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IUC 2026 Stage 2 information session

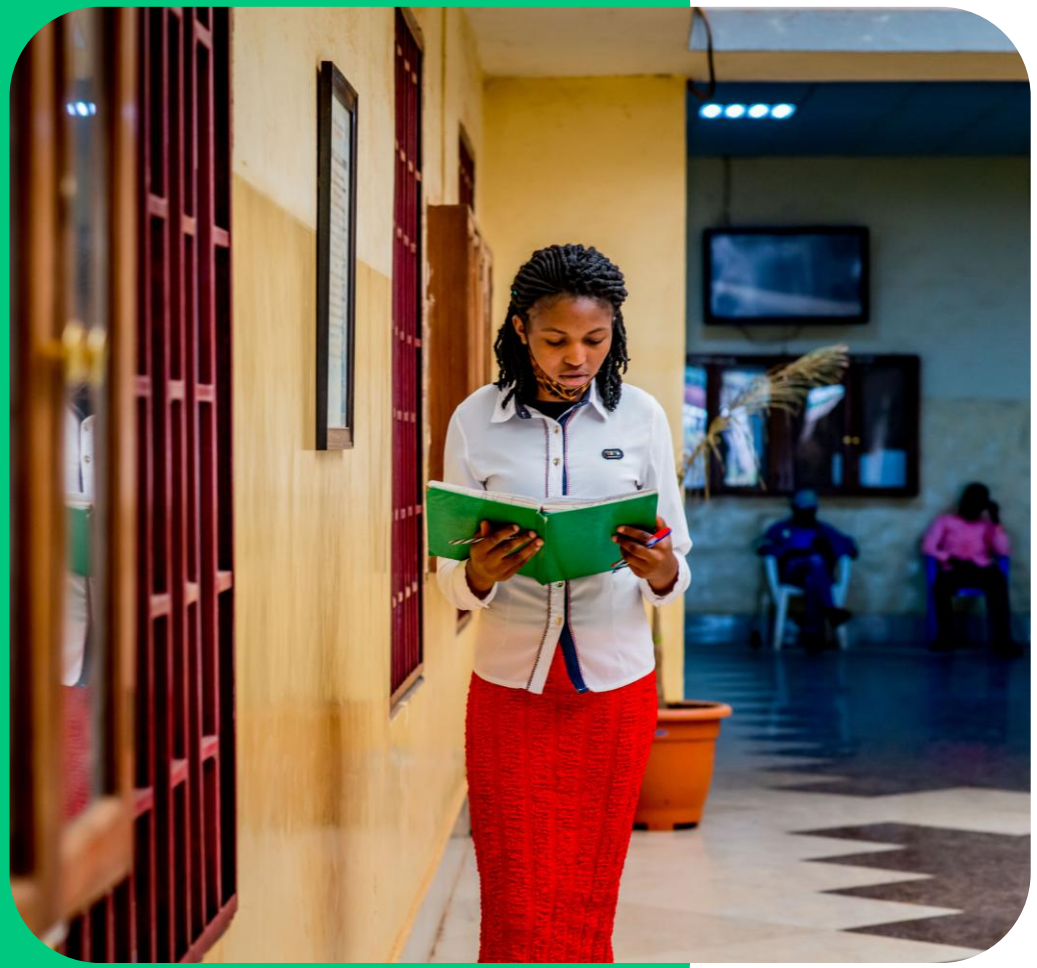
30 January 2025

Agenda session

13:30 – 13:45	Opening of session/agenda & presenting delegations
13:45 – 14:40	IUC Stage 2 Call & intro to the formats / consortium building
14:40– 15:15	Q&A
15h25 max.	***Closing of session***

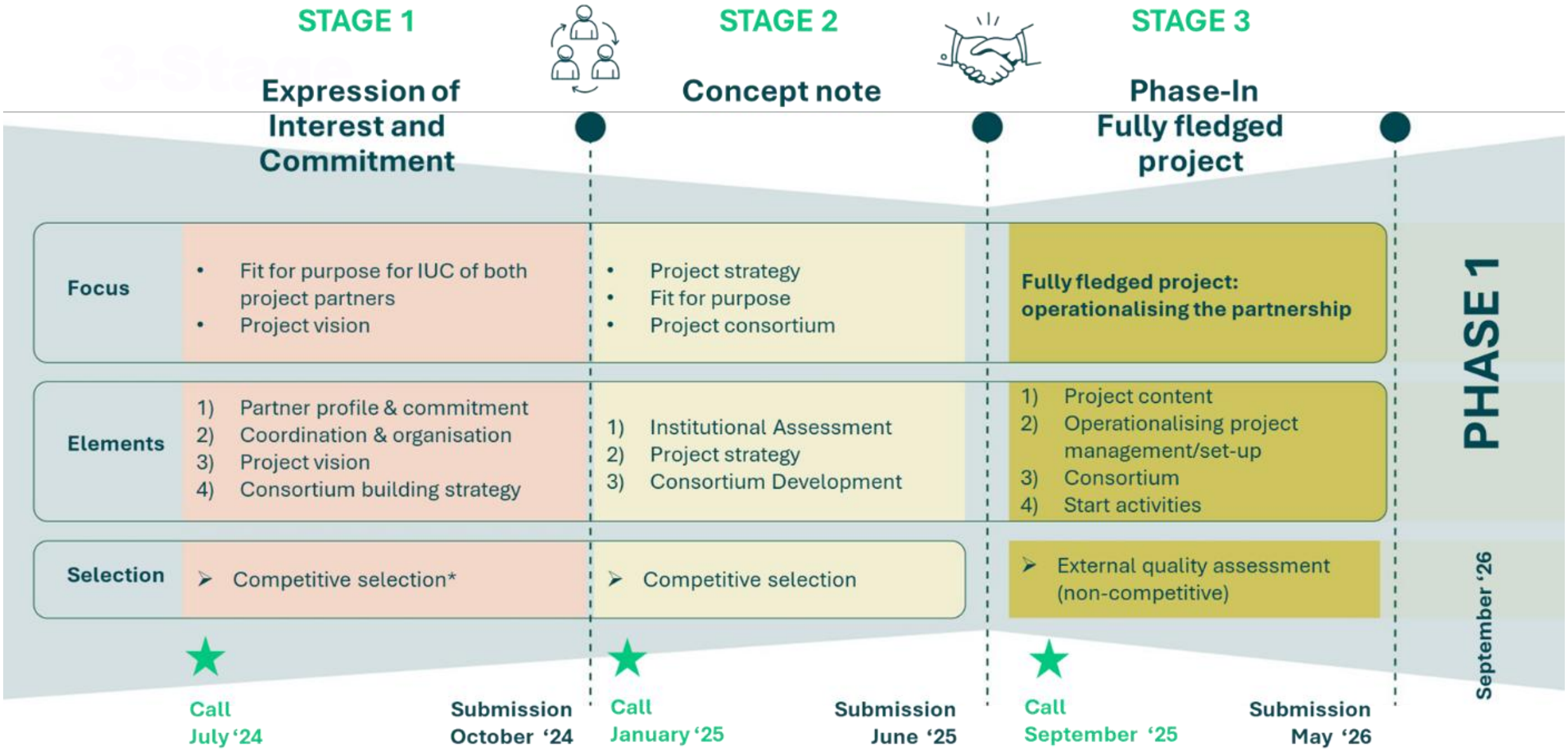


IUC 2026 Stage 2 – general info



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IUC intake procedure – 3 stages



Where are we in the process

- 8 IUC expressions of Interest & Commitment | vliruos selected
- Stage 2 Call Concept Notes: launched 23 Jan 2025

- Institutional Assessments: planned, information sessions
- Website development ongoing (in interaction with IUC teams)
  - important in view of upcoming consortium building efforts
- Consortium development along criteria set in the Call: this specific attention for consortium building and MIP is **new** as compared to previous calls
- One consortium building (kick-off) event per IUC proposal
  - mostly in online format

- Deadline IUC CN proposals: **5 June, 17h, via the submission tool**

IUC intake 2026 - Phases

	Phase In	Phase 1 Capacity Building					Phase II Consolidation and valorisation					Phase Out: Valorisation	
Year	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Partnerships	(Oct.) 2025-2026	2026-2031					2031-2036						

- Phase-in (ca. 1 year): project formulation activities, preparing the operational and management modalities/set-up and support structure
- Two main project phases of 5 years each, midterm evaluation in Y4-5
  - Max. budget per activity year : currently 600.000 EUR/AY in Phase 1
- Phase-out : final evaluation (Y10-11) follow-up; closing event, valorisation, financial and administrative closing.

Focus IUC Concept Notes

- project strategy
- focus on fit for purpose for IUC of the local partner university (Institutional Assessment), and IUC set-up (Flanders/local)
- consortium development (MIP and MSP), with still a main focus on the consortium building in Flanders (composing a balanced and motivated project team along the criteria set out in the call).

Institutional University Cooperation (IUC) projects

- Long term institutional partnership, more than 10y
- **Empowering local university to fulfil role as driver of change**
- 1 partner university collaborating with (by design) Flemish universities & universities of applied sciences and arts (Multi-Institutional Partnership)
- Institutionally embedded
  - Interconnected subprojects
  - Capacity strengthening
  - Improved institutional performance in line with the partner institutional strategy
- Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships

"The next level"



IUC project strategy

- enabling a **change process within the partner university** leading to improved institutional performance & strengthened role as driver of change
    - Important to focus the **transversal institutional strengthening sub-projects** on key strategic policy domains, support of science-society interaction, tech transfer
- vision on change/impact outside the institution, contributing to sustainable development challenges
    - Implemented via **academic theme based sub-projects,** that strengthen educational and research capacities in a number of domains/departments, with structural attention for uptake of knowledge and applications

Inst Assessment (IA) - purposes

- Inform the Selection Commission in view of the selection of IUC partner universities
- Inform the development of the concept note in order to tackle blind spots in the institutions' capacities
- Provide VLIRUOS with an evidence-based baseline of institutional capacities.
- The Institutional Assessment draws from the 5 Core Capabilities model and identifies an institution's strengths and weaknesses
- Data collection / self assessment and institutional visits
- Information sessions 28/1 and today 30/1
- Timing visits has been agreed with the partner universities and will take place between 17 February and 3rd week of March.

Important stage for consortium building in Flanders – looking for expertise at level of universities and UASA



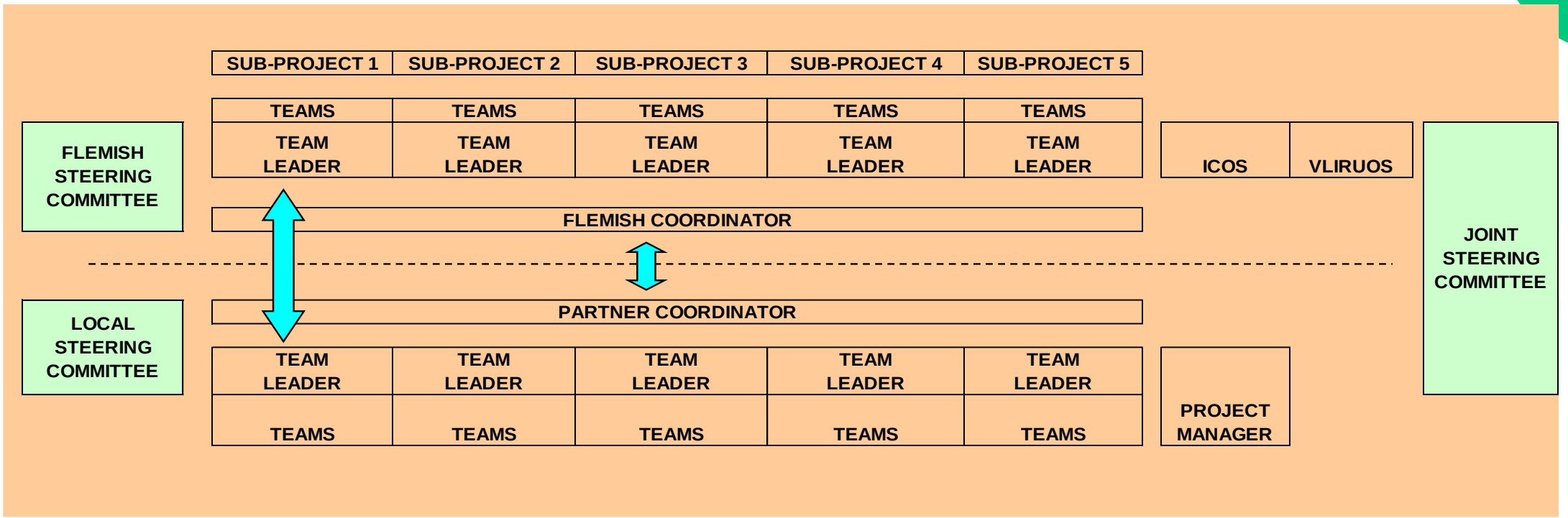
Multi-Institutional Partnership (MIP) set-up

- involving multiple teams of academics and specialists from the partner university, as well as from multiple Flemish universities and universities of applied sciences and arts.

Flanders

- minimum 5 Flemish HEIs, including the coordinating university, of which minimum 3 universities and 2 universities of applied sciences and arts, included as part of the team, not necessarily in the capacity of team lead.
- At least 3 different Flemish HEIs have a mandate, being 1 university with the mandate of coordinator (of the IUC project)

IUC Management structure



- Identification of local project team and of the Flemish team: interdisciplinary, along expertise requirements of sub-projects, inter-institutional on the Flemish side
- Team Leads with academic responsibility, good mix, motivated, attention for gender balance in the Teams;
- Team members, responsible for specific project components, activities

IUC project as a bridge to other projects/networks/actors/society

- **Connecting people, projects, institutions and networks**
- **Flagship project in country portfolio,** linking with other SI, TEAM, ITP, IUC, ICP Connect, GM, … and with other donors/actors..
- Triggering other initiatives, connections with governments, private sector, and with society at large…
- **Multi-Stakeholder set-up** from the outset => stakeholder board (good practice)







Selection procedure

- Standard selection criteria:
  - Relevance & coherence of the project;
  - Quality of the project design;
  - Implementation set-up of the project;
  - Potential impact and sustainability.

- Each selection criterion is described by a number of descriptors => check differences with Stage 1 IUC (e.g. descriptor 2.1. evolved from high level vision to a project strategy)

- IUC Selection commission: external, mix of expertise and backgrounds

- Stage 2 Selection: oral presentation & defense by coordinators, meeting planned **2nd week of September 2025 (indicative 10-12 sept 2025)**

  - Way of presentation still to be confirmed: equal chances => all online or all present



IUC Stage 2 – format
IUC Concept Notes



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Available resources

- IUC blueprint management structure and mandates, and procedure team composition (updated, next updates during final stage)
- Methodological background document: info on general theory of change concepts / integration of SDG principles, but not specific for IUC.
- Gender policy document
- Publication on "Creating the conditions for uptake"
- Background Information per country – Country reference frameworks (CRF) available on our website (Cuba; Ecuador; Ethiopia; Kenya; Peru; Philippines; South Africa; Uganda, Vietnam.)
- Inspiration / project ideas for collaboration with other BE actors: Inspiration for project ideas

Format Proposal

- **Working document / Format for Concept Note, and then to be submitted via the submission tool (a link per proposal is already available in the tool)**

- **Annex 1 : Overview of Team Members**
- Annex 2: Visualisation of basic Theory of Change / project strategy of the IUC proposal
- Annex 3: CVs of coordinators & team leaders (via accessible online links; CV COOR already available, but please add an online link as well) of Flemish and partner coordinator
- Annex 4: Letter of Commitment Partner university
  - with reference to the Stage 2 proposal
  - incl. support to the CN strategy,
  - Support to the team of the coordinator and team leaders of the institution,
  - Reference to the institutional commitment in terms of management and in-kind funding).

Content: 8 modules



1: Context / problem analysis



2: Project strategy (Impact statement and ToC)



3: Organisation



4: Stakeholders and coherence



5: Planning & budgeting



6: Risk management



7: Monitoring



8: Learning and steering

Context analysis



Module 1

1. **Sustainable development context**
2. **Institutional context partner institution**
3. **Institutional strategy**

Link with selection criterion Coherence & relevance / potential impact & sustainability

ESSENCE

The context (global/regional/national) and partner university profile (link with institutional strategy/track record) justifies the **importance / relevance** of the project and contextualizes the **reasons** why the project is needed (i.e. interconnected **problems** being faced).

Module 1

Sustainable development context

- Describe the local/regional/global context in which the partner university is working,
- highlighting key sustainable development and higher education challenges (e.g. referring where relevant to local, national or even regional/international policies (e.g. Africa 2063 or the EUs Global Gateway, ASEAN policy documents, …) and underlying causes.

Key questions

1) Scope & identification: Why is the project needed? What are the key challenges / problems you want to tackle? Who is it a problem for?
2) Causes: What are the causes of the problem(s)?
3) Interlinkages: How are the SD issues/problems linked to each other?

Maximum 4,000 characters

Leave No One Behind (LNOB)

- to end extreme poverty in all its dimensions … to curb horizontal and vertical inequalities and to take action to reach the furthest behind first

- **Invitation to integrate this at the level of context analysis, stakeholder mapping, focus end beneficiaries, attention for vulnerable groups**

- *Example IUC: which vulnerable groups, and intermediate organisations (women's groups, associations, NGOs) were identified as project counterparts, ?*
- *Does the institution have a gender policy, gender focal points? how will gender be taken into account at level of selection of scholarship holders?*



Across all modules

Indivisibility & Interconnectedness



- Integrated approach to address multiple goals simultaneously
- Universal nature of the global challenges
- Co-benefits … or trade-offs
- Invitation to apply holistic context analyses, interdisciplinarity and cross-sectoral approach, building connections with other sectors & domains

- *Example: interconnectedness between environmental factors and a socio-economic situation? (e.g. Climate change can lower the production rates, leading to rural poverty and exodus)*



Across all modules

Checklist SDG principles

Module 1

LNOB	❑ Have you identified which groups are (at risk of being) left behind within the intervention area (country, region) and from what they are excluded? ❑ Have you analysed why they are left behind (considering intersecting factors)? ❑ Have you formulated clear definitions or criteria for poverty, marginalization, exclusion, …? ❑ Have you conducted a gender analysis which examines the differences in women's and men's needs, roles and responsibilities, daily routines and activities, and access to and control over resources, services and decision-making, including those that lead to social and economic inequalities?
INT	❑ Have you gained a solid understanding of the important interlinkages in the system in which you are working? ❑ How are these issues linked? What are important co-benefits and trade-offs (e.g. environmental – economic trade-offs)?
MIP/MSP	❑ Do you have a solid understanding of the relevant actors and their relationships in the system in which you are working? ❑ Is the context-analysis co-created by the relevant (local) actors and does it include their perspectives?

Institutional context



Module 1

Introduction to the partner university

- Elaborate on the **profile** of the partner university and its position in the national higher education landscape
- highlight the **strengths and capacity constraints / needs** of the partner university, and of the involved departments/units
- **Build on Stage 1 proposal and the findings of the Institutional Assessment**

Maximum 8,000 characters

Selection descriptor 1.1, 1.3

Institutional strategy



Module 1

Highlight the partner university's institutional strategy and its vision on its role as university and as a driver of change in society.

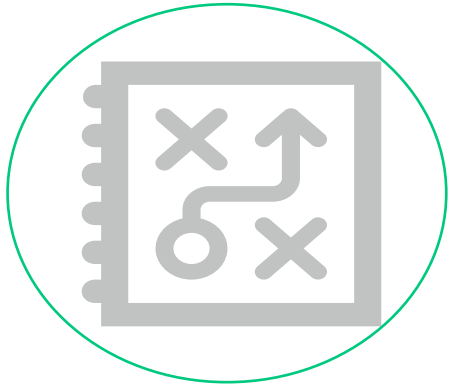
Refer to relevant internal policy documents, with reference to the date of approval and implementation period. ***=> see mandatory annexes (mission & strategic plan)***

Build on Stage 1 proposal, taking into account the Institutional Assessment

Maximum 3,000 characters

Selection descriptor 1.3

Project Strategy



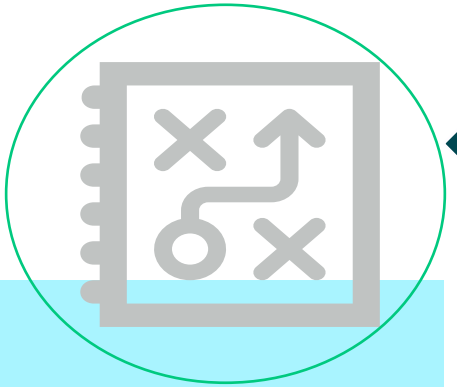
Module 2

1. **Project level vision and Theory of Change (ToC)**
2. **Information on the IUC sub-projects and how these connect with the project strategy (ToC)**

ESSENCE
Envision the desired long-term change (**dream**) to which the project wants to contribute.

Describe **change pathways** to develop an impact-oriented **strategy** for the partner university to drive change by identifying sub-themes.
How will these sub-themes generative transformative change, what do you want to achieve within these themes (sub-projects) and how it all connects with the overall theme and ambitions of the project

Project Strategy



Module 2

Describe your project strategy (Theory of Change)

along 3 key questions.

A fully-fledged ToC is not requested, rather the alignment of your project and its change process with the general IUC concept and ToC.

Key questions

1. What is the long-term change to which the IUC, as envisioned driver of change wants to contribute **= Why ?**
2. **What** do you want to achieve with the IUC? What is the central theme and identified subthemes
3. **How** do you want to do it? How will the sub-themes generative transformative change, what do you want to achieve within these themes (sub-projects)

Outline detail on the following slides

Developing the Project Strategy

Module 2

1. Project level vision and ToC – Key question 1

- **What is the long-term (sustainable development) change to which the IUC, as envisioned driver of change, wants to contribute with (this answers the WHY question)?**

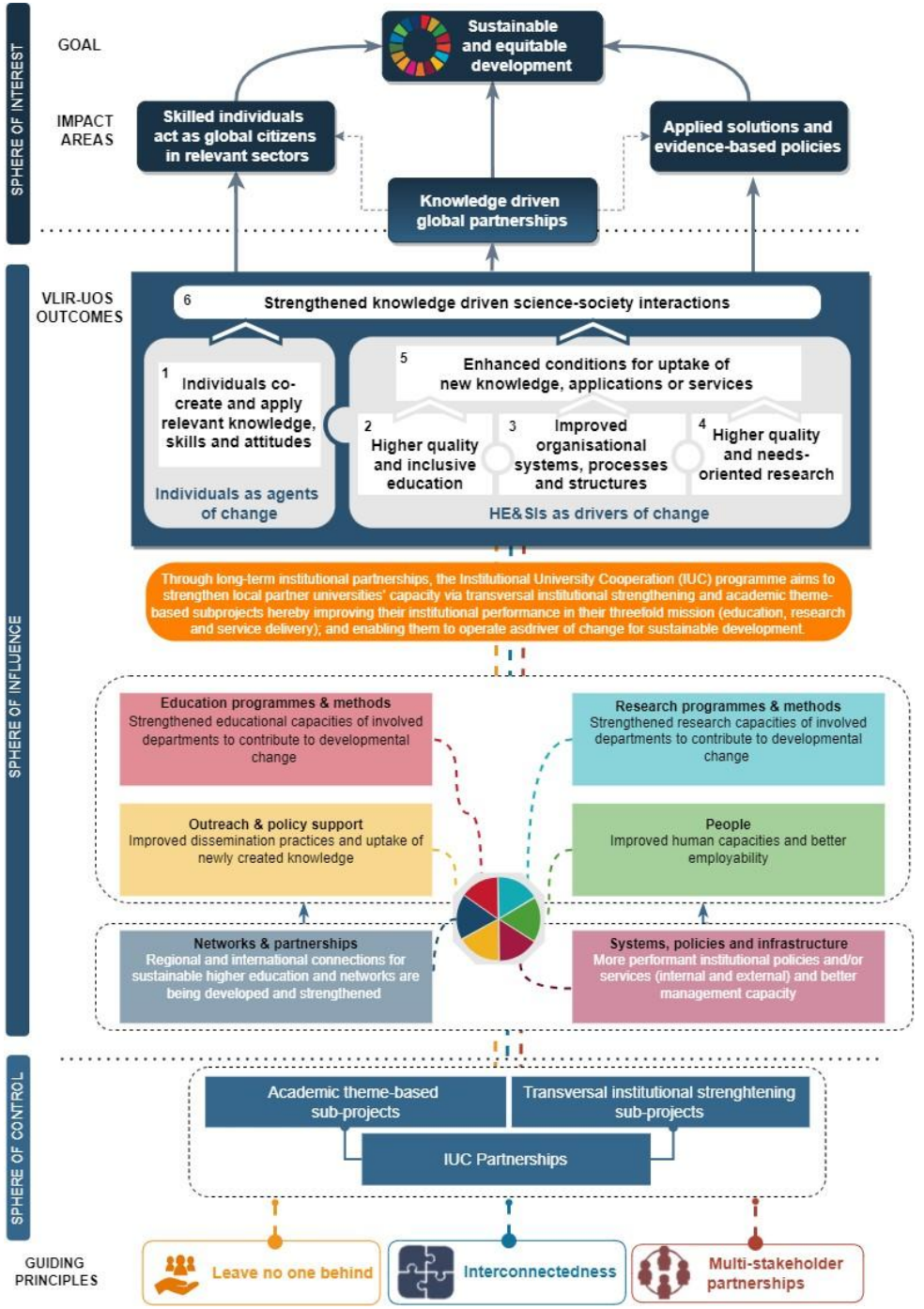
Please take into account:
- *the development and partner university's institutional context,*
- *how the project aligns with the overall IUC concept/ IUC programme Theory of Change.*

What are the ambition(s)/dream(s) of the proposed IUC partnership? Why is it important and for whom

Link with selection criterion – Quality of the project design

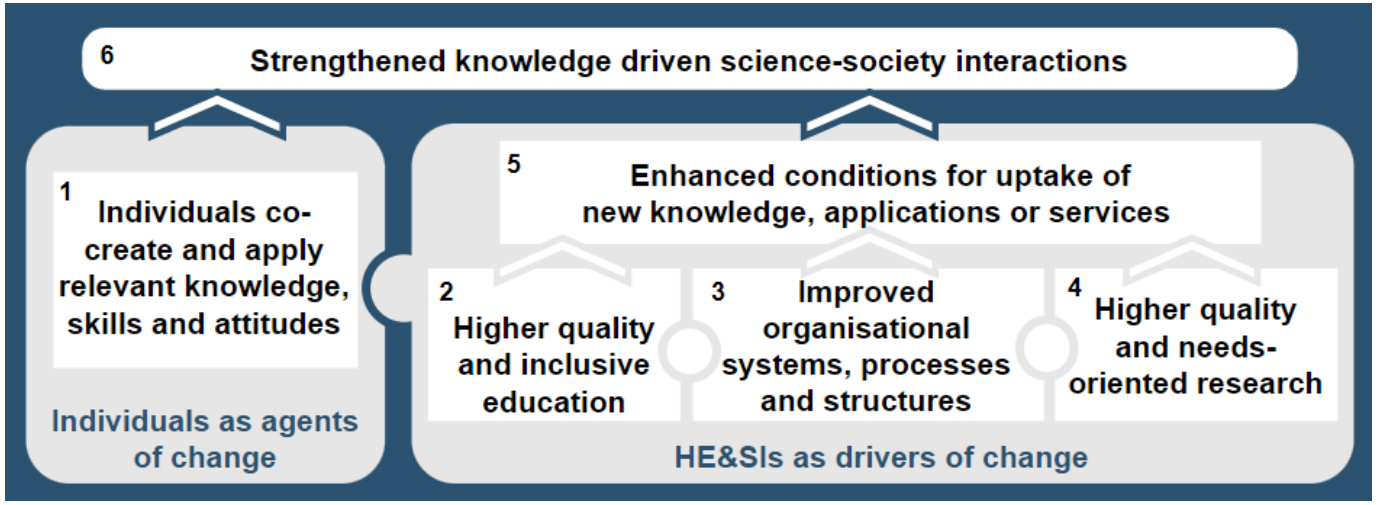
Maximum 3,000 characters

IUC Theory of Change



Alignment with VLIR-UOS Strategy

What do you want to achieve by the end of the project?





IUC typically contributes to all VLIR-UOS outcomes along the axe of strengthening a HE as driver of change.
Each subproject typically combines 2 to 3 outcomes with at least outcome 5 for academic subprojects & outcome 3 for transversal projects

Developing a ToC –What do you want to achieve by the end of the project?

Module 2

What is the central theme of the IUC project? When reflecting on this, please elaborate on how the project proposes to address the key challenges and needs highlighted in the context analysis and institutional strategy.

Please also explain how the proposed IUC project will contribute to the strategy of the IUC partner university.

Remember aligning with the **VLIR-UOS standard outcomes**

Maximum 2,500 characters

Developing a ToC – change pathways

Module 2

- Starting from the Key challenges, please describe **change pathways** to develop an impact-oriented **strategy** for the partner university to drive change **by identifying sub-themes**.
- **How will these sub-themes generate change**, what do you want to achieve within these themes (sub-projects) and how it all connects with the overall theme and ambitions of the project

- *Please take into account that the typical IUC set-up with 'academic' subprojects linked to key challenges related to sustainable development themes and a number of mandatory transversal institutional strengthening sub-projects linked to the organizational/institutional challenges identified in the institutional strategy and confirmed/suggested by the Institutional Assessment*

Annex 2: basic Theory of change for the proposed IUC project

Maximum 5,000 characters

How will the project realise organisational and institutional change?

Module 2

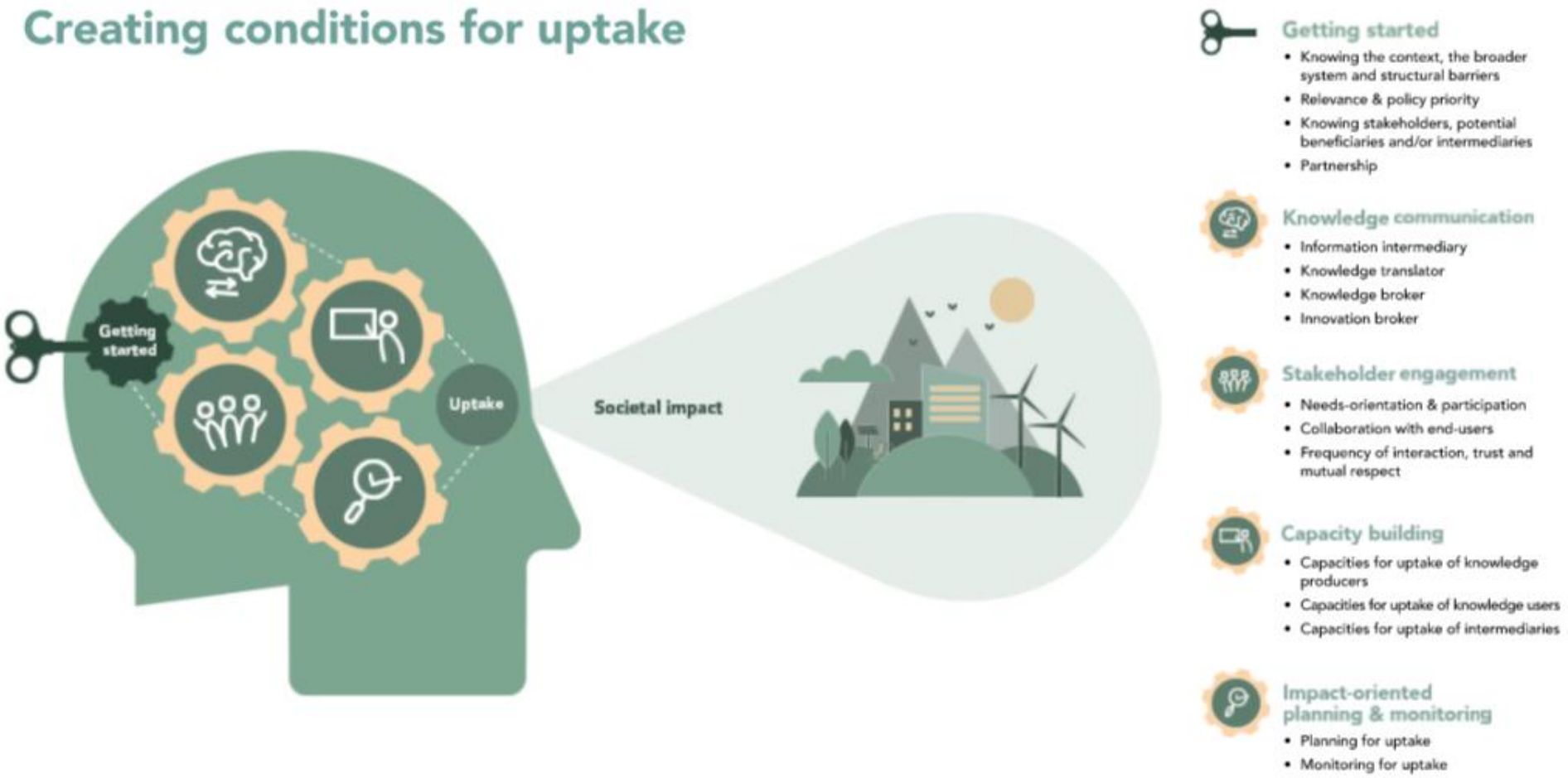
How will new products, processes and results be sustainably embedded within the university's operations?

What are the challenges in terms of university management and how (and who) will the project approach this?

Maximum 3,000 characters

Explain how the project will create the conditions for Uptake of new knowledge, applications and services

Maximum 3,000 characters



Inspiration: the VLIR-UOS publication of Creating the conditions for uptake

Integration of gender

Module 2

Explain how the project will integrate the transversal theme of gender, linked to the principle of interconnectedness and LNOB?

Explain how the project will take the actual gender situation (in the institution and broader context) into account in its strategy.

Maximum 2,000 characters

Integration of environmental sustainability

Module 2

Explain how the project will integrate the transversal theme of environment, linked to the principle of interconnectedness?

Explain how the project will take the actual environmental situation (in the institution and broader context) into account in its strategy.

Maximum 1,500 characters

Module 2

Subproject level

Linked to the change pathways identified in the IUC

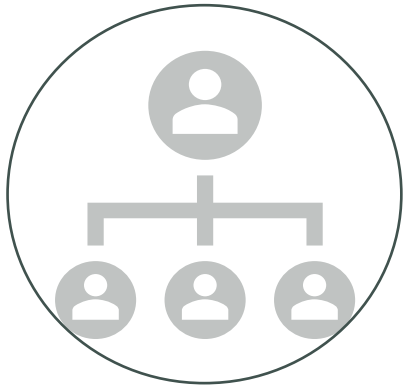
- Please include a first overview of the sub-projects, and elaborate on the expertise required to support the sub-project themes
- What do you want to achieve through the sub-project (medium-term (5 year) objectives) and how does it align with the broader project vision/theory of change and long-term objective of the IUC?
- Explain the link with the IUC general context analysis, specific challenges of involved departments
- Describe the main methodological approaches and operational steps, and identify key deliverables (‘How you want to do it’) => inspiration in intermediate change domains

check characters per sub-question, overall 8,500 + personal data in Annex 1 overview of team members

Inspiration in the standard VLIRUOS project domains of intermediate change

Domain	Intermediate change
Research programmes and methods	Strengthened research capacities of involved departments / units linked to academic priorities for developmental change
Education programmes and methods	Strengthened educational capacities of involved departments / units, linked to academic priorities for developmental change
People	Increased individual/community capacity (skills, knowledge, competencies) of students, staff and alumni and improved employability of the partner university's students, staff, and alumni and/or community members
Outreach and policy support	Improved dissemination practices and uptake of newly created knowledge, applications, services
Systems, policies, and infrastructure	Improved institution-wide organisational capacity of HEI in a number of institutional priority domains; and/or in domains of internal service delivery; and/or in domains of external service delivery
Networks and partnerships	Regional and international connections for sustainable higher education and networks are being developed and strengthened

Organisation



Module 3

1. **Annex overview of Team Members (Annex 1)**
2. **Add links to Online CVs of the Team Leaders (and if not yet available new links for the coordinators)**
3. **Management quality & commitment : add on info Stage 1**
4. **How was the Strategy for building a broad partnership implemented / how was the team composed.**

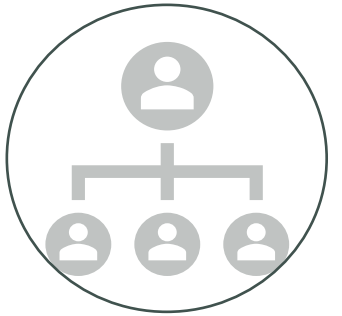
Link with selection criterion – Implementation Set-Up

ESSENCE

Complement on the info of Stage 1 in terms of the presentation of the coordination team, now it is about presenting the consortium, the mix of expertise in the local and Flemish team, how you came to the composition. Also describe how the minimal requirements in terms of inter-institutional composition of the Flemish IUC team were met.

Module 3

Organisation – management quality and commitment of the partner university – Add on info Stage 1

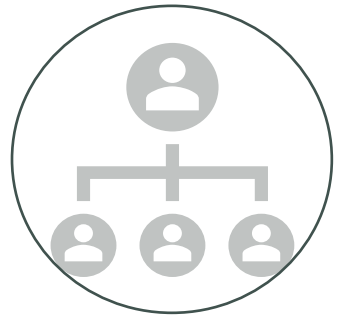


- Quality / capacity: How will the partner university organise itself to successfully manage and support the IUC project?
- Explain the **fit for purpose** of the partner university and the proposed project set-up for an IUC project
- Commitment: Explain how the commitment of the partner university to the IUC project will be translated into concrete actions relevant to the project ***(see also Annex 4 Letter of Commitment partner university)***

Maximum 4,000 characters

Module 3

Organisation – management quality and commitment of the Flemish university - Add on info Stage 1



- Quality / capacity: How will the Flemish university organise itself to successfully manage and support the IUC project?
- Explain the **fit for purpose** of the Flemish university and the proposed project set-up for an IUC project
- Describe how the necessary management and support structure will be guaranteed for the new IUC project, **bearing in mind that this is a MIP project in Flanders** and also taking into account the institutional capacity/ongoing IUC projects

Maximum 4,000 characters

Describe how the proposed strategy to broaden and embed the partnership in the partner country and in Flanders (MIP) was implemented

Module 3

- Describe how the different Flemish universities and universities of applied sciences and arts were involved: e.g. how you went about the matching of the expertise needed on the one hand with the offer and interest available at the level of the Flemish HEIs on the other,
- How did you guarantee equal access to information and participation in the context of the consortium building events in the context of the Concept Note development (Multi-Institutional Partnership)?
- How did you mobilise the expertise? (e.g. refer to the role of the 'associatieve' projecten' at the level of the university associations in Flanders in this regard).

Maximum 3,000 characters

IUC Team Composition.

Module 3

- How was the IUC team (e.g. in particular the proposed team leaders) composed at level of the IUC partner institution? Did this occur via specific internal procedures? How were the minimal criteria as set out in the IUC Call and in the Annex on the IUC Management structure and team composition taken into account
- When composing the Flemish IUC team, how was the advice of the partner institution taken into account? How were the minimal criteria as set out in the IUC Call and in the Annex on the IUC Management structure and team composition taken into account.
- How did you consider the team balance in terms of mix of expertise, profile, gender, fit of members within the team?

Maximum 3,000 characters

MSP set-up

Module 3

- Describe how you will advance in terms of the proposed Multi-stakeholder partnership (MSP) set-up in the partner country.

- Which steps will be taken during the IUC Phase In to reach out to civil society actors, government and/or private partners in the partner country (e.g. preparatory activities of the in-country formulation mission, and the follow-up towards the later implementation process in case of final selection as an IUC).

Maximum 2,000 characters

Stakeholders and coherence



Module 4

1. **Stakeholder management strategy**
2. **Coherence: internal & external**

ESSENCE

Elaborate a basic strategy to **manage** the stakeholders throughout the project.

Elaborate on the potential coherence of the IUC with other projects/actors

Stakeholders management

Module 4

What ? General management of the interactions with the **most important stakeholders of a project (**external to the project team e.g., knowledge users (farmers, policy makers, etc.), intermediaries (NGO's), etc.), contributing to the realisation of the project outcomes and impact (e.g., the end-users of the project results, knowledge users).
Please identify the project's max. 10 most important stakeholders.

Approach

- **How** manage / engage with them
  - Knowledge users : e.g. farmers, policy makers
- **How do they contribute** to the realization of the project outcomes and impact (e.g. the end-users of the project results)

Maximum 3,500 characters

Module 4

Coherence

Coherence is about the complementarity of the project with other actions/Networks.

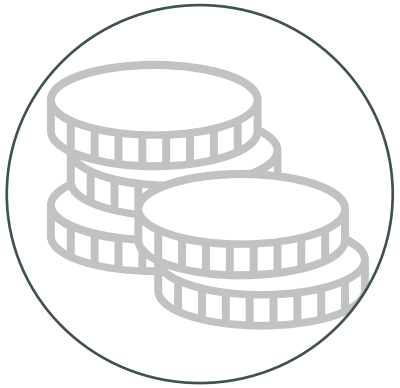
Elaborate on any coherence with:

- **other VLIR-UOS funded activities** (e.g; with TEAM/SI, IUC, Global Minds projects, ICP Connect,..) (*internal coherence*);
- and with **other actors/projects** (e.g. local, partner country level, regional, Belgian non-governmental actors, etc.) (*external coherence*)

Please note that lessons learned from previous experiences from earlier projects and/or between the projects partners fit under Module 8.

Maximum 2,500 characters

Planning and budgeting



Module 5

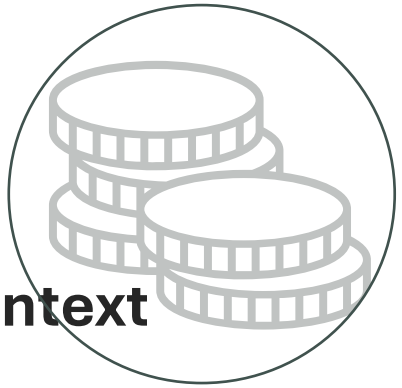
1. **Budget – value for money**
2. **Capacity to manage**

1. Budget – value for money

- A budget proposal format is not included in this stage of the IUC Call, but please elaborate on the value for money and how you intend to spend the requested budget for the Phase 1 Cooperation
- Indications of budget spent on subprojects (%)
- Reflection on in-kind support from the partner institution

Maximum 4,000 characters

Planning and budgeting



Module 5

2. Does the institutional assessment and local context confirm the capacity to manage an IUC budget?

When responding the question take into account that a normal IUC budget amounts to max. 600.000 EUR/year during Phase 1 (5 years).

We consider an IUC partner university to be "fit for purpose" to effectively and efficiently manage an annual budget of in principle 600.000 EUR, in an international, multi-subproject and multi-institutional set-up.

In case you consider that the internal institutional procedures of the local partner university and/or the local context do not allow for such a budget to be efficiently and effectively managed, you can propose a lower budget/smaller scope.
Please elaborate and motivate here.

Maximum 2,000 characters

Learning & steering

1. **Lessons learned**
2. **Follow-up & steering**

ESSENCE

- Describe how to follow-up on changes, adaptations and **lessons learned** from (previous) experiences in order to improve the quality of the project.

- Follow-up on recommendations of the stage 1 Commission

Learning & steering

Cooperation track record

- Track record of cooperation with Flemish HEIs. List the former / ongoing projects with one or more Flemish higher education institutions (dates, duration, funding organisation, budget), and briefly describe role of the partner university.
- Lessons learned from previous experiences from earlier projects and/or between the project partners, both in terms of managing for results as well as operational and financial management of projects.

Maximum 2,500 characters

Learning & steering

Recommendations Selection commission & Institutional Assessment.

Please describe how you took into account the comments of the Stage 1 Selection commission, and of the Institutional Assessment throughout the proposal, and highlight elements you were not able to address, and the reasons for this.

Maximum 2,500 characters

Annexes

Format for a project proposal (offline working document)	Main proposal document. All information in this working document will need to be included directly in the online project submission tool.
Annex 1: Overview of the Team Members	Information on who is involved in the project and its organisational structure
Annex 2: Visualisation of a Basic Theory of Change	Visualisation in a pdf or word document, basic version clarifying project strategy, aligning with the VLIRUOS Theory of Change for IUC projects (1 A4)
Annex 3: (a) CV partner coordinator / CV Flemish coordinator (b) CV Team leaders (Flemish/partner) per proposed sub-project	A short CV of Coordinators, max. 5 pages, has already been delivered in Stage 1 of the IUC Selection procedure. Please now include for all Team leaders per proposed sub-project accessible online CVs (e.g. preference for ORCID links), fully readable and containing overview of expertise.
Annex 4: Letter of commitment rector partner university with the proposed Concept Note	Letter of commitment from the rector/president with reference to the Stage 2 proposal (incl. support to the CN strategy, the coordinator and team leaders of the institution, the institutional commitment in terms of management and in kind funding Document to be uploaded via the submission tool. Note: commitment of the Flemish university is given by the endorsement of the proposal in the submission tool.



Questions, remarks, reflections ?

Thank you!

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