STYX

EUT+ STATUS AND STRUCTURE EXPERIENCE

Deliverable 2.3

General principles of processes, juridical, technical, and sociological analysis

WP2

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1 Purpose of the document

This document is the deliverable D2.3 of the STYX Erasmus+ Project. It encompasses various crucial aspects for facilitating the rollout of the alliances' roadmap, including the establishment of a legal entity.

On the one hand, it delineates the governance structure, process architecture, and procedures, as well as the various roles, bodies, and responsibilities essential for realizing the EUt+ vision within the alliance as a whole. This depiction is the outcome of numerous iterations conducted over the past approximately four years since the alliance's inception.

On the other hand, it introduces the EUt+ approach aimed at facilitating the gradual harmonization of its member institutions towards the development of a European super campus. This is crucial for ensuring a seamless operation and fostering social acceptance of the previously outlined scheme. To achieve this, the document makes public the first release of the EUt+ Standards and Guidelines for Harmonization (EUt+ SGH). These standards aim to describe what implies embedding EUt+ within the member universities, while the guidelines offer principles to enhance comprehension and support. Despite presenting a comprehensive list in this deliverable, it is important to note that these standards and guidelines are not final but represent the outcomes of work conducted in WP2 of the pilot project. They will be subject to regular updates as the alliance progresses in its strategic objectives.

The document incorporates recommendations arising from the efforts of STYX WP2, derived through the analysis of self-assessment reports generated by EUt+ members and the insights provided by external experts from other European University alliances.

This deliverable does not aim to interconnect the alliance processes, bodies, and harmonization approach with the experimental analysis of the EUt+ legal entity, as that specific aspect is the primary focus of STYX WP3.

Sections 1 and 2 delineate the document's purpose and an executive summary, respectively. Section 3 outlines the ambition of EUt+, elucidating our vision for convergence in education, research, and innovation. Section 4 provides an overview of the governance structure in EUt+, along with its key roles and bodies. The methodology employed in crafting the EUt+ Standards and Guidelines for Harmonization is detailed in Section 5, followed by the comprehensive listing of these standards and guidelines in Section 6, and Section 7 shows the main outputs and results. Section 8 draws the most relevant insights and recommendations

derived from the work, while Section 9 presents the primary conclusions and outlines the subsequent steps in the process. ANNEX I features the template for EUt+ members' self-assessment reports.

2 Executive summary

European University alliances are extremely complex ecosystems formed by a large diversity of stakeholders, including the students, academic and non-academic staff, the university management teams, regional and national authorities, accreditation agencies, the European Commission, relevant associations, networks, higher education experts, consultants, etc. Preliminary analysis and the experiences accumulated by other university networks encourage the creation of joint legal entities that can support the objectives of the initiative regarding hiring staff, handling of shared expenses, design, and implementation of common offices, provision of joint services, etc. However, in such complex environments, a single joint legal entity can neither replace the role of the member universities, nor can it host the whole alliance governance, committees, and boards (at least not currently). This document is built upon the understanding that regardless of the final goal of the alliance and its members, the purpose of the joint legal entity is to add value and to complement the work done by the members for the goal of becoming a European super campus. Consequently, its premises are:

- Most of the work done at EUt+ is done by its members, and this will continue to be so at least during the second phase of EUt+ (that started in November 2023 and will end in October 2027).
- The establishment of a joint legal entity will help consolidate the initiative and bring value, but it will not alter the previous statement, i.e., the first experimental legal entity of EUt+ will not replace the current universities, that will still have a legal status in their respective countries.
- The STYX proposal considers a legal entity for the provision of joint IT data-based services to the members. The provision of joint degrees or hiring academic staff is not considered within the scope of the STYX project.
- It is only by harmonization that we can achieve a truly frictionless experience for our stakeholders, particularly for our students and staff.
- The scope of the harmonization shall cover areas of potential disparity among the members. Since the ambition of EUt+ is an eventual merger, the approach must include all the missions of the universities.
- Europe has shown its capacity to define harmonization standards that boost European cooperation in the European Higher Education Area, fostering mutual trust, transparency, and better recognition of the provisions done by other European institutions.

This document describes:

- The current description of the EUt+ governance structure, bodies, and key procedures. This is mostly an organized, curated, and coherent compilation of information included in multiple agreements of the members since the beginning of the alliance. Due to the high demand for transformation and experimentation of the European University Initiatives, the EUt+ governance is subject to regular updates derived from a continuous improvement system.
- The standards of what it means to be an EUt+ campus, and the guidelines for its implementation. Inspired by the EQAR ESG, we describe a comprehensive description of our standards so that the members can evaluate the adoption of the EUt+ vision in their campus and act accordingly. The EUt+ members use the guidelines to review their internal processes and be able to understand what impedes, limits, or lingers the harmonization of their internal working schemes with the agreed EUt+ vision.
- The results from the pilot experiment of using a first list of EUt+ Standards and Guidelines for Harmonization to understand the penetration of the EUt+ in its member universities, identify obstacles, and find solutions for the successful implementation of the objectives. The results are complemented with key insights, conclusions, and recommendations to different stakeholders such as the partner universities, the alliance's Secretariat General, the Rectors Board, externals stakeholders, and other alliances sharing similar issues and willing to explore this solution.

3 Introduction and context

3.1 Ambition: from a university network to a merger

EUt+ is a consortium of nine institutions that was selected as one of the European University Alliances funded through the 2020 Erasmus+ call and renewed through the 2023 Erasmus+ call. All members are technological universities from across Europe, diverse in culture and historical trajectories, that share the commitment to form new generations of European citizens and empower them with the mindset and appropriate skills to serve society. For this, EUt+ aims at developing a new model of the university, one that requires a fundamentally new approach to technology, deeply integrating humanities and social sciences in the way education and research are performed to ensure that the people we train, the research we undertake and the innovations we foster are geared to addressing global societal challenges such as climate change. EUt+ is the only European Alliance where the members have stated publicly to go for full integration and have agreed on an approach to enable this. Yet, it is not only this very ambitious goal that makes EUt+ unique, but also *how* it is to be achieved: an integration through gradual pooling of activities means that we aim to become fully Europeanised, rather than focusing on a few activities/missions and keeping the rest as it is. We are gradually and strategically—via the coordination provided by the EUt+ steering bodies (see section 6)—transforming what exists into a new university adapted to the challenges of the mid-21st century.

The choice of a full merger is derived from the specific ambitions of EUt+ and stands out as the optimal system leading to desired objectives. Broadly, we can assume three main options for collaboration among universities in the European Universities Initiative:

- First, a network of universities with a loose integration in which the members act as preferred partners for some of the initiatives related to the theme of the alliance. Some joint programs are possible, but they represent a small offer compared to the global academic offer of the institution. In such a loose scheme of cooperation, the need for harmonization is relatively minor.
- Second, a confederal level in which the members possibly fund a common association or foundation that takes care of some of the actions of the alliance. Joint degrees are envisaged, but these mostly represent new ones, and not the transformation of the academic offer. Some common offices, possibly hosted by the joint entity, provide services for the goals shared

among the members. Still, the majority of the community of the universities does not have direct contact in their daily life with the alliance, and their decisions, and implementations are mostly independent and not harmonized in all the campuses. This option demands a certain level of harmonization, but this can remain at the level of individual initiatives, or joint programs, without the need for a global perspective for the whole institution.

+ Third, a merger in which the integration is as full as possible. The Alliance becomes an integral part of the university processes and daily life. Some new joint degrees can be created, but the major share of the academic offer gets Europeanised. There are common offices for all the relevant missions of a university, and the main strategic decisions and actions take the global goals into account. In such a tight scheme of collaboration, success is only possible with a holistic institutional approach of harmonization towards European common standards. The principle of subsidiarity, both top-down and bottom-up, is essential to ensure that management is as close as possible to everyone, with a shared strategy and ambition, comprehensive management and a single *affectio societatis*.

EUt+ has positioned itself on the third choice—a merger—as early as its 2020 proposal and Mission Statement. It has appeared indeed that in the specific cases of its eight initial members—now expanded to nine—, being a campus of the European University of Technology would bring more visibility and relevance to each member than staying as it is. This choice has proved relevant in the pilot phase of EUt+ (see subsection below) and the merger process is thus meant to intensify in the deployment phase as shown by the recurring Mission Statement and vision of EUt+. The integration path developed hereafter proves necessary for a full merger, which itself appears necessary for optimal benefiting from an EUI in the case of EUt+ members.

Integrating two institutions is already a long and sinuous process, even if they are geographically close, complementary in disciplines, and aligned in values. We are well aware that integrating nine institutions in nine different countries, with partially overlapping research and teaching provision is a great challenge, maybe the greatest in the respective histories of each of our member institutions. Our process of integration is guided by the standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area (see section 5). Our long-term roadmap for merging our universities includes a progressive shift from a confederal to a federal model, which implies a consequential transfer of power from our universities to EUt+. This shift has deep implications both at an individual institutional level and at a national level and requires a proper alignment between

all concerned actors. It is not realistic (or desirable) to imagine that it can happen at the same speed in all countries and for all universities.

During the next four years, we foresee a hybrid model in which some universities, in agreement with their national ministries, push forward faster and implement more ambitious structural changes that prefigure a possible intergovernmental agreement that would enable a merger. These universities would assume the status of "federal" members and commit to implementing all EUt+ processes and aligning their internal governance, processes, and policies. Other universities will need longer before being able to move ahead, because of national legal restrictions or/and local institutional context. They will temporarily be "confederated" members. It is important to underline that the condition of "federated" and "confederal" is not permanent but is meant to enable certain universities to test new models and integrate more rapidly. Furthermore, it is not absolute, and all members will always be welcomed to join any new initiative.

3.2 Significant progress towards merging

Over the course of the first phase of EUt+, we have made significant inroads in setting up the building blocks that will allow us to consolidate our partnership moving forward. Building on this foundation, we are aiming to take our partnership to the next level and consolidate the backbone of a fully merged university super campus. The Secretariat General team has been managing communication flows and processes across EUt+ and paving the way toward the first backbone of EUt+ governance structures. Integrating the strategy of EUt+ into the institutional fabric of each member university, accelerating buy-in from the wider communities, and scaling up activities from pilots, is a complex, long-term endeavour, especially when it involves entities with different institutional practices and from diverse cultural backgrounds, in addition to heterogenous regulatory frameworks. To overcome the complexity, common structures covering all academic and support activities, spanning from education and research to administration and IT processes, are to be implemented at the EUt+ level. Importantly, these entities will not add another "bureaucratic" layer, but are built from what already exists, and will relevantly integrate based on an analysis of practices. For example, the creation of the "EUt+ Erasmus Common Office"—which is made up of one officer and one student from each of the EUt+ campuses—, together with the "EUt+ International Team Coordination Office", has allowed the Alliance to make significant progress to support the structuring of our mobility and multilingualism strategy as part of our overarching goal to deliver a "Europe for everyone". EUt+ operations must come to

be not “one more thing to do”, but on the contrary, be so fully and intimately integrated into our core mission that they make one with them.

3.3 Convergence in Education

In education, EUt+ members have defined a trajectory of convergence of national curricula towards European common training programs so as to build European degrees in engineering at Bachelor and Master levels (which we have dubbed “EUt+ engineering programmes”).

Common curricula are the backbone of the European University of Technology. The time spent at the European University of Technology will constitute a decisive experience in the lives of all students and learners. It will provide them with the practical and theoretical foundations necessary to navigate a complex and evolving environment, empowered with valuable degrees as responsible, ethical European citizens ready for the challenges of the job market, rich in a European network of peers, equipped with intellectual and cultural curiosity, entrepreneurial mindset, open-mindedness, and civic values.

Our future European degrees in technology studies, engineering, and design are key. For our members, it is the way forward towards our unique vision and alignment. For the European Union, it constitutes a key milestone towards a better integration of higher education, that other HEIs can learn from and scale up, in order to accelerate the transformation of an open and inclusive higher education system in Europe. For students and learners, it is an important acknowledgment of their European identity.

Three years ago, our eight institutions differed in many ways with regard to their educational offer. Some disciplines and programs overlapped naturally, but the detailed courses, content, calendar, evaluation, etc. could differ notably. Heading towards a multi-campus university model, the curricula will eventually be aligned in content, quality, and format. During the first phase, our students and staff have, in a bottom-up manner, formed 12 clusters — a group of already existing national curricula, in a given subject, from at least three member institutions. This group of clusters aims at an accelerated convergence towards a joint European degree with a single academic regulation, where every student can move freely across

participating EUt+ campuses[1]. We agreed on the principles underlying these joint programmes, such as generic principles of a student's curriculum, and curricula convergence trajectory, as well as adopted and adapted the 12 characteristics of the European degree for the EUt+ Bachelor/Master engineering curricula. Importantly, we have reached an agreement on the automatic recognition of ECTS, a common framework of competencies and a common reference guide for our up-and-coming European curricula.

3.4 Convergence in Research

In research, the members of the European University of Technology defined a trajectory of convergence towards common research institutes across Europe to actively enable joint research activities via EUt+ Research Institutes (ERIs)[2]. An ERI is a group of researchers and academics from the EUt+ member universities joining efforts and infrastructures either on an inter- or transdisciplinary topic, field or on a concentrated specific research domain or area. The emerging institutes are envisioned to become a point of reference for research in Europe. While each EUt+ member will allocate resources by providing infrastructure and at least one new Ph.D. student stipend and their environment (e.g., project costs such as consumables, conference attendance, etc.) per year for the first three to four years, the financial sustainability of each ERI is contingent on the acquisition and achievement of competitive projects and external funding. To this end, each institute develops a strategic plan including specific indicators. Moreover, our research community can now take advantage of the network and support of the ERO (European Research Office).

3.5 Convergence in Innovation

In innovation, we have laid the groundwork for the development and coordination of knowledge-creating teams that boost and align the respective R&I strategies of the eight members, and that leverage our non-HEI partner network and regional complementarities, in order to accelerate knowledge and technology transfer

[1] The cluster works towards a common pedagogical model based on the description given in the European Degree in Engineering EUt+ reference guide – 2021 09 MoA for the creation of EUt+ Bachelor and Master degrees.pdf

[2] 2021 11 Creation of ERIs - EUt+ European research institutes.pdf.

opportunities. Our ultimate goal is that all consortium members embrace the paradigm shift in the way HEIs instil entrepreneurship, innovation awareness, and training, and seek whole institution improvement, by embedding and adopting an entrepreneurial culture across all their operations. We have, during the first phase of the initiative, (i) established the framework structures and conditions for members of our communities to create or develop their businesses and start-ups and (ii) improved the quality of education/training through the co-creation of formal and informal courses that allow students to develop an entrepreneurial mindset. We have also provided opportunities for students to work collaboratively across disciplines and across our international locations ensuring that mindsets embed international and interdisciplinary approaches. We have done this through international boot camps, showcase events, and collaborating on our good practices. The work has a strong climate and inclusion emphasis. We have an established community of 60 “inclusive entrepreneurship educators” who participate in training, knowledge-sharing, and practice-sharing initiatives.

4 Roles and bodies in EUt+

4.1 History of the Alliance's governance structure

The overall governance system of EUt+ results from a continuous evolution. The main representative functions in this structure are carried out by the representative bodies of EUt+, which are the Sectoral Committees, the Student Board, and the Rectors Board working for EUt+ on its Europeanisation and internal harmonization. These bodies are accompanied in the process and supported in their work by the Secretariat General as the EUt+ Executive body for the daily management, operations organization, support, and strategy development, and by the Supervisory Body (formerly Governing Board) for the supervision and balancing of interests of all EUt+ stakeholders.

First, with the Memorandum of Agreements on the Common Roadmap signed in September 2021 in Cyprus, the members agreed to initiate the process towards full institutional integration. A Secretariat General has been set up for managing communication flows and processes across EUt+ and providing a first backbone of EUt+ governance structures. In the line of pooling resources, a key point of our strategy of governance creation is to ensure the participation of individual universities' top management staff (Vice-presidents/Vice-rectors, Heads of department) in EUt+ governance bodies, initially as WP/Task leaders/managers of the various Alliance projects and therefore members of the Steering Committee and later in new emerging bodies (committees and offices). Through the presence of Vice Presidents in the Sectoral Committees we aim at ensuring an alignment, and increasingly an integration, of actions and processes at the respective institutions in education, research, innovation, and IT service provision. In this context, some of the members have or are in the process of setting up a specific position of "Vice-president for EUt+". In parallel with the committees, we have set up supporting offices to enable coordination on a technical or administrative level (EUt+ Research office, EUt+ Innovation and Technology Transfer Office, Erasmus+ Common Office, International Team Coordination Office).

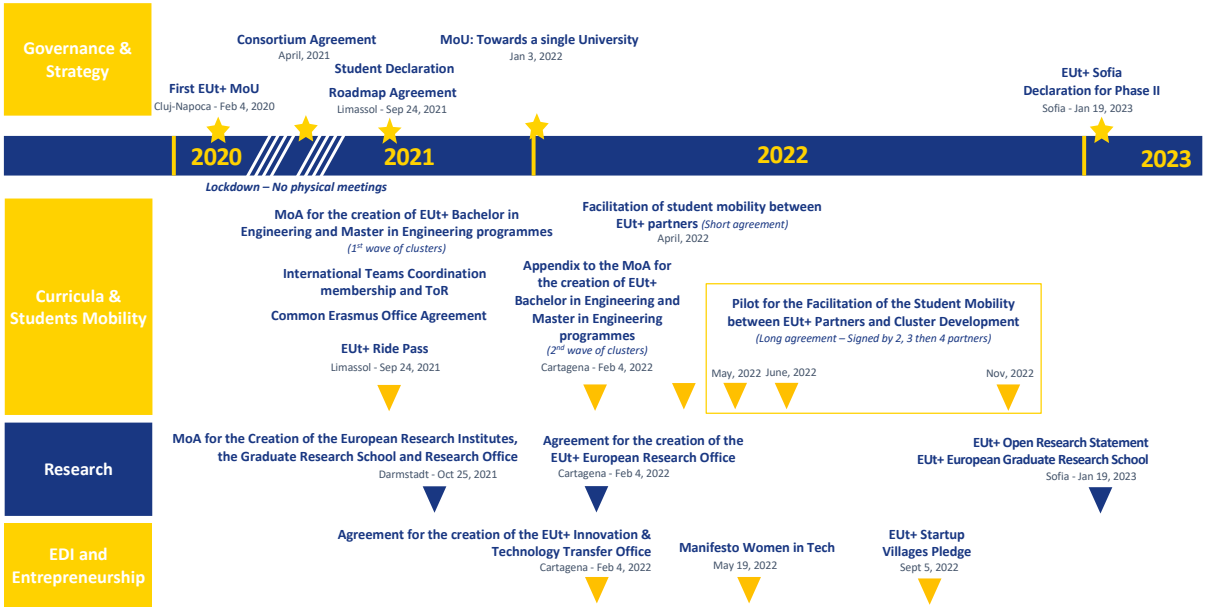

Figure 1: Timeline of main MoA and agreements that progressively structure EUt+

4.2 Principles of the Alliance's governance structure

EUt+ is not creating an "umbrella" or "parallel" structure to run the European University. Our objective of merging leads us to propose a twofold convergence process:

- *bottom-up*: the member universities themselves are evolving for greater coordination, harmonization, and pooling;
- *top-down*: through its steering bodies (see section 6), EUt+ is working to ensure the cohesion of the system and its step-by-step convergence. It also prefigures the later managing bodies of the single, multi-campus European University of Technology.

The enhanced governance structure that we are setting is designed to ensure that we move beyond the short-term project logic of EU funding, to set up an institutional backbone that enables a merger of all or some EUt+ members that:

- is compatible with and considers the institutional level governance setup and decision-making processes at the member universities;

- strikes a better balance in terms of ensuring the involvement of different groups of partner communities, while keeping decision-making efficient and effective;
- ensures continuity of development in case of strong disagreement on certain points;
- brings our communities together, so that they spontaneously push for integration.

The governance architecture of EUt+ results from a continuous evolution of the bodies during the first phase and the inputs given by external reviews. In particular, the EUt+ governing organization must:

- Integrate all the stakeholders (especially the students).
- Evolve to encompass a much larger community of adopters that has grown exponentially from the team involved in the submission of the first proposal.
- Transfer know-how and capacity building from the more experienced participants to those less familiar with the European systems and programs.
- Ensure the legitimacy of the decision-making and representation bodies.
- Define clear roles for every participant.
- Maintain the ambition and the agility needed to deeply transform the member universities, as declared in our Mission Statement.

Thus, the target governance system is organized around three main functions[3]:

- The daily management and strategy development are handled by the general secretariat;
- The representative bodies of the members, discussing (sectoral committees and student board) and validating decisions (Rectors Board)
- The supervisory body (formerly Governing Board, to become Supervisory Board in phase 2).

This balance was achieved through extensive discussions, compromises, and testing, as well as pragmatic constraints, generally related to the heavy workload of people with a formal decision-making role, but who have to be involved in EUt+ activities in addition to their day-to-day workload in the member institutions. And,

[3] It should be noted that this governance model has strong similarities with numerous intergovernmental or supranational organizations, such as the European Union. Here, the analogy of the three functions can be seen quite clearly with the European Commission, the European Council, and the European Parliament. The case of the EGTC in the "provision of common services" function is analogous to European agencies.

as previously mentioned, all this is still being shaped by a strong team that meets regularly to gradually build up the EUt+ bodies, but above all to develop the mindset and general ownership.

Additionally, the need for a clear set of procedures that would apply indifferently to all decision-making bodies mentioned hereafter is observed. These procedures are to be understood on two levels:

+ They apply to all decision-making bodies in EUt+ to ensure continuity and complementarity between bodies,
+ The way they are applied differs to ensure the procedures do not restrict but complement the specific objectives of a given body.

The procedures are under construction and may be organized into structural procedures (e.g., chairing of meetings, quorum, ending a board or committee, liability) and operational procedures (e.g., agenda, invitations to meetings, decision-making, and passing of a resolution, minutes). The detailed procedures are to be refined and applied to hereafter mentioned bodies.

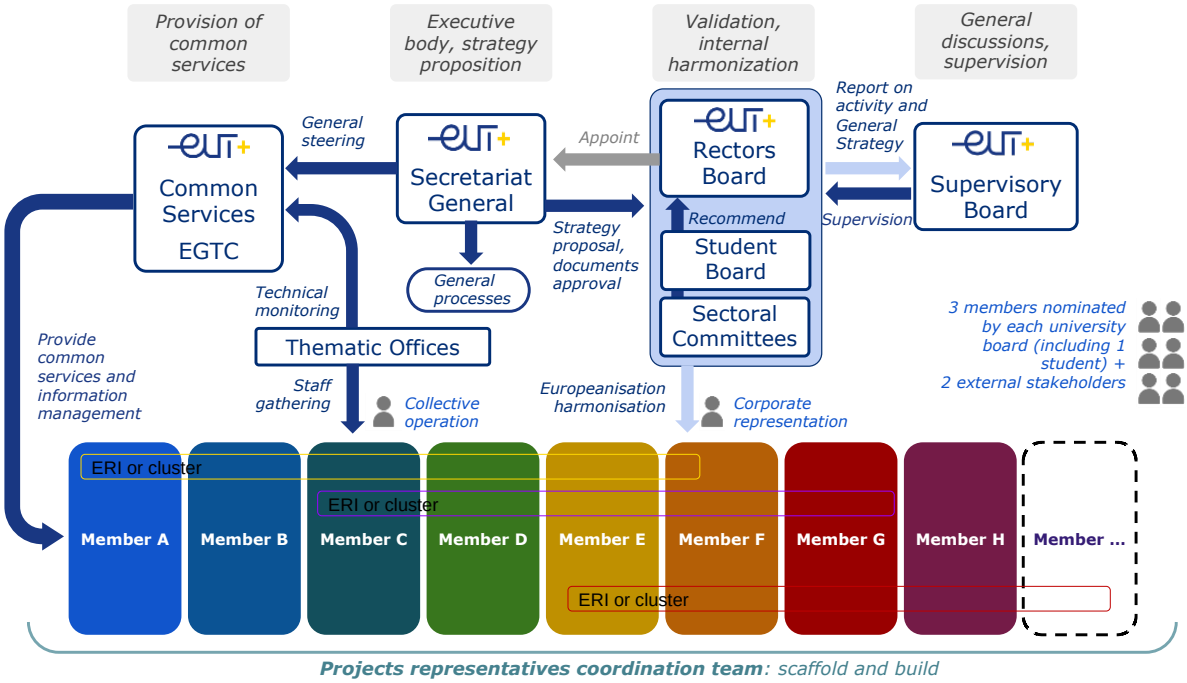

Figure 2: Partial and simplified description of the general organization of EUt+.

4.3 Composition of the Alliance's governance structure

Collective activities are broken down as follows:

+ Those that remain at the level of the member institutions but imply a transformation for alignment with the EUt+ strategy and joint operation. The participants of the specific activities dedicate a share of their time to EUt+ questions, and the other to member-level inputs. They are chaired by one of the members. They have mainly led to the creation of offices (for joint coordination offices), clusters (for national curricula that converge on European curricula), and European Research Institutes (for groupings of research activities).
+ Those with a greater level of integration require a common entity acting for and at the service of all members. This will lead to the creation of EGTC "EUt+ Common Services".

General principles of interaction are given in the above chart (Figure 2: Partial and simplified description of the general organization of EUt+). The general organization of EUt+ goes as follows:

4.4 The Secretariat General (SG)

The Secretariat General is the body that organizes and develops EUt+ daily, this is the Executive body. It supports all other bodies in their work and meeting organization, from the planning of the minutes to assuring alignment with the alliance's general strategy and the evolution of the European context.

Its roles are:

+ To ensure the effective daily management and operation of EUt+, and the monitoring of processes (assisted by the Project Support Office).
+ To provide strategic intelligence to the different bodies of EUt+.
+ To recommend technical and strategical changes and orientations.
+ To ensure that EUt+'s ambition, European objectives, and Mission Statement are fulfilled.
+ To help the members in capacity building, especially "Europeanising"
+ To ensure that objectives are agreed on by consensus with all stakeholders.
+ To represent EUt+ in current affairs and negotiate on behalf of EUt+, especially with the European Commission and other Alliances or stakeholders.

The SG is formed by:

- the *kernel*: a full-time person, usually an academic, delegated by each member university who works transversally for all EUt+, whose role is to drive and organize;
- the *general management team*, ensuring administration and facilitation of processes;
- the *technical expert team*, ensuring capacity building.

4.5 The Rectors Board, the Student Board and the Sectoral Committees

These bodies ensure confederal representation: they gather the members' elected representatives (when necessary, additional relevant participants are invited depending on the topic). Their roles include:

- Discussing (all boards and committees) and validating the decisions (Rectors Board)
- Sharing good practices and ensuring institutional convergence
- Transforming practices and aligning goals in member institutions
- Giving recommendations on development and orientation proposals

Rectors Board

- The board consists of the Rector, President, or Director of each member as voting members. The Secretary-General is invited.
- The Rectors Board is chaired by one of the Rectors in a rotary semestrial way
- Tasks: the board receives reports and recommendations from the Students Board and the Sectional Committees through the Secretariat General for discussion and validation and can initiate activities towards the creation of EUt+'s European processes.
- Board meetings: shall be held about every 6 weeks, and, if possible, at the EUt+ working weeks in presence; in between these weeks ad hoc meetings in hybrid mode can be held. A rector can invite their Principal Representative to board meetings. The Secretary-General is invited to the meetings. The Secretariat General planning and preparing the meeting with the two Rectors chairing (Hosting institution and Semestrial Rector chairing) while the local organisation of the physical meetings during the EUt+ weeks such as rooms etc. is provided by the hosting partners.
- As much as possible, the suggested agenda validated by the chairs is sent about two weeks before the meeting, and minutes are provided by the Secretariat General with the relevant agenda.

Student Board

The Student Board's specific role is to represent the interests of the students.

+ Comprises 2 student representatives per member.

Every other month, the Rectors Board and the Student Board meet to discuss general orientations and to ensure a sharing of visions and expectations on the progress of the development of EUt+.

Sectoral committees

The Sectoral Committees' (Research Committee, Education Committee, IT Committee, and others to be possibly created) specific role is the deployment of strategies and methods for the joint implementation of EUt+'s European processes. The rationale is the interlinking of joint activities in the sector between the EUt+ members for the purpose of coordination and steering. The Sectoral Committees are formed by:

+ Two representatives per member on the given theme (typically Vice-president and equivalent). The two committee members per member institution are to ensure continuity of the representation of each member, especially in case of absence and change. If possible, each member will take care to ensure the balance of the representation of thematic fields through the appointment of the committee members, e.g. one member from the field of engineering or science, the other from the field of social or business sciences.
+ One member of the Secretariat General kernel is invited (in relation to the subject).
+ Committees avoid holding subgroup meetings that would agree on ideas without prior consent discussion with all members.

The Supervisory Board

It ensures the supervision and the balanced interests of all the stakeholders. Its roles are to:

+ Review and comment every semester on all decisions validated by the Rectors Board.
+ Review and give an opinion on the strategic orientations.
+ Give an opinion on the EUt+ facts and figures.

Constitution:

- 3 members per university (including one student) nominated from the governing bodies of each member university.
- 2 external stakeholders (suggested by the Secretary-General and agreed by the Rectors).

Its constitution will gradually change during this phase, as the maturity of the actors and the ownership of EUt+ by all stakeholders increases.

Implementing bodies

Offices

They are constituted of high-level staff in a given sector (unit, service, bureau, etc.) who implement the decisions and orientations of EUt+. There is (at least) one person per member, who is usually a high-level administrator, or an academic who carries a more technical task.

Existing offices and functions:

- Erasmus+ Common Office: coordinates EUt+ internal mobility and related calls.
- EUt+ Communication Office (ECOMO): coordinates internal and external communications
- EDI Team: Shares best practices on equity, diversity, and inclusiveness. Designs EUt+ EDI policies, monitors its implementation, and suggests corrective actions when needed.
- EUt+ European Research Office (ERO): coordinates research support.
- EUt+ European Innovation and Technology Transfer Office: coordinates technology transfer and industry relations.
- EUt+ Graduate Research School: coordinates training and support for the master-by-research and doctoral student, in particular with the ERIs.

Offices under development:

- EUt+ Information Technology Office: coordinates and manages common databases and digital tools, plays a very important role in the technical management of the EGTC EUt+ data services.
- EUt+ Green Office: coordinates the strategy and actions of issues on sustainability and environment.
- Multilingualism and Languages Teaching Office: derived from the Language Pool of phase 1, its purpose is sharing best practices and coordination in foreign language teaching.

- Global Outreach Office: coordinates the global outreach strategy of EUt+ and joint mobility calls beyond EU member countries.
- Legal Departments Office: legal support to the EUt+ centralized initiatives, and global matters.
- HR Office: discussion and coordination of HR policies and Europeanisation for all staff.
- Quality Assurance Office.

Clusters Coordination Committees

For each cluster, a steering team organizes the progressive convergence of the final learning outcomes, the development of mobility maps, and all other practical and pedagogical aspects. An agreement signed between the members precisely defines their role and their constitution: it is composed of representatives of teachers, students, and staff piloting the mobility.

4.6 The daily management and coordination body of the project

Projects representatives' coordination committee

EUt+ is still an initiative under construction: there are still many "scaffolds" and missing pieces. To coordinate this and ensure operations run smoothly, a weekly meeting (general operative meeting) is held between representatives of the Secretariat General (the kernel), of the members (the Principal Representatives), of the implementing bodies (the offices), of the heads of the WPs and two student representatives—these parties make up the equivalent of what has been called the Steering Committee in phase 1. Such operational meetings are held very frequently (more than one hour every Thursday morning, and experience has shown that it is not possible to reduce their frequency, neither technically nor sociologically). Current affairs, the lives of the WPs, the relations among them, and the institutions are discussed there, as well as decisions related to the organization of physical meetings. It is therefore not an element of EUt+ as a target structure, it is more of a project management body, a temporary scaffolding, but it is as solid as essential.

Project Support Office

The member institutions have appointed project managers whose role is to support the administrative and technical activities. This involves a large number of decision implementations and coordination activities that are time-consuming for such a large Alliance and the diversity of cultures and habits. The project managers meet twice a month to coordinate technical matters within the project support office.

Principal Representatives

EUt+ is not a simple project that only involves the people who participate in it. Most of the discussions reach deep into the members, up to the highest level: the Rectors do not have the time to discuss every issue, but they need to be informed almost in real time and represented by people they trust. This is the role of the Principal Representatives (one per member) who play the role of “sherpa”. The Principal Representatives are often current or former Vice Presidents and Deputy Directors who know their institution very well and devote the majority of their time to the link with EUt+. In addition to the link with their Rectors, they ensure a permanent liaison and representation of their member institution.

5 Methodology

5.1 Inspiration from enabling European Initiatives

The European Universities is not an isolated initiative, it takes place in a comprehensive context with a global dynamic that is already well documented. For it to work, it must be supported and enabled by frames such as the ECTS, the diploma supplement, the European Qualifications Framework, etc. The principle underlining these frames is that by harmonization we can achieve that Europeans cooperate, build trust, and recognize the provisions made by other institutions and parties. Another key example is the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes, or the Council Recommendation on Automatic Recognition of Qualifications.

The methodology of STYX WP2 gets inspiration from initiatives such as the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the Higher Education Area (ESG), The European Network for Accreditation of Engineering Education (ENAEE), projects like EuniQ, whose aim was developing a European Approach for Comprehensive Quality Assurance of European University Networks, and others like the European Student Card (ESC), Erasmus Without Papers (EWP), or the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R). Among them, the case of the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance is of particular interest to our purpose.

5.2 European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the EHEA

The European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the Higher Education Area[4] (later referred to as the ESG) are a collection of standards and guidelines aimed at ensuring internal and external quality assurance in higher education. The ESG are not standards for quality or strict prescriptions for how quality assurance processes should be carried out. Instead, they offer guidance, encompassing essential aspects crucial for fostering successful quality provision and creating enriching learning environments within the higher education sector.

They were jointly prepared by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) in collaboration with the European Students' Union (ESU), the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE), and the

[4] https://www.eqar.eu/kb/esg/

European University Association (EUA), and adopted by the Ministers responsible of Higher Education in 2005. Since then, they have been subject to review and update. The latest version was adopted in 2015.

Our proposal is to follow a paradigm similar to the ESG and the EQAR European Approach for the EUt+ member. Inspired by their spirit, our objectives are:

- Set a common tool useful in the transformation processes of each campus to integrate the institution and EUt+, moving from a loose to a tight coupling.
- Build mutual trust and transparency.
- Have a better recognition of the provisions done by other partners.
- Having standards and methodologies that are acceptable for all.
- Ease the path toward a joint Quality Assurance validation at the EUt+ level.
- Facilitate the agreements with other institutions not members of EUt+ and potential candidates to expand the consortium as they provide criteria of what it means to be an EUt+ university.

5.3 A collaborative process

Reviews will be done as a collaborative process, in which all stakeholders work together as equal partners to move forward in consensus, facilitated by a **Steering Group**. This group comprises the STYX WP2 leader from the EUt+ General Secretariat plus one representative from each EUt+ member speaking on behalf of their respective organizations (the 8 STYX WP2 liaisons plus a guest from the 9th EUt+ partner). To streamline efficiency, a smaller **Drafting Team** with 3 people takes charge of the technical drafting and preparation. The latter is formed by the STYX WP2 leader plus two other members selected by the Steering Group.

The Steering Group plays a pivotal role in providing direction to the Drafting Team. The drafts produced by the latter are then submitted to the Steering Group for further consideration. Additionally, the Steering Group members have the option to establish a **Revision Team** within their organizations, enabling preliminary discussions about their organization's positions ahead of the meetings. The opinions of each campus revision team must be curated and introduced as one at the Steering Group meetings.

STYX will benefit from having 3 associated partners from 3 other European University alliances that will participate as guests in the workshops organized in WP1. These workshops will allow for receiving early feedback on preliminary and detailed definitions.

5.4 Transformative (not disruptive) approach and assessment

The concept of using standards and guidelines facilitates a progressive convergence path, rather than a legal or contractual framework for all. The outcome of STYX WP2 shall be matched with the multiple macro-processes (strategic, key, and support) that must be Europeanized including the EUt+ paradigms. Progressively, each member must elaborate an analysis of the situation at its campus, with three possible values for its status. The EUt+ Standards might be:

- **Fully adopted**, when all the necessary aspects are considered in its implementation by the member.
- **Partially adopted**, for standards that are adopted by some of the programs, faculties, departments, or other relevant units, or under specific circumstances.
- **Not yet adopted**, when they are not implemented at any level.

The statements regarding these adoption maps will be accredited by the relevant documentation regularly.

Together with the participation in the Steering Group, the role of the WP2 campus liaisons includes:

- Flow down the EUt+ standards and guidelines to their institutional stakeholders so their procedures are updated accordingly.
- Work with the campus Revision Team to extract the strategic, key, and main support macro-processes for its campus, and study how to include the EUt+ approach.
- Work closely with the EUt+ Principle Representative to connect the standards with the local actions derived from the multiple EUt+ initiatives.

The EUt+ standards and guidelines will only serve their purpose as long as they relate to the institutions' processes. We shall understand strategic processes as those related to the main strategy of the initiative, such as having a European model of education that represents the standard study offer of the institution. Key processes are those with a direct impact on the universities' main stakeholders: the students. Support processes assist the other processes and deal with other stakeholders.

5.5 Empirically informed and co-designed recommendations

Coherent with EUt+ co-construction approach and process, the adoption of the standards and guidelines (presented in D2.2) has been the object of a rigorous study, combining a comprehensive and co-construction approach, designed in an incremental way. This D2.3 presents the second stage of the study, the self-assessment and focus groups.

Figure 3. Incremental approach combining comprehensive and co-design methods.

After the self-assessments made by the partners, reflecting their own perception of the level of adoption of the standards and guidelines, within their own member universities (as introduced in the previous section), focus groups will emphasize again the participatory aspect of our approach. We consider this key since such a transformation like the one EUt+ is attempting demands a lot of work in cocreation and participatory design. Figure 3 summarises the methodology steps.

The focus group method

A focus group is a method of participatory design that has been traditionally used as a way of collecting qualitative data, engaging a small number of people in an informal group discussion, focused around a particular topic or set of issues. The difference with group interviews, which are often used simply as a quick and convenient way of collecting data from several people simultaneously, is that focus groups use group interaction as part of the method. What sets it apart from other methods is that the interaction between research participants is explicitly used as a source of research data. This means that, rather than the researcher/facilitator asking each person to answer a given question in turn (a simple form of interview), participants are encouraged to talk to each other: asking questions, exchanging anecdotes and commenting on each other's experiences and views.

We designed two focus groups as this method is particularly useful for exploring participants' knowledge and experience, and can be used to examine not only what participants think, but also how they think and why they think the way they do, answering the "how" and "why" questions. In fact, participants in a group may ultimately develop particular perspectives, as a result of discussions with others who have had similar experiences. The focus group method can also serve as a way to explore the results of the SER.

Aiming at representativeness of target audience and / or maximum participants, we composed two panels: an internal panel and an external one. External stakeholders bring their own exterior perspective, enrich the discussions and improve the Standards that gain greater credibility that if they had been “EUt-centred-only”.

Each focus group – internal and external – has respective yet complementary objectives. However, both share the same principles of

- Open and rich discussion (that is just ‘facilitated’ and not ‘oriented’)
- Trust
- Welcoming of differing perspectives and feeling welcome
- Respectful listening
- Forbidding of judgy / simplistic answers: “OK” or “bad”, with instead rich narratives.

The internal focus group is structured around open discussion and trust, so that, through sharing of both achievements and difficulties in a very honest and respectful way, participants gain awareness about the necessity of transformation. The main objective is the appropriation of the standards towards the buy-in of change. The external focus group aims at collecting a maximum feedback from colleagues from other alliances and universities, so as to enrich the standards with their perspectives. This would mainly allow improving the standards, which are not finalized but subject to continuous improvement in line with EUt approach to quality. The other benefit would be to achieve greater credibility / validity of the standards, which would have been subject to exterior evaluation of peers.

The research questions that have driven the content of the focus group correspond to two successive phases are:

- What are the respective needs of the participants? [Co-analysis phase]
- How implement relevant co-designed solutions by confronting perspectives through collective intelligence? [Co-design phase]

The main results and conclusions obtained from the focus groups are depicted in sections 7 and 8 of this document, respectively.

6 Standards and guidelines for institutional harmonization towards EUt+

This section presents 10 standards that aim to be representative of the ambition and domains of EUt+, without being exhaustive. As HEIs are highly complex organizations, we do not intend to define the standards as completely independent. Instead, the main purpose of this list is to cover the main missions and implications related to becoming an international super campus that shares the same harmonized principles while embracing our peculiarities and differences in the implementation, which are a part of our richness.

Standards and guidelines cover the following areas:

ID	Standard	Brief description
1	Resources and Participation in EUt+	A transversal standard that enables all the rest. An EUt+ campus must dedicate resources to the EUt+ goals.
2	An Education Oriented to the EUt+ Students	It deals with the key process of the interaction between the students and the academic information provided to them.
3	Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion	Standards 3, 4, and 5 are dedicated to the core values and principles of the EUt+ mission and vision, the EU values, the United Nations' SDG, and the parity of esteem for all European languages and cultures.
4	Multilingualism and Intercultural Learning	
5	A sustainable, ethical, and environmentally responsible EUt+ campus	
6	EUt+ Embedded in the Study Offer	It is related to the strategic process of defining the study offer of the institution.
7	EUt+ in Research, Development, Innovation, and Entrepreneurship	It deals with the strategic research and technology-transfer mission.

8	EUt+ Brand and Outreach	It is dedicated to the necessary connection between what we claim, what we do, what we communicate, and how we introduce ourselves to the world.
9	EUt+ as Long-Term Strategy	It covers the long-term vision of the initiative.
10	EUt+ Standards' Assessment and Reviews	A general standard to describe the way they must be reviewed and evaluated.

Standards describe an agreed and accepted practice, while the guidelines explain how this can be implemented.

While the EUt+ members[5] shall endeavor to implement the standards and guidelines, its adoption at each campus must be understood as an appreciative transformation process within the boundaries of what is formally, financially, and sociologically acceptable.

6.1 Resources and Participation in EUt+

Standard 1

An EUt+ campus allocates the necessary resources to realize the objectives of the alliance, participating actively in the EUt+ governance, bodies, offices, and teams, with representatives and delegates appointed and contributing to the tasks within the expected share of time. Delegates and representatives are appointed according to the regulations agreed at EUt+, if any.

Guidelines

1) Have in place the necessary procedures and means to appoint the staff to EUt+ bodies.
2) EUt+ is considered an integral part of the staff work (academic and non-academic) and is recognized in the university staff careers.

[5] In the description of these standards and guidelines the terms EUt+ member, EUt+ campus, and EUt+ HEI are used indistinctively.

3) When needed, create the necessary roles, and provide them with the means to complete their role and remits.
4) Facilitate the active participation of the students in the design, development, and life of the alliance.
5) Actively seek and promote the participation of external stakeholders in the alliance.

6.2 An Education Oriented to the EUt+ Students

Standard 2

An EUt+ campus/dept./school must facilitate the students with access to all the opportunities, offers, and relevant information of the EUt+ offer throughout all the phases of the student's academic process, including pre-admission, admission, skills, and competencies acquisition, and certifications.

Guidelines

1) Have a system to collect, value, and use the information needed and provided to the students for what concerns the EUt+ study offers, considering EDI principles, so actions for continuous improvement can be designed, applied, and assessed in the fields of:
   + Promotion, student uptake, admission, and enrolment of students
   + Credit recognition
   + Support for the design of their study track
   + Coordination among the multiple campuses of a joint program/cluster
   + Multiple teaching/learning and evaluation methodologies
   + Work-based experience possibilities
   + Management of feedback and complaints
   + Professional orientation
   + EUt+ alumni
   + Lifelong learning possibilities[6]
2) Determine the procedures that regulate and control the decisions related to the students.
3) Have in place instruments to disseminate the EUt+ relevant information related to the EUt+ students, including rights and duties, evaluation systems,

[6] Some of these may not be currently available at EUt+. The list intends to be as comprehensive as possible.

antifraud mechanism, timetables, use of facilities, housing, student life offers, etc.
4) Define how the process involving the experience of EUt+ students are designed, developed, reviewed, and improved, involving the relevant stakeholders.
5) Report the performance indicators of these activities to the relevant stakeholders.

6.3 Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

Standard 3

A EUt+ campus "thinks human first". The EUt+ motto *European Values Empowering Technology* is embedded in the university policies and strategy.

Guidelines

1) Provide equitable access to all its community, making sure that EUt+ opportunities are equally accessible for all.
2) Plan, execute, evaluate, and update the policies and procedures dedicated to the principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion.
3) Take corrective actions against any behavior contrary to the EUt+ EDI principles.
4) The European Union values are fully adopted[7].

6.4 Multilingualism and Intercultural Learning

Standard 4

A EUt+ campus gives parity of esteem to all European languages and cultures, providing education opportunities to learn and study both in the HEI official languages and in other European languages, and a working environment that fosters the learning and practice of other European languages.

Guidelines

1) Offer language courses to its students in preparation for study mobilities.

[7] https://ec.europa.eu/component-library/eu/about/eu-values

2) Facilitates a study offer that is respectful of the principle of multilingualism, both to the enrolled students and to incoming ones.
3) Offer activities that foster the immersion of the incoming EUt+ students in the local culture and community.
4) Support staff in their interest and openness to learning about new languages and cultures of other EUt+ member locations, which can in turn build connections and influence attitudes to multilingualism and intercultural learning of students.
5) Have policies that facilitate the learning of other European languages.
6) Contribute to the EUt+ joint practices that pursue the goals of this standard.

6.5 A sustainable, ethical, and environmentally responsible EUt+ campus

Standard 5

A EUt+ campus embeds the principles of a sustainable ethical responsible technological education and innovation that are aligned with the SDG.

Guidelines

1) Study programs include competencies dedicated to the sustainable design and use of technology.
2) The study, innovation, and research works are mapped considering their impact on the SDG.
3) Participate actively in the EUt+ Green Office, aligning with their agreements and policies.[8]

6.6 EUt+ Embedded in the Study Offer

Standard 6

An EUt+ campus/dept/school embeds the EUt+ dimension in the process of creating, maintaining, and renewing its academic offer, developing methodologies for its design, approval, implementation, control, and review that considers the European approach, and allowing the students to obtain the EUt+ European certificate/label or joint diplomas.

[8] Other actions like measuring the SDG impact of the institution and working to improve it could be considered. For now, we could assume this included in the bullet dedicated to the EUT+ Green Office.

Guidelines

1) Consider EUt+ in the bodies, stakeholders, and procedures involved in the development of the academic offer including the phases of planning, design, approval, provision of the program, periodic review, and ending a program (if needed).
2) Have a system that allows aligning the objectives of the study programs with the EUt+ strategy, while considering the factors of its campus, and the society's needs, with a reasonable workload for the student, and aiming at its satisfaction and fulfillment of expectations.
3) Create processes to oversee decisions concerning academic offerings throughout the program's lifecycle that consider EUt+.
4) Have a system to collect the relevant information including the international dimension so the maintenance, relevance, renewal, and updates can be assessed.
5) Have in place mechanisms to take into consideration the results of continuous improvement systems, including the outcomes of the EUt+ dimension.
6) Determine the approach for involving and reporting to the EUt+ stakeholders in the design, organization, development, review, and improvement of the academic programs.
7) Have in place a procedure for issuing the EUt+ European certificate attached to the Bachelor and Master diplomas, that is compliant with the EUt+ agreements.
8) Offers to its enrolled students a study path with automatic recognition of at least 25 ECTS for one semester of studies in another EUt+ campus.
9) Students are offered interdisciplinary and challenge-based approach training which are recognized with ECTS in their study programs.

6.7 EUt+ in Research, Development, Innovation, and Entrepreneurship

Standard 7

An EUt+ campus must promote and develop R&D&I aligned with the EUt+ agreed strategy, while keeping into consideration its resources, academic offer, and societal needs, considering the European dimension of its impact.

Guidelines

1) The bodies that define, follow up, and execute the R&D&I policies, objectives, and priorities shall include the EUt+ research roadmap and strategy for implementation, including the European Research Institutes as an integral part of the research actors of the institution.
2) Establish a system for the participation of European bodies and groups of interest in the definition of policies, objectives, and priorities for R&D&I.
3) Include the EUt+ R&D&I in the procedures for deciding regarding its planning, coordination, and availability of resources.
4) Consider the European dimension in the system to evaluate the research projects, including protection and exploitation of the results, if necessary.
5) Include the EUt+ territory in the analysis of societal impact, influence, and visibility, involving other EUt+ campuses and regions in the R&D&I training programs, capacity building, wealth development, social value, and/or university extension actions.
6) Include the EUt+ dimension in the R&D&I reports and its system for continuous improvement.
7) Participate actively in the EUt+ Graduate Research School providing international graduate training, teaching research, and getting involved when possible, in European master-by-research and EUt+ Doctorate programmes.
8) Provide international entrepreneurial opportunities driven through EUt+ the Entrepreneurship School and actively participate in entrepreneurial EUt+ joint actions.

6.8 EUt+ Brand and Outreach

Standard 8

A EUt+ campus has a policy for the use of the EUt+ brand that is respectful of the EUt+ agreements and represents the long-term vision of becoming as much as possible a single European university. This must be reflected in its outreach strategy, providing the necessary steps towards a joint strategy that shall enlarge the EUt+ visibility and presence in the world, promoting its model of education and research.

Guidelines

1) Define a plan for brand coexistence that progressively puts EUt+ as the primary brand of the institution.
2) Have a system to collect all relevant information regarding the use (or not) of the EUt+ brand, evaluate it, and act based on it.

3) The bodies in charge of defining, following, and implementing the outreach strategy shall consider the EUt+ principles for collaboration in this area.
4) Identify outreach and partnerships opportunities aligned with the EUt+ vision and mission, and actively open and foster collaborations with external partners in the frame of EUt+.
5) Include the contribution to EUt+ in the decision-making process for outreach objectives and activities.
6) Define a model to coordinate the outreach policies with the other EUt+ members to find synergies.
7) Include the EUt+ dimension in the communication and outreach reports and its system for continuous improvement.

6.9 EUt+ as Long-Term Strategy

Standard 9

EUt+ is an integral part of the strategy of the institution. This is stated in the HEI strategic plan, and it is reflected in the university policies. This strategy responds to global societal challenges.

Guidelines

1) The objectives of the HEI strategy must be aligned with the EUt+ objectives, and the HEI vision must be aligned with the EUt+ principles and mottos. HEI objectives that are not aligned with EUt+ shall not present a conflict.
2) KPIs, including the EUt+ dimension, are established and monitored. Access to these KPIs is provided to all relevant actors.
3) Regular evaluations of the KPI results are done, including quantitative and qualitative information to get a comprehensive understanding of the progress.
4) Strategic analysis and institutional marketing assessments include the EUt+ dimension.
5) Internal and external stakeholders participate actively in the development and evaluation of the university strategy and policies.
6) Strategy revisions and updates include other EUt+ members in the panels.

6.10 EUt+ Standards Self-evaluation and Reviews

Standard 10

An EUt+ campus reviews internally its compliance with the EUt+ standards and facilitates external reviews.

Guidelines

1) Have in place a system to make the self-assessment, with the necessary means. To minimize duplication of efforts, this system can be designed and implemented based on any existing internal review process.
2) The self-assessment should reflect on the standards of this guide to create a proper idea of the stage of the adoption.
3) The system includes metrics to understand the progress of all the EUt+ Standards and Guidelines.
4) The university has a plan-do-check-act cycle that fosters prompt reaction and continuous improvement.
5) The institution is willing to share best practices and learn from the ones of other EUt+ members, with continuous participation in the activities dedicated to the harmonization of the experiences of students, staff, and other stakeholders.
6) Governance and decision-making bodies have access to the information of this self-evaluation. These bodies must include education and pedagogy, research and innovation, mobility, and other domains included in these standards.
7) External reviews are designed to pursue an active role of the EUt+ community. The external panel should include at least students, academic and non-academic staff, researchers, alumni, professionals, external stakeholders, and external experts.
8) The chair of the external review panel shall be external to the institution.
9) The external review panel shall have access to the relevant documentation necessary to evaluate the stage of adoption of the standards, including the self-evaluation report.
10) The external review panel shall be allowed to carry out a physical meeting if deemed necessary to complete its evaluation. The visit should enable the panel to discuss the adoption of the standards onsite, including exchanges with key personnel and stakeholders of the internal review. The visit must have a clear agenda and the interviews documented.
11) The process shall have an appreciative spirit and be handled constructively. The external panel shall keep in mind that the adoption of the EUt+ standards

is a transformation process, and it shall not be expected that a university can complete this transformation beyond what is formally and sociologically acceptable.

12) The external review panel shall prepare a report containing the relevant findings, analysis, conclusions, and recommendations with respect to each standard.
13) Have the opportunity to review a preliminary version of the report and reply to its comments to amend possible errors.
14) Have a procedure to submit an appeal or a complaint about the process, without this implying that the panel report is not valid.

7 Analysis of the results

7.1 Outcomes of self-assessment reports

Figure 4 shows the aggregated values obtained from the self-assessment reports for the eight members participating in the STYX pilot project. The ninth member of EUt+ joined after STYX was launched and consequently did not have time enough to get integrated in the alliance and consequently to participate meaningfully. The following sections analyze the information included in the reports for each standard. The content has been slightly altered to keep the information anonymous.

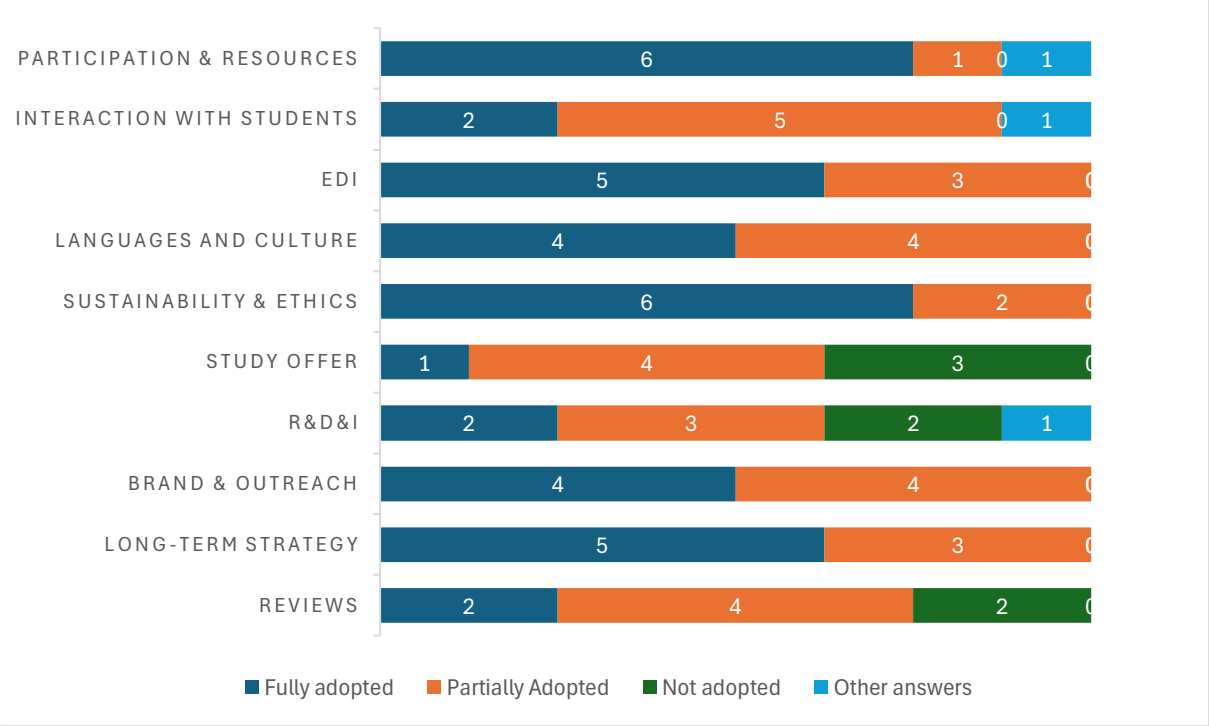

Figure 4: Summary of the adoption levels provided in the self-assessment reports for each standard.

Standard 1 Participation & Resources

This standard and its guidelines encourage the members to analyse the following factors to estimate its level of adoption:

a) Allocation of resources, including dedication of staff and possible co-funds.
b) Active participation in the EUt+ bodies, tasks, etc. with the expected share of time, role and skills.
c) The representatives should be appointed following the principles of EUt+, such as level of seniority, democratically, etc. The role of the students is highlighted.
d) There are procedures in place to appoint, create roles and the participants are given the necessary means to facilitate their work.
e) Advocacy and active promotion of the participation of external stakeholders.

Initially, all the members reported this standard as fully adopted. However, one reviewed its score and finally declared partially adopted based on the justification provided in the report. However, there is a large variety in the way the adoption is defined and justified. While some of the reports for this standard cover all the five aspects, others do not mention some of them in their evaluation (while still declaring full adoption). Some examples of excerpts from the reports related to the number of participants, the consideration on the workload, and other mechanism to enable time to work for EUt+ are:

+ EUt+ office operational with four full time senior staff members and procedures for working including weekly operational meeting as mechanism for continuous improvement.
+ Active engagement of over 100 people and infrastructure for the work of EUt+ in Member X. At school level there are no formal allowances or mechanisms to facilitate engagement with EUt+.
+ Member X has appointed all positions of the participant list of EUt+ Accelerate, including representatives in all the boards, committees, and teams. All the positions are distributed among 60 people, and the maximum number of tasks assigned to one person is 2.
+ Part-time lecturers have been hired to reduce the workload of some key academic staff, and new non-academic staff has been hired full-time to assist international affairs, research, and project management.
+ More than 60 persons both academic and administrative staff are involved in EUt+.

There are also examples describing the way the student representatives are appointed and their work facilitated.

+ The role of the student representatives has been created in the Students Board, and some budget has been allocated to their initiatives.

Some examples highlighting the engagement of external stakeholders are:

- Member X has invited external stakeholders such a regional and local administration, and the industry to EUt+ meetings and to sign agreements with the alliance.
- Promotion of EUt+ to external stakeholders to support the work of the alliance (e.g. Partnership with Y, professional accreditation bodies, government agencies, partners, and associate partners on European funding calls).
- Active member of Y group advocating for European University Alliances to Y government ministry (National Forum of Y EUI Partners)
- Additional financial resources contributed from Y.
- Ministry of Education of Y funded with Y euro to enhance our participation.

Some members highlight the challenges to engage participants:

- Level of engagement of university stuff is not at the level that is initially planned.
- All time given to the project is on top of normal workloads. This could impact on sustainability of engagement.

On the other hand, some other reports focus on the top management documents and decision-making, leaving aside measurements or evidence of the implementation:

- The strategic plan for X makes EUt+ project one of the three main orientations, together with [] and []. All operational decisions (create new positions, design a new curriculum etc.) are to be validated by X counsels (study-counsel, research-counsel and the board that takes the decision on the recommendation of the X Director).
- We have been involved in the EUt+ initiative since its inception. We were one of its initiators. Our participation in the united European University of Technology is our priority and this is embedded in our vision and development strategy. We think that our participation in EUt+ is extremely important for us due to the decreasing number of candidate students, the increased competition of universities all over the world.

Standard 2 An Education Oriented to the EUt+ Students

This standard pretends to support the understanding of how much of the daily work in the alliance is accessible by the students. It defines what is means granting access to EUt+ opportunities for the students, covering the following aspects:

a) Have a continuous improvement system for the alliance information provided to the students covering all the phases (from pre-admision to alumni), learning experience, consortium arrangements, training opportunities, etc.
b) Identify the impact of the alliance in the member's procedures and control measures regarding the students.
c) Dissemination of EUt+ results to the student community.
d) Have a process of continuous improvement for the student experience in EUt+.
e) Report all these points to all the relevant stakeholders.

The members find more problematic to adopt this standard, with only 2 full adoptions, 5 partially adopted, and one answer "Fully with operational delays", which also shows a lack of real adoption.

The contents of the reports show a large variety, possible also derived from very different levels of understanding of the expected explanations. It is remarkable that for the two members that claim full adoption, one report simply declares:

+ Fully adopted in the clusters only.

And the other addresses the order of command at the member and its alignment with the concept, without mentioning evidence of its implementation or its monitoring:

+ Board's decisions on the recommendation of the X President are compulsory for the whole of X. At the time, fully adopted in principle but partially adopted from an operational point of view. But X is the partner having developed EUt+ principles in the field of international curricula.

On average, the reports declaring partial adoption are more complete and cover in a wider way the aspects of the standards and its guidelines. Some excerpts are:

+ The fact that EUt+ does not offer joint European degrees prevents X to comply this standard to the same level as per its own degrees. EUt+ academic offer is considered now an itinerary for mobility students in the frame of exchange programs, with some advantages and the possibility to obtain a specific certificate (which is covered in the standard 6).

- The information about current EUt+ opportunities and offers is available at the university website www.XXXX.XX. However, it must be completed with a clearer offer of the mobility maps, which is partially present for the cluster Z but not for the rest. Students are in fact informed on demand, but the information is not always published online.
- EUt+ material is included in the campaigns that X does in student's fairs, school visits, etc.
- Decisions regarding the study offer consider the internationalization and EUt+ dimension when the degrees are linked to EUt+ clusters. This is enforced by having the directing teams of the schools and faculties involved in the clusters. The body that approves the study offer has the vice-rector of internationalization and the EUt+ Principal Representative as ex officio members.
- Credit recognition is ensured automatically for specific programs thanks to the mobility maps developed within the various clusters of EUt+. The existence of EUt+ clusters also ensure support for the design of the students' study track. Before the start of the semester, the EUt+ student coordinator at X communicates with the EUt+ cluster coordinators during the enrolment process, asking the cluster coordinator to review the provisionally selected courses, provide their commentary and recommendations for the student. This ensures an individual approach for each EUt+ student and helps them feel welcome and sure that their study courses will be recognized and suit their study program back at home.

Standard 3 Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

This standard is the first one of three linked to the EUt+ values. The guidelines encourage the members to consider the following aspects in their reports:

a) Provide equal access to EUt+ opportunities, having in place a culture of quality for EDI, including a continuous improvement cycle and taking corrective actions when needed.
b) Explicatively verify compliance with the European Union values as per https://ec.europa.eu/component-library/eu/about/eu-values.

Five members declared full adoption and three a partial adoption. Some excerpts of the reports emphasize assessments coming from other initiatives, or the policies and offices in place:

- On pathway for Athena Swan Silver for gender equality (X currently has Athena Bronze). Multiple other public accreditations and certification benchmarks on EDI (X Equality Statement (2019-2022), Athena SWAN Charter of Principles, and Sustainability Statement 2022-2025).
- Staff training programmes on bystander awareness, antiracism, bias, etc.
- Gender pay-gap and equality monitored and publicly reported on.
- We formed an EDI office and EDI committee and adopted an EDI policy and action plan.
- Member X has several mailboxes for unproper behavior and procedures for acting accordingly. The ombudsperson is also available, and can receive, and mediate in conflictive situations regarding EDI. Ther is also a recent Commission against Violence, Discrimination and Harassment created in the framework of our new “rules of coexistence”.
- There is a program so that people with lesser opportunities have access to extra fund and support when demanded.

While some others remark implementation issues such as:

- Even though at X many policies that promote EDI principles are in place, many of them lack real-life applications. For example, despite the fact that guidelines have been created for improving communication and the study environment for persons with disabilities and special needs, not all teaching staff members use these guidelines or follow EDI principles in their classroom. We believe that a significant institutional culture change has to take place before we can say that this principle is fully adopted at X. Also, mechanisms to monitor and take corrective actions against any behaviour contrary to the EUt+ EDI principles need to be developed and improved.
- There is a system to collect the feedback from the experiences, but this feedback is not processed, and the potential conclusions do not reach the policy makers.
- X does not measure if minorities are represented proportionally in the international dimension.
- At work it is possible to hear and read racist comments without specific measures to prevent them.

Standard 4 Multilingualism and Intercultural Learning

The members of EUt+ participating in the pilot represent 9 official languages and different cultures widely distributed across Europe. This standard defines the EUt+ values regarding respect for languages and cultures, featuring:

a) Provision of opportunities to learn different European languages and to study in different European languages.
b) Language courses for incoming and outgoing students.
c) Access to cultural activities and community immersion.
d) Support to initiatives that foster a multicultural environment and the staff learning other European languages.

The reports show responses equally distributed between fully adopted and partially adopted. Some focus more on the language training and skills:

+ Despite the multilingual and intercultural environment in place at X, there are things that still have to be improved. For example, there should be more language-learning opportunities for the students and staff, especially the languages of EUt+ countries. Also, as there currently are not many foreign staff members at X, support mechanisms for them are scarce.
+ Many course options for intercultural learning but there is a reluctance among students to take languages. This is a national phenomenon.
+ All incoming students are offered a free course of the national language and culture. The information is public and available at www.xxx.xx.
+ The staff gets reimbursed the cost of the credentials of English as a foreign language.
+ Staff (academic and non-academic) receives free training in other European foreign languages including English, French, German, and Italian. Other languages are available thanks for the language pool initiative of EUt+. Also, professors and lecturers who teach in English have an additional recognition in their teaching workload.

Some of the reports who claim full adoption did not cover all aspects. Remarkably, the promotion of equal respect for other cultures is often ignored in the reports.

Standard 5 A sustainable, ethical, and environmentally responsible EUt+ campus

Six out of eight institutions assessed that they have adopted this standard fully, while the other two declared it as partially adopted. Since the EUt+ work on

sustainability, ethics and environmental responsibility is quite incipient, the assessments could be motivated by the state-of-play of the institution in parallel to EUt+ activities. The standard covers mostly 3 aspects:

a) Related competencies in the studies.
b) Mapping of study, innovation, and research outputs against the SDG.
c) Active participation in the EUt+ Green Office.

The alignment of this standard with the internal policies is mentioned in some reports:

+ Integrating sustainability and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into study, research, innovation and governance processes is one of the cornerstones of the Institutional Excellence – Sustainable Development goal emphasized within the X Strategy.

They also show the potential of sharing good practices, as some members are clearly more advanced than others. Some demonstrate their commitment based on international standards:

+ X is ranked 45th globally in the green policy and sustainability ranking GreenMetric World University Rankings 2023. In the GreenMetric rating, universities are ranked according to their commitment to reduce the harmful impact on the environment. The compliance of the university's actions with green principles is evaluated in six criteria - common infrastructure, energy efficiency and climate change mitigating activities, waste management, efficient use of water resources, transport infrastructure, and environmental education and science. X posted the highest results in environmental education and science, transport infrastructure and the implementation of energy efficiency and climate change mitigating activities. The university has made an ambitious strategic decision to achieve climate neutrality by 2030, with X producing very little or no carbon emissions.

Some other reports show challenges scenarios, lack of budget or feasibility to apply it in practice, with some members claiming that they need more budget to adopt this standard and having a more sustainable campus.

Several reports highlight the existence of top managers dedicated to this topic, with comments such as:

+ Member X participates actively in the EUt+ Green Office. The liaison of this office is the Vice-rector of Campus and Sustainability.

Perhaps since there were no explicit guidelines dedicated to it, the ethical part of this standard is somehow relegated to a secondary presence in the reports, with some members describing briefly their organization, policies or codes of ethics.

Standard 6 EUt+ Embedded in the Study Offer

The penetration of the EUt+ in the study offer of the institutions is the standard with the lowest global score, with only one declared full adoption, four partial adoptions, and three institutions reporting that they did not adopt it yet.

Compliance with this standard would request a university to:

a) Consider EUt+ in all the phases of the academic offer, including designing and updates.
b) Embed the principles of the European Approach into their internal regulations.
c) Facilitate the students access to the EUt+ join programs and the EUt+ certificate for Bachelor and Master.
d) Include EUt+ stakeholders in the key bodies, processes, and procedures.
e) Monitor the progress of the study programs in relation with EUt+ and report it to the EUt+ partners.
f) Include interdisciplinary and challenge-based learning experiences recognized with ECTS in the study programs.

Currently, EUt+ mobility maps feature approximately 15.000 ECTS of automatic recognition, and this number is growing as new clusters are progressing in their design of their maps. However, the reports show that such mobility maps are not always in practice by the units responsible of credit recognition.

Some of the issues that are declared as delaying or preventing the adoption are:

+ There are technical complications in the recognition of the ECTS and a lack of appropriation of academic staff who does not apply strictly recognition based on Learning Outcomes but rather on the course contents.
+ Thanks to the mobility maps developed within the different EUt+ Clusters, it is easier for the student admissions officers to offer them different opportunities, for example, exchange studies in one of the EUt+ partner universities with courses already aligned. However, this has not become an embedded practice at the university yet. Similarly, X is open to issuing the EUt+ European certificate attached to the Bachelor and Master diplomas, that

is compliant with the EUt+ agreements; however, no procedure for that is yet in place.

+ Member X is much more diverse than most other EUT+ partners with limited points for programme harmonising.
+ It is impossible to impose a unique set of European rules to all existing programs.
+ Lack of interest on the part of the teaching staff to advertise the courses. If students go on mobility, the number of students in the groups (in the local member) is reduced. We pay extra money to teachers who manage to send students on EUt+ mobility.

Regarding the processes, some members explain that EUt+ is not yet embedded in the design or update of the study offer.

+ EUt+ stakeholders are not explicitly present in the design, organization, development, review, and improvement of the academic programs. It is up to the Schools and Faculties to decide this.

Some members provide opportunities for interdisciplinary and challenge-based learning within the alliance BIP programmes, which are recognized with ECTS in the study plan.

Some of the aspects provided in this standard and its guidelines were not covered in the reports, or in most of them, such as the penetration of the European Approach in the internal procedures.

Standard 7 EUt+ in Research, Development, Innovation, and Entrepreneurship

The standard embraces a wide spectrum of processes and areas as it includes research, tech-transfer, innovation and entrepreneurial activities. This could justify the low number of self-assessments that declared a full adoption (2 out of 8), or even partial adoption (3). Among the remainder members, 2 declared not adoption and one reported “Fully with operational delays”, with a justification pointing out a lack of development of the ideas, and that the term “fully” means complete alignment with the principles but nothing specific in the actual implementation. The adoption of this standard would imply covering the following areas:

a) The alignment of the R&D&I strategy.
b) Measuring the impact of the R&D&I at European level.

c) The decision-making bodies of the university regarding R&D&I consult to external stakeholders who represent the alliance.
d) Planning and coordination procedures consider EUt+.
e) Training, capacity building considers the needs related to EUt+.
f) EUt+ is included in the nominal R&D&I reports.
g) Participating in the activities organized by the EUt+ doctoral school.
h) Provide international opportunities to the entrepreneurs and participate in the dedicated EUt+ school.

Some practices reported by the members include:

+ EUt+ established as office in X Research Information System, so reporting and recording possible.
+ Fully adopted: A dedicated EUt research office is established under the EUt coordination centre, our academics participate in most ERI's and we are in the process to establish a new ERI under our coordination.
+ Two people (one technical and one administrative staff) have been specifically hired to work and support EUt+ research activities.
+ Member X researchers have access to specific calls and budgets to participate in EUt+ research activities. All positions related to research have been appointed, with the necessary share of time.
+ X Vice-rector of research is the person participating in the EUt+ Research Committee, and chairs X's commission of research, ensuring the inclusion of EUt+ vision into the university strategy.
+ Indicators related to European Projects are considered in the staff dedication, with partial and even full waivers of teaching duties to research active in European projects.

Examples of hurdles include:

+ In terms of research and development, there is much to do. Our laboratory equipment is not made available to our EUt+ partners. We also do not have the full information of what they have in order for us to use it.

The members also show limitations in adapting their bodies and procedures to include EUt+ as normal work in the field of research:

+ No external participants are included in the relevant research bodies.
+ X does not consider particularly the European dimension to focus on research areas. The research approach is more bottom-up, with a strong link to the regional industry.

- The lack of procedure updates and consideration of European stakeholders in the research bodies limits the scope of the system in place to consider the European dimension. Having EUt+ researchers in the university committees could improve the QA of the corresponding processes.

However, one report show discomfort with the current description, claiming that EUt+ work on research should be better described as a network, rather than a global R&D&I strategy.

- As it is currently written, this standard seems not applicable. The standard should be stated the other way around.

Standard 8 Brand and Outreach

The EUt+ members declared that they have adopted the brand in their internal and external communications and are actively advocating for the initiative. Four reported a full adoption, and the remainder four a partial adoption, showing a very positive buy-in of the new brand. This standard covers:

a) The use of the EUt+ brand in respect with the EUt+ brand book.
b) A communication plan that is aligned with the long-term vision of merging, even if different speeds for this are understandable.
c) The bodies dedicated to global outreach consider EUt+ in their initiatives.
d) Give visibility to the EUt+ brand and model in the world.
e) Measure EUt+ outputs in communication and outreach for the continuous improvement.

Most of the members declared that the EUt+ logos are present and clearly visible in their websites, with their logos placed next to their university logo, and dedicated websites with information. Some other examples or the penetration of the EUt+ brand are:

- X has a policy for brand usage that defines the coexistence between the X and EUt+ brands, available at xxx.xxx.xx.
- EUt+ is integrated in the X website, including dedicated sections to find out more about the partners, research, study opportunities, etc.
- EUt+ is used in the official email signature of the employees.
- There is a dedicated EUt+ section in the X internal communications system and X PR division is actively involved in preparing articles on EUt+ (e.g.

interviews with X researchers and scientists working in the different clusters and institutes of EUt+).

+ A separate page on the X website is dedicated to general information about EUt+ as well as details on mobility opportunities within the EUt+ consortium.
+ EUt+ Office at X also appears on the virtual Campus Tour.
+ EU+ logo is placed on the business cards of X employees.
+ EUt+ banners are placed within X faculties, informational posters can be found on info boards.

Some examples of work in progress are:

+ The use of the EUt+ brand in students and employee's cards is under development.
+ There is not a system to collect of the relevant information regarding the (proper) use or not of the EUt+ brand, and act upon it.

Some practices related to global outreach include:

+ EUt+ has become an integral part of both X's internationalization as well as outreach strategy. From being seen as just another project initially, it is now perceived as an important tool that can help X reach its KPIs, attract local and foreign students and staff, foster the overall internationalization of the university as well as improve its reputation and increase its position in different university rankings.
+ Internationalization efforts have shifted from focusing on X first to putting EUt+ in the foreground and using the EUt+ brand to attract students. For example, X has gone from participating in education fairs as X to participating as EUt+, committing to the joint identity of the consortium and strengthening its presence in the higher education area.
+ We have moved from "push-marketing" to "pull-marketing".
+ X has participated in the joint efforts of co-organized KA171 applications and has CBHE projects with Y as a member of the EUt+ alliance. X has participated with delegates in international academic fairs such as EAIE and APAIE, including the rent of a joint EUt+ booth.
+ X has signed agreements with external partners on behalf of EUt+ and has actively promoted EUt+ during international visits.

However, one member raises concerns about the communication strategy, claiming that the definition of this standard, currently describing the brand and outreach all the objectives of EUt+, should be reformulated.

- This standard is not systematically adopted yet. But we should define a strategy allowing for coexistence of both EUt+ and member universities brands. What is preventing the standard? Time will be needed to progressively reformulate all objectives and realizations in terms of EUt+ strategy and objectives.

Finally, on this and other standards, the crucial role of the rectors to advocate internally is highlighted:

- The rector should intervene more actively in the process of adapting the brand.

Standard 9 EUt+ as Long-Term Strategy

This is a transversal standard that shows buy-in and a top-down adoption of the institution, and its reflection in one of the most important documents of a university: its strategic plan. Five members declared a full adoption and three partial adoptions. The standard and its guidelines identify the following areas to be compliant:

a) EUt+ is explicitly mentioned in the strategic plan.
b) Reflection in the university policies.
c) The strategic plan of the university must respond to global societal challenges.
d) In case of other objectives and KPIs, these should not be in conflict with those of EUt+.
e) The need to do monitoring and evaluation of the KPIs related to EUt+.
f) Strategic and institutional marketing assessment include the EUt+ dimension.
g) Participation of external EUt+ representatives in the key panels and bodies.

Some examples of integration in the university strategy are provided:

- EUt+ is explicitly mentioned in the X strategic plan: xxx.xxx.xx, but it is not described as its main priority. X's strategic plan has not been updated since 2021.
- As explicitly stated in the X strategy for the period of time from 2023 to 2027, membership of the European University of Technology (EUt+) consortium provides an opportunity to contribute to X's international competitiveness by helping to find knowledge that is directly relevant to our region's economic, scientific and political priorities, creating synergies between them.

- EUt+ is embedded into the KPIs of the university.
- The long-term strategy of X is well integrated with the EUt+ strategy and there are considerable common goals related to the mission of the alliance. See website xxx.xxx.xx

Some of the highlighted practices are:

- EUt+ as the main internationalization strategy of the university has been explained to internal and external stakeholders in multiple formal meetings.
- X's management has defined numerous KPIs that are to be reached of facilitated with the help of X's participation in EUt+, aligning the objectives of the HEI strategy with the EUt+ objectives.

Some of the limitations to foster EUt+ as long-term strategy are:

- There are no delegates from other EUt+ members in the board of X's strategic plan.
- Institutional marketing assessment would not necessarily include EUt+ dimension.
- Current regulations prevent representatives from EUt+ members to be members of the University Council.

Reports also describe conversations to update limiting regional or national regulations:

- The conversations related to the change the limiting regulations have started.

Among those of partial adoption, one member explained that:

- Not all the KPIs of the EUt+ dimension are monitored by default. Data including quantitative and qualitive information is partially collected, but not always processed and used for continuous improvement.

Finally, one member demanded knowing more specifics of the EUt+ strategy before accepting the commitment.

- One can only agree on the principle that a common strategy should be applied by all members. But before accepting to apply it, this strategy has to be discussed and proved to be feasible.

Standard 10 EUt+ Standards Self-evaluation and Reviews

The final standard is meant to help understanding how much a university facilitates the proper assessment of the 10 standards for harmonization, including:

a) Having a proper system for internal assessment, including evidence and metrics to facilitate the understanding, provision of reports, appeals, etc.
b) Have a PDCA cycle for continuous improvement regarding these standards.
c) Willingness to share practices and participate in the regular update of the standards and reports.
d) Provide access to key information, facilities, etc. to the alliance governing bodies, QA board members, and external reviewers when needed.
e) Keep an appreciative and constructively spirit during the process.

Half of the members declared that they have partially adopted this standard, and the other half is equally divided between full adoption and not adoption.

Among the limitations for a full adoption, we can find:

+ External review panel of X is not connected to EUt+.
+ There is no plan-do-check-act cycle of continuous improvement as regards EUt+ standards assessment.
+ OK on the principle. But not operational yet.
+ The insufficiently active role of the university management.
+ External panels for the EUt+ SGH have not been formed yet, as we have not reached this moment of the pilot.

Some positive practices are:

+ We have formed an EUt+ coordination office in which the main representatives of X in EUt participate together with the Rector and the PIs of the projects undertaken under the EUt+ umbrella.
+ In the frame of STYX, X has done its first internal review against the EUt+ Standards and Guidelines for harmonization. The revision team, with a leader that belongs to the top management of the institution, includes one student, academic and non-academic staff, and has contacted colleagues to verify the compliance of the standards.
+ The initiative of the standards and guidelines has been presented to the Governing Board of X in 2023 and the results of the SER will be presented in 2024.

7.2 Challenges to complete the report and remarks on the standards

All the participants were given materials and instructions on how to complete the reports. The documented material was complemented with physical and online sessions dedicated to explaining the objectives of the reports and providing examples. The SER template (ANNEX I) features explanatory notes and information regarding the expected number of words per section. The participants were not given written examples of a self-assessment with the purpose of analysing, also as a component of the pilot, the different approaches to complete them. Indeed, the differences among the members regarding the way the reports were filled were remarkable.

One unexpected output was that two partners did not complete in all cases the level of adoption as described in the methodology, but instead created new categories such as “fully adopted in principle” and “fully with operational delays”. These non-normalized answers categories may be understood as an attempt to describe the willingness to adopt it, but the limitations of its actual implementation. Other remarks of one of these members describe some definitions as “standards for the future”, which is aligned with this interpretation. Such responses could be also described as “partially adopted” or “not adopted”, together with the necessary justifications as per the SER template, but we decided to keep the reports as provided by the revision teams in the pilot experiment. Occasionally, one member declared that a certain standard is not applicable to them, pointing out that it cannot be expected that is fully adopted currently. In any case, these answers are exceptional (3 out of 80 levels of adoption).

Most of the answers (and all of them in the case of the revision teams of six members) in the SERs selected the normalized level of adoption, justifying the responses to some extent, with large differences in the depth of the analysis and justification, and what is considered necessary to justify the self-declaration. The number of words in the self-assessment reports ranges from 400 to 7800. Regarding the provision of evidence, some reports included public websites and other references accessible online, while some justified the level based solely on the fact that the decision was made by the rector/president, without any further evidence of its implementation or the accessibility to the information by the community. This could be also partially due to the relatively short amount of time to complete the exercise (approximately 2 months).

We expect that the self-assessments will become more uniform with time, and in fact this process has already started since some of the reports were updated and completed during the pilot after a group session to show the preliminary results.

This process should help to level up the outputs to a certain common level of excellence for all the members.

Comments on the standards, guidelines, and the approach from the reports

Most of the feedback provided by the revision teams finds the methodology, the definition of the standards and the use of guidelines positive to achieve the goals of EUt+, with comments such as:

- The SER has proven to be very useful for a critical evaluation of the overall situation at X, which standards are fully adopted already and which are still in process and require the most work in the near future.
- As a result of the SER, we have managed to identify our strengths and weaknesses and how both can be used to facilitate the embeddedness of all 10 standards within the procedures and policies of the university.
- The guidelines were very helpful for an in-depth analysis and understanding the specific standard better.
- Even in the cases in which some steps have been made, some of the descriptions foster a culture of quality around the domain of the standard.
- The 10 Standards comprehensively capture the overarching requirement for governance. It is notable that, “While the members shall endeavor to implement the standards and guidelines, its adoption at each campus must be understood as an appreciative transformation process within the boundaries of what is formally, financially and sociologically acceptable.”
- The standards are good and well described. They are somewhat subjective and may be open to different interpretations in different institutional contexts, but having a review team bringing particular expertise and with different levels of engagement to EUt+ work helps draw better picture.

Some other general comments in the reports provide a wider analysis from the members:

- While analysing the standards document, it became clear the implementing some of these requirements is both a legal and a management challenges, and information and concrete KPIs will follow once the approach has an opportunity to mature.
- Many of the fully adopted standards are related to the work performed within the common projects and based on the internal decisions of the university, while the unadopted one depends heavily on the external update of the national and European legislation.

Finally, there are also comments for which we will need follow-up to make progress:

- There are too many elements in the standard.
- The guidelines should maybe say something about the necessity, for each EUt+ member university, to adjust its internal rules in order to take into account experience provided by students' exchanges.
- This standard, as the other ones, can only be thought of as future standards. In the meantime, each EUt+ member university has to make specific steps in order to attain a regular functioning mode, which will make these standards a reality. To be achieved, strong internal support is needed.
- This standard should be rewritten since it can only apply to joint and shared curricula. Only for such programs is it possible to have shared procedures obliging X to report to EUt+ structures.
- As it is currently written, this standard seems not applicable. Academic freedom makes it impossible to force all research activities under a unique European research strategy. Actually, the very concept of a "research strategy" should first be defined.

7.3 Outcomes from the internal focus group

The internal focus group was structured around open discussion and trust, so that, through sharing of both achievements and difficulties in a very honest and respectful way, participants gain awareness about the necessity of transformation. The main objective is the appropriation (of the standards towards the buy-in of change).

The research questions that drive the content of the internal focus group are:

For the co-analysis phase:

- What is the main achievement that you are most proud of or that you were not expecting?
- What are the main surprises you met in your own self-assessment that seemed to you unexpectable as regards your university or that you didn't know of?
- Identifying common needs or phenomena from the narratives.

For the co-design phase:

- Let's imagine together how to make the most of the good practices that allowed the achievements. How to overcome the difficulties met?

Table 1 below shows the response to the question - what are the achievements that you are most proud of, and the main surprises from reading the SER of your institution – and their connection with the EUt+ standards and guidelines for harmonization.

Input	Related standard	Remark
We are committed to continue working together after completing the first 3 years.	9	Included as a long-term strategy.
The investment of the vice-rectors on a daily basis on EUt+.	All	The guidelines clarify that engagement of the top management of the different areas is key to consider the adoption as an institution.
Embedded in the long-term strategy and giving people the assurance that is something long-lasting.	9	Already included.
Discussed and visible with the Ministry, commitment with the Ministry, that will be monitoring.	1	Already included.
Understanding that is not merely a project, that was a struggle at the beginning. Reflected in the KPIs of the development institution, for instance, in the study affairs.	9	Already included.
Engagement of the students thanks to a good communication campaign.	2 and 8	Already included.
Increasing number of students mobilities to other EUt+ campus thanks to automatic recognition available in the mobility maps.	6	Already included.

The initiative of the language pool, bringing new people who would normally not meet.	4	Already included.
Level-up of partners having an EDI plan.	3	Already included.
Update of the procedures concerning welcoming incoming students.	2 and 4	Already included.
Internationalization of entrepreneurial activities for students.	7	Already included.
The commitment to participate together in European calls for projects, and a growing competence in doing so.	7	Included as part of the strategy for research. Not explicit for studies and Erasmus+ calls.
Showing that Europe exists, that it's not something far away.	8	Can be considered as included if it is part of the communication efforts of the institution.
A good surprise was the realization of the full adoption of Standard 1.	1	Already included.
A bad surprise was realizing that we are not including EUt+ as a part of review of the institution.	10	Already included.
When collecting information for the SER, a lot of staff in X believes that the alliance is something that is just driven by a few selected people and that is not for everyone.	1 and 8	It is somewhat included, but for the next update we could consider a more explicit mention of staff engagement.
Non-academic staff got a change to exchange with European colleagues and travel, which was unusual before EUt+.	All	Included by design as part of the Europeanization of the daily work.
Presence of the EUt+ brand in the campus.	8	Already included.

During the revision of the standards, very few comments questioning them, or surprised about their descriptions.	All	This shows a strong buy-in of the spirit of the standards and that negatively perceived.
Alignment of the strategy of the institution with the standards of EUt+.	9	Already included.
Using European standards as a normal benchmark to do activities and evaluate them.	All	Included by design as part of the Europeanization of the daily work.

Table 1. Selection of inputs for steps towards an ideal implementation of the alliance regarding growing engagement.

Later the group was asked to highlight two of them as the most interesting for all in a consensual way, which were:

- **The growing engagement and Europeanization of the institutions,** which summarizes the global spirit of the ten standards, covering them all.
- **The embedment of EUt+ in the long-term strategy of the university,** which is the realization and adoption of the standard 9.

The second part of the focus group with the internal stakeholders was dedicated to better understand the missing elements, the gaps, for a successful development of the initiative. The underlying idea was to identify practices that could lead to such an ideal implementation and that are not included of the current standard definitions and guidelines. Tables Table 2 and Table 3 show the results of the session. A selection of the inputs and their relations with the standard definitions for the topic of growing engagement is shown in Table 2.

Input	**Related standard**	**Remark**
Structural changes at partner level that values working on EUt+.	1	Already included.
Work done in another EUt+ campus is fully recognized at the home institution.	1	It is already included but it could develop further including full

		recognitions of staff mobilities.
Support joint supervision and review of theses (master and doctoral).	6	Included by design as joint and European degrees require the joint supervision.
The EUt+ Human Resources Office has a joint policy that enables diverse European Careers.	1	The input is at EUt+ level. At standard level
Ensure dedication of resources for meaningful activities, e.g. staff language courses.	4	Already included.
Effective communication internally and externally to connect people.	8	The standard does not demand an effective communication but the inclusion of EUt+ in the normal communication.
Find ways to maintain student collaboration initiatives (e.g. Showcase event from ClimateLaunchpad).	1	This could be further developed to stress its importance.
We have a quality framework that enables EUt+ study programs, sharing research infrastructure.	6	Such a QA framework needs to be defined at EUt+, but members must adopt it. This could be stated in the standard update.
Many cultural events create the social demand to interact at European level.	4	Already included.
Capacity building enables the participants	1	Already included.
Also make interculturality "courses" or inclusion.	3	Already included in the EDI policies.
Branding local activities as UNIVERSITY + EUt+ activities though not directly related	8	Already included.

to e.g. ACCELERATE, STYX or EXTRAS project.		
Co-authoring on conference papers.	7	This is not explicitly mentioned yet. Could be included in the update.
Support and foster emergence of cluster and programme and European label / certificate and European degree.	6	Already included.

Table 2. Selection of inputs for steps towards an ideal implementation of the alliance regarding growing engagement.

The second topic of the group, also oriented to the steps of the ideal implementation, was dedicated to the coherence of the long-term strategy and KPIs. Table 3 shows a selection of inputs and the connection to the standards.

Input	**Related standard**	**Remark**
Create inspiring good practice reports translated to multiple languages that can reach stakeholders who are normally not deeply engaged in EUt+.	10	Standard 10 considers the reporting to the stakeholders, but it could be enhanced towards creating a book of good practices, which could be an output of the WP dedicated to QA.
Numbers of co-supervised PhD students.	7	Already linked.
Improved teaching content and quality – experience of EUT+ clusters, results of various EUT+ surveys that can be useful for improving within each institution.	6	Already included as there is an item for continuous improvement and the EUt+ dimension.
Results produced by the EDI Team reflected in the support mechanisms provided to students/staff members.	3	Already included.

Dedicated roadmaps and more specific strategic plans in the different dimensions of the alliance (4 missions).	9	Already included.
Student/staff mobilities within the EUT+ consortium significantly increase the overall mobility numbers at each university.	All	The current version of the standards mentions recognition of studies and work, the public access to the key information, but not necessarily the promotion of the mobilities. To be investigated for the next update.
Strengthening cooperation on accessible lifelong learning courses both locally and internationally (e.g. summer schools with EUT+ partners, etc.).	3	Already included.
Staff careers are assessed and rewarded considering the strategy of the university.	1	Already included.
Support on carbon measuring - EUt+ initiatives (on travel).	5	Included in an indirect way. Could be expanded in the next update.
Diverse student cohort success - improve diversity and initiatives that help on diversity of students.	3	Already included.
All students and staff get sustainability literacy.	5	To be considered in the next update.
Methodological note: In case of harmonization (STYX) common evidence for assessment.	10	Foreseen in the evaluation by external panel, which will be evidence-based (and not only self-assessments).

Keep inclusion of all boards and working groups etc.	3	Not explicitly included. To be considered for the next update.
Work with local authorities to avoid conflict in differing targets on national level and EUt+ level.	1	Already included.

Table 3. Selection of inputs for steps towards an ideal implementation of the alliance regarding growing engagement.

7.4 Outcomes from the external focus group

The external focus group aims at collecting feedback from colleagues from other alliances (EUniWell, EU Green, and UNITA), so as to enrich the standards with their perspectives. This would mainly allow to improve the standards, which are not final but subject to continuous improvement in line with EUt+ approach to quality. The other objective benefit would be to achieve greater credibility / validity of the standards, which would have been subject to exterior evaluation of peers.

Applicability to other alliances and alternatives

The first part of the session was dedicated to reply to the following research questions:

- To what extent are the EUt+ SGH a proper way to understand the EUt+ization of the members?
- How do you think that they can help? Do you consider that they can help to build mutual, trust, respect for the provisions and work of the other members? (raising the visibility to the challenges at every member and the work behind the transformation).
- Has your alliance any other initiative to achieve the same goal? How do you do it? What is your experience?

Among the different inputs of the session, some of the positive feedback that was given was:

- The standards are absolutely useful, and some of other present alliances share all the key points. Since the standards are defined according to an

international perspective, for other alliances it is easy to identify themselves even in the very same set of standards.

- The systematic approach can be extremely useful to integrate new members, as it shows in a relative short document and with an assessment system what changes are implied to transform the university in an alliance member.
- The followed methodology was considered very pragmatic and engineering-oriented. Some of the attendees who participate in other pilots for a legal entity only considered the legal and technical aspects, but this aspect covers a very important point that is common for the alliances.
- It was highlighted the value of having a graph that informs the extent of the penetration of the alliance in the members' strategies, processes, and procedures.
- From the point of view of the staff involved in Quality Assurance, the use of standards and guidelines aligns very well with the spirit of monitoring using a quality perspective.

Additionally, some challenges were identified to transfer this approach in the case of another alliance. The main issues raised were:

- According to one participant, the term harmonization matches well with the kind of alliance that EUt+ is, but it may not work in other alliances where there is wider diversity.
- The description of common standards implies a depth of integration in the long-term which matches EUt+ but not necessarily other European University initiatives.

Nevertheless, one alliance stated that we need to agree to harmonization while celebrating our diversity.

Regarding other alternatives to monitor and report the progress of the members, it was reported the use of KPIs and progress schedules, not only at WP level but also flow-down for each member, and interviews to identify the barriers and analyze the issues. Satisfaction surveys are also used to understand the usefulness of the activities, and with all this information, a Quality Assurance Board prepares an impact observatory report that is presented to the management of the alliance and the members.

A lot of stress was placed on the importance of the interviews, creating a space to discuss among the key stakeholders, and having a deep understanding of the barriers that block the implementation at the member universities.

Main blocking issues

The second exercise was dedicated to finding the reasons for failure. The participants were asked the following question: in 3 years' time, EUt+ (status, processes, and overall deployment) has failed. Let's imagine together what happened, focusing on the reasons and the steps of the failure. The participants were requested to describe it in a – the show must go on – formula, to keep the creativity open and a relaxed atmosphere. The purpose of this exercise is to legitimate failure so barriers and obstacles can emerge openly.

Table 4 below shows some of the inputs provided by the participants, together with their relation with the EUt+ SGH.

Input	Related standard	Remark
The communication plan failed because it was not very practical, the communication flow was a disaster.	8	The standard and guidelines encourage the communication to get integrated in the normal communication activities of the members and a reasonable dedication to the common office.
A possible workaround was discarded because one member did not accept doing something different from the normal work.	-	The issue is caused by a blocking situation in the decision-making process of the alliance, which is more connected to the consortium agreement rather than with the harmonization.
Incompatible national regulations.	1	Standard 1 considers that being committed to the alliance implies advocating to the authorities and key stakeholders that must support the initiative.
Communication was jeopardized because the participants did not share the same understanding due to cultural differences. Activities	4	The standard foresees the need to create a multicultural atmosphere that fosters a better

with a focus on cultural differences and multicultural events were not accepted by the top management that did not consider them important and instead wanted to invest all the budgets in paying PhD students for serious research.		understanding and respect for other viewpoints.
The partners did not manage to find common topics for the PhD students.	7	The adoption of standard 7 would mitigate this risk as it promotes the compatibility of the local strategies by aligning to the joint defined at the alliance level.
The institutions of the European Union lost interest in the initiative and stopped investing on it and facilitating the conversations with the member states.	1 and 8	Standard 1 promotes advocacy, and 8 a communication approach that encourages the European identify in the university community.
All the staff working in EUt+ was overloaded and eventually they got burnout. This problem scaled up as more and more things emerged one being in the alliance.	1	Already considered as the standard foresees the need to invest in resources and considering the work for the alliance as an integral part of the career.
Key staff left the alliance without a proper renovation plan that kept the momentum, carry the vision and the ambition.	1 and 9	This risk could be mitigated adopting standards 1 and 9 as the presence in the long-term strategy must come with an associated human resources plan in line with standard 1.

Table 4. Selection of reasons provided in the pre-mortem exercise anticipating the failure of EUt+, and their relations with the standards and guidelines for harmonization.

An ideal scenario for implementation

Finally, the participants were requested to consider an ideal scenario for the development and appropriation of the processes towards the success of the alliance. The purpose was to identify missing elements that can contribute and are not present in the current version. Table 5 shows the inputs provided by the participants, the related standard or standards and some clarifying remarks.

Input	Related standard	Remark
Certain kind of cultural homogeneity.	4 and all	The purpose of the standard includes fostering a multicultural atmosphere. The global purpose is to harmonize experiences without losing identity and diversity.
Full recognition of the work done for the alliance and in other campuses of the alliance.	1	Standard 1 could be complemented with the full recognition of teaching hours in other campuses, and other initiatives.
Efficient and effective communication.	8	Included in the standard.
Intellectual motivation coming from the European identity.	4 and 8	Standards 4 and 8 are the ones with a stronger focus on creating a European Identity.
Training and up-skilling initiatives to be able to do it.	1	It is included in the spirit of standard 1 but it could be made more explicit.
A proper career frame so their motivation is aligned with the career recognition.	1	Even though recognition is mentioned in the standard, when the development will be such, the description could be expanded to the alignment of

		the local HR strategies with the EUt+ joint one.
The member states (ministries and agencies) agree on common study path and agree to allocate budget from EU to be spent in the transformation of alliances.	1 and 6	This is related to the standard 1 and 6 but beyond its scope as the action is for the states and not for the universities.
Ministries are aware that a transformation process is everyone's responsibility (academics), but mainly theirs.	1	Emphasis on the advocacy with authorities.
Achieve objectives in two-fold way: mindset + regulation. No fear anymore: regulations allow people to do things. Working on a change of mindset.	1 and 8	Regulation linked to standard 1, and mindset is more a matter of internal communication (8).
No more stress factor (which can seriously impede).	1	Included in the allocation of resources.
Shared pride to belong to an alliance, that overweighs fears.	8	Internal communication and buy-in.
Pride to belong to something big as an alliance (at European level).	8	Must be included in the communication strategy.
Change of mindset at all levels: university, society.	8	Must be included in the communication strategy.
Public institutions align with society's (not commission's) expressed need for a European Higher Education.	8	Must be included in the communication strategy.
The member states agree to have a Common Higher Education Pact.	1	Advocacy.

Table 5. Selection of the inputs to build an ideal scenario for the appropriation of the process towards the success of EUt+ obtained during the focus group with external participants.

8 Analysis and recommendations

From the hundreds of inputs collected from the reports, group sessions with the steering team, and focus groups, we can conclude some elements that we have organized based on the standard areas and the stakeholder that can act upon it.

8.1 Analysis per standard domain

Figure 4 showed the scores provided in the self-assessment for each standard. The domains with the highest scores (described from now on as the addition of fully adopted + partially adopted) are 5 *sustainability and ethics* (6+2) and 1 *participation in resources* (6+1), followed by 9 *long-term strategy* and 3 *EDI* (both with 5+3), what can be interpreted as the perception from the members that they are doing well in these areas.

The next categories with higher scores are 4 *language & culture*, and 8 *brand & outreach* (both with 4+4), showing the growing penetration of the activities linked to create a European identity in the community, and the progress in the communication efforts both internally and externally.

However, the member's perception is that the penetration of the alliance vision in other domains is far from complete. Remarkably, standard 6, with a score of only 1+3, shows the small impact on the study offer, its design and monitoring, indicating that the EUt+ ambition in this area is in its initial stages. The content of the reports presented before connects this with the internal and national regulations as very limiting factors to achieve this standard, but this should not hide other issues that are linked to lack of appropriation, unsuited procedures, etc.

Also with limited development are the standards 2 *interaction with students* (2+5) and 7 *R&D&I* (2+3). In principle, standards 2 and 6 could be quite interconnected, as a lack of offer would cause a lack of information to present to the students. However, standard 2 focuses more on the provision of information, and this is not merely limited to the design of join degrees, but also other mobility and learning opportunities. Regarding 7 and research, innovation and entrepreneurship, the reports focused clearly more on research, and the few comments regarding entrepreneurship were in fact positive. The low score could be caused by the low number of European Research Institutes currently approved by the Rectors Board at EUt+, and the difficulties to define a joint strategy that is aligned with the one of the members, particularly in a field in which the staff and researchers have a lot of

freedom to choose their topics, and the most active ones have the inertia to use their own networks.

Nevertheless, we must always keep in mind that the scores come from the possible subjective perception of the revision teams, and despite the fact that some reports mention some evidence and indicators to support the statements, this is not always the case.

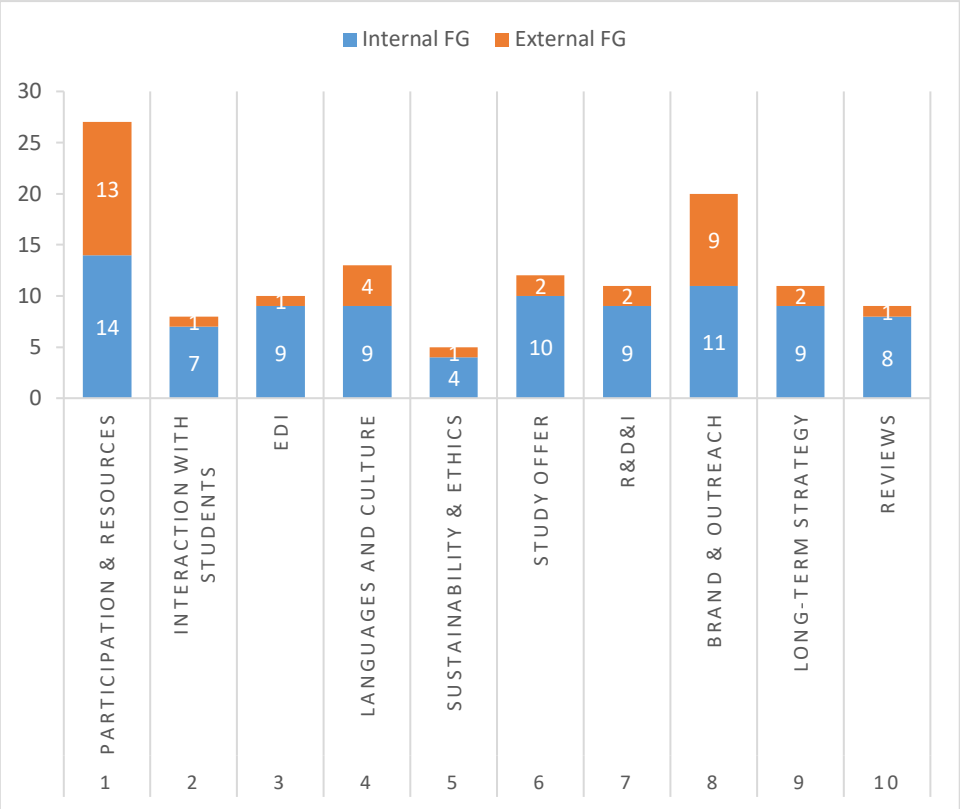

Figure 5: Frequency of the standards during the focus groups sessions with internal and external stakeholders.

Figure 5 shows the frequency of the standards in the focus groups (i.e. how often the topic they cover is mentioned) both with internal and external stakeholders. We can assume that the higher the frequency, the more relevant the topic is for the group under consideration. Both groups were asked to focus on key elements for the success of the alliance, independently on whether they were in an ideal scenario or in a pre-mortem exercise.

By far, the domain that attracts more relevance and concerns is the one of standard 1, featuring participation, resources, and advocacy with the authorities. This is the case for both internal and external groups, making a clear contrast with the high scores provided in the reports to this standard, as shown in Figure 4. There are multiple reasons that could explain this, two of them being that the standard is not complete enough to consider all concerning matters, and that it is assessed in a generous way in the SERs. The topic deserves further consideration and a deeper investigation that will need to be done out of this pilot project.

As observed in Figure 5, the second standard with the highest number of appearances during the focus groups was standard 8 dedicated to brand, communication, and global outreach, but mostly for what concerns internal communication, growing awareness and appropriation, a sense of pride and belonging to the alliance, and European identity in coexistence with the national and regional ones. In this case the score provided in the SERs was 4+4 (see Figure 4), showing a perceived medium level of development. Considering the importance given by both groups (it is the second highest scores for the two of them), more efforts should be dedicated to fully adopt this standard.

The external focus group also highlighted the importance of fostering a multicultural and multilingual environment (standard 4), which was also considered important by the internal stakeholders.

Most of the remainder topics were mentioned in a quite uniform way, showing the need to include them all (none of them was ignored or neglected), and the relatively similar weight that is given to these topics, except for a slightly more relevance of the standard 6 dedicated to the study offer.

8.2 Recommendations to member universities

Because the member universities carry most of the weight of the transformation process needed for the successful implementation of the alliance's objectives, they represented the main target group of the WP2 of this pilot project. The main recommendations that arise and would be directed to them are:

- The SER can support a better self-understanding of the penetration of EUt+ in our institution. Investing in preparing a proper SER can help identify strengths and weaknesses in a systematic way.
- Naturally, the standards with the lowest scores imply areas where the penetration is pending. Nevertheless, high scores may also be due to lack of depth in the analysis when preparing the reports.

- The contributions and discussions with other participants from our universities (other colleagues and students) can help us realize the perception of other internal stakeholders and their level of awareness.
- The guidelines can be used as a reflection on the way our internal processes and systems are built.
- A self-analysis exercise that can help realize the work done and its impact on our community.
- It fosters the continuous improvement of the institution.
- There are many areas in which the blocking situation does not come from regulations. Among all, resources, full recognition of the work for the alliance and proper internal communication emerge as the most cited items.
- The root cause of many of the issues seems to be related to lack of resources. The members should invest in hiring and training new employees, together with the capacity-building for the existing staff to support their Europeanization.
- Advocacy at national level, with the ministries, accreditation agencies, etc. is essential.

8.3 Recommendations to the Rectors Board

The rectors are the most relevant internal stakeholder of their institutions, and consequently the one whose actions and communications have a deeper impact on the rest of the community. At EUt+, the Rectors Board is the ultimate decision-making body. Because of their relevance and impact in a community of more +110.000 people, we highly recommend some actions dedicated directly to them.

- Among all the inputs identified as key for a successful implementation, most of them are linked to the need to allocate resources, but also the advocacy with key national/regional stakeholders like ministries and accreditation agencies. Top managers should emphasize their efforts on this matter.
- The endorsement and support of the rector towards the internal stakeholders is consider key to facilitate the Europeanization of the members and close the gap between the EUt+ governance and the reality in the campuses.
- Formally approve a version of the EUt+ Standards and Guidelines for Harmonization to reinforce the adoption and facilitate the follow-up of the internal implementation of the decisions made by the Rectors Board.
- Participate in interviews with external review panels for a better understanding of the barriers and finding possible solutions.

8.4 Recommendations to the EUt+ Secretariat General

The Secretariat General is the body in charge of coordinating the alliance, with the ultimate goal of carrying out the vision and promoting the implementation of its mission statement. To succeed in its endeavour, it needs to understand the difficulties of the members for the effective implementation of the EUt+ decisions and agreements, taking actions that create a working climate of trust and mutual understanding. From the analysis of the pilot project, we recommend that the Secretariat General utilizes the Standards and Guidelines for Harmonization to:

- Enable a space for the members to share the difficulties, good and bad practices with other members.
- Collect a report of practices and lessons learned.
- Utilize the SER as a summary of the alliance's progress, integrating them in the QA approach, complementary to other methods.
- Implements the standards in a continuous improvement cycle, so the exercise becomes more and more useful, and provides a better self-understanding of the penetration of EUt+ in our institutions.
- Use interviews to analyze the barriers and work collaboratively to eliminate or work around them.
- There is a strong need for advocacy. The Secretariat General must take this role with the European Institutions.
- The use of the standards and monitoring KPIs and other indicators are complementary. The standards are about making all the efforts to make this happen. Indicators show the results of these efforts.

8.5 Recommendations to external stakeholders and other alliances

At EUt+ we are very much aware of the fact that we are privileged to experiment with a model of alliance that can represent the future of the European universities. We do not take this responsibility lightly and consider dissemination as a normal part of our job, keeping in mind the relevance to understand the transferability of our results and conclusions. With this principle, we would like to recommend the following ideas to alliances willing to develop an initiative like the EUt+ standards and guidelines for harmonization.

- The approach has demonstrated its usefulness for the problem under consideration and can support multiple purposes which are common in most alliances (if not all).

- The current descriptions of the standards have shown to be useful, and the fact that they are defined with an international perspective, makes it easy for other alliances to identify themselves or even to use them almost as they are.
- The use of a systematic approach can be useful for the current set-up of the alliance, but also for the integration of new members.
- The approach is complementary to other analysis based on progress reports, KPIs and interviews.
- The methodology can be useful to show progress in a synthetic way to the alliance governance bodies.
- The use of standards and guidelines can be connected to other Quality Assurance initiatives.

9 Conclusions and further steps

The deliverable D2.3 of the STYX project is built upon the deliverable D2.2, which was a technical document providing a preliminary description of our government and approach towards convergence, plus the contributions done by the STYX consortium by October 2023. It introduces two questions that are key to the establishment of a truly European university.

On one front, we have outlined the essential bodies, roles, responsibilities, and procedures required to actualize the EUt+ vision. This outline draws heavily from agreements forged by various EUt+ entities, including the Rectors Board, and other technical documents. Given EUt+'s dynamic nature, these specifications undergo regular updates to align with the alliance's natural progression.

Conversely, we have introduced our methodology, its outcomes, and key insights to facilitate the gradual alignment of EUt+ members towards the realization of a European super campus. This methodology takes inspiration from established initiatives like the Bologna Process, the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance, and the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programs.

We have delineated ten EUt+ Standards and Guidelines for Harmonization, covering the four dimensions of a European University. These standards aim to capture the essence of EUt+ aspirations without claiming exhaustive completeness. Acknowledging the intricate nature of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), our objective is not to establish these standards as entirely autonomous entities. Instead, this list primarily addresses the core missions and implications associated with the journey towards establishing an international super campus.

The envisioned future EUt+ super campus is expected to adhere to harmonized principles while recognizing and embracing the unique characteristics and variations in implementation that contribute to our collective diversity. These standards and guidelines span various domains, including resource allocation and participation in the alliance, orientation towards EUt+ students, principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion, appreciation of multilingualism and intercultural learning, university missions such as study/learning, research, and innovation (including entrepreneurship), outreach and branding, adoption of long-term strategy, and the imperative to assess the adoption of these EUt+ standards within our institutions.

The document also outlined the methodology for developing and revising the EUt+ Standards and Guidelines for Harmonization and the achieved outcomes. This

process relies on input from both internal and external stakeholders, incorporating recommendations tailored to each stakeholder group.

The global conclusion is that both internal and external stakeholders find the use of the standards and guidelines extremely useful to understand and support the penetration of the alliance activities, vision and mission, in its member universities.

9.1 Main conclusions with respect to the standards and guidelines for harmonization

The members of the European University of Technology have demonstrated their willingness for harmonization and a positive attitude towards having common standards that represent the core values and principles of the alliance. All the participating members provided inputs in their reports, took part in the discussions, and accepted the exercise of evaluating the penetration of EUt+ in their institutions, showing their commitment to integrate and work more efficiently together. We find this a considerable milestone in the life the alliance.

The reports varied significantly in their declared level of adoption, depth of the comments and evidence provided to support the assessment. However, the results show that very few items were questioned by the revision teams (formed by the stakeholders which are not always part of the construction of EUt+). In other words, the member universities may not have completed the adoption of the alliance in all the domains, and some of the reports may not be complete, but they do not question that the penetration should be present, and the utility of the approach.

From the comparison and analysis of the 8 reports and the more than 120 inputs obtained in focus groups with internal and external participants, we concluded several recommendations regarding the work for every specific domain of the standards, and addressing different key stakeholders, particularly: the member universities; the EUt+ Secretariat General; the Rectors Board; external stakeholders and other alliances.

9.2 Next steps

The results obtained in the pilot demonstrated the interest and need to further develop the proposal. The next steps that the EUt+ team intends to follow are:

- Formally adopt the standards at the EUt+ Rectors Board to reinforce their adoption and the regular assessments. This proposal will be introduced to the Rectors Board on April 4, 2024.
- EUt+ is currently progressing in the development of a joint quality assurance system that shall apply to our joint and shared activities. Its underpinning principles are transparency, efficiency, accountability, mutual trust, equal respect to all cultures and languages, institutional independency, academic freedom, and the European Values. We intend to include the EUt+ Standards and Guidelines for Harmonization in the QA framework of the alliance, as a mean to engagement of all key stakeholders and foster continuous improvement in an appreciative approach towards our harmonization.
- Analysis the reusability of the current QA instruments to optimize the use of the resources and know-how.
- Identify and contact external experts for the external panel described in standard 10 regarding self-evaluations and reviews.
- Exchange with the European Commission EACEA to understand the validity of the SGH reports for monitoring the alliance's progress.
- Establish a calendar for the possible assessments and updates from the inputs obtained from the different sources.
- Include this work in a normal plan-do-check-act cycle, to ensure the continuous improvement of the initiative.

ANNEX I Template for the self-assessment report

HEI self-assessment/evaluation report (HEI-SER)

EUt+ Standards and Guidelines for Harmonization

Name of HEI	Name	Role
Member of the Steering Group		
Members of the Revision Team		
Contributors		
Date		

Summary

Describe the general status of the adoption of the standards at the HEI (between 300 and 500 words).

ID	Standard	Level of adoption (fully, partially, not adopted)
1	Resources and Participation in EUt+	
2	An Education Oriented to the EUt+ Students	
3	Equity, Diversity and Inclusion	
4	Multilingualism and Intercultural Learning	

5	A sustainable, ethical, and environmentally responsible EUt+ campus	
6	EUt+ Embedded in the Study Offer	
7	EUt+ in Research, Development, Innovation, and Entrepreneurship	
8	EUt+ Brand and Outreach	
9	EUt+ as Long-Term Strategy	
10	EUt+ Standards Self-evaluation and Reviews	

Assessments

Standard i *Title of the standard*

Description of the adoption

Describe the way the standard is adopted at the HEI (between 300 and 500 words). Mention the necessary agreements at the different HEI boards when necessary. Explain whether the adoption covers the whole HEI or only certain faculties, study clusters, etc.

Level of adoption

Choose among “fully adopted”, “partially adopted”, and “not adopted”. Justify why you have provided such a self-assessment (100 words).	
Level of adoption	
If the level of adoption was not “fully adopted”, please explain	
Who is impacted?	

What is preventing the adoption?	
Where is the issue?	
Why is this an issue to adopt the standard?	
How often does this happen? (e.g. constantly, under some circumstances, rarely).	
Is there any action planned that could help progress in the adoption of the standard?	
If yes, what is the planned schedule of the action and its result?	

Remarks on the process

Make any general remark that you feel you must share for a better understanding of the SER. You might want to consider answering some of these questions: a) Did the standards help you better understand the situation at your HEI regarding the adoption of the EUt+ initiative in the university? b) Did you find the description of the standards and guidelines too vague or too specific? c) Did you find it difficult to define the level of adoption with the information that you have available at the university? d) Was the fact that the standards are written in English an issue for the revision team and other potential contributors? e) Do you have any suggestions for improving this report? f) Do you have any suggestions for improving the standards and guidelines?