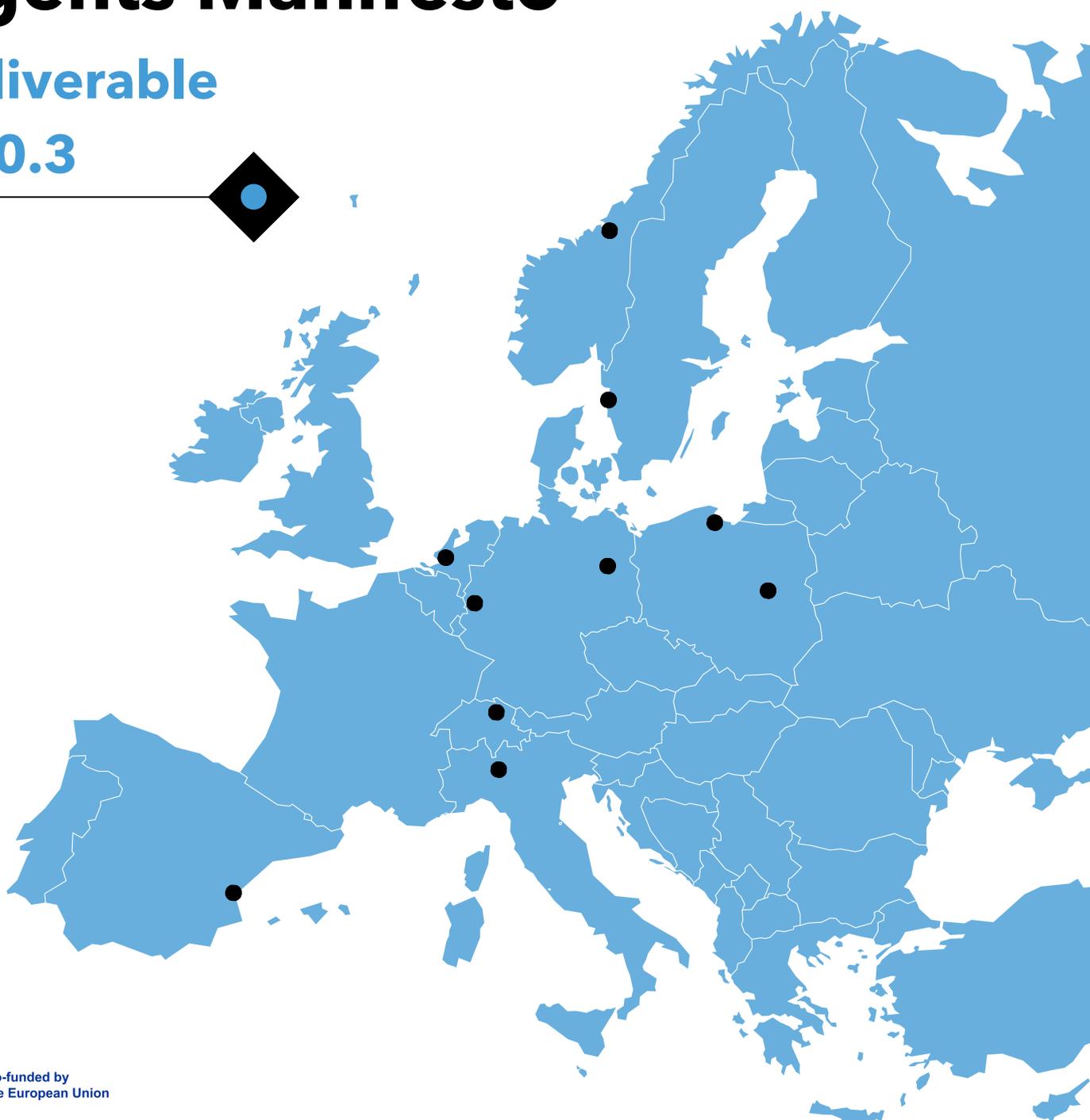
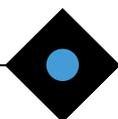


ENHANCE Impact Statement and Change Agents Manifesto

Deliverable
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ENHANCE Impact Statement and Change Agents Manifesto

1. Context

The ENHANCE Alliance has significant potential in fostering collaboration, enhancing mobility, and promoting internationalisation across universities. The ENHANCE Change Agents Manifesto outlines the most important points of reference and proposes several reflections to maximise our collective impact. The Manifesto is designed to create impact awareness and to raise impact literacy within our entire community.¹

Impact awareness describes the understanding and recognition of the effects of one's own actions, decisions, and behaviours on individuals, communities, and on society as a whole. Within the context of ENHANCE, impact awareness encourages the consideration of how all activities contribute to the ENHANCE mission:

ENHANCE, the European Universities of Technology Alliance, brings together ten leading European research-intensive universities with a focus on science and technology. Rooted in European values, our Alliance of European Universities of Technology will turn global challenges into opportunities by empowering people with knowledge and competencies in science and technology, to drive responsible transformation for the benefit of society.

Impact literacy describes the ability to understand, assess, and communicate the effects of actions, decisions, and behaviours on projects, or policies on individuals, communities, and the environment. Within the context of ENHANCE, impact literacy promotes a skillset that enables stakeholders to make informed, evidence-based decisions and to measure as well as interpret the outcomes of their work.

Being an **ENHANCE Change Agent** refers to an individual or a group who actively participate in the co-creation of meaningful action to facilitate and promote change in their communities and organisations towards the ENHANCE mission. Change Agents are proactive stakeholders who encourage mutual understanding and who create an environment that supports diverse contributions to shared goals, while remaining mindful of the broader impacts of one's work on colleagues, beneficiaries, and society as a whole. Change describes the process that is kicked off by acting on the transformative potential of the Alliance, as described in the ENHANCE Mission Statement. Everyone can be an ENHANCE Change Agent.

Diversity is an integral part of our impact that we wish to create with and within the ENHANCE Alliance. Diversity orientation and impact orientation go hand in hand: Our goal is to develop and implement impact-driven measures to ensure the inclusion of diverse talents and backgrounds, actively addressing the structural underrepresentation of women and non-traditional learners at all levels in our respective institutions. This underrepresentation is particularly pronounced in academic and leadership positions at universities of science and technology, thereby directly affecting our work.

The **ENHANCE Change Agents Manifesto** calls upon all Alliance stakeholders to embrace an impact-oriented mindset and approach which creates possibilities to reflect on the joint contribution of all activities to the ENHANCE mission. It supports all Alliance stakeholders to become agents of change, working together to remove barriers for education and to build a European University for the future of Europe and a resilient society. On the leadership level, Board of Directors and Steering Committee representatives commit to the development of long-term activities that have impact beyond ENHANCE+ 2023 – 2027. On the operational level, Work Package Leads and other actors responsible for the execution of (sub)tasks are guided in evaluating the impact components of ENHANCE+ tasks.

¹ Basis for this document includes input generated at the ENHANCE Board of Directors (BoD) Meeting in June 2024, results from the ENHANCE Impact Orientation Survey 2024, and information and materials gathered during the ENHANCE Impact Orientation Event.

MANIFESTO MESSAGE:

We, the members of the ENHANCE Alliance, stand united in our commitment to shape a brighter future for higher education in Europe. Our shared goals can only be achieved through our collective efforts. Our vision is based on three key impact fields that guide our efforts until 2027 and beyond:

We advocate for **Education without Barriers**, promoting the European Way of Life and strengthening our shared values. By fostering resilience, excellence, and inclusiveness within higher education institutions, we aim to create a united, innovative, digital, connected, and green Europe that embraces diversity while deepening transnational collaboration.

As a **European University for the Future of Europe**, we strive to increase the attractiveness and competitiveness of our institutions. Acting as agents of change, we embrace green and digital transitions, making lifelong learning a reality while contributing positively to regional development and societal wellbeing through knowledge exchange and research.

We envision a **European University for a Resilient Society**. We are dedicated to boosting excellence in education and research while championing gender equality and inclusivity. Through deeper cooperation among institutions, we will catalyse transformative changes across Europe's educational landscape.

Together, we commit to these goals, ensuring that our Alliance is a driver for purposeful and responsible transformation.

2. Points of Reference

Our desired impacts lay a strong foundation for successful impact assessment and support us in implementing our joint activities with a clear focus on where we want to go – until 2027 and beyond.

2.a. Leadership Level

While we are on the way to fulfilling our long-term mission, we rely on the guidance of the **Board of Directors**, our highest governing body, to keep us focused on our impact ambitions. They are the ones who enable us to work together through fostering a collaborative environment at their respective institutions. During a virtual meeting of the ENHANCE leadership in June 2024, the participating rectors and vice-rectors provided the following summarised reflections on our impact so far:

In the context of the European Universities Initiative, the ongoing restructuring of education programmes aims to increase mobilities between universities through the introduction of mobility windows. As part of the core ENHANCE mission, the European Education Pathways (EEPs) have facilitated learner exchanges which is viewed positively. Increased interest from faculties in participating in the EEPs has supported internationalisation efforts at ENHANCE universities. The focus remains on simplifying collaboration and increasing internationalisation to foster further exchange of students and other learners.

While there was initial excitement regarding participation in this initiative according to the rectors' and vice-rectors' perspectives, it has become clear that transforming academic institutions takes time and requires a sustained engagement. Throughout this ongoing process, students and other learners have engaged in various learning opportunities as part of our ENHANCE Innovative Learning Campus, and joint discussions surrounding micro-credentials have emerged, adding value at both local and national levels. The future goal is to further increase the added value for our students and faculty through consolidating innovative educational formats. Institutional changes also reflect a commitment to a more holistic perspective on education. The importance of funding for collaborative efforts is emphasised as an investment in the future, as increased mobilities could lead to enhanced research activities further down the road. Efforts to increase

mobilities and to facilitate exchange have also led to improved collaboration in areas such as sustainable entrepreneurship and innovation as well as future skills while fostering leadership cooperation.

Aligning strategic plans with the initiative's goals focused on European values is seen as a key component to maintain our successful partnership. A trusted network among partners facilitates knowledge sharing across various disciplines and has the potential to multiply dissemination efforts. From a leadership perspective, ENHANCE has positively influenced the mutual trust among institutions which has opened the door to discussing topics such as research security and academic freedom. Growing recognition of the advantages offered by the Alliance membership emphasises the need for broader awareness among staff and students. ENHANCE is seen as an important driver for internationalisation strategies while stressing the importance of joint educational projects beyond traditional mobility frameworks. There is an awareness of the increased bureaucracy as a byproduct of the enhanced collaboration which calls for effective ways to manage the complex integration of processes and frameworks. Promoting sustainability and excellence is seen as an important element of those efforts.

All participating ENHANCE institutions share a commitment to deepening collaboration across Europe through innovative educational practices while addressing administrative challenges such as bureaucracy and funding. The collective effort aims not only at improving student mobility but also at strengthening research capabilities and institutional visibility within the framework of ENHANCE. Each institution intends to further build on its unique strengths while working towards our key goals that benefit higher education across Europe.

2.b. Operational Level

The first edition of the **ENHANCE Impact Orientation Event** brought together ENHANCE Work Package Leads and impact practitioners from across the ENHANCE member universities to foster impact awareness and impact literacy. The event provided an environment to tackle the challenge of how to support the long-term development of ENHANCE as a sustainable, impact-driven Alliance that consists of a diverse and inclusive community.

In today's rapidly changing educational landscape, societal impact is one of the most pressing issues for higher education institutions. ENHANCE is a key player for deepening our understanding of how we can address impact on local, national, and global scales. This understanding will also be crucial in enhancing the sustainability and effectiveness of project-based work within our institutions. Looking ahead, particularly in the field of technology, universities strive to facilitate responsible innovation that aligns with societal needs and ethical standards. Raising awareness about impact therefore has the potential to promote meaningful contributions to society. As a collaborative network, the ENHANCE Alliance plays a key role by fostering partnerships and sharing good practices.

We explored four themes that foster institutional impact and have the potential to positively contribute to our communities.

Internationalisation and impact: For ENHANCE universities, demographic developments and financial considerations require a careful balance between quality and identity while pursuing internationalisation through sustainable and agreeable changes. ENHANCE has the potential to tackle systemic issues by fostering the integration of administrative staff, and positioning the Alliance as a regulatory sandbox for innovation. We can keep building an environment that encourages new forms of exchange with fewer administrative barriers and more flexibility based on trust. Practical approaches rely on peer-to-peer value reviews, securing sufficient funding, and focusing on qualitative information through storytelling, for example. Our planet as a stakeholder needs to be recognised in our joint educational initiatives, striking a balance between immediate local concerns and long-term global implications. Emphasising entrepreneurship is a crucial element for impact to build agency among staff and students (SEI "Train the trainer" programme). Create the future in order to predict it.

Sustainable project management: Fulfilling our long-term mission requires us to tackle the tension between short-term project-based funding that promises a long-term alliance-based impact, particularly as an initiative with a transformative mission. While a short-term project can serve as an experimental tool, the lack of sustainable structures implies a risk of losing sight of the ENHANCE Key Goals while managing limited resources. Alignment with overall strategic objectives for both the Alliance and its universities is key, as is the involvement of all ENHANCE stakeholders where relevant and necessary to foster ownership. Investing in relationships and building closer collaborations across all ENHANCE levels remains a top priority. We should focus on minimising bureaucracy while building opportunities for scaling up and valorising our joint offers, also by integrating ENHANCE initiatives into university structures and vice-versa. Long-term planning for ENHANCE in combination with diversified funding can support the sustainability of the Alliance. One perspective is to view ENHANCE as a vehicle for change to foster long-term impact within its institutions.

Diversity- and impact-aware community building: ENHANCE effectively engages local communities by organising workshops such as the Anti-Bias Lunchbreaks, Inclusive Communication Trainings, and seed funding projects aimed at reflecting and harnessing the diversity of all stakeholders. Continuously engaging in conversations across borders is the element that drives impact: Listening to understand, rather than react, is essential in these interactions. To ensure that our joint ENHANCE efforts address real needs, it is important to increase awareness of societal challenges and to offer the tools for meaningful engagement. This includes educating ENHANCE stakeholders about their privileges, implicit biases, and the importance of inclusive communication. They should feel empowered to speak out against various forms of discrimination. Cultivating an inclusive culture within ENHANCE community-building efforts is supported by sharing good practices, such as NTNU's Experts-in-Teamwork and Chalmers' Genie (Gender Initiative for Excellence).

International governance and trust: Stronger university-business-society collaborations are key for ENHANCE when it comes to reaching the goal of transforming HEIs. ENHANCE plays a crucial role in fostering scientific literacy and bridging the gap between scientists, entrepreneurs, and policymakers. Embracing transdisciplinarity in our work ensures that we address diverse societal needs. There is valuable potential in opening joint educational opportunities to lifelong learners across all sectors to foster mutual understanding and knowledge transfer. Facing a growing mistrust in science, the ENHANCE impact also relies on effective communication and dedicated resources for public engagement. Diversifying measures of academic success can enhance our understanding of quality and encourage us to reach new target groups. Identifying common ground based on shared values helps us to identify the opportunities and boundaries of our collaboration.

3. Reflections

ENHANCE+ is well on its way, and now is the time to engage more purposefully and systematically with our desired impact for this project period and beyond. Here are some of the key aspects to consider for our impact approach:

Measuring and showing our impact is a long-term effort. To fulfil our long-term mission over time, we need to continuously activate our efforts and support them with sufficient resources towards a sustained long-term engagement.

Impact has three main ingredients: significance, reach, and people. Increased impact awareness motivates us to ask, what is happening, where is it happening, how is it happening, and who does it matter to?

For our consortium, our shared goals can only be achieved through our collective efforts. Reaching the outcomes and impacts as outlined in the ENHANCE+ Workplan relies on successful collaboration across institutional and national borders.

Impact is a cross-cutting topic, it is not just about one specific area or field of expertise. This also means impact affects everyone involved in ENHANCE. We should think and plan in terms of networks rather than silos as a prerequisite for fulfilling our long-term mission.

Impact literacy is an important skill. Through an improved understanding of how to assess and communicate impact, we can empower ourselves and each other to responsibly act towards fulfilling our long-term mission.

Assessing impact is a complex endeavour. It includes recognising both the outcomes we want and intended to happen and those we did not intend to see in practice. This requires us to improve our understanding of the processes we plan and take part in, relying on transparency and mutual learning.

Finally, while it is essential to demonstrate and communicate our impact, we must ensure that this does not distract us from actually creating a supportive environment for developing and implementing impact-driven activities in the first place.

Key practical aspects to consider for the impact of our joint activities:

1. How does the activity benefit its target group(s)?

Large audience numbers do not guarantee deep engagement, and while creating awareness can lead to change over time, fulfilling the transformative potential of ENHANCE requires a multimodal approach that considers various factors. Understanding the perspectives, needs, and behaviours of our target groups is essential for scaling efforts beyond the project period, as our long-term mission depends on long-term engagement.

2. What defines the successful implementation of a joint activity?

There are several factors such as achievement of objectives, stakeholder engagement, sustainability, and quality of outputs that we need to consider when defining the successful implementation of a joint activity. Their application is context dependent. Adopting a holistic approach with both qualitative and quantitative indicators allows us to paint the full picture and identify learnings. Our intended objectives are measurable, and organisation of activities needs to be evidence-based.

3. To what extent do the allocated resources support successful implementation?

The scope of the planned activities is directly linked to the available human, financial, and material resources, reflecting the ENHANCE+ Workplan. Additionally, structures need to be in place for the overall coordination of activities (reporting, monitoring, follow-up) and the exploration of potential funding synergies that support fulfilling the transformative potential of the Alliance in the long term.

The **ENHANCE Impact Awareness Toolbox** is a complementary WP10 subtask that deals with these aspects and the development of an actionable approach in more detail.