

# UNLOCKING EU FUNDING

Coordinating a Project to  
ensure real impact

[www.cascade-foundation.eu](http://www.cascade-foundation.eu)





# WHO WE ARE



- ★ We are a not-for-profit foundation committed to addressing the inequities in international education and helping institutions across the world become more globally connected
- ★ By creating a community of practitioners, we want to help organisations overcome the barriers they face and deliver transformative change.
- ★ We believe this can be achieved by combining new approaches to intercultural competence, co-creativity and social innovation.

# WHAT WE DO

- ★ Training programmes and workshops tailored to the needs of educational institutions.
- ★ Development and implementation of funded projects in teaching, exchange, research and innovation.
- ★ Design of structured curricula and frameworks that align with organisations' objectives.
- ★ Strategic support in areas such as staff empowerment, research and innovation, creating robust budgets, organisational change, and internationalization strategies.
- ★ individual coaching and mentoring services to professionals within educational organisations.

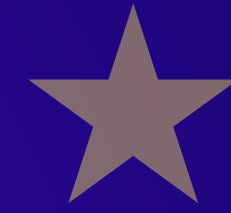
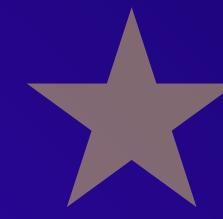
# A FEW POINTS BEFORE WE START



- ★ This webinar is devised specifically to highlight the opportunities for collaboration with international partners – i.e. outside the EU. We will focus on the Erasmus+ and Horizon Europe programmes
- ★ This session will be recorded.
- ★ Be realistic about expectations! These webinars will not offer you a “silver bullet” to success but rather offer a map to help you on your way.
- ★ Housekeeping: Please post questions into the chat and we will try to answer them as we go; there will also be a chance for questions and answers between sections.
- ★ We will contact you for feedback after the webinar.
- ★ Please feel free to contact us after the webinar although any individual support we can offer will be limited.



# AGENDA



Main focus will be on Erasmus Capacity Building in Higher Education

- ★ **Managing a Consortium**

- ★ also dealing with the Commission!

- ★ **Budget Control**

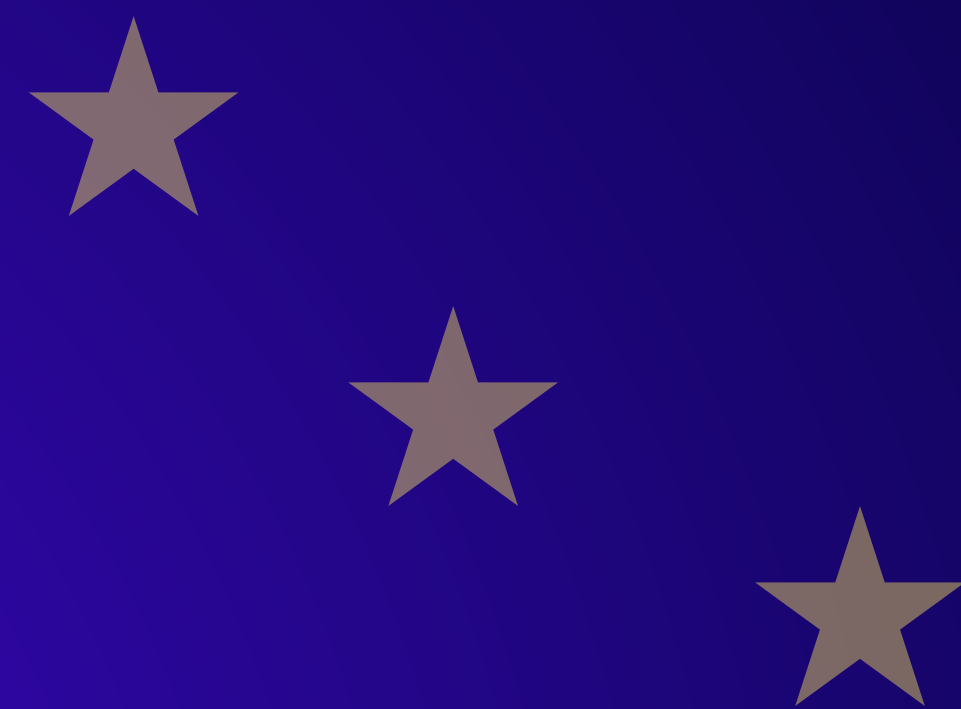
- ★ Lump sum should make things easier but don't be complacent!

- ★ **Monitoring and Quality Assurance**

- ★ with special guest speaker!

- ★ **Sustainability and Impact**

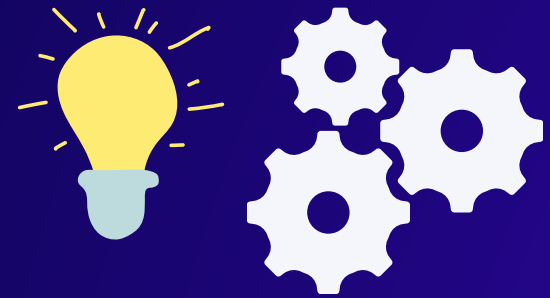
- ★ going beyond EU funding



# **MANAGING A CONSORTIUM**



# TIME FRAME



November  
Call Opening



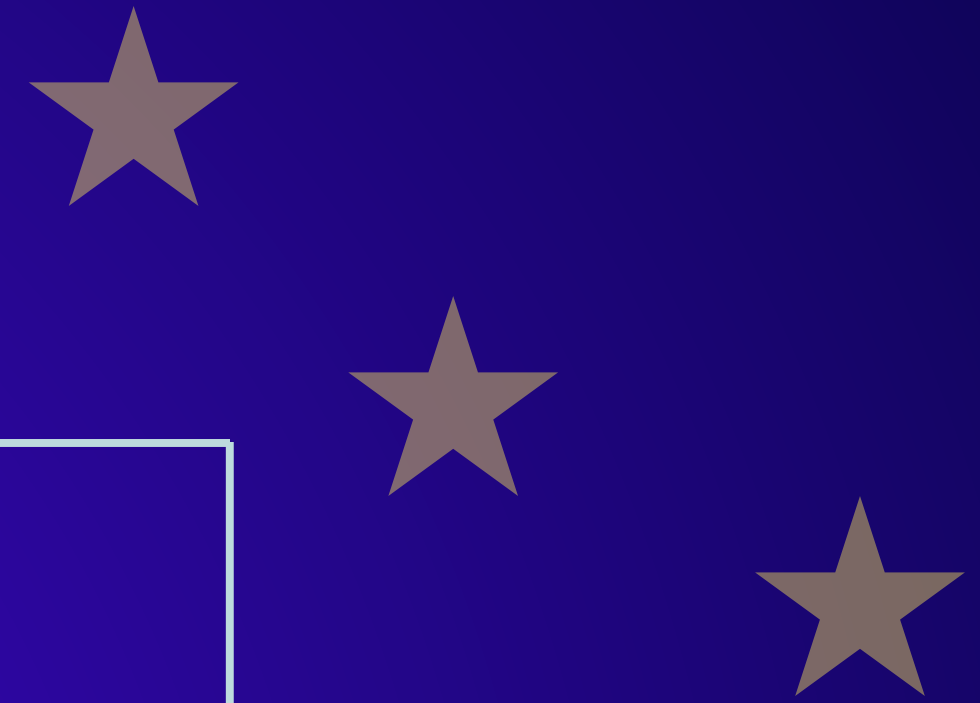
Call Deadline  
see call deadline  
on FTOP

Approx. 5 months  
from call deadline  
Evaluation Period

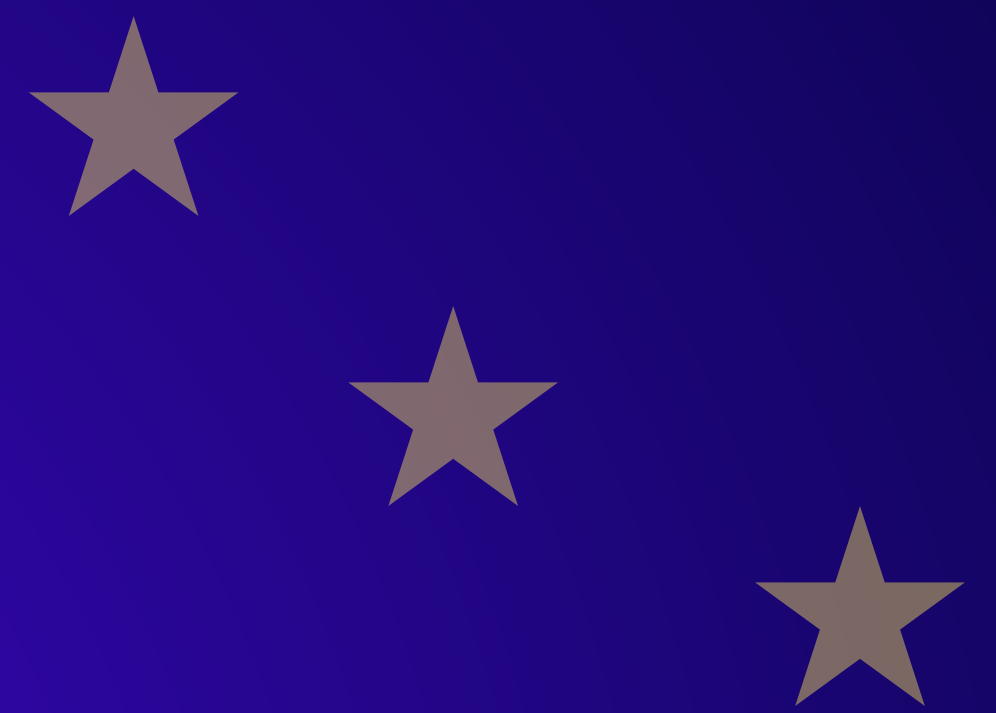
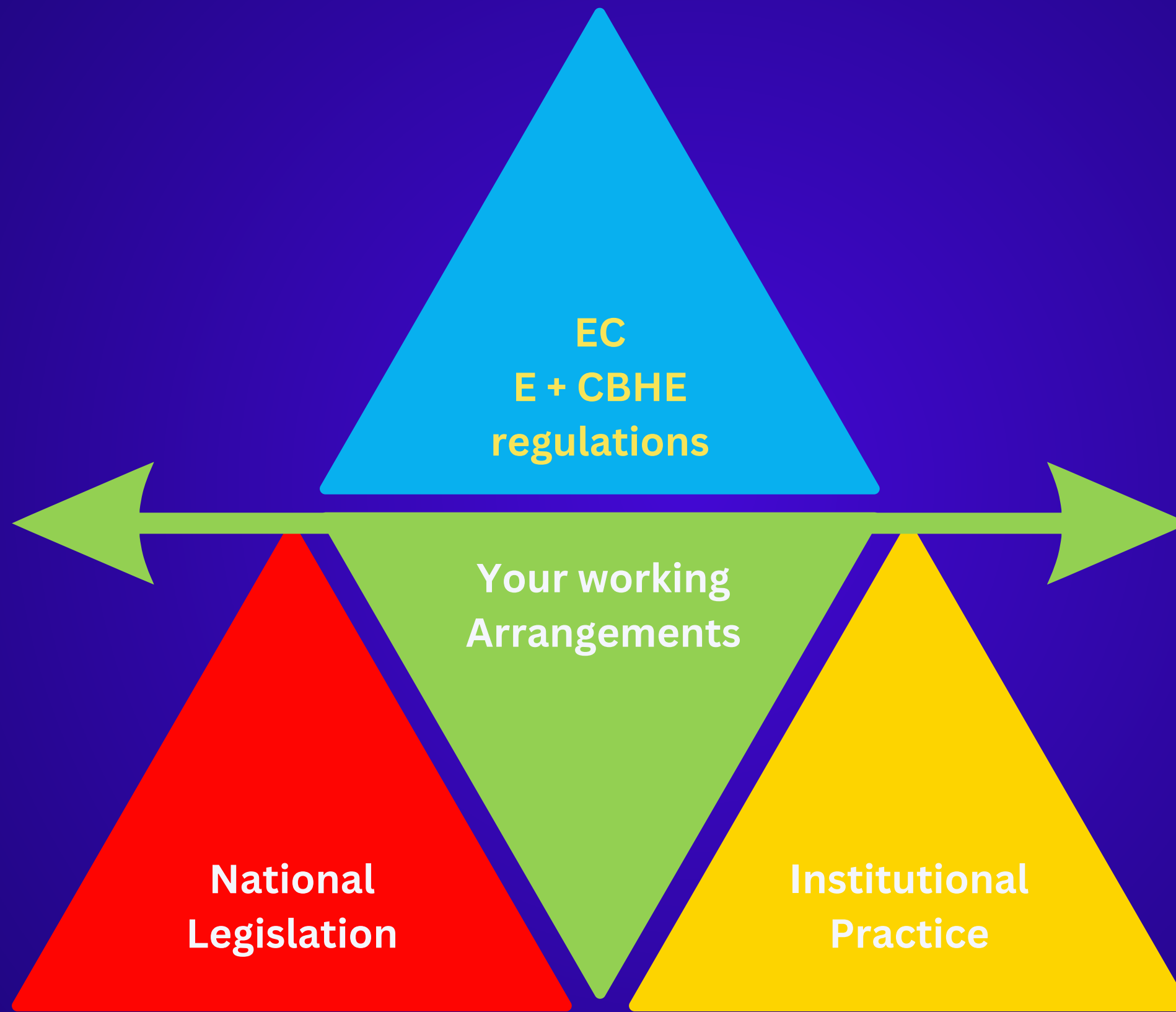
EU Funding & Tenders Portal

July - August  
information to  
applicants

October  
Signature of grant agreement



# OBLIGATIONS





# GRANT AGREEMENT

- ★ Role and obligations of the Beneficiaries
  - ★ Multi-beneficiary Grant Agreement
- ★ All beneficiaries are jointly responsible (???)
  - ★ In case of recovery
  - ★ In case of audits, checks or evaluation in their premises
  - ★ Only organisations can be Beneficiaries
  - ★ **...but how does this work in practice?**

# GRANT AGREEMENT

## Elements to watch out for...

- ★ Publicity and Dissemination (Art. 17) - **EU visibility**
- ★ Conflict of interest (Art. 12) - **Relationships within Consortium**
- Beneficiaries**
- ★ Data Protection (Art. 15) - **especially communication strategies**
- ★ Grant reduction (Art. 28) - **in event of poor performance**
- ★ Suspension, Termination and  
Force majeure (Art. 31, Art 32, Art 35) - **COVID19**



# MANAGEMENT PORTAL

The screenshot displays the 'RESEARCH & INNOVATION Grant Management Services' portal. The user is logged in as Barbara GONZALEZ LOBO. The main content area shows a 'MY PROJECT' section with details for an ERASMUS-JMO-2021-HEI-TCH-RSCH project, including its call number, type of action, current phase, duration, and estimated project cost. A 'Continuous Reporting' progress bar is visible, indicating the project has started on 01 Feb 2022. Below this, there are sections for 'Continuous reporting data', 'Process documents', 'Process communications', and 'Process history'. At the bottom, a 'Grant Management' dashboard provides a quick overview of various project activities with status indicators: Project Summary (red X), Deliverables (blue i), Milestones (blue i), Critical Risks (green check), Dissemination activities (green check), Communication Activities (green check), Events and Trainings (green check), and Financial support to 3rd parties (green check).

European Commission

RESEARCH & INNOVATION  
Grant Management Services

Help

Barbara GONZALEZ LOBO

Launch new interaction with the EU +

MY PROJECT

Call: ERASMUS-JMO-2021-HEI-TCH-RSCH  
Type of Action: ERASMUS-LS  
Acronym:  
Current Phase: Grant Management  
Number:  
Duration: 36 months  
GA based on the: ERASMUS+ Lump Sum Grants MGA — Mono/Multi - 1.null  
Start Date: 01 Feb 2022  
Estimated Project Cost: €0.00  
Requested EU Contribution: €24,000.00  
Contact: [Khadija NOURI](#)

Continuous Reporting 01 Feb 2022  
Started Completed

Continuous reporting data

Process documents

Process communications

Process history

Grant Management

ERASMUS-LS	Project Summary	Deliverables	Milestones	Critical Risks	Disseminat... activities	Communic... Activities	Events and Trainings	Financial support to 3rd parties
Call: ERASMUS-JMO-2021-HEI-TCH-RSCH Topic: ERASMUS-JMO-2021-MODULE	✗	i	i	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

H2020 ONLINE MANUAL

ONLINE MANUAL

- ★ Project Summary
- ★ Deliverables
- ★ Milestones
- ★ Critical risks
- ★ Dissemination activities
- ★ Communication activities
- ★ Events and Trainings

# PROJECT OFFICER

- ★ **A Project Officer (PO)** will be assigned with the objective of monitoring your project:
  - ★ Ensuring the project is on track and respects CBHE requirements
  - ★ Supporting the partnership during the project implementation
  - ★ Anticipating difficulties
  - ★ Identifying best practices
  - ★ **They are governed by existing guidelines**
- ★ How?
  - ★ Regular communication with the coordinator (email or on line meetings)
  - ★ Assessment of reports, requests for amendment
  - ★ Visits to projects (individual visits or in the context of cluster meetings)
- ★ Monitoring intensity based on "risk assessment"



# THE CONSORTIUM: COMPATIBILITY AND COMPLEMENTARITY

- ★ Make sure the skills and experience of your partners match the project needs
- ★ Diversity and unity
- ★ Level of commitment - with authority comes responsibility
- ★ Complementarity of staffing levels
- ★ Balancing sociability with effectiveness





# CONSORTIUM AGREEMENTS

- ★ Formalisation of internal project and grant management procedures
  - ★ Institutional commitment to the project
  - ★ Partnership conflict resolution
- ★ **Elements**
- ★ Definition of Terms
- ★ Structured around Grant Agreement
- ★ Payment schedules
- ★ Demonstration of cost AND work done
- ★ Communication protocols
- ★ Intellectual Property





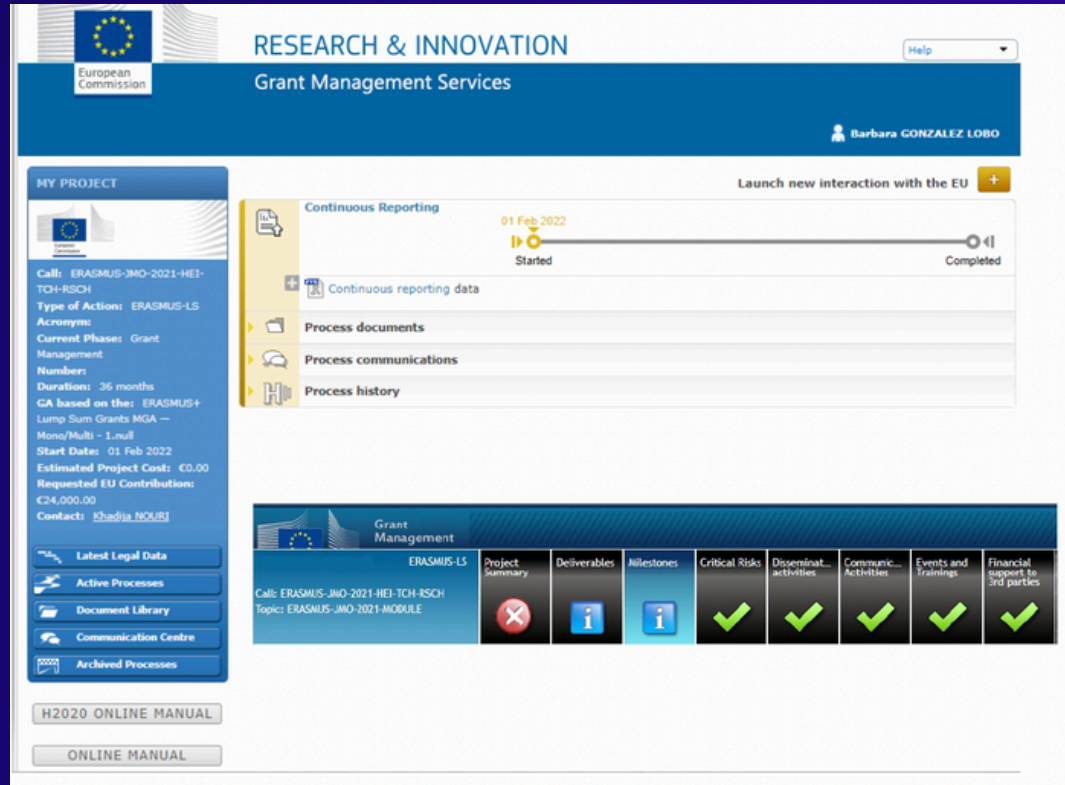
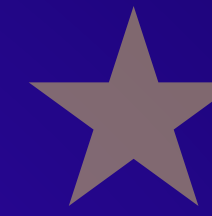
# KICK-OFF AND SUBSEQUENT MEETINGS

- ★ Team Building
- ★ Creating a shared understanding
- ★ Allocating roles and responsibilities and ensure partners are prepared to contribute
- ★ Understanding project management aspects
- ★ Defining a timeline
- ★ Managing conflict
- ★ Regular check-ins - even if they seem painful at times, they ensure cohesion

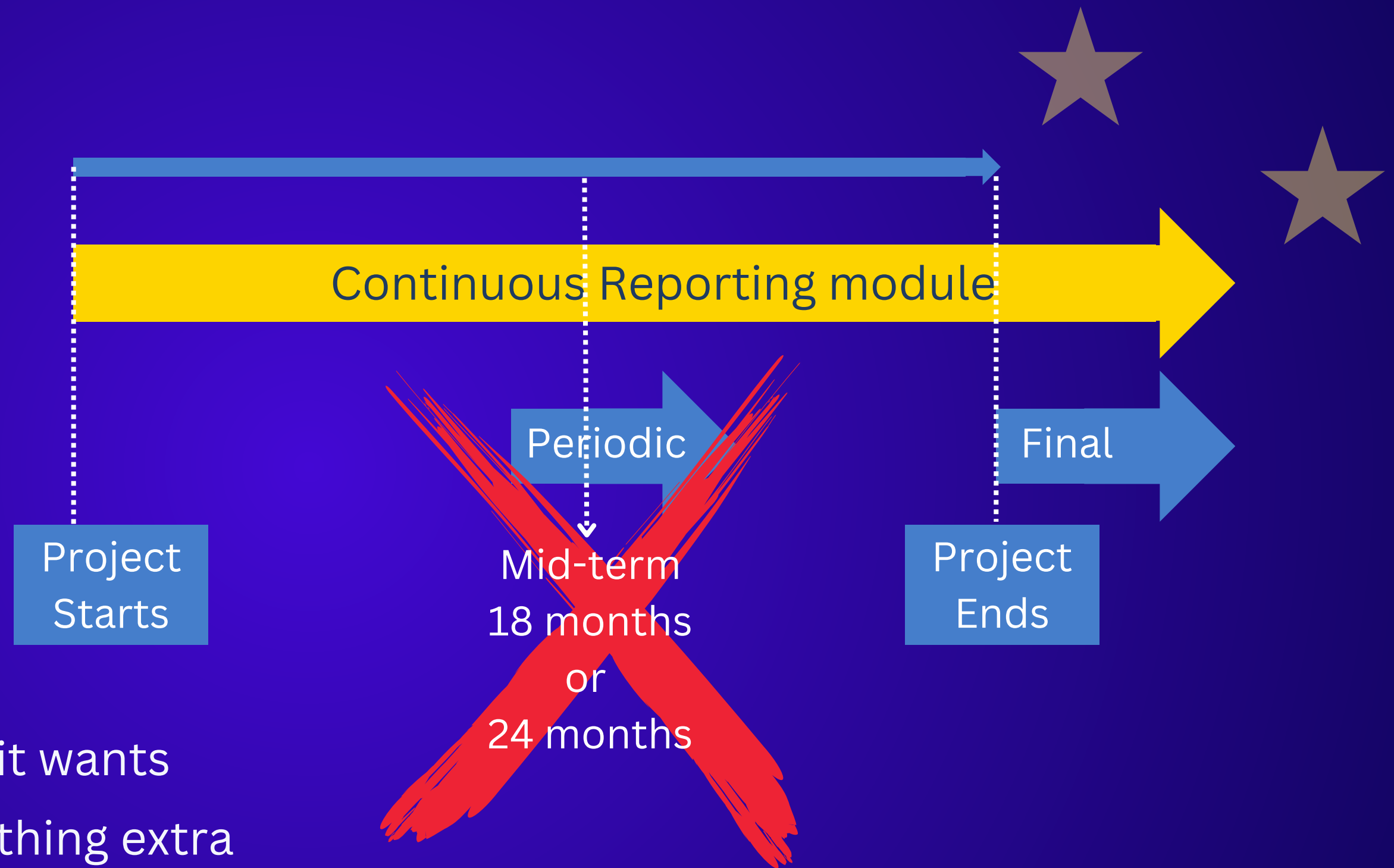




# REPORTING TO THE COMMISSION



- ★ Continuous reporting
- ★ Regular reports
- ★ Task completion
- ★ Giving the Commission what it wants
- ★ Giving the Commission something extra
- ★ Requesting changes
- ★ Final reporting





# **BUDGET CONTROL**



# LUMP SUM BUDGETS—CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

## Inadequate Planning

- ★ Develop a thorough needs analysis and realistic objectives during the proposal stage.
- ★ Ensure that deliverables are **specific, measurable, and achievable**. Identify areas of flexibility

## Deliverables Definition Issues

- ★ Clearly outline and agree on deliverables with all partners during the planning phase.

## Partner Misalignment

- ★ Draft and agree on a partnership agreement detailing roles, responsibilities, and budget distribution

## Monitoring and Evidence

- ★ Maintain comprehensive records such as meeting minutes, attendance lists, deliverables, photos, and reports

# LUMP SUM BUDGETS-CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

**A €400,000 lump sum project might distribute its budget as follows:**

Project Management:	<b>€80,000</b>	<b>(20%)</b>
Training and Workshops:	<b>€120,000</b>	<b>(30%)</b>
Development of Deliverables	<b>€120,000</b>	<b>(30%)</b>
Dissemination and Sustainability:	<b>€80,000</b>	<b>(20%)</b>

**Each work package should include:**

- Specific objectives
- Expected deliverables
- Quantitative and qualitative indicators



# PRE-FINANCING

The first pre-financing payment from the European Commission typically constitutes 70% of the total awarded amount. This is intended to provide sufficient liquidity to launch project activities and cover initial expenses.

The consortium will typically receive the remaining 30% of the budget after successfully completing all project deliverables

Transfer of amounts between work packages is only acceptable if:

- ★ Work packages not already completed
- ★ Justified by the implementation of the action
- ★ Amendment does not call into question the decision awarding the grant or breach the principle of equal treatment of applicants

# SALARY COSTS

- ★ Realistic estimation of staffing costs
- ★ Variation between countries and staff levels
- ★ Disconnect between what is done and what is budgeted
- ★ Matchfunding element
- ★ Demonstration of staff spend
- ★ Risk of non-compliance

# TRAVEL AND ACCOMMODATION

- ★ Flights
- ★ Visa payments
- ★ Element of risk (cancellations etc.)
- ★ Timely reservation of trips
- ★ Minimising accommodation costs
- ★ Reducing carbon emissions
- ★ Ensuring compatibility



# EQUIPMENT COSTS

- ★ Well-defined inventory
- ★ Demonstration of due diligence
- ★ Ensuring value for money
- ★ Timely spend
- ★ Use and compliance

# AUDIT TRAILS

- ★ Accurate recording keeping
- ★ External auditors
- ★ Maintenance of records
- ★ Continuous monitoring
- ★ Compliance is king
- ★ Do not rely on the project officer for answers!



# **MONITORING AND QUALITY ASSURANCE**



# ADVISORY AND EVALUATION COMMITTEE

- ★ Terms of reference
- ★ Roles and responsibilities
- ★ Commitment of members
- ★ Management of meetings
- ★ Record-keeping
- ★ Reporting to Steering Committee
- ★ Troubleshooting





# RISK ANALYSIS AND CONTINGENCY PLANNING

## Risk Mitigation Planning

- ★ Mitigation Strategies: Define specific strategies for mitigating each identified risk, such as avoidance, reduction, transfer, or acceptance.
- ★ Contingency Plans: Develop contingency plans to address risks that cannot be fully mitigated.
- ★ Resource Allocation: Allocate necessary resources, including budget and personnel, for implementing risk mitigation measures.
- ★ Risk Register: Maintain a risk register to track identified risks, mitigation measures, and their status.
- ★ Regular Reviews: Conduct regular risk reviews to assess the effectiveness of mitigation measures and identify new risks.
- ★ Reporting Systems: Establish reporting systems to communicate risk status and updates to stakeholders.

Risk Matrix		Severity				
		Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Severe
Likelihood	Almost Certain	Medium	High	Very High	Very High	Very High
	Likely	Medium	High	High	Very High	Very High
	Possible	Low	Medium	High	High	Very High
	Unlikely	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	High
	Rare	Low	Low	Low	Low	Medium

# EXAMPLES OF RISKS



- ★ Creeping scope – a loss of coherent direction
- ★ Tasks involving third parties – unreliable delivery
- ★ Use of unfamiliar technologies, or emerging new technologies – lack of expertise
- ★ Any part of the plan based on assumption rather than fact – ill-conceived proposal
- ★ Funders requirements – expectations that cannot be realised
- ★ Institutional restraints – partners internal limitations
- ★ Insufficient skill levels – inexperience amongst partners
- ★ Recruitment and retention of staff – partners leave current positions
- ★ Relevant staff development – training inadequate



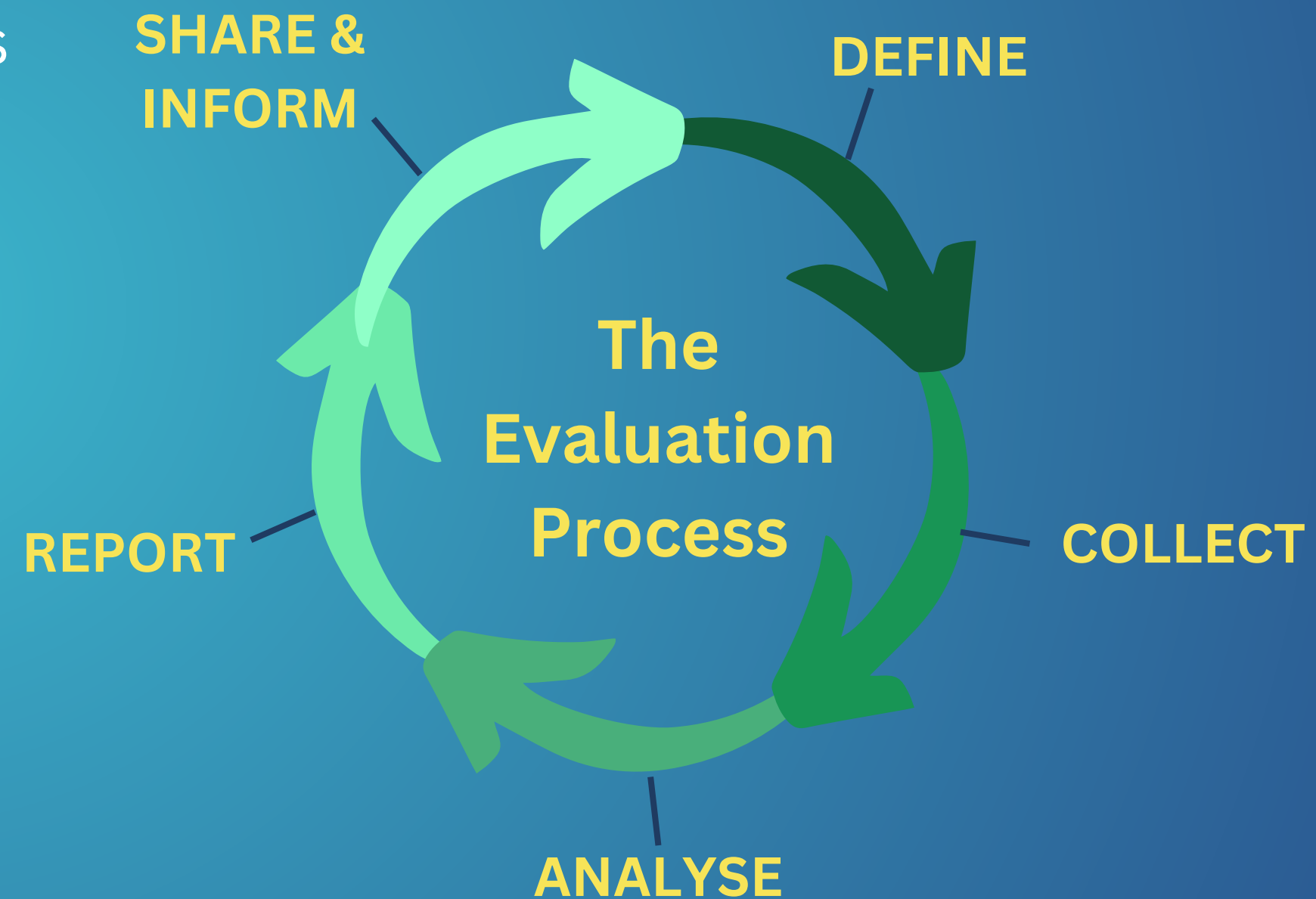
# EXAMPLES OF RISKS (2)



- ★ Supply of equipment – not delivered in timely fashion
- ★ Resource failure – poor quality of equipment
- ★ Resource support and knowledge – inadequate in-house expertise
- ★ Changes in technology or environment – project no longer matches needs
- ★ Intellectual property management – legal or institutional limitations
- ★ Clear workflow – time frame not adhered to
- ★ Quality control – poor results
- ★ Undefined goals – loss of direction
- ★ Compliance to standards – unable to achieve KPIs of project proposal
- ★ Preservation and sustainability of resource – results do not survive beyond the lifetime of the project

# ACTIVITY EVALUATIONS

- ★ **Select Evaluation Methods:** Choose qualitative and quantitative methods for data collection (e.g., surveys, interviews, performance metrics analysis).
- ★ **Determine Data Sources:** Identify sources of data (e.g., project reports, financial records, stakeholder feedback).
- ★ **Create an Evaluation Timeline:** Develop a schedule for when evaluations will be conducted (e.g., project milestones, end-of-project review).



# EXAMPLES OF EXTERNAL EVALUATORS

- ★ **Donor agencies** Ensuring that their funding is not only effectively used but also achieves set outcomes.
- ★ **Government agencies / Policymakers** Regulatory role and objective of an impact of capacity building actions and efforts on the overall higher education system.
- ★ **Consultants in higher education and capacity building** Offering independent expertise and objectivity to the external evaluation process.
- ★ **Industry partners** Relevance of education programs to industry needs and employability of graduates.
- ★ **Professional organizations** Setting curriculum guidelines, professional development activities or setting accreditation standards relevant to the capacity building projects and programs.
- ★ **Research institutions** Collaborating on research projects, serving as peer reviewers for external evaluation reports or cooperating on related research projects.
- ★ **National and international educational partners (HEIs)** Enhancing the overall quality of the international, national, and regionals, higher education systems.
- ★ **Alumni networks** Acting as potential mentors and advocates, as well as providing valuable insights into the impact of their education on their careers and communities.
- ★ **Community organizations** Ensuring equitable access to educational opportunities.
- ★ **General public and media** Influencing public opinion, funding decisions, and policy priorities.



# TYPES OF EXTERNAL EVALUATION




- ★ **Desk Review:** Analysis of the project documents (proposal, deliverables, etc.), program call, previous actions, etc. If data is collected by a source other than the project/program, they are secondary data, and it should be ensured that they are of good quality.
- ★ **Surveys:** Online surveys to recipients of training actions, surveys to stakeholders of the action, etc. Questions can be open-ended, which generates qualitative data, or close-ended, which generates quantitative data.
- ★ **Interviews:** In-depth interviews, usually with a semi-structured open-ended questionnaire, with a handful of important stakeholders (beneficiaries, activity coordinators, etc.). Which key informants are chosen can have a big influence on findings.
- ★ **Focus Group Discussions:** Small-group (8-12 people) discussions facilitated by the evaluator, usually using a semi-structured open-ended questionnaire. Participants should be somewhat homogeneous in order to encourage people to feel comfortable expressing themselves (e.g., all same occupation, as a focus group discussion for university financial managers).



# EXTERNAL EVALUATION (2)

- ★ **Most Significant Change** - collecting narratives of change from program participants and selecting the most significant of these stories to assess the impact of project, like identifying the key transformative experience of university administrators following a leadership development workshop.
- ★ **Outcome Mapping** - focussed on tracking changes in behaviours, relationships, actions, and activities among stakeholders involved in a project. It is also commonly used to illustrate a program's theory of change in a participatory manner.
- ★ **Case Studies** - focus on the real-life context of a specific activity-issue, for instance, the set-up of a new institutional unit (e.g., Technology Transfer), and the analysis of its performance for a period of time.
- ★ **Delphi Survey** - iterative survey to forecast and achieve consensus on the initiative's effectiveness, ensuring anonymous input while refining responses through feedback, leading to informed decision-making about the initiative's future directions.
- ★ **SWOT Analysis** - stakeholders may collaborate to pinpoint the initiative's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, then strategize on how to enhance strengths, address weaknesses, capitalize on opportunities, and minimize threats for program improvement and sustainability.



**See:** Chapter by D. Alpera & R. Escarre in *Increasing the impact of higher education in developing countries through capacity building projects* - Roberto Escarré & Javier de León (McGraw Hill)

**SPECIAL GUEST**



**DAVID ALPERA**

Monitoring & Evaluation Expert in the field of  
Higher Education

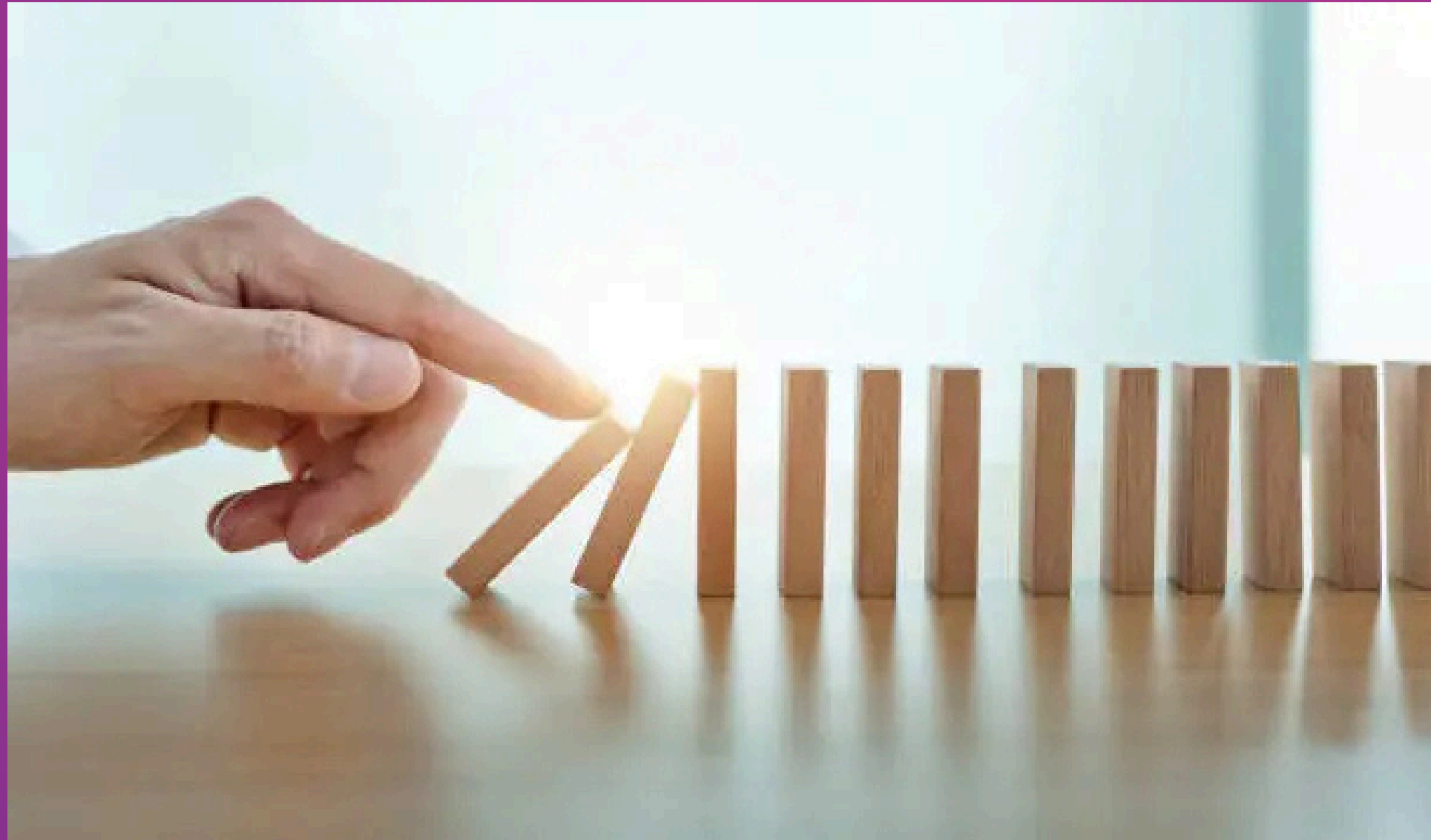


# **SUSTAINABILITY AND IMPACT**

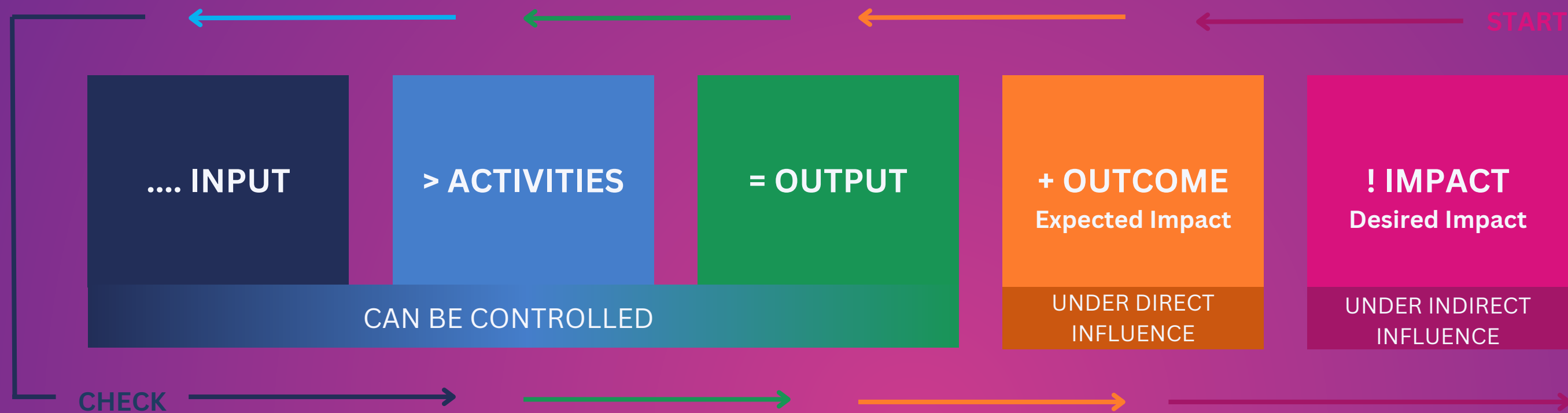


# IMPACT

What is the difference between a project **RESULT** and project **IMPACT**



# IMPACT



Category	Description	Examples
Outputs	Deliverables, products, or services directly resulting from a project	Training materials, curricula, websites, digital tools, increased knowledge and awareness
Outcomes	Use or adoption of project outputs by the target group, leading to behavioural change	Students actively cooperating in youth work, staff utilising new skills, organisations promoting digital tools
Impact	Broader, long-term effects of the project on individuals, organisations, society, or systems	Active citizenship, improved employability, enhanced economic development, policy reforms

**Impacttool mobility**  
 Anyone who is familiar with Erasmus+ will also be familiar with the term "impact". This term also gives rise to many questions, however. What exactly does it mean for your project? How can you ensure that a proje...



# IMPACT

## Different levels of impact:

- ★ **Individual** (e.g., enhanced career opportunities).
- ★ **Organisational** (e.g., improved international collaboration)
- ★ **Community/Society** (e.g., inclusive practices).
- ★ **Systemic/Policy** (e.g., policy reforms).



# THEORY OF CHANGE



Inputs	Process	Outputs	Outcomes	Impact
Write all the resources you need to complete the task (people, places, funding, etc)	What are the key activities you will conduct to reach the goal?	How will we measure the initial success of the project/initiative?	How we will see signs that project has been effective post initial launch etc?	What is the ultimate, strategic impact of the work want to achieve? This can be bold and visionary
Quantify the above with budgets, employee numbers etc.	Write the key milestones and timeframes	Short term (0-6 months) success measurements. Example: # of people involved, % participation etc)	Mid term (12-18 months) success measurements. Example: follow up survey/research results, increase sales	Long term (18 months onwards) Note: the impact type depends on the project type

# IMPACT MONITORING VS EVALUATION



## Monitoring:

- ★ Continuous process of collecting, analysing, and using data.
- ★ Tracks the progress of project activities and outcomes during implementation.
- ★ Helps ensure the project remains on course and identifies areas for adjustment.

## Evaluation:

- ★ Periodic assessment conducted at specific milestones (e.g., mid-term or project end).
- ★ Examines the project's design, implementation, and outcomes.
- ★ Provides insights to shape and improve future projects.



# IMPACT TRACKING



Choose measurable **indicators** for impact: **qualitative or quantitative** surveys, interviews, group discussions, structured observations, forms.

## Examples:

- ★ Percentage of participants achieving career growth.
- ★ Number of policy reforms influenced by the project.
- ★ Change in public attitudes or behaviors.



Very useful qualitative data collection method:  
**STORYTELLING**

# SUSTAINABILITY PLAN



- ★ **Finance** - Ensuring that the other elements of the sustainability plan (Network and exchange; Communication channels; and activities) are financially feasible for the partners involved in the project, taking into consideration the end of European funding - commercialisation of products; membership fees; institutional investment etc.
- ★ **Network and exchange** - Ensuring that the international network that has been established by this project continues to exist and promotes meaningful exchanges between partners.
- ★ **External communication channels** - Ensuring that there are clear guidelines around how the communication channels that have been used by project partners will be sustained following the close of the project, including which will continue, and which will be discontinued or wound down.
- ★ **Activities and outputs** - Establishing which elements of the main activities of the project will be sustained, and how university partners and non-HEI partners will collaborate continuously with each other and between regional ecosystem

# DISSEMINATION FOR SUSTAINABILITY

- ★ **Branding** - Name and logo that will have meaning beyond the scope of the project
- ★ **Website Platform** - ownership and domains need to be sustainable - too easy to lose a website after the project is over
- ★ **Website Design** - adhere to EC guidelines on visibility but also think about what the website will look like after the funding is ended
- ★ **Attracting stakeholders** - create a strong identity and affiliation and make sure you are offering something to potential stakeholders beyond “we are an EU project”; identify the most appropriate stakeholders for what you want to achieve.
- ★ **Connecting Networks** - All Networks have an interest in expansion so you can extend your reach exponentially by reaching out to other networks that may share thematic or geographical characteristics and points of interest
- ★ **Cementing your own network** - MOUs are innocuous but as such of little meaning... try and develop a tangible programme of activities - events, online sessions, resources that will attract and retain stakeholders.
- ★ **Develop ownership within the consortium** - ultimately the partners' interest in the project will vary so identify the key players and nurture their interest beyond the project.
- ★ **Institutional commitment** - Institutions are not generally interested in maintaining an initiative without funding; it is important to utilise the social capital offered by the project to benefit internal stakeholders as much as possible to build credibility and interest within your institution.



# DISSEMINATION FOR SUSTAINABILITY

## Strategies for Achieving Sustainability

- ★ Plan for Sustainability Early:
  - ★ Incorporate sustainability objectives in the project design.
  - ★ Identify long-term benefits and outline steps to maintain them post-funding.
- ★ Engage Stakeholders:
  - ★ Involve stakeholders in the planning and implementation phases to create a sense of ownership.
  - ★ Example: Training local staff to continue project activities.
- ★ Capacity Building:
  - ★ Develop the skills and knowledge of participants to ensure they can independently continue the project's work.
  - ★ Example: Providing training-of-trainers sessions.
- ★ Leverage Partnerships:
  - ★ Build strong networks with local, national, or international organizations to support the continuation of activities.
  - ★ Example: Partnering with NGOs or educational institutions to fund follow-up programs.
- ★ Dissemination and Visibility:
  - ★ Promote project results widely to attract future collaborators or funders.
  - ★ Example: Sharing results on open-access platforms and organizing public events.
- ★ Adaptability and Scalability:
  - ★ Design activities and tools that can be adapted to different contexts or scaled up for broader impact.
  - ★ Example: Creating adaptable lesson plans that can be used in other schools or regions.
- ★ Institutional commitment:
  - ★ Institutions are not generally interested in maintaining an initiative without funding; it is important to utilise the social capital offered by the project to benefit internal stakeholders as much as possible to build credibility and interest within your institution.





# NEXT SESSIONS

## ★ Other Sessions for February/March/April 2025 (date tbc):

**Workshops:** Social innovation and co-creation response to AI  
Intercultural competence and course design

**Roundtables:** International Education in Sub-Saharan Africa  
International Education in Latin America  
International Education in Southeast Asia  
International Education in MENA countries





# THANK YOU!

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