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Info-day WIDENING 2026-2027:
Advancing Research Excellence, Talent and Institutional Capacity
29th of January 2026

STRATEGY FOR RESEARCH CAREERS AND MANAGEMENT

- A PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE -

EXPERIENŢĂ

2020-2022	**BRAINTWIN** Horizon 2020 Twinning action
2022-2025	**BI4E** HORIZON-WIDERA
2022-2025	**DocTalent4EU** HORIZON-WIDERA
2026-2029	**CareerEnhance** HORIZON-WIDERA

BrainTwin
https://www.braintwin.eu/

WP1: Ethics

WP2: Project management

WP3: Strengthening capacities

WP4: Raising research profiles

WP5: Improving the quality of scientific writing

WP6: Research management and administration skills for international R&I funding

WP7: Communication, dissemination and exploitation

Resources:

- Public deliverables: https://www.braintwin.eu/public-deliverables/

- Scientific writing workshops

- Proposal writing workshops

- Recordings of webinars

- Videobook of transferable trainings: https://www.braintwin.eu/videobook-of-transferable-trainings/

BI4E: Boosting INGENIUM for Excellence

https://boosting-ingenium.com/

The Boosting INGENIUM for Excellence (BI4E) project is a joint initiative of eight European higher education institutions that are part of the INGENIUM Alliance. We aim to give a boost to our Alliance by enhancing inter-university cooperation, increasing our global competitiveness, addressing societal challenges, and strengthening the capacities of our partners in the widening countries

WP 01   Management and Coordination

WP 02   Building strategic planning and forward-looking capacities

WP 03   Fostering institutional transformation: improving governance and resourcing

WP 04   Cooperation for Excellence in research

WP 05   Entrepreneurial Universities: best practice in Technology Transfer and Commercialisation

(including staff entrepreneurship by way of spin-offs)

WP 06   Promoting the attractiveness of academic careers

WP 07   Communication, dissemination and exploitation

WP 02 Building strategic planning and forward-looking capacities:

This work package has three main objectives. The first one is to understand and share partner planning and outlook experiences and good practices. The second objective is to improve the capacity of partner higher education institutions, particularly those in the Widening Countries, to prepare for societal challenges and adapt to social and technological changes, with a focus on the Green Deal. The final aim is to establish joint structures that provide partner Universities with external advice and feed experience-based insights into strategic planning processes.

WP 03 Fostering institutional transformation: improving governance and resourcing:

The objectives were to foster institutional transformation and improve the governance of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), particularly those in widening countries. The ultimate goal is to contribute to a more resilient and equitable higher education landscape that benefits everyone.

WP 04 Cooperation for Excellence in research

Work Package 4 aims to enhance research capacity and performance within partner universities. It seeks to identify emerging and highly performing research groups, as well as key research areas, and to promote best practices for fostering research excellence. Additionally, the package seeks to increase transnational cooperation between research groups, thereby boosting the overall research capacity of partner universities. In this sense, one of its primary objectives is to promote durable cooperation between research groups, with a specific focus on the digital and ecological transition.

WP 05 Entrepreneurial Universities: best practice in Technology Transfer and Commercialisation (including staff entrepreneurship by way of spin-offs)

Work Package 5 aims to strengthen the capacity of partner universities to collaborate with industry and enhance the relevance of research to industrial needs. This involves improving structures, systems, and capacity to maximize the impact of research outcomes. Additionally, the package aims to enhance the capacity of partner universities to build local ecosystems, foster technology transfer, and facilitate the commercialization of research results.

WP 06 Promoting the attractiveness of academic careers:

Work Package 6 aims to enhance the capacity of partner universities to attract and retain talent, with a particular emphasis on improving job security and promoting diversity and inclusion. This involves implementing strategies to create a more welcoming and supportive environment for staff and students alike.

Title	Description	View
Good Practices in HEI Governance and Institutional Transformation	Full Deliverable: "Good Practices in HEI Governance and Institutional Transformation", which presents a comprehensive examination of governance practices and transformational strategies within higher education institutions across Europe.	[Click here]()
Exchange and Transfer of Experiences in Strategic Planning & Strategic Planning Seminars and Good Practice Document	Presentation summarizing Deliverable 2.2 ("Strategic Planning Seminars and Good Practice Document"), which collects partner information on good practices on strategic planning and the impact of two seminars organized by URN on strategic planning processes and results.	[Click here]()
Good Practices in Entrepreneurship in the University Environment	A booklet containing a compilation of good practices and success stories from BI4E partners	[Click here]()
Study on incentives and obstacles to teachers' and researchers' careers	Presentation summarizing the main outcomes of the study	[Click here]()
How to use CONNECT	The document explains how researchers can leverage the CONNECT AI platform to find potential collaborators	[Click here]()

CONNECT: The Game-Changer for Finding Potential Collaborators with AI by INGENIUM and BI4E

CONNECT, the AI-powered collaborative platform developed by the joint efforts of INGENIUM and BI4E at the University "G. D'Annunzio," offers a novel approach to interdisciplinary collaborations. With the support of the European Commission, CONNECT uses artificial intelligence to effectively match research interests, enabling smooth connections within the INGENIUM network.

Researchers can quickly find potential collaborators through CONNECT's analysis of abstracts from reputable databases such as SCOPUS and ORCID. The platform gives detailed snapshots of researchers' affiliations and ORCID profiles, presenting a comprehensive overview of their academic endeavours.

CONNECT is an invaluable tool to easily locate researchers with common interests, allowing a rigorous review of their work and the conversion of opportunities into fruitful collaborations.

https://connect.unich.it/

Instructions at:

https://boosting-ingenium.com/connect/

Platform link:

https://connect.unich.it/
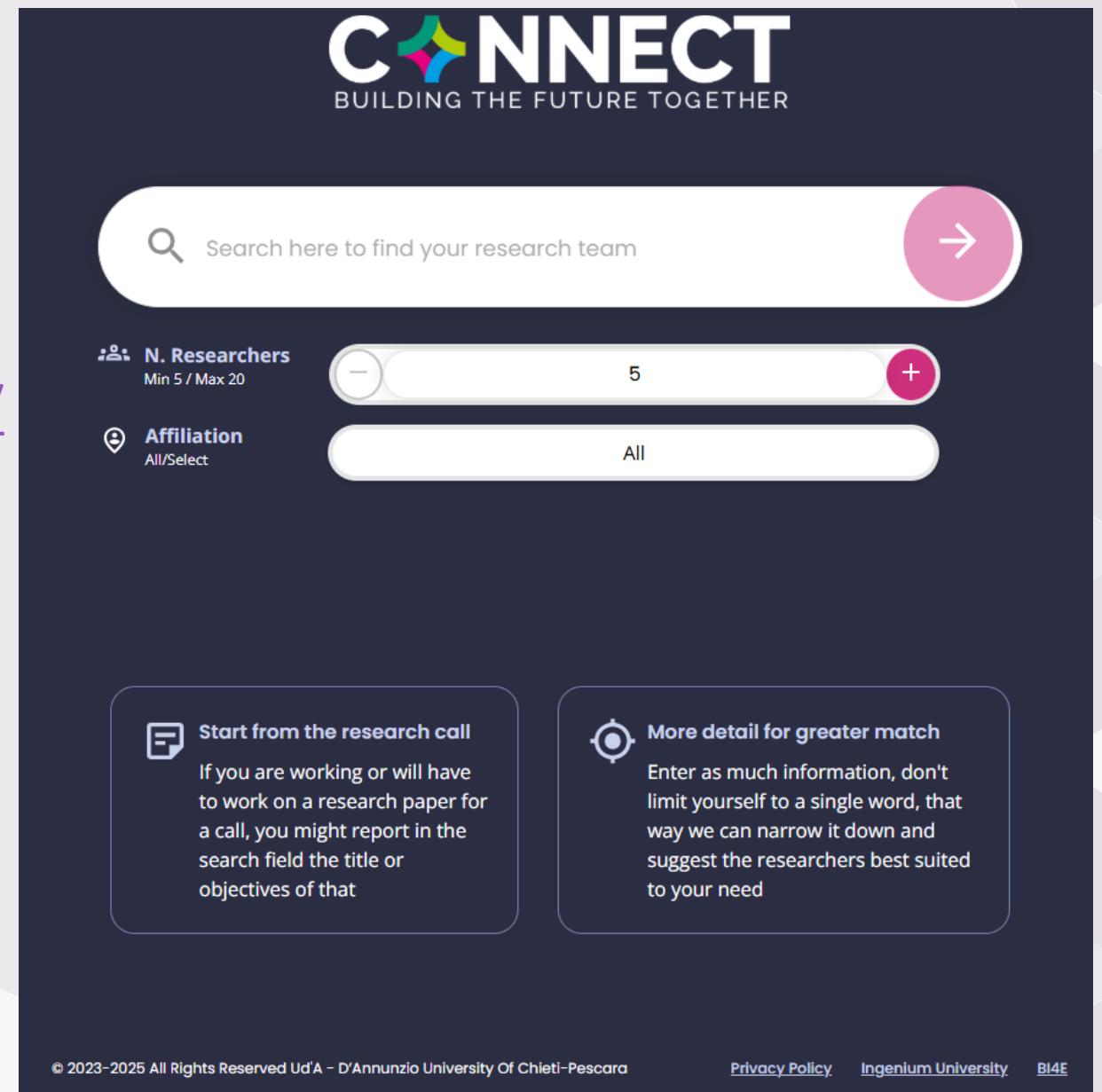
DocTalent4EU: Transforming Europe Through Doctoral Talent and Skills Recognition

https://doctalent4eu.eu/

The DocTalent4EU improves transversal skills training and career development for PhD candidates by:

Boosting skills intelligence

and identifying the most demanded transferable skills

PhD candidates

Higher Education Institutions

Policy-makers

Developing an interdisciplinary curriculum

on selected transferable skills

PhD candidates

Higher Education Institutions

Implementing a digital credential system

to facilitate and boost recognition of skills earned during the PhD, both formally and informally

PhD candidates

Higher Education Institutions

Market actors   Policy-makers

Creating local talent management centres

to support training and career development of PhD candidates

PhD candidates

Higher Education Institutions

Skills definition

Report on current and future transversal skills needs: It outlines the data collection and analysis conducted to identify the skills gap for PhD graduates.

Machine learning-based system to monitor skill needs: It leverages smart technology to track job postings and analyse the skills employers seek.

DocTalent4EU Credentials

Manual on how to issue DocTalent4EU credentials: A comprehensive guide on issuing DocTalent4EU digital credentials, detailing the chosen platform, practical steps, and challenges encountered during the process.

Guidelines and good practices for the use of digital credentials to recognise transversal skills at PhD level: They show HEIs how to implement DocTalent4EU digital credentials.

Training courses on transversal skills

Open database on existing courses on transversal skills: It provides an overview of courses offered by DocTalent4EU partner universities and open platforms.

DocTalent4EU courses:
- Teamworking and Networking
- Personal Effectiveness and Leadership
- Enhancing Communication and Negotiation Skills

Career development

Framework for the local talent management centres: It outlines the common conceptual and operational framework for setting up local Talent Management Centres (TMCs).

Catalogue of talent management services: It provides a structured overview of services for implementing and evaluating TMCs.

Lessons learned and good practices for setting up local Talent Management Centres: It highlights how TMCs can help PhD candidates and early career researchers develop and showcase in-demand transferable skills.

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https://skills.doctalent4eu.eu/

Log in
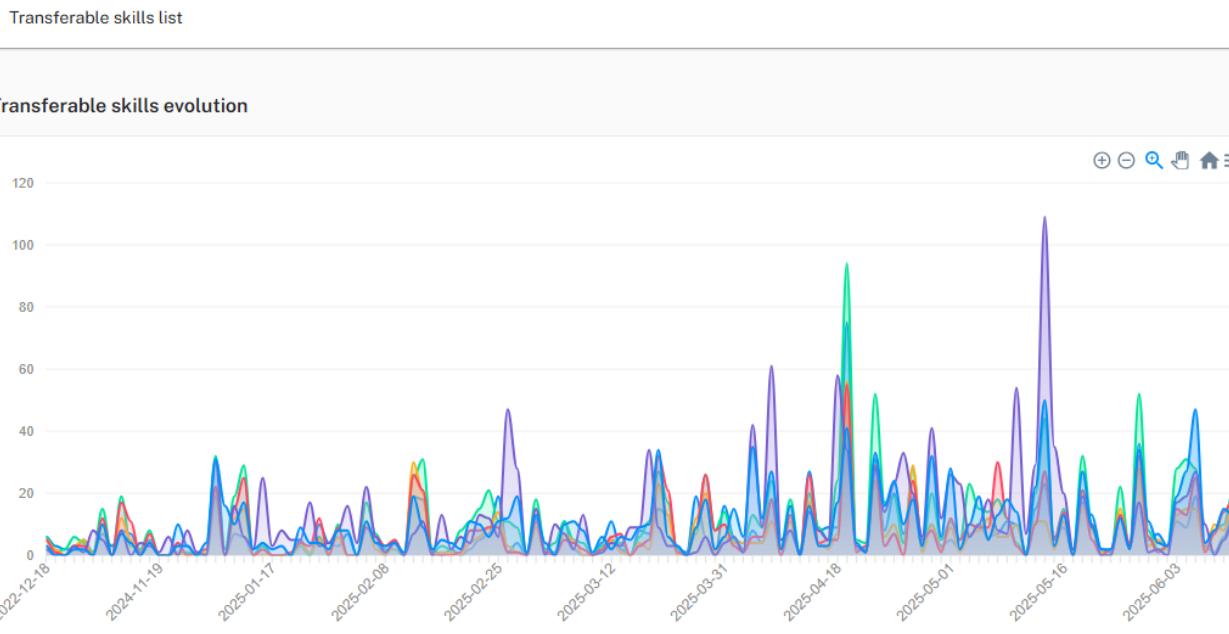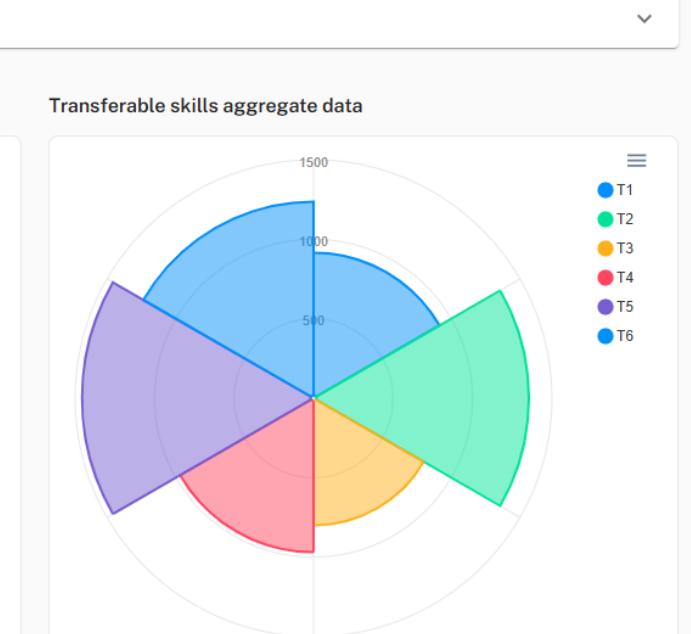
DocEnhance
Courses
on Transferable Skills

" Welcome to the DocEnhance platform! You'll find a set of courses on transferable skills, developed and piloted within the DocEnhance project. These courses are freely available for you to use as they are, or to implement within existing PhD curricula. Based on an innovative concept, each course is developed with three modules, including online lectures, local group work, and regional assignments, fostering open education, interdisciplinarity, and mobility. "

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Available courses

Doc Talent 4EU

Open Course

Teamworking and networking

In this course, the students will learn to recognise, develop and benefit from successful teamwork in research projects. The course will provide theoretical background as well as practical, interactive and embodied examples on how teamwork and networking influence research performance and excellence in higher educational settings. The importance of teamwork and networking for co-creation processes across sectors and industries will also be illustrated and discussed.

In terms of research methods, co-creation

Doc Talent 4EU

Open Course

Personal Effectiveness and Leadership

This course is intended to provide doctoral candidates with several essential skills and knowledge required to enhance their self-awareness, productivity, and resilience while developing strong teamwork and leadership qualities. Recognizing that doctoral candidates are often required to navigate complex academic environments and undertake independent research, this course aims, first, to provide them with the tools and strategies necessary to succeed in their academic endeavors; and, second, to strengthen their transversal skills to improve their employability and future integration into the labor market.

Doc Talent 4EU

Open Course

Enhancing Communication and Negotiation Skills for PhD Candidates

The course is intended to provide doctoral candidates with the essential skills and knowledge required for effective communication and negotiation. The course aims to enhance participants' abilities to communicate their research effectively, negotiate successfully in academic and professional settings, and understand the role of such skills in advancing their research and careers.

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ERA Monitoring 2024
Second 18-months review of the implementation of the ERA Policy Agenda ('EU-level Report')
Doi:10.2777/5186038

4.2.5. Horizon Europe projects supporting research careers

A Horizon Europe pilot Talent Ecosystems call for early-career researchers was launched in the WIDERA work programme 2023-2025, promoting attractive, sustainable working conditions and employability in line with the new European Charter for Researchers and the European Framework for Research Careers. Consortia are expected to collaborate across academic, private, and public sectors to create career pathways that meet the skills demands of today's labour market. Ten projects are expected to be funded with the aim of providing policy feedback to the European Commission and Member States.

The SECURE and DocTalent4EU projects made progress considered to be highly relevant to the implementation of the new European Framework. Notably, deliverables focus on a toolbox of options for research organisations in their efforts to undertake reforms, on Tenure-Track-Like models, on skills training, and on the development of Talent Management Centres.

3.2.2. European projects addressing research assessment reform

Several EU-level projects that support the objectives of the ERA Actions have Their contributions include:

- **Open and Universal Science** (OPUS), which supports research asses reforms by designing coordination and support measures, and incen Science. This initiative is moving away from the traditional impact facto assessment towards new methods that align with Open Science initiatives.
- **SciLake** aims to establish a "scientific lake" for research assessment wl knowledge is "contextualised, connected, interoperable, and easily acces services are tailored to scientific merit and include automated assessments of reproducibility, replication, and the scientific, societal, or economic impact of research.[33]
- **GraspOS** is contributing to research assessment reform. It is developing and piloting an Open Science-aware responsible research assessment framework, focusing on tools and services that support fair and transparent evaluation practices.
- **SECURE** aims to enhance sustainable research careers while addressing challenges in modern research assessment systems. It focuses on developing and implementing a common Research Career Framework that supports the recruitment, employment, training, career development, progression, and mobility of researchers. Other projects launched in previous years but active during the second phase of the ERA Agenda include DocTalent4EU and GRANteD.

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Table 4 Assessment of the progress towards Action 3 Specific Objectives: initiatives and outcome

Specific objectives[37]	Main initiatives implemented	Main outcome
Analysis of legal and administrative barriers at national and trans-national level for a modern research assessment system	• SECURE • GRANteD • SUPERA • GraspOS • ORION • OPUS • SciLake • DocTalent4EU • Support studies on research assessment reform	• Research career framework • Training on gender equality and gender-sensitive research assessment • Research Assessment Framework • Federated Open Infrastructure • Promotion of Open Science practices • Scientific Lake
Create a coalition of European research funders and research performers who agree on a new approach for research assessment, following wide and inclusive consultations at European and international level	• CoARA • Support through CoARA Boost	• A coalition of over 700 organisations committed to improving research assessment practices • CoARA working groups and national chapters • Increased operational capacity of CoARA
Implementation plan of the coalition to roll-out the new approach, including pilots in different domains	• Mainstreaming European Universities Initiative and European Excellence Initiative • Cascading grants in CoARA Boost	• More than 150 institutional action plans • Support for research assessment reform in EEI and European University Consortia

Source: Technopolis Group, based on data collected through desk and interviews

A major success of ERA Action 3 is the growth of CoARA in quantitative and qualitative terms. Individual projects such as GRANteD, SECURE's, OPUS, DocTalent4EU, or SciLake delivered individual outcomes relevant to ERA Action 3, such as infrastructure for Open Science research assessment or AI-assisted services for research evaluation.

Table 5 Assessment of the progress towards Action 4 Specific Objectives: initiatives and outcome

Specific objectives[51]	Main initiatives put in place	Main outcome
Development of a European Framework for Research Careers and toolbox of support measures to improve attractiveness of research careers	• 2023 Council Recommendation on a 'European framework to attract and retain research, innovation and entrepreneurial talents in Europe' • Horizon Europe projects (SECURE, DocTalent4EU)	• Concrete recommendations to promote research careers and boost an 'Internal Market for Research' • Toolbox of measures to support the implementation of the new Framework for Research Careers

CareerEnhance: A community of practice to enhance research careers and inter-sectoral mobility

CareerEnhance aims to strengthen research careers in Europe by establishing a European Community of Practice (CoP) that supports the uptake of the European Framework for Research Careers (EFRC) and ResearchComp.

This CSA addresses **HORIZONWIDERA- 2025-06- ERA-01 (AREA 3: Communities of Practice for research careers).**

The consortium is led by UiT the Arctic University of Norway, consists of **20 partners** (50% new to ERA initiatives) from 13 countries, and is supported by a Reference Group represented by over 30 organisations.

CareerEnhance will co-create innovative, open-access tools, training courses, and digital resources that enhance employability, inter-sectoral mobility, and recognition of researchers across Europe.

Planned activities:

- Mapping barriers and opportunities for career reform;

- Developing digital and training tools linked to EFRC and ResearchComp;

- Piloting career enhancing tools and three transferable skills courses (Research ethics including AI, Open Science, and Understanding business contexts) with early-career researchers in diverse contexts;

- Establishing a sustainable Career CoP Hub integrated with the ERA Talent Platform;

- Delivering policy briefs and recommendations to support institutional and national reforms.

CareerEnhance seeks to create new training opportunities for 160 early-career researchers, and validated resources for adoption by higher education institutions, employers, and policymakers.

WP 1	Inception and maintenance of CareerEnhance CoP
WP2	Assess barriers & opportunities
WP3	Develop tools
WP4	Develop courses
WP5	Pilot tools and courses
WP6	Evaluation and impact assessment
WP7	Policy implications, synthesis and exploitation of results
WP8	Communication and dissemination
WP9	Project and Consortium Management
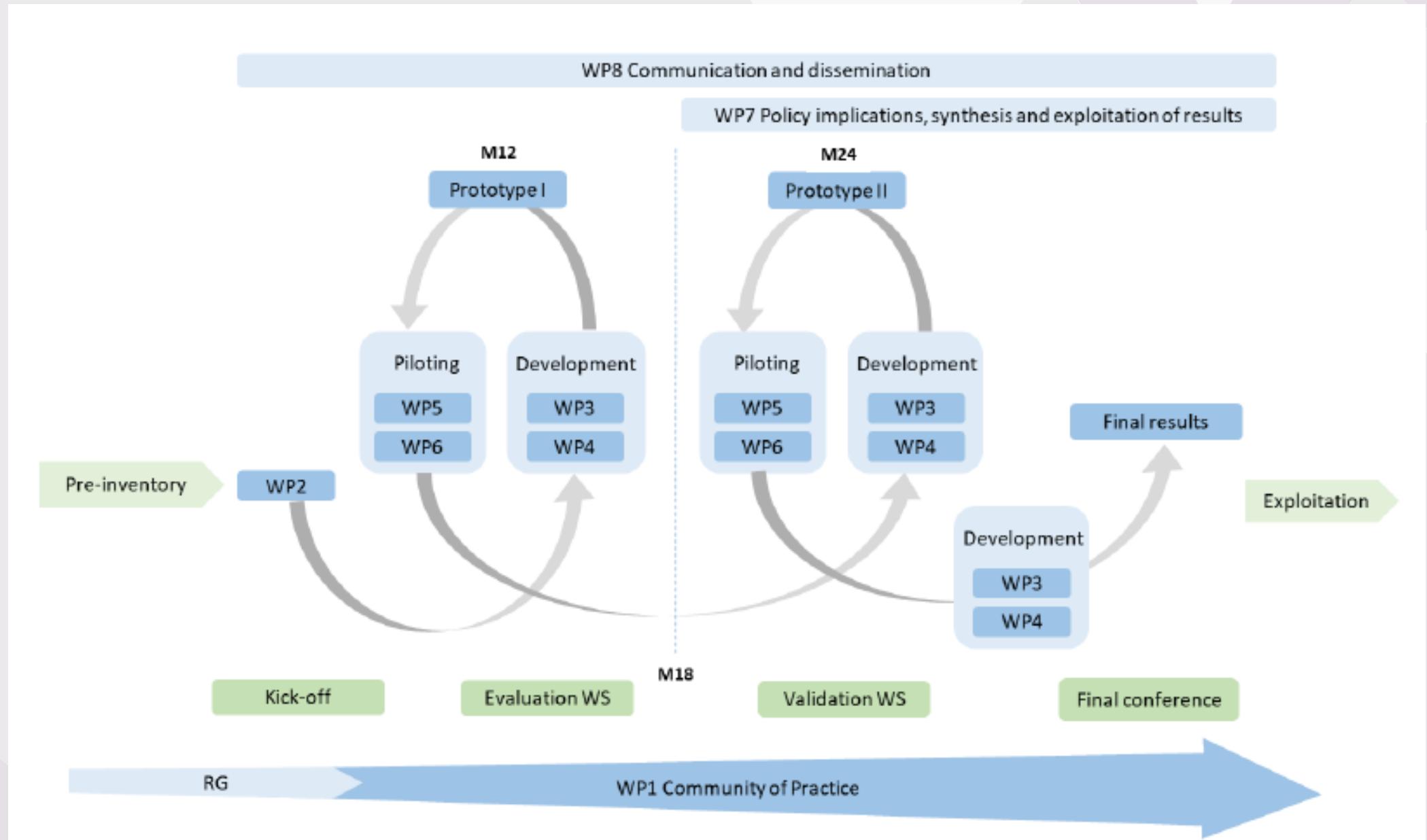
Lecţii învăţate

Aspecte de obicei neglijate în propuneri

❖ *Explicarea avantajelor pentru instituţiile implicate în proiect, cât şi pentru comunitate*

❖ *O propunere WIDERA trebuie să conţină neapărat*

- ✓ *Chestionare*
- ✓ *Mapări*
- ✓ *Programe de tip MOOC sau training online – hibrid*
- ✓ *Elaborare de ghiduri*
- ✓ *Suport pentru dezvoltarea competenţelor transversale*
- ✓ *CEVA....nou şi invovativ*

❖ *Chestionarele trebuie întocmite cu respectarea regulilor şi GDPR. Trebuie explicat în propunere care este rolul chestionarelor, cum vor fi construite, cui vor fi trimise, la ce foloseşte feedback-ul etc.*

❖ *Oferirea de livrabile de tip Policy sau Best Practices*

❖ *Cum sunt implicaţi Policy Makers şi Stakeholders în proiect – trebuie să se regăsească în descrierea WP*

Aspecte de obicei neglijate în propuneri

❖ *Lipsa cuantificării afirmaţiilor*

❖ *Detalii tehnice insuficiente sau incorect susţinute de date / stadiul actual*

❖ *Coerenţa dintre planul de lucru şi descrierea soluţiei (partea introductivă descrierea WP)*

❖ *Lipsa de feedback între WP-uri – proiectare în sistem LOOP (buclă)*

❖ *Tratarea cu prea multă lejeritate a capitolului de diseminare, comunicare şi exploatare*

❖ *Tratarea necorespunzătoare a riscurilor. Nu sunt identificate corect riscurile, pe categorii: tehnice, administrative, economice*

❖ *Măsurile de reducere a riscurilor trebuie să fie concrete şi nu generice*

❖ *Lipsa KPI*

❖ *Lipsa identificării beneficiarilor externi propunerii (stakeholders)*

❖ *Livrabilele trebuie denumite clar şi coherent*

Lecţii învăţate

Majoritatea aplicanţilor se concentrează pe idee şi soluţia tehnică, tratând cu uşurinţă aspecte care pot face diferenţa.

Parteneriatul	Partenerii din proiect şi relevanţa acestora este esenţială
Planul de lucru	Planul de lucru trebuie să fie coerent şi să conţină detaliile tehnice necesare pentru crearea unui tablou foarte bun al activităţilor. Un plan de lucru logic şi detaliat semnifică o bună cunoaştere a problematicii şi a activităţilor de implementare. Studiul stadiului actual nu are ce căuta în WP-uri (ca task) Acesta se consideră finalizat la momentul depunerii proiectului.
Stakeholders	Definirea corectă a stakeholders înseamnă că aplicanţii cunosc cui se adresează şi cine le va oferi feedback. Stakeholder – din afara proiectului. Exemplu: primării, societate civilă, studenţi, alte companii etc
Diseminarea rezultatelor	Diseminarea este extrem de relevantă, fiind parte din IMPACT. O diseminare bună a rezultatelor asigură aproape jumătate din scorul de la IMPACT. Diseminare bună presupune: articole în reviste OA, platforme OA (tip : Zenodo), conferinţe (totul trebuie nominalizat)
Comunicarea rezultatelor	Activităţile de comunicare se confundă de cele mai multe ori cu cele de exploatare şi diseminare. Măsurile de comunicare ar trebui să promoveze proiectul pe toată durata de viaţă a proiectului. Scopul este de a informa, de a ajunge la societate şi de a arăta activitățile desfășurate, precum şi utilizarea şi beneficiile pe care proiectul le va avea pentru cetățeni. Comunicare înseamnă : website, newsletter, workshop-uri

Lecţii învăţate

Exploatarea rezultatelor	Rezultatele trebuie să fie clare şi clar diferenţiate. Trebuie identificaţi corect stakehoders-ii. Discutaţi despre KER (key exploitable results)
KPI	KPI = key performance indicators Sfat: introduceţi KPI în toate fazele propunerii, inclusiv la diseminare, comunicare şi exploatare
IP management	Schiţaţi strategia pentru managementul drepturilor de proprietate intelectuală în propunere, chiar dacă nu se cere explicit.
Risks and mitigation measures	Sunt identificate riscurile critice legate de implementarea proiectului şi sunt propuse măsuri adecvate de atenuare a riscurilor? Riscurile se grupează pe categorii (tehnice, administrative, economice)
Deliverables	Sunt livrabilele corecte şi logice? Există livrabile pentru orice activitate relevantă? Există un număr suficient de livrabile publice? Un număr scăzut de livrabile publice arată că diseminarea rezultatelor este slabă. Există corespondenţă între deliverables şi milestones? Evitaţi confuzia dintre ele!

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