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**INVEST FOR EXCELLENCE IN REGIONAL
SUSTAINABILITY (INVEST4EXCELLENCE)**

INVEST4EXCELLENCE aims at developing an integrated and long-term joint strategy on research and innovation in line with the education strategies from the INVEST EU University Alliance.

The thematic focus of the INVEST Alliance is in Sustainable development as one of the most important global challenges.

INVEST4EXCELLENCE will create the background for the development and implementation of research and innovation ideas through model development for institutional transformation at research and innovation dimension.

1. Institutional transformation at Research and Innovation Dimension

The project will deliver a model for institutional transformation.

Such model will serve as a long-term tool for integrated, systematic, structural and sustainable impact at the various levels and areas of activities in partner universities based on their strengths and potentials for synergies.

The project will provide strategies for internationalization, research and innovation and handbook of best practices in institutional transformation for policy makers.

Their creation will be divided in a process of three steps – analysis, planning and management, with the aim to create long-term plans and vision by understanding the situation, analysing the chances, setting the goals and rules to use resources.

Strategic planning process will determine the sequence of decisions that have to put into practice in the right order.

2. European Innovation Ecosystem

A set of measures and documents aimed to connect Living Labs of INVEST with European Innovation Ecosystem will be delivered, such as position papers, handbooks or proofs of concept/practice.

The project will facilitate the development of a common approach and exchange knowledge across languages and borders, disciplines and sectors, of researchers, students, regional stakeholders, entrepreneurs and community organizations.

3. Capacity Building

To strengthen the human capital enabling brain circulation and gender balance by developing research competences and skills of the INVEST RDI staff and PhD students represents the main aim of the capacity building.

The project will identify key competences and skills needed to be shared in the consortium, develop training tools to mainstream the open science practices and provide trainings for various target groups including non-academic (stakeholders).

4. Dissemination

The project will design and implement a Dissemination and Awareness Plan focused on the research and development activities within the INVEST ecosystem and the promotion of the proposed organizational and pedagogical models.

It will provide the overall design and use of strategic communication tools that will deliver the deployment of a large-scale promotion and dissemination campaigns ensuring a widespread of INVEST research and development results and its impact.

Objectives

Invest for Excellence in Regional Sustainability – INVEST4EXCELLENCE aims at developing an integrated and long-term joint strategy on research and innovation in line with the education strategies from the INVEST EU University Alliance.

INVEST4EXCELLENCE will create the background for the development and implementation of research and innovation ideas through developing the common research and innovation agenda, exchanging best practices and sharing common research infrastructure and resources.

This will lead to reinforcement of the human resources in the research and innovation of the INVEST Alliance and will contribute to achieving the knowledge-based civic society, engaged in creation and benefitting of the high quality research and innovation outputs.

INVEST4EXCELLENCE will influence the interactions between institutional adaptation and the transformation of research and innovation systems by analysing change and adjustment within the whole alliance.

INVEST4EXCELLENCE brings together a large European educational community that will actively cooperate and maximize the learning impact of the project.

The project comes with several key enabling educational and digital technologies that can optimize all research and innovation aspects promoted by the INVEST Alliance.

INVEST4EXCELLENCE is focused on achievement of its objectives that are designed to be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely), what is ensured by structured, complementary and interconnected tasks of the project work plan. The specific aims are the following:

Specific aim 1: To develop and implement the INVEST4EXCELLENCE model for institutional transformation at research and innovation dimension

Specific aim 2: To develop INVEST4EXCELLENCE European Innovation Ecosystem for Academia-Business & Society

Specific aim 3: To develop INVEST4EXCELLENCE Capacity Building Tools

Specific aim 4: To implement and promote the I-EDUC8EU tool

Specific aim 5: To set up well-functioning group of stakeholders

WP 1 Management and Coordination

Main objective: To establish a solid management structure in order to ensure the achievement of project objectives and overall successful implementation of all project activities.

Specific objectives:

- to ensure the achievement of project objectives while fulfilling all expertise, administrative, financial, legal and technical aspects;
- to implement suitable management and coordination instruments;
- to provide high-quality reporting towards European Commission (EC);
- to execute project activities while ensuring mutual understanding and proportional involvement of the whole consortium;
- to deliver high-quality project outcomes and deliverables; to fulfil properly all tasks and achieve WPs' objectives.

WP2 INVEST4EXCELLENCE Model for Institutional Transformation at Research and Innovation Dimension

Main objective: To develop and implement the INVEST4EXCELLENCE Model for institutional transformation at research and innovation dimension as a long-term tool for integrated, systematic, structural and sustainable impact at the various levels and areas of activities in INVEST universities based on their strengths and potentials for synergies.

Specific objectives:

- identification of resources, challenges, barriers, needs, ways and good practices of cooperation in research and innovation;
- development of INVEST4EXCELLENCE joint vision and documents setting the bases for the institutional transformation in research and innovation;
- establishment of a network between “European universities”, presenting best practices in the institutional transformations in research and innovation, working on recommendations to policy making;
- setting the bases for INVEST4EXCELLENCE Open Science practices, incl. digitalization of resources.

WP3 INVEST4EXCELLENCE European Innovation Ecosystem for Academia-Business & Society

Main objective: To strengthen a European partnership on Regional Sustainable Development, the regional Living Labs of INVEST connect into a European Innovation Ecosystem, by gaining insight on diverse and shared ambitions, experiences and practices. The WP facilitates the development of a common approach and exchange knowledge across languages and borders, disciplines and sectors, of researchers, students, regional stakeholders, entrepreneurs and community organizations.

Specific objectives:

- Develop a common approach for the regionally established INVEST Living Labs, based on transdisciplinary methods for connecting applied science, education, governance, business and citizens in learning and innovation.
- Identify common aspects and criteria for the development and performance of transition pathways in the regional Living Labs.

- Create synergy on European level between the academic research practices of diverse universities, and regional Living Labs practices and experiences.

- Develop innovative and relevant applied research methods for European higher education inter-university 'campuses' to facilitate European Innovation Ecosystems.

WP4 INVEST4EXCELLENCE Capacity Building Tools

Main objective: To strengthen the human capital enabling brain circulation and gender balance by developing research competences and skills of the INVEST RDI staff and PhD students.

Specific objectives:

- Identification and description of the key competences and skills that are needed to share research resources within INVEST consortium;
- Development of INVEST4EXCELLENCE Open Science training tool and materials that enable mainstreaming the open science practises within and beyond the consortium;
- Development of INVEST4EXCELLENCE stakeholder tool for systematic involvement of the stakeholders into joint research and innovation;
- Development of INVEST4EXCELLENCE training tool providing online and on-site training camps for re- and up-skilling of the RDI staff, PhD students and stakeholders.

WP5 Dissemination, Awareness Building & Engagement for INVEST R&D

Main objective: To maximise the INVEST outcomes of research and development by disseminating and exploiting all relative results. This will include the overall design and use of strategic communication tools that will deliver the deployment of a large-scale promotion and dissemination campaigns ensuring a widespread of INVEST research and development results and its impact. Maintaining a realistic exploitation strategy focused on the research achievements of the initiative will promote the potential utilization of INVEST as the de-facto paradigm for multilingual research organization on regional sustainability.

Specific Objectives:

- Co-ordinate and promote dissemination and commercial exploitation of the scientific results obtained in the different WPs of the project
- Develop a methodological approach to support evaluation and validation proposed and communicate the project vision on extensible network service provisioning by focusing key messages and project research results to various stakeholders

- Support consortium members /organise stakeholder networking, to sustain awareness and engagement in relation to research activities
- Promote the INVEST pedagogical and organizational models via international conferences and journal special issues
- Create a communication and disseminations strategy with measurable Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Ambition

INVEST4EXCELLENCE has the ambition to pave the way for the exploitation of research and innovation in relation to advanced methodologies for education and academic advising systems supported by artificial intelligence, augmented reality, and revolutionary software engineering techniques. In this context INVEST4EXCELLENCE will:

Develop the first international education academic tool (called I-EDUC8EU):

I-EDUC8EU will be capable of constructing, organizing and predicting higher education student performance dynamics and be self-configured and applied in any university alliance that promotes the European University. Furthermore the proposed automation will diminish human advisor subjectivity and partiality in taking final educational decisions.

Stimulate higher education by applying innovative virtual academic advising models:

Focusing on modelling virtual academic advisors, the proposed project will provide an advising hub that will increase student educational retention, success and graduation rate. This will be achieved by reinforcing co-creation especially with the non-academic sectors while at the same time innovative methodologies will digitize all the research support processes.

Represent a breakthrough framework in the area regional ecological sustainability related to the European urban and rural development:

More specifically, the proposed project will promote a multitude of PhD programs focusing on (a) the deterioration of the European ecological environment and the threat on public safety because of the economic development, (b) assessment methodologies and introduction of carbon emission indicators from a spatiotemporal regional development perspective and (c) the development, quality and impact of environmental sustainability education in Europe as an innovative thematic research of education.

Be based on some of the most cutting-edge technology in the area of education, artificial intelligence and human-computer interaction:

In particular, the project aims to improve the role, performance and prediction capabilities of present organizational higher education systems used in the domain of personalized higher education assistance.

The interconnection of Europe and the need for an increasingly intensive transfer of knowledge means that the further development of higher education is not possible without the development of cooperation at all levels.

Contemporary Europe is characterized by a strong knowledge community consisting of well-cooperating universities and their links with regional communities, businesses and society as such.

Increasing internationalization of higher education is therefore crucial for development of European society.

To be continuous and successful, further internationalization of higher education has to involve all its aspects and components, such as student and staff mobility, transformation of curricula and study programmes, novel forms of learning, cooperation in excellent research, creation of modern policies, developing quadruple-helix collaborations, etc.

INVEST Alliance represents the integrated platform of European universities for international, cross-disciplinary and multilingual studies and research and development activities, addressing global challenges for sustainable development.

It provides a unique platform (both in physical and virtual aspects) for enhancing the interactions and relationships between higher education institutions and stakeholders and encouraging cultural and social dialogues and understanding for fostering the broader civic engagement and entrepreneurial mind-set.

Source of the texts: <https://www.invest4excellence.eu/>

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