

## **D7.5 SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY – 1<sup>ST</sup> VERSION**

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*Polytechnic of Leiria (IPL), Portugal and  
Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands Midwest (TUS), Ireland*

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## Abbreviations

### Deliverable

ECTS	European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System
EEA	European Economic Area
EHEA	European Higher Education Area
EIH	European Innovation Hub
ENQA	European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
EQF	European Qualifications Framework
EQAR	European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education
ERA	European Research Area
ESG	European Standards and Guidelines
FHV	Vorarlberg University of Applied Sciences, Austria
HAMK	Häme University of Applied Sciences, Finland
HEI	Higher Education Institution
IPCA	Polytechnic of Cávado and Ave, Portugal
IPL	Polytechnic of Leiria, Portugal
MSA	Main Scientific Area
NHL Stenden	NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences, The Netherlands
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
ORDP	Open Research Data Pilot
RUN-EU	Regional University Network – European University
RUN-EU PLUS	Regional University Network – European University: Professional Research Programmes for Business and Society
SZE	University of Győr – Széchenyi István University, Hungary
TUS	Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands Midwest, Ireland
UAS	University of Applied Sciences
WP	Work Package

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With a strong focus on building strong partnerships, and effective exploitation of project outcomes, the sustainability strategy for the RUN-EU PLUS project includes actions to be undertaken during the project (version 1, M24) and after the end of the project (version 2, M36). The establishment of joint governance and management systems greatly contributes to ensuring the sustainability of the project, fostering synergies within the alliance and the complementarity in relation to the RUN European University (Erasmus+ project). Supporting the dual goal of further cooperation in R&I and the sustainability of the Professional Practice-based Research Degrees, the sustainability strategy will also include recommendations to national and European policymakers and other stakeholders, supported by concrete instruments such as a cost-benefit analysis, and suggested strategies to overcome barriers, such as response to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions and impacts.

RUN-EU PLUS WP3 (Common Research and Innovation Agenda) has developed an Action Plan for validation and accreditation, and an Economic Resource/ Impact Assessment Model to analyse the added-value, resource model and cost-benefit model to support and enhance conditions for the future sustainability of the project's outputs with a focus on the Professional Practice-based Research Degrees. Upon project completion, an Innovation Impact and Scaling Potential Report will analyse the innovation potential and scalability of the Professional Practice-based Research Degrees, including the potential for synergy with other trans-European initiatives. The Sustainability Strategy of RUN-EU PLUS will also contribute and benefit from the actions planned in the RUN-EU alliance, namely: enlargement of the network to other HEIs in other countries, engagement of additional associated partners to expand the capability and relevance of the alliance in terms of its educational and research offer, plan for the realisation of the 10-year vision of the alliance for the creation of a Multinational European Zone for Interregional Development applying a quadruple helix approach.

The Sustainability Strategy for the RUN-EU PLUS project is presented in 2 reports at M24 and M36 of the project. The strategy will describe the best practices and recommendations to ensure the operational and financial sustainability of the RUN-EU PLUS Practice-based master's and Doctoral Programmes beyond the lifetime of the RUN-EU PLUS project.

This first report (**D7.5 Sustainability Strategy**) represents the first version of the sustainability strategy for the RUN-EU PLUS project. It describes the strategic plan to ensure the continuation and further development of cooperation in Research & Innovation (R&I) and the sustainability and development of Professional Practice-based Research degrees. This initial sustainability report

presents the first version of the concrete methodology for actions which support the project's sustainability to be undertaken during the project.

**D7.6 Sustainability Strategy** is the final sustainability and development strategy which will be made available at the end of the project. It will approve the main conclusions and recommendations to national and European policymakers on cost-benefit analysis, identification of the main barriers and suggestions, including the main strategies and methodological approaches to respond to operational and financial challenges which may arise.

The final conclusions in terms of identification of the main barriers to the development of Professional Practice-based Research Degrees, the policy recommendations and the cost-benefit analysis of the actions and programmes will be incorporated in this final sustainability report (**D 7.6**) which will be disseminated to the relevant national and European stakeholders.

## 1.0 Introduction

The primary aim of the RUN-EU PLUS project is to complement our RUN-EU European University action plans in developing an integrated long-term strategy for a Common Research and Innovation Agenda and Collaborative Action Plan. The RUN-EU Innovation Ecosystem proposed an innovation capacity programme and a governance structure as a vehicle of regional development. Ambassador networks have been established to mainstream open science, research & innovation, and gender & diversity best practices across the alliance. The project has identified a number of transformational models to achieve these aims. The individual partners of the RUN-EU alliance are all at different points on the pathway in training and degree delivery provision for researchers. The developed Research Career Development Training Programme supporting our research degree framework for masters and PhD researchers, along with the Cloud of Knowledge Portal and the Research and Career Evaluation System, will adhere to the principles as set out in the European Charter and Code to support our researchers in identifying their current researcher skills, development needs and clear personal career paths which will encourage inter-sectoral, interdisciplinary and international mobility during their careers. The Researcher Career Development Training Programme supports and will continue to support RUN-EU researcher mobility and internship programmes. The programme aims to prepare our researchers with skill sets for a variety of careers in the public and private sector in research and non-research roles. We have defined a long-term Researcher Career Development Training Programme, overlapping principles for it and for the content, and practical guidelines for implementing the programme. In addressing the challenge to coordinate all events to reach our target groups, we have designed and begun implementing the RUN-EU PLUS Cloud of Knowledge Portal. It is designed to support researchers with their skills development and will be a repository for all training material and therefore a support tool to all researchers.

## 2.0 Integration into RUN European University

The RUN-EU PLUS project is funded by the Horizon 2020 funding programme under its Science with and for Society support actions (GA 101035816) and is a supporting co-ordination project of the RUN European University which is funded by the Erasmus+ Programme (GA 101004068). The long-term sustainability of both the R&I collaboration frameworks and Practice-based master's and

Doctoral Programmes developed by the RUN-EU PLUS project is dependent on their effective integration into the RUN European University. This section outlines how this is being achieved.

## *2.1 Joint Governance and Management Systems*

The establishment of joint governance and management systems will greatly contribute to ensuring the sustainability of the project, fostering synergies and complementarity with the RUN-EU alliance.

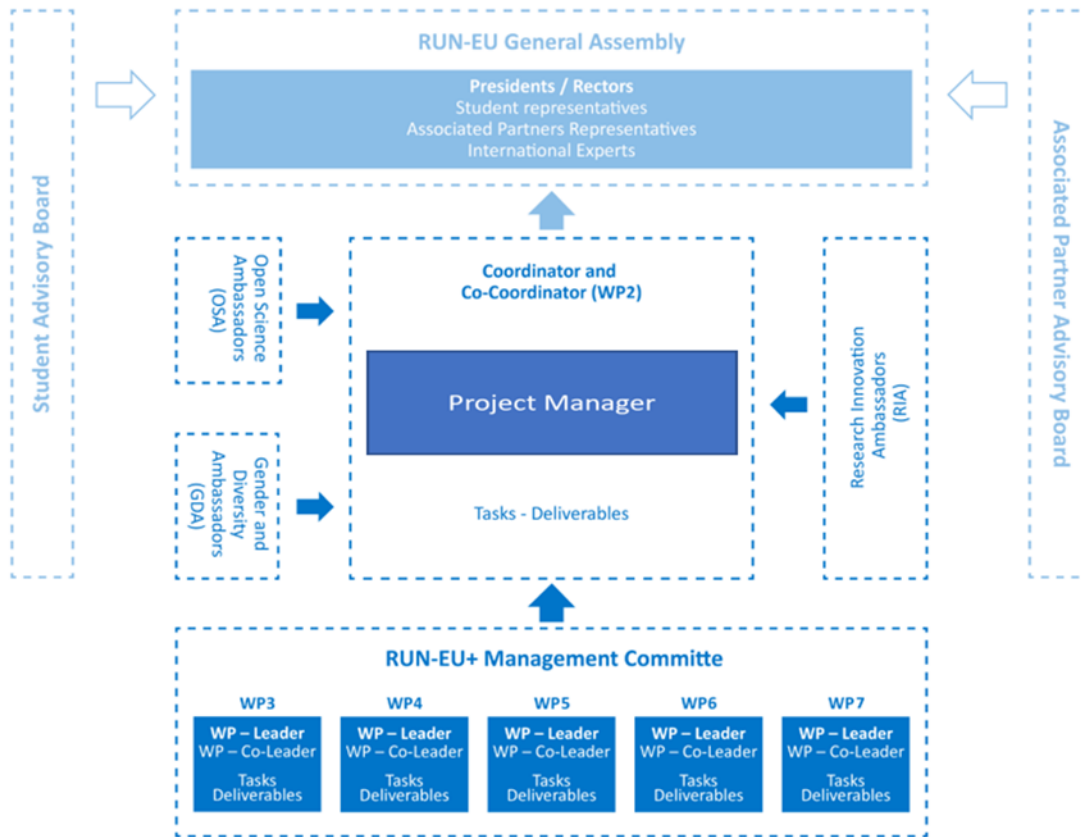
**Figure 1** portrays the governance structure of the RUN-EU PLUS project, and how it fits into the governance structure of the RUN European University. The RUN-EU PLUS Project Management Committee oversee the activities of the following 7 RUN-EU PLUS work packages:

- WP 1 - Ethics requirements (WP lead: TUS)
- WP 2 - Co-ordination & Management (WP lead: TUS/IPL)
- WP 3 - Common Research & Innovation Agenda (WP lead: IPL/TUS)
- WP 4 - Strengthening Human Capital (WP lead: HAMK/IPCA)
- WP 5 - Mainstreaming of Open Science Practices (WP lead: NHL Stenden/FHV)
- WP 6 – Research with Business & Society – RUN-EU Professional Practice-based Research Degrees (WP lead: TUS/SZE)
- WP 7 – Dissemination, Outreach & Sustainability (WP lead: TUS/IPL)

The RUN-EU PLUS coordinator (TUS) and co-coordinator (IPL) represent the RUN-EU PLUS project on the Project Management Committee of RUN-EU and at the annual General Assembly of the RUN European University which is attended by all Presidents/CEOs/Rectors of the RUN alliance organisations, student representatives, associated partners (national and regional representatives) and international experts. Decisions made at each of these levels ensure that the focus and activities of the RUN-EU PLUS project remain aligned with and integrated into the European University.



Figure 1 – Governance structure of RUN-EU PLUS in relation to the governance of RUN European University



Work package membership in the RUN-EU PLUS project includes representation from all sectors of the RUN-EU research community including researchers, research managers, academic leaders, and research support staff. Since commencement of the RUN-EU PLUS project on October 1st, 2021, membership has significantly expanded as the RUN-EU PLUS project has become embedded across relevant functions of our alliance organisations. A list of all project members involved in the RUN-EU PLUS project and their associated titles are listed in **Table 1**.

**Table 1 – Membership of RUN-EU PLUS project, affiliated alliance university and their professional titles**

TUS	IPL	HAMK	IPCA	SZE	FHV	NHL Stenden
Siobhán Moane (RUN-EU PLUS Project Manager)	Pedro Assunção (VP Research)	Annikka Pakarinen (Director of HAMBio Research Unit)	João Vilaça (Pro-president for R&D)	Katalin Czako (Programme Manager PhD Programmes)	Markus Preißinger (Head of Research)	Agnes Brinks (Education & Research Quality Advisor)
Patrick Murray (Head of Research & Technology Transfer)	Clara Espirito Santo (RUN-EU Project Manager)	Virve Kallioniemi -Chambers (Education Development Specialist, Global Education)	Pedro Morais (Senior Researcher)	Petra Szakonyi (Horizon Europe Coordinator)	Frauke Dobers (RUN-EU and R/NEU PLUS Project Manager)	Willie van der Galien (Mastersprogramme Director)
John Cosgrove (Director– IDEAM Research Institute)	Nuno Almeida (Pro-president)	Lotta Linko (Quality Manager)	Paula Tavares (VP, Professor of Design)	Tibor Dory (Chair of Management Campus Competence Cent)	Isabella Venc (HR, Recruitment and Development)	Ingrid van Gorkum (Project Leader Research Support Group)
Michelle Bennett (Dean of Faculty Business and Hospitality)	João dos Santos (Dean of Art & Design)	Jari Jussila (Director of HAMK Design Factory)	Patricia Gomes (Associate Professor Public Accounting)	Sarolta Kobori (International co-ordinator)	Katrin Paldan (User-Centered Technologies Research Centre & Ethics chair)	Jellie Visser (Advisor Open Access)
Tania Marsh (Scholarly Communications Librarian)	Ana Duarte (Quality Assurance Officer)	Mona-Anitta Riihimäki (Dean, School of Bioeconomy)	António Rocha (Professor)	Diana Skultety (Librarian)	Christina Kleiser (Research Co-ordination)	Delke Schultz (Professor, Organisations and Social Media)
Shane O’Sullivan (PI Sustainable Development)	Marisa Dinis (Vice-Dean of School of Technology and Management)	Telle Hailikari (Senior Lecturer, Teaching & Learning)	Jorge Pereira (Director of Design School)	Renata Farkas (Head, Department of Stock Creation & Processing)	Fabian Rebitzer (Head, Diversity and Equal Treatment Research)	Trudy Post (Research Support Officer)
Anthony Johnston (Director of Research Development, Faculty of Business and Hospitality)	Tania Marques (CARME- Centre of Applied Research in Management and Economics)	Hanna Lindroos (Education Research Unit)	Daniel Miranda (Assistant Professor, Applied AI)	Laszlo Lendvai (A. Professor, Audi Faculty of Vehicle Engineering)	Michael Hellwig (Postdoctoral Fellow)	Ria Oekas (Corporate Communication & Marketing Manager)
Joanne Prout (Graduate Studies and Research Office)	Sara Novais (Researcher Environmental Toxicology)	Olli Niemitalo (Data analyst)	Sofia Coelho (Social Services Director)	Tihana Vasic (Research Student)	Anna-Maria Baronenkova (PhD Student)	Jaap Sanders (Programme Manager in Education)
Amy Higgins (Research and Technology Transfer Office)	Diogo Monteiro (Professor, Sport Sciences)	Janne Salminen (Leading Research Scientist, Bio Research)	Jessica Walsh (TUS) (Researcher, Bioscience)	Gábor Dogossy (Associate Professor)	Rita Cordeiro (IPL) (Communications Manager)	Carol Wrenn (TUS) (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager)
June Daly (Faculty of Business & Hospitality)	Dulce Correia (Librarian)	Iivari Kunttu (Lead Researcher, Bioeconomy)	Carmel McKenna (TUS) (Graduate Studies Support Officer)	Emilia Papp (Head of International Project Team)	Lorna Walsh (TUS) (Director of Research Support Services)	Ali Ahmed (TUS) (RUN-EU PLUS Dissemination Support Officer)

To ensure maximum impact for the RUN university and its regions, the RUN-EU PLUS project co-ordinators have focused on the integration of RUN-EU PLUS management and work package members into all elements of RUN since commencement of the project. This includes:

1. Integration of project co-ordination - IPL are co-ordinators of the RUN-EU (ERASMUS+) project with TUS co-coordinators. The roles are reversed in the RUN-EU PLUS project.
2. Integration of project management - The RUN-EU PLUS Project Manager is a member of the RUN-EU project management committee (PMC) and provides the committee with an update on RUN-EU PLUS matters at each meeting.
3. Integration of communication channels – RUN-EU PLUS project outcomes and dissemination activities are communicated to the wider RUN-EU community via the RUN-EU official website ([www.run-eu.eu](http://www.run-eu.eu)).
4. Integration of work package members – the RUN-EU PLUS Project Manager is a member of the following RUN-EU work packages (WP1 Co-ordination and Management, WP2 European Innovation Hubs, WP5 RUN Discovery Programme and WP7 Double and Joint Degrees). RUN-EU members who are leading developments which are key to the successful delivery of the RUN-EU PLUS project are members of relevant RUN-EU PLUS work package. These include the European Innovation Hub leads and the leader of the RUN Discovery Programme.

To exploit synergies and ensure complementarity with the activities and outcomes of the RUN-EU project, the RUN-EU PLUS project co-ordinators have focused on integration of RUN-EU PLUS activities and outcomes into all elements of the RUN European University since commencement of the project. This integration is demonstrated in **Table 2**.

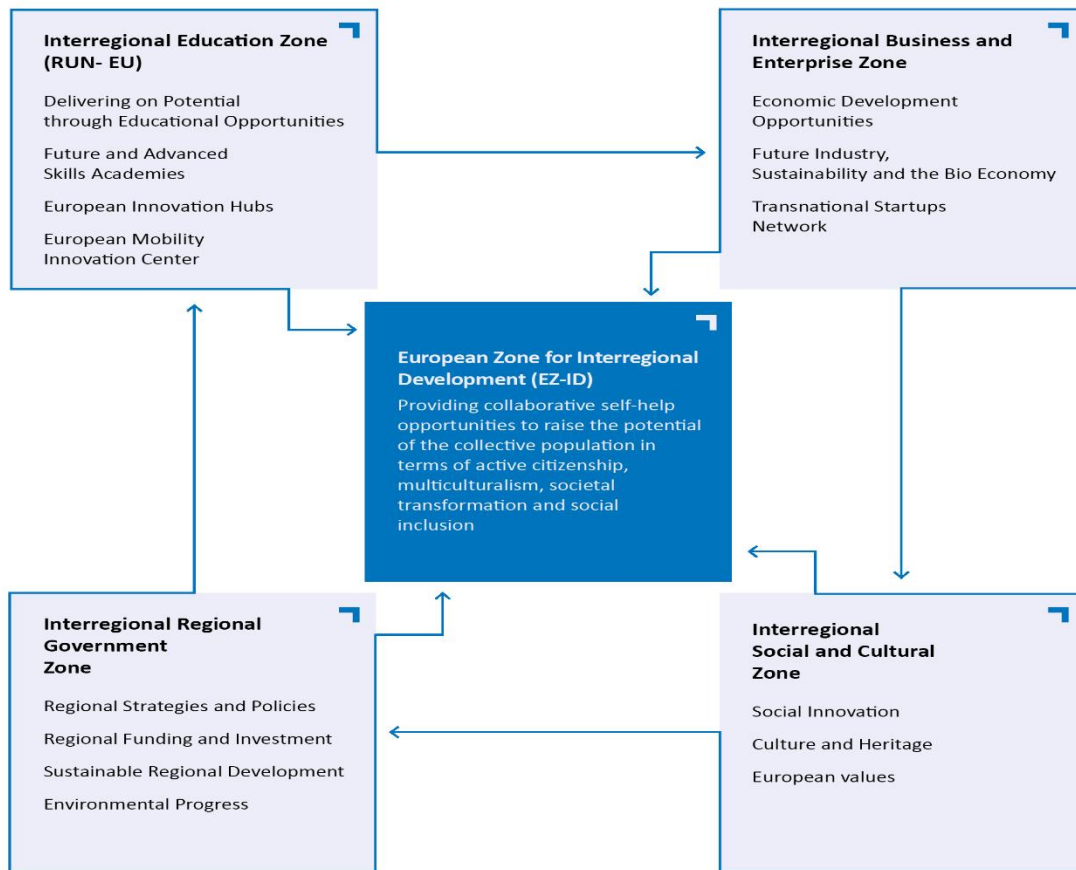
**Table 2 - Integration of RUN-EU PLUS activities into RUN-EU**

<b>RUN-EU Work Package</b>	<b>Integration of RUN-EU PLUS</b>
<b>WP1 Coordination and Management</b>	The RUN-EU PLUS project management team are members of the RUN European University project management committee (PMC) and provide the committee with an update on RUN-EU PLUS matters at each meeting.
<b>WP2 European Innovation Hubs</b>	<b>RUN-EU PLUS D6.1 RUN-EU Innovation Ecosystem</b> presents a long-term strategy and implementation plan for the development of a RUN-EU Innovation Ecosystem which integrates the activities of the European Innovation Hubs (EIHs), RUN Discovery Research Programme and RUN-EU PLUS. RUN-EU PLUS management is represented on the EIH management committee and RUN-EU PLUS activities are integrated into EIH events including a Hackathon at NHL Stenden (Feb 2023), Science Meets Regions events at SZE (April, 2023), IPCA (May 2023), TUS (June 2023) and an Innovation Festival (TUS, June 2023).
<b>WP3 Future and Advanced Skills Academies</b>	FASA Skills Bulletins inform RUN-EU PLUS skills training programme and the FASA work package leader and RUN-EU PLUS Project Manager work together whenever appropriate to integrate the FASAs and RUN-EU PLUS.
<b>WP4 European Mobility Innovation</b>	RUN-EU PLUS activities which involve research placements/exchanges and SAP participation (research challenges) are supported by RUN-EU WP4. Researcher virtual mobility is also an element of RUN-EU PLUS namely researcher training and ICARUS conferences.
<b>WP5 RUN-EU Discovery Programme</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RUN-EU PLUS <b>D6.1</b> presents a long-term strategy and implementation plan for the development of a RUN-EU Innovation</li> </ul>

	<p>Ecosystem which integrates the activities of the EIHS, RUN Discovery Research Programme and RUN-EU PLUS.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RUN-EU PLUS Research Career Development Training Programme, Open Science activities, Research Career Evaluation Tool, Supervisor training programme and practice-based research programmes support the RUN-EU Discovery Research Programme in achieving its research objectives.</li> </ul>
<b>WP6 Short-Advanced Programmes</b>	SAP research challenges offer researcher skills training, mobility, and networking opportunities to RUN-EU researchers.
<b>WP7 Collaborative European Degrees</b>	RUN-EU PLUS management are members of this work package and involved in the development of collaborative agreement templates for the provision of joint programmes and awards at master’s and Doctoral levels. RUN-EU PLUS management are also members of the RUN-EU Inter-university Recognition Team (IURT).
<b>WP8 Dissemination and Sustainability of RUN-EU</b>	RUN-EU PLUS project outcomes and dissemination activities are communicated to the wider RUN-EU community via the RUN-EU official website ( <a href="http://www.run-eu.eu">www.run-eu.eu</a> ), social media, digital leaflets, and newsletters. Researcher Career Development training workshops are disseminated and offered to all researchers across RUN-EU.

## 2.2 RUN-EU 2

The long-term sustainability of the RUN-EU PLUS activities is dependent on the long-term sustainability of the RUN European University whose key objective is to achieve development of RUN alliance member regions through the implementation of a European Zone for Interregional Development (EZID) (Figure 2).



**Figure 2 - RUN-EU objective European Zone for Interregional Development**

In June 2023 the RUN European University was approved for continuation funding under the European Universities Erasmus+ funding programme. The outcomes of the RUN-EU PLUS project are integrated into the workplan of this 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of RUN (RUN-EU 2.0), shown in **Figure 3**. While RUN-EU PLUS features in all work packages, the RUN-EU PLUS R&I collaboration frameworks are integrated into WP3 (RUN – European Research Area) and the RUN-EU PLUS master’s and Doctoral Programme frameworks and programmes are integrated into WP2 (RUN – European Programmes Academy).

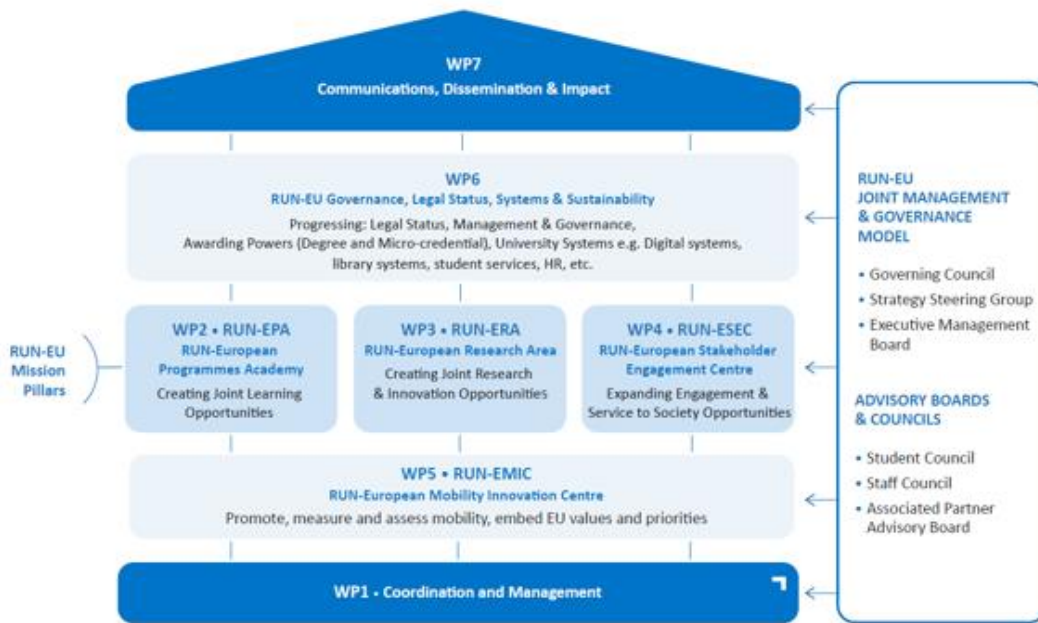


Figure 3 - Overview of RUN-EU 2.0 workplan

## 3.0 Sustainability of the Professional Practice-based Research Degrees

Key to sustainability planning is the identification and minimisation of risk. The RUN-EU PLUS project has identified barriers to the development of Practice-based Research Degree Programmes. These barriers and approaches to overcome them are presented annually in Short Policy Briefs, 2 of which have already been produced (M12 and M24) and a 3<sup>rd</sup> which will be produced at the end of the RUN-EU PLUS project (M36).

### *3.1 Development and Accreditation Framework*

While the European Qualifications Framework aims to relate different countries national qualifications systems to a common European reference framework, within our alliance we identified challenges in the design of our university research degree framework in that legal regulations and accreditation of doctoral training are different from one country to the other and can also vary within each country across universities, faculties/departments or disciplines particularly when related to Universities of Applied Sciences (UAS). This is particularly true in terms of regulatory accreditation systems for new programmes in certain members, descriptions of research master's degrees, and entry requirements for new research programmes.

RUN-EU PLUS has defined a Degree Development Roadmap (**D3.2**) and an Accreditation Action Plan (**D3.3**) for the development of these collaborative professional practice-based research master's and Doctoral programmes. The programmes will be accredited, scalable, interdisciplinary, and focused on business and society development needs. The roadmap and accreditation action plan will ensure that the programmes created are producing research that has a significant impact and will address pressing societal challenges. At least four European Collaborative Professional Practice-based Research Degrees (three master's and one Doctoral) will be designed by the end of the project in the Regional Strategic Priority Areas mentioned (see **Figure 14**).

The development of the programmes is currently underway. While the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) aims to relate individual country national qualifications systems to a common European reference framework, within our alliance we identified challenges in the design of our European University research degree framework in that legal regulations and accreditation of master's and doctoral training are different from one country to the other and can also vary within each country and across universities. To address this, a basic structure has been proposed with

admission and assessment guidelines for a general framework for joint research Doctoral and master’s programmes across the alliance. Our co-designed research degree programmes incorporate the necessary elements to provide a clear transfer pathway from master’s to Doctoral degree as in certain instances, we envisage that some master’s level research projects will generate sufficient innovation to allow transfer to the Doctoral programme.

### 3.2 Financial Sustainability

A budget framework has been developed which will be used to calculate the cost per student for delivery of the RUN-EU PLUS Practice-based master’s and Doctoral Programmes. This framework, presented in **D3.4 Economic Resource/Impact Assessment Model**, will ensure that all programme delivery costs are budgeted for and the programme will be run on a cost-neutral basis thereby supporting the scalability and long-term sustainability of the programmes by resourcing the supports necessary for their implementation. The budget and its allocation between partners will be agreed in the Consortium Agreement and the Memorandum of Agreement of each programme. **Appendix 1** presents a budget framework which can be used by programme teams in the development of RUN-EU PLUS master’s and doctoral research degree programmes. The budget calculations are on a ‘per annum’ basis and therefore can be applied to both master’s and doctoral programmes.

**Part A** of the budget calculates the overall cost of organising the programme per annum and includes the annual salary of a dedicated Programme Co-ordinator, programme board meetings, student induction and administration costs.

<b>*Programme Costs (per annum):</b>		<b>Total:</b>	<b>Programme Cost per student (A):</b>
Co-ordinator salary	€		
Programme Board meeting	€		
Student Induction	€		
Communication	€		
Programme Co-ordination	€		
Website	€		



		<b>€Total Programme Cost</b>	<b>*€ Total Programme Cost /number of students (A)</b>
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*\*Indicative Programme Costs*

**Part B** of the budget calculates the cost associated with each research student on the programme and includes the cost of participating in a Research Challenge Short Advanced Programme (SAP), taught modules, research supervision costs, consumables and overheads.

<b>*Individual Student Costs (per annum):</b>			<b>Individual Student Cost Total (B):</b>
	1 SAP	€	
Participation cost:	Taught modules	€	
	Supervision costs	€	
	Thesis enrolment & insurance	€	
	Annual symposium	€	
	Programme Administration	€	
	Computer	€	
	Consumables	€	
	Overhead costs	€	
			<b>€ (B)</b>

*\*Indicative Programme Costs*

The cost of each student per annum on a RUN-EU PLUS Research Degree Programme are calculated as follows:

**Programme cost per student (A) + Individual Student cost (B) = total (C)**

The tuition fee is listed in the Programme Consortium Agreement (signed by collaborating institutions).

### *3.3 Strategic Partnerships*

The master's and Doctoral programmes developed by the RUN-EU PLUS project are practice-based research programmes and the research undertaken by these programmes will be focused on the development or improvement of a product or process of relevance to the industry partner. Researchers will be based either in the collaborating organisation itself and/or carried out in RUN-EU research institutes. Strong relationships both across the RUN-EU alliance and with strategic partners in our regions is key to the long-term sustainability of these master's and Doctoral programmes and the RUN-EU PLUS project plans to support them during the timeframe of the RUN-EU PLUS project and into the future.

#### 3.3.1. Internal RUN-EU stakeholders

The annual ICARUS conference engages research students, academic staff, researchers, Research Cluster and European Innovation Hub leaders across the RUN-EU network in discussions concerning the development of practice-based research, open science practice and researcher career development. The project has hosted two online Annual International Conferences on Applied Research with Business and Society (ICARUS) in December 2021 and 2022 with over 400 delegates in attendance over the 2 conferences. The conference invites business and societal partners to engage in the schedule of events.

Networks of R&I Ambassadors, Open Science Ambassadors and Gender & Diversity Ambassadors have been established to promote diversity and inclusion, advance open science and promote a more diverse inclusive research community, leading to better research outcomes and greater societal outcomes.

The RUN-EU PLUS Research Career Development Training Programme, along with the Cloud of Knowledge Portal and the Research and Career Evaluation System, adhere to the principles as set out in the European Charter and Code and engage our researchers through providing them with support in identifying their current researcher skills, development needs and clear personal career paths which will encourage inter-sectoral, interdisciplinary, and international mobility during their careers. The Researcher Career Development Training Programme will support RUN-EU researcher mobility and internship programmes. The programme aims to prepare our researchers with skill sets for a variety of careers in the public and private sector in research and non-research roles. We have defined a long-term Researcher Career Development Training Programme, overlapping principles for it and for the content, also in addition to practical guidelines for implementing the

programme. In addressing the challenge to coordinate all events in a way that they will be reach our target groups we have designed and begun implementation of a RUN-EU PLUS Cloud of Knowledge Portal. It is designed to support researchers with their skills development and will be a repository for all training material and therefore a support tool to all researchers.

### 3.3.2 External Stakeholders

The RUN-EU PLUS project is currently generating and will generate many results that can be exploited. The Researcher Career Development Training Programme has been designed in a way that is accessible and engaging for a wide range of stakeholders. As well as the workshops being available to members across the RUN-EU alliance, the aim is to also open the workshops to external stakeholders who are interested in learning about open science, attractive research careers and approaches to research supervision. This will strengthen the capacity of human capital engaged in research and innovation in our regions. RUN-EU PLUS can work collaboratively with other organisations or universities to pool resources and expertise to develop more improved training programmes in the future. The development of a roadmap and accreditation plan for collaborative professional practice-based research master's and Doctoral programmes by RUN-EU PLUS can act as a valuable way to promote best practices and collaboration among other European University Alliances. By sharing this framework, other universities can follow this as a guide as they develop their own joint research programmes feeding into the development of joint doctoral frameworks as recommended in the 'Progress of University Alliance Projects' report recently published in April 2023. Lastly, the Cloud of Knowledge Portal being developed by the project can be used as a shared resource across the alliance and externally, attracting talent to our regions and equipping researchers with a combination of pedagogy and research skills.

### 3.3.3 Continued collaboration within FOREU2 and other relevant EU initiatives and programmes

Addressing other HEIs in the participating countries and other European countries (and beyond), to ensure the sustainability of the project's outcomes beyond its lifetime as well as enabling exploring joint structures and sharing best practices to ensure system-level impact, will also be addressed in line with the outreach and cooperation structures secured by the RONEU alliance and European

University, including the “Forum of European Universities #2 – FOREU2”, a discussion forum for the 24 Alliances from the 2nd Erasmus+ Pilot Call.

### 3.3.4 Regional Associated Partners

Through the Directors of the 3 European Innovation Hubs and Research Cluster Areas, Senior Researchers Managers and Senior Researchers, the RUN-EU consortium has strong strategic partnerships with organisations within its regions, and the future sustainability of the RUN-EU PLUS programmes depends on upscaling and broadening these types of relationships. Strategies to strengthen Academia-Business collaboration are presented in detail in the RUN-EU PLUS **D6.4 Strategy for Innovation Co-operation** including maintaining relevance of the Professional Practice-based Research Degree Programmes to our collaborators, educating our researchers with the skills and competencies which will empower them to be business leaders of the future, implementing the RUN-EU PLUS Innovation Capacity Programme and Innovation Detection System (**D6.2 Innovation Capacity Report**). A comprehensive list of who RUN-EU partners considered as key in the delivery of regional strategy and therefore key to their regional development has previously been provided in RUN-EU PLUS **D3.1 Strategic Research Priorities Report**.

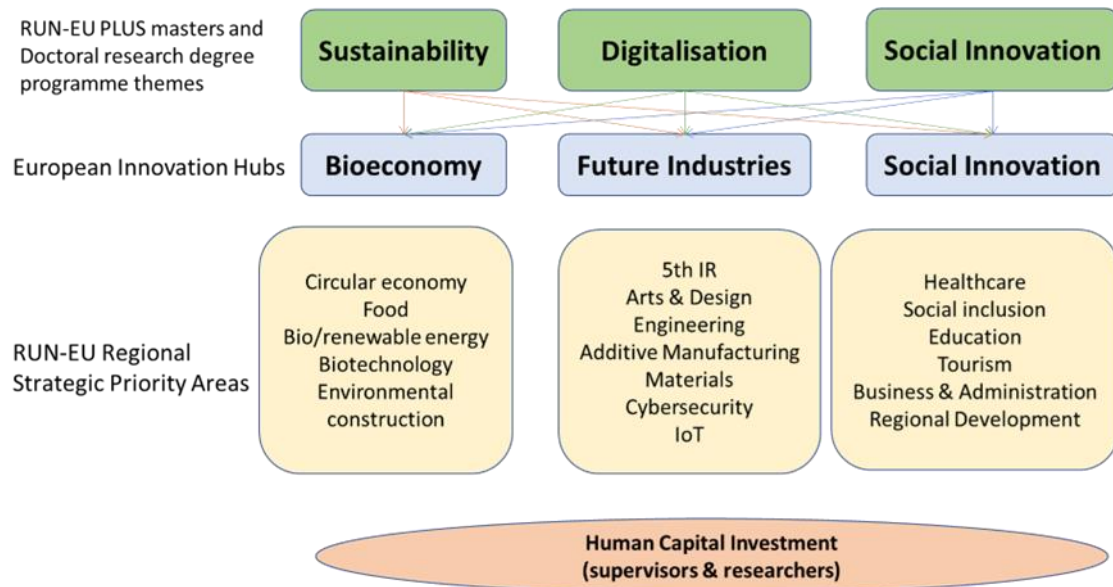
## 3.4 Maintaining Relevance

The academic requirements an MSc dissertation or PhD thesis are not always aligned with the needs of the external partners, particularly in the case of PhD programmes. Potential external partners may be of the belief that the PhD results may not be immediately applicable or have a relevant industrial application. The TRL of PhD results may not match the expectations of external partners and to align the two sides may pose a challenge. This section presents measures taken by the RUN-EU PLUS project to ensure the relevance of the Practice-based master’s and Doctoral Programmes.

### 3.4.1 Review of Strategic Development Plans

An analysis of RUN-EU regional priority domains was carried out by the project to identify the focus of future research and innovation (R&I) collaboration activities with business and society partners. This analysis included an overview of the regional research interests and resulted in the identification of those regional priorities which will be leveraged in the creation of the RUN-EU

Professional Practice-based Research Degree programmes. Sustainability, Digitalisation and Social Innovation were identified as the priority research areas which will inform the design of the research master’s and Doctoral programmes (**Figure 4**). This analysis and findings are presented in RUN-EU PLUS **D3.1 Strategic Research Priorities Report**.



**Figure 4 - Alignment of RUN-EU PLUS Master’s and Doctoral Programme thematic areas to RUN-EU regional strategic priority areas**

### 3.4.2 Co-design and Delivery of Programmes

RUN-EU PLUS members believe that matching academic objectives with those of external parties must be subject to agreement and part of the engagement process. Co-design of master’s and Doctoral programmes helps to find and integrate benefits for external partners into the research programme. This is essential to justify their provision of financial support for both students and the programme (equipment, travel, etc). Specific mechanisms will be defined by the RUN-EU Innovation Ecosystem and be implemented to achieve the required level of engagement of the RUN-EU academic community in projects with external partners.

### 3.4.3 Template Contract Agreements

An integral part of the RUN-EU Innovation Ecosystem presented in **D6.1** of RUN-EU PLUS is a suite of model template agreements developed by RUN-EU WP 5 (RUN Discovery Programme) of the RUN-EU Erasmus+ project. These agreements will serve as the point of reference for internal RUN-EU alliance and industry RUN-EU alliance research partnerships from the perspective of knowledge transfer (KT) and Intellectual Property (IP) management. The template forms are designed to be suitable for research transactions assisting in removing ambiguity in KT by encouraging predictability and transparency across the RUN-EU KT system. The model agreements are offered in a ‘clean’ form Word document, ready to download and use as a starting point for drafting and discussion with research partners.

**Table 3 - RUN-EU Template Knowledge Transfer Agreements (RUN-EU D5.3 RUN-EU Research Framework-Research, Material, Intellectual and Knowledge Transfer Agreements)**

<b>RUN-EU Model Agreement Type:</b>
Research Consortium Agreement
Collaborative Research Agreement (Part Industry Funded)
Collaborative Research Agreement (Wholly Industry Funded)
Material Transfer Agreement Outward
Material Transfer Agreement Inward
Innovation/IP Disclosure Form
Joint Ownership and Management Agreement
Exclusive License Agreement
Non-exclusive License Agreement
Option and Evaluation Agreement
Confirmatory Assignment Agreement
Contract Research Agreement
Learner MOU

### *3.5 Supervision training*

Building and strengthening supervision capacity is a key focus of RUN-EU PLUS WP6. In its **D3.2 Degree Development Roadmap**, the RUN-EU PLUS project has set minimum guidelines for the supervision teams for its practice-based master's and Doctoral programmes. Supervisors must hold a qualification at the award level which they are supervising. RUN-EU PLUS research programmes involve joint supervision between alliance partners with a principal supervisor from the home Institution being supported by a co-supervisor from a RUN-EU alliance partner institution. An advisor from the collaborating external partner may also be included in the supervision team as appropriate. If the principal supervisor has not previously supervised a student to graduation, then a mentor supervisor will be included in the supervision team.

A Research Supervision Training Programme is already being implemented by the project. It covers best supervision practices as well as research skills and is available for all supervisors, mentors, and advisors. A supervision capacity report will be produced by the RUN-EU PLUS project by M36 (**D6.3 Research Supervision Capacity Report**) which will describe the professional development programmes for supervisors and provide feedback in its implementation.

### *3.6 Researcher training*

Attracting and retaining experienced researchers is essential for the long-term sustainability of the RUN-EU PLUS research degree programmes. A secure and rewarding career path with the RUN European University is essential.

Research quality and impact along with researcher performance are fundamental criteria assessed by universities during the recruitment, promotion, or reward of research personnel. Within RUN-EU PLUS an essential goal is that RUN-EU researchers will develop strong competencies in research and transferable skills supported by the RUN-EU PLUS Researcher Career Development Training Programme. The Cloud of Knowledge Portal being developed by the project will be a repository for training materials which will be available to RUN-EU researchers.

The researcher evaluation system being developed by the project will award researchers the ability to plan their future career and learning paths will support these general goals. We will follow the recommendations described in the EU report 'Towards a Reform of the Research Assessment (2021)' with the aim to develop research and researcher evaluation systems that is based on intrinsic merits and performance. The RUN-EU PLUS researcher evaluation system aims to be

flexible to recognise the diversity of research disciplines and of researcher maturity levels and career paths in addition to RUN-EU partner research missions and cultures. We in RUN-EU PLUS have defined our first concrete goals for the researcher evaluation system as the following:

- support researcher career development on all researcher career stages,
- support researcher competences especially in the features of practice-based research,
- focus particularly on recognising team performances,
- emphasise the quality of work,
- include assessment of teamwork, Open Science, and research quality markers,
- support the development of RUN-EU researcher recruitment and collaboration practices,
- support trainers of RUN-EU researchers to plan and implement their training based on the general objectives of RUN-EU,
- support the assessment and development of the RUN-EU researcher training.

### *3.7 Innovation Capacity building*

Building capacity in innovation development, detection and transfer is a main enabler of the RUN-EU Innovation Ecosystem which is presented in **D6.1 Innovation Ecosystem**. Transfer of novel innovations to industry and organisational partners is a key driver of regional development and a way to build and maintain strong relationships between business and academia. A Strategy for Innovation (D6.4), an Innovation Capacity Programme (**MS11**) and an Innovation Detection System (**D6.2 Innovation Capacity Report**) have been developed by the RUN-EU PLUS project in order to implement its plan for a RUN-EU Innovation Ecosystem.

Coherent practices and training for the development of Intellectual property and knowledge transfer within our researcher community concerning projects developed with and for industry addressing clear and obvious societal challenges have been developed.

### *3.8 Shared systems and access to infrastructure*

European University infrastructure includes not only physical infrastructure, but critically e-infrastructures for administrative activities e.g., such as research and knowledge and technology transfer offices. This shared digital infrastructure will be the critical element of successful European University alliances involving storage and exchange of data in accordance with European data regulation requirements. Such digital infrastructure is critical for the joint research degree programmes being developed by this project to provide international programme teams with



access to student information concerning their programme of study. Within RUN-EU PLUS we have designed and are currently implementing a digital cloud of knowledge portal. The development of this unified 'Cloud of Knowledge Portal' will facilitate international collaboration through common approaches to research skills, intellectual property, ethics, research integrity and impact assessment. It is a shared platform which facilitates the creation of 'ecosystems of learning' including students, researchers, public and private sector, regional and social partners where multidisciplinary teams will address societal challenges. This cloud key digital instrument with an array of functions and following the project's principles of open access, mainstreaming and inclusion, this digital portal will:

- include different resources (texts, policy documents, informative and training materials, infographics, videos, etc),
- address various topics, e.g.: resilience and independent working, communication skills, networking and influencing skills, project management, personal development, strategic career planning, time management, writing and publishing skills,
- provide a research career evaluation system to reward researchers and research excellence at all career development stages,
- gather contributions from all partners and institutions outside the consortium,
- host cross-disciplinary and cross-sector collaboration with stakeholders outside academia,
- facilitate international collaboration through common approaches to research skills, intellectual property, ethics, research integrity and impact assessment,
- showcase excellent and impactful research.

**Figure 5** shows the information available to users of the Cloud of Knowledge Portal which includes the research expertise and infrastructure available across the RUN European University, researcher profiles, research events and conferences, promotion of upcoming training workshops and corresponding training material. The portal also contains an Innovation Portal showcasing technology offerings of the universities and an overview of the supports available to researchers with respect to technology transfer.

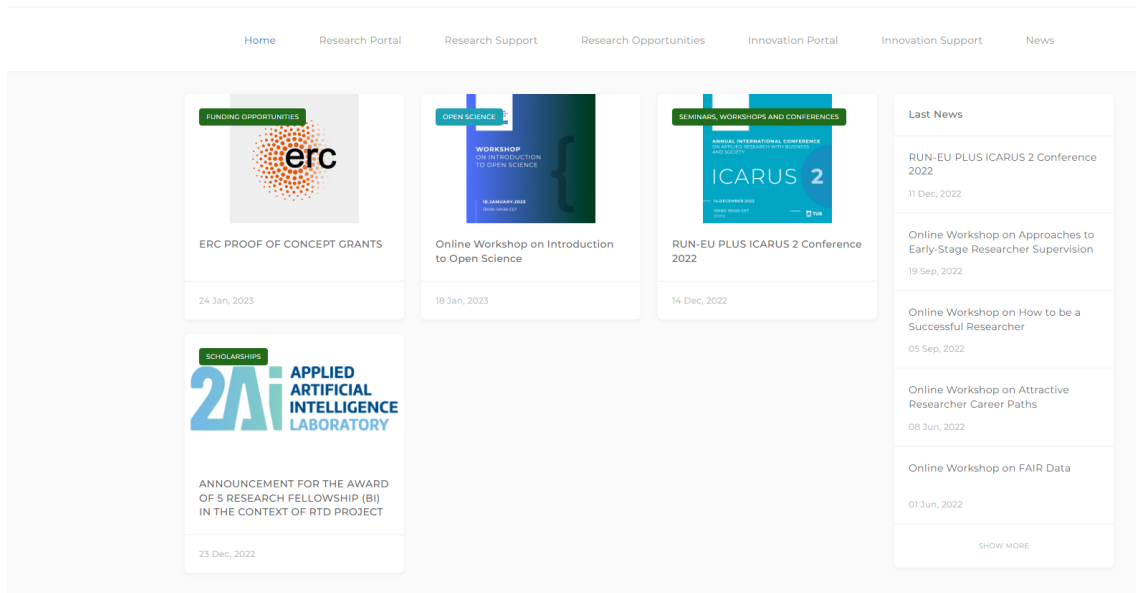


Figure 5 – Screenshot of Cloud of Knowledge Portal

The portal will be integrated into the RUN-EU R&I ecosystem of the RUN-EU 2.0 project with RUN-EU PLUS members sharing lessons learned and best practice identified during delivery of the RUN-EU PLUS project.

### 3.9 Funding sources

Direct funding from regional business and organisations will be sought for registration of their employees on the RUN-EU PLUS Professional Practice-based Research Degree Programmes. The R&I Ambassadors, along with Senior Research Managers of RUN-EU partner institutions, will play a key role in promotion of the programmes to their regional organisations and recruiting students onto the programmes. National funding opportunities may be a way to sustainably fund the programmes as per the model utilised in FHV and other partners.

RUN-EU partners have previously secured funding for master's/PhD scholarships from EU funding programmes and these are additional potential funding sources for the RUN-EU PLUS practice-based research programmes. These include funding programmes such as the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions International MSCA Doctoral Networks, Erasmus Mundus programme, Erasmus+ programme and specialised programmes such as the Digital Europe programme.

### *3.10 Knowledge transfer pathways*

The RUN-EU Research & Innovation Committee (**D6.1 Innovation Ecosystem**) has been proposed by the RUN-EU PLUS project as a central oversight committee which will strategically lead both knowledge creation and future skills training across the RUN-EU alliance in accordance with the needs of RUN-EU regional business and societal partners. The committee is comprised of key roles in the ecosystem including the directors of the RUN-EU European Innovation Hubs, Research Cluster leads, RUN-EU PLUS R&I ambassadors, TT Case Managers and the RUN-EU co-ordinators. Between them there is extensive expertise in technology transfer, research, innovation development and commercialisation.

Regional business and societal organisations inform RUN of their future innovation and skills needs through consultation with their RUN-EU Innovation Hub and RUN-EU PLUS FASA. The Research & Innovation Committee supports the development of new RUN skills training programmes (from researcher training workshops to doctoral programmes and entrepreneurship training) in addition to collaborative research projects with industry. The new knowledge created by researchers within their research group will be protected in accordance with best practice, promoted as new technology offerings to RUN-EU regional partners and which will be commercialised through licensing agreements with them or through the creation of RUN-EU spin-out companies.

This committee plays a key role in co-developing and delivering new innovations to business and other organisations in RUN-EU regions.

### *3.11 Recruitment of research candidates on the programmes*

The research master's and doctoral programmes developed by the RUN-EU PLUS project are collaborative programmes which are co-designed and developed in partnership with regional stakeholders. The programmes are focused on their future sustainability, digitalization, or have a social innovation theme in line with regional development strategies with the objective of contributing to the strategic development goals of the RUN-EU alliance member regions (**D3.1 Strategic Research Priorities Report**). Research candidates may be current employees of regional organisations or graduates of RUN-EU alliance members who will work on a research project which is a collaboration between a

RUN-EU research cluster and a regional organization thereby providing them with state-of-the-art facilities and expertise.

The RUN-EU PLUS research degree programmes are also designed to provide a PhD pathway to RUN-EU master's students. Students currently registered on a master's programme with a RUN-EU partner may apply to transfer to a RUN-EU PhD programme or to register on a new PhD programme with a PhD-awarding RUN-EU partner once their current master's degree has been awarded.

The RUN-EU PLUS project members are committed to ensuring gender equality in the recruitment of research candidates. Supported by the RUN-EU PLUS Gender and Equality Ambassadors, RUN-EU PLUS will adopt a gender participatory approach to ensure the equal distribution of resources and authority to all programme participants, as well as ensure equal opportunities to engage with target groups and to have an impact through the research aims and objectives of the research programme.

## 4.0 Achieving Scalability

Will be achieved through investigating the potential for synergy with other trans-European initiatives and alliances. Enlargement of the network to other HEIs in other countries, engagement of additional associated partners to expand the capability and relevance of the alliance in terms of its educational and research offerings, plan for the realisation of the 10-year vision of the alliance for the creation of a Multinational European Zone for Interregional Development applying a quadruple helix approach.

The RUN-EU PLUS project has built solid foundations in supporting the RUN European University in achieving sustainability for its Professional Practice-based master's and PhD programmes through its accomplishments to date which include:

- Identification of Sustainability, Digitalisation and Social Innovation as strategic research priority areas for the RUN-EU regions and the focus for RUN-EU PLUS master's & PhD programmes.
- A Degree Development Roadmap and an Accreditation Action Plan for the RUN-EU PLUS joint and collaborative practice-based research degree programmes at both masters and PhD level.
- RUN-EU Innovation Ecosystem for the RUN European University.
- A Researcher Career Development Programme to educate RUN-EU researchers with the skills and competencies required to become leaders of the future.
- A Supervision Training Programme to train RUN-EU academics to supervise research degree programmes.
- A Cloud of Knowledge Portal to support the RUN-EU research community in their R&I collaborations with business and organisations.
- A Research Career Evaluation System to support RUN-EU researchers to select their career path and plan their training goals.

- An Open Science Skills Training Programme to mainstream Open Science practices across RUN-EU.
- An Innovation Capacity Programme and Innovation Detection System to facilitate transfer of RUN-EU R&I discoveries to RUN-EU regions for optimal impact in regional development.
- Networks of R&I Ambassadors, Open Science Ambassadors and Gender & Diversity Ambassadors to focus on maximising the outcomes of the RUN-EU PLUS project.
- An Annual International Conference on Applied Research with Business and Society (ICARUS) to create a collaborative space where the RUN-EU research community can come together with its regional partners to showcase their joint achievements in research and innovation.

## 5.0 Access to Data

Given the intention and commitment of RUN-EU PLUS partners to promote common R&I structures, maintain existing and scale-up the creation of long-term collaborations, one of the discussions not to be missed is about the resources for long-term preservation of project data. Open Access is not only one of the core principles of RUN-EU PLUS but also it will be the theme and instrument of several activities. Thus, enhancement of Open Access, as well as the development of competences to foster it, run throughout the project, especially through the activities of WP4, aimed at a comprehensive mainstreaming of Open Science practices and skills and reflecting the consortium's commitment to open science principles.

As part of the RUN-EU PLUS project, we are developing further the mainstreaming of open science practices and skills within our R&I platforms through the delivery of new programmes in Open Science Principles including a comprehensive Data Management Plan (DMP) which is updated annually at M6 (**D2.2**), M12 (**D2.3**), M24 (**D2.4**) and M36 (**D2.5**). This annual plan outlines how RUN-EU PLUS project data will be collected, organised, stored, backed up, preserved, shared, archived, and disposed in accordance with the policies defined by the alliance partners.

Gaps in training and education on open science skills will be identified and the development of new practices for students, researchers, and managers, at all career stages will be supported. RUN-EU PLUS has developed an Open Science Training Programme aimed at a network of new Open Science Ambassadors (OSA) to support the open science agenda across our network to exchange best practice and mutual learning within the alliance. These ambassadors will be local resources for increasing conversations around open science, cultivating awareness, fostering openness, and equipping RUN-EU PLUS researchers and innovators with the necessary tools to champion the open science agenda.

## 6.0 Effective Communication

The RUN-EU PLUS communication and dissemination activities will focus on promoting and sharing the project's activities, deliverables and results among the stakeholders and key target audiences. The detailed tasks, deliverables and timelines are outlined in WP7 - Communication Dissemination and Impact. This will include internally reaching out to the community of students and staff and externally, addressing other HEIs in the participating countries and other European countries (and beyond) and other regional, national and EU stakeholders, such as public authorities, businesses and business representatives, these actions are also important in ensuring the sustainability of the project's outcomes beyond its lifetime.

The RUN-EU PLUS plan for dissemination and exploitation relies on the following vectors that will contribute to maximising the impact of the project in terms of number and type of targets (groups and individuals), levels of engagement and sustainability measures:

1. Full-range dissemination: RUN-EU PLUS aims at enhanced, sustainable cooperation across all levels of the alliance organisations and different areas of activity, fostering empowerment of researchers, students, and staff to implement the alliance's vision. But it goes beyond this in various ways: dissemination actions and tools included in the Dissemination and Outreach Strategy foster appropriation of the project's results by the target groups (both inside and outside the alliance, including stakeholders of the quadruple helix) and not merely a top-down one-way advertisement of activities and outputs. Also, full-range dissemination includes proactive actions and requirements fostering diversity, inclusiveness, accessibility, and gender balance. This is ensured through initiatives such as the "Gender and Diversity Ambassadors" to support, encourage and advocate for women in R&I and career advancement and ensure a connection with regional, national, and European agencies to maximise the impact of the activities.

2. Synergies with RUN-EU: RUN-EU PLUS will take stock and build on relevant tools and resources of RUN-EU Erasmus+, acting as a unified brand for dissemination and exploitation purposes. This will include not only more organic actions, e.g. expanding the network of associated partners, encouraging cross-participation and promotion of activities and results, but more strategic synergies, such as shared communication and dissemination channels (website, social networks, newsletter and digital leaflets) and common structures: the European Innovation Hubs; the Future and Advanced Skills Academies) and the European Mobility Innovation Centre– allowing shared



infrastructure, inter-institutional teams, enhanced and engagement collaboration, sharing expertise.

3. High-level collaboration for enhanced policy action and outreach: FOREU2, the “Forum of European Universities#2”, gathering the 24 Alliances from the 2nd Erasmus+ Pilot Call will ensure collaboration across their projects through thematic sub-groups, as well as regular cross-discussions with FOREU. This collaboration will strengthen the voice and intervention capacity of all alliances.

4. Turning barriers into opportunities: Communication and dissemination activities usually held face-to-face may need to be shifted to other formats given the continuation of the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the indisputable importance of this direct contact, the need to engage target groups and hold project activities in different settings is also an opportunity to promote digitisation and key skills. This will strengthen the importance of the values promoted by RUN-EU PLUS including open access, inclusiveness and cooperation, i.e. transferring activities to online format with a true benefit for stakeholders will be fully attained if the principles of data management and data access are adhered to. Finally, with more activities online, it is an opportunity to reach more participants/stakeholders than those reached in face-to-face activities.

5. Inform target groups about the conditions for exploitation and plans for future sustainability, providing adequate support tools, such as a FAIR data access driven data management plan and an Economic Resource/Impact Assessment Model.

6. Dissemination of information about RUN-EU PLUS to engage target groups beyond the project to ensure effective outreach of the knowledge outputs and results.

Based on the quadruple helix approach to the collaborative co-design and co-creation of its activities, RUN-EU PLUS will turn HEIs (representing the education, innovation, and research community) into the multiplier engine capable of reaching out to the other stakeholders.

## 7. Summary

The Sustainability Strategy for the RUN-EU PLUS project is presented in 2 reports at M24 and M36 of the project. The strategy will describe the best practices and recommendations to ensure the operational and financial sustainability of the RUN-EU PLUS Practice-based master's and Doctoral Programmes beyond the lifetime of the RUN-EU PLUS project.

This first version of the sustainability strategy for the RUN-EU PLUS project describes the strategic plan to ensure the continuation and further development of cooperation in Research & Innovation (R&I) and the sustainability and development of Professional Practice-based Research degrees. This initial sustainability report presents the first version of the concrete methodology for actions which support the project's sustainability to be undertaken during the project and it refers to a framework for the development and accreditation of research degree programmes as well as the significance of strategic partnerships and innovation capacity building as key approaches to the achievement of financial sustainability.

## Appendix 1

### RUN-EU PLUS Budget Framework for Practice-based Research Programmes

#### **PART A: Programme Cost**

<b>*Programme Costs (per annum):</b>		<b>Total:</b>	<b>Programme Cost per student (A):</b>
Co-ordinator salary	€		
Programme Board meeting	€		
Student Induction	€		
Communication	€		
Programme Co-ordination	€		
Website	€		
		<b>€ Total Programme Cost</b>	<b>*€ Total Programme Cost/number of students (A)</b>

#### **PART B: Individual Student Cost**

<b>*Individual Student Costs (per annum):</b>			<b>Individual Student Cost Total (B):</b>
	1 SAP	€	
Participation cost:	Taught modules	€	
	Supervision costs	€	
	Thesis enrolment & insurance	€	
	Annual symposium	€	
	Programme Administration	€	
	Computer (?)	€	
	Consumables	€	
	Overhead costs	€	
			<b>€ (B)</b>

*\* Indicative costs – budget to be completed for each research programme*

**Total Cost per student (per annum):**

**Programme cost (A) + Individual Student cost (B) = total (C)**

- *RUN-EU PLUS – target is company employees (no stipend) -*

Annual Tuition Fee charged based on C, agreed by collaborating institutions, included in Programme Consortium Agreement (signed by collaborating institutions).

The income generated from the annual tuition fees will be distributed among the partners, taking account of equitable distribution of the overall programme costs among the partners.



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