



**Final evaluation of the IUC
with Hué University,
Vietnam**

Acronyms

CHC	Community Health Centre
DARD	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
DONRE	Department of Natural Resources and Environment
EHR	Electronic Health Record
FMC	Family Medicine Center
FPL	Flemish Project leader
FTM	Flemish Team Member
HEI	Higher Education Institutes
HPET	World Bank Health Professions Education & Training
HU	Hue University
ICD	International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems
ICP	International Master Programme, funded by VLIR-UOS
ICPC-2	International Classification of Primary Care, Second edition
ITP	International Training Programme, funded by VLIR-UOS
IUC	Institutional University Cooperation
JSCM	Joint Steering Committee Meeting
KRA	Key Results Area
KTT	Knowledge and Technology transfer
LPL	Local project leader
LTM	Local Team Member
MOET	Ministry of Education and Training
MOH	Ministry of Health
PP	Partner Programme
QA	Quality Assurance
TM	Team Member
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
VLIR-UOS	Vlaamse Interuniversitaire Raad – Universitaire Ontwikkelingssamenwerking

Executive Summary

Context & programme description. Hué University's organizational framework is delineated by a two-level structure, with the central university and its highly autonomous member universities. The Institutional University Cooperation (IUC) primarily incorporates Project 1 (Institutional Strengthening) within the central university, while Projects 2, 3, and 4 are distributed among three distinct member universities. The structure ensures that while Project 1 is central, it remains integrally connected to the others. The program's design responds to HU's unique requirements, aiming to reinforce the central university's governance, bolster capacity at all levels, enhance the societal relevance of HU's research and education, and foster high quality research.

Programme description. The programme consists of four projects: Project P1, "Institutional Strengthening," maintained its focus on innovative educational methods, quality assurance, and university governance, aiming to elevate Hué University to become a national university with international exposure. Project P2, "Livestock and Aquaculture," aimed to enhance the sustainability of smallholder animal production, leveraging research on polyculture and by-products from agriculture, integrating life cycle assessments for environmental sustainability, and fostering capacity building through integrated research and training. Project P3, "Coastal Ecosystem and Natural Resources Management," based on prior research, addressed challenges of water quality and biodiversity in the Tam Giang - Cau Hai lagoon, extending studies to the Thuy Tu lagoon, and proposing educational activities to promote environmental sustainability and awareness. Project P4, "Rural Health Care," sought to improve Vietnam's primary health care system, particularly at the commune health center (CHC) level, through specialized training aligned with Family Medicine principles and local needs, aiming to enhance the management and accessibility of healthcare services.

Limitations. The evaluators have encountered several limitations during their assessment. Despite recognizing the general success of the collaboration, they noted deficiencies in the quality of reporting and self-evaluations, which posed significant challenges in data triangulation. The complex structure of HU University, comprising a Central University along with Member Universities that operate with a high degree of autonomy, proved to be a double-edged sword. This autonomy, while critical at the program level, impeded the evaluators from fully integrating these entities into the assessment due to time and logistical constraints. Additionally, the university's intricate framework impeded the application of certain methodologies that were planned during inception phase of the evaluation. For instance, the central university's non-central role in specific areas meant that the assessment of the 5 core capabilities exercise was not feasible in the manner initially intended. Lastly, the evaluators were allocated only a three-day period for the impact case, which was inadequate for a thorough research and triangulation of the impact, particularly regarding discussions with the patients and clients of the Community Health Centres (final beneficiaries). This resulted in an evaluation that focused primarily on the direct beneficiaries, such as the staff of the CHCs, rather than a holistic assessment including the final beneficiaries.

Relevance. Hué University's strategic positioning within Thua Thien Province is integral to its mission of fostering regional prosperity through education and research. Despite facing challenges such as underdeveloped staff skills, a nascent research-based educational mindset, and underutilization of its expertise by the local community, the university has crafted ambitions and objectives with the Institutional University Cooperation (IUC HU) to fortify its role in innovation and societal progress, specifically at the educational and research level. The university's immediate strategic objective is to achieve national recognition (becoming a 'National University'), with the longer-term goal of becoming an internationally ranked institution and attracting global students. This aligns with its strategy to secure more substantial budgetary allocations accorded to national universities under the jurisdiction of the prime minister. Project 1, as a core component, is pivotal in attaining the strategic objective of national university status by addressing accreditation mechanisms, expertise in quality assurance, development of innovative teaching methods, and enhancement of university governance. The project is also key to bolster research quality and increase the volume of peer-reviewed international publications. The IUC's alignment with the university's strategic plan underlines its contribution towards evolving into a National University, with the anticipation that the initiative's focus on research and teaching excellence will equip students for the dynamic job market through enhanced research-based education.

Coherence. During the mid-term review of the Institutional University Cooperation Hue University (IUC HU), the internal coherence among the four projects was a significant concern, particularly the limited dissemination of results from the transversal Project 1 to the member universities. Recommendations for enhancing coherence led to some progress in the second phase, though it was modest, partly due to the autonomous two-level structure of the university and a strategic choice to support already promising research groups, aligned with the university's objective to increase PhD graduates and peer-reviewed publications. Despite these structural and strategic complexities, Project 1 fostered synergies, most notably through the introduction of self-assessment reports for 25 training programs, meeting quality standards set by the Ministry of Education and Training of Vietnam. Educational innovation, quality assurance, and governance activities were organized, drawing over 2100 participants from internal and external bodies, including the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET). These efforts, although hard to quantify in direct impact, raised awareness about quality assurance and innovative methodologies across all member universities, aligning them towards the university's strategic goal of achieving national status by 2025 and establishing unified quality and innovation standards in teaching and research. Compared to the mid-term evaluation, the evaluators could also see that important steps had been made in the field of external coherence (e.g., coherence with VLIR-IUC Network, IFS Project, HUAF research project,...).

Effectiveness & Impact. In assessing the effectiveness of the Institutional University Cooperation Hue University (IUC HU), the evaluators utilized the 5C model, integrating workshop results, interviews, and document analysis. The 5C model's application proved challenging due to the diverse governance and strategic approaches of the Central University and its member universities, each with extensive services and autonomy. The assessment disclosed that Project 1 and the Central University primarily influenced the program's effectiveness. While all dimensions of the 5C model showed progress or maintained status, particularly, the capability to achieve coherence saw improvements in the vision/strategy and the overarching university level strategies. These advancements are aimed at achieving national university status by 2025, elevating research and teaching quality, and increasing output of peer-reviewed articles, thereby enhancing the university's attractiveness and student enrolment. However, the governance/management structures did not exhibit progress, constrained by the existing two-level legal structure. The capability to deliver results remained constant in terms of educational quality but saw progress in high-quality research and the university's role as an agent of change. The number of publications in peer-reviewed journals rose dramatically, from few to over 600, partially credited to the IUC's influence and the 13 PhD scholarships it funded. Educational innovation benefited from the IUC as well, with updated master programs and new courses that reached over 2,000 students. Externally, the university increased its visibility and engagement through conferences and workshops, with over 2,100 external stakeholders participating, facilitated by Project 1's networking efforts. The IUC's alignment with political and educational spheres was noted, although attracting additional funding remains a challenge. Lastly, in the domain of adaptability and self-renewal, the university responded agilely to new higher education laws and quality frameworks, translating the strategic aim of international recognition into a more immediate goal of national recognition by 2025. The IUC notably enhanced HU's capacity to adapt to these changes, contributing to the quick assimilation of quality assurance requirements and accreditation processes across its member universities.

Efficiency: The Institutional University Cooperation (IUC) program directed a substantial budget of €1.3 million towards its initiatives, with a significant 92% funnelled to Hue University (HU). Distribution of funds within Vietnam was mainly allocated to scholarships and operational costs, with a smaller portion dedicated to investment and personnel, reflecting the VLIR-UOS policy of non-remunerative participation for university staff, thus maintaining personnel costs at a minimum. The investment expenditure, while modest, was primarily utilized for equipment in Project 3. The evaluators of the program discerned a considerable return on investment, marked by the low personnel expenses owing to the voluntary nature of staff involvement. This approach, however, also resulted in additional burdens on staff, with their project commitments adding to their existing obligations, potentially affecting the effectiveness of the program. The budget's significant allocation towards PhD scholarships for existing staff members demonstrated an effective and efficient use of resources, evidenced by the completion of several PhDs and the projection of the completion of the remainder by 2024. The high retention of these graduates at the university also reflected positively on the program's effectiveness and the university's advancement in accreditation status. Conversely, the evaluators identified a lack of coherence both among the different projects and within individual projects, where PhD scholarships operated in silos across various research groups.

Impact case Rural Health Care (P4). The project excelled in advocacy, notably influencing primary healthcare policy development in Vietnam, which is evidenced by its integration into the preparatory processes of significant health policy advancements. The project's influence is acknowledged in key policy documents and reforms such as the Vietnam National Law on Medical Examination and Treatment, various health circulars, national health plans, and resolutions highlighting family medicine as a pivotal element in healthcare improvement. Through active engagement with the Ministry of Health and strategic dissemination of expertise, the project notably contributed to the drafting of new policies that promise to enhance access to primary care, especially for remote populations. In terms of capacity building at the Community Health Centres (CHC), the project implemented a multifaceted approach to enhance healthcare service quality. This included the development of blended-learning courses in family medicine and organizing workshops and Continuing Medical Education (CME) courses. The Family Medicine Centre (FMC) played a key role in educational development by revising curricula, producing teaching materials, and establishing new training guidelines. While the project's initiatives have led to increased capacity among primary care staff, challenges persist, such as insufficient equipment and medication supplies at CHCs, affecting patient trust and care quality. Despite these hurdles, the project's commitment to capacity strengthening at CHCs is observed to be increasing trust among stakeholders. The integration of Family Medicine into the regular medical curriculum represents a significant stride toward sustainable health education, requiring all medical trainees to engage with family medicine courses and CHC internships. This integration ensures that future medical professionals are well-prepared for service in CHCs. The project's role in curriculum development and the use of innovative educational tools like VR technology, in conjunction with research-based teaching, demonstrates a robust contribution to medical education.

Learning question 1 - Optimizing diversity/inclusivity in PhD Trajectories. In the IUC programme, there was no deliberate policy to ensure equal gender participation or to attract underrepresented groups to the PhD scholarships, selection was based on merit. Despite this, women were not underrepresented: they received 8 out of 13 scholarships and constituted 4 out of 7 graduates. Interviews revealed the programme was beneficial for female staff, particularly due to the 'sandwich' scholarships allowing limited time abroad and more time in Vietnam, which suited those with family obligations. This approach was especially compatible with PhD candidates who had children and preferred not to be away for extended periods.

Learning question 2 - Effective coordination. Hue University (HU) operates with a two-level structure granting autonomy to its member universities, which was managed through a transversal Project 1 focusing on institutional strengthening. This approach enhanced the Central University's relevance, with its activities serving as a model for member institutions. Project 1 led to an overall increase in HU's status, evident in aspects like global publication output and maintained rankings. Additionally, influential leaders from other projects, who held sway within their respective universities, ensured that collaborative decisions at the Program Support Unit (PSU) level were effectively disseminated and executed across the university.

Learning question 3 - Ensure Uptake. The IUC HU showcased effective societal uptake, especially in enhancing Family Medicine's role within the healthcare system, leading to significant policy involvement and the improvement of primary health care services. Advocacy efforts contributed to impactful legislation and a network of Community Health Centres (CHCs) working closely with the Family Medicine Center at Hue University (HU). Other projects within the program also saw adoption of new practices, such as the establishment of ethical committees to oversee animal-related research and adherence to ethical standards, influencing other academic institutions across Vietnam. The project contributed to this result through exchange visits with Flemish and Dutch academics disseminating the practices in Flanders, the Netherlands and Europe in general.

The uptake of project initiatives is facilitated by various factors, such as the project's direct relevance to rural communities, the novelty of the research topic, and the alignment with political policies. The review highlighted the importance of engaging civil society and authorities throughout the research process to generate a social impact. The internal coherence of projects, by synergizing resources towards a common goal, is also essential for achieving greater societal impact. However, focusing exclusively on projects with immediate social relevance might limit the scope for fundamental research that could inform policy priorities in the long term. The challenge for universities, identified by some of the university stakeholders and evaluators, is to balance the demands of providing education, conducting research, and translating outcomes into social services. Academics often lack expertise in addressing social and

economic needs, which suggests the necessity for dedicated university roles or departments in knowledge and technology transfer. Past initiatives, like the VETEC Erasmus+ project, have raised awareness about technology transfer, yet follow-through remains hindered by legal frameworks, underscoring the need for future projects to involve national authorities and policymakers as key stakeholders to ensure continued impact and implementation.

Recommendations.

Recommendation 1 (To VLIR-UOS & University partners). If uptake is to be central to each IUC project, then it is worth considering explicit consideration of developing or including Knowledge and Technology Transfer (KTT) modalities/mechanism in each IUC.

Recommendation 2 (To VLIR-UOS & University partners).

Cross-cutting themes should be an integral part of the approach/policy at the programme level.

Recommendation 3 (To VLIR-UOS).

A plea for a mix of types of scholarships: sandwich scholarships & full-time scholarship in Flanders.

Recommendation 4 (To University partners & VLIR-UOS). Continue to award PhD-scholarships to staff members of the university.

Recommendation 5 (To VLIR-UOS & University Partners). Identify the partner university's priorities in great detail during the matchmaking and formulation phase.

Recommendation 6 (To VLIR-UOS & University Partners).

Internal coherence choices should be better justified and explicitly framed within existing university priorities and policy choices.

Recommendation 7 (To HU).

Implementation of the AUN-QA accreditation programmes in the next coming years.

Recommendation 8 (To VLIR-UOS & University partners).

Link projects as much as possible to international strategic developments in the region

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background

Hué University is characterised by a complex two-level structure with a central university and member universities. The peculiarity of this structure is that these member universities have a very high degree of autonomy. This is also reflected in the structure of the IUC, with P1 (institutional strengthening) being taken up by the central university. The other three projects are managed by 3 different member universities, namely Hue University of Agriculture and Forestry (HUAF)(P2), Faculty of Science (Departments of Chemistry, Biology, Geography and Geology) (P3) and the University of Medicine and Pharmacy (Hue UMP, Family Medicine Department of Hue UMP) (P4). As a result, the programme level of the IUC is mainly embedded in Project 1, obviously with strong links to the various other projects.

This programme structure was inspired by HU's specific needs:

- 1) consolidation of the authority of the central level of Hué University as overarching academic and administrative body.
- 2) capacity building on central level as in member universities.
- 3) Increase the societal impact of HU's research & education
- 4) Increase involvement of other societal stakeholders in the valorisation of output as well as the identification of research priorities.

The consolidation of the identity of Hue University as homogenous entity is mostly addressed through the transversal P1 project. This project addresses institutional issues that were expected to affect all member universities. The transversal project P1 was drawn on the output generated by the discipline-centred projects to achieve institutional progress on research-based education and improved university management. The focus of the programme remained during the second phase: creating an enabling environment for research-based education and strengthen the institutional capabilities. The structure of the constituent projects proved valid, according to the programme documents and thus remains unchanged compared to phase one: one transversal project and three thematic projects (see *Table 1*).

The following programme objectives were formulated:

- consolidate Hue Universities' role as driver of innovation and research-based education
- consolidate Hue Universities' role as driver of societal progress, esp. at educational level

Table 1. Projects

Projects	Project title	Objective
P1	Institutional strengthening	Phase II of the 'Institutional Strengthening Project' kept its focus on three themes: (1) innovative methods in education; (2) quality assurance; and (3) university governance. The main objective was that Hué University becomes a university with an international image. Activities were organised with this goal in mind. Focuses (1) and (2) support the organisation of workshops, consultancy, and doctoral research. Focus (3) supports a forum for local specialists in education and governance.
P2	Livestock and Aquaculture	The general objective of P2 is to enhance the sustainability of the primary animal production of small holder farmers in central-Vietnam. Research of Phase I revealed polyculture in aquaculture systems and local by products from agricultural activities and the food industry are key factors in this respect. In phase II studies will build on these results, which will be extended by the integration of life cycle assessments to holistically evaluate the environmental

		sustainability of the proposed approaches. Capacity building is aimed at through research and training on integrated animal and environmental sciences. To reach the project's objectives essential information about sustainable aquaculture and livestock systems is disseminated to stakeholders.
P3	Coastal ecosystem and natural resources management	Based on the research results of phase I, Tam Giang - Cau Hai lagoon ecosystems face problems of water quality and decreasing biodiversity. In phase II studies on lagoon resilience will be continued but including Thuy Tu lagoon (the northern part connecting to Cau Hai lagoon). Research focused on lagoon primary production, water quality monitoring, and risks assessment of pollutants. Recommended activities on education, sustainability and enhancing environmental awareness through involvement of stakeholders will be carried out.
P4	Rural health care	Phase 2 of this project was to expand the achievements of Phase 1 and to improve the primary health care system of Vietnam at the first encounter commune health centre level through a work/study modular training program based on the core content of the specialty of Family Medicine and appropriate for local needs. The project had the objective to improve the quality of health care services at primary care level and access and management of non-communicable diseases in population.

1.2. Context

Socio-Economic Context

Vietnam initiated its shift from a centrally planned economy to a market-driven economy in 1986. This economic transformation was characterized by active economic reforms, extensive trade liberalization, opening up to international markets, acknowledging the pivotal role of the private sector in the nation's development, and adopting market-based mechanisms for state governance. These reforms yielded significant results, with Vietnam experiencing noteworthy economic growth and a reduction in poverty. However, the economy was also significantly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic starting in early 2020.

Under the transition to a market economy, Vietnam achieved remarkable progress in socio-economic development. A key indicator of this advancement has been the consistent increase in Gross Domestic Product (GDP). This growth was reflected in the rise of GDP per capita, GDP in 2022 was estimated to increase by 8.02% compared to the previous year, achieving the highest increase in the period 2011-2022 due to the economic recovery. Of the increase in the total added value of the whole economy, the agriculture, forestry, and fishery sector increased by 3.36%, contributing 5.11%; the industry and construction sector increased by 7.78%, contributing 38.24%; the service sector increased by 9.99%, contributing 56.65%.

Vietnam is in a period of rapid change in population and social structure. The population is aging rapidly. The country's average population in 2022 was estimated at 99.46 million people, and labour force aged 15 and over was estimated at 52.1 million people. Of which, the proportion of workers with informal employment outside of households in agriculture, forestry, and the fishery was estimated at 54.9%. The average monthly income of salaried workers was estimated at 7.5 million VND/month for 2022 (equivalent approximately 300 Euro). The middle-class is accounting for 13% of the population. Multidimensional poverty and inequality rates have decreased significantly but unevenly across regions and population groups. An open economy with a high ratio of import-export turnover to GDP continues to create many jobs but the pace is slowing down.

Over the past 10 years, Vietnam has made significant progress in the educational level of the workforce, but the technical and professional level of the workforce is still very low and the improvement is quite

slow. In 2022, the proportion of trained labour force accounts for 26.4%, an increase from 15.6% in 2011. Of which, the proportion of labour force with university degrees or higher in 2022 accounts for 11.9%, nearly double of those compared to 2011 (6.1%).

Climate change has exerted detrimental effects on the growth of the agricultural sector in the nation, particularly in the Mekong Delta region. The prevalence of severe drought and extensive salinization has prompted numerous coastal provinces to shift from rice cultivation to the cultivation of salt-tolerant crops and the development of aquaculture. Aquaculture has assumed an increasingly critical role for farmers.

Higher education context

Vietnam aims to strive to develop as an upper middle-income country by 2030. The 10-year strategy on socio-economic development (for period 2021-2030) indicates the pathway to transform the economic model to a dynamic, knowledge driven, productivity driven, digital and resilient economy. For this purpose, it is a crucial task to build high quality workforce, and higher education reform is one of vital tasks.

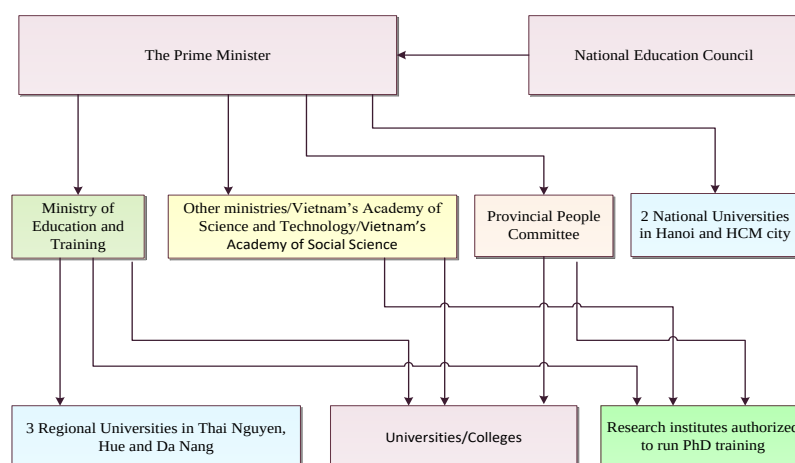
Vietnam's higher education system has steadily developed. The number of universities has increased rapidly. In 2020, Vietnam has 420 universities, of which there were 175 public ones and 60 private universities and 5 with 100% of foreign investment in the country. Now many of them have developed to be multi-field, multi-disciplinary/comprehensive universities offering Associate/college, Bachelor/university, master's and PhD programs. Regarding the enrolment, according to the World Bank, of the 6.9 million pupils of post-secondary school age, about 2 million (28.6%) are enrolled in universities and colleges. This rate is quite low compared to the countries in the region.

In terms of management structure, universities in Vietnam can be categorized into three primary types: National universities, regional universities, and normal universities/colleges. Two national universities located in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City are directly overseen by the Prime Minister. These national universities oversee various universities, colleges, service delivery institutions, and research institutes.

Meanwhile, three regional universities situated in Thai Nguyen, Hue, and Da Nang cities fall under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET). These regional universities, similar to their national counterparts, encompass a range of universities, colleges, and research institutes. These regional universities are all characterized by similar organizational and management structures.

Normal universities and colleges, on the other hand, may be established by MOET, other ministries, Vietnam's Academies of Science and Technology, or Social Science, or under the authority of provincial People Committees. (See *Figure 1. Structure of Higher Education Sector in Vietnam*).

Figure 1. Structure of Higher Education Sector in Vietnam



In terms of ownership, the educational landscape in Vietnam encompasses both government-run and privately-owned universities and colleges. Among the private institutions, there are those that are entirely foreign owned, as well as joint ventures involving both foreign and domestic investors, as stipulated in Article 7 of the Law on Higher Education 2012.

Policy context

In recent years, Vietnam's universities education system has conducted a number of structural reforms to improve quality on such key areas including: (i) increase of access and equity; (ii) improving of training curriculum to meet high requirement of labour market' needs; (iii) improving financial autonomy; and (iv) bettering governance.

As part of the efforts for accelerating the reforms of universities, in 2018, the National Assembly passed the revised Higher Education Law to update the 2012 Law. The updated Law provides clearer legal framework for reform of the university governance setup to be more flexible and to increase of managerial autonomy to the university, especially among the top-tier universities to be able to raise self-finance. As a result, universities have the right to determine their own objectives and select a way to implement its objectives. The revised Law also indicates provisions for improving the budget allocation and efficient usage of resources.

Another initiative from Government is the Prime Minister's Decision issued in 2019 (69/QĐ-TTg), approving a Program on Quality Improvement for Higher Education for 2019–2025. This Decision pronounces the overall strategic directions and the main principles applicable for all universities. In implementing this Decision, universities have been encouraged to:

- Increase the diversification of income sources and make a more efficient use of resources.
- Enhance internationalization and strengthen employer engagement.
- Ensure equity and competition among universities and strengthen quality assurance.

1.3. Evaluation methodology and process

In this section, we briefly describe the evaluation framework, the main activities carried out and the limitations of the evaluation research.

The evaluation framework tabulated below (see *Table 2*) presents the DAC criteria with associated evaluation questions and assessment criteria. This framework was developed during the inception phase. In addition, an impact case was also studied, which is described below.

Figure 1 illustrates the sequential stages of the evaluation process, which commenced with an in-depth desk review, primarily focusing on self-assessments, annual plans, and reports. Subsequently, this phase transitioned into a series of online consultations with the coordinators and the project leader of P4, with the objective of delineating the impact case and deliberating over the chosen methodology. In the period from 18th to 26th September, the evaluators undertook a visit to HU, during which a variety of workshops, group discussions, and interviews were conducted. Following this visit, further online discussions were held with the Flemish project leaders. The process then advanced to a restitution meeting with VLIR-UOS, culminating in the preparation and finalization of both the draft and final evaluation reports.

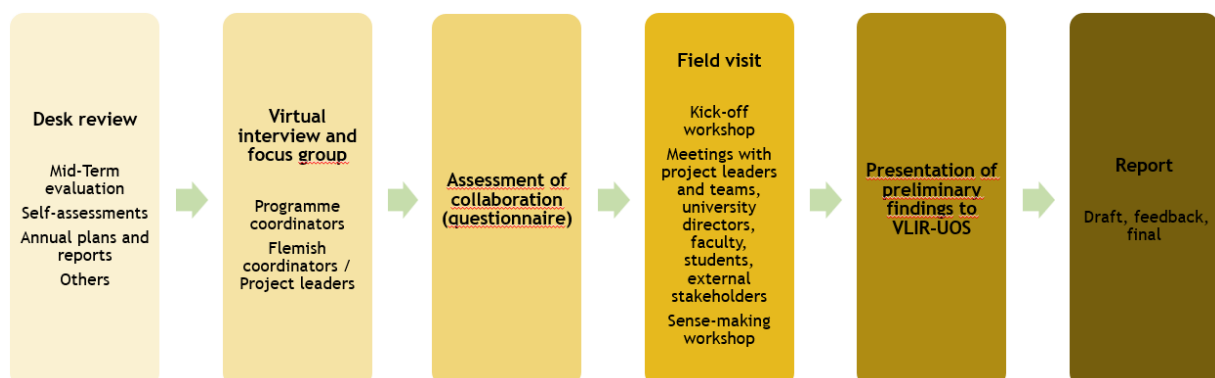
Table 2. Evaluation Framework¹

Criterion	Evaluation Question	Judgement criteria
1. Relevance	EQ1. To what extent are the objectives of the programme/project consistent with beneficiaries' requirements,	1.2. What is the relevance (ex ante) of the formulated outcome(s) and objectives?

¹ For more information about the evaluation framework, the inception report of the framework assignment can be requested for consultation at the level of VLIR-UOS.

Criterion	Evaluation Question	Judgement criteria
	country needs, global priorities and partners' and donors' policies?	1.2. Extent to which changes in the external context or within the organisation influenced the relevance of the intervention, and how this was handled?
2. Coherence	EQ2. To which extent is the partnership programme coherent, internally and externally? What is the level of synergy and complementarity with other relevant (Belgian) actors?	2.1. Internal coherence
		2.2. External coherence
3. Efficiency	EQ3. To which extent resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted to results in an economic manner?	3.1. The cost-effectiveness (the usage of resources in relation to the achievement of objectives)
		3.2. The extent to which organisational management and structures of the programme/project are conducive for efficient implementation.
4. Effectiveness	EQ4. To what extent are the programme's objectives (expected to be) achieved, taking into account their relative importance?	4.1. The extent to which the programmes outputs and outcomes have been achieved and the likelihood that the predetermined outcomes will be achieved by the end of the implementation period.
		4.2. Inhibiting and facilitating factors and actors
		4.3. Scientific quality
5. Impact	EQ5. To what extent are (potential) positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects generated by the programme, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.	5.1. Changes (intended and unintended, positive and negative) in stakeholders' lives and contexts contributed to by the programme
		5.2. Fostering 'collective impact'
6. Sustainability	EQ6. To what extent will the programme results continue after the programme is completed?	6.1. Level of institutional sustainability
		6.2. Level of financial sustainability
		6.3. Level of academic sustainability

Figure 2. Evaluation Process.



1.4. The limitations of this evaluation

The evaluation encountered several constraints that affected its scope and depth:

1. The evaluators recognized the decade-long collaboration as generally positive, with some outcomes being exceptionally successful. Nonetheless, it must be noted that data available from reporting (annual reports and self-assessments), presenting considerable challenges for the evaluators in triangulating the data.
2. The organizational structure of HU University is notably intricate, consisting of a Central University and Member Universities, each exercising substantial autonomy. Such independence is pivotal at the program level, and the evaluation would have benefited from the inclusion of these member universities as primary units of assessment. Unfortunately, due to time restrictions and logistical impediments, this integration was unattainable. So during the workshops only representatives of central university and project leaders of the different projects were present, while it would have been good to include high level representatives of the member university because they define the policies of member universities.
3. The university's multi-level framework further complicated the implementation of specific methodologies that were developed during the inception phase. For example, the application of the 5 core capabilities exercise was hindered as the central level was not the main actor in these domains. Ideally, these exercises should have been conducted individually for each member university, but this approach was precluded by the limited resources allocated for this evaluation.
4. The duration of the evaluation exercise forced the evaluation team to delineate the impact case to include the CHC staff (but not the final beneficiaries. There was notably inadequate time for in-depth discussions with the Community Health Centres' patients and clients—who are the final beneficiaries. Consequently, the evaluation's limited focus was primarily on the direct beneficiaries, specifically the enhanced capabilities of the CHCs' staff (see annex 1).

1.5. Description of impact case

Project 4 has been chosen by unanimity as impact case by the PSU. The project underscores the significant role of family physicians in Vietnam's primary healthcare system. They are integral to the community, providing comprehensive, ongoing care and fostering long-term relationships with patients. Despite having over 10,000 commune health centres, many doctors are predominantly theory-trained with limited clinical experience, resulting in suboptimal healthcare quality. The initial phase of the project identified a pressing need to bolster grassroots health care in the face of rising non-communicable and communicable diseases. This has led to the integration of family doctor activities, referral regulations, and improved patient monitoring and care coordination between different health care levels. The project highlights the challenges and solutions associated with training primary healthcare staff. With a heavy workload and responsibilities, staff at Community Health Centres (CHCs) find it difficult to leave their duties for training. Phase II of the project aimed to address this by continuing and enhancing training activities that are innovative, contextually relevant, and allow healthcare workers to study while working. The program focused on improving the quality of care for both communicable diseases and the rapidly increasing non-communicable diseases by implementing and evaluating work-based and problem-based training methods. This approach aimed to strengthen (including policy change) the healthcare system's response to chronic disease management and risk reduction at the primary care level. The impact of the project is analysed and described in *Chapter 4 Impact case*.

1.6. Structure of the evaluation report

The continuation of the evaluation report is structured into three major sections. Initially, we present the findings at the program level, utilizing the DAC criteria. At this IUC, the program level predominantly aligns with project 1 (Institutional Strengthening), which is considered a cross-cutting project. Subsequently, in the second section, we delve into the four distinct projects to briefly discuss them, also utilizing the DAC criteria. Finally, in the last section, the impact case of project 4 (specifically, the

program's impact on the Community Health Centres-CHC) is examined. The report concludes with our findings and recommendations.

2. Analysis and findings: programme level

2.1. Overview of programme performance

Criterion	Excellent (4)	Good (3)	Weak (2)	Poor (1)
Relevance	x			
Coherence		x		
Efficiency	x			
Effectiveness & Impact	x			
Sustainability		x		

2.2. Relevance

Hué University, situated in Thua Thien Province, is strategically placed in a region with rural demographics and relatively low living standards. The university wants to take the responsibility of driving regional prosperity through education and research. It aims to contribute to society by innovative research and education. However, the university faces challenges, including limitations in staff skills, a limited research-based education mindset. The IUC HU was developed with these challenges in mind. The programme's formulated overall objectives reflected these challenges and ambitions:

- consolidate Hue Universities' role as driver of innovation and research-based education.
- consolidate Hue Universities' role as driver of societal progress especially at educational level.

It could also be inferred from the document analysis that the programme (and project 1 in particular) had set the ambition of being highly ranked as an international university and attracting international students. This ambition was confirmed during the interviews but is rather seen as a long-term objective. What was formulated as an achievable strategy and objective in the short term is to be recognized as a 'national university'. This strategy is also officially part of the university vision and objectives. National universities fall under the jurisdiction of the prime minister and are allocated separate larger budgets compared to all other types of universities under the jurisdiction of the MOET.

As described above, project one serves, as a transversal project, the programme level and served as vehicle to realize the overall strategic university objective of becoming a national university. To achieve this overall objective, it was important (and Project 1 sought to address this) for the university to fit into existing accreditation mechanisms. Project 1 therefore had the explicit aim of gaining expertise in quality assurance (theme 2 of Project 1, quality assurance) at the central university and further disseminating this knowledge to member universities. Strongly linked to the quality assurance and accreditation mechanism are obviously the development of innovative teaching methods (theme 1 of project 1) as these are often included in accreditation schemes. But also, because the need was identified to link research and teaching (activating and differentiated teaching) more strongly. A final key theme identified within Project 1 was university governance. This involved streamlining the complex organization of the university and aligning it with the needs of being recognized as a national university by 2025. Within this overall framework, it was also extremely important for HU to increase the quality of research and as a consequence the number of internationally peer-reviewed publications. This was also one of the criteria for selecting the IUC's other projects. After all, the choice was made to include research groups that had potential for further development.

So, the IUC aligns with and contributes to the university's strategic plan, aiding in its evolution into a National University. The evaluators could note during several interviews that the IUC programme was very much in line with the policy plans developed at the central level. By injecting into improving research and teaching quality and upgrading the entire university framework, it was hoped to offer students better research-based education and arm them for a rapidly changing job market.

2.3. Coherence

The internal coherence of the IUC HU was one of the major concerns during the mid-term review. One of the main findings was that the four projects operated independently of each other. Also, for the transversal project 1, it was then observed that the trickle-down of results/activities to the different member universities and research groups was too limited. One of the recommendations was therefore to increase internal coherence between the projects.

The evaluators could notice that in terms of internal coherence, progress was made in the second phase, albeit on a limited scale. On the one hand, the limited coherence can obviously be explained by the two-level structure of the university, with great independence from the different member universities. On the other hand, it can also be explained by the fact that an explicit choice was made to support research groups and centres of different member universities (and which were not linked to each other) that had already developed a certain potential. This choice is then justified by the university's policy of boosting the number of PhD graduates and increasing the number of internationally peer-reviewed publications in specific fields and thus the overall number of publications of the university. So, the incoherent selection of projects supported the university strategy to maintain its ranking within Vietnam and facilitate recognition as a national university. Within this perspective, internal coherence should be understood as supporting individual research groups to achieve a higher strategic goal.

Nevertheless, at the programme level (i.e. at the level of Project 1), important synergies were created between the different projects as well as with the 8 different member universities, below we give the main achievements:

- Implementation of self-assessment reports for 25 training programs at Hue University. With the support of the project, these training programs were assessed and met the quality standards set by the Ministry of Education and Training of Vietnam.
- From Project One, several conferences and workshops were also organised around educational innovation, quality assurance and university governance with both internal stakeholders (member universities) and external stakeholders (mainly representatives of the MOET). In total, more than 2,100 people participated in such activities during phase two. It was very difficult for the evaluators to assess the direct effect and impact of these activities. Drawing on the interviews and group discussions the evaluators were able to have during the visit to HU, the evaluators can conclude that project 1 succeeded in creating awareness among all member universities about the importance of quality assurance and the introduction of innovative teaching methods and university governance. The evaluators could notice as well that these activities contributed to the creation of greater unity between the central university and the member universities in terms of the overall university strategy (with the aim of achieving national university status by 2025) and the need to create overall quality standards and be innovative in both teaching and research at all levels to this end.
- An innovation fund has been created to deliver grants (1,000 EUR) to individual lecturers to develop their ideas on research innovation. The grants were awarded based on competitive calls. In many cases (but exact number could not be provided) this research grants resulted in international peer reviewed publications.
- Successful collaboration between P1 and P4 in the field of PhD Research and especially in the field of interprofessional education (IPE).

Compared to the mid-term evaluation, the evaluators could see that important steps had also been made in the field of external coherence. From several interviews, the evaluators could see that relationships with the MOET were strengthened in the second phase. This is mainly due to the fact that Prof. Dr. Boa, who was head of the Quality Assurance Department of Central University has taken up a leadership position in the Quality Assurance Department of the MOET. However, this has forced him to resign his position at the HU. This move to the MOET can be seen as an illustration of the success of Project 1. Project 1's activities, among others, allowed him to build on his expertise in QA. Within the framework of project 1, strong complementarity was also created through participation of HU Quality Department in the SHARE project organised by DAAD, British Council and Alliance Française with ASEAN. Hué University has been invited as a partner in pilots about Quality Assurance in higher education.

2.4. Effectiveness & Impact

As described in the inception report, we use the 5C model and the results of the workshop based on the 5C model to assess the effectiveness and impact of the IUC. These data were analysed together with data obtained during the interviews and available documents. Discussing the 5C model was a particularly difficult exercise. Indeed, around the table were representatives from Central University and from three member universities (Hue University of Sciences, Hue University of Medicine and Pharmacy, Hue University of Agriculture and Forestry). Each of these entities have extensive central services such as a rectorate, administrative departments that coordinate international collaborations, who are responsible for curriculum development, but each also must draw up its own strategy and policies.

The exercise therefore revealed that the IUC programme lacked strong internal coherence, as indicated above, and that its effectiveness should be analysed mainly at the project level. Below, in line with the previous chapters concerning the programme level, we will focus mainly on project 1 and the Central University level because it explicitly had the crosscutting level as its objective.

Below in Figure 1 and Figure 2 are visual illustrations of the scores on the different dimensions of the 5C model. An initial quick analysis of the graphs reveals that, according to respondents, no dimension went backwards during the second phase of implementation and progress was made on most dimensions. On a limited number of dimensions, which already scored high in 2019, neither progress nor regression can be noted.

Figure 3. 5C Maturity Level of The Programme at the beginning of phase 2: 2019

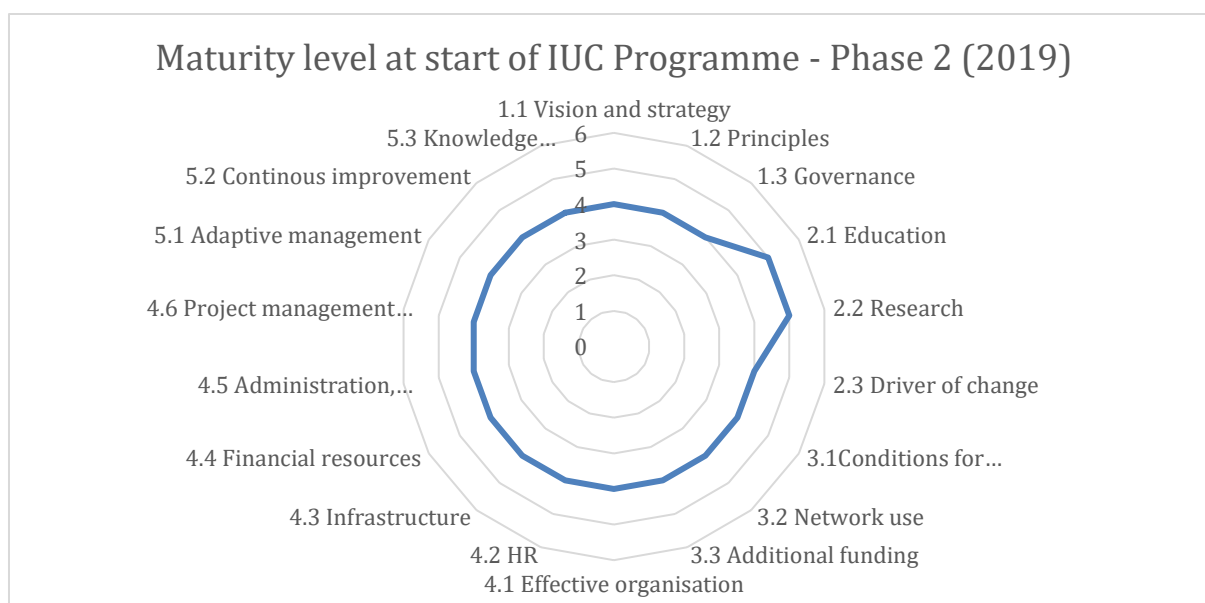
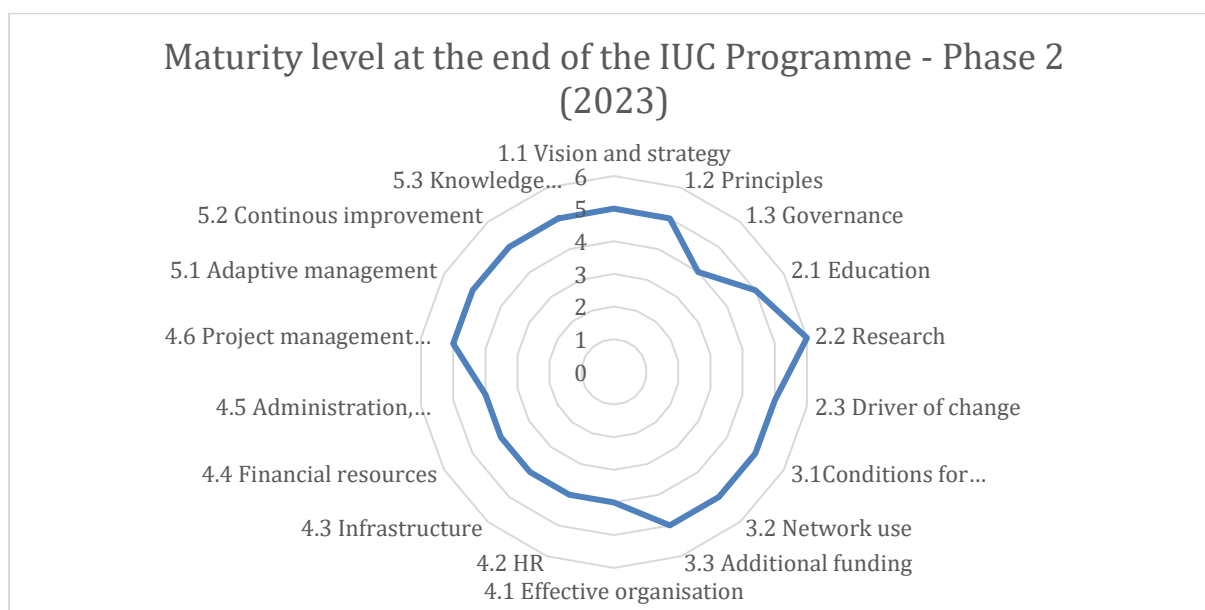


Figure 4. Maturity Level at the end of the Programme - 2023



At the Capability to achieve Coherence level, progress in two of the three domains was reported. As elaborated above, there is a clear vision and strategy with the stakeholders about the future of the university (vision/strategy) namely acquiring the status of national university by 2025 (domain 1). The path towards this is placed at the overarching university level according to a set of several main strategies and objectives (domain 2). Namely increasing the quality of research and teaching to achieve a higher position in university rankings and generate more output in terms of internationally peer-reviewed articles. The vision was further translated into a strategy to award VLIR PhD fellowships to in-house staff in order to build research capacity sustainably. All these strategies together should lead to greater attractiveness of the university and thus higher student enrolment. All these factors together ultimately determine the university's ranking and should thus ultimately have a favourable impact on the application for national university status. On the last domain 'the university's governance/management structures are effective', no progress was reported in the last five years. The complex 2-level structure and associated governance frameworks are a legal fact and cannot be changed by the central university or member universities concerned. However, the evaluators could note that the Central level gained in importance thanks to the funds that flowed to the Central University through the VLIR Project-1. This allowed the Central level to take initiatives to disseminate the vision and strategy to the member universities.

On the second dimension (the capability to deliver results), respondents stated that the domain of high quality developmental relevant education remained roughly constant between the beginning of the second phase and the end of the second phase. The second and third domains progressed, with the domain of high-quality research receiving the highest possible score of 6. Participants also viewed the university more strongly now as an actor and driver of change than at the start in 2019. Based on the discussion of additional data, the evaluators can confirm the progress in these domains. One possibility to assess the quality of research is the number of annual publications in international peer-reviewed journals.² For the whole university (i.e. all member universities), this has increased dramatically over the past 10 years from a few to more than 600 (by 2022). This increase is a direct consequence of the university strategy to put research centre stage. This rising number of publications is obviously not the exclusive result of the IUC but as result of a common effect of all member universities to put research at the centre of the university's strategy. Thus, a practice has become to give research and publications a more important share in the reward system of academics (promotions). However, IUC did contribute to this rise in a moderate fashion. Since the start of the second phase, there are 43 international peer-reviewed publications that can be directly related to research carried out within the different projects of the IUC programme, in particular the 13 PhD scholarships funded by the VLIR-UOS

² Another interesting initiative to measure quality of research is the DORA declaration on research assessment (<https://sfidora.org/read/>)

IUC HU. The educational innovation that was part of the objective was also delivered by the various projects. No less than 13 master programmes were substantially updated, and 6 new courses were developed, thanks to the projects and thus the IUC programme. And, though the figures were incompletely reported and difficult to reconstruct, just over 2,000 students in total are said to have enjoyed the newly developed courses (though mainly in P4). Whether the university is perceived as a real actor or driver of change (domain 3) depends from the perspective. No survey data is available that captures HU perceptions of external stakeholders. So, we have to look at the results the projects have yielded and what potential for societal change they have brought about. For the different projects, we briefly describe this in project analyses below and for project 4, which can be considered a success example in this area, we describe this in detail in the impact case study. For the central university, it can be assumed that there was a higher visibility than before the project implementation because through conferences and workshops (51 initiatives in total), external stakeholders (often governments and other education actors), but sometimes also the private sector, were almost always invited as participants. For all activities together, more than 2,100 external stakeholders participated. This was the explicit consequence of the opportunities created through Project 1. Through this channel, the aim was to create networks and give visibility to the HU in the region. Unfortunately, it was not possible for the evaluators to survey participants of these activities within the scope of this evaluation.

These networking activities (workshops and conferences) are thus also an illustration of the capability to relate to external stakeholders. As indicated above, many networking activities have been developed at programme level with many invited stakeholders from different sectors in society. It could also be observed from the interviews that the university is well embedded in the political and educational arenas (and this seems to be the case for all projects). Attracting additional funding remains a point of attention, according to the evaluators. MOET's resources to fund research remain rather limited. The VLIR partnership has already played an important role to provide the projects with research funds. Limited additional funds were generated at project and research group level.

Finally, we briefly discuss the last dimension (capability to adapt and self-renew). The new higher education laws (2018-2019) created new contexts for all universities. The main consequence of the new reality is that the MOET no longer reimburses all costs (such as salaries and/or facilities). In addition, this legislation also concerns the application of the new Vietnamese Quality Framework, conditions for students to enroll in Master's programmes (e.g. level B1 in English), the possibility to organize online courses and thus apply new teaching methodologies. As far as the evaluators could adequately assess, HU seems to have adapted to this new context in a very agile way. Whereas in phase 1 it was still mainly the strategic objective to become an internationally recognized university, that has evolved more concretely to a shorter-term strategic objective where the objective is to be recognized as a national university by 2025. What the evaluators learnt from the interviewees is that the IUC provided them with an extraordinary number of skills and knowledge to deal with this changing context. For example, all quality assurance workshops and exchanges contributed to the fact that HU quickly understood the consequences related to these requirements but also had the necessary expertise to implement them (via pilots) in the various member universities (e.g. the AUN-QA self-assessments exercises implement within the framework of P1). But beyond the technical requirements of accreditation, they had also learnt through that P1 how to prepare administrative files and the logistical and administrative procedures required for this.

2.5. Efficiency

The evaluators assessed the efficiency criterion based on the limited financial reporting available to them and the limited information available in the various reporting tools. During the visit to HU, more attention was also paid to the other DAC criteria as these were considered more relevant within the framework of the final evaluation.

The IUC programme budget totaled €1.3 million, of which €1,196,000 (92%) was transferred to HU. The Flemish funds were used for administrative costs and mainly concerned PSU coordination costs. Of all expenditures in Vietnam, about 30 per cent went to scholarships, 55 per cent to operational costs and 7-8 per cent each to investment and personnel costs. A characteristic of all VLIR-UOS projects is that staff of the universities involved do not receive any additional salary or remuneration as participants of the cooperation. Hence, personnel costs are rather low and mainly relate to consultancy assignments or short-term assignments of externals involved in the project. Investment costs are also relatively limited

at around 93,000 euros, less than 8 per cent of the total budget. This investment budget was mainly used for investment in equipment for project 3. Thirty percent of the budget was spent on 13 PhD scholarships and about 55 percent on operational costs for implementing the programme (research, travel, organization of workshops, conferences, field visits, etc...). The evaluators believe, based on this data, there is a high added value or return on investment:

- Very low staff cost. Academics commit to the project on a voluntary basis. The downside of this approach is that the projects are often an extra burden on staff. Their engagement in this type of project does not mean they are relieved of other duties. So, project tasks often come on top of other duties. The evaluators noted that many involved carry overcrowded schedules and particularly heavy responsibilities, which does not always improve efficiency (and perhaps effectiveness).
- A relatively large budget was spent on 13 PhD scholarships for staff who were already working at the university before the IUC started. At the time of the evaluation, seven students had already completed their PhD and all the others are expected to finish during 2024. Only one of the graduates has left the university for a position in Canada. The low drop-out rates combined with high retention not only illustrates high effectiveness but is also an illustration of efficient use of resources to upgrade staff.

On the other hand, the evaluators noted that coherence between the different projects was not high and even within the projects, PhD scholarships were isolated and part of different research groups within a member university. The question can be asked whether it would not have been better to concentrate resources on one or two research groups in order to stimulate cooperation between PhD students and build even stronger research groups. A more collaborative approach might have been more efficient (this might also have led to more sustainable effectiveness).

Finally, it's crucial to note that the COVID-19 period, marked by lockdowns, had significant implications for international travel. This resulted in the cancellation of key networking events precisely when the second phase of the program should have been at full speed. The COVID-19 period also largely explains why several PhD research projects need to be finalized during the phasing-out of the program.

2.6. Sustainability

2.6.1. Institutional & academic sustainability

The quality assurance and accreditation mechanisms formed a pivotal theme of the first project. Hue University, aimed to meet the Southeast Asian University Network's (AUN-QA) quality assessment standards by 2020. Despite efforts facilitated by the VLIR-UOS IUC HU collaboration, no member university at Hue University has yet completed the quality assessment according to AUN-QA standards, although internal self-assessments have been implemented as support by the IUC. The lack of a fully developed internal quality assurance system in line with AUN-QA models was identified as a primary reason for this shortfall. The need to assess the status of quality assurance activities within these universities is emphasized, with a view to align them with AUN-QA standards. This alignment is deemed crucial for realizing Hue University's strategic goal of becoming a national university in Vietnam. In sum, the evaluators did find evidence that a lot of activities (through workshops, exchange visits, conferences, self-study), knowledge and skills have been build-up at the central level, and thanks to the contribution of the IUC and this knowledge has been disseminated to the membership universities but that the final phase, namely the real accreditation of programmes is not yet implemented. According to the evaluators, this should be a priority the next two years.

The strategy of awarding scholarships predominantly to existing staff members at Hue University is highlighted as a significant choice that bolsters both academic and institutional sustainability. All graduates have remained at HU (except for one lecturer). The knowledge and expertise gained thus remains within the university. The evaluators have been told by their supervisors that the graduates used their acquired knowledge and skills in their teaching and research (by developing new and deepening existing research lines). However, it is noted that these lecturers and researchers, conduct their research in relative isolation from each other. This decentralized approach to research, with

scholarships evenly distributed among various faculties and departments, as seen e.g., in projects like P2 and P3, where each of three PhD students belongs to different faculties, resembles an approach that did not want to concentrate all resources, but wanted to give opportunities to different departments and units. As mentioned earlier in this report, this was an understandable choice in the light of the wider strategy to focus on units where there was potential for high quality research with accompanying publications in peer reviewed journals.

Further, the IUC invested also in equipment. A policy has been established where the equipment purchased under the project is available for use not only by the involved research units but also by other research units within the university. This approach is recognized for optimizing the utilization of resources. The various stakeholders of the projects assume that this equipment will be able to be used for at least another 10 years and that the knowledge is in place to maintain it.

Lastly, the contribution of projects, especially P1 and P4, to the development of novel educational practices is acknowledged. Innovations such as blended learning, e-learning, the introduction of virtual reality, systematic review of manuals, and testing procedures have been significant as according to the reporting files more than 1,500 benefited from it. These innovations have been or are in the process of being integrated into the university's procedures, reflecting a commitment to evolving educational practices.

2.6.2. Financial sustainability

The financial sustainability at the central university level seems assured, at least that is confirmed by key stakeholders. There is no external alternative funding at the moment that can absorb the VLIR-UOS IUC funding. Regular resources, which include contributions from member universities, must guarantee the continuation of activities. The central university administration states it is committed to organizing the workshops and conferences for external stakeholders on a continuing basis. The financial stability of projects 2 & 3 are rather limited because no substantial alternative funding is in place. The equipment purchased within the IUC programme is obviously still available to the researchers, but it remains a challenge, according to the various stakeholders, to finance the materials (like liquids, chemicals, ...) needed to continue using the devices. So far, they have managed to do so.

The only project whose financial stability seems assured is the work of Project 4. Anchored in the Hué University of Medicine and pharmacy, the FMC is envisioned as one of its spearheads and thus receives university funding.

Moreover, the subject Family Medicine included in the curriculum of the regular Medical programme has facilitated the acquisition of financial support from the university. This financial backing has ensured the continued implementation and sustainability of innovations developed within the project, including the standardized patient teaching model, virtual reality, and electronic patient health record systems

Finally, there are also financial resources coming to the FMC through various national and regional policy initiatives, e.g. specific research funds towards better primary care, legislation allowing certain acts in the FMC to become reimbursable to insurance companies.

3. Brief assessment per project³ (max 1,5 pages per project)

Below in *Table 3* are the scores the project rated themselves with in their self-assessment are presented. The minimum score is 0 and the maximum score is 4. Below, we can see that the projects evaluate themselves mostly positively. In general terms, the evaluators agree with this assessment. Below, we briefly describe the projects in the programme with a brief summary of the projects' efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability, to the extent that these have not already been discussed above.

Table 3. Scores by project based on the self-assessments⁴

	P1	P2	P3	P4
Sustainability (Q3)				
Finance/economic sustainability	3	3	4	4
Level of ownership	4	4	4	4
Results will continue	4	3	3	4
Partnership (Q3)				
Quality of comm within the project/programme	4	3	3	3
Academic interest and commitment	4	3	3	3
Project management (Q5)				
Value for money	4	4	3	3
Working relations with PSU	4	3	4	3
Active involvement	3	4	4	4
Mutual trust and joint decision making	4	4	4	4

Source: Self-assessments by projects

3.1. Project 1. Institutional strengthening

This project has mainly been described at the programme level above. We summarize the most important elements and add those characteristics which have not yet been elaborated.

Phase II of the 'Institutional Strengthening Project' kept its focus on three themes:

- (1) innovative methods in education;
- (2) quality assurance; and
- (3) university governance.

The main objective is that Hué University becomes a university with an international image.

The project was, as indicated above, effective. The indicators at the level of the specific objective were achieved, except for the number of successfully defended PhDs (1 compared to the 3 proposed). However, the evaluators were able to note during the visit that a second student is completing her PhD research as a result of a collaboration between P1 & P2. The focus of this PhD-research is mainly on educational innovation and interprofessional education. Important results achieved are also that the number of publications is above the target value and more e-learning courses have been developed than anticipated (5). The number of QA-based courses is also higher than expected (namely 4 versus the targeted 2).

It should be mentioned that many activities had to be cancelled in the 2020-22 period due to the Covid-19 restrictions on F2F contacts. This influenced the realisation of intermediate results related to international and national workshops and travel as, indicators show. Thus, the number of staff visits to Belgium had to be reduced and slightly fewer workshops and conferences were organised. This

³ To avoid duplication of information, this section focuses on the specificities of each project. Other findings that cut-across the programme level are addressed in the section that discusses findings at programme level.

⁴ These scores correspond to projects in phase 2. In this section, the focus is on phase 2.

obviously also influenced the total number of participants but had no vital impact on the achievements of the specific objective.

Through the network of P1 team leaders, the project has successfully achieved integration in the field of Quality Assurance (QA) at the ASEAN level. Consequently, QA has been reoriented within an international framework, encompassing built-up expertise, manuals, tools, and other resources.

3.2. *Project 2. Livestock and Aquaculture*

The general objective of P2 was to enhance the sustainability of the primary animal production of small holder farmers in central-Vietnam. Research of Phase I revealed polyculture in aquaculture systems and local by-products from agricultural activities and the food industry are key factors in this respect. In phase II studies have built on these results, which have been extended by the integration of life cycle assessments to holistically evaluate the environmental sustainability of the proposed approaches. Capacity building was aimed at through research and training on integrated animal and environmental sciences. To reach the project's objectives essential information about sustainable aquaculture and livestock systems was intended to be disseminated to stakeholders. Excluding the COVID-period, workshops engaging stakeholders have indeed been conducted to disseminate findings in both livestock and aquaculture. Notably, the workshops targeting veterinarians and agricultural advisors from the local government, who play a pivotal role as external stakeholders closely connected with local farmers, fostered a strong bond with the field. The fact that sampling occurred on farms during Phase 2 further facilitated the direct dissemination of results into the field.

The relevance of the project

Vietnam, as a Lower Middle-Income Country, has witnessed significant improvements in the living standards of its population, leading to a rising demand for livestock and aquaculture products. This demand is anticipated to continue increasing in line with Vietnam's official "Vietnam 2035" agenda, aimed at further advancing the country's prosperity and elevating it to a High Middle-Income status. Consequently, agriculture and aquaculture have transitioned from subsistence farming to production for local markets and, in some cases, for export, aligning with the country's policy goals. Specifically, for livestock, the focus is on boosting local production to reduce reliance on imports and associated risks. This project aimed to contribute to environmental sustainability by addressing issues such as ammonia emissions and reducing feed imports.

Similarly, Vietnam's aquaculture industry faces challenges related to pollution, disease incidence, and deteriorating water quality, further exacerbated by climate change impacts on water availability and quality. These developments have a direct impact on farmers' livelihoods, particularly smallholders who are the most vulnerable. Therefore, the strategies researched in this project prioritized solutions applicable to and economically beneficial for smallholder farmers. These strategies encompass the utilization of local feed resources in the livestock sector and the adoption of polyculture aquaculture to address water quality and disease-related challenges.

Coherence of the project

The project exhibits coherence in its approach to addressing issues within the livestock and aquaculture sectors in Vietnam. It has identified specific challenges faced by these sectors and has developed strategies that align with national policies and priorities, particularly in the context of Vietnam's economic growth and sustainability objectives. The project's focus on enhancing the genetic potential of local genotypes in livestock aligns with the goal of reducing reliance on imports and improving the country's self-sufficiency. Moreover, the project's emphasis on environmental sustainability and addressing issues such as ammonia emissions and feed import reduction is coherent with broader national and global sustainability goals. It acknowledges the importance of minimizing the environmental impact of livestock and aquaculture production. The project's attention to smallholder farmers and their economic well-being is consistent with the broader objective of inclusive growth and improving the livelihoods of vulnerable populations. It ensures that the strategies developed are not only relevant but also practical and economically beneficial for the target group. Additionally, the project has collaborated and synergized with other related projects and networks, enhancing its coherence within the academic and research community.

Impact of the project

The project has exerted a significant impact on the university's livestock and aquaculture research direction. Previously, the primary focus of research in this field was centered around enhancing animal productivity. However, the project has instigated a noticeable shift towards sustainable livestock and aquaculture development, particularly emphasizing environmental considerations. This transformation has not only influenced the research endeavors but has also led to adjustments in the training curriculum. The concept of mitigating environmental pollution at its source has been integrated into both research linked directly to the VLIR-IUC project and other related projects. The university recently completed the revision of MSc level training curriculums in compliance with Circular 17 issued by the Ministry of Education and Training. As part of these revisions, a new mandatory course on environmental sustainability has been introduced across all MSc programs.

Furthermore, the project has made an impact on the university's research capabilities in the livestock and aquaculture environment domain. Multiple research teams have been established, and the laboratories have been equipped with state-of-the-art facilities capable of analyzing critical environmental parameters. Consequently, the university's research activities now conform to international standards. For instance, an ethical committee has been created to evaluate the ethical aspects of animal-related experiments. This ethics committee was the first of its kind in Vietnam and serves as an example for other Vietnamese universities. Part of the importance of this ethics committee is that a procedure for this ethics committee is necessary to get research published in international peer-reviewed journals.

Impact on Society

The scale of the project's influence on the broader society seems to be limited although a good case could be identified from the industry. For example, an industry leader like Green Feed responded to the project's insights by producing environmentally friendly diets, adopting measures to reduce dietary crude protein to mitigate ammonia and odor emissions from industrial pig production. These proactive steps by industry players highlight the project's role in driving practical changes towards sustainable and environmentally conscious practices.

Sustainability of the Project/Results

While the project team has shown success in securing research grants from international, national, and provincial sources, these funds primarily covered consumables, labor, and some basic facilities, making it challenging to secure comprehensive laboratory equipment (e.g., IFS project, GIA Lai Province research funding, and HUAF research project). The project's emphasis on capacity building was excellent, as nearly all staff members involved in the project, except one PhD researcher in aquaculture, have remained at the university, ensuring the continuity of knowledge and expertise.

3.3. *Project 3. Coastal ecosystem and natural resources management*

Based on the research results of phase I, Tam Giang - Cau Hai lagoon ecosystems face problems of water quality and decreasing biodiversity. In phase II studies on lagoon resilience have been continued. Research focused on lagoon primary production, water quality monitoring, and risks assessment of pollutants.

Relevance & Coherence of the Project

The Tam Giang – Cau Hai lagoon system, encompassing an expanse exceeding 22,000 hectares, possesses distinctive environmental, biodiversity, and livelihood features conducive to the protection, restoration, and conservation of a wetland region. Nevertheless, socio-economic development processes in recent years have profoundly influenced the lagoon's ecosystem. Commencing in the 1990s, there has been a substantial expansion in aquaculture, yet the absence of a definitive zoning plan has resulted in the reduction of the lagoon's natural water surface, culminating in exploitative activities that have markedly depleted the natural resources of the open lagoon. Additionally, the lagoon's waters have been contaminated by aquaculture, as well as by agricultural runoff from rice fields, while the discharge of untreated wastewater from local communities has further compromised the lagoon's integrity. In light of these challenges, the People's Committee of Thua Thien Hue province has determined the necessity of conducting a study to establish a protected wetland area within the Tam Giang Cau Hai lagoon, designating it as a priority to devise a comprehensive socio-economic development plan for the area beyond the 2020s. The project's contribution to development has thus

been specifically directed towards enhancing lagoon primary production, water quality monitoring, and pollutant risk assessment.

Effectiveness & Impact:

The outcomes of the project facilitated the Hue University of Sciences in formulating and executing a sustainable development strategy, while also enhancing the university's capacity to educate and enhance skills pertaining to the conservation and investigation of coastal ecosystem resources. The research skills of staff and students from three academic departments, namely Chemistry, Biology, and Environmental Science, were enhanced through their participation in various project activities. These activities included a lagoon monitoring programme, practical work, and experiments. As a result, the number of publications pertaining to the lagoon increased. The project provided funding for the participation of Master's students in field studies and laboratory research, which included the utilization of project-funded equipment and chemicals. The training sessions were attended by personnel, researchers, and Master of Science students with the purpose of enhancing their understanding in the areas of experimental design, data analysis, and article composition. Postdoctoral researchers and participants of the project used the information they had obtained to establish their own research initiatives.

Impact of the project on the broader society.

Although the project's endeavors were strategically planned to complement the local government's strategy for the preservation of coastal ecosystems (see relevance of the project), the evaluation team could find little convincing evidence that there was a major impact of the project on the use of the lagoon by local communities although some workshops with local communities have been organized. More time is probably needed to generate impact because policies need to be formed by the local authorities and then implemented. What does seem certain is that the research findings of the project have been communicated to local authorities. It seems that the capacity of various stakeholders—including the Department of Science and Technology (DOST), Department of Natural Resources and Environment (DONRE), Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD), Fisheries Association, local authorities, and pertinent departments within Hue University has been strengthened (through the dissemination of project outcomes during seminars and meetings). Furthermore, the initiative provided guidance to support aquacultural operations in the lagoon, aligning with sustainable development objectives. Notably, this involved assisting DONRE in revising the lagoon's monitoring procedures to comply with prevailing international standards. This assistance consisted in the organisation of workshop and consultations.

Sustainability of the project/results

The well-trained staff (through the project trainings) at the university will keep teaching and researching in ways that are more in line with international standards. This will help the university's position in the long run. Based on the study results, the local government and officials should be able to develop a practical management plan for the lake, according to the team members.

3.4. Project 4. Rural Health care

Phase 2 of this project was to expand the achievements of Phase 1 and to improve the primary health care system of Vietnam at the first encounter commune health center level through a work/study modular training program based on the core content of the specialty of Family Medicine and appropriate for local needs. The project had the objective to improve the quality of health care services at primary care level and access and management of non-communicable diseases in population.

Relevance & Coherence of the project

The success of primary care in developing countries relies on the presence of competent generalists, including family doctors. Vietnam's network of commune health centers (CHCs) is extensive, but many have undertrained staff. Many general doctors lack clinical experience and post-graduate training, leading to patients bypassing local CHCs. The Ministry of Health identified Family Medicine training as a foundation for improving primary care and the overall health system. Phase 1 of the training program on Family Medicine to CHC physicians resulted in workshops and CME courses for CHC health professionals. However, the challenge lies in human resources, particularly the availability of trainees to attend training courses. 152 commune health centers in Thua Thien Hue province are offered E-learning

and E-mentoring for health staff, and a pilot basic platform for E-Learning and E-mentoring Hub has been launched. The aging population in Vietnam demands healthcare services for non-communicable diseases, which are often inadequate due to lack of health information, human resources, and essential medicines. Systematic education, motivation, and continuous monitoring by health professionals can help encourage lifestyle changes. Self-management programs for chronic non-communicable diseases are lacking in Vietnam, and cooperation between different disciplines is lacking.

The specific problem that the project tried to solve was the need for better management, guidance, and delivery of basic care in Vietnam, especially in the central region. The project holds significance because it fits with evidence-based practices and the creation of new public policies that stress the need for skilled doctors who know basic principles of primary care, like Family Medicine. Strong proof and a study of what people in the region want led to the development and implementation of the project's treatments and activities.

Not only the Flemish Universities (through the IUC HU), but also the Ministry of Health, the Provincial Health Department of Thua Thien Hue, and Boston University worked together with the University of Medicine and Pharmacy, Hue University on the project. The project team seems to have also formed a strong relationship with the team from Liege University on a FM project that is being funded by Wallon and Brussels regional governments. These partnerships have helped the project teams, users, and partners get to know each other and become more committed, which means they will support policy creation and project implementation.

Impact/Results of the Project

The project has led to a significant shift in attitudes and practices among faculty members, healthcare providers, and students in the Vietnamese healthcare system. It has increased the recognition of primary care and family medicine, leading to a greater emphasis on patient-centered approaches and holistic healthcare delivery. Evidence-based practices and a more collaborative approach seems to be adopted, particularly in rural and remote areas (see impact study). Medical education and training practices have also undergone intended changes, with a shift towards competency-based education. Innovative teaching methods, such as blended learning, E-mentoring, simulation-based training, virtual reality (VR), and interprofessional education, have enhanced students' learning experience and prepared them for real-world healthcare challenges (see for more information impact study). The project has integrated virtual reality (VR) into medical education, enhancing students' practical skills and decision-making abilities. Collaborations with researchers have assessed the effectiveness of VR applications in medical education and healthcare. These initiatives have positioned the university as a leader in Vietnam's medical education reform efforts, as was confirmed by the Flemish partners. Faculty members have been able to pursue advanced research and training in primary care practice and education through project support and mentorship. The project has also enhanced the capacity of teaching staff and faculty through doctoral training programs, short-term training opportunities, and participation in conferences and seminars. The project has played a crucial role in improving the performance and quality of care provided by the university. Faculty members and 1771 healthcare providers at the CHCs have received training and support to enhance their clinical skills, diagnostic capabilities, and treatment protocols, leading to more accurate diagnoses, better management of chronic conditions, and improved patient outcomes.

Impact on Society:

See impact-case study below.

Sustainability of the Project:

The project has enabled the provision of financial assistance to staff members to pursue doctoral studies and engage in research activities. Consequently, this has led to the development of sustainable capacity and enhanced chances for securing further financing for future research efforts. The training programme and instructional resources created during this project phase allow the institution to sustainably expand its course offerings without requiring further financial support. The FM training and practice Center's operational mechanisms generate earnings that contribute to the maintenance of its operations and assure the financial sustainability of the family medicine practice model inside the institution.

Regionally, research results provide evidence for planning and management in health human resources management and NCD management at the primary care level. The project has established a strong foundation for the application of Information Technology (IT) in healthcare, particularly in mobile health

(mHealth) and digital health. Building upon the project's success, there is an opportunity to expand the use of mHealth and digital health solutions to enhance healthcare delivery and patient engagement. Institutionally, the project's results and effects will continue in terms of capacity building and infrastructure improvement. A large group of leaders and staff receiving training and obtaining academic degrees will continue to serve as core members of the university and the FMC. The establishment and progress of E-learning and skill lab training have provided a solid foundation for ongoing development. The project can also foster collaborations with IT experts and stakeholders to explore innovative ways of integrating IT applications into medical education and healthcare delivery.

4. Impact case

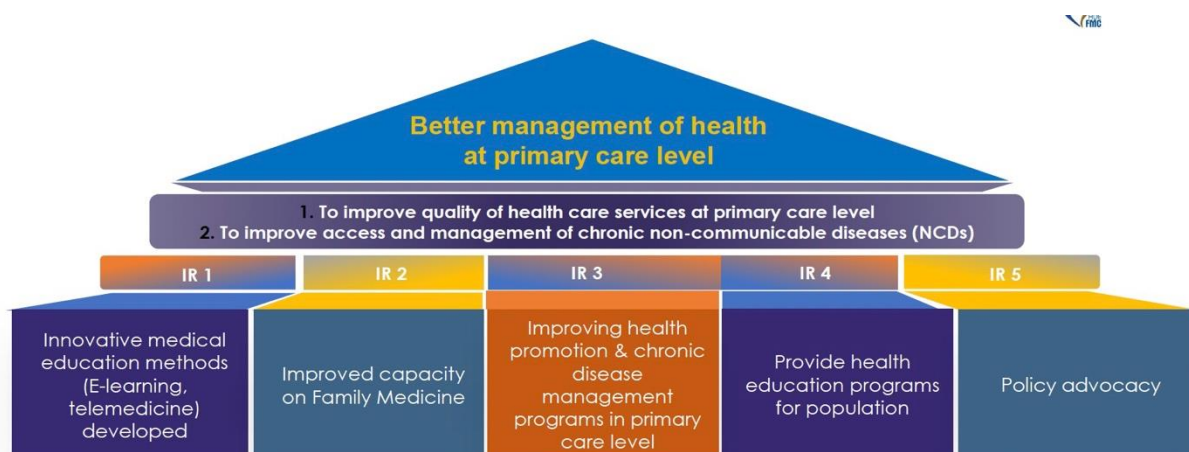
4.1. Introduction: description of Project 4

The program focused on improving the quality of care for both communicable diseases and the rapidly increasing non-communicable diseases by implementing and evaluating work-based and problem-based training methods. This approach aimed to strengthen the healthcare system's response to chronic disease management and risk reduction at the primary care level. This has been translated into project ToC visualised below (see Figure 1).

The base of the ToC consists of five foundational components, each identified as an Intermediate Result (IR), which are necessary to achieve the final objective.

IR1: Innovative medical education methods (E-learning, telemedicine) developed. This suggests a focus on modernizing and expanding the reach of medical education through digital means. IR2: Improved capacity on Family Medicine. This indicates efforts to enhance the skills and abilities of those who practice family medicine, presumably to provide better primary care services.

Figure 5. Theory of Change (ToC).



IR3: Improving health promotion & chronic disease management programs in primary care level. This implies the development and improvement of programs that both promote health generally and specifically address chronic disease management at the primary care level. IR4: Provide health education programs for the population. This likely involves creating educational programs that aim to inform the general population about health topics, potentially leading to better self-care and awareness of health issues. IR5: Policy advocacy. This component involves efforts to influence policies in a way

that supports the other goals of the ToC, ensuring that the regulatory and policy environment is conducive to achieving better health management.

The specific Objectives are:

- To improve the quality of healthcare services at the primary care level. This is an overarching goal that likely encompasses the development of innovative medical education methods and the improvement of family medicine capacity.
- To improve access and management of chronic non-communicable diseases (NCDs). This aim is directly supported by improving health promotion and disease management programs as well as providing health education to the population.

4.2. Major Achievements & Contributions of the project.

For the impact case analysis, the evaluators started with the methodological approach with identifying the impact claim, identifying mechanisms, strength of evidence and appreciation of significance. These elements are included in the text below. Nevertheless, the interconnectedness between the different components (i.e. strong coherence) is so high that it is impossible to want to detect linear relationships. Rather, it is the interplay of different results and efforts that made that great impact was generated. We have tried to reconstruct this in an accessible way below.

Contribution to National and Regional Policy Decision making processes.

The project was particularly successful in terms of advocacy. FMC played a vital role in Primary health care policy development. Because of the activities and successful results the project produced, it enjoys a great reputation in Vietnam and is the FMC involved in preparatory policy processes. The evaluators could conclude with a high degree of certainty that the FMC played an important role (contribution) on subsequent national policy development:

- Degree 81 of the Vietnam National Law on Medical Examination and Treatment (Issued January 15, 2023): This regulation is a landmark in formalizing FM practice within the national legal framework.
- Circulars and Health Plans:
 - Circular 37/2014/TT-BYT (first phase of the project)
 - Circular 16/2014/TT-BYT (first phase of the project)
 - Vietnam Health Plan for 2016 – 2020 (Policy 139/KH-BYT, March 1, 2016)
 - Circular on Guidelines for pilot family medicine practices issued by the Ministry of Health - No. 21/2019/TT-BYT Hanoi, August 21, 2019
- Resolution No. 20-NQ/TW (October 25, 2017): From the Sixth Plenary Session of the 12th Party Central Committee, emphasizing the development of FM as a major task and solution for improving people's health (first phase of the project)
- Implementation of the Law on Medical Examination and Treatment No. 15/2023/QH15 (second phase of the project)

FMC's contribution in this policy advocacy is based on its strong relationships with the Ministry of Health, the organisation of conferences and workshops. These consultations happen on its own initiative or by invitation. During their visit, the evaluators could observe that the FMC received an invitation from the Department of Medical Examination and Treatment of the Ministry of Health to be part of the editorial board for the Circular that will determine the list of diseases and health conditions for remote medical examination and treatment/telemedicine. The new circular has the potential to significantly enhance primary care services and healthcare accessibility for the population, particularly for those residing in remote areas and elderly individuals.

Of course, it remains difficult to ascertain the exact scale of contribution of the VLIR-UOS project. Of course, the FMC HU was not the only invited stakeholder. But from several interviews with unfortunately only internal stakeholders and the Flemish project leaders, it is clear that FMC contributed and contributes to policy change together with others, (in particular with Family Medicine Department of Hanoi Medical University). So, it is mainly the strong external coherence that has made policy changes happen. Whether Hanoi's contribution was stronger than HU's or vice versa was impossible for the evaluators to identify. What is certain is that through the project, the FMC was able to increase and build its expertise and as a result, among other things, gained a great reputation and is considered a strong

partner by national and regional governments on primary healthcare. The examples above do illustrate that the FMC directly and the project indirectly influenced primary health care policy in rural areas and this at the national level. The societal contribution of the project should therefore be considered very large.

Finally, the deployment of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and developed tools by the FMC has proven to be a ground-breaking approach in the realm of primary care management. This technology provides invaluable insights, granting authorities a comprehensive visual overview of the healthcare system's infrastructure. It elucidates the distribution of disease patterns and the healthcare requirements of the population. Significantly, this GIS innovation has been seamlessly adopted by the Provincial Health Department, where it has been incorporated into their strategic decision-making and health planning methodologies.

Contribution to increased capacity at the level of Community Health Centres (CHC)

The project aimed to enhance the quality of healthcare services at the primary care level. This objective seems to have been realized through several initiatives, including improving the capacity of staff and primary care workers, delivering blended-learning training courses in family medicine (FM) and primary care, and conducting studies to explore the effectiveness of these training methods. According to the project files, more than 1700 health care in different CHCs and DHCs in the Central and Highlands region were trained. 145 CHCs in Thua Thien Hue province used the E-learning system developed within this project. Additionally, the project supports the establishment of the Association of Family Physicians in Thua Thien Hue province, illustrating a strategic focus on strengthening primary care through collaboration and shared learning.

To achieve these objectives, a diverse range of activities has been undertaken. These include organizing workshops and Continuing Medical Education (CME) courses for CHC health professionals, with a focus on non-communicable disease (NCD) management and strengthening the FM network. Innovative training approaches, such as pre-training programs (a kind of short-term internship at the CHC for students of the 2nd and 5th year of the regular medicine programme) in rural workplaces for medical students and capacity-building seminars for family physicians, have been implemented. Furthermore, the Family Medicine Center has undertaken significant efforts in academic development in a resource-limited setting, highlighting activities such as curriculum revision, production of textbooks for regular medical students and health care workers, e-learning modules, and development of training guidelines for lecturers at the university.

The results of these initiatives are, according to the evaluators multifaceted. There is evidence of improved capacity among primary care physicians and staff, as several of them shared their upgraded knowledge and skills to the evaluators. Knowledge of the integrated approach to family medicine and the skills to put it into practice seem to have been acquired by a large proportion of the trained staff. This is further demonstrated by the awarding of the Third Prize at the Thua Thien Hue province technological Creativity contest in 2020 of the e-learning approach of the project⁵. Nevertheless, it could also be observed by the evaluators that not all of the three CHCs they visited had the necessary equipment and often did not stock enough medication to help patients. The latter also seems to be due to the perception among local authorities that the capacities at the level of the CHC are not sufficiently high resulting in a lack of confidence to provide them with a varied supply of medication. This results in a significant downside for patients passing through these CHCs and still dropping down to HU and the FMC to seek a doctor's consultation. Aware of these processes, the project staff has been fully committed to strengthening the staff at the CHC level. This is to provide better primary care and thus increase trust among local authorities and patients. That this model works could also be observed by the evaluators. Although evaluators could assume a logical link between the training and improved patient care, evaluators were unable to gather sufficient contextual elements that provide conclusive evidence of the direct impact of the training programme on better health services to patients. Elements

⁵ The Thua Thien Hue 10th Technical Innovation Competition in 2020, organized by the Thua Thien Hue Union of Science and Technology Associations, was a significant event aimed at promoting the creative labor movement in the fields of science and technology. It was part of a broader effort to apply scientific and technical solutions to enhance socio-economic development and contribute to the industrialization and modernization of the country. The competition, held from March to December 2020, welcomed diverse creative and technical solutions in six major areas: Information technology, electronics and telecommunications; mechanical automation, construction, transportation; materials, chemicals, energy; agriculture, forestry,

such as, for example, proximity to the city (with improved medical services), management skills of CHC leaders, educational background of staff and medical staff, vision and policy processes by local authorities are important elements that could not be sufficiently mapped in a comparative way. What was noted by evaluators, however, was that the P4 staff is fully aware of these contextual factors and therefore also focused very strongly on the advocacy pillar of the project (see above).

Integration of Family Medicine in the Regular Medical Programme.

Another very important achieved result that can have a potential big impact in the long run and strengthens the sustainability of the programme is the fact that the subject Family medicine has been integrated into the regular medical programme of the Hué University of Medicine and Pharmacy. This means that all doctors in training are required to take the Family Medicine course and do short internships (in the 2nd and 5th year) in CHCs in the region. Later in training, they can then specialize further. This will obviously result in better trained medical personnel being available for employment in CHCs in the future. Through discussions with doctors-in-training in the CHC and at the FMC, the evaluators were able to establish that these internships are indeed effective in getting students to make informed educational choices in the sense that now students can also consciously choose to be trained as family medicine doctors. The project has as such demonstrably contributed to curriculum development (through exchanges/workshops), development of teaching materials (such as development of courses where VR technology is used), and through research-based teaching (PhD research).

The establishment of an electronic health record (EHR) system, the development of textbooks, and the integration of family medicine into the regular medical program of the Hué University of Medicine and Pharmacy are tangible outcomes.

Conclusions

Based on document analysis, the interviews and field visits at a few CHCs, the evaluators can conclude that the project has made a clear contribution in three areas:

- Improved quality of service delivery with family medicine principles as an approach in the CHC through training and support of FMC
- Supporting educational components (e.g. curriculum development, teaching materials) and research (PhD research) in the discipline of Family Medicine.
- Strong influence on policy development in Vietnam's health sector at national and regional levels.

Of course, other important factors also contributed to the successes achieved. We highlight the most important ones here:

- The Family Medicine Project funded by the Atlantic Philanthropies should be considered as the start of the establishment of the FMC (2013-2016). This project has been implemented by Hue University of Medicine and Pharmacy with the technical supports from Boston University. It was a model programme for training health professionals to meet standards of practice and delivering care effectively at the basic level in underserved rural areas.
- A clear strategy and policy vision at the Rectorate level of the Hue University of Medicine and Pharmacy to make Family Medicine a focal point in the university.
- Excellent cooperation (networking) between the Ministry of Health and Thua Thien Hue Provincial Health Department and Hue University of Medicine and Pharmacy (including the Family Medicine Centre).
- A concentration of different resources and funding sources with the same strategic goals corresponding to the objectives of the VLIR-UOS project: Boston University⁶, Kobe University, University of Liège and World Bank.

Taking into account the above elements, it should be concluded that the VLIR-UOS support was timely and efficiently combined and fitted into other initiatives that all responded to a policy strategy developed

⁶ <https://www.bu.edu/ghc/where-we-work/viet-nam-projects/vietnam-education-foundation/>

by HU University of Medicine and Pharmacy policymakers. In this sense, it was the common efforts of the various programmes towards a common goal that determined the results.

5. Findings on the learning questions

5.1. How to support PhD trajectories, with a focus on optimizing diversity/inclusivity (gender and Leave No One Behind)?

There was no specific focus or policy in the programme regarding the equal participation of men and women in PhD programmes, nor was there any special attention to actively attract disadvantaged groups into the programme. It could be inferred from the interviews that candidates were chosen based on their academic qualities. The absence of any explicit gender policy did not mean that women were underrepresented. Of the 13 PhD scholarships awarded, eight went to women (61%). Looking at the number of graduates (at the time of the evaluation), out of 7 graduates, 4 are women.

It should be mentioned that in this IUC programme, PhD scholarships were mainly awarded to HU staff (which is positive in terms of retention). The evaluators were also able to conduct some interviews with female PhD candidates and graduates. It was clear from these interviews that sandwich scholarships are extremely suitable for female PhD students. Spending only a limited number of months abroad (often with family members) allowed them to spend the rest of the time in Vietnam with their families (and children). This formula was thus welcomed as positive in contrast to PhD scholarships that require one to stay abroad permanently for 2 or more years. This argument probably also relates to the age group to which PhD students belong. Students who already have children are less mobile, where for students at a younger age this is often not an issue, and longer periods abroad also generate positive effects such as, for example, a major focus on the PhD research and broad immersion in another culture.

5.2. What factors and measures, at VLIR/IUC level and/or at partner institute level, support effective coordination of programmes?

As already mentioned above, HU is characterized by a complex 2-level structure with high independence of the member universities, each of which has its own rectorates. The coordination of the IUC within such a complex structure was strengthened by a cross-cutting project (P1 institutional strengthening) that explicitly aimed at building Central University's relevance. The relevance of the Central University was demonstrated through activities and results that could then be implemented by member universities.

Internal coherence between the projects was rather limited and given the high independence of the member universities within the HU university as a whole, coordination was mainly taken up by the central university in project 1. Since its limited power over the member universities, its mission consisted mainly in allowing elements of quality assurance, educational innovation and university management to trickle down to the different universities. This was done this mainly through workshops and conferences with participants from all member universities.

In addition, influential project leaders were chosen for the other three projects who have (had) a lot of influence in the respective member universities. As a result, decisions taken jointly at the PSU level could also be more easily propagated and implemented. Thus, by selecting the right project leaders, there was strong support in the respective member universities for the IUC HU.

5.3. *How to ensure uptake of research results or new educational practices by political and societal actors and end-users?*

In the impact case described above, for project four, uptake has manifested itself in different domains. We briefly repeat them here:

- Strong advocacy resulted in legislation giving Family Medicine a central place in healthcare. The project contributed, among other factors, to HU's FMC being strongly involved in policy preparation work (societal uptake).
- Directly supporting medical staff in over 145 CHCs led to improved knowledge and skills of family medicine principles and practices. As a result, they can deliver better primary health care in the province. The fact that a network of CHCs was established with the FMC in HU is also highly relevant within the framework of continuous learning (societal uptake).
- Specific PhD research (e.g. on Diabetes) also has great societal relevance, as inherently this research will develop strategies to combat diabetes.

Also, in other projects could good uptake practices be identified:

- Innovative techniques introduced in project 1 were adopted by other HU member universities. Such as, for example, the self-assessment of programmes and curricula carried out which led to a better understanding of accreditation mechanisms in all member universities (new educational practices)
- Within project 2 another excellent of example educational uptake could be identified, namely with the establishment of its first ethical commission, dedicated to the evaluation of animal-related experiments and research protocols. This initiative led to the formation of an ethical committee that not only assesses the ethical dimensions of such experiments but also rigorously scrutinizes manuscripts for plagiarism. Subsequently, the program's influence extended to other academic institutions across Vietnam. A workshop was co-organized with Ghent University College and Nong Lam University, featuring expertise from Utrecht University, which culminated in the creation of ethical guidelines for experimental research protocols. As these guidelines were disseminated, they catalyzed a widespread adoption of ethical standards, prompting universities and research institutes to either seek affiliation with Hué University's ethical committee or establish their own. The project's reach further extended within HU University and all its member universities where formal regulations were enacted. These regulations require that all biological and animal research obtain ethical clearance before commencement. The main reason why this initiative has been so successful is that such ethical procedures are necessary to get research published in international peer-reviewed journals.

The question that is obviously important within this framework covers what circumstances, measures, actions can encourage and or facilitate uptake. Of course, there are several elements that facilitate uptake (i.e. outside the strict framework of the project). First obvious reason is the type of that project. The evaluators believe e.g. projects targeting rural communities, and want to solve certain problems for these rural communities can generate results that have a social impact more directly than a project that wants to realize long-term and technical research on, e.g., water quality in a lagoon. In addition, the status of a particular research topic is also important. For example, in the research on water quality in the lagoon, no prior research had been conducted. So, it was the first of its kind. This makes it harder to generate immediate impact on policy and society. Indeed, it takes time to obtain the research findings and then disseminate them to authorities and populations.

Nevertheless, based on the findings of this review and within the context of Vietnam, it can be argued that involving societal stakeholders and authorities throughout the research process (see impact case, CHCs) is an important element for generating social impact. Another important factor is that research that aligns with political policy priorities and policy plans seems essential for generating social impact very rapidly. A third important factor is the internal coherence of the projects. Combining resources from different donors, for example, in function of the same objective/objective generates greater scientific, and also potentially societal impact. This seems logical and obvious but is not always applied. Often, resources are spread across different research groups without making choices in research priorities. Increased impact naturally presupposes that these choices are made. This evaluation taught us that in universities/faculties where the policy strategy and policy plans include clear choices (e.g. making FMC a key partner in the Hue University of Medicine and Pharmacy), the (societal) impact increases.

The need for societal impact, raises the question of whether all projects should aim for this rapid social impact. This could have the perverse effect of only conducting research on topics that are already perceived as socially relevant. The door would then be closed to more fundamental research that could lead to new societal policy priorities in the longer term.

Finally, it is important to mention that the tasks imposed on universities are quite extensive: namely, providing high-quality education, conducting internationally relevant research, and translating this research into outreach and/or social services. Academics are usually trained and specialized in research and teaching, but often have much less feeling for social and economic needs. The question is where academics' priorities should be focused. During discussions with several academics at HU, it was suggested that more support is needed for social translation of research results. This could be done, for instance, by a university institution/department/office dedicated to knowledge and technology transfer.⁷ Within this framework, it is important to mention that HU was involved in an Erasmus+ project in the past (2016-2018), namely 'The Vietnam-European Knowledge and Technology Transfer Education Consortium (VETEC)⁸. This project contributed to creating a lot of awareness in the field of technology transfer and learning about different models of KTT (Knowledge and Technology transfer). But the evaluators could see during this evaluation visit that no concrete follow-up was given to this project. The reason several interviewees shared with the evaluators was that the legal framework did not allow them to take such initiatives. Future projects that would focus on KTT should explicitly include national authorities and policy makers as central stakeholders.

⁷ In Flanders, there are good examples of university support services facilitating knowledge and technology transfer of research. For example the Research & Development-Tech Transfer Office (KU Leuven), Societal Value Creation Fund (UGent), Valorisation Office (Universiteit Antwerpen), VUB TechTransfer (VUB).

⁸ The midterm and Final Evaluation of VETEC has been carried out Patrick Vander Weyden

6. Conclusions

The ambition of the Hué University is to play a critical role in advancing regional prosperity through educational and research endeavors, especially in a region (Thua Thien Province) faced with modest living standards and rural demographics. The IUC aligns with the university's strategic goal of becoming recognized as national university and so to take up the role of regional incubator. The aspiration to get 'national university' recognition carries with it a status that not only results in increased financial resources, but also augments its institutional prestige and pedagogical impact. The program, particularly through Project 1, has strategically targeted this vision. The project served as a pivotal means to integrate into existing accreditation systems, elevate teaching methodologies, and improve research quality, all of which are vital for gaining national recognition. The push towards quality assurance and innovative teaching methods is in direct response to accreditation requirements and the necessity to synergize research with pedagogy. Furthermore, Project 1 addressed the imperative need for streamlined governance to align the university's complex organizational structure with the national recognition prerequisites. The commitment to bolster the quality of research and increase the volume of peer-reviewed international publications reflects the strategic emphasis on academic excellence. Overall, the IUC's alignment with Hué University's strategic plan marks a concerted effort towards its transformation into a National University. The evaluators have observed, through various interviews, that the IUC program closely resonates with the central policy objectives, fostering hope that it will significantly elevate research and teaching standards, and prepare students more effectively for the evolving demands of the job market (*see recommendations 5 & 6*).

In the mid-term review of the IUC HU, significant concerns were raised regarding the internal coherence among the four projects, noting their operational independence and limited transversal impact. Recommendations for enhanced internal synergy were made. Subsequent progress in coherence was observed, albeit modestly, influenced by the university's two-tiered structure and a deliberate strategy to bolster research groups with existing potential to elevate the university's international publication output and PhD graduate numbers, aligning with its ambition to be recognized as a national university within Vietnam. Despite the fragmented approach, strategic synergies emerged at the program level, particularly within Project 1. Noteworthy achievements included the successful implementation of self-assessment reports for 25 training programs at Hue University, aligning with the national quality standards. Despite these efforts and results, the evaluators found that no training or programme has yet been accredited. This should be a priority for the next two years (*see recommendation 7*). Additionally, conferences and workshops facilitated a shared awareness of quality assurance and governance innovation, contributing to a more unified university strategy. Furthermore, an innovation fund was established, distributing grants to promote educational innovation among lecturers, leading to peer-reviewed publications. While the exact impact of these activities was challenging to quantify, they signaled a stride towards unity and innovation within the university's overarching strategy. Despite the improvements that could be identified in terms of internal coherence, the evaluators still found that, except for project 1, projects were implemented in relative isolation. This is largely explained by the complex structure of the HU and the strategic choice to focus on different research groups within different member universities (*see recommendations 5 & 6*).

In recent years, the university has made significant strides in two of three domains as part of its strategic goal to become a national university by 2025. It has developed a clear vision and established main strategies, particularly in enhancing research quality and teaching to improve its ranking and attract more students. Although there has been no progress reported in governance structures, central university initiatives have gained prominence, particularly through the VLIR Project-1, which has disseminated the vision and strategy to member universities. When it comes to delivering results, the quality of education has remained constant, but there have been notable improvements in research quality and the university's role as a driver of change since 2019. A dramatic increase in annual publications in peer-reviewed journals—from a handful to over 600 by 2022—reflects the university's focus on research. The IUC program has modestly contributed to this rise, with 43 publications directly associated with it. The university has also successfully updated 13 master's programs and developed six new courses, with over 2,000 students benefiting from these innovations. Although comprehensive data on the university's impact as an agent of change is lacking, Project 4 stands out as a successful example. The central university has increased its visibility through numerous conferences and

workshops, with over 2,100 external stakeholders participating, thus demonstrating its capacity to engage with external sectors. The university's ability to adapt and self-renew has been tested by new higher education laws granting more autonomy and changing funding models. The university has agilely adapted to these changes, shifting its strategic focus from international recognition to achieving national status by 2025. The IUC has been instrumental in equipping the university with the necessary skills and knowledge to navigate this transition, from quality assurance to the implementation of new administrative procedures.

The IUC program's budget allocation has shown both strengths and areas for improvement. With a total of €1.3 million, 92% was appropriately utilized by HU, emphasizing administrative and operational costs, scholarships, and investments. The distribution saw a significant portion going to scholarships and operational costs, indicating a prioritization of academic development and the running of the program. Notably, the personnel costs were low due to the volunteer nature of staff participation, which, while commendable for its cost-saving, also resulted in increased workloads for staff who received no additional remuneration.

Critically, this volunteerism has led to an overextension of staff duties, potentially affecting the efficiency and effectiveness of their work. Despite these concerns, the use of funds for 13 PhD scholarships, who were already staff members of the university, resulted in tangible outcomes, with most recipients on track to complete their studies by 2024 and a noteworthy retention rate post-graduation. This illustrates not only the program's effectiveness but also its strategic use of funds to enhance the university's academic stature (*see recommendations 3 & 4*).

Hue University, through its collaboration with VLIR-UOS IUC HU, aimed to align with the Southeast Asian University Network's (AUN-QA) quality assessment standards by 2020. However, no member university has successfully completed the AUN-QA assessment, primarily due to the lack of a fully developed internal quality assurance system. While considerable knowledge and skills have been developed and disseminated among member universities, the accreditation of programs remains unimplemented—a critical step that evaluators recommend addressing within the next two years (*see recommendation 8*). The decision to award scholarships primarily to existing staff has proven to be a strategic one, contributing to both academic growth and institutional sustainability (*see recommendation 5*). Except for one lecturer, all scholarship recipients have remained at Hue University, applying their new knowledge and skills in teaching and research. This approach has fostered the development of new and existing research lines within the university. In terms of educational innovation, projects P1 and P4 have significantly contributed to the development of advanced educational practices, such as blended learning, e-learning, the use of virtual reality, systematic reviews of manuals, and testing procedures. These innovations are in the process of being incorporated into the university's standard procedures, indicating a robust commitment to evolving educational practices.

Financial sustainability at the central university level for activities similar to those funded by the VLIR-UOS IUC appears secure, according to the HU stakeholders. Despite the lack of external funding alternatives to supplant the VLIR-UOS IUC funds, member universities are expected to ensure the continuation of activities through their regular contributions. The central administration is committed to maintaining workshops and conferences. However, maintaining the financial stability of projects 2 and 3 remains challenging, especially concerning the procurement of materials necessary for the continued use of the equipment bought under the IUC program. Project 4 stands out with assured financial stability, integrated within the Hue University of Medicine and Pharmacy, which benefits from university funding. The inclusion of Family Medicine in the medical curriculum ensures the allocation of medical staff and resources to the Family Medicine Center (FMC). Additionally, the FMC attracts financial support from national and regional policy initiatives, including specific research funds for primary care and legislation that makes certain services at the FMC eligible for insurance reimbursement.

The Family Medicine Center (FMC) has been significantly influential in the domain of advocacy, particularly in the development of primary health care policies in Vietnam. The project's success has earned it a notable reputation, leading to its active participation in policy formulation. The evaluators are confident that FMC's involvement has had a meaningful impact on national policy development, including contributions to crucial legal frameworks and guidelines that are pivotal in shaping family medicine practices within the country. The FMC has established robust connections with the Ministry of Health, which have facilitated its participation in key policy discussions and decisions, often through direct invitations to contribute to significant health policy documents. This includes involvement in drafting a new circular that will have far-reaching implications for the delivery of remote medical services,

potentially enhancing primary care accessibility for remote populations and the elderly. While quantifying the precise extent of the VLIR-UOS project's impact on policy is challenging, it is evident that the FMC's engagement in the project has bolstered its expertise and authority in primary health care discussions. The project's initiatives, such as the GIS Impact study, have provided a data-driven foundation for policy decision-making in healthcare. The FMC's active role and the project's indirect influence on rural primary health care policy at the national level are clear, underscoring the substantial social impact of the project. The "Specific Academic Objective 1" of the project aimed at enhancing healthcare services at the primary care level has largely been met through various initiatives. These have included improving staff capacity, offering blended learning in family medicine, and conducting studies on training effectiveness. Additionally, a network of community health center (CHC) professionals was established in Thua Thien Hue province to strengthen primary care via collaborative learning. Activities undertaken to reach these objectives encompassed organizing workshops, medical education courses focused on non-communicable disease management, and innovative training methods such as pre-training for medical students in rural areas. Moreover, the Family Medicine Center (FMC) has made significant academic advancements by revising curricula, creating textbooks, e-learning modules, and training guidelines. Evaluators have observed an improvement in the capacity of primary care physicians and staff, evidenced by their upgraded skills and knowledge. Despite this, some CHCs lacked necessary equipment and medication, attributed to local authorities' limited confidence in CHC capabilities. Aware of this, project staff is dedicated to enhancing CHC services to build trust with local authorities and patients. While evaluators recognize a likely connection between training and improved patient care, they could not definitively quantify the direct impact due to varying contextual factors such as proximity to urban centers, management skills, and local policies. Notably, project P4 staff is actively addressing these challenges, focusing on advocacy for sustainable health interventions within the constraints of available resources.

The integration of Family Medicine into the regular medical curriculum is a significant achievement of the program, promising long-term benefits for the sustainability of healthcare. This new requirement for medical trainees to undertake Family Medicine courses and internships at community health centers (CHCs) is expected to yield better trained medical personnel for future employment in these facilities. Evaluators have confirmed that such internships are effectively influencing students' career decisions and have noted the project's substantial contribution to curriculum development, including innovative teaching materials and research-based teaching methods.

The programme did not specifically emphasize gender equality or the engagement of underrepresented groups in its PhD scholarships, yet outcomes did not suggest a gender bias, with women receiving a majority (61%) of the awards (**see recommendation 2**). The success rate between male and female graduates was comparable. Notably, the programme primarily benefitted staff from the host university, aiding in retention. Interviews revealed that 'sandwich' scholarships, which allow for shorter stays abroad, were particularly advantageous for female students, especially those with family obligations in Vietnam. This flexible arrangement was appreciated as it did not require extended periods away from home, which can be challenging for those with children. The adaptability of the scholarship terms to the candidates' life circumstances seemed to be a positive aspect, especially for older students with families, although younger, child-free students could also benefit from longer cultural immersion and focused research time abroad (**see recommendation 3**).

It is evident that strategic alignment with university policies and a robust knowledge and technology transfer (KTT) framework are pivotal for achieving and sustaining social impact. The uptake of Project Four's initiatives across health care, particularly in Family Medicine, exemplifies the potent effect of aligning project goals with societal needs. However, the challenges in translating research into societal gains underscore the necessity for dedicated KTT mechanisms. The historical involvement of HU in the Erasmus+ VETEC project underscores the recognized need for knowledge transfer but also reveals a gap in continuing efforts due to restrictive legal frameworks. For future projects to truly capitalize on their potential for societal impact, it is imperative that they not only align with the immediate objectives of university strategies but also engage national authorities and policymakers. This approach will ensure that KTT is not an afterthought but a pivotal component of project design, ensuring that the research can be effectively transformed into tangible benefits for society. Ultimately, the projects reviewed demonstrate that when research is strategically aligned with university goals and supported by effective KTT, the potential for both immediate and long-term societal impact is greatly enhanced. It's crucial for universities to embed these elements into their strategic planning to ensure that research outcomes extend beyond academia and contribute meaningfully to social and economic development (**see recommendation 1 & 5**).

7. Recommendations

Recommendation 1 (To VLIR-UOS & University partners).

If uptake is to be central to each IUC project, then it is worth considering explicit consideration of developing or including **Knowledge and Technology Transfer (KTT) modalities/mechanism** in each IUC. It would be good to include the approach to KTT as a cross-cutting theme in the programmes. The reason why it is important to explicitly include this theme is that academics are primarily interested in upgrading their teaching and research assignments. Societal uptake is often an element that comes in as a last resort. Moreover, the review shows that academics do not always have the necessary skills to shape uptake. Support in that area from experts who can translate research results into societal impact can then be very valuable. What this evaluation also learned is that KTT deserves an integral approach. This means that many different stakeholders should be involved in a KTT approach. Obviously, university executives and key stakeholders should be given an important place in the development of KTT. In addition, it is also important to involve stakeholders at the policy level, business and society.

Recommendation 2 (To VLIR-UOS & University partners).

Cross-cutting themes, such as gender, LNOB and environment, were not explicitly developed as themes in the evaluated IUC. The evaluators acknowledge that regarding gender, for example in the area of scholarships, there was a balance between men and women. Environmental themes are also explicitly addressed in projects 2 and 3 given the research themes chosen in these two projects. What is absent, however, is an **integral approach/policy at the programme level to these cross-cutting themes**. In programme development and during annual reporting, these cross-cutting themes should be explicitly included.

Recommendation 3 (To VLIR-UOS).

The sandwich scholarships are a particularly good tool to give staff members with families or with family commitments the opportunity to carry out doctoral research in Flanders, combined with more practice-oriented research in Vietnam. Nevertheless, it was found that doctoral students must take on many additional tasks while in Vietnam. Time for doctoral research and time for other tasks should be better defined. Along with the sandwich scholarship system, consideration should also be given to the possibility of allowing PhD students to carry out research in Flanders for longer periods of time (for one or two consecutive years). Immersion in other research and socio-cultural contexts is perceived as very enriching, especially by younger researchers. **Hence the plea for a mix of types of scholarships: sandwich scholarships & full-time scholarship in Flanders with of course the involvement of Vietnamese stakeholders and data collection periods in Vietnam.**

Recommendation 4 (To University partners & VLIR-UOS).

Awarding PhD scholarships to staff members already working within the university is a particularly successful capacity-building strategy. During this evaluation, retention was found to be high which is obviously particularly good to ensure the sustainability of the upgraded knowledge and skills in the university. **Therefore, it seems important to continue the decision to award scholarships to staff members of the university.**

Recommendation 5 (To University Partners & VLIR-UOS).

The success of the IUC HU is mainly due to the complementary and synergistic nature of the programme. The developed IUC fits perfectly into the outlined university policy. We also observed for the projects that the better the projects fit the university's priorities, the stronger the results achieved. **That is why it is important to identify the partner university's priorities in great detail during the matchmaking and formulation phase.** Additionally, it is essential to acquire a more precise and clearer understanding of the organizational structures and cultures of the collaborating universities during the matchmaking process. This may assist in identifying the appropriate stakeholders who have the potential to generate impact.

Recommendation 6 (To VLIR-UOS).

University structures (e.g. complexity of management structures, e.g., two-level structure), are important elements that may or may not encourage high levels of internal coherence between projects and within projects. We found that the higher the internal coherence between projects and within projects, the better the impact (which, of course, is not surprising). This could make a case for maximising coherence between and in projects (where now they often act as separate projects from each other). Nevertheless,

it may be a strategic choice to have projects function separately from each other in order to generate impact in different research and education domains and strengthen multiple research groups. **However, internal coherence choices should be better justified and explicitly framed within existing university priorities and policy choices** (see recommendation above).

Recommendation 7 (To HU).

Hue University, through its collaboration with VLIR-UOS IUC HU, aimed to align with the Southeast Asian University Network's (AUN-QA) quality assessment standards by 2020. However, no member university has successfully completed the AUN-QA assessment, primarily due to the lack of a fully developed internal quality assurance system. While considerable knowledge and skills have been developed and disseminated among member universities, **the AUN-QA accreditation of programs remains unimplemented - a critical step that evaluators recommend addressing within the next two years**, although the evaluators recognize that the first priority of HU is to be recognized as National University.

Recommendation 8 (To HU).

Link projects as much as possible to international strategic developments in the region. Project should connected to wider international networks within their field of expertise (e.g. quality assurance activities within the ASEAN as implemented by project 1, or FAO, WHO, OECD,...).

8. Annexes

8.1. List of documents consulted.

- Annual planning documents 2020, 2021, 2022
- Annual reports 2020, 2021, 2022
- Government Statistics Office' report "Socio-economic-situation - data-and-statistics" – January, 2023.
- IUC HU, Partner Programme (PP), 2018, Multidisciplinary education & Research at Hué University & Hué Province.
- Law No. 34/2018/QH14, Law on Amendments to the Law on Higher Education
- Management Manual IUC HU
- Mid-Term Evaluation Report IUC HU, 2018
- Prime Minister's Decision N. 69 QD -TTg issued in 2019, approving a Program on Quality Improvement for Higher Education for 2019–2025.
- Self-assessment Report at programme level, P1, P2, P3, P4.
- World Bank, The 2022nd World Bank - Vietnam Taking Stock Report - "Education to Grow", 2022 August.

8.2. Field visit programme

Day	Time	Interview activity
18/9/2023	All day	Start-up workshop Core team of IUC (All people from PSU (Prof. Le Anh Phuong, Prof. Nguyen Quang Linh, Dr. Nguyen Xuan Huy, Dr. Tran Dang Huy, Dr. Pham Khac Lieu, Do Nguyen Ngoc & Local Project leaders of P1, P2, P3 and P4)
19/9/2023	09:00 – 10:30 14:00 – 15:30	Interview Local PSU leader: Dr. Nguyen Xuan Huy Interview Former Programme Coordinator: Prof. Nguyen Quang Linh Interview Former Local PSU leader: Dr. Pham Khac Lieu
20/9/2023	10:15 – 11:15 14:00 – 15:30 15:45 – 17:00	Interview PhD student of Project 1: Dr. Nguyen Phuoc Cat Tuong Interview PhD student of Project 2: Dr. Hoang Nghia Manh Interview PhD student of Project 3: Dr. Phan Thi Thuy Hang Interview Project leader 2: Prof. Le Dinh Phung Interview member of Project 2: Assoc. Prof. Dinh Van Dung Interview Project leader 1: Dr. Do Thi Xuan Dung Interview Vice Project leader 1: Assoc. Prof. Vo Viet Minh Nhat
21/9/2023	09:00 – 10:00 10:15 – 11:15	Interview Project leader 3: Dr. Duong Van Hieu Interview Former Project leader 3: Prof. Nguyen Van Hop Interview Project leader 4: Assoc. Prof. Nguyen Minh Tam Interview member of Project 4: Mr. Duong Quang Tuan Interview member of Project 4: Ms. Le Ho Thi Quynh Anh

22/9/2023	08:00 – 09:45	Impact case study P4 – Visit to Thuy Phuong Commune Health Center (observation, interviews with patients/medical students) Interview external stakeholder of Project 4: Dr. Nguyen Thi Lanh –Thuy Phuong Commune Health Center, Huong Thuy District Venue: Thuy Phuong Commune Health Center
	10:00 – 11:00	Impact case study P4 – Visit to Huong Thuy district health center Interview external stakeholder of Project 4: Dr. Phan Thi Huong, Dr Nguyen Thi Kim Thu – Huong Thuy District Health Center Venue: Huong Thuy District Health Center
23/9/2023	All day	Impact case study P4 - Family Medicine Center, Hue University of Medicine and Pharmacy
25/9/2023	08:30 – 11:00	Impact case study P4 - Visit to Loc Dien Commune Health Center to evaluate non-communicable disease management interventions at the commune (interview patients and health care providers) Venue: Loc Dien Commune Health Center
	14:00 – 16:30	Impact case study P4 – Family Medicine Clinic, Hue University of Medicine and Pharmacy (observation training activities with virtual reality, interviews with students/ lecturers)
26/9/2023	09:00 – 12:00	Debriefing Overall evaluation & impact case Core team of IUC & team member P4

8.3. List of people consulted/interviewed.

Prior to the visit

Name	University	Position
Dr. Nguyen Xuan Huy,		Vice-director of Science, Technology and International Relations Department, Local program manager
Prof. Dr. Peter Bossier	UGent	Former Flemish programme coordinator
Dr. Jean D'Hondt	UGent	Flemish Programme Manager
A.Prof Nguyen Minh Tam	University of Medicine & Pharmacy, HU	Vice-rector, P4 leader
Le Ho Thi Quynh Anh	Family Medicine Center, Hue UMP, Hue University	Representative of administration/resources management PhD student

Kick-off workshop – 18.9.2023

Name	University	Position
Prof. Le Anh Phuong	Hue University	President, local program coordinator
Prof. Nguyen Quang Linh	Hue University	Former local program coordinator

Dr. Nguyen Xuan Huy,	Hue University	Vice-director of Science, Technology and International Relations Department, Local program manager
Dr. Tran Dang Huy	Hue University	Director of Planning, Finance and Facilities Department, Program chief accountant
Dr. Do Thi Xuan Dung	Hue University	Vice president, P1 leader
A.Prof Nguyen Duy Quynh Tram	University of Agriculture & Forestry, HU	Dean of Fisheries Faculty, P2 vice leader
Dr. Duong Van Hieu	University of Sciences, HU	Faculty of Environmental science, P3 leader
A.Prof Nguyen Minh Tam	University of Medicine & Pharmacy, HU	Vice-rector, P4 leader
MSc. Do Nguyen Ngoc	Hue University	Program secretary

Interviews and focus groups – Hue University

Name	University	Position	Date
Dr. Nguyen Xuan Huy,	Hue University	Vice-director of Science, Technology and International Relations, Local program manager	19/9/2023
Prof Nguyen Quang Linh	Hue University	Former local program coordinator	
A.Prof. Pham khac Lieu	University of Sciences, Hue University	Former local program manager	
Dr. Nguyen Phuoc Cat Tuong	University of Education, HU	Faculty of Psychology, PhD student	20/9/2023
Dr. Hoang Nghia Manh	University of Agriculture & Forestry, HU	Faculty of Fisheries, PhD student	
Dr. Phan Thi Thuy Hang	University of Sciences, HU	Faculty of Biological, PhD student	
Prof. Le Dinh Phung	University of Agriculture & Forestry, HU	Vice-rector, P2 leader	
A.Prof. Dinh Van Dung	University of Agriculture & Forestry, HU	Dean of Animal Science and Veterinary Medicine Faculty, P2 project member	
Dr. Do Thi Xuan Dung	Hue University	Vice president, P1 leader	
A.Prof. Vo Viet Minh Nhat	Hue University	Vice-director of Academic and Students' Affair Department, P1 vice-leader	
Dr. Duong Van Hieu	University of Sciences, HU	Faculty of Environmental science, P3 leader	21/9/2023
A.Prof. Nguyen Van Hop	University of Sciences, HU	Faculty of Chemistry, Former P3 leader	
A.Prof Nguyen Minh Tam	University of Medicine & Pharmacy, HU	Vice-rector, P4 leader	
Ho Le Thi Quynh Anh	University of Medicine & Pharmacy, HU	P4 member	
Duong Quang Tuan	University of Medicine & Pharmacy, HU	P4 member	

Interviews and focus groups – P4 - University of Medicine & Pharmacy, HU

Name	Affiliation	Position	Date
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Prof. Dr. Nguyễn Vũ Quốc Huy	University of Medicine & Pharmacy, HU	Director	23/9/2023
Phan Thị Hương	Hương Thủy District Health Center	Family Physician Former head of Thủy Văn commune health center, Hương Thủy District	22/9/2023
Nguyễn Thị Lanh	Thủy Phương Commune Health Center (CHC), Hương Thủy District	Family Physician Head of the CHC	22/9/2023
Võ Giác	Loc Dien Commune Health Center, Phú Lộc District	Family Physician Head of the CHC	25/9/2023
Bùi Thị Thanh Nhân	Loc Dien Commune Health Center, Phú Lộc District	Nurse	25/9/2023
Trần Thị Kim Phụng	Loc Dien Commune Health Center, Phú Lộc District	Pharmacist	25/9/2023
Đương Thị Hằng Nga	Loc Dien Commune Health Center, Phú Lộc District	Mildwife	25/9/2023
Le Thị Kim Anh	Loc Dien Commune	Patient	25/9/2023
Le Quang Tiến	Loc Dien Commune	Patient	25/9/2023
Dương Thị Thủy	Loc Dien Commune	Patient	25/9/2023
Nguyễn Thị Liên	Loc Dien Commune	Patient	25/9/2023
Đương Thị Thu Hằng	Hương Thủy District Health Center	Vice Director	22/9/2023
Nguyễn Thị Kim Thu	Hương Thủy District Health Center	Vice Director	22/9/2023
Ngo Dac Sy	Thủy Phú commune health center	Family Physician Head of the CHC	22/9/2023
Nguyễn Thị Hồng Ngọc	Thủy Châu commune health center	Head of the CHC	22/9/2023
Trương Thị Ngọc Diệp	Hương Thủy District Health Center	Head of Department for Disease Control and Prevention	22/9/2023
Nguyễn Vũ Quốc Huy	Hue University of Medicine and Pharmacy (Hue UMP), Hue University	Rector	23/9/2023
Nguyễn Minh Tâm	Hue UMP, Hue University	Project leader Vice rector	21/9/2023
Nguyễn Thị Anh Phương	Hue UMP, Hue University	Head, Faculty of International Education	23/9/2023
Đương Quang Tuấn	Family Medicine Center, Hue UMP, Hue University	Junior lecturer	21/9/2023
Le Hồ Thị Quỳnh Anh	Family Medicine Center, Hue UMP, Hue University	Representative of administration/resources management PhD student	21/9/2023
Nguyễn Thị Thanh Huyền	Family Medicine Center, Hue UMP, Hue University	PhD student	23/9/2023
Hồ Anh Hiền	Family Medicine Center, Hue UMP, Hue University	Vice Director of Family Medicine Center PhD student	23/9/2023

Nguyen Minh Huy	Center for Informatic Technology, Hue UMP, Hue University	IT engineer	23/9/2023
Vo Duc Toan	Family Medicine Center, Hue UMP, Hue University	Deputy head, Family Medicine Clinic	23/9/2023
Ho Dac Truong An	Family Medicine Center, Hue UMP, Hue University	Physician	23/9/2023
Nguyen Thi Cuc	Family Medicine Center, Hue UMP, Hue University	Physician	23/9/2023
Che Thi Len Len	Family Medicine Center, Hue UMP, Hue University	Researcher	23/9/2023
Le Cong Toan	Hue UMP, Hue University	5th year medical student	25/9/2023
Ho Thi Cam Tu	Hue UMP, Hue University	5th year medical student	25/9/2023
Dang Ngoc Vu	Hue UMP, Hue University	5th year medical student	25/9/2023
Prof.Dr.Johan Wens	Universiteit Antwerpen	Flemish Project Leader P4	21/11/2023
Prof. Dr. Martin Valcke	Universiteit Gent	Flemish Project Leader P1	1/12/2023
Prof. Dr Veerle Fievez	Universiteit Gent	Flemish Project Leader P2 and current Programma Coordinator	18/12/2023
Prof. Dr. Marc Elskens	Vrije Universiteit Brussels	Flemish Project leader 3	Also planned week of 23 december 2023

Restitution workshop - 26/9/2023

Name	University	Position
Prof. Nguyen Quang Linh	Hue University	Former local program coordinator
Dr. Nguyen Xuan Huy,	Hue University	Vice-director of Science, Technology and International Relations Department, Local program manager
Dr. Tran Dang Huy	Hue University	Director of Planning, Finance and Facilities Department, Program chief accountant
Dr. Do Thi Xuan Dung	Hue University	Vice president, P1 leader
A.Prof Nguyen Duy Quynh Tram	University of Agriculture & Forestry, HU	Dean of Fisheries Faculty, P2 vice leader
Dr. Duong Van Hieu	University of Sciences, HU	Faculty of Environmental science, P3 leader
A.Prof Nguyen Minh Tam	University of Medicine & Pharmacy, HU	Vice-rector, P4 leader
MSc. Do Nguyen Ngoc	Hue University	Program secretary
Le Ho Thi Quynh Anh	Family Medicine Center, Hue UMP, Hue University	Representative of administration/resources management PhD student

Restitution with VLIR-UOS Workshop - 23/11/2023

Name	University	Position
Patrick Vander Weyden		Lead Evaluator
dr. Joshua Eykens	VLIR-UOS	Monitoring and Evaluation Manager
Peter De Lannoy	VLIR-UOS	Global Partnerships Coordinator, focal point Vietnam
Dr. Nguyen Xuan Huy,		Vice-director of Science, Technology and International Relations Department, Local program manager
Prof. Dr. Peter Bossier	UGent	Former Flemish programme coordinator
Dr. Jean D'Hondt	UGent	Flemish Programme Manager
Prof. Dr. Veerle Fievez	UGent	Current Flemish programme coordinator

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