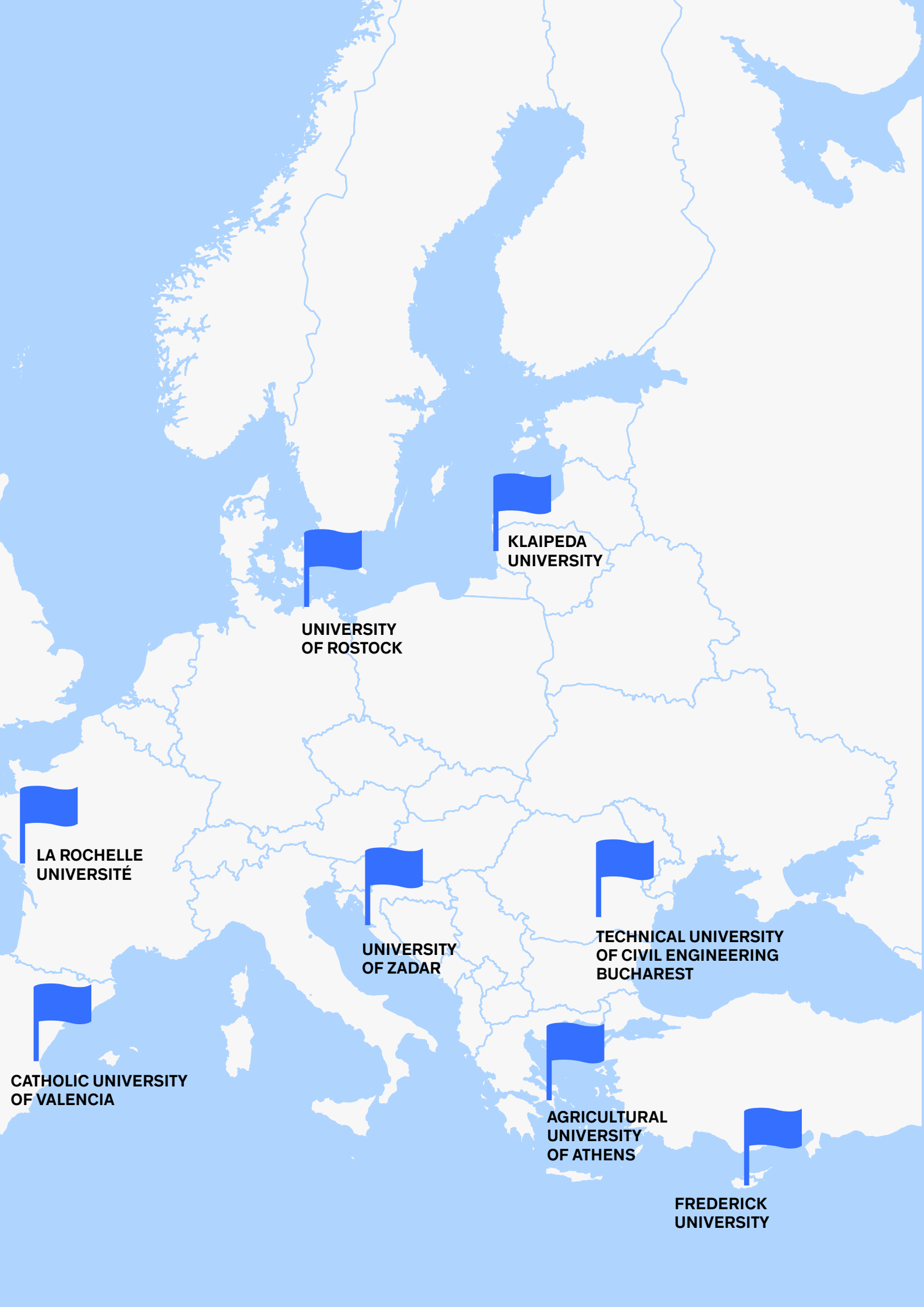
70k
Students

8k
Staff
(teachers, researchers, administrative)

900
Academic Programmes

218
Research Institutes




KLAIPEDA
UNIVERSITY
UNIVERSITY
OF ROSTOCK
LA ROCHELLE
UNIVERSITÉ
UNIVERSITY
OF ZADAR
TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY
OF CIVIL ENGINEERING
BUCHAREST
CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY
OF VALENCIA
AGRICULTURAL
UNIVERSITY
OF ATHENS
FREDERICK
UNIVERSITY

A Unique Thematic Focus on a Global Societal Challenge

EU CONEXUS

The Alliance is uniquely positioned around Smart Urban Coastal Sustainability, which concentrates all university missions on finding solutions to global societal challenges faced by urbanized and semi-urbanized coastal areas. This thematic focus creates a unique competitive advantage to assemble and build on an expertise from all its partners and regional ecosystems, through inter- and transdisciplinary based approaches.

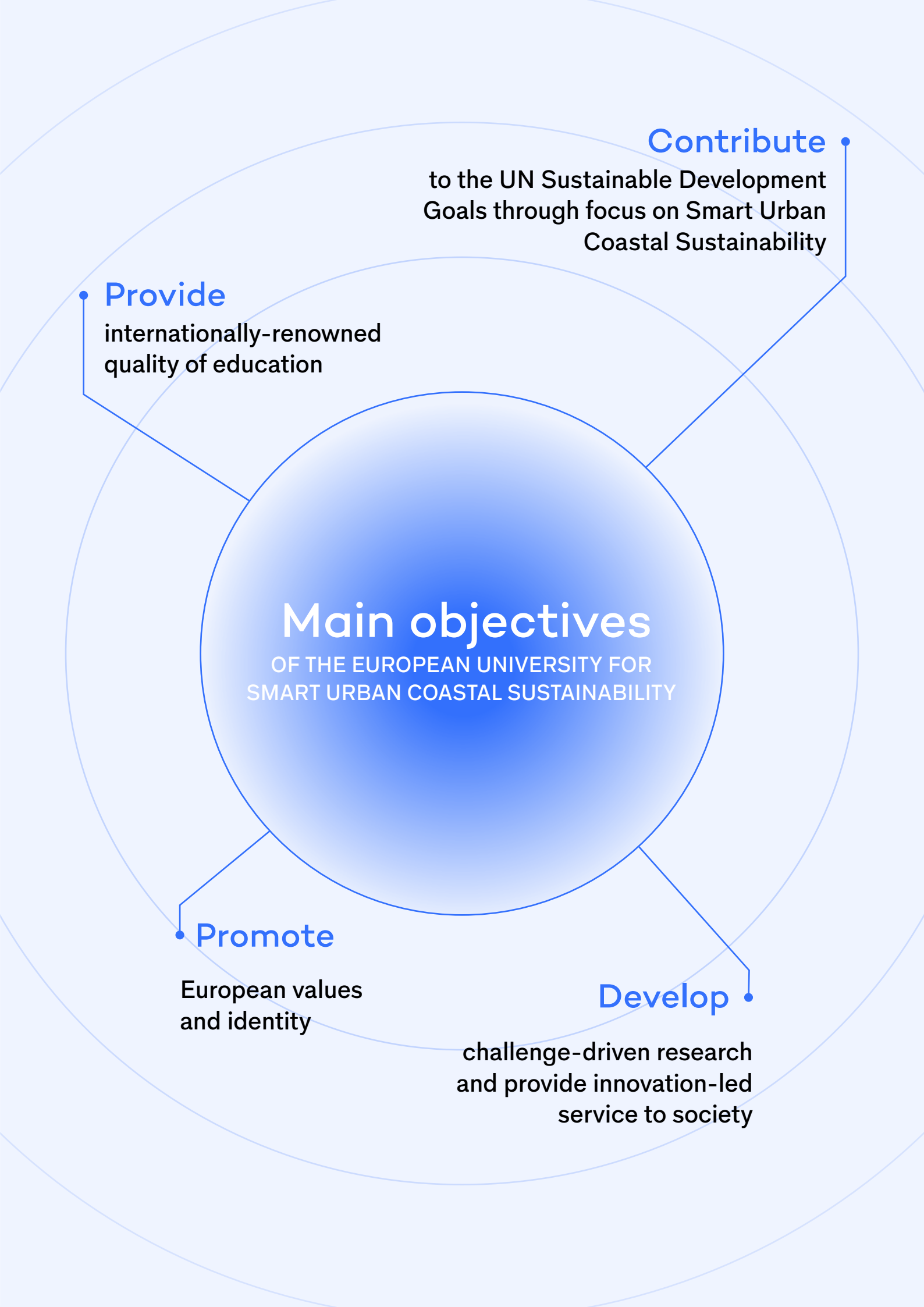
These societal challenges are **global in scope**, since

60%

of the global population lives within **100km** of the coast.

The “land-sea” interface is the first area threatened by the climate transition and the rise of the oceans.




Contribute
to the UN Sustainable Development Goals through focus on Smart Urban Coastal Sustainability
Provide
internationally-renowned quality of education
Main objectives
OF THE EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY FOR SMART URBAN COASTAL SUSTAINABILITY
Promote
European values and identity
Develop
challenge-driven research and provide innovation-led service to society

Joint Vision and Mission

EU-CONEXUS promotes common European values and a strengthened European identity by bringing together a new generation of Europeans, who can cooperate and work within different European cultures, in different languages and across borders, sectors and academic disciplines. EU-CONEXUS is committed to creating a new institutional framework for higher education in Europe that allows for a truly European way of studying and carrying out research through institutional alignment and seamless mobility for all.

An Integrated Transnational Higher Education and Research Institution

The European University for Smart Urban Coastal Sustainability is an integrated transnational higher education and research institution.

The EU-CONEXUS inter-university campus is located in nine European countries as an inclusive and comprehensive university model covering all university missions. EU-CONEXUS aspires to create a comprehensive legal framework for a structured long-term partnership based on integrated strategic and operational institutional structures.

Perfectly distributed across Europe, the campus covers all European coasts. Students, teachers, researchers, and staff are studying, teaching, conducting their research activities, innovating and working on a European scale.

On the basis of these complementary partner profiles, the Alliance is exceptionally well positioned to create a thematically specialised European university with distributed excellence in education and research on Smart Urban Coastal Sustainability (SmUCS).

A Unique Thematic Focus on a Global Societal Challenge: Smart Urban Coastal Sustainability

SmUCS is a unique thematic focus that concentrates all university missions on finding solutions to global societal challenges faced by urbanised and semi-urbanised coastal areas.

This societal challenge is global in scope, since 60% of the global population lives within 100km of the coast, and the "land-sea" interface is the first area threatened by the climate transition and the rise of the oceans.

The thematic focus creates a unique competitive advantage for EU-CONEXUS which is well positioned to assemble and build on thematic expertise from all its partners and regional ecosystems, through inter- and transdisciplinary based approaches. With this focused expertise EU-CONEXUS contributes to the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs), and to integrated holistic coastal zone management.

An Internationally Renowned Quality of Education

EU-CONEXUS provides inter-, trans- and cross-disciplinary research-informed and problem based education on SmUCS themes. High quality education relies on innovative pedagogies, student-centred and flexible learning pathways with simplified access for a diverse learner community, industry informed and open course programmes, multilingual and multicultural learning and the use of innovative technologies. Transdisciplinary training programmes foster intellectual plasticity of students and prepare them to solve societal challenges in an open-minded way. A recognition of the critical significance of Green and Digital skills is reflected in the integration of these domains across the complete study cycle within the university.

Challenge-Driven Excellent Research on SmUCS Themes

On the basis of its shared research infrastructures EU-CONEXUS provides complementary high-quality research and expertise on SmUCS across Europe. By leveraging the expertise of its about 5000 teaching and research staff on its specialization on SmUCS on a global scale following holistic and interdisciplinary approaches, EU-CONEXUS creates a concentrated scientific potential on SmUCS which is unprecedented at the international level and allows the Alliance to become a world-class player.

An Innovation-Led Service To Society

EU-CONEXUS develops its research and education in close connection with local and regional ecosystems, informs public policies and contributes to regional socio-economic development. The socio-economic similarities (port economy, tourism, aquaculture, naval and maritime industry, etc.) of the territories where EU-CONEXUS partners are located creates favourable conditions for concentrated innovation, with a European scope, for the sustainable economic development of coastal territories. It provides innovative services and solutions to public and private actors in the field of SmUCS through professionalising training, education and research.

EU-CONEXUS makes society at large better aware of SmUCS related societal challenges. More particularly, EU-CONEXUS has a clear ambition to act as role-model and contribute to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) and the green transition. By developing a "Green Campus" Action Plan and committing to implement its recommendations, the Alliance aims to become an exemplar in reducing the carbon footprint of all its activities.

Joint Values

1 As a European higher education and research institution ACADEMIC FREEDOM is a principle value to be upheld throughout all our activities.

2 RESPONSIVENESS (having impact) to societal challenges is the starting point for the design of all university missions.

3 The promotion of DIVERSITY, INCLUSIVENESS, GENDER EQUALITY and NON-DISCRIMINATION of any kind is a basic principle of our organizational behaviour

4 We adhere to the principle of SUSTAINABILITY and align with the United Nations SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS.

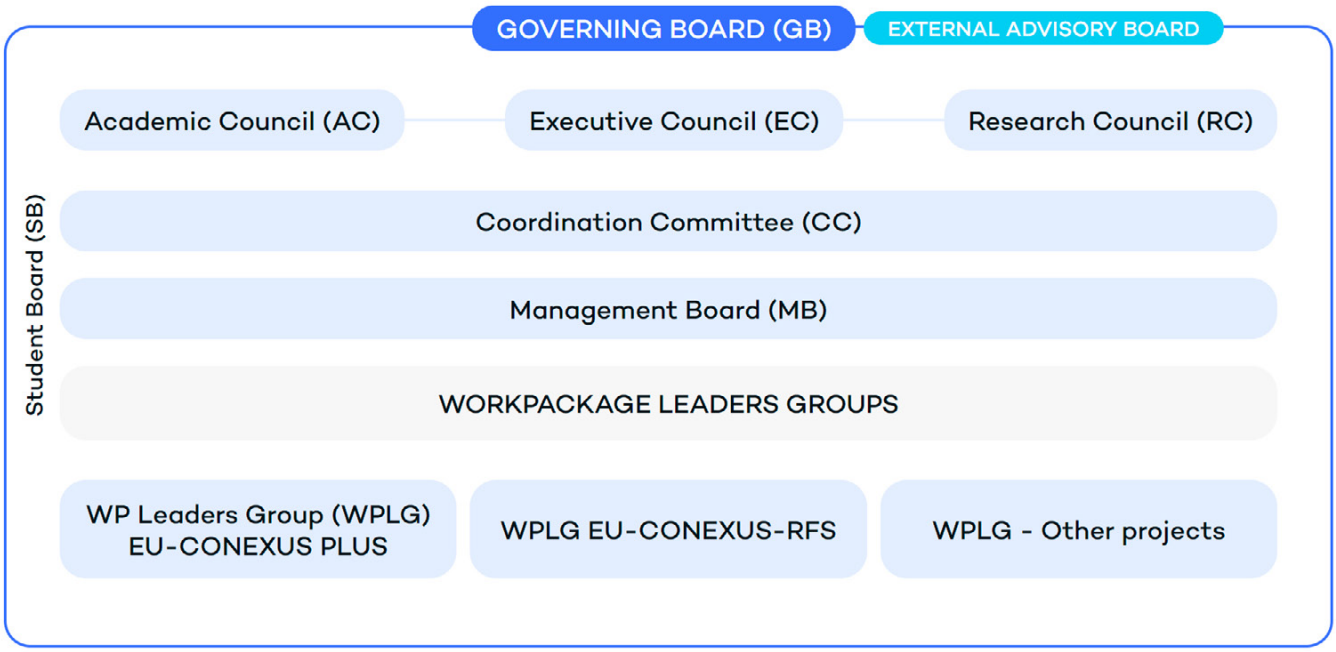
5 The principal values guiding our partnership relations are COOPERATION, COMPLEMENTARITY and SUBSIDIARITY.

6 We adhere to a concept and quality of education which has the objective to create RESPONSIBLE CITIZENS in professional and individual terms.

7 TRANSPARENCY of decision-making and openness for ASSESSMENT and EVALUATION are the main principles of governance and management.

8 MULTICULTURALISM and respect of differences are characteristic values of our geographically distributed cooperation. In this context we see science and education as essential tools to fight against prejudices and ignorance.

Joint Long-Term Strategy





FOR GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

In line with our joint vision and mission an ever-more integrated governance of the transnational higher education and research institution will be achieved by the following steps:

Institutional commitment

— A non-profit association is established by all partners that will centralise operational procedures for joint activities.

— All partner institutions include EU-CONEXUS in their strategic development documents (statutes, ...) and thereby create a formal institutionalised commitment that is not limited to a cooperation in a funded project and not limited to

a certain funding period. Strategic decisions of the Alliance are validated by partner's institutional decision making bodies.

— The legal framework for European Universities which is under discussion by the European Union and should provide for an adapted legal status for a transnational university system will be examined for implementation.

Alliance presidency

— The coordinator's rector keeps the Alliance presidency of the Governing Board for the 2 years of the pilot phase (2022-2024). After that a rotation sequence will be established by the Governing Board creating 2-year mandates for the presidency of the Alliance.

— A vice-president of the Governing Board will be nominated in correspondence with the sequence of the rotation to prepare the follow-up presidency.

— The leaving president continues to participate in Executive Council meetings as internal advisor.

Alliance boards

— The Alliance maintains a Strategic Council structure: Student, Executive, Academic and Research Council. The Executive Council is chaired by the president of the Governing Board. The Academic and Research Council Chairs will be elected and nominated annually by their peers and the nomination will be confirmed by the Governing Board.

— In the longer term and in line with the development of integrated activities and joint staff, the creation of additional Councils may be foreseen (e.g. international relations, innovation, etc.)

External strategic guidance

— The External Advisory Board continues to support strategic orientation. The Chair of the External Advisory Board will continue for at least two years, as will the composition of the Board.

— In the medium-term, the establishment of a Stakeholder Board will be part of the conceptualisation of a knowledge and innovation eco-system.





FOR STAFF AND STUDENTS

In line with the joint vision and mission an ever-more integrated staff and student community will be achieved by the following steps:

Coordination staff

— Coordination staff (Coordination Committee) is currently recruited at the Erasmus+ project coordinator's level or delegated to a partner for other projects. For ensuring sustainability, transversality and stability of the Alliance, the Governing Board will discuss models of joint recruitment of coordination staff in the longer term. These models will be developed up to 2026 and tested from that date.

— Institutional coordinators are recruited at the partner institutions.

Professional support staff

— Currently professional and support staff are participating in job shadowing programmes for establishing personal contacts and exchanging institutional best practices in relevant fields. This activity will be maintained and strategically guided in order to promote institutional alignment in major areas affecting joint activities, such as administration of student registration, mobility, financial procedures, quality assurance, etc.

— Centralized services will be provided by distributed support staff in particular in IT, mobility, quality assurance, finances, project development, study programme development, and pedagogical methodologies.

Academic staff

— Teachers and researchers are currently engaged into Alliance activities in the framework of joint activities (educational programmes), joint training and through the exchange of best practices through job shadowing mobilities or visiting teaching stays. These exchanges and mobilities will be further intensified to facilitate the steady growth and widening of joint educational and research activities.

— In the medium-term teachers training will be intensified in particular with the aim of raising awareness of the thematic framework of the Alliance and enhancing the quality of educational offers.

— In the longer term, joint PhD programmes and joint post-doc programmes will further strengthen the commitment of academic staff to the Alliance.

— Up to 2026 it is foreseen that models of joint or shared recruitment of academic staff (e.g. joint chairs) will be explored.

Students

— Students are currently most directly confronted with the Alliance when following joint study programmes, participating in joint cultural and sport activities or being members of the Student Board.

— Study programmes with built-in mobilities within the Alliances will continue to make the inter-university campus life a reality for students.

— In a next step the mainstreaming of study offers at the Bachelor level will reach out to a wider student community and intensify the identity of the student community as being part of a transnational European University. This will be achieved by opening up study programmes at the institutional level at partner universities, strengthening complementarities of study offers, creating short courses (microcredentials) and open courses. Thereby students will have a multitude of opportunities to include courses from Alliance partners in their curricula.



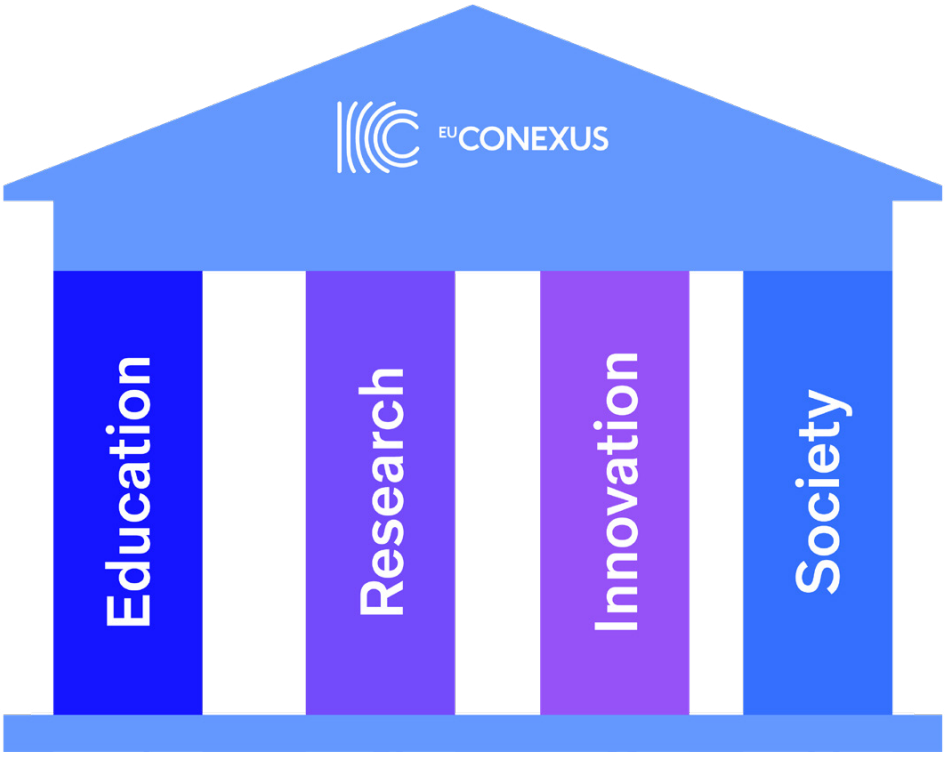
— At the Master level, a first cohort of students will be "joint students" of the Master programme in Marine Biotechnology from September 2022. The development of more joint Master programmes will further enhance this Master student community in the medium- to long-term. Additionally, the opening up of Master programmes at partner universities by providing opportunities to integrate short courses or modules from partners will enhance further complementarities at Master level.

— Bilateral or multilateral PhD theses will be promoted and will create opportunities for doctoral candidates to get the best supervision for their doctoral studies building on the distributed excellence available within the Alliance and at the same time enhance the coherence and complementarity of the thematic framework of the Alliance.

— A stepwise introduction of an "eu-conexus.eu" email address and of a trans-institutional student card will make the European University student identity visible and will have practical value for all students.

— In the long-term, building on these structures, each student will realise that he or she is studying at a European University and not at a partner university only.

Four University Missions



In line with the joint vision and mission, enhanced integration of activities across all university communities will be achieved by the following steps:

Education

— The development of joint study programmes will continue at all levels. The Alliance is committed to engage in the development of a European Degree and jointly delivered degrees at all levels (BSc, MSc, PhD) based on the accreditation of joint programmes following the European approach.

— In the long term and following suggestions of the External Advisory Board, EU-CONEXUS will construct a set of comprehensive and complementary study programmes, aligned with market needs and in response to the evolution of society in coastal areas.

— More emphasis will be laid on the exploitation of complementarities of study offers at all levels.

— Centralised services will promote the quality assurance of educational offers and services.

— Teacher exchange and job shadowing will improve complementarities and promote the application of best practices in teaching and learning.

— In the long-term teacher exchange programmes and shared or joint recruitment will provide for a shared pool of expertise and talent for all partners.

Research

— The Joint Research Area will develop around societal challenges included into the thematic framework of the Alliance. In the long term, a scientific policy will be defined for the whole EU-CONEXUS ecosystem, in order to boost the visibility of the research area.

— Collaboration, networking and team-building will be supported by research mobility funds and joint scientific conferences.

— Joint research projects will be supported by project development funds and seed-funding for small projects.

— Joint Research Institutes will promote networking of EU-CONEXUS researchers and submission of joint research projects to calls of funding programmes, such as Horizon Europe.

— Joint PhD programmes/thesis, summer schools, conferences and courses will strengthen community building and provide more focus for research initiatives on the thematic framework.

— In the long term, EU-CONEXUS members will investigate the opportunity to increase their international visibility through a common publication policy.

— The opening of access to research infrastructures and the alignment of investment strategies with regard to research infrastructure are foreseen in the longer term.

— In the longer term the application of joint recruitment models for researchers will further strengthen the Joint Research Area.

Service to society

— The visibility of the Alliance in its local, regional, national and international context will continue to grow with the organisation of annual cultural festivals for local communities, national and international events and the engagement in policy development at all levels supported by the transnational knowledge and innovation network.

— Specific attention is laid on establishing enduring contacts with schools for raising awareness of the thematic focus and attracting future students to higher education and research in general and in particular for Alliance study programmes.

— The thematic focus of the Alliance is set out to benefit specifically the local communities in coastal areas, but solutions found in the transnational ecosystem for education, research and innovation will be transferable internationally in similar contexts.

— The international outreach of Alliance activities will in turn benefit the local socio-economic environment.

— Participation and interaction with society is supported by the promotion of open science and participatory science projects.

Innovation

— A stakeholder community is set up around cities and ports where Alliance partners are located.

— Associated partnerships (primarily coming from identified main stakeholder communities) will be strengthened by attaching roles (Stakeholder Board) and providing specific offers to associated partners (Stakeholder Academy, PhD thesis projects, mentorships, educational programme design, seed-funding for small-scale innovation projects).

— The promotion of entrepreneurship skills will be a focus in training programmes at all levels and for all staff categories.

— A transnational knowledge and innovation eco-system will develop continuous interaction between regions and cities for innovation and economic and social development guided by sustainability concerns.



Main principles of strategic action plan

PRINCIPLE	DESCRIPTION
Subsidiarity	The Strategic Action Plan applies primarily to alliance-level activities and initiatives. It does not impose unilateral obligations on all institutional provisions.
Institutional Autonomy	Full respect for the autonomy of each member institution is guaranteed. No actions will be imposed; participation remains voluntary and aligned with each institution's governance and strategic priorities.
Differentiated Levels of Participation	Recognizing the diversity of partners, not all institutions are required to participate in every activity. Engagement will be flexible, allowing differentiated levels of involvement based on capacity, interest, and strategic relevance.
Non-Legally Binding Nature	The Strategic Action Plan is not a legally binding document. It serves as a shared framework for cooperation and strategic alignment rather than a contractual obligation.

PRINCIPLE	DESCRIPTION
Role as a Roadmap	The plan provides a strategic roadmap outlining mid- and long-term actions. It is a frame document and does not include all operational details, which may be addressed in complementary documents.
Continuity and Consolidation	The plan builds on existing achievements and proven practices. It seeks continuity and improvement, rather than starting from scratch, leveraging what works effectively today.
Evidence-Based Development	The Strategic Action Plan is the result of a process spanning over a year, informed by bilateral meetings, institutional positions and outcomes from the Valencia workshops.
Use of Existing Structures	The plan relies on existing governance and operational structures. No new structures are intended to be created; however, current structures may be subject to review and optimization.

Mission & Identity

FIRST LEVEL OBJECTIVE

1.1. Position the alliance as a collaboration hub focused on smart urban coastal sustainability, addressing EU-CONEXUS challenges framework

SECOND LEVEL OBJECTIVES	MAIN ACTION LINES
1.1.1. Commit to establishing the Alliance as a collaboration hub.	— Approval of Strategic Action Plan. — Include EU-CONEXUS commitment in partner universities' strategic plans.
1.1.2. Ensure a shared, coherent understanding and management of EU-CONEXUS challenges and goals throughout the Alliance.	— Review and expand EU-CONEXUS challenges — Establish Challenge Governance Framework and develop implementation roadmap

FIRST LEVEL OBJECTIVE

1.2. Build a strong EU-CONEXUS brand, aligned with its values and core themes

SECOND LEVEL OBJECTIVES	MAIN ACTION LINES
1.2.1 Strengthen the EU-CONEXUS brand to clearly communicate its unique value proposition and differentiate it from other alliances.	Value propositions for all key stakeholder groups and competitive analysis of EU-CONEXUS' unique selling points
1.2.2 Establish a targeted communication strategy to clearly convey the Alliance's added value to each audience.	Communication strategy that conveys the value proposition to each target group

FIRST LEVEL OBJECTIVE

1.3. Establish a sustainable alliance that ensures long-term viability and stability

SECOND LEVEL OBJECTIVES	MAIN ACTION LINES
1.3.1. Ensure the Alliance's long-term sustainability by developing a diversified funding model.	Map, prioritize and design a diversified funding model and roadmap.
1.3.2. Ensure efficient resource and budget allocation across EU-CONEXUS projects.	Set guidelines and monitoring for fair resource and budget allocation.
1.3.3. Facilitate institutional collaboration on administrative and operational challenges.	Review EU-CONEXA supportive role and advance digitalization (medium priority).

FIRST LEVEL OBJECTIVE

1.4. Establish a shared governance and management system across partner universities to promote transparency and streamline decision-making

SECOND LEVEL OBJECTIVES	MAIN ACTION LINES
1.4.1. Adapt the governance structure to enable better, more efficient decision-making and collaboration across the Alliance.	Strengthen and streamline governance: dedicated EU-CONEXUS governance-level responsible, joint councils, streamline decisions.

Education

FIRST LEVEL OBJECTIVE

2.1. Consolidate EU-CONEXUS' academic offerings to enhance engagement and impact

SECOND LEVEL OBJECTIVES	MAIN ACTION LINES
2.1.1. Scale-up proven joint academic offerings and enhance complementary learning experiences across the Alliance.	— Review current and past academic offerings, identify successes and gaps. — Joint solutions for bachelor programs with declining enrolments. — Joint statement on mutual recognition to enhance credit transfer.
2.1.2 Improve the student journey to ensure a seamless interaction with EU-CONEXUS.	— Assess and improve the student journey; gaps identification and remediation plan. — Define metrics for student journey success factors.

FIRST LEVEL OBJECTIVE

2.2. Enhance quality and innovation within the curricula

SECOND LEVEL OBJECTIVES	MAIN ACTION LINES
2.2.1 Facilitate the integration and exchange of proven pedagogical techniques across EU-CONEXUS curricula.	— Redesign Teaching Academy format. — Secure management commitment.

FIRST LEVEL OBJECTIVE

2.3. Align educational offerings with societal challenges, current and emerging sustainability challenges and student needs

SECOND LEVEL OBJECTIVES	MAIN ACTION LINES
2.3.1 Establish ongoing processes to identify the knowledge, skills abilities and market needs most beneficial to students, to guide curriculum design and improvement.	Periodic skills mapping, joint programmes with stakeholders and entrepreneurship opportunities (medium priority).
2.3.2 Enhance academic programmes by embedding research synergies to address societal challenges aligned with EU-CONEXUS' thematic priorities.	Integrate research skills and methodologies into curricula (minors + research projects; summer schools; best-practice sharing).

Research

FIRST LEVEL OBJECTIVE

3.1. Foster research around EU-CONEXUS challenges and smart urban coastal sustainability thematic areas that benefits society and facilitates innovation transfer

SECOND LEVEL OBJECTIVES	MAIN ACTION LINES
3.1.1 Align research efforts with EU-CONEXUS challenges to generate meaningful societal impact.	— Identify challenge-aligned target groups and outreach. — Launch internal seed-funding calls for multidisciplinary research.
3.1.2 Facilitate innovation and knowledge transfer into society.	— Review best practices for knowledge and innovation transfer. — Create guidelines for knowledge transfer; establish incubator and accessible dissemination.

FIRST LEVEL OBJECTIVE

3.2. Enable research collaboration through shared, international initiatives

SECOND LEVEL OBJECTIVES	MAIN ACTION LINES
3.2.1 Consolidate and continue to expand an engaging research network to foster collaborative projects.	Strengthen research collaboration through review JRI model and its link with Challenge Governance, enhance PDSO, improve RIIS and organize matchmaking events.
3.2.2 Coordinate efforts to enhance participation and success in international funding opportunities.	Update and consolidate research expertise map.

FIRST LEVEL OBJECTIVE

3.3. Support capacity building to strengthen research and its management across the alliance

SECOND LEVEL OBJECTIVES	MAIN ACTION LINES
3.3.1 Strengthen the research pipeline by supporting early-career researchers and fostering student involvement.	— Map early-career support activities — Strengthen joint PhD/ cotutelle model
3.3.2 Intensify research mobility and knowledge exchange.	Align mobility funds with EU-CONEXUS challenges and secure funding.

Internal Community

FIRST LEVEL OBJECTIVE

4.1. Foster a sense of belonging to the alliance by all its staff and students

SECOND LEVEL OBJECTIVES	MAIN ACTION LINES
4.1.1 Strengthen the sense of belonging to a transnational Alliance across the academic community.	Define the Alliance 'higher goal' for internal and external communication.

FIRST LEVEL OBJECTIVE

4.2. Deepen and advance the community already established, ensuring strong student engagement across all study levels

SECOND LEVEL OBJECTIVES	MAIN ACTION LINES
4.2.1 Consolidate and promote student internationalisation through expanded mobility and virtual initiatives.	Identify and develop short mobility activities recognised in curricula.
4.2.2 Facilitate student engagement within EU-CONEXUS initiatives.	Student engagement: ambassadors, incentive models, mapping of offers.

FIRST LEVEL OBJECTIVE

4.3. Facilitate internationalisation and professional development for all staff, both academic and non-academic

SECOND LEVEL OBJECTIVES	MAIN ACTION LINES
4.3.1 Support the professional development and internationalisation of staff through the exchange of best practices.	Map and align PDT policies and update staff development offerings.

External Community

FIRST LEVEL OBJECTIVE

5.1. Promote awareness and engagement concerning EU-CONEXUS challenges

SECOND LEVEL OBJECTIVES	MAIN ACTION LINES
5.1.1 Increase awareness and engagement of younger generations through targeted EU-CONEXUS initiatives.	Define activities to engage prospective students and teachers (visits, contests).
5.1.2 Raise public awareness of EU-CONEXUS through targeted outreach and engagement activities.	Participate in established events to increase visibility (conferences, fairs).

FIRST LEVEL OBJECTIVE

5.2. Engage with local ecosystems to co-create solutions around EU-CONEXUS challenges

SECOND LEVEL OBJECTIVES	MAIN ACTION LINES
5.2.1 Shape public policy around EU-CONEXUS priorities.	— Map legislative barriers and regulatory challenges. — Collaborate with alliances to advocate for change.
5.2.2 Strengthen and expand the synergies between EU-CONEXUS initiatives and local challenges to co-create solutions.	— Create thematic think tanks. — Enhance Stakeholder Academy program.



Strategic Plan Review

INDEX

p. 17
Strategic Axes

p. 19
Strategic Objectives

p. 41
Action Lines and Indicators

Approved strategic axes



Mission & Identity

9 universities working together towards a sustainable and true European University Alliance built around a shared thematic focus



Education

Excellent educational offerings at all levels within our thematic area



Research

Collaborative network of leading international research



Internal Community

Building strong international community for professional development.



External Community

Showcase our contribution and raise awareness on EU-CONEXUS challenges

Strategic Plan Review

INDEX

p. 17
Strategic Axes

p. 19
Strategic Objectives

p. 41
Action Lines and Indicators



Mission & Identity

9 universities working together towards a sustainable and true European University Alliance built around a shared thematic focus

First Level Objectives Overview

1.1 Position the alliance as a collaboration hub focused on smart urban coastal sustainability, addressing EU-CONEXUS challenges framework.
Cultivate a culture of inter-institutional cooperation and shared expertise driven by clearly defined challenges.

1.2 Build a strong EU-CONEXUS brand, aligned with its values and core themes.
Increase public awareness of EU-CONEXUS' mission, values, and core themes through a clear communication strategy that highlights the alliance's value regarding local and global challenges.

1.3 Establish a sustainable alliance that ensures long-term viability and stability.
Ensuring operational viability through effective sourcing and allocation of resources and funding, supported by a centralised infrastructure aligned with strategic goals.

1.4 Establish a shared governance and management system across partner universities to promote transparency and streamline decision-making.
Strengthen the governance and management framework to enhance decision-making efficiency through collaborative engagement, shared institutional commitment to translating global goals into local action, and address the challenge of transnational university legal framework.

FIRST LEVEL OBJECTIVE

1.1
Position the alliance as a collaboration hub focused on smart urban coastal sustainability, addressing EU-CONEXUS challenges framework

Cultivate a culture of inter-institutional cooperation and shared expertise driven by clearly defined challenges.

SECOND LEVEL OBJECTIVES

1. **Commit to establishing the Alliance as a collaboration hub:** This objective emphasizes the importance of securing active commitment from member institutions within the EU-CONEXUS Alliance to engage in collaborative initiatives. It focuses on cultivating mutual trust, promoting open communication, and enabling seamless cooperation across the Alliance, thereby positioning EU-CONEXUS as a dynamic and integrated hub for academic and institutional collaboration.

2. **Ensure a shared, coherent understanding and management of EU-CONEXUS challenges and goals, disseminating them at every level of the alliance:** This objective aims to ensure that all EU-CONEXUS member institutions share a consistent understanding of the Alliance's challenges and how they are managed, enabling a coordinated and transparent effort that delivers meaningful impact.

FIRST LEVEL OBJECTIVE

1.2
Build a strong EU-CONEXUS brand, aligned with its values and core themes

Increase public awareness of EU-CONEXUS' mission, values, and core themes through a clear communication strategy that highlights the alliance's value regarding local and global challenges.

SECOND LEVEL OBJECTIVES

1. **Strengthen the EU-CONEXUS brand to clearly communicate its unique value proposition and differentiate it from other alliances:** This objective focuses on enhancing the visibility and recognition of the EU-CONEXUS brand by clearly differentiating the Alliance from others through strategic branding that highlights its distinct value proposition, fostering a strong and unified identity across member institutions and external audiences.

2. **Establish a targeted communication strategy to clearly convey the Alliance's added value to each audience:** This objective focuses on crafting communication approaches for different stakeholder groups to clearly communicate the benefits of EU-CONEXUS, ensuring that communication is relevant and impactful for each audience, while remaining simple to apply consistently across all member institutions.

FIRST LEVEL OBJECTIVE

1.3.
Establish a sustainable alliance that ensures long-term viability and stability

Ensuring operational viability through effective sourcing and allocation of resources and funding, supported by a centralised infrastructure aligned with strategic goals.

SECOND LEVEL OBJECTIVES

1. **Ensure the Alliance's long-term sustainability by developing a diversified funding model:** This objective focuses on developing a diverse funding model that supports the long-term financial stability of the alliance by reducing its dependency on any single stream of income.

2. **Ensure efficient resource and budget allocation across EU-CONEXUS projects:** This objective aims to strategically allocate resources and budgets across EU-CONEXUS projects to ensure efficiency, alignment with priorities, and maximum impact.

3. **Facilitate institutional collaboration on administrative and operational challenges:** This objective aims to strengthen internal coordination among EU-CONEXUS partner institutions by establishing structures and processes that support effective collaboration on shared administrative and operational matters.

FIRST LEVEL OBJECTIVE

1.4.
Establish a shared governance and management system across partner universities to promote transparency and streamline decision-making

Strengthen the governance and management framework to enhance decision-making efficiency through collaborative engagement, shared institutional commitment to translating global goals into local action, and address the challenge of transnational university legal framework.

SECOND LEVEL OBJECTIVES

1. **Adapt the governance and management structure to enable better, more efficient decision-making and collaboration across the Alliance:** This objective aims to adapt the EU-CONEXUS governance and management structure to improve decision-making efficiency and foster stronger collaboration across member institutions by refining roles, processes, and coordination mechanisms in support of both the individual institutional missions as well as those of the wider alliance.



Education

Excellent educational offerings at all levels within our thematic area

First Level Objectives Overview

2.1 Consolidate EU-CONEXUS' academic offerings to enhance engagement and impact.
Continue to develop and scale-up shared academic offerings that facilitate seamless student interaction across the alliance, enhancing engagement and the overall learning experience.

2.2. Enhance quality and innovation within the curricula.
Promote best practices and continuous pedagogical innovation across EU-CONEXUS to uphold and improve academic quality.

2.3. Align educational offerings with societal challenges, current and emerging sustainability challenges and student needs.
Align academic offerings with current affairs (especially considering the alliance's thematic priorities) and students' evolving academic, professional and personal development needs, to respond to actual market needs.

FIRST LEVEL OBJECTIVE

2.1. Consolidate EU-CONEXUS' academic offerings to enhance engagement and impact

Continue to develop and scale-up shared academic offerings that facilitate seamless student interaction across the alliance, enhancing engagement and the overall learning experience.

SECOND LEVEL OBJECTIVES

1. **Scale-up proven joint academic offerings and enhance complementary learning experiences across the Alliance:** This objective focuses on expanding and improving the existing shared academic programmes by building on successful initiatives (such as Joint Master Programme in Marine Biotechnology), strengthening credit transfer and recognition of international curricula, and embedding proven complementary formats, such as BIPs and micro credentials, into institutional curricula to enrich learning and increase impact.

2. **Improve the student journey to ensure a seamless interaction with EU-CONEXUS:** This objective focuses on enhancing the student experience across all touchpoints with EU-CONEXUS. It includes streamlining processes related to academic pathways, digital platforms and support services. The goal is to make students' interactions with the Alliance smooth, intuitive, and supportive.

FIRST LEVEL OBJECTIVE

2.2. Enhance quality and innovation within the curricula

Promote best practices and continuous pedagogical innovation across EU-CONEXUS to uphold and improve academic quality.

SECOND LEVEL OBJECTIVES

1. **Facilitate the integration and exchange of proven pedagogical techniques across EU-CONEXUS curricula:** This objective seeks to consolidate, continuously support and promote the exchange of successful teaching practices among EU-CONEXUS member institutions and to systematically embed a range of proven pedagogical approaches into curricula; including, but not limited to, challenge-based learning and solution-based learning.

FIRST LEVEL OBJECTIVE

2.3. Align educational offerings with societal challenges, current and emerging sustainability challenges and student needs

Align academic offerings with current affairs (especially considering the alliance's thematic priorities) and students' evolving academic, professional and personal development needs, to respond to actual market needs, while promoting Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), leadership, civic and digital skills, and European values.

SECOND LEVEL OBJECTIVES

1. **Establish ongoing processes to identify the knowledge, skills, abilities and market needs most beneficial to students, to guide curriculum design and improvement:** This objective aims to create continuous mechanisms for identifying the most relevant competencies for students, ensuring that curriculum development is informed by evolving educational priorities, market needs, and future career opportunities.

2. **Enhance academic programmes by embedding research synergies to address societal challenges aligned with EU-CONEXUS' thematic priorities:** This objective focuses on enriching academic programmes by integrating insights from research, ensuring that teaching is informed by the latest developments and aligned with EU-CONEXUS' thematic priorities. The goal is to create a learning environment where students benefit from research-driven content that deepens their understanding of societal challenges, without requiring them to conduct research themselves.



Research

Collaborative network of leading international research

First Level Objectives Overview

3.1. Foster research around EU-CONEXUS challenges and smart urban coastal sustainability thematic areas that benefits society and facilitates innovation transfer.
Consolidate and promote research initiatives that address the alliance's challenges and thematic priorities, enhancing EU-CONEXUS' impact on society through innovative solutions and knowledge transfer.

3.2. Enable research collaboration through shared, international initiatives.
Promote a research ecosystem that facilitates international collaboration, fostering community engagement and advancing the alliance's position as a global research hub.

3.3. Support capacity building to strengthen research and its management across the alliance.
Develop a seamless research support function that harnesses the strength of human capital to foster collaborative research across the alliance.

FIRST LEVEL OBJECTIVE

3.1.
Foster research around EU-CONEXUS challenges and smart urban coastal sustainability thematic areas that benefits society and facilitates innovation transfer

Consolidate and promote research initiatives that address the alliance's challenges and thematic priorities, enhancing EU-CONEXUS' impact on society through innovative solutions and knowledge transfer.

SECOND LEVEL OBJECTIVES

1. **Align research efforts with EU-CONEXUS challenges to generate meaningful societal impact:** This objective aims to focus research activities around the Alliance's thematic priorities, positioning EU-CONEXUS as a leading research hub that delivers tangible solutions to societal challenges.

2. **Facilitate innovation and knowledge transfer into society:** This objective seeks to improve how research outcomes and innovations are shared with external stakeholders by strengthening knowledge transfer processes and promoting best practices across the Alliance.

FIRST LEVEL OBJECTIVE

3.2. Enable research collaboration through shared, international initiatives

Promote a research ecosystem that facilitates international collaboration, fostering community engagement and advancing the alliance's position as a global research hub.

SECOND LEVEL OBJECTIVES

1. **Consolidate and continue to expand an engaging research network to foster collaborative projects:** This objective aims to build structured and dynamic research networks across EU-CONEXUS institutions, actively engaging researchers to participate in joint projects that advance shared research goals.

2. **Coordinate efforts to enhance participation and success in international funding opportunities:** This objective focuses on aligning institutional efforts to target international research funding opportunities, presenting a unified approach across EU-CONEXUS to improve competitiveness and success rates.

FIRST LEVEL OBJECTIVE

3.3. Support capacity building to strengthen research and its management across the alliance.

Develop a seamless research support function that harnesses the strength of human capital to foster collaborative research across the alliance.

SECOND LEVEL OBJECTIVES

1. **Strengthen the research pipeline by supporting early-career researchers and fostering student involvement:** This objective aims to build a sustainable research support ecosystem within EU-CONEXUS by providing targeted support for early-career researchers, passing knowledge to facilitate capacity-building and actively promoting research to students that could be encouraged to pursue further studies, thus helping to cultivate talent and strengthen long-term research capacity.

2. **Intensify research mobility and knowledge exchange:** This objective aims to expand opportunities for researcher mobility and cross-institutional sharing of best practices to strengthen skills, promote collaboration, and enhance the overall research capacity and effectiveness across the alliance.



Internal Community

Building strong international community for professional development

First Level Objectives Overview

4.1 Foster a sense of belonging to the alliance by all its staff and students.
Strengthen and sustain efforts to develop a community that fosters a shared identity among students and staff as members of a transnational alliance, supported by common initiatives, shared values, and seamless mobility throughout.

4.2 Deepen and advance the community already established, ensuring strong student engagement across all study levels.
Provide the resources and infrastructure that enable seamless cross-border student interaction and empower students to express their views with confidence.

4.3. Facilitate internationalisation and professional development for all staff, both academic and non-academic.
Strengthen the alliance's human capital through professional development (particularly in language and intercultural skills) and improving staff mobility to support ongoing collaboration.

FIRST LEVEL OBJECTIVE

4.1. Foster a sense of belonging to the alliance by all its staff and students

Strengthen and sustain efforts to develop a community that fosters a shared identity among students and staff as members of a transnational alliance, supported by common initiatives, shared values, and seamless mobility throughout.

SECOND LEVEL OBJECTIVES

1. **Strengthen the sense of belonging to a transnational Alliance across the academic community:** This objective aims to strengthen a sense of belonging to EU-CONEXUS among students, academics, and staff by promoting shared activities, events, and initiatives that strengthen inter-university connections and foster a collective identity.

FIRST LEVEL OBJECTIVE

4.2.
Deepen and advance the community already established, ensuring strong student engagement across all study levels

Provide the resources and infrastructure that enable seamless cross-border student interaction and empower students to express their views with confidence.

SECOND LEVEL OBJECTIVES

1. **Consolidate and promote student internationalisation through expanded mobility (virtual, blended and physical) and other virtual initiatives:** This objective aims to increase student participation in international academic experiences by broadening access to physical mobility programs and enhancing virtual opportunities that foster internationalisation at home.

2. **Facilitate student engagement within EU-CONEXUS initiatives:** This objective aims to provide a supportive and dynamic environment where students feel empowered to transform their ideas related to EU-CONEXUS into meaningful, collaborative projects.

FIRST LEVEL OBJECTIVE

4.3. Facilitate internationalisation and professional development for all staff, both academic and non-academic

Strengthen the alliance's human capital through professional development (particularly in language and intercultural skills) and improving staff mobility to support ongoing collaboration.

SECOND LEVEL OBJECTIVES

1. **Support the professional development and internationalisation of staff through the exchange of best practices:** This objective aims to enhance the professional growth, intercultural competence, and language skills of all university staff by providing training, mobility opportunities, and collaborative projects across member institutions, thus fostering a more connected, globally engaged staff community and strengthening internal collaboration and international partnerships.

External Community

Showcase our contribution and raise awareness on EU-CONEXUS challenges

First Level Objectives Overview

5.1 Promote awareness and engagement concerning EU-CONEXUS challenges.
Increase public awareness (especially around youth) surrounding EU-CONEXUS challenges and attract future students to higher education and research.

5.2 Engage with local ecosystems to co-create solutions around EU-CONEXUS challenges.
Continue to collaborate with local stakeholders (industry, policymakers, etc.) and launch initiatives that address the alliance's challenges with the goal of furthering EU-CONEXUS' societal and academic impact.

FIRST LEVEL OBJECTIVE

5.1. Promote awareness and engagement concerning EU-CONEXUS challenges

Increase public awareness (especially around youth) surrounding EU-CONEXUS challenges and attract future students to higher education and research.

SECOND LEVEL OBJECTIVES

1. **Increase awareness and engagement of younger generations through targeted EU-CONEXUS initiatives:** This objective aims to strengthen the Alliance's connection with younger audiences by designing and refining initiatives that spark interest in higher education and in the Alliance, emphasizing the identification, sharing, and scaling of successful approaches to attract prospective students.

2. **Raise public awareness of EU-CONEXUS through targeted outreach and engagement activities:** This objective focuses on enhancing the visibility and societal impact of EU-CONEXUS by supporting member institutions in delivering effective outreach initiatives and events that promote the Alliance's mission and achievements to the public.

FIRST LEVEL OBJECTIVE

5.2. Engage with local ecosystems to co-create solutions around EU-CONEXUS challenges

Continue to collaborate with local stakeholders (industry, education policymakers, smart urban coastal sustainability related policymakers, etc.) and launch initiatives that address the alliance's challenges with the goal of furthering EU-CONEXUS' societal and academic impact.

SECOND LEVEL OBJECTIVES

1. **Shape public policy around EU-CONEXUS priorities:** This objective aims to position the Alliance as an active contributor to policy development by engaging with policymakers to address legislative barriers and thematic challenges, while building strategic alliances with other academic Alliances to amplify influence and drive shared goals.

2. **Strengthen and expand the synergies between EU-CONEXUS initiatives and local challenges to co-create solutions:** This objective focuses on identifying meaningful connections between EU-CONEXUS activities and regional needs, enabling the co-creation of innovative, locally relevant solutions through collaboration with community stakeholders, ensuring that Alliance-wide efforts have tangible, community-level impact.



Strategic Plan Review

INDEX

p. 17
Strategic Axes

p. 19
Strategic Objectives

p. 41
Action Lines and Indicators



ACTION LINES AND INDICATORS

1.1 Mission & Identity

Cultivate a culture of inter-institutional cooperation and shared expertise driven by clearly defined challenges

FIRST LEVEL OBJECTIVE

1.1. Position the alliance as a collaboration hub focused on smart urban coastal sustainability, addressing EU-CONEXUS challenges framework

SECOND LEVEL OBJECTIVES

1.1.1. Commit to establishing the Alliance as a collaboration hub.

MAIN ACTION LINES	LEADERS / PATHFINDERS (WHERE SPECIFIED)	PRIORITY
1.1.1.1 Define, approve and implement the strategic plan.	Governing Board	High
1.1.1.2 Include EU-CONEXUS commitments in the strategic plan of all partner Universities as a statement of intent.	Governing Board	High
1.1.1.3 Create recognition programmes and incentives to encourage participation of member Universities in joint initiatives.	All partners	Low

INDICATORS:

High-priority indicators:

— Number of EU-CONEXUS members that approves Alliance Strategic Action Plan.
— Number of EU-CONEXUS members with statement of intent or similar in their strategic plans.



ACTION LINES AND INDICATORS

1.1 Mission & Identity

Cultivate a culture of inter-institutional cooperation and shared expertise driven by clearly defined challenges

FIRST LEVEL OBJECTIVE

1.1. Position the alliance as a collaboration hub focused on smart urban coastal sustainability, addressing EU-CONEXUS challenges framework

SECOND LEVEL OBJECTIVES

1.1.2. Ensure a shared, coherent understanding and management of EU-CONEXUS challenges and goals, disseminating them at every level of the alliance hub.

MAIN ACTION LINES	LEADERS / PATHFINDERS (WHERE SPECIFIED)	PRIORITY
1.1.2.1 Review and expand EU-CONEXUS challenges for overall alliance activities including all stakeholders, addressing social sciences / humanities and link with SDG.	Executive Council, Research Council and Academic Council	High
1.1.2.2 Establish a structured Challenge Governance Framework (identification of group chair and scientific managers with a defined working group, including representatives from relevant groups: AC, RC, students, etc.).	Executive Council, Research Council and Academic Council	High

MAIN ACTION LINES	LEADERS / PATHFINDERS (WHERE SPECIFIED)	PRIORITY
1.1.2.3 Develop a detailed implementation roadmap, outlining specific tasks required to operationalize each identified challenge and to embed it in each strategic axes: education, research, community.	Challenge working groups	High
1.1.2.4 Design and implement a challenge review procedure that ensures inclusive participation from all relevant EU-CONEXUS stakeholders.	Executive Council, Research Council and Academic Council	Medium

INDICATORS:

High-priority indicators:

— Roadmap of implementation defined and approved.
— Number of proposals (projects, programmes, stakeholder activities…).

Nice to have indicators:

— % of challenges with clearly assigned lead institution and responsible person.
— Share of challenge responsibilities by institution.



ACTION LINES AND INDICATORS

1.2 Mission & Identity

Increase public awareness of EU-CONEXUS' mission, values, and core themes through a clear communication strategy that highlights the alliance's value regarding local and global challenges

FIRST LEVEL OBJECTIVE

1.2. Build a strong EU-CONEXUS brand, aligned with its values and core themes.

SECOND LEVEL OBJECTIVES

1.2.1. Strengthen the EU-CONEXUS brand to clearly communicate its unique value proposition and differentiate it from other alliances.

MAIN ACTION LINES	LEADERS / PATHFINDERS (WHERE SPECIFIED)	PRIORITY
1.2.1.1 Define Value Proposition for each relevant stakeholder: i) Internal: Students, Researchers, Teaching staff, admin staff. ii) Externals: Alumni, Local territory actors, research orgs., government, schools, external orgs.	Executive Council, Joint Communication Unit	High
1.2.1.2 Conduct a competitive analysis of unique selling points of EU-CONEXUS compared to other alliances.	Executive Council, Joint Communication Unit	High

MAIN ACTION LINES	LEADERS / PATHFINDERS (WHERE SPECIFIED)	PRIORITY
1.2.1.3 Define the concept of impact for EU-CONEXUS and develop a comprehensive strategy to measure and enhance it.	Executive Council, Joint Communication Unit	Medium

INDICATORS:

High-priority indicators:

— Value proposal document for each targeting audience.
— Engagement in all offers (“value propositions”).
— Evaluation reports from the participants after their involvement.
— Impact reports.
— Report of competitive advantage of EU-CONEXUS.

Nice to have indicators:

— Brand recognition rate (% of target audience that recognises EU-CONEXUS).
— Value proposition clarity score (How well stakeholders understand the value proposition of EU-CONEXUS).



ACTION LINES AND INDICATORS

1.2 Mission & Identity

Increase public awareness of EU-CONEXUS' mission, values, and core themes through a clear communication strategy that highlights the alliance's value regarding local and global challenges

FIRST LEVEL OBJECTIVE

1.2. Build a strong EU-CONEXUS brand, aligned with its values and core themes.

SECOND LEVEL OBJECTIVES

1.2.2. Establish a targeted communication strategy to clearly convey the Alliance's added value to each audience.

MAIN ACTION LINES	LEADERS / PATHFINDERS (WHERE SPECIFIED)	PRIORITY
1.2.2.1 Develop a tailored communication strategy that clearly conveys the value proposition to each target group (based on 1.2.1.1).	Joint Communication Unit	High
1.2.2.2 Develop clear methods to embed the EU-CONEXUS communication strategy into each partner university's communication channels and practices.	Joint Communication Unit	Medium

INDICATORS:

High-priority indicators:

— EU-CONEXUS communication strategy approved.
— Report of EU-CONEXUS integration into University Communication.

Nice to have indicators:

— Media coverage (mentions in media).
— EU-CONEXUS website visits.
— Number of followers on social media platforms.



ACTION LINES AND INDICATORS

1.3 Mission & Identity

Ensuring operational viability through effective sourcing and allocation of resources and funding, supported by a centralised infrastructure aligned with strategic goals

FIRST LEVEL OBJECTIVE

1.3. Establish a sustainable alliance that ensures long-term viability and stability.

SECOND LEVEL OBJECTIVES

1.3.1. Ensure the Alliance's long-term sustainability by developing a diversified funding model.

MAIN ACTION LINES	LEADERS / PATHFINDERS (WHERE SPECIFIED)	PRIORITY
1.3.1.1 Map all funding opportunities: Public/ private and EU/National/Regional.	Alliance Coord Team, Management Board	High
1.3.1.2 Prioritise funding opportunities.	Governing Board, Executive Council, Management Board	High
1.3.1.3 Develop a funding model and roadmap for the alliance (with annual revision).	Alliance Coord Team, Management Board	High

MAIN ACTION LINES	LEADERS / PATHFINDERS (WHERE SPECIFIED)	PRIORITY
1.3.1.4 **Identify activities that can be commercialised.**	Research Council, Academic Council, Working Group Leaders	Medium
1.3.1.5 Establish a joint team to manage funding support (e.g., within EU-CONEXA).	Governing Board, Alliance Coord Team	Medium
1.3.1.6 Conduct an assessment to determine the need for professional support in funding acquisition (hiring independent experts to strengthen capacity).	Governing Board, Executive Council, Management Board	Low

INDICATORS:

High-priority indicators:

— Number of new funding sources identified.
— % of revenue from each source.
— Annual Revenue Growth Rate.
— Increase of number of projects submitted on an annual basis.
— Annual Report



ACTION LINES AND INDICATORS

1.3 Mission & Identity

Ensuring operational viability through effective sourcing and allocation of resources and funding, supported by a centralised infrastructure aligned with strategic goals

FIRST LEVEL OBJECTIVE

1.3. Establish a sustainable alliance that ensures long-term viability and stability.

SECOND LEVEL OBJECTIVES

1.3.2. Ensure efficient resource and budget allocation across EU-CONEXUS projects.

MAIN ACTION LINES	LEADERS / PATHFINDERS (WHERE SPECIFIED)	PRIORITY
1.3.2.1 Establish clear guidelines for partners to actively and fairly allocate resources across alliance projects.	Governing Board, Executive Council, Management Board	High
1.3.2.2 Establish a continuous process to monitor, adjust, and align institutional budget allocations with EU-CONEXUS objectives (supported by appointed representatives and project communities at each partner university), while ensuring that budgetary control remains under the sovereign authority of each institution.	Governing Board, Executive Council, Management Board	High

INDICATORS:

High-priority indicators:

— % deviation between planned and actual spending.

ACTION LINES AND INDICATORS

1.3 Mission & Identity

Ensuring operational viability through effective sourcing and allocation of resources and funding, supported by a centralised infrastructure aligned with strategic goals

FIRST LEVEL OBJECTIVE

1.3. Establish a sustainable alliance that ensures long-term viability and stability.

SECOND LEVEL OBJECTIVES

1.3.3. Facilitate institutional collaboration on administrative and operational challenges.

MAIN ACTION LINES	LEADERS / PATHFINDERS (WHERE SPECIFIED)	PRIORITY
1.3.3.1 Review EU-CONEXA supportive role and identify tasks to be performed by the EU-CONEXA to increase its role.	Governing Board, Executive Council, Alliance Coord Team	Medium
1.3.3.2 Continue advancing the digitalization of EU-CONEXUS to enhance efficiency, promote sustainability, and ensure scalability across all operations.	Executive Council, Alliance Coord Team	Medium
1.3.3.3 Design and implement an integrated staff directory to facilitate collaboration and reduce barriers in cross-institutional communication by offering a centralized contact resource as well as to establish a sustainable process for its regular maintenance and updates.	Alliance Coord Team, Management Board	Low

INDICATORS: **Nice to have indicators:** Satisfaction rate with digital tools.



ACTION LINES AND INDICATORS

1.4 Mission & Identity

Strengthen the governance and management framework to enhance decision-making efficiency through collaborative engagement, shared institutional commitment to translating global goals into local action, and address the challenge of transnational university legal framework

FIRST LEVEL OBJECTIVE

1.4. Establish a shared governance and management system across partner universities to promote transparency and streamline decision-making.

SECOND LEVEL OBJECTIVES

1.4.1. Adapt the governance structure to enable better, more efficient decision-making and collaboration across the Alliance.

MAIN ACTION LINES	LEADERS / PATHFINDERS (WHERE SPECIFIED)	PRIORITY
1.4.1.1 Appoint a dedicated EU-CONEXUS governance-level responsible at each university.	Rector or Vice-Rector per Institution	High
1.4.1.2 Establish regular joint meetings between Academic and Research Council.	Research Council and Academic Council	High

1.4.1.3 Establish regular joint meetings between institutional EU-CONEXUS responsibles	Management Board	High
1.4.1.4 Enhance the EU-CONEXUS governance and decision-making framework to streamline validation and administrative procedures, thereby increasing operational autonomy for staff managing day-to-day activities.	Governing Board, Executive Council, Management Board	High
1.4.1.5 Assess and implement the inclusion of external stakeholders (e.g., ports committees, local authorities) within the governance and management structure.	Governing Board, Management Board	Medium
1.4.1.6 Establish ongoing regular process of reviewing of the alliance governance model.	Governing Board	Medium
1.4.1.7 Review and amend the student Board election process.	Student Board	Low

INDICATORS:

High-priority indicators:

— Member satisfaction with Governance.
— Process Time Reduction Rate

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Nice to have indicators:

— Attendance to meetings.
— Number of decisions taken in meeting.

ACTION LINES AND INDICATORS

2.1 Education

Continue to develop and scale-up shared academic offerings that facilitate seamless student interaction across the alliance, enhancing engagement and the overall learning experience

FIRST LEVEL OBJECTIVE

2.1. Consolidate EU-CONEXUS' academic offerings to enhance engagement and impact.

SECOND LEVEL OBJECTIVES

2.1.1 Scale-up proven joint academic offerings and enhance complementary learning experiences across the Alliance.

MAIN ACTION LINES	LEADERS / PATHFINDERS (WHERE SPECIFIED)	PRIORITY
2.1.1.1 Review all current and past academic offerings, identifying success stories, low performing programmes and unsuccessful offerings.	Academic Council	High
2.1.1.2 Identify bachelor programmes facing declining enrolments and explore joint solutions—such as double degrees or coordinated programme pathways—to ensure sustainability and alignment with the EU-CONEXUS thematic	Academic Council	High

2.1.1.3 EU-CONEXUS joint statement establishing the universities' commitment to mutual recognition for enhancing credit transfer in study programmes	Academic Council	High
2.1.1.4 Assign data analysis and educational QA officer to coordinate data collection and analysis across the alliance.	Academic Council	Medium
2.1.1.5 Appoint an independent Academic Facilitator to coordinate the implementation of educational action lines.	Academic Council	Medium
2.1.1.6 Develop a lifelong learning strategy with the involvement of interested EU-CONEXUS partners	Academic Council	Low

INDICATORS:

High-priority indicators:

— Reports of current and past offerings
— Existence of database with courses
— LLL strategy published.
— # of Universities where minors, micro credentials and other courses are recognised.

Nice to have indicators:

— Number of joint academic programs offered.
— Student enrolment in joint offerings.
— Number of courses shared between partners

ACTION LINES AND INDICATORS

2.1 Education

Continue to develop and scale-up shared academic offerings that facilitate seamless student interaction across the alliance, enhancing engagement and the overall learning experience

FIRST LEVEL OBJECTIVE

2.1. Consolidate EU-CONEXUS' academic offerings to enhance engagement and impact.

SECOND LEVEL OBJECTIVES

2.1.2 Improve the student journey to ensure a seamless interaction with EU-CONEXUS.

MAIN ACTION LINES	LEADERS / PATHFINDERS (WHERE SPECIFIED)	PRIORITY
2.1.2.1 Assess and improve the student journey identifying gaps and success factors to develop a remediation/improvement plan (including students in the process and potentially in collaboration with other alliances).	Academic Council	High
2.1.2.2 Develop a staff training plan focused on best practices in student support and implement mechanisms for ongoing feedback and improvement.	Academic Council	Medium

2.1.2.3 Define quality and quantity of metrics to identify key success factors for student journey.	Academic Council	High

INDICATORS:

High-priority indicators:

— Key success factors list.
— Action plan to improve student journey approved.
— Training plan approved.

Nice to have indicators:

— Student Satisfaction Score.
— Number of student complaints.
— Time to resolve student issues.

ACTION LINES AND INDICATORS

2.2 Education

Promote best practices and continuous pedagogical innovation across EU-CONEXUS to uphold and improve academic quality

FIRST LEVEL OBJECTIVE

2.2. Enhance quality and innovation within the curricula.

SECOND LEVEL OBJECTIVES

2.2.1 Facilitate the integration and exchange of proven pedagogical techniques across EU-CONEXUS curricula.

MAIN ACTION LINES	LEADERS / PATHFINDERS (WHERE SPECIFIED)	PRIORITY
2.2.1.1 Review and redesign the Teaching Academy's format (determining online/ blended delivery, thematic coverage, and pedagogical approach) to enhance relevance and impact.	Current Teaching Academy + member of each Institution involved	High
2.2.1.2 Develop and implement a plan for rolling out the new local training approach.	Current Teaching Academy + member of each Institution involved	Medium
2.2.1.3 Secure active commitment from participating institution's management to enhance the integration and adoption by staff of the teaching academy.	All partners	High

2.2.1.4 Design procedures to align faculty and administrative staff development needs with the content and structure of EU-CONEXUS training programmes.	Current Teaching Academy + member of each Institution involved	Medium
2.2.1.5 Create an accessible database defining different teaching techniques/methods and with information on trainers in Teaching Academy.	Current Teaching Academy + member of each Institution involved	Low

INDICATORS:

High-priority indicators:

— Number of teaching academy courses/hours imparted.

Nice to have indicators:

— Number of academic offerings adapted to include innovative pedagogical techniques.

— % of academic staff enrolled in at least one teaching academy initiative.

ACTION LINES AND INDICATORS

2.3 Education

Align academic offerings with current affairs (especially considering the alliance's thematic priorities) and students' evolving academic, professional and personal development needs, to respond to actual market needs

FIRST LEVEL OBJECTIVE

2.3. Align educational offerings with societal challenges, current and emerging sustainability challenges and student needs.

SECOND LEVEL OBJECTIVES

2.3.1 Establish ongoing processes to identify the knowledge, skills and market most beneficial to students, to guide curriculum design and improvement

MAIN ACTION LINES	LEADERS / PATHFINDERS (WHERE SPECIFIED)	PRIORITY
2.3.1.1 Conduct a periodic skill mapping exercise (min. every 2 years).	Academic Council	Medium
2.3.1.2 Leverage insights from skills mapping to design and deliver targeted training that enhances and updates EU-CONEXUS offerings.	Academic Council	Medium

2.3.1.3 Engage the stakeholder network ecosystem to co-develop academic programmes, ensuring relevance, innovation, and alignment with societal and industry needs.	Academic Council	Medium
2.3.1.4 Consolidate and enhance entrepreneurial learning opportunities by promoting the existing courses, activities and support services offered across partner universities, while exploring joint initiatives within EU-CONEXUS	Academic Council	Medium
2.3.1.5 Explore opportunities to enhance collaboration between students and industry via mentorship and project-based/challenge-based cooperation, respecting partner regulations	Academic Council	Low

INDICATORS:

High-priority indicators:

— Employability rate
— Skill map updated, report completed
— # of new study offers.

Nice to have indicators:

— Frequency of skill mapping exercise, number of skills mapped to curricula, alignment score between curriculum and market needs.

ACTION LINES AND INDICATORS

2.3 Education

Align academic offerings with current affairs (especially considering the alliance's thematic priorities) and students' evolving academic, professional and personal development needs, to respond to actual market needs

FIRST LEVEL OBJECTIVE

2.3. Align educational offerings with societal challenges, current and emerging sustainability challenges and student needs.

SECOND LEVEL OBJECTIVES

2.3.2 Enhance academic programmes by embedding research synergies to address societal challenges aligned with EU-CONEXUS' thematic priorities.

MAIN ACTION LINES	LEADERS / PATHFINDERS (WHERE SPECIFIED)	PRIORITY
2.3.2.1 Integrate research skills and methodologies into curricula, with opportunities for students to actively participate in research projects: — Combining minor programs with research projects. — Providing summer schools and other short programmes for different target groups and topics. — Providing a framework for sharing best practices with other member institutions.	Academic Council (with support of Research Council)	High

2.3.2.2 Establish process to engage alliance stakeholders, including alumni to identify gaps and problems within the curricula.	Academic Council	Medium

INDICATORS:

High-priority indicators:

— Annual report of activities
— Number of student participating in research-related initiatives.

Nice to have indicators:

— Number of courses fed by live research.

ACTION LINES AND INDICATORS

3.1 Research

Consolidate and promote research initiatives that address the alliance's challenges and thematic priorities, enhancing EU-CONEXUS' impact on society through innovative solutions and knowledge transfer

FIRST LEVEL OBJECTIVE

3.1. Foster research around EU-CONEXUS challenges and smart urban coastal sustainability thematic areas that benefits society and facilitates innovation transfer.

SECOND LEVEL OBJECTIVES

3.1.1 Align research efforts with EU-CONEXUS challenges to generate meaningful real-world impact.

MAIN ACTION LINES	LEADERS / PATHFINDERS (WHERE SPECIFIED)	PRIORITY
3.1.1.1 Identify and segment target groups aligned with each challenge (including researchers and other stakeholders) and establish an outreach mechanism to communicate the challenges and its impacts on society.	Research Council	High
3.1.1.2 Launch internal funding calls / seed funding to address challenges and support multidisciplinarity.	Research Council	High

3.1.1.3 Launch competition / incentive schemes for researchers that promote multidisciplinary research that addresses EU-CONEXUS challenges and real-world problems	Research Council	Medium
3.1.1.4 Develop a suite of Masters and PhD research topics aligned to EU-CONEXUS challenges as a priority list of research projects and advertise and promote this suite across the alliance.	Research Council	Low

INDICATORS:

High-priority indicators:

— % of research projects mapped to EU-CONEXUS challenges
— Number of applications received for seed funding
— Amount of seed funding allocated



ACTION LINES AND INDICATORS

3.1 Research

Consolidate and promote research initiatives that address the alliance's challenges and thematic priorities, enhancing EU-CONEXUS' impact on society through innovative solutions and knowledge transfer

FIRST LEVEL OBJECTIVE

3.1. Foster research around EU-CONEXUS challenges and smart urban coastal sustainability thematic areas that benefits society and facilitates innovation transfer.

SECOND LEVEL OBJECTIVES

3.1.2 Facilitate innovation and knowledge transfer into society.

MAIN ACTION LINES	LEADERS / PATHFINDERS (WHERE SPECIFIED)	PRIORITY
3.1.2.1 Conduct a review of best practices for knowledge and innovation transfer.	Research Council	High
3.1.2.2. Develop university and Alliance-level guidelines to promote best practices in knowledge transfer: — define, develop and establish an EU-CONEXUS incubator — enhance research dissemination formats by using accessible media and adapting language for the public.	Research Council	High

3.1.2.3. Establish an EU-CONEXUS-level innovation panel to coordinate strategies and promote knowledge transfer at Alliance level.	Research Council	Medium
3.1.2.4. Establish processes to integrate community and societal stakeholders into research process from the outset.	Research Council	Medium
3.1.2.5. Strengthen and expand initiatives that foster innovation and creativity (e.g., such as the Innovation Hub)	Research Council	Low

INDICATORS:

High-priority indicators:

— Knowledge transfer guidelines created and approved
— Number of knowledge transfer initiatives developed inside the incubator.
— Number of activities of dissemination of research results including conferences, workshops, webinars, publications, policy briefs.

Nice to have indicators:

— Number of citations from external stakeholders.
— Percentage of research outputs published in accessible formats.



ACTION LINES AND INDICATORS

3.2 Research

Promote a research ecosystem that facilitates international collaboration, fostering community engagement and advancing the alliance's position as a global research hub

FIRST LEVEL OBJECTIVE

3.2. Enable research collaboration through shared, international initiatives.

SECOND LEVEL OBJECTIVES

3.2.1 Develop an engaging research network to foster collaborative projects.

MAIN ACTION LINES	LEADERS / PATHFINDERS (WHERE SPECIFIED)	PRIORITY
3.2.1.1 Review the model of JRI and its link with Challenge Governance Framework.	Research Council	High
3.2.1.2 Analyze the current role of PDSO and explore opportunities to create centralized support function for identification of competitive calls and proposals formalization.	Research Council	High

3.2.1.3 Enhance the existing research platform (RIIS) towards providing matchmaking for joint research opportunities, exploring existing market solutions.	Research Council	High
3.2.1.4 Provide specific matchmaking events for researchers.	Research Council	High

INDICATORS:

High-priority indicators:

— # of calls identified.
— # of researchers involved.
— # of researchers supported by PDSO.
— Funding and success rate for proposals supported by PDSO.

Nice to have indicators:

— Number of researchers actively using research platform.



ACTION LINES AND INDICATORS

3.2 Research

Promote a research ecosystem that facilitates international collaboration, fostering community engagement and advancing the alliance's position as a global research hub

FIRST LEVEL OBJECTIVE

3.2. Enable research collaboration through shared, international initiatives.

SECOND LEVEL OBJECTIVES

3.2.2 Coordinate efforts to enhance participation and success in international funding opportunities.

MAIN ACTION LINES	LEADERS / PATHFINDERS (WHERE SPECIFIED)	PRIORITY
3.2.2.1. Update and consolidate the research expertise map across all EU-CONEXUS universities to reflect current strengths and identify potential collaboration areas.	Research Council	High
3.2.2.2. **Establish a spin-off consultancy positioning EU-CONEXUS as the European expert in smart urban coastal sustainability, mobilizing its research community to deliver solutions to thematic challenges and provide specialized advisory services.**	Research Council	Medium

3.2.2.3. Analyse the possibility and roll-out plan for spin-off consultancy focused on EU-CONEXUS thematic challenges.	Research Council	Low

INDICATORS:

High-priority indicators:

— Increase in number of project submissions on an annual basis.
— Increase in number of successful project submissions on an annual basis.
— Applications submitted in Horizon Europe.
— Applications approved in Horizon Europe.



ACTION LINES AND INDICATORS

3.3 Research

Develop a seamless research support function that harnesses the strength of human capital to foster collaborative research across the alliance

FIRST LEVEL OBJECTIVE

3.3. Support capacity building to strengthen research and its management across the alliance.

SECOND LEVEL OBJECTIVES

3.3.1 Strengthen the research pipeline by supporting early-career researchers and fostering student involvement.

MAIN ACTION LINES	LEADERS / PATHFINDERS (WHERE SPECIFIED)	PRIORITY
3.3.1.1. Map and evaluate all existing activities across the Alliance that support early-stage researchers and measure their impact and effectiveness.	Research Council (with support of Academic Council)	High
3.3.1.2. Strengthen a joint PhD/cotutelle model to enable co-supervised doctoral research across EU-CONEXUS universities (with aligned procedures, recognition, mobility support and participation in conferences).	Research Council (with support of Academic Council)	High

3.3.1.3 Use the quantified map of existing activities to design targeted initiatives that strengthen student engagement in research across the EU-CONEXUS Alliance.	Research Council (with support of Academic Council)	Medium
3.3.1.4 Establish efficient and transparent communication channels between academics, researchers, and students to support research collaboration and information flow.	Research Council (with support of Academic Council)	Medium
3.3.1.4 Explore the feasibility of an inter-university publishing print	Research Council	Medium

INDICATORS:

High-priority indicators:

— Number of each activity provided (summer school, workshop…).
— Number of participants in research activities.
— Number of co-tutelles and joint PhDs.
— Mobility rate among PhDs.

Nice to have indicators:

— Number of conferences with EU-CONEXUS participation.
— Number of published articles.
— % of research outputs involving students.



ACTION LINES AND INDICATORS

3.3 Research

Develop a seamless research support function that harnesses the strength of human capital to foster collaborative research across the alliance

FIRST LEVEL OBJECTIVE

3.3. Support capacity building to strengthen research and its management across the alliance.

SECOND LEVEL OBJECTIVES

3.3.2 Intensify research mobility and knowledge exchange.

MAIN ACTION LINES	LEADERS / PATHFINDERS (WHERE SPECIFIED)	PRIORITY
3.3.2.1. Align research mobility funds with respective EU-CONEXUS challenges and secure funding for mobility research.	Research Council	High
3.3.2.2. Conduct and analysis of the intra-alliance mobility process with the goal of simplifying and streamlining this process both for researchers and admin staff.	Research Council	Low

INDICATORS:

High-priority indicators:

— Number of mobility events/ actions implemented

— Mobility rate among PhDs.





ACTION LINES AND INDICATORS

4.1 Internal Community

Strengthen and sustain efforts to develop a community that fosters a shared identity among students and staff as members of a transnational alliance, supported by common initiatives, shared values, and seamless mobility throughout

FIRST LEVEL OBJECTIVE

4.1. Foster a sense of belonging to the alliance by all its staff and students.

SECOND LEVEL OBJECTIVES

4.1.1 Strengthen the sense of belonging to a transnational Alliance across the academic community.

MAIN ACTION LINES	LEADERS / PATHFINDERS (WHERE SPECIFIED)	PRIORITY
4.1.1.1 Define the 'higher goal' of EU-CONEXUS that the Alliance wants to convey to the community (both internally and externally).	Executive Council, Research Council, Academic Council	High
4.1.1.2 Implement an ongoing process at each institution (e.g., periodic survey) to measure the involvement and knowledge of EU-CONEXUS of internal community and identify appropriate incentives to encourage participation.	Management Board	Medium

4.1.1.3 Scale IAM Student–inspired activities to every campus and create a shared communication space to strengthen community and belonging.	Academic Council, All partners	Medium

INDICATORS:

Nice to have indicators:

— % of alliance community reporting awareness and understanding of EU-CONEXUS (via periodic survey)
— % of staff and students participating in EU-CONEXUS events
— % of staff aware of EU-CONEXUS support services



ACTION LINES AND INDICATORS

4.2 Internal Community

Provide the resources and infrastructure that enable seamless cross-border student interaction and empower students to express their views with confidence

FIRST LEVEL OBJECTIVE

4.2. Deepen and advance the community already established, ensuring strong student engagement across all study levels.

SECOND LEVEL OBJECTIVES

4.2.1 Consolidate and promote student internationalisation through expanded mobility (virtual, blended and physical) and other virtual initiatives.

MAIN ACTION LINES	LEADERS / PATHFINDERS (WHERE SPECIFIED)	PRIORITY
4.2.1.1 Identify and develop short mobility activities which are recognized as part of the curricula of our partner universities and define minimum requirements (e.g., minimum number of partners involved).	Executive Council, Research Council and Academic Council	High
4.2.1.2 Establish a seasonal mobility window (e.g., dedicated week) in EU-CONEXUS across all partner institutions (for mobility, training, workshops...).	All partners, Research Council and Academic Council	Medium

4.2.1.3

Establish process to gather feedback from students participating in mobility activities.	Academic Council, Management Board, Student Board	Medium

INDICATORS:

High-priority indicators:

— Number of mobility programmes implemented by each University.
— Number of students involved in mobility initiatives.

Nice to have indicators:

— No. of virtual / in-person events delivered across the alliance (e.g., employability/ job-readiness event from a career network perspective)
— No. of students participating in virtual / in-person events or transnational activities (e.g., online workshops, shared courses, online career events).



ACTION LINES AND INDICATORS

4.2 Internal Community

Provide the resources and infrastructure that enable seamless cross-border student interaction and empower students to express their views with confidence

FIRST LEVEL OBJECTIVE

4.2. Deepen and advance the community already established, ensuring strong student engagement across all study levels.

SECOND LEVEL OBJECTIVES

4.2.2 Facilitate student engagement within EU-CONEXUS initiatives.

MAIN ACTION LINES	LEADERS / PATHFINDERS (WHERE SPECIFIED)	PRIORITY
4.2.2.1 Empower more students to be ambassadors for EU-CONEXUS activities.	Management Board, Student Board	High
4.2.2.2 Rethink the incentive models for students taking an active part in EU-CONEXUS initiatives.	Management Board, Student Board	High
4.2.2.3 Mapping of student offers and activities (excluding academic offers) and analysis of their success rate.	Management Board, Student Board	High

4.2.2.4 Integrate EU-CONEXUS into international offices at each university.	Management Board, All partners	Medium
4.2.2.5 Empower institutional student bodies to actively participate in and shape the EU-CONEXUS Student Board, while broadening the Board's role and responsibilities.	All partners, WG leader, Student Board	Medium
4.2.2.6 Develop a plan of common actions, events and cultural activities to be implemented at each University.	All partners, WG leader, Student Board	Medium
4.2.2.7 Develop short local student-led activities to promote EU-CONEXUS.	All partners, WG leader, Student Board	Low

INDICATORS:

High-priority indicators:

— Number of ambassadors appointed.
— Number of events and cultural activities in each academic year.

Nice to have indicators:

— Number of student-led initiatives delivering activities per year
— % of ambassadors who meet annual engagement criteria (e.g., participation in training, promotion of minimum X events, contribution to local EU-CONEXUS activities).
— No. students awarded (e.g. ECTS or University Award etc.) for involvement in the SB and Ambassador scheme



ACTION LINES AND INDICATORS

4.3 Internal Community

Strengthen the alliance's human capital through professional development (particularly in language and intercultural skills) and improving staff mobility to support ongoing collaboration

FIRST LEVEL OBJECTIVE

4.3. Facilitate internationalisation and professional development for all staff, both academic and non-academic.

SECOND LEVEL OBJECTIVES

4.3.1 Support the professional development and internationalisation of staff through the exchange of best practices.

MAIN ACTION LINES	LEADERS / PATHFINDERS (WHERE SPECIFIED)	PRIORITY
4.3.1.1 Map and evaluate existing University policies on Professional Development Training, identifying gaps and ensuring alignment between Universities 'requirements and EU-CONEXUS training.	Executive Council, WG leader, All partners	High
4.3.1.2 Review and update existing offerings for staff (academic, administrative, researchers) and typologies of PDT (e.g., job shadowing, co-teaching, sharing best practices, peer to peer support, research mobility programmes).	Executive Council, WG leader, All partners	High

4.3.1.3 Create an office for capacity building of PDT and internationalisation of staff.	Executive Council, WG leader, Management Board	Medium
4.3.1.4 Analyse the possibility to participate in Key Action 1 (KA1) of Erasmus + for PDT development.	Executive Council, WG leader, Management Board	Medium
4.3.1.5 Develop an ERASMUS Umbrella Agreement to streamline mobility across all disciplines and partner universities.	Executive Council, WG leader, Management Board	Medium

INDICATORS:

High-priority indicators:

— PDT review report
— Report outlining the different types of PDT available
— Number of PDT offerings.
— Number of staff participating in EU-CONEXUS PDT activities within each training type.
— Number of cross-institution staff collaborations (e.g., co-teaching, best-practice exchanges, joint workshops).



ACTION LINES AND INDICATORS

5.1 External Community

Increase public awareness (especially around youth) surrounding EU-CONEXUS challenges and attract future students to higher education and research

FIRST LEVEL OBJECTIVE

5.1. Promote awareness and engagement concerning EU-CONEXUS challenges.

SECOND LEVEL OBJECTIVES

5.1.1 Increase awareness and engagement of younger generations through targeted EU-CONEXUS initiatives.

MAIN ACTION LINES	LEADERS / PATHFINDERS (WHERE SPECIFIED)	PRIORITY
5.1.1.1 Define specific activities for engaging prospective students and their teachers (including physical visits, contests, etc.).	Academic Council, Alumni Network	High
5.1.1.2 Develop an information package that communicates the EU-CONEXUS educational offerings to prospect students, highlighting benefits such as employability, mobility, and international experience.	Academic Council,Joint Communication Unit	Medium

5.1.1.3 Map existing partnerships with high schools and identify promising ones to strengthen collaboration and outreach efforts.	Academic Council, WG Leader, Management Board	Medium
5.1.1.4 Engage students/youth networks (ESU, ESN, AEGEE, Scouts) through collaborative webinars and micro-events designed to raise awareness and promote EU-CONEXUS opportunities.	Academic Council, Management Board, Student Board	Low

INDICATORS:

High-priority indicators:

— Number of engaged prospective students/teachers/ high schools interacting with EU-CONEXUS.

Nice to have indicators:

— Number of prospect students who have been informed and then apply to EU-CONEXUS universities, along with their corresponding academic programs.



ACTION LINES AND INDICATORS

5.1 External Community

Increase public awareness (especially around youth) surrounding EU-CONEXUS challenges and attract future students to higher education and research

FIRST LEVEL OBJECTIVE

5.1. Promote awareness and engagement concerning EU-CONEXUS challenges.

SECOND LEVEL OBJECTIVES

5.1.2 Raise public awareness of EU-CONEXUS through targeted outreach and engagement activities.

MAIN ACTION LINES	LEADERS / PATHFINDERS (WHERE SPECIFIED)	PRIORITY
5.1.2.1 Actively identify and participate in established events, such as conferences, fairs, and academic gatherings, to increase visibility of EU-CONEXUS.	Research Council, Academic Council, Management Board, Joint Communication Unit	High
5.1.2.2 Enhance the physical presence and visibility of EU-CONEXUS across member university campuses and their surrounding cities through coordinated branding and outreach efforts.	All Partners, Joint Communication Unit	Medium

5.1.2.3 Analyze the portfolio of existing events and conferences at each partner university to identify synergies that could enhance the promotion of EU-CONEXUS.	Management Board, Joint Communication Unit	Low
5.1.2.4 Organize public events, such as coastal sustainability fairs and port open days, in collaboration with local governments	All partners, Joint Communication Unit	Low

INDICATORS:

High-priority indicators:

— Number of physical mentions around cities.
— Number of events that EU-CONEXUS participates in.



ACTION LINES AND INDICATORS

5.2 External Community

Continue to collaborate with local stakeholders (industry, policymakers, etc.) and launch initiatives that address the alliance's challenges with the goal of furthering EU-CONEXUS' societal and academic impact

FIRST LEVEL OBJECTIVE

5.2. Engage with local ecosystems to co-create solutions around EU-CONEXUS challenges.

SECOND LEVEL OBJECTIVES

5.2.1 Shape public policy around EU-CONEXUS priorities.

MAIN ACTION LINES	LEADERS / PATHFINDERS (WHERE SPECIFIED)	PRIORITY
5.2.1.1 Identify and map legislative and regulatory challenges that affect EU-CONEXUS academic offerings, mobility, and collaboration across member countries.	Research Council, Academic Council, Management Board	High
5.2.1.2 Establish process to collaborate with other university alliances to advocate for legislative and policy change at national and European levels.	Governing Board, Executive Council, Alliance Coord Team	High

5.2.1.3 Develop and present discussion papers addressing EU-CONEXUS challenges to inform and engage society, policymakers, and stakeholders.	Research Council and Academic Council, Joint Communication Unit	Medium
5.2.1.4 Create informal regional ecosystem with stakeholders: university alliances and policymakers.	All partners, Governing Board, Management Board, Joint Communication Unit	Medium

INDICATORS:

High-priority indicators:

— Policy changes achieved.
— Number of discussion papers published per year.



ACTION LINES AND INDICATORS

5.2 External Community

Continue to collaborate with local stakeholders (industry, policymakers, etc.) and launch initiatives that address the alliance's challenges with the goal of furthering EU-CONEXUS' societal and academic impact

FIRST LEVEL OBJECTIVE

5.2. Engage with local ecosystems to co-create solutions around EU-CONEXUS challenges.

SECOND LEVEL OBJECTIVES

5.2.2 Find synergies between EU-CONEXUS initiatives and local challenges to co-create solutions.

MAIN ACTION LINES	LEADERS / PATHFINDERS (WHERE SPECIFIED)	PRIORITY
5.2.2.1 Establish think tanks focused on key EU-CONEXUS thematic areas by identifying and engaging experts and specialists from diverse disciplines across member institutions and external stakeholders.	Research Council and Academic Council	High
5.2.2.2 Identify improvements to enhance and continue the Stakeholder Academy programme.	Executive Council, Management Board	High

5.2.2.3 Implement industrial PhDs and PhDs funded by public institutions.	Research Council	Medium
5.2.2.4 Develop and implement joint exchange initiatives for young researchers with external partners.	Research Council	Medium

INDICATORS:

High-priority indicators:

— Number of project proposals developed with external stakeholders.
— Success rate of project proposals.

Nice to have indicators:

— # of successful exchanges.

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