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## D1.2 Initial Policy Brief

22.12.2023



# EUROPEAN POLICY BRIEF



## ACCELERATION SERVICES IN SUPPORT OF THE INSTITUTIONAL TRANSFORMATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

This document summarises the ERA policy related insights on behalf of 3 acceleration services projects: CATALISI, Accelerate Future HEI and aUPaEU

22.12.2023

### INTRODUCTION

Research and research-based education provided by universities are major assets for the competitiveness of Europe, and a prerequisite to solve societal challenges and maintain value added of its products and services in the future. Universities and their academic and non-academic partners in the innovation ecosystem help materialise the transitions our society needs in terms of creating and circulating knowledge, upskilling talent and fostering societal engagement; they are a crucial source of talents and knowledge for Europe's innovation ecosystem.

Universities and their partner organisations (non-university research institutes, companies, etc), need support in R&I to bring about such impact, by facilitating transnational cooperation in research and innovation, providing sufficient investments at all levels (institutional, member states and the Union), as well as coordination between these levels. The European Union and the individual member states are required to take decisive steps forward to support the university sector in its pursuit of excellence, as defined in the Pact for R&I.

Action 13 of the [ERA Policy Agenda 2022-2024](#) aims to “Empower Higher Education Institutions to develop in line with the ERA, and in synergy with the European Education Area”. The Action particularly targets strategic institutional cooperation of universities and focusses on identifying relevant policy and programme measures. It aims at making the university sector more research-competitive globally by (i) raising and (ii) promoting R&I excellence of the university sector across the ERA, in particular through joint capacity building, and (iii) creating effective synergies at policy and programme level between the education and research missions of the university sector, including increasing the impact of excellence research on education. The subgroup acts as well as an informal platform of exchange and works on proposals for actions to (iv) build

and maximise investments in research and innovation, and synergies across national and EU programmes to jointly increase the global visibility and competitiveness of Europe's university sector.

The Member States and universities experts active in ERA Action 13 recommended the EU to continue providing funding for strategic institutional cooperation with competitive R&I calls (including, but not limited to, European Universities) to raise excellence in R&I and building capacity throughout the entire ERA territory. In addition, the EU is recommended to continue support to a wide range of individual or networks of universities across ERA for institutional change in ERA priorities, notably strengthening research careers, mainstreaming open science practices, reinforcing knowledge valorisation.

This is exactly the aim of the Horizon Europe Framework Programme: "Acceleration Services in support of the institutional transformation of Higher Education Institutions".

## EVIDENCE AND ANALYSIS

1. *Describe the main project(s) results so far. Briefly inform on the obstacles encountered, and how they were solved.*

### CATALISI

Over the past twelve months, the CATALISI project has achieved several results.

**Establishment of seven Acting Living Labs** by each of the CATALISI Implementers, that are Aristotelio Panepistimio Thessalonikis (AUTH), Kauno Technologijos Universitetas (KTU), Luiss Libera Università Internazionale degli Studi Sociali Guido Carli (LUISS), Amsterdam University Medical Center (AUMC), Universitat Jaume I de Castellon (UJI), Uniwersytet Gdanski (UG), University College Cork - National University of Ireland (UCC). Setting up the CATALISI Acting Living Labs was initiated by mapping the relevant Quadruple Helix stakeholders (representing Academia, Business, Public Administration and Civil Society) who are relevant from the perspective of institutional transformation of all CATALISI HEIs. In the next stage, these stakeholders were invited to collaborative workshops organised by all Implementers in their local ecosystems. The workshops were conducted following the Living Lab methodology and supported by the European Network of Living Labs (ENoLL). The participatory approach applied during the workshops allowed to gather stakeholders' feedback on local contexts, barriers and framework conditions that can affect the institutional transformation of partner universities. In addition to that, stakeholders reflected on their needs, values, concerns and expectations associated with concrete interventions that will be undertaken by Implementers to achieve institutional transformation of their universities. These activities were of vital importance for creating individual strategies and action plans for all Implementers at the later stages of the project.

**Seven Individual Strategies and Agenda Setting.** Each CATALISI university shaped an individual strategy and agenda to support short, medium, and long-term sustainable institutional transformation. Utilizing the "Reflection Tool" supported by partner EY, universities identified goals and potential actions in alignment with their unique contexts. This tool serves as a dynamic compass, guiding institutions through a structured approach to transformation, with ongoing adjustments planned throughout the project duration (living document).

**Learning Hub.** The creation of a public online Learning Hub, integrated into the project website by partner F6S, facilitates engagement through webinars and workshops, ensuring widespread access and dissemination of knowledge not only among partners.

**CATALISI Community of Practice (CoP)** was established to foster collaboration for institutional transformation. Currently, 113 members joined the CoP. The first CoP MML workshop organized by APRE in November 2023 focused on "Inspirational Examples on Institutional Transformation in Research and Innovation (R&I)," and it was the first opportunity to share good practices, discuss obstacles, and strategize approaches adopted to achieve institutional transformations in the field of R&I with a wider community.

**A model for Mutual knowledge sharing** among the implementers has been defined providing a common methodology as a unifying framework for the organization of Twinning scheme and MML workshops during the second year of the project.

The **CATALISI Marketplace** dedicated to the mapping of funding opportunities is already available and allows users to have direct access to the most relevant funding opportunities in their field of research. The

search function is based on specific keywords tailored to higher education institutions. In the future, the CATALISI Marketplace will include two other sections, one to promote matchmaking and the other to access training and knowledge related to fourteen intervention areas.

### **Obstacles encountered**

The involvement of external stakeholders, often referred to as the quadruple helix, presented obstacles in their engagement in the acting Living Labs (LL) workshops. To address this, a solution proposed by ENoLL was for the implementers to conduct to them interviews and surveys after the workshops, creating a valuable feedback loop that improved the stakeholder engagement. Aligning project activities with the academic university calendars posed another challenge. This was tackled by being flexible, scheduling in advance, and thanks to a strong commitment among participating implementers. This approach ensured that the project's timeline fits with the rhythms of each university.

### **Accelerate Future HEI**

In respect to set objectives, the project results in year 1 are the following:

**Nine focus group discussions** to define desired future state in regards with institutional transformation and 9 reports (for each university partner).

**Nine Strategic vision statements** (by each testing partner): a strategic vision towards becoming an Entrepreneurial & Innovative University that describes the testing partners' motivation and ambition for the transformation (will be published as a deliverable).

**An extensive evidence-driven status quo assessment:** The key outcomes of the survey, asset and ecosystem mapping. The survey was disseminated in each university reaching out to leadership, academics, professional staff and students (will be published as a deliverable).

**Nine Roadmap workshops** delivered to support universities in creating transformational pathways (will be published as a deliverable).

**A Policy recommendation workshop** (including stakeholders from sister projects) was held to reflect on the current process and collect input for the policy brief.

**A Monitoring & Evaluation methodology** (co-creation with project partners) - the guidelines for defining KPIs and progress indicators to continuously monitor, capture progress and evaluate the implementation of acceleration services.

### **Obstacles encountered**

Aligning the schedules of different partners for joint events, especially involving external stakeholders have been an ongoing challenge. We provided as much flexibility as possible in remote collaboration using different tools. Regarding the survey, the challenge was to collect a meaningful number of responses. In anticipation, the survey was designed to be as user friendly as possible, and the deadlines were extended to give time for universities to disseminate the survey in several rounds.

### **aUPaEU**

The aUPaEU project aims to create a comprehensive online platform called Agora to connect universities and researchers with acceleration services. This platform will serve as a central hub for universities to discover, utilise, and collaborate on acceleration services.

The project has made significant progress in developing the Agora, and in establishing an inventory of existing acceleration services across partner universities, formulating a guideline to refine the concept of acceleration services, and developing a collaborative tool for categorising services.

The project is also developing an AI-powered search engine to facilitate efficient information retrieval and utilization within the Agora. This search engine will integrate diverse technical formats of data from various sources, enabling seamless connectivity between researchers, HEIs, and alliances, and improving interoperability.

To ensure the effectiveness of the Agora, the project has established a methodology for testing and engaging user groups. This methodology involves identifying user groups, validating the Minimum Viable Solution (MVS) of the Agora, and collaborating with the CATALISI and Accelerate Future HEI projects.

The project has also developed a comprehensive communication strategy to engage and inform core and extended user groups, including third-party organisations. This strategy includes press releases, newsletters, dedicated events, and a network map of aUPaEU contact points.

In summary, the aUPaEU project is making significant strides in developing a valuable platform for universities to accelerate their innovation and entrepreneurship initiatives.

2. *Explain especially your most relevant (joint) finding in terms of methodology to support your user group(s) or university community to develop in line with the ERA priorities.*

The **most relevant joint finding** from the described methodologies is the **emphasis on collaborative and co-creative approaches** in supporting Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and university communities to develop in line with the European Research Area (ERA) priorities. The following are the key aspects of these approaches:

- Collaborative Co-Creation for Institutional Transformation
- Evidence-Based Approach and Stakeholder Engagement
- Iterative and Adaptive Methodologies
- Networking and Inter-Alliance Collaboration
- Comprehensive Process from Identification to Testing

## **CATALISI**

In order to ensure the achievement of Institutional Transformations of HEIs, the CATALISI methodology is divided into four phases: explore, co-design, implement, and evaluate. The first year of the project focused mainly on the Explore and Co-design stage, aimed at analysing and assessing the current state of affairs of the Intervention Areas of the implementers as well as co-designing a transformational pathway with the support of different stakeholders. In this process, the adoption of co-creation methodologies to explore the needs, perceptions, barriers and framework conditions of the seven Higher Education Institutions has been proven to be very successful.

Different instruments and tools were used, such as onsite workshops in university sites to identify HEIs' priority intervention areas (living labs service), with the participation of quadruple-helix stakeholders and the facilitation of project partners. In addition, one-to-one in-depth online meetings were conducted with each HEI to refine their answers and guide HEI's in their assessment process. A reflection tool (transformational pathway guideline) was further adopted to identify a) short, medium and long-term goals that each implementer will achieve and b) potential activities that the implementers will perform in order to reach the objectives.

This co-creation methodological approach enabled universities to internally discuss and identify their gaps, needs, strengths and weaknesses in relation to R&I intervention areas, while also refining these outcomes on a continuous basis. The process of co-creation was relevant and useful to create an environment and setting skills where implementers, facilitators and the other stakeholders came together to co-create their transformational pathway, at the same time ensuring a contextualised approach and a more tailored execution of the activities which will be implemented. CATALISI HEIs will successfully step into the next stages of the methodology: definition of a concrete Action Plan, to validate and refine parameters for the development and implementation of the detailed strategy for the institutional transformation, and embrace their own pathways towards the accomplishments of their institutional transformation goals in relation to R&I intervention areas.

## **Accelerate Future HEI**

Accelerate Future HEI methodology is aiming to develop acceleration services that cater to understanding the specific context and challenges that exist within each HEI, while at the same time identifying common challenges and issues faced by HEIs in order to develop in line with ERA priorities. The methodology therefore provides an evidence-based approach to identify the key challenges and opportunities for transformation per HEI partner, as well as identifying areas where support is needed. This fulfils two purposes: (1) Ensuring that each HEI can develop its strategy and roadmap for transformation based on data and evidence gathered internally; and (2) Identifying common challenge themes to develop working groups with participants across HEIs addressing similar challenges, to share knowledge and insights, and eventually inform policy.

During the first year of the project, the focus was on a gap-analysis, to determine the (i) current state of the HEI, then (ii) clarifying the desired future state including diverse HEI stakeholders' perspectives and followed by (iii) designing a roadmap and implementation plan to achieve the desired future state and institutional transformation goals and objectives.

Regarding the most relevant findings with regards to methodology, the HEI partner reflections confirm that one of the most important aspects of acceleration services is to provide evidence-based analysis of the current state in order to ensure internal buy-in of leadership stakeholders and long-term impact of the institutional change. Another important aspect is to create ownership of the process in the project team, by co-creation and collaborative activities, as well as including a diversity of the stakeholders from each HEI.

**aUPaEU**

Design thinking helps aUPaEU build the Agora platform as a project solution. The aUPaEU project employs user evaluation and validation to develop this Agora. ERA policy goals include institutional support for user groups and university communities.

Based on ERA activity #8, we used Agora early to build research infrastructures and prioritise resource sharing. We reached EPICUR and Unite! stakeholders through Agora portals, which allow stakeholders to upload and classify research infrastructure catalogues. We study using the Agora as an acceleration service as an aim in itself.

We build alliance stakeholder relationships, collaborate, and trade through our developing network. We will aggressively seek mutually beneficial Open Science, Citizen Science, and Industry Engagement partnerships with alliance project leaders. A map of aUPaEU contact sites was built with partner institutions to facilitate core and extended user group engagement.

Our most important discovery is our strategy to support user groups and university alliance communities with ERA goals. The process has three steps. Active stakeholder involvement begins with collaborative discussions about needs, concerns, and goals. Quickly creating an agile proof of concept lets stakeholders test it. Stakeholder requirements are met via improving corporate processes through collaboration. This popular method has provided engaging onboarding. Iterative refinement adapts and sustains solutions. Through better platforms and processes, this plan should achieve collaborative outcomes and ERA priorities.

### *3. Explain as well any complementarity between the three acceleration services projects and any joint actions the three projects achieved together.*

On the basis of the identified synergies, the three projects delivered some joint actions during the first year of the projects. These are related to communication and dissemination activities, network of external stakeholders, policy activities as well as peer learning, mentoring and mutual learning activities:

- Collaborative communication and dissemination activities through cross posting and supporting each other's visibility in respective websites and social media channels, and through newsletters publications and dissemination of events and conferences. Collaboration in enhancing response rates of surveys, to reach a more balanced EU sample, by disseminating the questionnaires to respective network of stakeholders was another joint action performed.
- Coaching, peer learning and mutual learning events were opened up for the participation of all three project partners. A webinar on "Gender and Inclusion on Higher Education" organised for CATALISI HEIs (Nov 2023) was benefitted also by sister projects' partners. A policy workshop organised by Accelerate Future HEI (Dec 2023) was also animated by the other project' partners.
- Collaborations around evaluation and impact assessment activities has been performed. Two representatives of Accelerate Future HEI and aUPaEU are appointed members of the CATALISI external acceleration board (EAB) to evaluate the seven transformational pathways of HEIs.
- Joint knowledge sharing and mutual learning activities were performed. The three projects participated in common mutual learning events, such as a common training to WIDERA NCP community on "acceleration services in support of the institutional transformation of Higher Education Institutions (May 2023). Representatives of the projects are also selected members of the CATALISI Community of Practice (CoP), contributing with their expertise and experience to build collective knowledge in shared domains of interest.
- The Policy recommendation workshop was opened to the stakeholders from CATALISI and aUPaEU in order to gather more input regarding the policy implications from the HEI partners of the acceleration services projects, which is partly informing this join Policy brief. The commitment to further collaborate in this area has been made.

**CATALISI** model has been built upon two building blocks: on one side four facilitators (APRE, EY, ENoLL, F6S) that will accelerate and facilitate the transformational pathways of HEIs through the acceleration services, the knowledge transfer, and the implementation of activities co-designed. On the other side, the implementers are the Higher Education Institutions involved in CATALISI that will pursue institutional transformations. These members commit to introduce and implement new reforms in their structures intervening on specific domains and intervention areas. The seven acceleration services are 1) Living labs: a systematic user co-creation approach, integrating research and innovation processes in real life communities and settings; 2) Design lab for transformational pathways: conducting innovative research around different targeted topics; 3) Counselling: empowering and supporting universities by providing guidance and best practice examples; 4) Reinforce human capital – capacity building: provide the skillset and capabilities to implementers through different educational and learning activities; 5) Predictive study on skills anticipation: support universities in

rethinking investments in education and training based on a predictive model that foretells how labor market and skills will evolve in response to the evolution of key macro-trends; 6) Marketplace: facilitate the identification of funding opportunities, collaborations or alliance, and opportunities for researchers to commercialize their research results; 7) Community of Practice (CoP): a group of people who share expertise and experiences in institutional transformation in HEI, feeding the project activities with knowledge, methods, and tools.

### **Accelerate Future HEI**

The complementarities across the projects are particularly evident in the emphasis on:

- Stakeholder Engagement and Co-Creation at each phase of the projects activities, in order to ensure involvement of different perspectives and ownership of the process.
- Data and Evidence-Based Approach to identify the key challenges and opportunities for transformation.
- Institutional Transformation and Roadmap Development with regards to becoming entrepreneurial and innovative HEIs, including the identification of opportunities and challenges to address in acceleration services and coaching activities.
- Iterative and Agile Process – methodology has ongoing monitoring mechanisms built in to adapt to the new findings and gaps identified.
- Networking and Collaboration – through workshops, events and training activities, partners are presented with opportunities to network and build collaborations.

Same as CATALISI, Accelerate Future HEI has two types of partners: acceleration partners (UIIN, TUMInt, MMS) and testing partners (HEIs representing two existing university alliances).

### **aUPaEU**

For the three projects, surveys, focus groups, and interviews are needed to identify demand and build acceleration services. Coordination with sibling projects' simultaneous activities helps. This collaboration invites partner HEIs to join all three programmes, expanding research. It promotes teamwork by sharing results and ideas. This paradigm allows flexible data collection for complementing aims. Coordination improves survey and interview validity and data gathering. In the second year of project implementation, sibling projects will start sharing data. The coordinated effort meets the project timeframe.

aUPaEU offers the Agora to partnerships like CATALISI and Accelerate Future HEI universities. The Agora will inspire HEIs, networks, and university alliances. Through the Agora, aUPaEU seeks to build a collaborative space where stakeholders can freely access and deliver services and share information.

The preliminary acceleration service catalogue and Agora will be presented in a workshop for sister projects.

We encourage all three project partnerships to these events to improve peer learning, networking, and collaboration. Communication, dissemination, cross-posting, and information sharing are occurring between the three projects. A uniform external stakeholder database was built. Important information was shared via a common email list to coordinate the three efforts. We intend to leverage sister projects as acceleration service testing user groups to encourage collaboration. Our acceleration services will be discussed in focus groups and interviews with sibling project users. User group assessments and sister project evaluations will improve the Agora. Future cooperative coaching and HEI network guidance are planned. As stakeholders or mentors in the coaching service, teamwork may improve.

## **POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### *4. Explain which gaps you identified in the current process in relation to the ERA policy agenda.*

This section will contain recommendations from the sister projects regarding the ERA policy. Yet, at this stage in the projects—12 months in—it is not still feasible to offer a comprehensive set of recommendations. There will be further recommendations in the second Policy brief, which will be released in December 2025. Currently, there are a number of gaps in the ERA policy agenda that have been noted:

*Specific Acceleration Services Definition:*

**Gap:** There is no precise definition of "acceleration services," nor information about their intended users or audiences.

**Implication:** it impedes the efficient and transparent execution of acceleration services within the framework of the transformation of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).

*Variations in the Availability of Information:*

**Gap:** The regulations of individual countries with respect to public information vary, which makes it difficult to compile an exhaustive list of infrastructures and services throughout Europe.

**Implication:** This disparity hinders coordination and cooperation across nations by making it difficult to comprehend the infrastructure and resources that are accessible throughout Europe.

*Limited Implementation of Project Outcomes:*

**Gap:** Institutional change in a higher education institution is a very ambitious challenge to achieve in a three-to-five-year project. This gap between the development of a transformation agenda setting and its implementation can lead to a sense of an incomplete process to achieve long term change.

**Implication:** EU initiatives don't always carry out their intended outcomes, and there is a time lag between the development and implementation phases that could lead to unmet goals.

*Barriers for HEIs to implement the strategic objectives of the EOSC:*

**Gap:** Although much progress has been made in promoting Open Science, especially through the EOSC and its Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA), Open Science is still not common practice in all HEIs.

**Implication:** In order for HEIs to participate in and contribute to the EOSC and thereby promoting this goal of the ERA Policy Agenda, progress needs to be made regarding the integration of open science initiatives in the academic environment and the implementation of SRIA's objectives into HEIs' policies.

*ERA Policy and HEI Level Disparity:*

**Gap:** There appears to be a disconnect between the top-level agenda for ERA policy, based on "high level" principles and its implementation at the HEI level (i.e. increasing awareness and commitment from HEIs' personnel/students to the agenda's objectives), which raises concerns about ROI and efficacy rates.

**Implication:** The effectiveness of the Higher Education Transformation Agenda as a whole may be impacted by this gap, which could impede the smooth integration of ERA policies into HEIs' regular operations.

*Absence of the European Community of Experts on the Transformation of HEIs:*

**Gap:** Establishing a European community of professionals in the field of research and innovation (R&I) transformation at higher education institutions (HEIs) is necessary.

**Implication:** By fostering cooperation, knowledge sharing, and best practices, establishing an expert community can improve the overall efficacy of R&I reforms in HEIs.

4. *List the actions in the policy agenda for which universities would need more support, in addition to those that your projects (will) already cover. Your answer would be helpful to shape any future calls on Acceleration services or similar activities in support of universities.*

The work of the three projects correspond to a range of actions originating from different Priority Areas of the ERA policy agenda, which include Actions 3-5, 8-9, and 12-14. As an illustration, our objective is to develop acceleration services that promote Open Science (#3) and Inclusiveness (#5), strengthen and link research infrastructures (#8), and enable higher education institutions (#12). Nevertheless, specific domains of universities continue to require institutional support and acceleration services that go beyond the purview of our endeavour.

Action 1: Enable the open sharing of knowledge and the re-use of research outputs, including through the development of the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC)

Action 3: Advance towards a reform the assessment system for research, researchers and institutions to improve their quality and impact, and acknowledge more diverse achievements

Action 5: Promote gender equality and foster inclusiveness, taking note of the Ljubljana declaration

Action 6: Which aims at strengthening academic freedom in Europe

Action 7: Upgrade EU guidance for a better knowledge valorisation

Action 8: Strengthen sustainability, accessibility and resilience of research infrastructures in the ERA

Action 11: which strives towards an ERA for green transformation

Action 14: Bring Science closer to Citizens

Action 15: Build-up regional and national R&I ecosystems to improve regional/national excellence and competitiveness

Action 17: Enhance the strategic capacity of Europe's public research performing organisations

Action 19: Establish an efficient and effective ERA monitoring mechanism

## SUSTAINABILITY AND LEGACY

5. *Indicate any project(s) output worth promoting (among others through REA Communication services) now or in the near future e.g. acceleration services joint developments or joint workshops etc*

In the near future, the projects plan to continue their collaborative efforts, firmly believing that creating synergies and taking joint actions are crucial for achieving sustainable institutional transformation of research organizations towards research and innovation (R&I).

- A Joint Policy recommendation workshop and co-creative event will be jointly organised by CATALISI and Accelerate Future HEI in 2025. This event could be also opened to aUPaEU, building on the first Policy recommendation workshop that has been held at the end of 2023 and included stakeholders from all three projects. One of the great benefits of this is having a broader geographic spectrum of EU universities represented, including both widening and outermost regions of the EU. These workshops provide an opportunity to gain valuable insights for this and the future policy briefs.
- Joint policy briefs will be prepared by all three projects to highlight commonalities, common achievements and areas for improvement.
- A shared databased of stakeholders (including coaches, mentors, experts) will be created (respecting GDPR regulations), to strengthen collaborations amongst quadruple-helix stakeholders and HEIs, thus advancing towards European values and reflecting a vision of HEIs that goes beyond academic achievement to encompass societal impact. To this end, jointly animating an online platform to engage quadruple helix stakeholders can be beneficial. Utilising the already existing Community of Practice LinkedIn group (113 quadruple-helix members) or Market Place platform, developed under the lead of CATALISI is one of the possibilities discussed.
- Accelerate Future HEI will organise Cohort Knowledge Exchange events which are dedicated for the project partners to meet and share their experience on the shared process. These events are also open to external stakeholders, which is a great opportunity to invite the partners from CATALISI and aUPaEU projects, to identify synergies and find complementarities in order to multiply the impact of the acceleration services.
- The suite of acceleration services developed in collaboration within the aUPaEU project. These services, encompassing joint developments and workshops, offer a tangible solution for enhancing collaboration and innovation within Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and university alliance communities. The Agoras provided by aUPaEU are open for testing by any European alliance seeking concrete solutions for the provision of acceleration services. This presents an opportunity for broader adoption and collaboration, especially for institutions in widening countries. The aUPaEU project seeks communication services and support to disseminate this option effectively, with a focus on reaching out to widening countries and ensuring that the benefits of these acceleration services are widely recognized and accessible throughout the European research and education community.
- Preliminary outline of the acceleration services catalogue developed in the aUPaEU project
- Initial workshop to present the aUPaEU Agora concept and implementation. Sister projects and other stakeholders will be invited to participate and involved into the discussion about acceleration services. The workshop will be held in early 2024.
- Preliminary version of the Agora, available at the following links:  
<https://aupaeu.widening.eu/> and <https://agora.unite-university.eu/>
  - First press releases communicating the start of the three projects
  - Newsletters of the projects

### 6. Describe the (joint and complementary) project's objectives and methodology after this first year of implementation.

The three projects—CATALISI, Accelerate Future HEI, and aUPaEU—share common objectives and methodologies in certain aspects, while each project also has its unique focus and approach.

#### Joint Objectives

##### *Knowledge Sharing and Collaboration:*

- CATALISI aims to promote dynamic and collaborative settings, reinforcing HEIs' roles within R&I ecosystems.
- Accelerate Future HEI seeks to create a shared knowledge base, coaching services, and a virtual meeting place for HEIs to connect with peers and external stakeholders.
- aUPaEU intends to develop an Agora platform as a shared knowledge base and meeting place for HEIs, university networks, alliances, and other ecosystem actors.

##### *Institutional Transformation:*

- CATALISI focuses on institutional transformations in areas like human capital, research modus operandi, and finance.
- Accelerate Future HEI aims to implement a transformation strategy and roadmap through the testing and implementation of acceleration services.
- aUPaEU's ultimate goal is to achieve integrated, shared, and long-term R&I transformations through the acceleration Agora.

##### *Designing and Testing Acceleration Services:*

- CATALISI, Accelerate Future HEI and aUPaEU explicitly focus on developing and implementing acceleration services to support HEIs in the areas of the Higher Education Transformation Agenda.

##### *Policy Feedback and Dissemination:*

- CATALISI aims to incentivize dissemination of knowledge and good practices by developing policy recommendations based on the impacts of institutional transformations.
- Accelerate Future HEI seeks to generate policy feedback to the European Commission and Member States and disseminate pilot results to various target groups.
- aUPaEU plans to give policy feedback to the European Commission on acceleration services and disseminate results to HEIs, networks, alliances, and other stakeholders.

#### Complementary Objectives

##### *Research and Innovation (R&I) System Improvement:*

- CATALISI focuses on improving R&I systems at the regional and European level and enhancing human capital in the field of research and innovation.
- Accelerate Future HEI aims to identify the status quo of HEIs and their ecosystems regarding entrepreneurial and innovative activities.
- aUPaEU contributes to R&I system improvement by developing and providing Agora platforms to other alliances, as well as by facilitating and testing a number of acceleration services in the area of R&I collaboration.

##### *Funding Support and Sustainability:*

- CATALISI aims to increase and support sustainable funding schemes for actions and projects related to institutional transformations.
- Accelerate Future HEI seeks to build the capacity of participating HEIs' staff through a comprehensive skills development program, which indirectly supports sustainable institutional transformations.
- Via the Agora platforms, aUPaEU will explore and facilitate business processes to support HEIs and researchers with resource allocation and improve financial sustainability of shared infrastructures.

## Joint Methodology

### *Scanning and Scoping:*

- CATALISI analyses and assesses the current state of affairs of the intervention areas in each HEIs to define their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT analysis) as well as their available resources, to shape current and future operations and strategic goals.
- Accelerate Future HEI conducts a comprehensive scanning and scoping phase to identify the status quo of HEIs and their ecosystems.
- aUPaEU analyzes the status quo of HEI transformation agendas to develop a shared knowledge base and takes inventory of operating best practice accelerating services at Unite! and EPICUR universities.

### *Capacity Building:*

- CATALISI will provide the skillset and capabilities to implementers through different educational and learning activities. Among these activities offered there are: learning hubs, twinning schemes and the creation of knowledge sharing events.
- Accelerate Future HEI builds the capacity of HEIs' staff to implement transformation roadmaps through a comprehensive skills development program.
- aUPaEU designs methodologies, coaching services, and support mechanisms to deploy acceleration services.

### *Evaluation Mechanism:*

- CATALISI includes an evaluation mechanism supervised by an 'acceleration board' of independent experts.
- Accelerate Future HEI includes an evaluation mechanism that enables partners to assess the strategies from HEIs.
- Engaging with a wide range of stakeholders, aUPaEU will assess the relevance and feasibility of acceleration services based on the needs and practices of user groups.

### *Dissemination and Policy Feedback:*

- All three projects aim to disseminate their results and provide policy feedback to the European Commission and other stakeholders.

In summary, these projects share common goals related to knowledge sharing, collaboration, institutional transformation, and policy feedback. They complement each other by focusing on specific aspects such as R&I system improvement, funding support, and the development and implementation of acceleration services.

## PROJECT IDENTITIES

<b>PROJECT NAMES</b>	<p>Catalysation of institutional transformations of Higher Education Institutions through the adoption of acceleration services (CATALISI)</p> <p>Entrepreneurial &amp; Innovative Universities Acceleration Programme (Accelerate_FutureHEI)</p> <p>A University Partnership for Acceleration of European Universities (aUPaEU)</p>
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<b>FUNDING SCHEME</b>	<p>Programme(s)</p> <p>HORIZON.4.2 - Reforming and enhancing the European R&amp;I System</p> <p>HORIZON.4.2.6 - Careers and universities</p> <p>Topic(s)</p>

HORIZON-WIDERA-2022-ERA-01-51 - Acceleration Services in support of the institutional transformation of Higher Education Institutions

Call for proposal  
HORIZON-WIDERA-2022-ERA-01

#### DURATION

CATALISI: January 2023 – December 2025 (36 months)  
Accelerate Future HEI: January 2023 – December 2026 (48 months)  
aUPaEU: January 2023 – December 2027 (60 months)

#### BUDGET

CATALISI: EU contribution : 3 219 156.25 €  
Accelerate\_FutureHEI EU contribution: 3 197 063 75 €  
aUPaEU: EU contribution : 3 477 625.00 €

#### WEBSITE

<https://catalisi.eu/>  
<https://acceleratefuturehei.eu/>  
<https://aupaeu.widening.eu/>

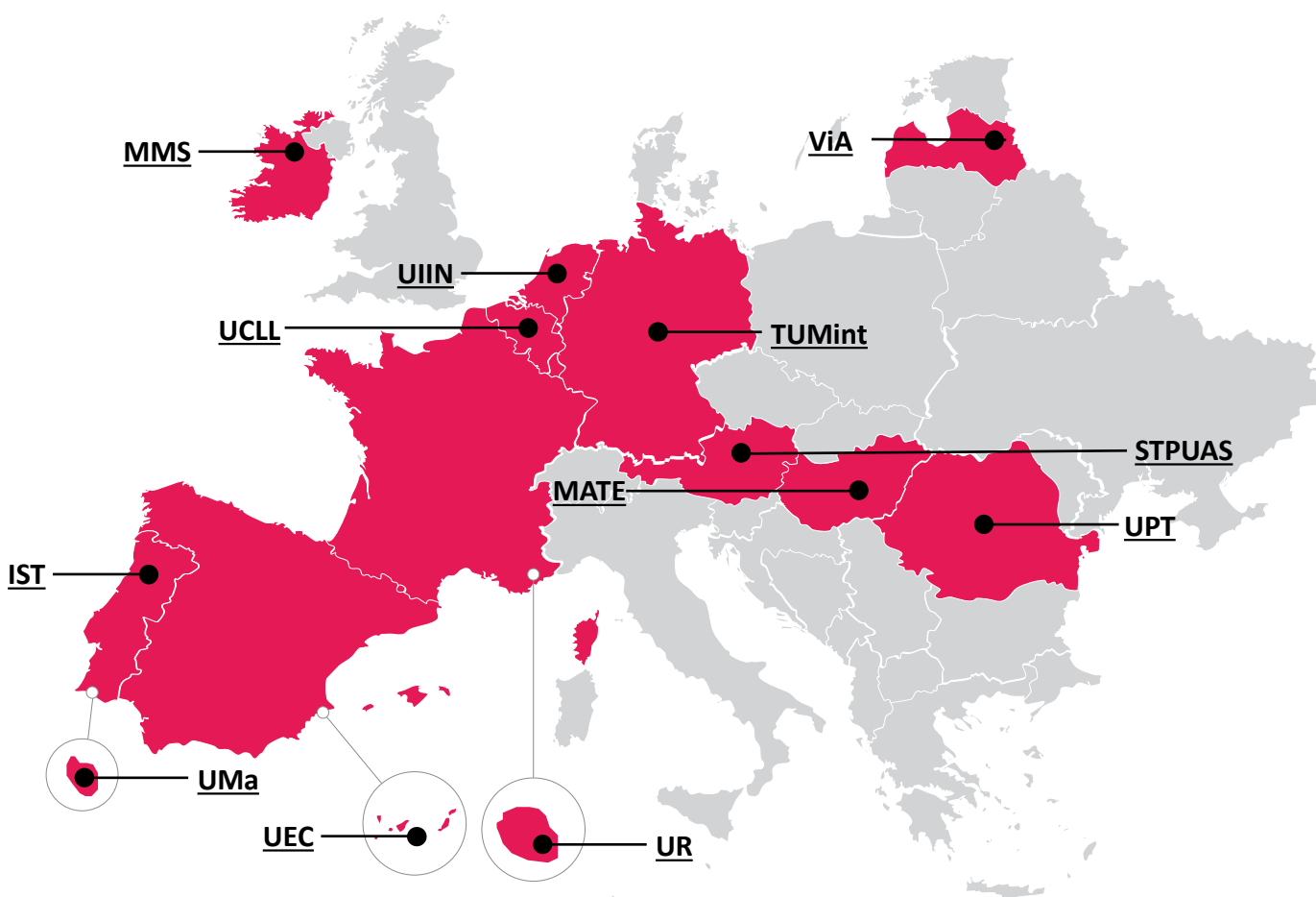
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