

D4.1 Initial Summary Report: Common issues related to ITAPs

30.06.2025



Funded by
the European Union

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List of abbreviations

EC	European Commission
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
HE	Horizon Europe
ITAP	Institutional Transformation Acceleration Projects
R&D	Research and Development
R&I	Research and Innovation
SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
SVS	Strategic Vision Statements
WP	Work Package



Grant agreement ID: 101095083
Duration: 1 January 2023 – 31 December 2026
Coordinator: UNIVERSITY INDUSTRY INNOVATION NETWORK BV
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About the document:
Document Name: D4.1 Initial Summary Report: Common issues related to ITAPs

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Citation reference: Day, T., Rusaite, R., Kortessidou, D., Jaber, S. (2025). Initial Summary Report: Common issues related to ITAPs. *Entrepreneurial & Innovative Universities Acceleration programme*.

HISTORY OF CHANGES		
Version	Publication date	Changes

Project Consortium

University Industry Innovation Network BV (UIIN) - Netherlands
TUM International GMBH (TUMInt) - Germany
Momentum Marketing Services Limited (MMS) - Ireland
Instituto Superior Tecnico (IST) - Portugal
Universite De La Reunion (UR) – La Reunion, France
Universidad Europea De Canarias (UEC) – Canary Islands, Spain
Universidade da Madeira (UMa) – Madeira, Portugal
Fachhochschule St. Polten GMBH (STPUAS) - Austria
UC Leuven (UCLL) - Belgium
Magyar Agrar- Es Elettudományi Egyetem (MATE) - Hungary
Universitatea Politehnica Timisoara (UPT) - Romania
Vidzemes Augstskola (ViA) - Latvia

In the project, the university partners are represented by or focus the project work on unique departments across their institutions. Specifically:

- UEC: School of Architecture, the Faculty of Social Sciences, and the Faculty of Health Sciences.
- UMa: *Higher School of Technology and Management*.
- STPUAS: team of Service Unit Research and Knowledge Transfer
- UCLL: Business Management and Research & Expertise
- MATE: Institute of Agricultural and Food Economics
- ViA: management team and Faculty of Society and Sciences
- IST: Department of Civil Engineering, Architecture & Environment
- UR: ESIROI engineering school
- UPT: Digital Transformation Institute - ID/IFR and e-Learning Centre

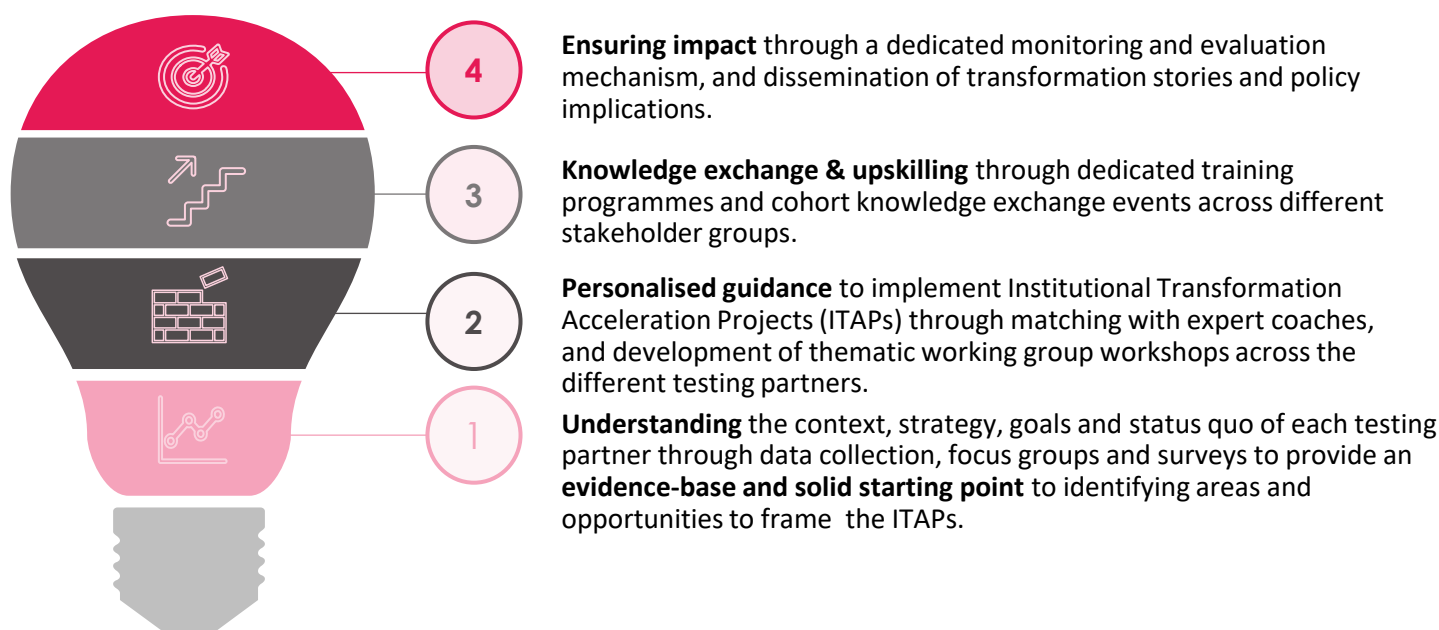


Executive Summary: Common challenges & opportunities for institutional transformation

What is this project about?

Led by [University Industry Innovation Network \(UIIN\)](#), the **Entrepreneurial & Innovative Universities Accelerator programme** (Accelerate Future HEI project) will develop and test acceleration services to equip universities with the skills and capacity to drive their institutional transformation towards becoming more entrepreneurial and innovative. The project will apply a comprehensive methodology that builds on the status quo and develops a connected vision and set of activities that provide each institution with a tailored transformation action plan.

How does this project support universities?



What is this report about?

This report provides an initial analysis of the implementation phase of the Institutional Transformation Action Projects (ITAPs) developed by testing partners as part of the Accelerate Future HEI project. It captures how institutions have moved from the design and planning stage, documented in D3.2, to early-stage implementation under Work Package 4.

The report focuses on the concrete steps institutions have taken to embed innovation, entrepreneurship, and transformation activities into their structures and strategies. It examines the peer learning and support mechanisms put in place to accompany this process—namely working group sessions, tailored mentoring, and investment strategy development—and reflects on the early signs of progress, as well as common implementation challenges and structural barriers.

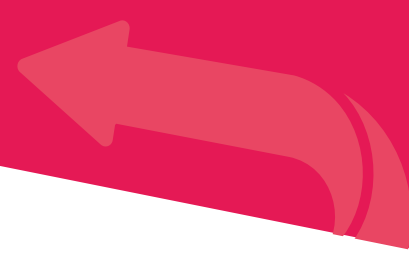
The analysis draws on institutional reports submitted by testing partners (Annex 1), insights from programme-level support activities, and collective reflections from across the project consortium. It also serves as a basis for informing the next stages of implementation and peer exchange, contributing to both continuous improvement and long-term sustainability planning.

01

Project Overview, Aim & Approach

An overview of the project's overarching goals, objectives, methodology and consortium.





Project Overview

The **Entrepreneurial & Innovative Universities Accelerator programme** (Accelerate_FutureHEI; thereafter referred as Accelerate Future HEI) project, under the coordination of [University Industry Innovation Network \(UIIN\)](#), launched in January 2023 and is funded by the European Commission's Horizon Europe programme. Accelerate Future HEI brings together **twelve European partners** from **eleven countries** to develop and implement acceleration services.

Main Aim

Accelerate Future HEI aims to **develop and test acceleration services** to **equip universities with the skills and capacity** to **drive their institutional transformation towards becoming more entrepreneurial and innovative**. To do that Accelerate Future HEI will apply a robust, comprehensive methodology that builds on the status quo and develops a connected vision and set of activities that allow each testing partner to define a tailored Institutional Transformation Acceleration Project (ITAP). Participating in this initiative provides Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) with a unique opportunity to identify key challenges they are facing and dedicate time and resources to develop solutions through a unique ITAP.

The **advantage of participating** is HEIs are not doing this alone, but instead receive personalised and peer-to-peer guidance through access to coaches, thematic working group workshops, training workshops and cohort knowledge exchange events. This allows HEIs to take a close internal look at what they want to achieve while receiving external support and guidance to enable them to implement these changes.

Key Objectives



TO IDENTIFY

the status quo of the HEI and its ecosystem regarding entrepreneurial and innovative activities.



TO DEVELOP

test and implement acceleration services that help institutions undertake a transformation roadmap and projects



TO BUILD

the capacity of the participating HEIs staff to implement the transformation roadmaps through **a skills development programme**.



TO EVALUATE

the strategies from HEIs supervised by an 'Acceleration Board' of **independent experts**.



TO GENERATE

policy feedback to the European Commission as well as provide widespread dissemination of the pilot results to other target groups.

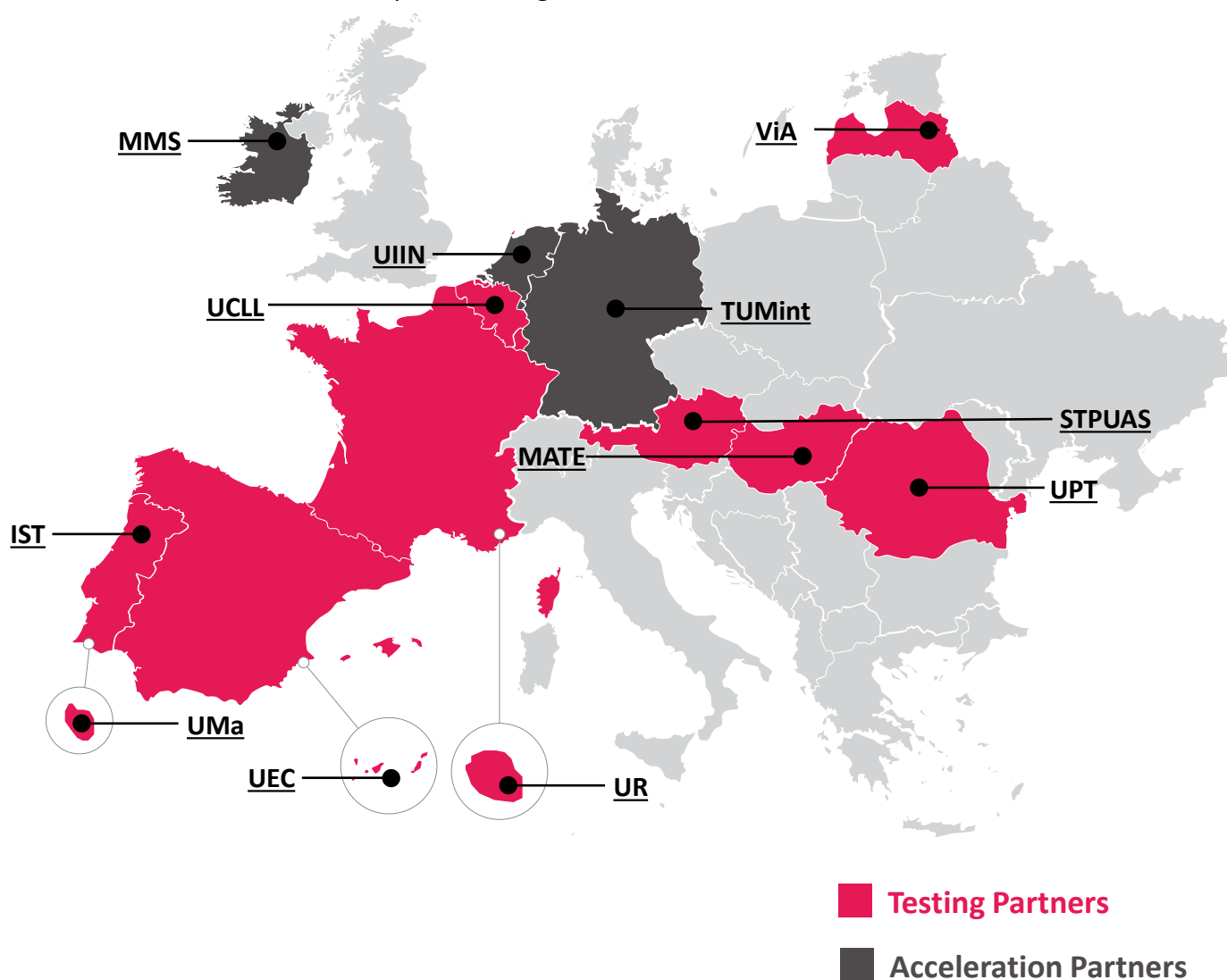


Project Consortium

Accelerate Future HEI brings together **twelve European partners** from **eleven countries** to develop and implement acceleration services.

Led by [University Industry Innovation Network \(UIIN\)](#), this ambitious project brings together twelve European partners from eleven countries to develop and implement acceleration services. The project consortium unites international experts on developing and supporting acceleration services, together with two established HEI consortia, one from the EIT HEI initiative (INCORE) and one from the European University Alliance (E³UDRES²) and EIT HEI Initiative (E.I.N.S.). UIIN, together with TUM International and Momentum are referred to as *acceleration partners* to design and deliver the acceleration services and support the HEI *testing partners* as they implement their initiatives.

Our consortium represents institutions across Europe, including the Outermost Regions. The diversity of the partners will enable the development of overarching services that can be applied in different contexts and enable the HEIs to impact their regions.



Project Approach: Methodology

The project's methodology is based on a **gap analysis** which involves a **three-phase approach** to understand the context, strategy, goals and status quo of each HEI testing partner and to provide an evidence-base and solid starting point to identifying areas and opportunities for institutional transformation. The research, development and implementation phases are underpinned and supported by training, evaluation, dissemination and other activities across the project duration.



Current State Analysis WP2 | M1 – M12

Uncovering the goals for institutional transformation.

Where are HEIs now?

The aim of this phase is to (1) clarify the desired future state and goals for institutional transformation and (2) understand the current state of each HEI testing partner and provide an evidence base for entrepreneurial and innovative activities at the partner universities. Specifically, WP2 involves activities of pre-scanning, asset mapping, focus groups, and surveys.

Developing Roadmaps & ITAPs WP3 | M6-M18

What needs to change to achieve the goals and how will you do it?

Subsequently this phase builds on the current state data to define and design an implementation plan to achieve the desired future state and institutional transformation goals and objectives, with regards to entrepreneurial and innovative activities including the identification of opportunities and challenges to address in acceleration services and coaching activities. This will be done through the roadmap workshops as well as Institutional Transformation Acceleration Projects (ITAPs).

Acceleration services pilot-testing WP4 | M12 – M48

What will you test and implement?

This phase will support the testing partners in implementing the acceleration services and undertake actions towards institutional change, through a mixture of individual HEI and group-based support. Specifically, HEIs will undergo individual ITAP coaching with experts aligned to their core transformation focus areas, to then work on the implementation of their ITAPs and development of their investment strategy.



Capacity Building & Knowledge Exchange program WP5 | M1 – M48

HEIs will be supported with knowledge exchange and learning opportunities across the full duration of the project. In addition to the personalised coaching sessions, and the feedback, peer-to-peer feedback and mentoring guidance, which will be provided throughout *Phase 1* and *Phase 2*, HEIs will have access to dedicated events and workshops, including thematic Cohort Knowledge Exchange Events and Accelerate Training Workshops.



Acceleration Impact – Monitoring & Evaluation WP6 | M1 – M48

The progress of the ITAPs will be tracked through a dedicated monitoring and evaluation mechanism to evaluate the impact and policy implications.



Communication and Dissemination WP7 | M1 – M48

A communication and dissemination plan will be developed to share the transformation stories and the project's key learnings to benefit the project's community.



Management, QA & Policy Feedback WP1 | M1 – M48

Adequate management and quality assurance processes and tools will be developed to deliver on the project's outcomes and inform policy.

Project Approach:

Foundational conceptual model

The methodology within this project is based on a combination of research and practice. One of the key models underpinning the methodology is the **UIIN Entrepreneurial and Innovative University Framework®** - the framework has been developed over 10 years of research and validated in practice to define the key elements of an entrepreneurial and innovative university, and the challenges and success factors associated with HEI transformation to become more entrepreneurial, innovative and engaged.

UIIN Entrepreneurial and Innovative University Framework®

Activities

The extent to which HEIs are innovative and entrepreneurial in their activities across education, research, valorisation and governance. This can include facilitating cooperation with surrounding Research & Innovation (R&I) ecosystem actors across all areas of the HEIs and supporting the transition to knowledge- and digitally-driven HEIs that include research and innovation outputs in teaching.

Mindset

An understanding of the entrepreneurial and innovative mindset across leadership, academics / researchers, professional / administrative staff, and students. This focuses on fostering entrepreneurial and innovative mindsets, not only across entrepreneurial activities but across all activities to develop and nurture a problem-solving approach.

Organisational Support

The organisational mechanisms required for developing both entrepreneurial activities and mindsets within the HEI. These include strategy and institutional commitment (e.g. HEI research and innovation strategies); support services and activities (e.g. mechanisms to facilitate collaboration and sharing of knowledge, capacity, infrastructure and resources) and incentives and recognition.

External Ecosystem

The external partners and supporting mechanisms in place to ensure impact pathways and the role of the HEI within its regional ecosystem. It defines the degree to which the HEIs facilitate collaboration with surrounding R&I ecosystem actors and engages citizens in solving societal challenges.



Main Deliverables

Below you can see the overview of the project’s deliverables, with the current deliverable highlighted.



Management, QA & Policy Feedback M1 – M48

The plan for how we will ensure we deliver on our outcomes & inform policy

D1.1
DMP M6

D1.2
Initial policy briefing M12

D1.3
Interim policy briefing M30

D1.4
Final policy recommendations report M48



Current State Analysis M1 – M12

Uncovering the goals for institutional transformation. Where are HEIs now?

D2.1
Strategic Vision Statements – M12

D2.2
Synthesis Report – M12

Developing Roadmaps & ITAPs M6-M18

What needs to change to achieve the goals and how will you do it?

D3.1
Roadmap Analysis report - Draft M12

D3.2
Roadmaps Analysis report Final M18

Acceleration services pilot-testing M12 – M48

What will you test and implement?

D4.1
Summary report - common ITAP issues M12

D4.2
Case study report- ITAPs and results M48



Capacity Building & Knowledge Exchange programme M1 – M48

The plan for how HEIs gain skills and insights for acceleration & transformation

D5.1
programme overview & delivery plan M12

D5.2
programme delivery progress report & updated plan M30

D5.3
Summary of the learning outcomes M48



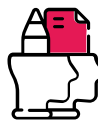
Acceleration Impact – Monitoring & Evaluation M1 – M48

We will monitor progress and evaluate impact of ITAPs

D6.1
Monitoring & evaluation plan – M12

D6.2
ITAPs Progress report – M30

D6.3
Final Impact Report



Communication and Dissemination M1 – M48

We plan to share our key learnings so others can benefit

D7.1
Initial Plan M6

D7.2
Updated plan & first dissemination report M12

D7.3
Interim dissemination report M30

D7.4
Final dissemination report M48



02

ITAP Implementation

Context and Process



ITAPs: from Development to Implementation

The development of Institutional Transformation Acceleration Projects (ITAPs) marked a key milestone in the Accelerate Future HEI project. As documented in ***D3.2 Common challenges and solutions to becoming more entrepreneurial and innovative HEIs. Final Analysis Report***, testing partners were guided through a structured, collaborative planning phase, culminating in the design of tailored ITAPs aligned with institutional transformation priorities. These plans reflected the insights drawn from institutional self-assessments and workshops, and were structured around four thematic areas:

- Fostering entrepreneurial skills and mindset of students
- Impactful research and research valorisation
- Institutional support of research valorisation and education
- Partnership strategies for stronger engagement

Following a co-creation workshop around ITAP development as part of the Cohort Knowledge Exchange Events, UIIN developed a standardised ITAP template that the testing partners have used to articulate their transformation goals, identify required resources, and propose pilot activities. This harmonised structure enabled both internal alignment within institutions and cross-institutional insights across the consortium. The common challenges and ambitions identified across institutions as part of deliverable D3.2 deliverable has laid the foundation for the implementation phase under WP4.

From ITAP Development to Pilot Testing

In this phase of the project, the focus has shifted from discovery and planning to action. WP4 supports the pilot testing of each ITAP, providing institutions with the opportunity to operationalise their strategies and test transformation interventions in real-time. This phase revealed the complexity of translating vision into practice, with partners encountering diverse contextual barriers — from cultural resistance and limited capacity to fragmented coordination across faculties.

Despite these challenges, the initial implementation phase generated valuable learning, fostered new collaborations, and strengthened institutional momentum. Interim reports from all nine testing partners demonstrated varying levels of progress, reflecting both institutional diversity and the iterative nature of transformation.

Initial Insights are presented in **Chapter 3. Common Issues and Pitfalls During ITAP Implementation.**

ITAP Implementation Support

To support the effective implementation of ITAPs, a suite of acceleration services has been put in place under WP4. These mechanisms are designed to provide targeted, flexible, and ongoing assistance tailored to the evolving needs of each institution. Grounded in a collaborative and capacity-building approach, they aim to strengthen institutional ownership, accelerate progress, and foster shared learning across the consortium. The three core support pillars include **structured ITAP Working Group Sessions**, tailored **Mentoring and Coaching**, and a dedicated **series of Investment Strategy Workshops** — each playing a complementary role in enabling partners to translate their transformation plans into practice. An overview of the three pillars is provided below, followed by additional detail on the next page.



The ITAP Working Group Sessions are structured peer-learning workshops where partners collaboratively reflect on their ITAP implementation progress. Each session focuses on a specific theme and follows a facilitated format that includes short presentations, peer consultation, and group feedback. These sessions foster horizontal exchange, collective problem-solving, and shared learning across institutions.

The Mentoring and Coaching support provides tailored, one-to-one guidance to testing partners as they implement their ITAPs. Drawing on a pool of experienced mentors, institutions are matched based on their specific transformation goals and thematic priorities. The flexible structure allows partners to co-design their mentoring journey, with sessions adapted to evolving needs. This mechanism offers targeted advice, external perspectives, and strategic support to help partners navigate implementation challenges and sustain momentum.

The Investment Strategy Workshops offer practical guidance to partners on ensuring the longer-term sustainability of their ITAPs. Delivered by the Acceleration partners and external experts, the sessions cover topics such as resource mapping, value proposition development, funding scenarios, and EU funding opportunities. These workshops equip institutions with the tools and insights needed to develop tailored investment strategies and identify viable funding pathways beyond the project's duration.

ITAP Working Group Sessions

Three virtual working group sessions were held so far with all testing partners, each designed to foster reflection, peer learning, and collaborative problem-solving:

Session 1 focused on peer consultation, where each partner presented a concrete implementation challenge and received structured feedback from peers through a facilitated consultancy-style format.

Session 2 centred on sharing one significant success or achievement since the previous session, as well as ongoing initiatives and approaches to overcome encountered barriers.

Session 3 explored the mentoring experience, allowing partners to reflect on what makes mentoring effective and to map their evolving needs for the next phase of mentoring support.

All sessions were delivered online using a collaborative canvas and other online tools, creating a dynamic and interactive space for exchange and documentation.

Mentoring Process

Following the initial ITAP submission, mentors were identified and matched for each testing partner based on the alignment of the thematic focus of their ITAP with the mentor's area of expertise. The initial engagement consisted of three coaching sessions over 12 months, with flexibility built in for partners to shape the structure and format. While most institutions opted to plan the sessions based on evolving needs, some co-designed a bespoke mentoring plan (see example on the right) with a dedicated mentor to support continuity. A new round of mentor matching is currently underway, informed by feedback from partners and reflective discussions during the third working group session.

Investment Strategy Workshops

To support long-term planning and sustainability, a series of investment strategy workshops were organised. Topics included goal setting, value

proposition development, scenario-based investment planning, and navigating EU funding programmes. Detailed description and initial insights are provided in **Chapter 4. Investment Strategy and Sustainability – Initial Approaches.**



Different approach to mentoring: example of IST

IST adopted a structured, multi-phase mentoring model co-designed with mentor Dana Redford (President & Founder, PEEP – Policy Experimentation & Evaluation Platform) to align closely with their institutional context and transformation goals. Unlike rotating or one-off mentoring formats, IST opted for a continuous collaboration. The mentoring process was organised around three key thematic blocks:

Internal engagement – aimed at mobilising core teams and launching the decentralised thematic innovation hub.

Boundary spanning – focused on building bridges between different institutional units and promoting cross-departmental collaboration.

ITAP and M&E revision – supported reflection and realignment of the ITAP with institutional strategy and a revised monitoring and evaluation system.

Each block followed a consistent structure of:

Preparatory sessions: used to frame the objectives, align expectations, and define roles for the upcoming milestone. These included discussions on strategic framing, institutional readiness, and tailoring agendas to local dynamics.

Milestone events: such as in-person team meetings or cross-unit engagement workshops, providing critical moments for dialogue, consensus-building, and decision-making.

Follow-up sessions: focused on capturing lessons, assessing progress, and adapting the next steps.

Early Signals of Progress

Across all testing partners, the initial ITAP implementation phase has catalysed a broad range of promising developments, reflecting growing internal momentum, enhanced stakeholder engagement, and emerging cultural shifts towards entrepreneurship and innovation.

Several institutions have strengthened **internal coordination and strategic alignment**. A few examples are provided below.

At **IST**, iterative ITAP development led to the establishment of a decentralised innovation and entrepreneurship hub, supported by a harmonised M&E framework (WP6). **UEC** aligned multiple faculties around shared KPIs for the first time, launching co-creation activities and certified experiential learning formats. **UCLL** fostered internal momentum through interdisciplinary matchmaking, staff involvement in research, and stakeholder mapping for sustainable entrepreneurship.

In terms of **student engagement and entrepreneurial learning**, **UMa** reported strong participation in entrepreneurship units, mobility schemes, and a new postgraduate programmes. **MATE** scaled its “Leaders of the Future” initiative, expanded student access to start-up training, and filed multiple IP applications through its Innovation Centre. **ViA** successfully activated young regional entrepreneurs through its Business Laboratory and engaged students and teachers in its Youth Forum 2025. **UR**, though in an earlier stage, launched a hands-on Design Sprint and began KPI development, supported by mentoring.

Partners also advanced **research valorisation and digital innovation**. **UPT** introduced 11 new OER-integrated courses, piloted AI and VR in teaching, launched microcredentials, and hosted large-scale events like TechTalks. Its innovation-focused teaching and research were supported by interdisciplinary collaborations and the development of digital platforms. **STPUAS** initiated strategies on social innovation, startup incubation, and stakeholder management, and

led a national alliance on spin-off support.

Finally, several institutions have expanded **external engagement and ecosystem contributions**. **MATE** and **STPUAS** initiated new regional and international partnerships. **ViA**, **UMa**, and **UPT** leveraged local and national platforms to foster collaboration with municipalities, industries, and policymakers. These early achievements signal that the ITAPs are already activating change — building strategic coherence, deepening stakeholder ties, and embedding entrepreneurial values — laying a solid foundation for sustained institutional transformation.



Early signs of transformation

The first wave of ITAP implementation is already revealing promising signs of institutional change across the partner universities. Early developments include:

- Cross-faculty collaboration around shared KPIs and innovation goals
- Launch of decentralised hubs for entrepreneurship and innovation
- Integration of challenge-based learning and immersive technologies
- New microcredential courses in AI, Blockchain, and digital education
- Strengthened stakeholder engagement through regional forums and labs
- Creation of new innovation structures and spin-off support mechanisms
- High levels of student participation in entrepreneurship activities
- Strategic alignment of ITAPs with institutional priorities and values

These early developments point to a growing shift in institutional culture and capacity — laying the groundwork for deeper, sustained transformation.



03

Common Issues and Pitfalls During ITAP Implementation

What's holding transformation back?



Key Implementation Challenges

The testing partners were asked to reflect on the main challenges encountered during implementation, including any deviations from their original roadmap, unforeseen obstacles, or contextual barriers. While each institution operates within its unique environment, a number of shared themes emerged. Partners reported challenges related to structural constraints, such as siloed organisational units and limited staff capacity; strategic tensions around alignment, incentives, and sustainability; and cultural resistance to new ways of working.

Key challenge

Structural Barriers

The implementation of ITAPs revealed a range of structural barriers that constrained progress across partner institutions. These challenges were often rooted in the organisational setup and operating procedures of universities, which were not always suited to support agile, cross-cutting innovation efforts.

1. Fragmented institutional structures and silos

Many institutions reported difficulties in achieving cross-departmental coordination and breaking down internal silos. Efforts to build shared services, join initiatives, or unified strategies were hindered by decentralisation and lack of integrated processes. The lack of coordination between faculties and support services has made it difficult to build the integrated approach required for successful transformation. The lack of a unified vision across units has also prevented meaningful alignment with institutional goals. Furthermore, one partner also found it difficult to establish effective communication channels within their own department due to it being large and decentralised.

2. Bureaucratic and administrative hurdles

Rigid institutional structures and formalised procedures have posed persistent challenges to ITAP implementation across partners. Universities often lack the agility required to support complex innovation processes, particularly when these involve novel

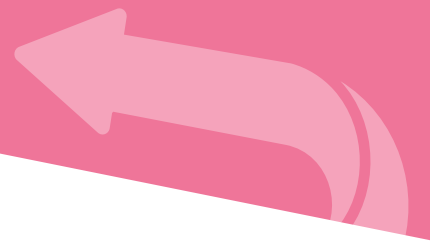
collaborations or cross-sectoral activities that fall outside conventional academic workflows. Administrative delays — whether in approving programmes, adapting internship procedures, or signing international agreements — have slowed progress and disrupted planned timelines.

In several cases, project teams have struggled to integrate ITAP outcomes into broader institutional strategies due to postponed strategic processes or the need for repeated approval and updates from governing bodies. Even when new training formats or pilot services gained traction, attempts to scale them were hindered by fragmented responsibilities and procedural bottlenecks.

Furthermore, efforts to change internal routines or introduce strategic partnerships frequently encountered resistance, with buy-in required from multiple stakeholders and top-down endorsement that was difficult to secure.

Underlying these challenges is a deeper institutional mindset issue: while many institutions support the idea of transformation in principle, translating that support into practice requires not just structural change but also a shift in values and culture.





3. Limited human and technical capacity

A recurring challenge across institutions has been the shortage of dedicated human and technical resources to support the implementation of ITAPs. Most universities relied on overstretched staff already burdened with core teaching, research, and administrative responsibilities. This has left limited room for sustained involvement in transformation efforts, particularly for activities requiring new routines, cross-functional collaboration, or ongoing engagement with external stakeholders.

Time constraints were a common issue for both staff and students. Faculty members, even when supportive, struggled to participate in capacity-building or partnership initiatives due to heavy workloads. Similarly, student involvement in entrepreneurship and leadership programmes was limited by academic timetables and competing priorities. While interest was evident, translating this into consistent participation required significant coordination, incentives, and better alignment with academic calendars.

Some institutions also highlighted the complexity of involving specific groups such as young entrepreneurs or researcher-entrepreneurs. These target groups required intensive support, sustained facilitation, and relationship-building — all of which were difficult to deliver within existing resourcing structures.

Ultimately, these constraints point to the necessity of sufficient resources to deliver transformational change. Without explicit mandates, dedicated staff, and protected time for ITAP-related work, it can be challenging to ensure consistent participation, which may affect the continuity and depth of institutional transformation over time.

Efforts to implement innovation often require cross-departmental collaboration and new forms of coordination, but technical constraints and the lack of dedicated personnel continue to present bottlenecks. Some institutions reported the challenge of finding staff with the right digital or pedagogical expertise to sustain initiatives such as microcredentials, immersive technology use, or AI integration. Others noted that while student demand and interest are rising, internal capacity to meet those needs consistently is still limited.



Key challenge

Strategic Barriers

While ITAPs are designed to drive institutional transformation, their implementation often collides with broader strategic challenges. Across partner institutions, issues such as misalignment with institutional priorities, delays in strategic decision-making, and unclear mandates hindered efforts to embed ITAPs within long-term planning frameworks.

1. Misalignment with institutional strategy or delays in strategic decisions

A number of institutions faced difficulties embedding their ITAPs within broader institutional strategies. In several cases, the ITAP was developed in parallel to ongoing or delayed institutional planning processes — such as the revision of strategic frameworks or the formulation of new institutional goals — which limited its integration and long-term visibility.

Strategic misalignment was often compounded by slow administrative procedures, shifting internal priorities, and the complex approval processes required to implement even modest changes. Activities such as revising internship structures to include external jury members or formalising new partnership models often stall due to procedural rigidity and the need for buy-in from multiple levels of leadership. This was particularly evident in cases where innovation initiatives required cross-unit collaboration or engaged with external actors in ways that fell outside traditional university operations.

These challenges reflect a broader lack of agility within institutional decision-making structures — especially in responding to complex, cross-sectoral initiatives that do not easily fit within existing frameworks. As a result, ITAP teams frequently had to navigate unclear mandates and shifting expectations, which slowed progress and reduced the strategic traction of their efforts.

2. Short-term vs long-term tension

Balancing the momentum of short-term pilot successes with the demands of long-term institutional transformation remains a key strategic challenge. While ITAP initiatives often align with broader ambitions, their integration

into established structures is hindered by procedural hurdles, limited resources, and a focus on immediate priorities. Partners reported that even when proof-of-concept activities gained traction, efforts to mainstream them were slowed by unclear ownership, structural inertia, and the need for sustained coordination. Moving from pilot to impact thus requires not only operational and strategic alignment, but also cultural adaptation and long-term investment.

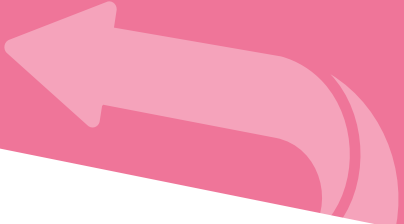
3. Lack of systemic incentives and recognition

A recurring challenge across partner institutions has been the absence of robust incentive systems to support staff and student engagement in entrepreneurial, cross-sectoral, or innovation-related activities. Without clear performance indicators, recognition mechanisms, or institutional rewards, participation in ITAP-related efforts often remained voluntary and sporadic.

In several cases, the activities outlined in the ITAP did not align with existing incentive structures for educators or researchers. This disconnect made it difficult to secure sustained involvement, as staff understandably prioritised responsibilities that were better recognised within academic career progression or departmental evaluation criteria.

Ultimately, these gaps in incentive and recognition systems have limited the ability of ITAPs to become integrated into everyday academic life. Without structural support and symbolic validation, engagement, entrepreneurship and innovation-related activities risk being viewed as extra work rather than a core part of institutional development.





Key challenge

Cultural Barriers

Institutional transformation efforts were often shaped — and at times constrained — by deeper cultural dynamics. Partners reported that innovation and entrepreneurship were not always seen as legitimate components of academic work, particularly in disciplines with strong traditional identities. Engagement was often uneven, relying on a small number of motivated individuals, while broader participation remained limited due to workload pressures and skepticism.

1. Perceived misalignment with academic identity

Across several institutions, innovation and entrepreneurship were often perceived by academic staff as outside the boundaries of their core professional roles. This was particularly evident in disciplines with strong traditional identities, such as engineering or the built environment, where introducing entrepreneurial thinking was seen as misaligned with disciplinary norms. Some faculty expressed reluctance to integrate these themes into teaching or research, especially in non-business contexts. As long as these activities are viewed as add-ons rather than integral to academic work, achieving broad-based engagement remains a challenge.

2. Motivation and engagement gaps

Staff and student engagement in ITAP activities frequently depended on the initiative of a small group of motivated individuals. Many staff, while supportive in principle, struggled to prioritise transformation initiatives alongside their existing teaching and administrative workloads. Institutions reported difficulty encouraging broader participation in innovation projects and partnerships, with engagement often described as uneven or limited. For students, participation in entrepreneurial activities outside the classroom requires continuous encouragement and alignment with

their academic responsibilities, highlighting the need for long-term reinforcement strategies.

3. Absence of cultural reference points

In several cases, the absence of internal success stories or visible role models made it harder to normalise and spread new practices. Institutions like UCLL noted the lack of strong examples of lecturers involved in cross-sector collaboration or entrepreneurial activity, which contributed to uncertainty and hesitancy among staff. Without relatable precedents or clear pathways, new behaviours remain isolated rather than becoming embedded in institutional culture. Greater visibility of internal champions and sharing of best practices could help shift perceptions and inspire wider engagement.

4. Motivation and engagement gaps

Cultural resistance also manifested in discomfort with unfamiliar modes of collaboration, especially those involving external stakeholders or interdisciplinary teams. Initiatives requiring more agile, cross-functional coordination often encounter procedural and mindset barriers. Institutions found it difficult to mobilise internal stakeholders for new types of partnerships or to involve external actors in activities like internships or project supervision. These patterns suggest that building openness to new ways of working — particularly those that span organisational boundaries — remains an essential part of cultural change.



Other Challenges

1. Difficulty in measuring success

Several institutions faced difficulties in defining and agreeing on appropriate indicators to measure the success of their ITAPs. In many cases, the innovative and cross-cutting nature of activities made it challenging to establish clear, shared KPIs. Additionally, the lack of baseline data for key areas of transformation complicated efforts to track progress over time. Without robust measurement frameworks in place, it was harder to demonstrate value, build momentum, or inform strategic decisions.

Partners undertaking multiple experimental initiatives, such as new digital and pedagogical formats, often lacked shared metrics to evaluate progress. As one report highlighted, while numerous activities were rolled out, institutions faced challenges in defining what constitutes success, whether in terms of uptake, learning outcomes, or institutional change.

2. Personnel issues

Personnel-related challenges also affected ITAP implementation in several institutions. In one case, the departure of a key team member disrupted continuity and required additional planning to maintain momentum. Efforts to formalise roles — such as establishing an official “ambassador” label to recognise engaged staff — has also proven difficult, suggesting the need for more flexible or context-sensitive approaches to defining and sustaining leadership within transformation initiatives. Several institutions noted gaps in staff capacity and skills, particularly when deploying emerging technologies or novel pedagogical approaches. While training sessions were initiated, mainstreaming these practices required ongoing upskilling and motivational support.

3. Language barriers

Language emerged as an unexpected barrier to effective participation in some ITAPs. Limited proficiency in English among key staff members

hindered engagement with international peers and reduced access to external resources — particularly in EU project contexts where English was the primary working language. In other cases, leadership expressed a preference for local-language training before participating in international activities, highlighting the importance of providing multilingual or locally adapted options to support broader involvement.

4. Balancing ambition with capacity

Some institutions found that the initial scope of their ITAPs included more activities than could realistically be implemented within the available time and resources. In cases like ViA, parallel initiatives and overlapping efforts added complexity, making it necessary to pause and conduct internal mapping to determine the right balance and focus. This highlights the importance of regularly reassessing priorities to ensure efforts remain targeted, manageable, and aligned with institutional capacity. Ambitious and multifaceted ITAPs, though aligned with strategic aspirations, occasionally outpaced the operational capacity of core teams. Institutions noted difficulties in maintaining momentum across multiple fronts without sufficient coordination, prioritisation frameworks, or dedicated personnel.

5. Complexity of multi-pillar implementation

Some ITAPs pursued broad transformations across several domains simultaneously (e.g., curriculum redesign, tech integration, outreach, valorisation). This multi-pronged approach increased innovation potential but also introduced complexity in coordination, sequencing, and communication. Without clear internal roadmaps or oversight mechanisms, progress risks becoming fragmented.



04

Investment Strategy and Sustainability

Initial Approaches

Preliminary Thinking on Investment Strategy and Sustainability

Recognising that long-term sustainability is a critical success factor for ITAPs, Work Package 4 (WP4) introduced a structured support programme to guide participating institutions in developing tailored investment strategies. This support has taken the form of a targeted workshop series designed to build capacity, stimulate reflection, and provide practical tools to help universities identify and secure the resources required to implement their ITAPs beyond the project lifetime.

Approach and Implementation

The **Investment Strategy Development programme** has been structured around a series of core and optional workshops, addressing both internal strategic development and access to external funding. Delivered by different consortium partners, the workshops are designed to meet institutions where they are in their investment planning journey and provide both immediate insights and longer-term planning tools. Topics covered so far include:

- **Fundamentals:** Goal-setting and resource mapping to support strategic clarity and sustainability planning – *led by UIIN*
- **Communication:** Designing a compelling institutional value proposition to attract partners and funders – *led by Crazy Town*
- **Investment:** Planning for diverse funding scenarios, including hybrid and long-term models – *led by Crazy Town*
- **Erasmus+ opportunities:** Navigating the Erasmus+ landscape and aligning proposals with strategic goals – *led by Momentum*
- **Horizon Europe opportunities:** Understanding the Horizon Europe framework and identifying relevant opportunities – *led by Europa Media*

The workshops are interactive and reflective, enabling institutions to tailor discussions to their unique contexts while also learning from the experience of peers. Additional sessions will take place throughout 2025 and into 2026.

As the ITAPs progress, the Acceleration partners have begun shaping their approaches to long-term sustainability.

While these strategies are still in development, several common directions and early priorities are emerging across the cohort. Alongside these shared efforts, institutions are also exploring context-specific pathways aligned to their institutional missions and ecosystems. These are summarised below.

1

Combining internal and external funding schemes

Across the board, institutions are adopting hybrid investment strategies that draw on both internal resources and external funding opportunities. Several universities are already reallocating existing budgets to support the continuation of activities piloted through the ITAPs. For example, Universidade da Madeira (UMA) has committed internal funds to support its knowledge transfer office, postgraduate programme, and the development of an international professional insertion platform. This is being complemented by additional funding secured through Horizon Europe, and from private sponsors including Santander and Delta Cafés. Similarly, Université de la Réunion (UR) is identifying regional and European funding sources to sustain and expand cross-border collaboration, while exploring the establishment of a dedicated innovation fund within its institutional budget. This fund would be used to maintain key ITAP-related infrastructure and services, including modern equipment, training programmes, and access to innovation facilities



Other institutions are applying for or have already secured external support. ST Pölten University of Applied Sciences (STPUAS), for example, has applied for national funding to support legal frameworks for spin-offs. It has also allocated internal resources to sustain roles such as a Product Owner and CRM Manager and to continue development of systems introduced during the ITAP. Some of these initiatives are already being integrated into broader European funding proposals.

2

Securing institutional commitment and integration

A key aspect of sustainability planning is the integration of ITAP initiatives within institutional strategy and operations. This includes ensuring alignment with long-term goals and embedding activities within governance and planning structures. For example, Universidad Europea de Canarias (UEC) is incorporating ITAP objectives into faculty-level action plans and performance indicators, helping to ensure long-term accountability and continuity. MATE, meanwhile, is working to embed its innovation and entrepreneurship activities — such as IP training and student innovation pathways — into the university's annual planning and performance frameworks.

Several universities are taking steps to ensure that ITAP-related processes become part of standard institutional practice. UCLL, for instance, is working to embed pilot activities into daily operations by testing new collaborative models—for example, involving internal research centres as clients or mentors in student projects. These approaches are designed to demonstrate value across departments and ensure relevance beyond the project scope. UCLL is also actively sharing sustainability practices from other HEIs across the institution, supporting wider adoption and learning.

In many cases, institutional buy-in is being reinforced by visible leadership commitment. Several universities note that the success of their long-term sustainability strategies will depend on the continued involvement of senior leadership, both in securing resources and in promoting a broader cultural shift towards innovation.

3

Building strategic and regional partnerships

Partnership development is emerging as a central component of sustainability efforts. Many institutions are cultivating new relationships with public bodies, private companies, and peer universities to co-develop initiatives, access funding, and share costs. Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences (ViA), for example, has initiated new collaborations with three municipalities and is working closely with regional development departments to position itself as a driver of a local innovation ecosystem. . In Austria, STPUAS is partnering with other universities of applied sciences to jointly fund legal consulting costs for spin-off support, highlighting the benefits of shared service models for institutional transformation.

Other universities, such as IST in Lisbon, are designing tailored partnership packages for industry stakeholders in the built environment sector. These partnerships aim to attract funding for BuildHub activities and create visibility and engagement across departments of the University of Lisbon.

Capacity building and cultural change

Institutions recognise that sustaining ITAP outcomes will require long-term investment in people and culture. UEC and MATE both highlight the importance of training staff and building internal capacity to deliver innovation and entrepreneurship initiatives. MATE is also working to track engagement in innovation-related activities using internal monitoring systems (such as the ETMR system), ensuring that evidence can support strategic decisions around resource allocation and impact.

Across the institutions, there is growing awareness that sustainability is not just about securing funding, but about embedding new ways of working — both structurally and culturally. While strategies remain in development, the groundwork laid during this phase reflects a strong commitment to long-term transformation and shared learning across the project network.

Distinctive approaches from individual institutions

While common themes are emerging, several institutions are also pursuing distinctive strategies that reflect their institutional contexts and opportunities:

- **ViA** is developing a regional innovation ecosystem in collaboration with local municipalities and national programmes. The university is positioning itself as a bioregional innovation hub focused on digital transformation.
- **UR** is planning to leverage the commercial potential of its existing high-end laboratory infrastructure and equipment to generate new revenue streams and support long-term innovation capacity.
- **UMA** is developing a new international professional insertion platform that connects students with global job opportunities, with a specific focus on green employment. This sits under the broader strategic umbrella of OSEAN, the institution's engine for sustaining innovation and entrepreneurship.
- **UEC** is embedding ITAP-related practices into institutional quality assurance and planning frameworks, and is also exploring partnerships with entrepreneurship networks and innovation hubs to provide real-world opportunities for students.
- **UCLL** is adopting a systems-thinking approach to internal transformation, piloting new collaborative models and promoting cross-departmental learning by integrating good practice from peer institutions into sustainability planning.
- **ST Pölten UAS** has strategically allocated staff roles and system development budgets into its long-term financial planning and is actively working with other Austrian UAS institutions to reduce costs through shared services.
- **MATE** is integrating innovation metrics into internal performance tracking systems to better align institutional planning with engagement outcomes and inform future investment decisions.
- **IST** is leveraging university-wide pedagogical innovation funding calls to support ITAP continuation and broaden institutional buy-in beyond the core team.

05

Lessons Learned & Emerging Recommendations

Key reflections on peer learning and support, to guide the next phase of the project



Peer Learning and Support Needs

As the ITAPs move into their next phase, institutions have identified a range of peer learning needs and support mechanisms that would help sustain momentum and deepen the impact of their transformation efforts. These reflections are based on working group sessions, mentoring interactions, and direct experience with institutional challenges and opportunities encountered so far.

1

Peer learning and exchange of practice

There is a strong demand for structured opportunities to learn from peers navigating similar institutional transformation journeys. Institutions highlighted the value of real-world insights into how others are embedding entrepreneurship, overcoming cultural resistance, aligning innovation initiatives with governance structures, and engaging with local and regional stakeholders.

Participants expressed interest in thematic exchanges on topics such as startup centre development, interdisciplinary programme design, internationalisation of employability platforms, and strategies for stakeholder co-creation. Many suggested that peer learning activities would be even more impactful if complemented by in-person meetings, study visits, or joint working sessions.

Communication emerged as an important element within this learning exchange. Institutions are keen to learn from others about how to build stronger internal narratives that generate organisational buy-in, as well as how to clearly articulate the value and impact of ITAP initiatives to external stakeholders. Sharing strategies around storytelling, institutional messaging, and engaging both internal and external audiences would support more effective promotion of transformation outcomes.

Finally, peer learning was seen as a vehicle not only for knowledge exchange but also for future collaboration. Several institutions expressed interest in leveraging the Accelerate Future HEI network to develop joint projects, publications, or shared service models that extend beyond the formal scope of the ITAP.

2

Targeted mentoring and expert input

While the mentoring received to date has been highly appreciated, institutions identified areas where deeper or more specialised support would be valuable. This includes access to mentors with expertise in specific domains—such as lifelong learning, entrepreneurship education, impact evaluation, or business engagement — and guidance from external experts to align institutional goals with broader ecosystem needs. Some institutions noted the limitations of virtual mentoring and suggested that longer, in-person or hybrid mentoring formats could facilitate more nuanced discussions and better contextual alignment. There is also growing interest in involving innovation professionals, entrepreneurs, and public sector stakeholders to strengthen the relevance and implementation of ITAPs in regional contexts.

3

Shared resources and collaborative opportunities

Partners expressed strong interest in co-developing and accessing shared resources that can guide institutional practice and support long-term sustainability, including:

- A central repository of tools, templates, and best practice guides (e.g. investment strategy templates, stakeholder dashboards, innovation hub blueprints);
- Practical toolkits for structuring long-term partnerships and managing stakeholder engagement;
- Opportunities for co-publication, staff exchange, and joint research or funding proposals;
- Access to European innovation networks and communities of practice to extend institutional visibility and collaboration opportunities.

06

Reflections & Next Steps

Key priorities for the coming months

As Accelerate Future HEI moves into its final phase, the focus shifts from piloting and exchange toward consolidating progress, embedding institutional change, and amplifying impact at regional, national, and European levels.

Key priorities for the coming months include:

Consolidation of ITAP outcomes

Testing partners will focus on embedding successful practices from their Institutional Transformation Acceleration Projects (ITAPs) into institutional structures and strategies. This includes finalising investment strategies, sustaining pilot initiatives, and aligning outcomes with long-term transformation goals.

Strengthening peer learning networks

Building on the strong demand for structured peer exchange, upcoming activities will deepen collaboration through in-person visits, targeted joint sessions, and the development of shared service models or resources beyond the project's formal scope.

Enhanced mentoring and support

Responding to the call for deeper domain-specific expertise, future mentoring will place stronger emphasis on context-aligned guidance, particularly in areas like impact evaluation, entrepreneurship education, and regional engagement.

Knowledge capture and dissemination

The consortium will develop synthesis outputs such as case studies, toolkits, and best practice

guides to consolidate learnings and enable adoption beyond the project partners. Particular attention will be given to supporting HEIs with similar contexts and challenges.

Policy engagement and final recommendations

Building on the interim policy briefings and ongoing feedback loops, the final months will culminate in a comprehensive set of policy recommendations. These will reflect insights from pilot implementations and support the European Commission's agenda for transformation across the higher education sector.

Monitoring and final evaluation

With the monitoring and evaluation framework already in place, testing partners will complete their final ITAP reports. These will feed into the overall impact assessment and contribute to the final policy and dissemination deliverables.

This final phase represents a critical opportunity to transition from experimentation to institutionalisation, ensuring the sustainability of change and reinforcing the role of HEIs as central actors in regional and European innovation ecosystems.

Bigger picture

The **Accelerate Future HEI** project is part of a wider effort under Horizon Europe to drive systemic institutional transformation across Europe's higher education landscape. Funded under the call "*Acceleration Services in support of the institutional transformation of Higher Education Institutions*", the project contributes to the development, testing, and scaling of targeted support mechanisms — collectively referred to as **acceleration services** — that help HEIs implement transformation agendas aligned with European Research Area (ERA) priorities. As demonstrated throughout this report, the project's coaching, mentoring, investment strategy development, and peer exchange mechanisms directly support HEIs in navigating the complexity of institutional transformation. These activities respond to real-world implementation barriers such as limited capacity, fragmented structures, and short-term pressures, while also contributing to broader ERA and European Education Area goals. Importantly, this is not just about supporting individual institutions — the project also contributes to building a shared methodology for **transformation and funding access**, laying the groundwork for evidence-based **policy recommendations**.

From reflection to action

The challenges identified in this report are not endpoints but **pivoting points** for targeted support in the next phase. Through enhanced mentoring, training activities, deeper peer learning, and policy engagement, the consortium will actively explore and **test responses to the structural, strategic, and cultural barriers** outlined in Chapter 3. In this way, the project will ensure that the acceleration services model remains both **responsive** and **relevant** to institutional realities across Europe.

Initial recommendations for institutions

For institutions interested in pursuing similar transformation journeys, the following early recommendations emerge:

Start with what's already working: Pilot initiatives can act as proof-of-concept and help build momentum internally — but require early planning for sustainability and ownership.

Create space for reflection and realignment: Transformation is non-linear. Regularly revisit strategy and scope to avoid overload and to ensure coherence.

Balance ambition with capacity: Be realistic about the pace and scale of change. Institutional change is resource-intensive and should be paced accordingly.

Invest in internal communication and buy-in: Clear messaging and shared narratives are essential to bridge the gap between vision and engagement across departments.

Leverage external support: Peer learning, coaching, and strategic mentoring can provide critical momentum, especially when institutional capacity is limited.

As the project progresses, Accelerate Future HEI will continue to bridge **institutional practice with EU policy ambition** — contributing to a more **resilient, connected, and transformative** European higher education sector.



Annex 1

Interim ITAP Report

Instituto Superior Técnico

15.04.2025



**Funded by
the European Union**

This interim report aims to capture key insights, early challenges, and emerging strategies from the pilot implementation of each Institutional Transformation Acceleration Project (ITAP). Responses will contribute to **Deliverable 4.1: Initial Summary Report of Common Issues/Pitfalls Related to ITAP**, by enabling the synthesis of recurrent themes, implementation barriers, and lessons across testing partners.

1. Overview of the ITAP (max. 500 words)

Figure 1 summarizes the transformational journey of Técnico from the coordination of INCORE (HEI Initiative funded by the European Institute of Innovation & Technology) to the ongoing Accelerate Future HEI project. DECivil is a key player in Técnico's transformative journey, serving as a testing environment for the evolution towards a more innovative and entrepreneurial higher education institution. The department is actively identifying areas of excellence and growth opportunities, setting a future where entrepreneurship and innovation are central to prosperity.

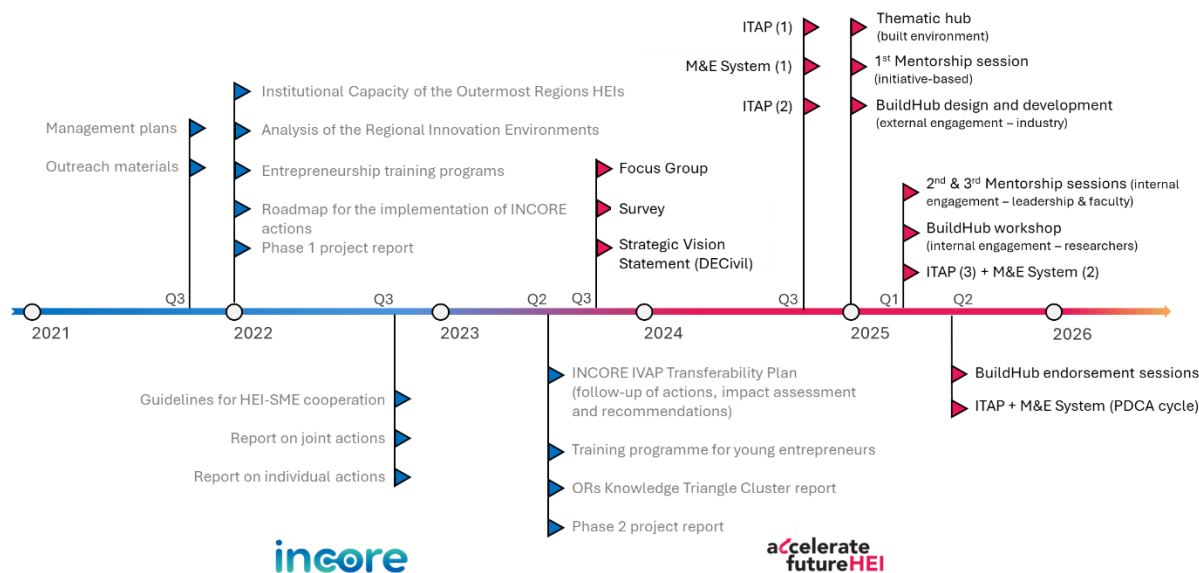


Figure 1 – IST ITAP storyline

To achieve this goal, 5 domain impact pathways were identified, following the EIT Initiative Theory of Change:

1. Fostering institutional engagement and change;
2. Strengthening partnerships;
3. Developing innovation and business;
4. Enhancing quality of innovation and entrepreneurial education;
5. Knowledge sharing.

These pathways support a harmonized joint approach to the ITAP and the M&E system.

2. Reflections on Initial Progress (max. 500 words)

The current version of the ITAP (3) results from the review of other 2 previous versions: ITAP (1) and ITAP (2) (see figure in section 1).

The first version of the ITAP (1) was developed in the first semester of 2024. This version successfully achieved an important alignment with the three main institutional goals outlined for the project: foster internal engagement & boundary spanning; cultivate external engagement; and recognize involvement and competence.

However, in the second semester of 2024, the IST Accelerate Future HEI team, together with the support of mentoring sessions, identified some advantages in a more decentralized and less formal event-based approach to implement the transformational actions. This was key to overcome some of the barriers initially identified, namely the lack of resources and the limitations imposed by the incentives policy (see section 3). Moreover, following deep discussions during team meetings, the IST decided to test a new vehicle to help operationalize many of the ITAP actions proposed. The discussions inspired the creation of a hub to build innovation and entrepreneurship capacity of students, educators, and professionals of the built environment. As this new hub started taking shape, a critical review and a new iteration of the work already done was necessary, giving birth to the 2nd version of the ITAP.

More recently, while working on a revised version for the Monitoring & Evaluation system (Work Package 6), the team decided to adapt the same structure for both the ITAP (3) and the M&E System (2) to align with the 5 domain impact pathways from the EIT Initiative Theory of Change: fostering institutional engagement and change; strengthening partnerships; developing innovation and business; enhancing quality of innovation and entrepreneurial education; and knowledge sharing. The project core team opted for this harmonization to enable a more actionable approach to the overarching goals of the IST pilot-case and facilitate the link to the corresponding performance indicators. With the support of the mentoring sessions, the new revised version integrating both the ITAP (3rd version) and the M&E system (2nd version) has already proven to be an enabler to structure and communicate ideas and gaps amongst key actors in the institutional transformations journey. After some rounds of iterations, we have finally reached an “ITAP + M&E system” version that consistently addresses the needs identified by the community. This new version is structured following a Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle enabling continuous improvement.

Considering the EIT Knowledge Innovation model (see Figure 2), the IST team has been mainly focusing on engaging with the internal parties of its testing environment (see Figure 3), namely the education units of the case demonstrator Department of Civil Engineering, Architecture, and Environment (DECivil), the research units (CERIS and CiTUA), and the in-house professional training unit that bridges with industry partners (FUNDEC). The team is now establishing contacts with student representatives to cover all the relevant internal parties. Some contacts were also made with the external parties representing industry/business and civil society to validate the relevance of some ITAP actions and shape the future hub for innovation and university-business collaborations for the built environment.

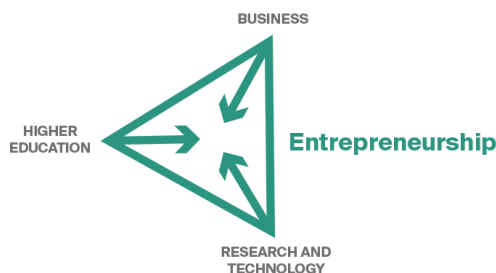
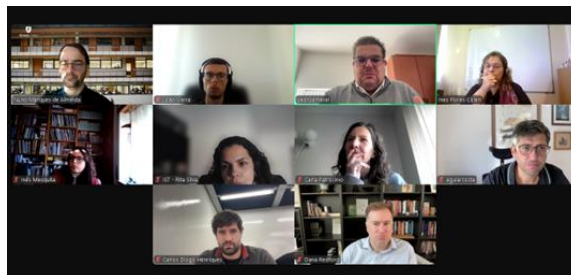


Figure 2 – EIT Knowledge Innovation model



26.11.2024. 1st block of mentoring sessions with Dana Redford



13.01.2025. 2nd block of mentoring sessions & internal engagement with IST Leadership and the Technology Transfer Units



20.02.2025. Internal engagement workshop with the Research Group 3 of CERIS



09.04.2025. Internal engagement session with the management board of DECivil

Figure 3 – Examples of mentoring and internal engagement activities

3. Challenges and Implementation Barriers (max. 300-350 words)

Because of the department-centred context of the pilot-test, one of the most challenging aspects was the ITAP **positioning** within the institution, combined with the corresponding level of formality/informality or institutionalization/decentralization and articulation with other units of the school as a whole. To better integrate the three vectors identified in Figure 2 and answer the gaps identified by the stakeholders, the IST team decided to keep the acceleration services under an informal decentralized structure bridging various school units of the testing environment, with a special emphasis on the Department of Civil Engineering Architecture and the Environment (DECivil), and the two research centres (CERIS and CiTUA) and the professional training unit (FUNDEC) orbiting DECivil.

Communication and consultation was one relevant challenge identified by the team. As the testing environment involves one of the largest departments within the school (with 118 teaching staff and a community of 1,500 bachelor and master students, along with 250 doctoral students), establishing fluid and effective communication channels is a challenging task. Work is also needed to reach out to external stakeholders of the built environment.

The **incentives policy** is also another important barrier. Because existing policy of incentives for educators and students do not cover many of the actions included in the ITAP, leaders to this kind of initiatives are rarely found and engagement with the community is difficult to guarantee.

Finally, the built environment is typically very **conservative**, lagging behind other sectors in terms of innovation and entrepreneurship. Therefore, a cultural barrier is frequently found when engaging not only with external parties (e.g., some industry partners) but also internal parties (the need for a mindset change).

4. Preliminary Thinking on Investment Strategy and Sustainability (max. 300–350 words)

The sustainability of this ITAP has been one of the hot topics during our last team meetings. So far, we have identified a couple of funding sources that could keep the momentum going:

- **University-Business Collaborations:** either through strategic or event-based partnerships, the built environment covers a significant number of industry partners that could potentially help funding some of these transformational actions. Some contacts with potential partners were already established and partnership packages have been designed;
- **Internal support:** Some of the internal partners have shown availability to support in financial and non-financial ways (e.g., physical space) the activities promoted by BuildHub;
- **National and European funding calls:** The actions promoted by BuildHub fall within the scope of some funding calls for more innovative and entrepreneurial HEI's
- **Funding for Pedagogical Innovation Projects:** To encourage the adoption of innovative practices and educational models, the University of Lisbon, but also its schools, namely IST, have launched calls for funding of Pedagogical Innovation Projects. The initiative is planning to apply to this fund, with the additional aim of attracting attention from HEI leadership across the different schools and its departments under the umbrella of the University of Lisbon.

5. Peer Learning and Support Needs (max. 300–350 words)

Leadership and professional staff of technology transfer units of IST have so far demonstrated high adherence to the training programs, with a peer learning component, and are benefiting from it. Tailored training packages for specific target audiences, namely researchers and academic staff, may increase the adherence of other stakeholder categories that have shown lower adherence to the training programs. At the moment, we are divulging the **Accelerate Impactful Researchers Program** (Oct–Nov edition). Something similar directed to academics would perhaps be valuable to boost institutional transformation as desired.

6. Annex

Please attach:

- The most up-to-date version of your ITAP document.
- Optional: Any additional materials that illustrate your current implementation (e.g., stakeholder maps, internal briefs, diagrams, photos).

Interim ITAP Report

MATE

30.04.2025



**Funded by
the European Union**

*This interim report aims to capture key insights, early challenges, and emerging strategies from the pilot implementation of each Institutional Transformation Acceleration Project (ITAP). Responses will contribute to **Deliverable 4.1: Initial Summary Report of Common Issues/Pitfalls Related to ITAP**, by enabling the synthesis of recurrent themes, implementation barriers, and lessons across testing partners.*

1. Overview of the ITAP (max. 500 words)

The Institutional Transformation Acceleration Project (ITAP) at MATE is centered on advancing the university's evolution into a more entrepreneurial and innovative institution, with a particular emphasis on regional leadership in agriculture. The core vision is to position MATE as a strategic hub for innovation, entrepreneurship, and societal engagement in its region, leveraging its agricultural expertise to address regional and global challenges.

The project's key objectives are to:

1. MATE-AGI will equip students with entrepreneurial skillsets and mindsets to tackle grand challenges
2. MATE-AGI will develop practices to support and drive regional, social and community development,
3. MATE will extend its service portfolio to launch entrepreneurship and innovation programs to have up-to-date professionals and support research projects
4. MATE-AGI will extend his network in the business sector and among the innovation-related NGOs at national and international level

During the pilot phase, primary activities included internal stakeholder engagement meetings to define transformation goals, preliminary mapping of existing entrepreneurial education initiatives, and a review of institutional structures that support innovation and external partnerships. The action plan also includes capacity-building for faculty and the development of cross-sectoral innovation labs.

The ITAP aligns with MATE's and MATE-AGI's long-term transformation goals by embedding innovation and entrepreneurship within institutional culture, curricula, and operations. It also establishes mechanisms for collaboration with businesses, municipalities, and innovation-focused NGOs, ensuring that transformation is both locally relevant and internationally connected.

2. Reflections on Initial Progress (max. 500 words)

The pilot phase of MATE's ITAP has already delivered a strong foundation for institutional transformation, marked by concrete actions and early signals of impact across several strategic goals.

Under Goal 1—equipping students with entrepreneurial skillsets—MATE launched its 2030 Strategy, a visionary document that prominently features innovation as a recurring theme. A key milestone was the introduction of the “Leaders of the Future” initiative, which gathers ambitious students to build leadership and career skills through specialized tracks, including one focused on entrepreneurship and innovation. In parallel, participation in the Hungarian Startup University Program (HSUP) has expanded, offering students practical training in startup development. As of September 2024, 67 MATE students and 12 from AGI are enrolled in this extra-curricular, two-semester e-learning course.

Progress under Goal 2—supporting regional and community development—has also been tangible. MATE introduced short-cycle trainings tailored to local industry needs, including leadership and logistics programs for companies like “BI-KA.” A cross-border initiative, AgForBio, was proposed through the INTERREG program to create an education network focused on biomass utilization. Internally, the ETMR framework has begun to systematize employee performance indicators, encouraging engagement in external partnerships and project implementation.

In relation to Goal 3—extending service offerings to foster innovation and research valorisation—the MATE Innovation Center has become a key actor. The university has filed 14 applications for patents, utility models, and plant varieties with various intellectual property authorities. The Center also leads a Proof of Concept project to support researchers and students in turning ideas into validated, exploitable prototypes. In 2024, ten researcher projects and three student projects have already received support.

Efforts to meet Goal 4—strengthening national and international partnerships—have resulted in new initiatives like the Citizen Science Programme, involving joint research between secondary and university students. MATE has also begun developing an exchange program and summer school in supply chain management with UCLL (Belgium), and is preparing for the Data-driven Supply Chain Workshop scheduled for April 2025.

These developments illustrate not only the diversity of actions underway but also a shift in institutional culture. The ITAP has become a platform for strategic experimentation, interdepartmental cooperation, and strengthened ties with external stakeholders—all of which are accelerating MATE’s transformation into an entrepreneurial and innovation-driven university. Overall, the ITAP has begun to shift institutional discourse toward innovation and impact, a cultural change that is crucial for long-term transformation.

3. Challenges and Implementation Barriers (max. 300-350 words)

While MATE has made meaningful progress during the ITAP pilot phase, few implementation challenges have occurred that may influence the sustainability of transformation.

A primary challenge is the limited capacity of the target groups, particularly students and staff, to fully engage with entrepreneurial and innovation-focused programs. While interest is growing, time constraints, lack of prior exposure, and competing academic responsibilities often reduce participation in extra-curricular initiatives like HSUP or leadership pathways. Building a stronger innovation culture within the student body requires continuous motivation and reinforcement.

A second key barrier is the motivation and engagement of internal staff. Although institutional strategies and leadership support transformation, motivating colleagues to contribute actively—especially in forming external partnerships or participating in innovation projects—remains a work in progress. Initiatives like the employee performance system (ETMR), which aim to incentivize engagement through performance indicators, are a step forward but require further institutional embedding, tracking and appreciation.

Partnership development also presents challenges. Identifying and activating relevant partners—especially those aligned with MATE’s agricultural focus and regional mission—can be time-consuming. Informal communication has started with several actors (e.g., UCLL), but moving from interest to formalized collaboration demands dedicated relationship-building capacity and clearer value propositions from the university’s side.

Administrative and structural difficulties also persist. For instance, while short-cycle trainings and proof-of-concept initiatives are gaining traction, launching and scaling them within current university systems often encounter bureaucratic delays or fragmented responsibilities. Cross-unit collaboration remains essential but is sometimes challenging.

Lastly, balancing short-term pilot success with long-term transformation is a strategic tension. The university is actively experimenting with new formats and services, yet integrating these innovations sustainably into institutional routines requires broader cultural change and investment.

Despite these barriers, the ITAP has surfaced both the opportunities and the obstacles linked to transformative initiatives—providing a valuable learning curve for MATE’s ongoing evolution.

4. Preliminary Thinking on Investment Strategy and Sustainability (max. 300–350 words)

Ensuring the long-term sustainability of MATE’s ITAP initiatives requires a multifaceted investment approach.

Internally, there is a growing recognition that innovation and entrepreneurship must be included into the university’s core functions, not treated as peripheral projects. To that end, activities led by the MATE Innovation Center—such as proof-of-concept funding, IP training, and the development of student innovation pathways—are informing discussions around how to institutionalize these programs. Future sustainability will depend on securing dedicated budget lines for these functions and integrating them into the university’s annual planning and performance frameworks.

Externally, MATE is actively pursuing collaborative opportunities that can reinforce the financial and strategic basis of its innovation agenda. The recent submission of an INTERREG project (AgForBio) signals a shift toward cross-border education and research partnerships, especially in the bioeconomy and agriculture sectors. These partnerships may serve as models for future consortia that combine educational innovation with applied research and regional development objectives.

To support sustainability, MATE is also considering mechanisms to track staff and student engagement in innovation-related activities through internal indicators (e.g., the ETMR system), which could eventually inform resource allocation.

In summary, a hybrid strategy combining internal institutionalization, external funding, service diversification, and strategic partnerships is emerging as the foundation for the long-term sustainability of ITAP initiatives.

5. Peer Learning and Support Needs (max. 300–350 words)

As MATE continues its institutional transformation through ITAP, targeted peer learning and support will play a critical role in accelerating implementation and enhancing impact. One key area of need is structured knowledge exchange with institutions undertaking similar innovation and entrepreneurship initiatives, particularly those within agricultural engaged universities, but a closer cooperation would also be necessary with economy-focused institutions, since AGI takes care of the discipline of agricultural economy and focuses on researching the economic aspects of the Hungarian agricultural and food economy. Sharing practical strategies for overcoming resistance, embedding innovation in teaching and research, and forming sustainable partnerships would be especially valuable.

Additionally, thematic peer learning sessions or expert-led workshops on topics such as innovation governance, third mission strategies, and cross-border education partnerships would be of high value. For instance, examples of successful interdisciplinary training programs, proof-of-concept funding schemes, or summer schools could inform MATE's ongoing efforts.

Mentorship or advisory support from institutions further along in their transformation journeys could also help MATE-AGI navigate institutional change management, including how to foster engagement from academic staff, redesign performance indicators, and integrate entrepreneurial goals into strategic planning. Understanding how others have built credibility with external stakeholders and leveraged funding instruments such as INTERREG or Horizon Europe would support more effective resource mobilization.

Finally, access to European innovation networks and international communities of practice—particularly in agriculture, bioeconomy, and supply chain innovation—would expand MATE's ecosystem and enhance its positioning as a regional innovation leader. Participation in such networks would also open pathways for joint projects, staff mobility, and cross-institutional capacity building. MATE-AGI is interested in joining European and international innovation networks to increase visibility, access emerging trends, and initiate collaborative projects.

In short, continued peer learning, targeted support, and strategic collaboration will be central to sustaining the momentum of ITAP and implanting its outcomes institution-wide.

6. Annex

- ITAP document

Interim ITAP Report

STPUAS

30.04.2025



**Funded by
the European Union**

1. Overview of the ITAP

According to its institutional strategy, STPUAS contributes to society as an engaged university. It defines itself as a European University committed to inspiring knowledge transfer and skill development for all individuals dedicated to contributing to an inclusive and progressive society. The ITAP activities directly contribute to the following strategic priorities: creating added value for society and recognizing and leveraging market opportunities. Through this ITAP, STPUAS supports the following goals: knowledge transfer within and across communities and acting as skills provider to foster an inclusive, resilient and progressive society.

STPUAS has identified 7 subtopics which support the achievement of the goals mentioned above:

- SP1: Fostering Social Innovation and Social Entrepreneurship
- SP2: Setting up a StartUp Centre
- SP3: Establish strategy for stakeholder relations – diversify partnerships
- SP4: Make Entrepreneurship and innovation a more vital and visible part of the way the university plans, monitors and evaluate activities measuring, slowing and communication the impact and achievements in cooperation with partners – Knowledge Transfer Strategy
- SP5: Establish hand-over events at critical stages / Points in time of an innovation process
- SP6: Develop legal frameworks, incentives and fallback scenarios for academic entrepreneurs founding spin-offs
- SP7: Recruiting academics with focus on entrepreneurial traits

The core focus of the work within the Accelerate Future HEI project will be set in SP1, SP2, SP3, SP4 and SP6. However, activities will be undertaken in all subprojects.

All stakeholders (students, staff - academic and administrative - as well as external partners) are affected by the ITAP's activities and are involved in different ways to contribute to the ITAP.

To align the ITAP with institutional strategic developments, its tasks were incorporated into the annual work plan of the Centre for Research and Cooperation, which serves as the internal lead of the ITAP activities.

2. Reflections on Initial Progress

SP1: Social Innovation & Social Entrepreneurship

A key milestone was the organisation of the first internal stakeholder workshop, conducted in collaboration with colleagues from various departments. This event enabled interdisciplinary exchange on social innovation and social entrepreneurship.

A major outcome was the development of a shared understanding of what social innovation means in our context. With these shared understanding as basis, we agreed on a definition that can serve as foundation for our future work.

Additionally, a core group of highly engaged and motivated people emerged. These colleagues showed strong interest in contributing to the next phases of the project. This group is expected to act as an important internal driver for advancing the topic.

The workshop also helped to identify opportunities for further activities, with participants sharing ideas on how to raise more awareness for social innovation at our institution. Some of these ideas go beyond traditional formats, like workshops, and include creative approaches that could reach a broader audience.

In summary, the initial ITAP activities have helped to successfully generate initial momentum and to build a network of engaged individuals.

SP2: Setting up a StartUp Center

Since 2024, STPUAS is the owner of the brand “SMARTUP”, the start-up and innovation programme of the city of St. Pölten. Within STPUAS, concepts for further developing this brand, including the link to an STPUAS owned internal StartUp Centre are discussed.

SP3: Establish strategy for stakeholder relations – diversify partnerships

STPUAS has been implementing a new stakeholder relation management tool from 2024 on. As part of this new development, a product owner and CRM Manager was nominated for further strategic development of stakeholder relation management within the UAS. As first task, this person has identified, together with the core-users of the CRM tool, the next steps for a successful implementation and acceptance of the new tool. To further advance stakeholder relation management, an overall strategy will be designed together with the leading team of STPUAS.

SP4: – Knowledge Transfer Strategy

In September 2024, a first kick-off workshop within the knowledge transfer and outreach team was initiated to start the discussion on a knowledge transfer strategy. A special focus was set on the development of a science outreach concept (focus on civil society) which is currently in discussion within the university.

SP6: Develop legal frameworks, incentives and fallback scenarios for academic entrepreneurs founding spin-offs

STPUAS has set an initiative with other UASs in Austria to set up a network of UASs to promote entrepreneurship and spin-offs within our institutions. The so-called “Academic Venture Alliance” was founded. It is a loose network of currently three UASs working on topics like legal frameworks and incentives. The network even applied for external funding, which was unfortunately not approved. Currently, the network is growing, and further development steps are discussed with

additional UASs in Austria. In addition to that, STPUAS is in contact with the tech transfer office of the region of Lower Austria to identify support mechanism for developing frameworks for spin-offs and start-ups from the academic sector.

3. Challenges and Implementation Barriers

STPUAS began the ITAP development with strong motivation, identifying numerous challenges and opportunities that initially led to the seven subtopics. As the work on the ITAP evolved, the need for prioritization became clear, and the focus was narrowed to five key topics. All selected topics require the active support and contribution of various internal and external stakeholders, making stakeholder identification and integration a significant coordination effort.

One of the first challenges was assembling the core project team. With one core team member set to leave the university, her position will need to be replaced. Additionally, most of the topics identified for the ITAP will also require the final approval from the managing board, with regular updates on the results as well as feedback from the decision-making bodies being essential. A main challenge that occurred during the ITAP definition was the definition of the KPIs used to measure the success of the ITAP. As for most of the activities no preliminary data was available, the identification of the baseline values remains an ongoing process. Initially, it was planned to integrate the preliminary ITAP results in the development process of STPUAS new institutional strategy. However, as the managing board decided to postpone the development of a new institutional strategy, direct integration will likely occur only after the project's conclusion. This represents a minor deviation from the initial plan. Beside this, no further necessary deviations have been identified.

4. Preliminary Thinking on Investment Strategy and Sustainability

Depending on the subtopic, STPUAS has already considered or applied for external funding as part of its broader investment strategy. For example, in relation to the development of legal frameworks for spin-offs and start-ups (SP6), STPUAS has applied to an external funding call supporting academic spin-offs and start-ups in Austria. Although the funding was not approved, the prepared budget plan can be used for identifying further funding opportunities or for allocating internal budget to ensure the sustainable integration of ITAP-developed activities. In addition, STPUAS has also joined forces with other Universities of Applied Sciences in Austria to share certain development costs, such as legal consulting fees.

From 2025 onward, the costs for establishing a Product Owner and a CRM Manager have been incorporated into the Centre for Research and Cooperation's budget and will continue to be accounted for in the future. Similarly, also the costs for the further development of the CRM tool have been allocated from the same budget

Regarding the potential startup centre, several financing options are currently under discussion, including internal funding or external support from local authorities. Some activities intended for integration into the startup centre have already been included in proposals to European funding programs. One of these projects has been approved and recently launched.

5. Peer Learning and Support Needs

From our perspective, the greatest benefit will come from peer learning activities. Specifically, from partners exchanging experiences related to similar challenges, regardless of whether they are part of their ITAP activities. For example, it would be highly valuable for us to leverage the Accelerate Future HEI community to gain deeper insights into best practices for establishing a startup centre and integrating it within the university governance structures as well as within local, regional, and international ecosystems. Such exchanges may also lead to future collaboration opportunities. We also believe that peer learning should be made available across all thematic areas.

The mentoring provided by the expert has been very valuable. However, more time for discussion, ideally through in-person meetings, would enhance its impact. Currently, due to distance and time zone differences, exchanges with our mentor are limited to online interactions.

Interim ITAP Report

UCLL

30.04.2025



**Funded by
the European Union**

*This interim report aims to capture key insights, early challenges, and emerging strategies from the pilot implementation of each Institutional Transformation Acceleration Project (ITAP). Responses will contribute to **Deliverable 4.1: Initial Summary Report of Common Issues/Pitfalls Related to ITAP**, by enabling the synthesis of recurrent themes, implementation barriers, and lessons across testing partners.*

1. Overview of the ITAP

With our ITAP we aim to accelerate UCLL's transformation into an innovative and entrepreneurial institution that contributes to a sustainable and just society. Our ITAP emphasizes breaking down silos, fostering changemakers, and strengthening collaborations with regional SMEs and other stakeholders.

Objectives

1. **Equip Students and Staff with Entrepreneurial Skills:** Cultivate an entrepreneurial mindset and skills among students and staff to create "Moving Minds" who contribute to a sustainable and just society.
2. **Enhance Collaboration with Regional SMEs:** Conduct research and deliver services in close collaboration with regional SMEs to foster innovation and sustainability.
3. **Strengthen Internal and External Engagement:** Build bridges within the institution and with external partners to enhance holistic partnerships and stronger external engagement.

Primary Activities During Pilot Phase

1. **Breaking Down Silos:**
 - a. Inventory of sustainable entrepreneurship initiatives.
 - b. Organizing cross-departmental meet-ups to facilitate interdisciplinary collaboration.
 - c. Pilot matchmaking sessions between students, researchers, and industry partners.
2. **Fostering Changemakers:**
 - a. Reworking economics textbooks to include sustainable economic approaches.
 - b. Workshops for economics teachers on new economic models.
 - c. Developing skills and mindset on sustainable entrepreneurship among students.
3. **Strengthening Collaborations:**
 - a. Mapping key stakeholders and establishing new collaborations.
 - b. Determining CIMIO's (= research group within UCLL) strategy for external stakeholder engagement.
 - c. Co-creating with industry, students, and researchers on projects like MOOCs on circular economy.

Alignment with Institutional Transformation Goals

- **Becoming More Innovative and Entrepreneurial in a Sustainable Way:**

- The ITAP focuses on embedding sustainability into the curriculum and research, fostering an entrepreneurial mindset, and developing innovative solutions through interdisciplinary collaboration.
- Activities like reworking textbooks and organizing workshops aim to install sustainable and entrepreneurial skills in students and staff.
- **Becoming an Important Partner in Our Local Ecosystem:**
 - By enhancing collaboration with regional SMEs and other stakeholders, the ITAP strengthens UCLL's role as an innovation hub.
 - Initiatives like pilot matchmaking sessions and stakeholder mapping ensure UCLL's active engagement and contribution to the local ecosystem.

2. Reflections on Initial Progress

Here are some key achievements and positive developments observed to date from our ITAP:

Early Signals of Impact

1. **Increased Collaboration:**
 - a. **Cross-departmental meet-ups** have been organized, fostering more interactions and exchange of knowledge between different departments
 - b. **Pilot matchmaking sessions** have been initiated, leading to collaborations between students, researchers, and industry partners
2. **Successful Engagement of Stakeholders:**
 - a. **Sustainable stakeholder engagement:** steps have been taken in order to build more sustainable relationships with businesses
 - b. **External stakeholder mapping** has been conducted, identifying key stakeholders, companies, and organizations relevant to sustainable entrepreneurship
3. **Positive Societal and Economic Contributions:**
 - a. Partners in the network of UCLL find their way to UCLL in a more sustainable way, and their businesses are strengthened in such a way that they become an important part of our economy in transition.
 - b. Students enter the job market with more knowledge on sustainable (social & circular) economics.

Internal Momentum Generated

1. **Enhanced Internal Engagement:**
 - a. **Teams channels** have been set up for matchmaking between researchers and lecturers, promoting stronger involvement of lecturers in research projects
 - b. **Pilot involvement of lecturers** in new/current research projects has begun, enhancing research quality and student learning

2. Development of Entrepreneurial Skills:

- a. **Workshops for economics teachers** on new economic models have been planned to support teaching sustainable economic approaches
- b. **Student survey on sustainability** has been conducted to link sustainability with entrepreneurship

3. Improved communication

- a. **Researchers' photos** have been taken by a team of students, so R&E communications department has an inventory of photos to work with.
- b. Steps have been taken to **increase awareness on R&E** in other departments of UCLL and among students and lecturers.

These achievements and developments indicate a strong start for the ITAP at UCLL, with promising signs of impact and engagement both internally and externally. The initiatives are fostering a culture of innovation, collaboration, and sustainability, aligning well with UCLL's institutional transformation goals.

3. Challenges and Implementation Barriers

We have encountered several challenges during the implementation of the actions of our ITAP:

Internal Challenges

1. Breaking Down Silos:

- a. **Formal Procedures and Steps:** Progress has been slower due to the need for formal procedures and steps to break down silos within the institution.
- b. **Limited Examples of Best Practices:** There are not many good examples available for involving lecturers in research projects.

2. Lecturer Involvement:

- a. **Time Availability:** Lecturers have limited time availability, making it difficult to involve them in research projects.
- b. **Engagement:** Not all lecturers are interested in cooperation, you need to work with the willing and convince others with best practices.

3. Internal Support:

- a. **Limited Capacity in Support Teams:** There is limited capacity in support teams to provide customized support for entrepreneurial activities.
- b. **Uncertain Future of StartMinds:** The future of the StartMinds program is uncertain, affecting its expansion and engagement with staff members.

External Challenges

1. Stakeholder Engagement:

- a. **Difficulties with Official Labels:** An official "ambassador" label appears to be challenging to install. We might refrain from it and look for an alternative.

- b. **Limited Resources for Researcher Entrepreneurs:** There are limited resources available to involve researchers in the StartMinds program.
- 2. **Partnerships and Collaborations:**
 - a. **Difficulty in Changing Existing Procedures:** There is difficulty in changing existing internship procedures to involve external supervisors as jury members.
 - b. **Buy-In Required from Multiple Stakeholders:** Strategic partnerships require buy-in from several people and top-down support, which can be challenging to achieve.

Communication Challenges

- 1. **Raising Awareness:**
 - a. **Slow process:** Raising awareness within UCLL of best practices takes time and patience
 - b. **Limited Internal Support:** There is limited internal support for raising external awareness of best practices.
- 2. **Stakeholder Engagement:** Effectively engaging important stakeholders is challenging as time is constrained.

Despite these challenges, the ITAP at UCLL continues to make progress and generate positive developments, with ongoing efforts to address and mitigate these obstacles.

4. Preliminary Thinking on Investment Strategy and Sustainability (max. 300–350 words)

Describe initial considerations related to the long-term sustainability of the ITAP. This may include early thinking on the development of a preliminary investment strategy, anticipated funding sources (internal or external), required resources, institutional buy-in, or partnerships needed to support ongoing implementation beyond the project's lifetime.

The investment strategy sessions provided as part of the Accelerate Future HEI project inspired us to explore different funding scenario's to better ensure long-term sustainability of the ITAP activities.

Internal funding

One **key strategy** is to explore internal funding by **integrating pilot projects into current ways of working**. By embedding these pilots into the daily operations and practices of the institution, we can ensure their continued use and relevance. This approach not only **leverages existing resources** but also **minimizes the need for additional funding**, making sustainability more achievable.

By testing for example how key strategic partners can be supported during more touchpoints, in both research projects and student projects and by exploring how our own research centres can act as a client in student projects, providing guest lectures or acting as jury members; we aim to demonstrate the win-win for all stakeholders, and embed these practices in existing ways of working.

Additionally, we are exploring how to **effectively share learned lessons within the broader UCLL organisation** to accelerate beyond the ITAP's immediate scope. One example is sharing the best practices from other Higher Education Institutions on creating sustainability policies with the sustainability manager of UCLL (cfr. TUMint sustainability training, learnings from national events on sustainability and results from a student survey on sustainability within UCLL).

External funding

A primary objective of the ITAP is to break down silos within our institute and promote collaboration across different research departments. To explore **funding opportunities to enable this cross-collaboration**, we will **leverage the framework provided during the investment strategy sessions by Momentum**. This framework will help identify potential funding opportunities and partnerships that can sustain collaborative efforts.

In addition to grants, other external funding opportunities will be explored. These may include private sector partnerships, contributions from regional SMEs, governmental bodies, and the integration of activities within existing hubs and networks where UCLL is already a partner, such as VOKA (chamber of commerce) and the social-circular hub Hasselt.

5. Peer Learning and Support Needs (max. 300–350 words)

Indicate what kinds of support, resources, or peer learning opportunities would be most valuable in the upcoming phase. Reflect on insights gained from ITAP working group sessions or interaction with other partners.

Impact communication

Peer learning in the area of impact communication would be beneficial for both internal and external purposes.

Internal Communication: It would be helpful to have peer learning and coaching, for example from Momentum, on **how to enhance institutional buy-in**. By adopting best practices from other partners on storytelling and internal communication, we can more effectively convey the value and impact of our projects within our organization, and the support that is required to generate even greater outcomes. This can include workshops and training sessions aimed at developing clear narratives.

External Communication: When we near the end of the project, it would be beneficial to share and learn from the different partners in the project to communicate the impact and expected long-term outcomes to external stakeholders. By leveraging peer learning and coaching we can increase the effectiveness of our communication to ensure it resonates with external audiences, including regional SMEs, governmental bodies, and other partners.

6. Annex

Please attach:

- *The most up-to-date version of your ITAP document.*
- *Optional: Any additional materials that illustrate your current implementation (e.g., stakeholder maps, internal briefs, diagrams, photos).*

Interim ITAP Report

Universidad Europea de Canarias (UEC)

04.04.2025



**Funded by
the European Union**

*This interim report aims to capture key insights, early challenges, and emerging strategies from the pilot implementation of each Institutional Transformation Acceleration Project (ITAP). Responses will contribute to **Deliverable 4.1: Initial Summary Report of Common Issues/Pitfalls Related to ITAP**, by enabling the synthesis of recurrent themes, implementation barriers, and lessons across testing partners.*

1. Overview of the ITAP (max. 500 words)

The Institutional Transformation Action Plan (ITAP) for Universidad Europea de Canarias (UEC) is centered on strengthening entrepreneurial and innovative capacities across the institution by fostering a culture of entrepreneurship, enhancing student employability, and aligning internal structures to support systemic change. The ITAP is strategically designed to contribute to the university's broader transformation agenda, specifically within the dimensions of Mindset & Culture and Ecosystem & Impact, as outlined in the HEInnovate framework. A key focus is to strengthen research as the foundation for innovation, not just entrepreneurship, thereby fostering a more robust and sustainable knowledge-based ecosystem.

During the pilot phase (2023–2024), the ITAP focused on DEFINIR LAS LÍNEAS DE ACCIÓN Y DESDE ELLAS, developing institutional capabilities through targeted activities across three faculties. The core objectives included:

1. Cultivating an entrepreneurial mindset among students and academic staff.
2. Enhancing collaboration between faculties, external stakeholders, and the entrepreneurship ecosystem.
3. Establishing sustainable structures and practices for embedding entrepreneurship in teaching, learning, and extracurricular activities.
4. Strengthen research as the foundation for innovation, not just entrepreneurship.

Key activities implemented during the pilot phase included:

- **Co-creation workshops and training:** These aimed to foster transdisciplinary collaboration, innovation, and the adoption of entrepreneurial teaching methodologies among faculty and staff.
- **Student engagement initiatives:** Programs such as idea challenges, networking events, and professional mentorships were launched to empower students to engage with real-world problems through experiential learning.
- **Collaboration with external stakeholders:** The university facilitated project-based learning and certification opportunities with companies and experts, bridging academia with the labor market.
- **Use of the Research Portal and HUB:** These internal platforms were leveraged to facilitate joint projects and foster a problem-solving culture that includes professionals from outside academia.
- **Institutional and Research coordination:** Efforts were made to align the goals and KPIs of all three faculties, with cross-departmental communication strategies and shared monitoring tools.
- **Definition and development of infrastructures and spaces for innovation and entrepreneurship,** including the opening of the CEOE Center on campus in 2024 and the launch of new architecture laboratories in 2025.

These initiatives contributed to building a more cohesive entrepreneurial ecosystem within the university. Notably, they also supported UEC's objective to embed entrepreneurship into its educational offering while responding to

societal and labor market needs. Challenges such as low student participation in some events and difficulties in synchronizing activities across faculties were addressed through enhanced coordination and shared planning tools.

Overall, the pilot phase of the ITAP has served as a foundational step in UEC's transformation journey, providing actionable insights, improved interdepartmental cooperation, and strengthened ties with external partners. These outcomes are guiding the development of more scalable actions for the next phase of implementation, in line with the university's commitment to quality, innovation, and employability.

2. Reflections on Initial Progress (max. 500 words)

The pilot implementation of the Institutional Transformation Action Plan (ITAP) at UEC has led to a series of notable achievements and early signals of impact, reflecting the institution's growing capacity to foster entrepreneurial education and collaborative innovation.

The design process began with an internal assessment of the potential for external engagement and the existing ecosystem, with the aim of attracting and aligning these capacities with the university's core structures.

One of the most significant outcomes has been the successful engagement and alignment of multiple stakeholders across the university. For the first time, three faculties worked toward shared KPIs and strategic goals related to entrepreneurship and innovation, supported by strong coordination between the Entrepreneurship & Employability Unit and the Student Life Department. This collaborative spirit has catalyzed a shift in mindset across departments, creating internal momentum for change and increased ownership of transformation processes.

The ITAP also led to the design and rollout of diverse experiential learning activities. These included idea co-creation workshops, interdisciplinary networking events, and entrepreneurship challenges that encouraged students to collaborate on real-world problems. These activities not only enhanced students' entrepreneurial mindset but also provided opportunities for certified project-based learning in partnership with companies, boosting their employability and exposure to professional environments.

Another key achievement has been the increased collaboration with external stakeholders. The university successfully involved business professionals, mentors, and alumni in various formats—from talks and workshops to guided projects and competitions such as "UEmprende." This engagement helped students gain valuable insights into real-world entrepreneurial practice and reinforced the university's position as an active contributor to the regional innovation ecosystem.

The use of internal tools such as the Research Portal and the Campus HUB enabled a more structured approach to cross-departmental collaboration. These platforms supported joint faculty-student-expert initiatives, fostering a culture of open innovation and practical problem-solving. Additionally, several teachers adopted more entrepreneurial pedagogies, reflecting an early but promising cultural shift within academic practices.

In terms of internal capacity building, the ITAP encouraged faculty and staff to participate in training sessions focused on entrepreneurial education, innovation methodologies, and stakeholder engagement. These learning opportunities have contributed to greater awareness and readiness to embed entrepreneurial approaches within curricula and institutional operations.

While some challenges remain—such as varying levels of student participation across events and the need for even closer integration between faculties—initial results are encouraging. The ITAP has demonstrated that when supported by strategic coordination, shared goals, and external partnerships, even limited resources can be leveraged for significant institutional impact.

In sum, the pilot phase has laid a solid foundation for broader transformation. It has generated internal momentum, built trust among stakeholders, and delivered early indicators of impact on student learning and institutional culture. These successes will inform the scaling and refinement of future ITAP initiatives, ensuring continued progress toward the university's vision of becoming a more entrepreneurial and innovative higher education institution.

3. Challenges and Implementation Barriers (max. 300-350 words)

While our ITAP achieved meaningful progress, its implementation was not without challenges. Several contextual and operational barriers emerged, requiring adaptive responses and occasional deviations from the original roadmap.

One of the main challenges was the **alignment and synchronization across faculties**. Despite shared objectives, differing academic calendars, priorities, and internal processes made it difficult to implement joint activities at the same pace. This occasionally led to delays or uneven participation across departments, requiring additional coordination efforts and adjustments to planned timelines.

Another significant issue was the **low student participation in some entrepreneurship events and initiatives**, particularly those held outside the classroom or academic schedule. While many students expressed interest, converting this into active involvement proved more difficult than anticipated. This highlighted the need for more targeted communication strategies, better alignment with students' academic commitments, and increased incentives for participation.

There were also **resource limitations**, particularly in terms of staff availability and dedicated time to support entrepreneurial activities. Faculty members, though supportive, often faced time constraints due to existing teaching and administrative responsibilities, which limited their ability to fully engage in training or project facilitation.

Additionally, the **external context**, including institutional changes and workload from parallel initiatives, created pressure on implementation timelines and capacity. Some originally planned activities had to be modified, postponed, or scaled down to adapt to these conditions, and **lack of agility in complex innovation processes**, particularly when they involve novel collaborations between organizations that do not typically work together.

Despite these challenges, the ITAP team demonstrated flexibility and maintained momentum through enhanced communication, cross-departmental collaboration, and a focus on learning and iteration. These lessons are now informing a more resilient, scalable model for future implementation phases.

4. Preliminary Thinking on Investment Strategy and Sustainability (max. 300–350 words)

From the outset, we recognized that the long-term sustainability of its Institutional Transformation Action Plan (ITAP) depends on strategic planning, institutional integration, and diversified resource mobilization. Early discussions have focused on embedding the ITAP within existing university structures and aligning it with long-term institutional goals to ensure continuity beyond the pilot phase.

A key consideration has been the **institutionalization of ITAP-related practices** within academic planning and quality frameworks. By integrating entrepreneurship and innovation objectives into faculty-level action plans and performance indicators, the university aims to secure long-term commitment and accountability. This also includes sustained engagement of internal stakeholders through working groups and governance structures that remain active beyond the project's lifetime.

In terms of funding, preliminary thinking points to a **hybrid investment strategy** that combines internal resources with external opportunities. Internally, there is a growing commitment to allocate part of the university's annual budget to support entrepreneurial education and innovation projects, especially those that show clear impact on student outcomes and employability. Externally, the institution is exploring **national and European funding programs** (e.g., Erasmus+, NextGenerationEU, and Horizon Europe) as well as partnerships with regional companies and public-sector bodies to co-finance future initiatives.

Sustaining momentum will also require **continued investment in capacity building**, particularly through training for faculty and staff. Strategic partnerships with entrepreneurship networks, businesses, and innovation hubs will be essential to maintain real-world relevance and access to mentoring and project opportunities for students.

Finally, early successes and stakeholder buy-in generated during the pilot phase are being used to advocate for broader institutional support, positioning the ITAP as a catalyst for long-term cultural and systemic transformation.

5. Peer Learning and Support Needs (max. 300–350 words)

As the Universidad Europea de Canarias (UEC) prepares to advance into the next phase of its Institutional Transformation Action Plan (ITAP), several types of support and resources have emerged as priorities for consolidating progress and scaling impact. These insights are informed by internal reflections and exchanges during ITAP working group sessions, as well as interactions with peer institutions and international partners.

One of the most valuable forms of support moving forward is **peer learning and exchange of good practices**. Opportunities to engage with other higher education institutions undergoing similar transformation processes—particularly those working on embedding entrepreneurship and innovation at a systemic level—would provide inspiration, practical tools, and lessons learned. Specifically, case studies and hands-on workshops related to entrepreneurial curriculum integration, stakeholder co-creation, and sustainable governance models would be highly beneficial.

In addition, **targeted capacity-building programs** for faculty and staff are essential. These should focus on entrepreneurial pedagogies, digital innovation in teaching, impact evaluation methods, and stakeholder engagement strategies. A modular training program or mentoring scheme—possibly co-designed with other institutions in the ITAP network—would help build lasting internal capabilities.

To sustain momentum, UEC would also benefit from **technical support in developing an institutional investment and funding strategy**. Guidance on blending internal funding with external sources (e.g., Erasmus+, Horizon Europe, or regional development funds) and structuring long-term public-private partnerships would enhance financial sustainability.

Finally, there is a growing interest in **digital tools and frameworks** that can facilitate data collection, monitor progress, and evaluate institutional transformation efforts. A shared platform or toolkit for self-assessment and impact tracking—aligned with the HEInnovate dimensions—would help ensure consistency and comparability across institutions.

Collectively, these forms of support will help UEC transition from pilot initiatives to a more integrated, resilient, and impactful model of entrepreneurial education and institutional innovation.

6. Annex

Please attach:

[UEC ITAP 2.xlsx](#)

- *Optional: Any additional materials that illustrate your current implementation (e.g., stakeholder maps, internal briefs, diagrams, photos).*

LINKS:

[https://universidadeuropea.com/noticias/universidad-europea-de-canarias-ceoe-tenerife-ayuntamiento-de-la-orotava-y-gobierno-de-canarias-/](https://universidadeuropea.com/noticias/universidad-europea-de-canarias-ceoe-tenerife-ayuntamiento-de-la-orotava-y-gobierno-de-canarias/)

<https://universidadeuropea.com/blog/crear-empresa-desde-cero/>

<https://universidadeuropea.com/blog/legal-project-management/>

<https://universidadeuropea.com/blog/como-montar-agencia-viajes/>

<https://universidadeuropea.com/blog/emprendimiento-empresarial/>

<https://universidadeuropea.com/curso-emprendimiento-online/>

<https://universidadeuropea.com/uemprende-event/>

PHOTOS:Entrepreneurship Workshops – Currently happening (3rd Session)

Attendance List

Entidad Colaboradora: El Club del Emprendimiento
 Identificación Memoria: CAP-MI N°11 Charla: CH-046 Mentora: ANA BELEN GALLEGO MARTÍNEZ

Cuadro de participantes N	Nombre	1º Apellido	2º Apellido	Nº DNI	Teléfono	Correo electrónico	Provincia
21	José	Alonso	Alonso	43855410M	631604411	joseluis.alonso@clubdel.com	SC Tenerife
22	José	Alonso	Alonso	43855410M	631604411	joseluis.alonso@clubdel.com	SC Tenerife
23	José	Alonso	Alonso	43855410M	631604411	joseluis.alonso@clubdel.com	SC Tenerife
24	José	Alonso	Alonso	43855410M	631604411	joseluis.alonso@clubdel.com	SC Tenerife
25	José	Alonso	Alonso	43855410M	631604411	joseluis.alonso@clubdel.com	SC Tenerife
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En UNIVERSIDAD EUROPEA de TENERIFE el MIÉRCOLES 26 DE MARZO 2025

Entidad Colaboradora: El Club del Emprendimiento
 Identificación Memoria: CAP-MI N°11 Charla: CH-046 Mentora: ANA BELEN GALLEGO MARTÍNEZ

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En UNIVERSIDAD EUROPEA de TENERIFE el MIÉRCOLES 26 DE MARZO 2025



Hunger for Innovation competition:



International Day of Tourism Round Table with external professional experts:



Innovation Management Workshop:



AD Week with professional experts:







Publicaciones (36)

Publicaciones de JUAN DIEGO LOPEZ ARQUILLO

2025

- Comparative evaluation of construction insulation materials: Environmental performance across production, end-of-life, and beyond system boundaries

Interim ITAP Report

University of Madeira

30.04.2025



**Funded by
the European Union**

*This interim report aims to capture key insights, early challenges, and emerging strategies from the pilot implementation of each Institutional Transformation Acceleration Project (ITAP). Responses will contribute to **Deliverable 4.1: Initial Summary Report of Common Issues/Pitfalls Related to ITAP**, by enabling the synthesis of recurrent themes, implementation barriers, and lessons across testing partners.*

1. Overview of the ITAP (max. 500 words)

The "Meeting of Minds" ITAP at the University of Madeira (UMa) is a strategic initiative under the Accelerate FutureHEI project, funded by Horizon Europe. Situated in one of Europe's outermost regions, UMa seeks to lead institutional transformation by integrating innovation, sustainability, entrepreneurship, and societal relevance. The ITAP positions UMa as a catalyst for regional development and global impact, aligning with European Commission priorities on inclusive, green, and digital growth.

Core objectives include: (1) fostering entrepreneurship and sustainable innovation, (2) enhancing global partnerships and international networking, (3) improving student employability and professional integration, and (4) driving digital and ecological transformation. A multimethod implementation strategy was adopted, combining roadmap workshops, brainstorming sessions, focus groups, digital platforms, and a real-time Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) dashboard.

Major pilot-phase achievements include the launch of a Knowledge Transfer Office (KTO), the creation of a postgraduate program in Entrepreneurship and Sustainable Innovation, the organization of two international events (SEAS-UP and Meeting of Minds), and the consolidation of the OSEAN research group. These actions underpin a vision of UMa as an innovation-driven institution committed to sustainable academic, economic, and social transformation.

2. Reflections on Initial Progress (max. 500 words)

UMa has demonstrated strong momentum in implementing the ITAP, with early results exceeding baseline expectations. Key achievements include:

- **SEAS-UP and Meeting of Minds Conferences:** These brought together over 80 participants each, including researchers, students, industry leaders, and policymakers. The events produced scientific publications (22 Q1/Q2-indexed articles), proceedings, and special journal issues.
- **Knowledge Transfer Office:** Operationalized with startup incubation, patent support, and active integration into European innovation hubs.
- **Postgraduate Program:** A 30 ECTS hybrid course approved internally and set for launch in 2024/25, with an international faculty and modules on sustainable innovation and entrepreneurship.
- **Student Engagement:** 242 students enrolled in entrepreneurship units, 64 in competitions, and 54 in Erasmus+ innovation mobility. 193 students joined technical/vocational programs with entrepreneurial modules.
- **Partnerships:** Expanded collaborations with Startup Madeira, Santander, Savoy Palace, and international institutions in Brazil, Mozambique, Germany, and others.
- **OSEAN's Role:** Acts as a research, management, and dissemination hub, linking academic outputs to real-world challenges and coordinating Horizon Europe projects.

These accomplishments reflect UMa's trajectory as a leader in sustainable transformation and global academic entrepreneurship.

3. Challenges and Implementation Barriers (max. 300-350 words)

Implementation has faced challenges typical of complex institutional transformation:

- **Administrative Delays:** Approval processes for program launches and international agreements slowed implementation.
- **Human Resource Constraints:** Limited technical and administrative staff capacity, especially for the digital M&E system and platform deployment.
- **Internal Resistance:** Some faculty resisted integration of entrepreneurship themes in non-business courses, requiring additional outreach.
- **Geographic Isolation:** Madeira's location affected partner participation and logistics for joint initiatives.

Despite these obstacles, UMa responded with agility, using digital collaboration tools, reallocating internal resources, and prioritizing stakeholder engagement. Strategic alignment remained intact, and key deliverables were met or adjusted with minimal compromise.

4. Preliminary Thinking on Investment Strategy and Sustainability (max. 300–350 words)

UMa's sustainability strategy leverages a hybrid funding model involving:

- **Internal Funds:** Reallocation of budget lines to support the ITAP's KTO, postgraduate program, and platform development.
- **External Grants:** Horizon Europe (GENESIS project, €500k+), Erasmus+, and regional innovation funds are key to scaling initiatives.
- **Private Sponsorships:** Engagement with corporate partners (e.g., Santander, Delta Cafés, Bioforma) enhances funding diversity and relevance.

OSEAN will continue as the institutional engine for sustaining innovation and entrepreneurship activities. The International Professional Insertion Platform, under OE-UMa, is a flagship initiative under development, connecting students to global employment opportunities. Launch is scheduled for late 2025, with strategic features including mentoring, CV profiling, and green job targeting.

A strong commitment from UMa's leadership ensures institutional buy-in, while strategic communication and M&E feedback loops will ensure continuous alignment with sustainability objectives.

5. Peer Learning and Support Needs (max. 300–350 words)

UMa values peer learning as central to ITAP success. The following supports are prioritized:

- **Sustainability Workshops:** Focused on investment strategies and building long-term financial models.
- **Thematic Exchanges:** On internationalization of employability platforms, stakeholder co-creation, and interdisciplinary entrepreneurship integration.
- **Repository of Tools:** Access to templates, dashboards, and best practice manuals shared across partners.
- **Joint Publications & Research:** Opportunities for co-publication, joint proposals, and staff exchange to reinforce academic excellence and strategic visibility.

UMa has benefited from peer insights, particularly on digital transformation and stakeholder engagement, and seeks more structured benchmarking activities. Partner universities with mature ecosystems (e.g., IST, STPUAS, UPT) have served as valuable comparators.

6. Annex

- **ITAP Documentation:** UMa Interim Progress Report II – PowerPoint.
- **Monitoring Framework:** Timeline Excel.
- **Evidence Files:** SEAS-UP and Meeting of Minds documents, short film (Green Hope), postgraduate curriculum.
- **Platform Prototypes:** International Professional Insertion Platform (beta version), OSEAN activity overview.

Links:

- SEAS-UP: <https://osean.uma.pt/osean-seas-up/>
- Poliempreende: <https://osean.uma.pt/poliempreende-contest/>
- Postgraduate: <https://osean.uma.pt/postgraduate-degree/>
- Green Hope Film: <https://osean.uma.pt/green-hope/>
- Insertion Platform: <https://forumdaempregabilidadeuma.pt/empresas>
- Research and Projects: <https://osean.uma.pt/research-and-project/>

Interim ITAP Report

***Politehnica University of
Timisoara***

18.06.2025



**Funded by
the European Union**

*This interim report aims to capture key insights, early challenges, and emerging strategies from the pilot implementation of each Institutional Transformation Acceleration Project (ITAP). Responses will contribute to **Deliverable 4.1: Initial Summary Report of Common Issues/Pitfalls Related to ITAP**, by enabling the synthesis of recurrent themes, implementation barriers, and lessons across testing partners.*

1. Overview of the ITAP (max. 500 words)

Politehnica University of Timisoara (UPT) has developed a comprehensive Institutional Transformation Action Plan (ITAP) titled "Empowering the Future through Digital Transformation of UPT." This ambitious initiative represents far more than a simple transition from traditional to digital tools; it encompasses a strategic transformation designed to position the university as a leading institution in Romania's West region.

The digital transformation strategy involves multiple stakeholders, including companies, students, alumni, faculty, and management personnel, who will participate as beneficiaries, sponsors, or partners. This collaborative approach ensures broad engagement and support for the university's modernization efforts.

The ITAP is structured around **three fundamental aims that collectively drive UPT's digital evolution**.

Digital Education Valorization forms the first pillar, focusing on microcredentials programs and challenge-based learning enhanced by artificial intelligence and virtual reality technologies. Key initiatives include developing specific performance indicators for assessing digital education openness and creativity, deploying microcredentials as part of UPT's educational offerings, and expanding lifelong learning opportunities. The university plans to strengthen industry partnerships through scholarships, collaborative education programs, and student mobility via internships and work placements. Central to this objective is the implementation of challenge-based learning as a pedagogical approach, supported by the establishment of VR and robotics laboratories and AI integration in educational activities. Additionally, UPT will increase training opportunities, workshops, and conferences featuring digital education experts.

Research Valorization represents the second strategic focus, emphasizing openness and creativity in digital research with direct local and regional impact. This involves engaging external stakeholders through commercialization of research and development results, including patents and software licenses for industrial applications. The university aims to increase academic entrepreneurship initiatives by training staff on research valorization and implementing AI and VR technologies in research activities. Plans include creating rewarding systems for digital innovation and entrepreneurship, expanding consultancy projects for external stakeholders, developing student satisfaction evaluation instruments, and establishing organizational structures that enable specialist employment while enhancing physical infrastructure.

Community Impact Expansion constitutes the third pillar, focusing on implementing Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and social innovation projects. This comprehensive approach includes implementing social innovation and sustainable practices to contribute to developing a "smart region," executing projects that improve institutional performance regarding SDGs such as reducing building carbon footprints and improving accessibility and diversity. The university plans to increase innovation and entrepreneurship competitions open to Timisoara University Alliance students and high school students, provide training involving distinguished alumni who serve as innovation accelerators, utilize storytelling methods for media promotion including annual videos of successful teachers, and expand workshops and conferences with SDG experts.

2. Reflections on Initial Progress (max. 500 words)

The main achievements pertaining to each of the above-stated goals are presented below.

1. Digital education valorization through microcredentials programmes and challenge-based learning using digital (AI, VR) technologies

During 2024-2024, 11 new courses integrated open educational resources (OERs), leading to a total of 30 courses integrating OERs as of June 2025. Also, 50 faculty members and 470 PhD students and young researchers were trained into creating or using OERs. In terms of open science platforms, 32 resources related to creativity, digital education were integrated in Zenodo, 10 courses were redesigned using immersive or interactive media, and 200 students engaged in creative digital assignments. Also, Artificial Intelligence integration was piloted in Spotlight Heritage Timisoara for text-to-speech in Romanian and English languages, developed and integrated by Master students in Spring 2024.

Furthermore, three new courses (Blockchain, New tools for Digital Education, AI for research) were integrated as microcredentials in UniCampus (UPT's, open Moodle platform) in 2024 -2025, counting 107 participants during August 2024 - January 2025. UPT invited lecturers in 8 courses - related to AI, VR and emergent technologies - (from start-ups and companies) at undergraduate and Master level, including from companies from Romania, Germany (Blockchain Fokus - Knut Blind) , Finland (Minna AI - Teemu Roos) and organized an International Workshop for Digital Competences with E³UDRES² in December 2024 with 300 participants.

Also, challenge-based learning and design thinking were integrated in 4 courses at Master and Undergraduate level, leading to 5 academics trained and confirmed to start integrating the two approaches, 60 students were involved and participated in the final evaluation at the end of course. Also, there is a guide under development in UPT for integration of , challenge-based learning and design thinking.

2. Fostering openness and creativity in a digital world via research valorization, with direct local and regional impact

In 2024 and 2025, UPT integrated the VR Lab for Nokia and Bell Labs museum, which was presented during “Nokia Bell Labs – 100 Years of Innovation” event, in May 15th 2025 and was tested by 80 participants and external stakeholders. In 2025, 70 PhD students and young researchers were trained on the matter of research valorization and entrepreneurial activities. The university also had increased presence in the community by participating in various local and regional events such as ILoveTech and BanatIT.

During 2024-2025, UPT engaged in implementing AI in research and education activities by equipping the university staff with knowledge and developing dedicated tools: 3 trainings in 2024-2025 with staff and 2 trainings with students and a short guide developed and integrated in UPT Virtual Campus UPT.

UPT is also developing a Digital platform dedicated to digital education (digiedu.upt.ro) in Romanian, with AI-generated translation in English.

3. Expand community impact by implementing SDGs and social innovation projects

UPT developed and implemented:

- Digital cultural heritage and tourism with Spotlight Heritage Timisoara
- Green Timisoara - digital support for development of Timisoara Botanical Garden and preservation of regional species
- Participation in the Digital Strategy for the Timisoara City - Silviu Vert part of the team at City Hall

Also, UPT underwent teamwork activities for an electric bike and car, a hydrogen car by the Mechanical Faculty team and launched (in December 2024) the UPT Car Race Team participation. Students from Multimedia created a VR simulation of the UPT Car Race Team in 2024, as to increase visibility and share integrated research.

The university is the host of TechTalks events in Timisoara (2024 and 2025 editions) featuring prominent speakers from numerous countries worldwide, with notable experience in fields such as AI and Quantum computing, including UPT alumni.

3. Challenges and Implementation Barriers (max. 300-350 words)

The initiative acknowledges significant monitoring and evaluation challenges due to the high complexity of certain activities, the intangible nature of many goals, and specific regulatory limitations, particularly regarding university spin-off regulations. These challenges require careful planning and adaptive management strategies to ensure successful implementation.

This transformative initiative positions UPT as a forward-thinking institution committed to digital innovation, research excellence, and community engagement, establishing a foundation for sustained growth and regional leadership in higher education.

4. Preliminary Thinking on Investment Strategy and Sustainability (max. 300–350 words)

UPT plans to further develop the Institute for Digital Transformation and to integrate it as an entity in its strategic plan. Internally, the university can integrate ITAP priorities into its annual strategic budgeting process, allocating funding to sustain core activities such as microcredential development, maintenance of digital platforms (e.g., digiedu.upt.ro, Virtual Campus, UniCampus), and faculty training in open education and digital innovation. Dedicated staff or units for digital pedagogy, SDG implementation, and emerging technologies (e.g., AI, VR) are essential to provide continuity and institutional memory.

Externally, UPT should actively pursue EU funding instruments such as Erasmus+, Horizon Europe (especially WIDERA and EIT initiatives), Digital Europe Programme, and national innovation grants to finance research valorization, international peer learning, and technology infrastructure. Strategic partnerships with industry—especially tech companies engaged in AI, VR, and green innovation—can serve as both funding partners and content co-creators for challenge-based learning and microcredentials. Alumni engagement, particularly through initiatives like TechTalks, can also offer alternative funding and mentorship streams.

Resource-wise, sustainable ITAP execution requires investment in interoperable platforms, digital content creation labs, multilingual AI tools, and agile governance structures to manage cross-departmental innovation. Developing a long-term human capital development plan is equally critical to retain and grow academic and technical expertise.

In the early stages, UPT should also explore the creation of a dedicated sustainability fund or innovation endowment, potentially co-funded by public-private stakeholders, to finance SDG-aligned projects with measurable community impact. These considerations set the foundation for a robust, adaptable, and inclusive transformation pathway aligned with UPT's mission and the European Education Area objectives.

5. Peer Learning and Support Needs (max. 300–350 words)

To sustain and scale the actions outlined above, future activities at Politehnica University of Timișoara (UPT) would benefit from structured support systems, expanded resource and better integration, and growing the peer learning ecosystems tailored to digital transformation, open practices, and SDG integration.

1. Institutional Support and Incentives

To foster long-term integration of open digital practices and microcredentials, UPT would benefit from clear institutional recognition systems—such as teaching excellence awards, digital innovation grants, and credits for digital innovation in the academic pointing system for internal evaluation and career advancement—for educators who develop OERs, immersive courses, integrate open practices, or challenge-based learning or design thinking activities. Furthermore, enhancing the structure of the Institute for Digital Transformation, as a central coordination office or support hub for digital transformation and SDG implementation could provide strategic alignment, technical support, and mentoring across faculties.

2. Resource Development and Infrastructure

Expanding access to tools and platforms is critical. UPT plans now to invest in shared digital infrastructure (e.g., a central VR/AI sandbox lab, content creation lab for digital education, open science authoring support) to serve multiple departments. Developing AI-enhanced resources (like digiedu.upt.ro) and increasing interoperability with European open science and education infrastructures will ensure scalability. Financial and technical support for maintaining and upgrading digital platforms—such as UniCampus and the Virtual Campus—could also be a priority.

3. Peer Learning and Professional Development

To build internal capacity and reinforce collaborative culture, UPT will need to enhance cross-disciplinary peer learning networks. This can include thematic communities of practice on open pedagogy, digital storytelling, and research valorization, as well as mentorship schemes connecting experienced staff with early-career educators or PhD students. Regular faculty development workshops, such as the International Workshop for Digital Competences, should be institutionalized and expanded to include hands-on co-creation labs, open innovation sprints, and SDG-focused hackathons.

4. Partnerships and Global Exchange

Stronger integration into European and international networks—through alliances like E³UDRES² and Erasmus+/Hoorizon Europe projects—will amplify innovation. Exchanges with partner universities, internships with tech companies, and transdisciplinary project collaboration (e.g., in green innovation or social entrepreneurship) can provide fresh insights and sustainability. Co-developing microcredentials with European partners would also enable mutual recognition and broaden learner mobility.

A continuous feedback and evaluation mechanism aligned with UPT's digital and social mission need to be set up as to validate and make visible for the UPT Board and Senate the results of these actions.

6. Annex

Attached:

- *The most up-to-date version of the UPT ITAP document – v5.*
- *Annex with detailed information on actions performed.*

Interim ITAP Report
University of La Réunion
25.04.2025



**Funded by
the European Union**

*This interim report aims to capture key insights, early challenges, and emerging strategies from the pilot implementation of each Institutional Transformation Acceleration Project (ITAP). Responses will contribute to **Deliverable 4.1: Initial Summary Report of Common Issues/Pitfalls Related to ITAP**, by enabling the synthesis of recurrent themes, implementation barriers, and lessons across testing partners.*

1. Overview of the ITAP (max. 500 words)

The Institutional Transformation Acceleration Project (ITAP) at UR-ESIROI is designed to support the university's strategic ambition to become a regional leader in innovation and entrepreneurship. The project focuses on three **core objectives**: (1) fostering a culture of innovation through mindset development and capacity building, (2) enhancing collaboration with industry and local stakeholders to establish a regional innovation hub and (3) equipping students with practical entrepreneurial skills to drive future socio-economic development.

The ITAP was developed based on in-depth institutional analysis and is being piloted within the Engineering School. One of the main challenges tackled by the project is engaging all components of the quadruple helix—academia, industry, government and civil society—in a coordinated approach to implementing the regional innovation strategy. This is pursued through targeted initiatives such as staff training, promoting an entrepreneurial mindset and launching joint projects with external partners.

At the faculty level, mindset development is key. Efforts are being made to build a culture that encourages creativity, risk-taking and collaboration among students, faculty and staff. Capacity building involves offering training programs, access to modern infrastructure and platforms for knowledge exchange. Simultaneously, UR-ESIROI is allocating resources—such as cutting-edge equipment and updated expertise—to support external partnerships and regional projects.

Institutional visibility and reputation are also being strengthened through improved communication and branding. This supports the expansion of partnerships and facilitates engagement with stakeholders. Furthermore, hands-on education and entrepreneurship training are being integrated into curricula to empower students to transform their ideas into viable ventures.

The first edition of the ESIROI Design Sprint, organized within France Design Week, served as a flagship initiative demonstrating how innovation and student engagement can be embedded into institutional practice. The ITAP also includes the launch of a mentoring programme and the development of a Monitoring & Evaluation framework, with the definition of KPIs currently in progress.

In the long term, the ITAP aims to establish a sustainable, innovation-driven institutional culture. Key planned actions include curriculum redesign, leadership development, enhanced support for students and staff and strategic resource allocation. By driving cultural and structural transformation, the project contributes to a stronger, more agile higher education institution that prepares students for the evolving demands of the global economy and enhances UR-ESIROI's role in the regional innovation landscape.

2. Reflections on Initial Progress (max. 500 words)

While tangible outcomes and visible changes have not yet emerged from the ITAP implementation at this early stage, the process has provided **valuable insights into the institutional context**, current limitations and areas requiring further attention. One of the key learnings so far is the recognition of deeply rooted structural and cultural challenges that must be addressed to enable real transformation.

Although stakeholder engagement has proven difficult, the initial phase has helped to identify where the **engagement strategies need** to be rethought and adapted. The absence of internal engagement has highlighted the importance of more effective communication, a clearer presentation of the benefits and a more personalized approach to involving both academic and non-academic staff.

This period has thus served as a crucial baseline assessment phase. It is clear that, before initiating visible change, **foundational work** must be done to build trust, raise awareness and foster a shared vision. These insights are now guiding the adjustment of our implementation approach and will help to reframe our strategy moving forward.

A key achievement has been the organization of the **first ESIROI Design Sprint Week**, an initiative combining hands-on education with practical innovation. The event, held in September 2024, focused on waste management and actively involved students and external stakeholders. This initiative reflects the core values of the Accelerate Future HEI project—collaboration, innovation, and real-world learning.

Efforts to define relevant **KPIs within the M&E framework** are ongoing. While this process is still developing, it demonstrates a shift towards a results-based approach.

A **mentoring programme** has also been launched with support from policy advisor Richard Tuffs. Although the mentoring sessions have so far been more reflective than solution-oriented, they provide a space for critical self-assessment and strategic recalibration.

Stakeholders are progressively being engaged through participatory mechanisms, with the first significant attempt being a workshop facilitated by our mentor. Unfortunately, this workshop, held on December 18, 2024, aimed at clarifying ITAP objectives, roles, and areas of collaboration, did not achieve the desired success.

Finally, **benchmarking activities with Mid Sweden University** have been initiated to facilitate peer learning and explore practical pathways to institutional innovation.

3. Challenges and Implementation Barriers (max. 300-350 words)

The implementation of the ITAP at UR-ESIROI has encountered several significant challenges, many of which reflect broader institutional and contextual barriers.

One of the most persistent issues has been the difficulty in **mobilising internal stakeholders**. Despite early efforts, engagement from both academic and non-academic staff has remained very limited. This lack of participation has significantly delayed initial actions and slowed down initial progress.

The primary cause behind this disengagement appears to be a general resistance to change and the perception that innovation and entrepreneurship fall outside the traditional scope of academic work. Efforts to promote an entrepreneurial mindset have met with skepticism or indifference, pointing to a deep-rooted cultural barrier within the institution.

Another key obstacle is the **limited human resources** available to support ITAP activities. The project requires time and commitment from staff members who are already heavily burdened with their existing responsibilities. The lack of dedicated personnel for project tasks makes it particularly difficult to mobilise participation, especially for activities that fall outside the core teaching or administrative duties.

The **bureaucratic structure** of the university has created obstacles to decision-making processes and hindered the timely implementation of planned activities. This issue is particularly critical in the context of capacity-building initiatives and the allocation of resources, which require timely responses to ensure that ITAP objectives are met.

Another key challenge has been the **limited capacity for cross-departmental collaboration**. The lack of coordination between faculties and support services has made it difficult to build the integrated approach required for successful transformation. The lack of a unified vision across units has also prevented meaningful alignment with institutional goals.

One of the most significant challenges remains the **institutional mindset shift**. While there is general support for the ITAP, changing the culture within the institution to one that values innovation and collaboration remains a slow process. A deep cultural change is necessary to ensure the long-term success of the project and its alignment with institutional transformation goals.

Language skills have posed an additional, unexpected barrier. Limited proficiency in English among some key participants has restricted their ability to engage with international peers, access external resources or contribute fully to joint activities, particularly in an EU project context where English is the working language.

Ultimately, the original plan overestimated how quickly internal stakeholders would get on board and didn't fully account for the mindset change needed. Moving forward, it is clear that more time and effort must be invested in internal communication, awareness-raising and capacity-building to lay the groundwork for sustainable change.

4. Preliminary Thinking on Investment Strategy and Sustainability (max. 300–350 words)

As the ITAP progresses, a central focus is on securing its long-term sustainability beyond the project's duration. Achieving this requires a solid investment strategy that ensures continued access to funding and resources. Early conversations have centred on designing a balanced approach that combines internal and external funding streams, alongside a strong institutional commitment to maintain support for the initiative beyond the pilot phase.

Internally, there is a need to allocate dedicated resources from the university's budget to maintain and expand the infrastructure, services and activities initiated by the ITAP. This includes ensuring continued

access to modern equipment, developing training programs and maintaining the innovation hub that is central to the project's goals. We are also considering the establishment of a dedicated innovation fund, sourced from the university's own budget, to support entrepreneurial initiatives and research collaborations long after the project concludes. A significant role will be given to the commercialization of the UR-ESIROL's existing cutting-edge laboratories and equipment, which we already have the expertise to leverage, to increase financial resources.

Externally, securing funding from regional and EU-level sources remains a priority. This could include tapping into Horizon Europe or national innovation funds to support the continuation of cross-border collaborations, entrepreneurial development and innovation-focused research. Partnerships with local businesses and industry players are also seen as crucial for providing both financial and in-kind support. We anticipate that the innovation hub will play a central role in fostering these partnerships, offering valuable resources such as mentorship, business incubation and networking opportunities.

In terms of institutional buy-in, it is clear that senior leadership must be actively involved in championing the ITAP's long-term vision. This includes not only supporting its continued funding but also fostering a cultural shift towards innovation and entrepreneurship across all levels of the institution. The involvement of both academic and non-academic staff in this transformation is essential to ensuring that the project's impact is sustained.

The preliminary strategy focuses on diversifying funding sources, strengthening institutional commitment and fostering external partnerships to ensure the ongoing implementation and growth of ITAP beyond the project's official timeline.

5. Peer Learning and Support Needs (max. 300–350 words)

As we enter the next phase of the ITAP, we need **practical support and resources** to overcome the challenges we've faced so far and ensure the success of the initiative. Based on feedback from ITAP working group sessions and discussions with other project partners, there are key areas where peer learning and external support will be essential.

One critical area is addressing institutional cultural barriers. We need to learn from **other institutions** that have successfully navigated similar transformations. By understanding their strategies, we can develop practical ways to foster a more entrepreneurial mindset among staff and students. Connecting with partners who have experience in implementing innovation-driven changes will help us build a more effective internal engagement strategy that overcomes resistance to change and maintains long-term commitment from all stakeholders.

In addition, we need practical resources like **best practice guidelines, case studies and toolkits** for setting up innovation hubs and organizing capacity-building activities. These will streamline our efforts and provide clear examples of how to approach key aspects of the initiative. We are particularly keen on learning how other universities have structured their innovation hubs, collaborated with local businesses, and secured long-term funding. Peer institutions could share specific models that have worked in practice.

We also recognize the need for **targeted training** in areas like project management, cross-departmental collaboration and international partnership building. To effectively implement ITAP, we need to

strengthen our skills in navigating bureaucratic processes, managing complex collaborations, and engaging with external partners. We would greatly benefit from hands-on training sessions or workshops focused on these specific aspects of institutional transformation.

Lastly, building stronger **connections** with external experts, such as **innovation specialists, entrepreneurs, and regional development agencies**, will provide us with mentorship and guidance, ensuring the project stays on track and aligns with regional development goals.

In summary, peer learning, practical resources, focused training and expert mentorship are all crucial for supporting the next phase of ITAP and ensuring its long-term success.

6. Annex

Please attach:

- *The most up-to-date version of your ITAP document.*
- *Optional: Any additional materials that illustrate your current implementation (e.g., stakeholder maps, internal briefs, diagrams, photos).*

Interim ITAP Report

***Vidzeme University of
Applied Sciences***

30.04.2025



**Funded by
the European Union**

1. Overview of the ITAP (max. 500 words)

Provide a concise overview of your ITAP, including its core focus, objectives, and primary activities undertaken during the pilot phase. Highlight how the ITAP aligns with your institutional transformation goals.

One of main strategic goal of Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences (ViA) is to foster a stronger engagement within the local and regional innovation ecosystem by promoting sustainable business practices and digital transformation. It also means to support industry in creating high-value products and services, provide critical research, data insights, and forward-looking analysis. Strategic priority of ViA is promotion of innovation and transfer of knowledge for economic growth. Additionally, the university is committed to developing human capital by enhancing entrepreneurship skills among students and staff while strengthening the human resource, leadership, and management capabilities of its faculty.

The project is essential to address several critical gaps identified within the university's student community, particularly in the areas of entrepreneurship, business skills, and student engagement in business-related activities. The following university needs highlight the importance of implementing this initiative:

- many students graduate without sufficient practical experience in the business world;
- need for building a stronger network with industry professionals, mentors, and peers.
- low number of students creating startups and low student activity in university business initiatives - the university has observed a low rate of student startup creation, which can be attributed to a lack of entrepreneurial knowledge and confidence.
- lack of entrepreneurial skills and initiative

The university management staff needs to improve their leadership abilities, entrepreneurial thinking, and mentoring skills for several key reasons. Entrepreneurial thinking enables staff to identify opportunities for collaboration with industry, innovation in curriculum, it encourages a proactive approach to solving challenges, ensuring that the university remains forward-thinking and adaptable. The management staff with strong leadership and entrepreneurial skills can foster an environment that encourages innovation among faculty and students, leaders can inspire staff and students to think creatively, engage in research with real-world applications, and pursue projects that can lead to societal and economic impact.

Two sub-goals were allocated for this ITAP:

- 1) Encourage entrepreneurial mindset for students and young entrepreneurs in Vidzeme region;**
- 2) Encourage entrepreneurial mindset and mindful leadership and human resource management skills for ViA leadership, professional staff and lead researchers.**

In the first pilot phase ViA implemented the following key activities under:

- 1) Goal 1: Business laboratory 2025; scientific publication about the results of the first pilot phase; ensuring the availability of career and entrepreneurship consultations; forum of young entrepreneurs 2025;
- 2) Goal 2: active participation in UIIN offered training; assessment of staff skills development after the first year of study.

ViA team have agreed that these types of activities are the most important in relation to building stronger engagement with the local and regional innovation ecosystem. Students are future entrepreneurs and the core ViA

ITAP activities should focus on the innovation and entrepreneurial mindset building. On the other hand, the leadership commitment to innovation is the driver for the further changes in the university.

2. Reflections on Initial Progress (max. 500 words)

Summarise key achievements or positive developments observed to date. This may include early signals of impact, successful engagement of stakeholders, or internal momentum generated by the ITAP.

There is a high interest of young entrepreneurs from the region to join Business laboratory for 3,5 months, get the knowledge, share their progress, build networks with ViA alumni, researchers, and each other. ViA has involved also three local municipalities to share the information and invite their young entrepreneurs to this Business laboratory. As the existing entrepreneurial support activities are mostly offered for more mature business ideas, this type of Business laboratory suits very well to test and work on the early stage ideas, understand what are the possibilities to transform these ideas in a more successful business projects. ViA offers a perfect platform for these young entrepreneurs to meet, network and think about more complex ideas in a structured way. During this Business laboratory we offer also three site visits to the local municipalities thus introducing to local communities around the region.

Another highlight of the first phase was the high number of youth who participated in the Youth forum 2025. ViA offered several inspiring key notes and interactive workshops. There were 138 participating students and pupils, and 13 teachers. ViA team used the opportunity of having teachers and career consultants from schools at ViA, and had a round table discussion on what it means for schools to encourage innovation and entrepreneurial mindset for school pupils, what works well, what are the challenges and how ViA could help in building bridges for their further studies at the university.

As the third example, ViA would like to highlight the development of the internal survey for ViA leadership on what skills are needed for them to become more entrepreneurial. We had a joint survey at the beginning of the project, then we offered many excellent training opportunities from UIIN, but there was a concern that we actually do not know in more depths what are the needs of ViA leadership and what is the readiness level for join the courses ViA offers in the frame of this project. We completed the survey during the spring 2025, and now we are doing the analysis and preparing the training plan for the autumn 2025 with the combination of UIIN offered courses and ViA organized local training in Latvian for the topics which will not be offered by UIIN but will be of high demand from ViA leadership. UIIN offers excellent opportunity to network at the international level, however there is a lot of leadership members who would prefer to do at first the training in the local language and have the first discussions in their local language and in the local context.

During this phase ViA had two internal validation meeting with ViA highest management to ensure that the planned activities support the overall ViA strategy and is in line with the development plans for ViA units. Accelerate Future HEI ViA team had the individual meeting and discussion with ViA rector, vice rectors, deans and head of the research institute in February 2025.

3. Challenges and Implementation Barriers (max. 300-350 words)

Reflect on the main challenges encountered during implementation. Describe any deviations from the original roadmap, unforeseen obstacles, or contextual barriers.

The main challenge for the first goal is to manage all the planned activities. At the moment ViA has identified more activities when it is possible to implement. There are also some parallel activities going on and there is the need for the internal mapping in order to better understand what should be the right balance and focus of this ITAP. There are

still several ITAP activities ViA has identified but did not start. Involving young entrepreneurs and keeping their engaged requires a lot of time, planning and organisation. The two main events for students required much more time and resources than we initially planned.

The main challenge for the second goal is that there was not enough offer for ViA lead researchers to joint the training of their interest. Another challenge was that some leadership members prefer the local training in the local language, before they would be ready to engage in the international training.

4. Preliminary Thinking on Investment Strategy and Sustainability

(max. 300–350 words)

Describe initial considerations related to the long-term sustainability of the ITAP. This may include early thinking on the development of a preliminary investment strategy, anticipated funding sources (internal or external), required resources, institutional buy-in, or partnerships needed to support ongoing implementation beyond the project's lifetime.

During this phase ViA had the negotiations on the several partnerships to support further the activities proposed in this ITAP:

- 1) *inviting three local municipalities and building contacts with their entrepreneurial development departments who are responsible for the entrepreneurial development in their regions;*
- 2) *establishing partner network for the developing the innovation ecosystem for digital transformation and developing ViA as bioregion;*
- 3) *establishing partner network and submitted the project on the students innovation grants at the local level supported by the national programme.*

5. Peer Learning and Support Needs (max. 300–350 words)

Indicate what kinds of support, resources, or peer learning opportunities would be most valuable in the upcoming phase. Reflect on insights gained from ITAP working group sessions or interaction with other partners.

For some ViA team members this was the first experience to work together with the international mentors and peers. It takes time to get the most out of this process. The current opportunities to learn from peers and support each other are very well designed and offers a lot of space to find new ideas.

Some suggestions what could be useful for next phase:

- 1) the mentor with the experience in the life-long education training programs, business trainer or other educational background;
- 2) the mentor for tacking KPIs, monitoring, evaluation and impact.

6. Annex

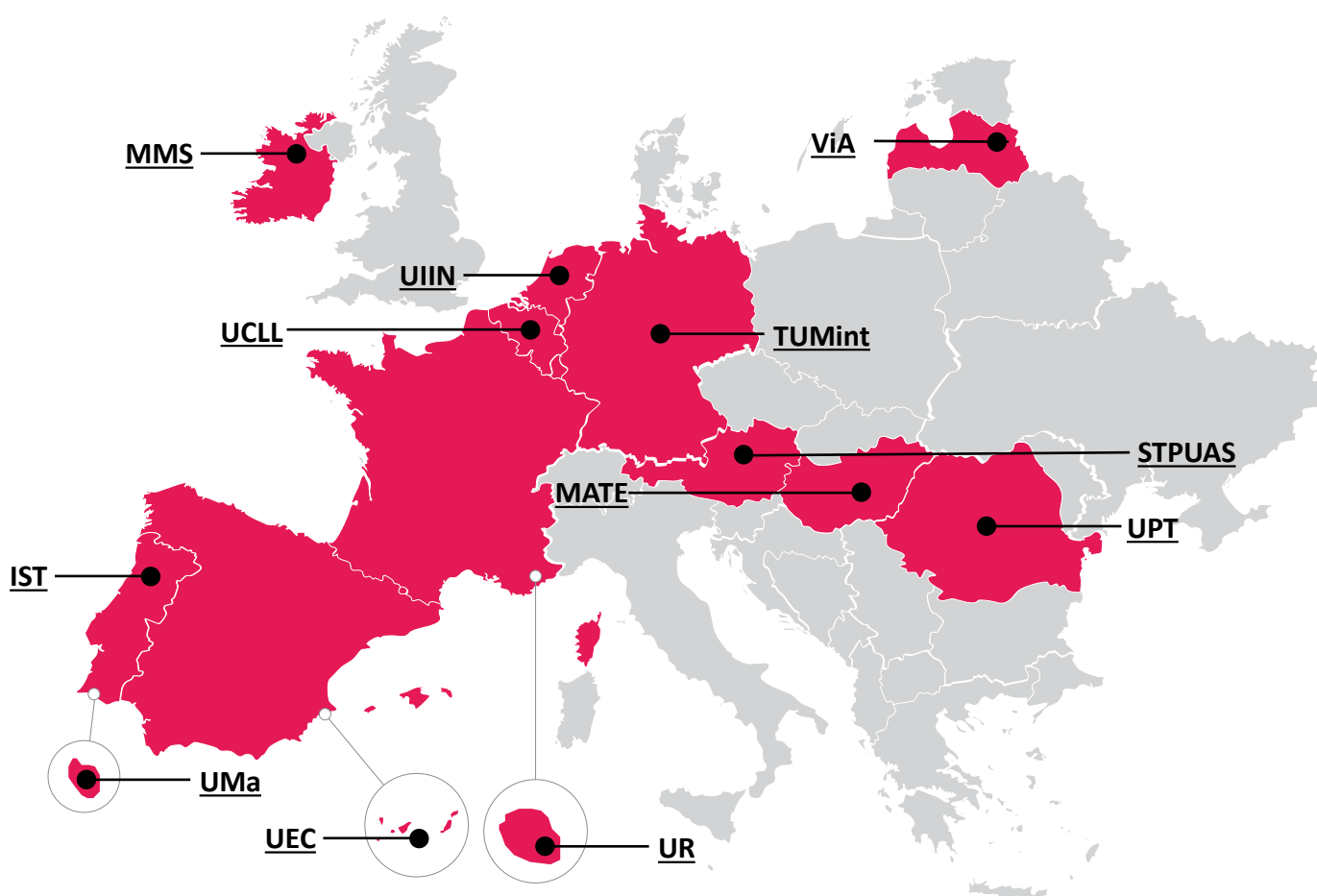
Please attach:

- *The most up-to-date version of your ITAP document.*

- *Optional: Any additional materials that illustrate your current implementation (e.g., stakeholder maps, internal briefs, diagrams, photos).*

Please see attached:

1. *The poster for Youth Forum 2025 (Latvian)*
2. *The invitation for teachers to a roundtable discussion during Youth Forum 2025 (Latvian)*
3. *The poster for Business Lab 2025 (Latvian)*



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