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# Joint R&I international strategic priorities and joint HR strategic priorities

**WIDE AcrossEU**



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# Contents

<b>Project Details .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Deliverable Details .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>History of changes .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Contents.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Preamble .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>1. Project Overview .....</b>	<b>5</b>
Mission, Vision and Shared Values .....	6
<b>2. Introduction.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>3. Description of project partners .....</b>	<b>8</b>
University of Pardubice, Pardubice, Czech Republic .....	8
Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje, Skopje, North Macedonia .....	9
Zhytomyr Polytechnic State University, Zhytomyr, Ukraine .....	9
University of Lapland, Rovaniemi, Finland .....	10
Umeå University, Umeå, Sweden .....	10
SWOT analysis of project partners .....	11
<b>4. Methodology .....</b>	<b>12</b>
Data collection.....	12
Data processing .....	12
<b>5. Joint R&amp;I international strategic priorities of the consortium .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>6. Joint HR international strategic priorities of the consortium .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>7. Conclusion .....</b>	<b>17</b>



## Preamble

Joint R&I international strategic priorities and joint HR strategic priorities develops and is heading cooperation among partners who implement project **WIDEn performance in research and innovation capacity and competence Across EU (WIDE AcrossEU)**.

This document was created with the aim to fulfil the joint vision and in conformity with joint values.

It respects strategical documents of the project partners, national strategical documents of countries which are the project partners based in and EU strategical documents.

# 1. Project Overview

WIDE AcrossEU aims to advance participants from Widening countries (the core group - three higher education institutions (HEIs) from CZ, MK, and UA) who were previously single beneficiaries of regional funding programs to a higher level, preparing them for wider and more successful participation in direct EU funding programs. Furthermore, the goal is to expand the number of Horizon Europe proposals submitted, both as lead applicant (coordinator) and with the core Widening country partners.

This will be accomplished by increasing competitiveness through targeted training, work shadowing, mobility, benchmarking best practices, and a tailored set of capacity and competency building activities. Participants from non-Widening countries (two higher education institutions from FI and SE) will co-provide trainings, strategic advice, share their experiences in synergic funding, role in smart specialization priorities setting and implementation and HE projects and related networks, host staff from the core group, help to promote the R&I infrastructures, and support access to targeted European networks and platforms.

The WIDE AcrossEU consortium, which includes partner institutions from Czechia (CZ), North Macedonia (MK), Ukraine (UA), Finland (FI), and Sweden (SE), has extensive experience participating in HE, Synergic EU R&I funding, Smart Specialization Clusters, and other international R&I funding schemes. The partnership is based on existing collaboration between four partners working through an emerging European University Alliance - AcrossEU.

Considering the above-mentioned, WIDE AcrossEU works towards the following **specific objectives**:

1. To map the needs and requirements of target groups in Widening partners – State of Play (Pathway mapping);
2. To strengthen competitiveness of target groups in Widening countries by acquiring new transferable skills for R&I staff (Capacity and Competence Pathway);
3. To create strategic priorities for international R&I and Human Resources (Capacity and Competence Pathway);
4. Access to networks and partnerships to secure more successful proposals and create a base for lead partner roles for Widening partners (Access Pathway);
5. To better use R&I infrastructure funded under ERDF or similar investments (Success Pathway);
6. To improve access to excellent European R&I networks and communities (Capacity Access and Sharing Pathway).

## Mission, Vision and Shared Values

### **Mission**

The WIDE AcrossEU project is a European partnership project funded by the Horizon Europe programme under the call HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-04 (Pathways to Synergies). The project consortium consists of 5 respected universities. Their joint general mission is to produce high-quality science closely linked with education. Through creative and active human potential, they strive for continuous development and prosperity of society.

### **Vision**

Vision of the WIDE AcrossEU consortium is to:

- be internationally respected universities of scientific research, creative activities and education,
- build on clearly defined high-standard and excellent areas of scientific research and education,
- be open institutions with significant research and innovation potential, demonstrating activity and competitiveness not only on national levels but mainly on international level,
- be rich in diversity and quality of scientific disciplines,
- develop and cultivate joint collaboration, networking and mutual relationships,
- be active in quality project proposal submitting,
- be successful in obtaining of financial support from international, European and national programmes and grant schemes,
- have satisfied, active, motivated, smart, critical thinking and fair rewarded employees and students.

### **Shared Values of the academic community of the consortium**

The shared values are:

- democratic and moral principles, academic freedom,
- respect for individuals, society, the environment, material, cultural and ethical values,
- creative, critical and independent thinking and free expression thereof,
- joint values in education, science, research, development and innovation,
- openness and diversity for creative results,
- partnership and cooperation regardless of gender, ethnicity, culture, religion and age,
- support to talents for excellence,
- integral, highly ethical development and self-improvement of individuals,
- innovation and sustainability of solutions to global challenges,
- open communication,
- quality, prosperity and social responsibility.

## 2. Introduction

To achieve the project's specific objectives, particularly specific objective 3 aimed at creating strategic priorities for international Research and Innovation (R&I) and Human Resources (HR), the integrated deliverables 4.1 and 4.2 will support all project partners in better aligning their institutional R&I and HR policies with EU policies.

In this regard, the integrated deliverable D4.1 - Joint R&I international strategic priorities and joint HR strategic priorities aims to contribute to the update and implementation of renewed institutional R&I policies and priorities for Widening and non-Widening partners, with support from corresponding HR policies and investments. The “Joint R&I international strategic priorities” should ensure that all partners consider the need to revise and update their institutional R&I and education policies to align with the project's goals and objectives, as well as the EU R&I priorities defined in the WIDERA Work Programme, EU Strategy for Universities, and the Pact for Research and Innovation in Europe. Furthermore, the “Joint HR strategic priorities” will contribute to greater determination and harmonization of HR priorities among partner institutions, given that access and success with EU funding, R&I collaboration at the local, regional, interregional, and EU and international levels require capacity, specifically human capital, time, and new competencies and skills.

A list of joint international R&I and HR priorities is developed by combining the specific priorities identified by each partner institution. This list will be used to revise, update, and harmonize the institution's policies.

For a better understanding of the joint priorities, an extensive elaboration and description of the partner institutions is provided below.



### **3. Description of project partners**

#### University of Pardubice, Pardubice, Czech Republic

The University of Pardubice builds on a seventy five-year tradition of higher education in the city. Government Decree No. 81 of 27 June 1950 established the Chemical College in Pardubice. From November 1953, it was called the Institute of Chemical Technology in Pardubice (ICT) for forty years. After 1989, the character of the school changed, new faculties were established and the range of study programmes multiplied. In 1994, the name of the school was changed to the University of Pardubice by law. The single-faculty ICT has gradually become a modern multidisciplinary university with seven faculties offering education in a wide range of disciplines and in several unique areas, such as energetic materials, printing, materials research, radar systems, rail vehicles and restoration technologies.

The dynamic development at the turn of the millennium proves that the University of Pardubice can quickly adapt to changes in external conditions, respond effectively to technological and social developments and demand in the labour market, and use current results of science and research in its educational activities. In several areas of education, science and research, the university has an important national and international position. This fact was confirmed by obtaining institutional accreditations (2018) for 6 areas of education (transport, economics, historical sciences, chemistry, informatics and medical disciplines), which describe the basic spectrum of activities and the potential for further development of science and research in education at the University of Pardubice.

In 75 years, the university has become a modern and consolidated institution, with 50,000 highly qualified professionals having left its lecture rooms. The current university with almost 7,000 students and more than 1,100 academic, research and other staff is an important centre of education, the importance of which extends beyond the borders of the Czech Republic.

Its faculties are:

Faculty of Chemical Technology – FChT (established in 1950 as ICT),

Faculty of Economics and Administration – FEA (established in 1991),

Faculty of Transport Engineering – FTE (established in 1993),

Faculty of Arts and Philosophy – FAP (in 1992, the Institute of Foreign Languages was established, later renamed the Institute of Languages and Humanities, which was transformed into a separate Faculty of Humanities in 2001, which was renamed the Faculty of Philosophy in December 2005),

Faculty of Restoration – FR (founded in 2005),

Faculty of Health Studies – FHS (in 2002, the Institute of Health Studies was established, which was transformed into a separate Faculty of Health Studies in January 2007)

Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Informatics – FEEI (established in 2002 as the Institute of Informatics, renamed the Institute of Electrical Engineering and Informatics in 2003, which was transformed into a separate faculty in January 2008).

## Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje, Skopje, North Macedonia

The Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje is the first state University in the Republic of North Macedonia, founded in 1949, initially with three faculties. Today, the University represents a functional community of 23 faculties, 5 research institutes, 4 public scientific institutions - associate members, 1 associate member - other higher education institution and 7 associate members - other organizations. Its activities are stipulated by the Law on Higher Education and the Statute of the University.

The Ss. Cyril and Methodius University develops study programmes in all scientific fields – natural sciences and mathematics, technical and technological sciences, medical sciences and health, biotechnical sciences, social sciences, humanities and arts. Except for the faculties, the research work, also is carried out in the independent research institutes as an integral part of the University. Nowadays, the illustration of UKIM through figures is as follows: over 25,701 students in the first cycle and 1,479 students in the second cycle of studies are part of the teaching and educational process. The third cycle - doctoral studies is realized within the School of Doctoral Studies, with a total of 1,378 students. Over 1,471 teaching, research, associate, as well as administrative staff participate in the realization of the teaching and scientific process at the faculties and institutes. The overall activities of the University also include sport, artistic, informative, recreational and other activities organized within many associations, clubs etc.

UKIM is the main research performer in the country and has participation in international projects. The academic staff manages and participates in scientific and research projects in HE, Digital Europe Programme, ERASMUS+, Single Market programme, COST, NATO, as well as in projects from the Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA) and bilateral agreements. Previous active participation is envisaged in Horizon 2020, COSME, CIP, FP7, FP6, CIP-IEE-2013, TEMPUS and other programmes. Main research institutes in the country are also connected to UKIM thus enabling direct contact with this target group. UKIM also possesses considerable experience in applied research and technology transfer cooperation with local business community.

## Zhytomyr Polytechnic State University, Zhytomyr, Ukraine

ZPSU is one of the progressive and leading universities in the Northern Ukraine region. It has leading positions in different national ranking lists among other educational institutions. It was founded in 1920, now awarded by ISO9001:2015. Today about 8 000 students are studying at the university. There are 51 bachelors, 35 master, 13 doctoral and 9 post-doctorate programmes provided at 6 faculties. Students are involved in activities related to hard and soft skills development, forming the most tech-innovative community of 50 thousand graduates from 30 countries; provide co-research for entrepreneurship development, with IT and producing clusters, form as well as local and global competitive landscape in economy and society.

ZPSU paid special attention for modernisation, digitalisation, innovation fulfilment, modern educational, scientific results, and practical approaches implementation into all spheres of university activities. Wide range programs realised: Erasmus+/Tempus, DAAD, OeAD, Nawa, IVF, NATO, Horizon 2020 and others in the sphere of the potential of HE development, development of new training courses, programs in accordance with international standards. ZPSU is inclusive, promotes gender equality (A-level certificate), multiculturalism.

Each year at least 3-4 new international projects are starting.  
Open for professional communities' development, co-research and fruitful cooperation with partners, and valuable consortiums formation.

## University of Lapland, Rovaniemi, Finland

The University of Lapland was established in 1979 and is located on the Arctic Circle in Rovaniemi, Finland. The university currently has 7,800 students and 730 employees. As the northernmost university in the European Union, it is renowned for its comprehensive research and educational offerings across various disciplines, including arts and design, education, law, social sciences, and tourism, with a particular emphasis on northern and Arctic issues.

Central to the university's mission is its focus on Arctic and northern change, aiming to develop scientific knowledge that ensures the prosperity of northern societies and their natural environments. The university holds a national mandate to research indigenous Sámi rights and societal issues, with its Arctic Centre serving as a crucial node for national and international Arctic research and policy consultancy.

In addition, the university is dedicated to advancing sustainable development, justice, well-being, equality, and culture-based service design, making impactful contributions at local, regional, and international levels.

## Umeå University, Umeå, Sweden

Umeå University was founded in 1965 and is Sweden's fifth oldest university. Today, it has a strong international and multicultural presence with students, teachers and researchers from all over the world (approx. 37,000 students and 4,500 employees).

The aim of the university is to continue becoming one of Scandinavia's best environments for study and research and meet the challenges of an ever-increasing global society. Umeå University is one of Sweden's most comprehensive universities within all areas of scientific research. This research takes place on a broad scale in order to compete in the international arena.

The university conducts ground-breaking research within several areas, e.g. Biogeochemistry, Ecosystem Dynamics, Energy, Infections, Plant and Forest Biotechnology and Social Welfare Research. A specific example of Umeå University's world class research is Emmanuelle Charpentier, who was awarded the Nobel Prize in Chemistry for her discovery of the CRISPR-Cas9 genetic scissors and was active at Umeå University when she made her ground-breaking finding.

## SWOT analysis of project partners

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Long term partnership</li> <li>- Good relationship</li> <li>- Excellent research in many disciplines</li> <li>- Experience with mono-beneficiary projects</li> <li>- Experience with project partnership</li> <li>- Partners, who have experience how to prepare, submit and coordinate projects (UMU, ULAPLAND)</li> <li>- Partners with ERC holders (UMU, UPCE)</li> <li>- Project support office at 4 universities (UMU, ULAPLAND, UPCE, UKIM)</li> <li>- Fundraising office – International department at ZPSU</li> <li>- HR Award holders (UMU, UPCE)</li> <li>- Partner who will apply for HR Award (UKIM, ZPSU)</li> <li>- Interest in seminars/webinars from participants from UKIM and ZPSU</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lack of interest in education from Czech target group</li> <li>- Fear of communication with different partners</li> <li>- Fear of projects coordination</li> <li>- English language knowledge (UPCE)</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- National contact points in 4 countries (S, FI, CZ, MKD)</li> <li>- Joint trainings for EU project preparation and application based on already established good communication and understandings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- War (Russia against Ukraine)</li> <li>- Unstable political situation</li> <li>- Pandemic</li> <li>- Change of rules in Horizon Europe programme</li> </ul>

## 4. Methodology

This chapter describes the methodology used to define the joint priorities for the R&I and HR policies of the participating partner institutions.

### Data collection

This report builds on a variety of secondary data sources. Each partner gathered data from various strategic documents, laws, bylaws, action plans, and other sources to ensure a thorough review of the institutional regulatory environment and policies. The data were mostly acquired through desk research, but each partner's planning, management bodies, and leadership also had a role in the process. In addition to the desk research, online sessions were scheduled to discuss the institution's policies and practices.

### Data processing

A qualitative analysis of the collected information was used. Following the qualitative assessment, a comparative analysis was conducted, with the institutional procedures compared to international best practices in terms of R&I and HR regulations.

## 5. Joint R&I international strategic priorities of the consortium

Regarding the joint R&I international strategic priorities, below is presented a summary of priorities and activities focused on strengthening scientific, research, development and innovation practices, fostering academic and research environments, and enhancing excellence and cooperation. These priorities are aligned with the broader goals of modern research institutions, help enhance research activity, increase number of submitted and implemented projects, involve more researchers and develop international cooperation.

As mentioned above, each priority (P) includes a set of targeted activities (A) that address essential areas where there is a need for interventions such as collaboration, networking, internationalization, training, staff exchange, experience sharing, raising of external funding and support. The associated timelines reflect the continuous nature of these efforts, ensuring sustainability, accountability, and measurable progress.

Priority		Activity		Timeline
P01	<b>Develop strategic scientific disciplines connected with education, especially with doctoral studies</b>	A01	Preparation and implementation of joint projects, involving of doctoral students	Continuously
		A02	Collaboration and networking	
		A03	Exchange of academic staff, researchers and doctoral students	
P02	<b>Strengthen the excellence in science</b>	A01	Preparation and implementation of joint projects	Continuously
		A02	Collaboration and networking	
		A03	Training and education	
		A04	Exchange of academic staff, researchers and doctoral students	
		A05	Experience sharing	
P03	<b>Connect scientific research with creative activities</b>	A01	Collaboration and networking	Continuously
		A02	Preparation and implementation of joint projects	
		A03	Experience sharing	
		A04	Training and education	
		A05	Job shadowing	
		A06	Staff exchange	
P04	<b>Upgrade the R&amp;D&amp;I infrastructure and strengthen the potential for innovation</b>	A01	R&D&I infrastructure platform	30.04.2025
		A02	Joint disciplines mapping	31.12.2026
		A03	Implementation of joint projects	Continuously
		A04	Raising of external funding	
		A05	Networking and collaboration (using of partner's infrastructure)	

<b>P05</b>	<b>Deepen interdisciplinary cooperation</b>	A01	Collaboration and networking	Continuously
		A02	Preparation and implementation of joint projects	
		A03	Experience sharing	
		A04	Training and education	
		A05	Job shadowing	
		A06	Job exchange	
<b>P06</b>	<b>Improve the R&amp;D&amp;I quality assessment system</b>	A01	Observation and analyzation of the national and international standards	Continuously
		A02	Comparison of the quality assessment systems of individual institutions in consortium	30.06.2026
		A03	Experience sharing	Continuously
<b>P07</b>	<b>Enhance strategic management of R&amp;D&amp;I, expand and cultivate international partnership in science</b>	A01	Collaboration and networking	Continuously
		A02	Experience sharing	
		A03	Training and education	
		A04	Job shadowing	
		A05	Staff exchange	
<b>P08</b>	<b>Strengthen the principles of open science</b>	A01	Collaboration and networking	Continuously
		A02	Experience sharing	
		A03	Training and education	
<b>P09</b>	<b>Commercialize scientific results with application potential</b>	A01	Collaboration and networking	Continuously
		A02	Preparation and implementation of joint projects	
		A03	Experience sharing	
		A04	Training and education	
<b>P10</b>	<b>Find, guarantee and sustain funding</b>	A01	Collaboration and networking	Continuously
		A02	Preparation and implementation of joint projects	
		A03	Experience sharing	
		A04	Training and education	
		A05	Funding mapping	
		A06	Raising of external funding	
<b>P11</b>	<b>Motivate and support academics, researchers and teams</b>	A01	Collaboration and networking	Continuously
		A02	Preparation and implementation of joint projects	
		A03	Experience sharing	
		A04	Training and education	
		A05	Services, consultations and advice providing	
		A06	Fair rewarding	
		A07	Supportive environment creation	

## 6. Joint HR international strategic priorities of the consortium

Regarding the joint HR international priorities, below is presented a summary of strategic priorities and activities focused on strengthening human resource practices, fostering inclusive academic environments, and enhancing institutional capacity through digital transformation and open science. These priorities are aligned with the broader goals of modernizing research institutions, improving researcher career pathways, and creating a supportive and transparent work culture.

As mentioned above, each priority (P) includes a set of targeted activities (A) that address essential areas where there is a need for interventions such as transparent and inclusive recruitment, career development, performance evaluation, gender equality, open science, and digitalization. The associated timelines reflect the continuous nature of these efforts, ensuring sustainability, accountability, and measurable progress.

Priority		Activity		Timeline
P01	Transparent and inclusive recruitment	A01	Develop and implement an OTM-R Policy	Continuously
		A02	Publish inclusive and accessible job advertisements	
		A03	Ensure fair, standardized selection procedures	
		A04	Use digital tools for recruitment	
		A05	Ensure non-discrimination and equal opportunity	
		A06	Monitor and improve recruitment practices	
		A07	Integrate recruitment into induction and training	
P02	Career development and individual support	A01	Implement Individual Development Plans (IDPs)	Continuously
		A02	Mentoring and supervision support	
		A03	Support for doctoral and postdoctoral development	
		A04	Career advice	
		A05	Skills development and training opportunities	
		A06	Encourage internationalisation and mobility	



<b>P03</b>	<b>Evaluation and incentive system</b>	A01	Develop a structured performance evaluation framework	Continuously
		A02	Implement digital or centralized evaluation tools	
		A03	Link evaluation to Individual Development Plans (IDPs)	
		A04	Incentivize high performance and excellence	
		A05	Support transparent promotion criteria	
		A06	Monitor and improve the system	
<b>P04</b>	<b>Gender equality and inclusion</b>	A01	Develop and implement a Gender Equality Plan (GEP)	Continuously
		A02	Monitor gender representation	
		A03	Ensure gender-balanced decision-making bodies	
		A05	Embed equality in recruitment and promotion processes	
		A06	Offer training and awareness activities	
		A07	Support equal career development opportunities	
		A08	Promote inclusive work culture	
<b>P05</b>	<b>Open science</b>	A01	Develop institutional open science policies and frameworks	Continuously
		A02	Promote open access to research outputs	
		A03	Ensure open data practices	
		A04	Train researchers in open science principles	
		A05	Incorporate open science into evaluation and career development	
		A06	Encourage dissemination and public engagement	
<b>P06</b>	<b>Digital transformation</b>	A01	Implement digital HR and evaluation systems	Continuously
		A02	Develop and use e-recruitment tools	
		A03	Enable online training and professional development	
		A04	Support digital research infrastructure	

## **7. Conclusion**

Each university in our project consortium is unique and different from the others. Each university has different focus and specialisation, level of experience, needs. It brings possibility for mutual inspiration, learning from each other and an opportunity for cooperation.