

Deliverable 2.1

TWIN SYNERGIES Report on the current state



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List of Abbreviations

EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
GA	Grant Agreement
HE	HORIZON EUROPE
PC	Project Coordinator
PM	Project Management
PO	Project Officer
QA	Quality Assurance
SCom	Steering Committee
WP	Work Package

Executive Summary





TWIN SYNERGIES

The report, Deliverable 2.1 (D2.1), provides a comprehensive analysis of the current state of affairs regarding the participation of TWIN SYNERGIES CORE TEAM institutions in EU research and innovation (R&I) projects, focusing on their readiness for Green and Digital transitions.

The report is based on a questionnaire survey conducted across eight partner institutions and an additional analysis of researchers' active involvement at various levels across different research fields.

The objective is to identify the existing skills, competencies, bottlenecks, and opportunities to strengthen participation in EU collaborative R&I projects.

This deliverable also highlights the gaps and needs identified in key areas, including proposal writing, innovation management, business internationalisation and strategic communication, which will inform future capacity-building activities under the Work Package 3 (WP3).





2 Introduction

This report is an essential step for the EU-funded project, TWIN SYNERGIES, operating under the HORIZON-WIDERA finding programme. The starting concern for the project is the increasing divide in R&I competencies between EU members. Multiple R&I grants and funding streams from the EU were implemented to amend this issue, such as the Cohesion Policy and Horizon2020/Horizon Europe programmes. Yet, participation in such programmes is similarly uneven, to the detriment of under-performing countries. Therefore, one of the EU's priorities in recent years was to bring these programmes together by developing the necessary competencies in the affected and peripheric regions. TWIN SYNERGIES directly tackles this issue, aiming to improve the competitiveness of partner institutions by enhancing their capacity to participate in EU-funded research projects.

This document - D2.1 - presents an internal survey analysis to assess partner institutions' status, survey findings and the observed training needs identified through planned TWIN SYNERGIES activities. The methods used for survey and data collection have been aligned with the project's objectives, ensuring that the results are contextualised within the limitations of the project framework. This document does not intend to compare its results to other studies, reports, or theories, nor should the findings be considered representative of all participating countries or types of institutions. The consortium encourages other institutions interested in developing their competencies to use these methods and build upon them for their assessments.

This deliverable will serve as a basis for subsequent tasks (e.g., WP2 Task 2.2 (T.2.2/ D2.2) and WP3, T3.1/ D3.1) planned in the project. Therefore, the deliverable is identifying specific gaps in partner institutions' capabilities that need targeted interventions. Through these insights, TWIN SYNERGIES aims to create tailored training modules and knowledge-sharing sessions to address the identified deficiencies effectively.

TWIN SYNERGIES aspires to foster stronger cross-border and cross-sector collaboration by strategically enhancing competencies, leading to a more balanced participation landscape across the EU. The CORE Group (FIS, UCV, VSB, AUC) is actively developing and implementing T2.1, ensuring that all activities align with the project's overall objectives. Their role is to provide





strategic oversight, facilitate coordination among partners, and contribute expert insights to enhance the effectiveness of capacity-building initiatives.

The objective of the D2.1

The objective of D2.1 for the TWIN SYNERGIES project is to provide a comprehensive analysis of the current state of partner institutions involved. Specifically, this deliverable aims to assess the skills, competencies, shortcomings, obstacles, and bottlenecks partner institutions face in developing, participating, managing, and implementing EU-funded collaborative research projects.

By utilising data from an internal survey, D2.1 presents the status quo of each partner institution, highlighting areas of strength and identifying specific gaps that require targeted interventions. The findings from this deliverable are intended to serve as a basis for designing tailored training modules, capacity-building activities, and knowledge-sharing sessions to improve the institutions' abilities to effectively participate in EU research programs. Ultimately, this report will inform future project tasks, ensuring that partners are better equipped to leverage EU funding opportunities, enhance cross-border collaboration, and ***contribute to reducing the divide in R&I capabilities across Europe.***

Further, the D2.1 report is the foundational analysis that feeds into D3.1 by providing critical data on the partner institutions' current skills, competencies, and specific needs, as identified through an internal survey. While D3.1 is to design a tailored capacity-building program, it will directly address the needs identified in D2.1. By understanding the specific competencies and shortcomings highlighted in the earlier analysis, D3.1 will create targeted training modules and coaching sessions to overcome these deficiencies. For example, the identified gaps in proposal writing skills inform the development of dedicated training sessions on EU proposal writing, including aspects like consortium building, risk management, and budgeting.

Moreover, the methodological framework in D3.1 will be customised to address the exact challenges that partner institutions face, as outlined in D2.1, ensuring that the capacity-building program is both relevant and effective, using delivery methods - such as online webinars, on-the-job training, and in-person sessions - that are best suited to meet the partners' specific needs.

The insights from D2.1 will also guide the selection of stakeholders for involvement in the capacity-building activities. This way, D3.1 will enhance institutional competitiveness by including internal





staff and external stakeholders to measure improvements effectively and ensure that the interventions are impactful.

Risk management and limitation

For D2.1 of the TWIN SYNERGIES project, we envisioned risk management focusing on mitigating potential delays by reallocating resources or adjusting schedules and engaging stakeholders through established networks to boost participation from Widening countries. The report's limitations include a narrow focus on partner institutions based on a tailored internal survey, which may limit broader applicability and potential challenges in reaching a diverse range of stakeholders, possibly affecting the comprehensiveness of the findings. Considering the limitations, the strategies aim to ensure the project remains aligned with its goals while addressing any challenges.

The proposed methodology for implementing the Capacity building program will be presented in the following chapter. The methodology was developed and tailored for the TWIN SYNERGIES project and will be implemented as such during the project duration. Nevertheless, it can be further (fully or partly) utilised for similar activities, aiming at increasing the non-scientific competencies of the different stakeholders.

3 Methodology

The data for the analysis was collected by conducting an *Online Survey* among partner institutions of the TWIN SYNERGY project. Therefore, it was tailored to address the possessed and missing competencies and the reasons for low/moderate participation in EU projects. The main target group was the four Higher Education Institutions (HEI) partners and Policy Support Organisations, members of the Project

The survey focuses on important project and innovation management topics to maximise its impact. The list of main areas of inquiry includes:

- Current and Past participation in EU-funded projects, as partners and as applicants
- Performance and mastery of skills and competencies in:





- Innovation Management (*innovation strategy and identification of opportunities; idea generation; Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) management; innovation funding and investment*)
- Business Internalisation (*market analysis; international business development; regulatory and legal considerations; cross-cultural communication and management*)
- Strategic Communication (*developing communication strategy; digital communication and social media; Public Relationships (PR) and media management; stakeholder engagement and networking*)
- Writing Horizon Proposals:
 - Define Project Objectives
 - Underlining the State of the art in the perceived field of application
 - Define the Concept and Approach
 - Deliberate and Develop Tasks
 - Consider Milestones
 - Determine Deliverables
 - Allocating the Budget
- Competence for Partnership Building:
 - Developing Strategic Vision
 - Building Relationships
 - Open Communication
 - Resource Allocation (pooling)
 - Adaptability and Flexibility
- Received and Perceived training (regarded as needed), as well as expectations from training and exchange activities
- Institutional Support Received for Project Writing and Implementation
- Perceived Barriers to participation/application of EU-funded projects

The survey questionnaire underwent revision by the consortium to increase its validity and reliability. To maximise the impact, this process was performed twice to avoid any missing topics, issues or concerns. The final version of the survey is attached as Annex 1.

Given the project aim and objectives of the survey, the consortium had to focus on specific groups in the partner institutions, including researchers, teaching staff, policy experts, and administrative





staff involved in financial and project management. One of the strong points of the approach was its intent to include personnel at different stages of career development (early-stage, mid-career and senior researchers) and even staff that was not competent or had experience in EU-project implementation. This aspect also contributed to the sampling technique. Due to specific needs, the consortium used non-probabilistic sampling and the snowball technique to identify relevant stakeholders who were fit to become survey respondents.

To validate the survey, the consortium applied a minimum cap of 6 researchers per HEI (4 institutions) and 8 experts provided by the supportive partners (4 organisations). However, significant effort was made to increase the survey reach and respondent participation to increase the internal validity of the results and conclusions. The survey was implemented via an online platform and reached 79 respondents. The results and participation can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1: Number of Respondents by Institution

Institution/Organization	Respondents
AUC - Algebra University, Zagreb	14
DAZ - Razvojna Agencija Zagreb za Koordinaciju i Poticanje Regionalnog Razvoja	2
FIS - Faculty of Information Studies in Novo Mesto	18
MSIC - Moravskoslezske Inovacni Centrum Ostrava	5
RCNM - Razvojni Center Novo Mesto Svetovanje in Razvoj Doo	4
SW Oltenia RDA - Agentia pentru Dezvoltare Regionala Sud-Vest Oltenia	4
UCV - University of Craiova	19
VSB - Technical University of Ostrava	13
Total	79

After the survey was completed, the consortium realised that the respondent base represented the data collection's aim in a suitable way. The distribution of respondents by occupation was focused on academic staff but also included relevant administrative, expert and supportive roles. Roughly, the cumulative percentage of academic staff can be calculated at 70%, which includes professors/teachers, researchers, and academic personnel occupying both roles (see Figure 1).



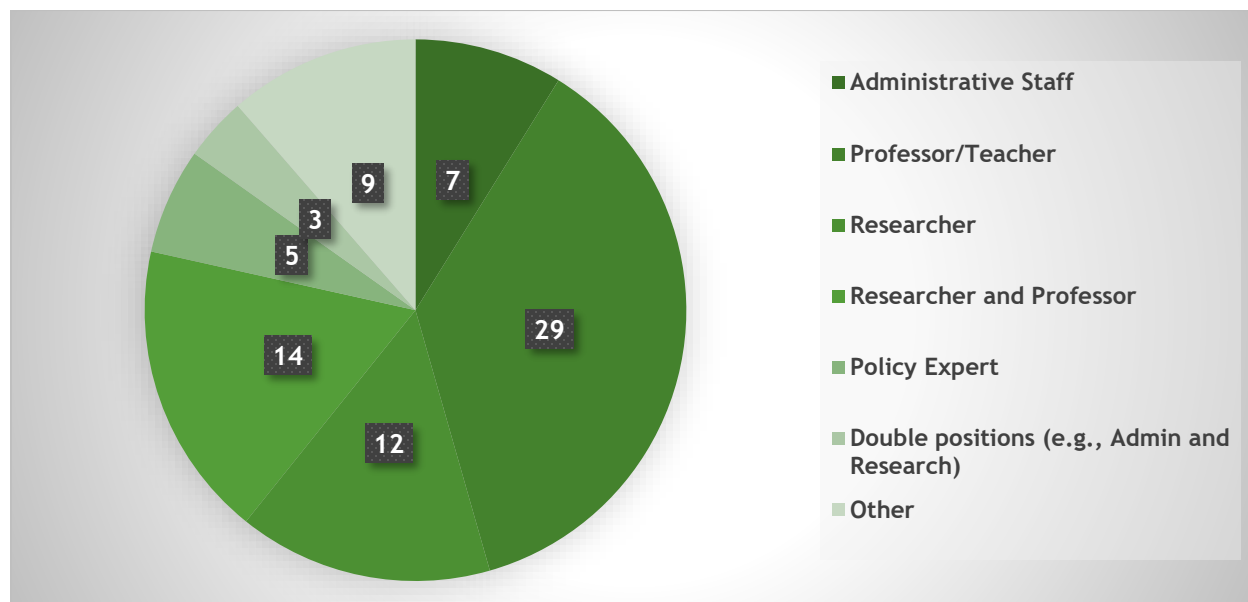


Figure 1: Distribution of Respondents by Occupation

3.1 Limitations

Given the aim of the analysis, the survey results face significant limitations in generalisation. Due to time constraints and a non-randomised sampling strategy, the survey lacks sample representativity. Although this was never the intent of the performed study, the consortium emphasises that the collected data reflect only the selected institutions' competencies, obstacles and needs.

Additionally, the need to accommodate diverse respondent groups led to a complex survey structure, which may have affected the consistency of the responses and increased the risk of misinterpretation. Some survey paths were unavailable to respondents who expressed their lack of knowledge or experience in certain areas. Thus, the distribution of answers for certain questions differed. Such results were used to tailor the project deliverables further and offer additional indirect insights when needed. Still, they were not considered in the report due to the inconsistency of the results.

4 Results

Out of all respondents, 77 reported having experience with EU-funded projects, and two admitted to lacking it. When focusing on the project's CORE TEAM (the four HEI), the distribution



represents a positive dynamic. Among the main HEI, only two respondents (3,12%), one from UCV and one from VBS, were never engaged in any EU projects (Table 2). All participants from the Policy Compliance team presented good results, with all respondents being previously involved in EU projects. The report acknowledges that participation in EU-funded projects is also one of the activities that became mundane for the researchers and administrative staff at HEI, as well as for staff of the support organisations. Experience in project implementation is bound to create familiarity and reduce some of the barriers for further participation and application but is not sufficient to consider for the project purpose.

Looking at current engagement in EU-funded projects, the picture and conclusions are entirely different (Table 3). The data shows that a significant proportion of respondents in FIS (22,22%) and VSB (33,33%) are not currently working in EU project implementation. In UCV, this proportion represents 3/4rs of the respondents. As the additional analysis showed, the majority of respondents not currently engaged in project implementation are Professors and/or Teachers (over 80%). Analysing the situation based on internal departments and study fields showed no relevant patterns. Nevertheless, these conclusions are not final, as the data is not representative. The current participation in the Policy Compliance group is very high, 86,67%, meaning only two persons are not involved in this line of work.

Table 2: Respondents with Project Implementation Experience

Do you have any experience with EU projects?		
Core HEI	No	Yes
AUC - Algebra University, Zagreb		14
FIS - Faculty of Information Studies in Novo Mesto		18
UCV - University of Craiova	1	18
VSB - Technical University of Ostrava	1	12
Total	2	62





Table 3: Respondents Currently Involved in Project Implementation

Current Involvement in EU-funded projects		
Core HEI	No	Yes
AUC - Algebra University, Zagreb		14
FIS - Faculty of Information Studies in Novo Mesto	4	14
UCV - University of Craiova	13	4
VSB - Technical University of Ostrava	4	8
Grand Total	21	40

The results revealed that the CORE TEAM is engaged in various projects, with multiple funding streams relatively evenly distributed. The data also showed that this trend has a longitudinal impact, as numerous respondents selected various Programmes that are now inactive. The complete lists of projects include *FP6*, *FP7*, *Horizon 2020*, *Horizon Europe*, *Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions*, *Erasmus+*, and *Interreg*, with the ability to select and indicate other funding streams.

The roles in which the four HEI were engaged are very different. Multiple respondents claimed extensive experience and many roles in the project implementation process. We considered three possible positions in EU-funded projects partnerships: Coordinator, Work Package or Task leader, and Partners (without any WP/Task responsibilities). The institutional engagements seem different when we look at aggregated data in the matrix (Table 4). In some, such as AUC and FIS, most personnel engage in different roles during their work experience. This can be seen especially in the case of FIS, which has a significant prevalence of its members working as coordinators, WP leads, and simple partners during their careers. Concerning the second group, one can observe a more balanced distribution of tasks across the selected roles, especially in VSB. Except for FIS (with almost 60%), the rest of the CORE TEAM exhibits limited experience in leading EU-funded projects. In this regard, the remaining three HEIs have more than half of their members reported never being in this position (looking at all combinations with Coord as in Table 4).





Table 4: EU Project Implementation Roles Matrix

	AUC	FIS	UCV	VSB
Coordinator (Coord)			1	
Work Package or Task leader (WP/T),	1	2		2
Partners (without any WP/Task responsibilities) (PP)	7	2	5	2
Coord & WP/T L			1	2
Coord & PP		1		1
WP/T L & PP		3	3	3
All 3 Roles	6	9	4	1

We also found that the initial optimistic picture does not hold when the analysis considers experience in Project Writing, a crucial step in the project application process. The percentage of personnel without experience in project writing rose to 21.05% for the whole sample. It increased slightly when considering the core HEI (21.31%), see Table 5.

Table 5: Respondents engaged in Project Writing

Do you have experience in writing proposals?		
Core HEI	No	Yes
AUC - Algebra University, Zagreb	5	9
FIS - Faculty of Information Studies in Novo Mesto	4	14
UCV - University of Craiova	2	15
VSB - Technical University of Ostrava	2	10
Grand Total	13	48

In raw numbers and percentual expression, FIS and AUC have the most respondents who lack project writing experience. Due to the non-representativity of the data, it is hard to conclude whether the trend is statistically significant. Assuming this proposition is correct, it might be





reflected in a heavier task specialisation in these institutions compared to other HEIs. In other words, this can be an example of institutions engaging part of their team in the project writing part and some mainly in the project implementation. *Au contraire*, at UCV and VSB, the trend shows that some parts of their staff are not focusing on project implementation (see Table 2, In-depth analysis showed that in both cases, people missing this experience are Professors/Teachers). Still, the ones involved are engaged throughout the process, as the vast majority have experience writing and implementing projects. In the Policy Compliance group context, except for one respondent, all the employees had previous experience in project writing (1-NO/10-Yes).

The reasonable next step was to consider not only the experience in writing but also the success of these endeavours. This represents a fundamental variable in the report and shows the readiness of the four HEI institutions and their staff to submit and secure EU funding for research and development. The survey results are presented in Table 6. The Policy Compliance team is more diverse. Their average is 11,4 years, with a standard deviation of 7,7, which indicates a vast variation in years of experience among their staff.

Table 6: Success in Project Application in the last 2 Years

Proposal Writing Success in the last 2 Years		
Core HEI	No	Yes
AUC - Algebra University, Zagreb	1	8
FIS - Faculty of Information Studies in Novo Mesto	5	9
UCV - University of Craiova	11	5
VSB - Technical University of Ostrava	2	8
Grand Total	19	30

Firstly, the total number of people responding to this question is lower than the respondents in other analyses (e.g., Tables 2 and 3) and corresponds to the total of people claiming experience in Project Writing (Table 5). This indicates that not all the staff members in the four HEIs are actively involved in submission and offer their responses to this question. Of course, this parameter is reflected in the respondents' experience and current level of career advancement.





Two institutions exhibit an excellent track of successful application in the last 2 years. These are AUC and VSB, which have only a few projects that have not been funded. The situation is rather positive at FIS, which receives funding in 2/3rds of its applications. UCV, whose respondents admitted not being successful most of the time, needs improvement. It is complicated to express whether these trends are representative of each institution.

A superficial table analysis suggests a strong association with some previous data. For example, the discrepancy between the Core HEI in Table 3 (Current involvement in EU-Funded Projects) explains easily why UCV claimed high rates of experience yet presented low current rates of project implementation. The data comparison shows that their success rates are lagging (compared to other HEIs), reflecting their status.

Even this preliminary overview of the data supports the TWIN SYNERGY Project's premise. It offers the first empirical argument for the existence of the problem that the consortium started to tackle. While overlapping the Success rates with previous analyses, one can spot an emerging pattern. On the one hand, some institutions like AUC and VSB have significant success rates but do not always consider the roles of project coordinators. Their employees feel comfortable filling the roles of Project Partners or WP/Task leaders. Contributing to project implementation in various consortiums is an important aspect of EU-Funding. However, the role of the coordinator (in writing and implementation) can secure more benefits in terms of defining key objectives and goals, leveraging the implementation and controlling the quality of the deliverables, as well as promoting institutional learning, thus increasing employee competencies in research and managerial skills. On the other hand, some institutions are familiar with being project leaders yet encounter significant gaps in achieving funding for their ideas (e.g., FIS).

Based on the success rate and their relevance to understanding the phenomenon of low EU-programme participation in Widening Countries, a deeper dive is needed to consider the Skills in Project Writing, Coordination, and Project implementation to have an ample view of the CORE TEAM status quo. We started by considering the most fundamental aspects, such as the experience in Project Implementation. The results revealed that most respondents have a significant background in EU project implementation (Table 7). Based on the standard deviation, we can conclude that there are insignificant variations between the institutions. The greatest divide between AUC and UCV is only a year of experience.





Table 7: Descriptive Statistics on Respondent's Years of Experience in EU Project Implementation

How many years of experience in EU projects do you have?				
Core HEI	Average	ST Dev	MIN	MAX
AUC - Algebra University, Zagreb	5,5	4,15	1	15
FIS - Faculty of Information Studies in Novo Mesto	7,83	4,69	1	20
UCV - University of Craiova	9,83	5,20	2	18
VSU - Technical University of Ostrava	8,33	4,40	1	15
Grand Total	7,98	4,822	1	20

Table 8: Cross-tabulation of Yeast of Experience and Success in the Last 2 Years

Matrix of Average Year of Experience with Success in the Last 2 Years				
Success in the last 2 years	Average Years of Experience			
	AUC	FIS	UCV	VSU
No	2	8,4	8,5	5,5
Yes	6,5	9,8	12	9,75

We opted to observe how the experience in Project Implementation can affect the success rates of the CORE TEAM. Indeed, there are significant differences, and most senior staff with more extended experience working on EU-funded projects are most likely to succeed in the application. However, except for AUC, an average experience of six to nine years does not guarantee a successful application (Table 8). Such findings indicate a need to pursue the analysis on a different level. Though the experience has a positive impact, it cannot account for all the variability. These conclusions pressured to conduct an in-depth analysis of the Skills and Competencies that could explain the existing rates of implication in project implementation, engagement in writing, successful application and assuming the leadership role.





Firstly, we proceeded to understand the respondents' competence in proposal writing. Given its relevance as a step in the project application process, the success of receiving funding often depends on the ability to articulate the proposed problem and solution coherently and comprehensively. Following the TWIN SYNERGIE's project aim and objectives, the section of a question aimed at assessing the project writing skills was designed to reverberate around the structure of a Horizon-level project. Therefore, the respondents were asked to conclude their ability to define and conceptualise several aspects (see Table 9). However, it was not specified to the respondent that these skills are exclusive to this funding stream. The survey did not aim to collect responses exclusively for Horizon due to the limited experience that some respondents might have. In this regard, we observed that just over half of the HEI employees were engaged in writing a Horizon 2020 or Horizon Europe proposal (60,94%), and the rest (39,06%) were not.

Table 9: Skills Application in Proposal Writing (Horizon Structure)

Project Writing Experience. Skills (all HEI)	No	Yes
Defining Project objectives	1	38
Describing State-of-the-Art	5	34
Outlining the Concept and Approach	9	30
Detailing Tasks	4	35
Establishing project Milestones	6	33
Specifying project Deliverables	5	34
Prepare project Budget	18	21

At first glance, the table shows that most HEI respondents were well-integrated into the project writing process. The main outlier is the step of budget preparation, where almost half of the respondents admitted never being involved in this activity. Despite a high percentage, this is easily explainable due to the task's specifics. We can assume that in some institutions, this step is done or assisted by support staff at HEI from a specialised project office or administration. Of the remaining skills, the most familiar for the respondents is "Drafting Project Objectives". As multiple finding streams cover this aspect, it is not surprising that some skills are transferable. The same





is true in reverse, concerning defining “Concept and Approach.” This is most common for the Horizon programme. Thus, almost a quarter of the respondents did not outline these aspects.

To investigate the CORE TEAM’s readiness to write and manage a project (equivalent to becoming Coordinators/ Project Leads), we examined four aspects: Innovation Management, Business Internationalisation, Strategic Communication, and Consortium/Partnership Building. The four aspects were selected during the consortium debates and represent the necessary skills for implementing and especially leading EU-funded projects. Despite their Business and Management Terminology, the partnership concluded that such skills are very much at play using project implementation and coordination. At first glance, we see a similar trend with the Horizon Project writing, as a significant proportion of the respondents have doubts about whether they are competent in applying these skills (Table 10).

Table 10: The Four Groups of Skills in Project Implementation and Coordination

Main groups of Skills	No	Yes
Do you feel competent in Innovation Management?	34	30
Do you feel competent in Business Internationalization?	44	20
Do you feel competent in Strategic Communication?	38	26
Do you feel competent to act for consortium/partnership building?	19	45

Taken one by one, each group represents different issues with the skills in project implementation. Concerning Innovation Management, which is essential for idea generation and understanding the relevance and value of an idea to be transposed as a project application, identification of funding streams relevant to its implementation, potential sharing of the ownership of the results and safeguarding the intellectual property in cases of technological development. Over half of the respondents claimed not to be competent in applying these skills in practice. This can explain the reluctance of respondents not to engage in the project application stage. An in-depth analysis revealed additional issues, which even the group, conscious of their ability, admitted to having trouble with (Table 11). In this regard, the easiest thing for the HEI team is to engage in an innovation strategy to develop an idea to fruition. Yet, half of the respondents admitted





encountering issues at the idea generation stage. This could be easily coupled with the skill of identification of fudging, which combined can read as the understanding of how to develop a novel idea and identify an EU grant for its implementation. Even harder is for the HEI staff to consider ownership, as IP management is the least applied skill.

Table 11: Innovation Management Skill Group

Innovation Management Skills	No	Yes
Innovation strategy – identify opportunities and strategic planning for innovation	11	19
Innovation processes and tools – idea generation, creativity techniques, agile methodologies, innovation management tools	14	16
Intellectual property management – protecting and managing IP in research projects	18	12
Innovation funding and investment – identify sources of funding for innovation (EU grants, venture capital, etc.), attract investments and manage investor relations	15	15

Following the next skills group, the Business Internationalisation set of competencies raised the greatest concerns. Most respondents do not feel confident in applying such skills in their work. Yet, these reflect the respondent’s position to understand the need for an innovative idea, promote it internationally, and show proficiency in managing intercultural teams and navigating regulatory systems. In other words, this set of skills is best suited for assuming the leadership role in an EU-funded project. Given the answer pattern of almost 70% lacking confidence in adequately applying these abilities, it offers a reasonable explanation for the conclusions drawn previously in Fig. 3. Diving into analysing the shortcomings of the respondents who ever used this skill revealed some crucial aspects (Table 12). There were no issues in understanding the principles of international and multicultural consortium management, as the overwhelming percent of respondents have experience with it. The problem is identifying the market need for an idea and navigating regulatory fields. These constraints are obvious given the differences in EU-member states’ legal systems, and for half of the respondents, the lack of business experience can explain their





hardship in underlining business opportunities. Therefore, to increase the confidence of the CORE TEAM in managing EU-funded projects, it might be wise first to address the skill of value identification and offer solutions to ease the burden of regulatory and legislative differences.

Table 12: Business Internationalisation Skill Group

Business Intenationalisation Skills	No	Yes
Market analysis and entry strategies – conduct international market research, select and evaluate entry strategies (exporting joint venture etc.)	10	10
International business development – building international partnership / networks, negotiating and deal-making in international contexts	5	15
Regulatory and legal considerations – international regulations and compliance, navigating IPR in different jurisdictions	17	3
Cross-cultural communication and management – impact on business of cultural differences, strategies for cross-cultural communication	4	16

Next is the skill group on Strategic Communication. Regarding confidence and applied experience, it is the second most problematic after Business Internationalisation. The skill group focuses on the essential aspects of any EU-funded project, reflecting the Communication, Dissemination, and Exploration strategies. Since this is part of almost all the EU programmes, mastering skills related to strategic communication is imperative for successful implementation. Among the respondents who considered confident in applying this skill in project implementation, we can also see some areas where experience is lacking (Table 13). As previously assessed, creating partnerships and, thus, networking is not presenting a big concern for the CORE TEAM. Also, most HEI employees have experience communicating with other partners, stakeholders, and associated groups. The problem is starting to emerge when the area of application reaches a more systemic level. Developing and managing public relationships and promoting a social





media campaign are severely deficient. About two-thirds of the respondents lack this experience, which is aggravated by half lacking technical knowledge.

Table 13: Strategic Communication Skill Group

Strategic Communication Skills	No	Yes
Developing communication strategies – crafting clear and compelling messages, identifying target audiences and tailoring communication	7	19
Digital communication and social media – leveraging digital tools/platforms for communication and best practices for using social media in professional contexts	13	13
PR and media management – building and maintaining a positive public image, engaging with media and handling press relations	17	9
Stakeholder engagement and networking – identifying stakeholders, mapping, engaging and relation building	5	21

The final set of skills is around Consortium Building. Given the previous response patterns, it is unsurprising that this group exhibits the highest confidence level, at 70%. This group covers the necessary preparatory step in project writing and coordination, indicating skills in socialisation and teambuilding, managing group resources and negotiation (e.g., conflict management). Despite high confidence in the skill set, there are numerous areas to consider. A detailed analysis revealed that the skills needed in project management leadership are not as exercised by the respondents (Table 14). Almost all the surveyed personnel admitted being unable to (re)allocate resources. It supplements previous findings on the lack of budget preparation experience, which might be related to having separate departments or teams within these institutions leveraging this aspect. This comes not as a conclusion but as a possible explanation for the encountered trend. It also indicates that training in budget preparation can be relevant. The skill in negotiation and diplomacy to amend conflicts and conflicting situations also showed high rates of not being applied. It is hard to imagine a project where a diplomatic approach to partnership mediation would not be required, even without conflictual situations. Therefore, it is reasonable to consider





that most respondents were never in the position of RU-Projects leaders (also supported by Figure 2).

Table 14: Consortium/Partnership Building Skill Group

Consortium/Partnership Building Skills	No	Yes
Develop strategic vision – identify areas of collaboration and define common goals	20	25
Build relationships, open communication and share information – cultivate relationships, build trust and define strengths and weaknesses of the partners	16	29
Negotiation and diplomacy - negotiate agreements, balance interests, share responsibilities, handle conflicts and /or find win-win solutions	30	15
Pooling resources for greater stronger impact – allocating resources equitably with the benefits	39	6
Adaptability and flexibility – adapt to evolving circumstances and challenges with showing resilience by strategy adjustment and mitigating risk mitigation	23	22

On the other hand, developing common goals and adaptability seems to be mastered by half of the respondents. It is common to observe such practices, as project implementation often requires a re-evaluation of goals and flexibility due to numerous obstacles to the implementation prices.

Determining self-confidence and experience in particular skills and their application does not represent a complete story. Regarding competencies and task performance, we opted to see how efficiently respondents apply these skills. Therefore, we elaborated a question asking the CORE TEAM to self-evaluate their skills and knowledge in core aspects of project writing and coordination (Table 15). The table indicates that the respondents are not very prepared to address financial management and reporting. This area has a visible imbalance, yet numerous people also reported having Advanced knowledge in this aspect. Such distribution again hints at the previous conclusion that in some institutions, this task is performed by a separate department specialised in budgeting, financing, and reporting. Numerous employees admitted having basic





to intermediary knowledge, thus indicating that their experience in applying this skill was probably partial when the situation demanded.

Table 15: Skills Self-evaluation for CORE TEAM

	No Knowledge or skills (KoS)	Basic KoS	Intermediate KoS	Advanced KoS
Idea development	2	10	28	24
Grant/Proposal Writing	8	15	29	12
Project Coordination	9	20	22	13
WP/Task coordination	4	14	29	17
Project Management	3	18	29	14
Financial Management and Reporting	16	23	15	10
EU Policies and Priorities regarding Green and Digital Transition	10	27	16	11
Collaborative Research and Networking	1	24	29	10
Digital Knowledge and Skills (e.g., data analysis, EU platforms, digital tools)	8	24	23	9
Sustainability Practices and Green Technologies	7	28	23	6

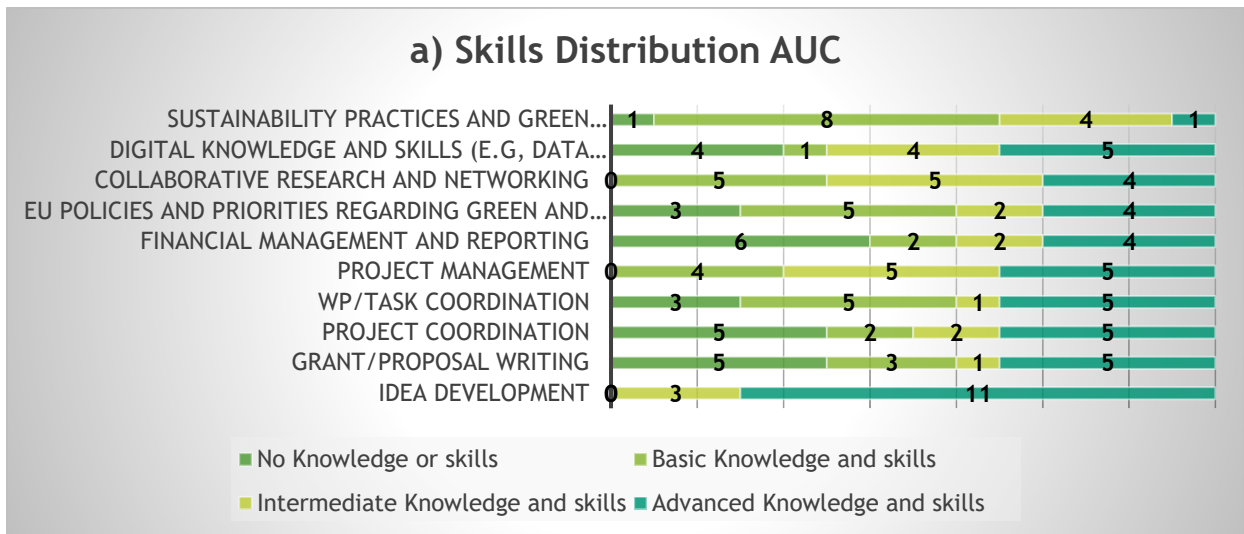
The next problematic aspect is the respondents' knowledge of identifying and navigating the EU's policy priorities. This aspect is concerning as the EU funding streams are founded on the strategic





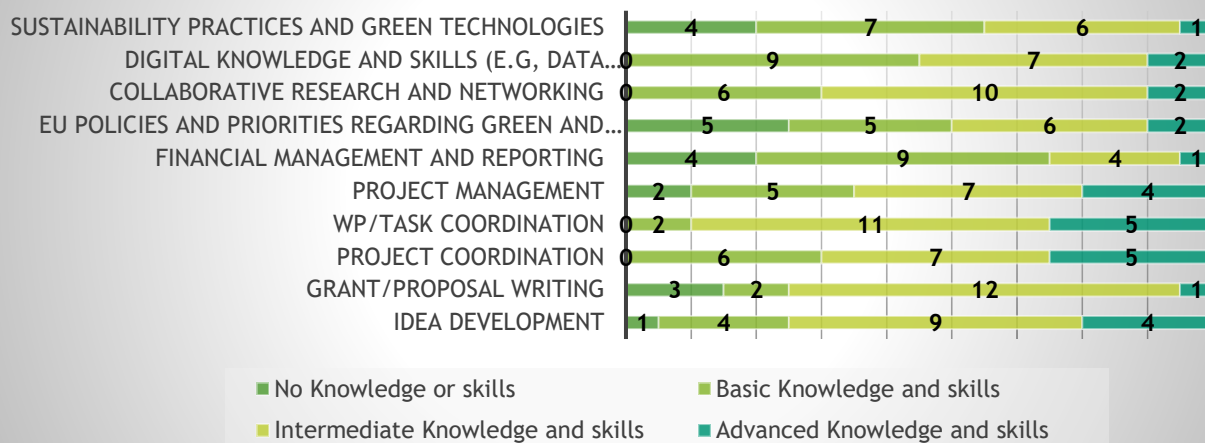
vision of the Union. This lack of knowledge can severely impede project writing and application. Also, it offers an additional explanation for the higher rates of unsuccessful applications. Even though most respondents have a basic and advanced understanding of Digital and Sustainability areas, this is not transferred to a successful comprehension of the EU priorities. Such a gap must be mediated to increase the ratio of successful applications.

Again, we corroborated the conclusion regarding the lack of experience in project coordination. Compared to other aspects of project writing and implementation (i.e., idea development, proposal writing, task implementation and coordination, etc.) Project coordination skills are more inclined towards basic or complete lack of skill application. Such findings reiterate the relevance of Project Coordination training programs to boost the skill application in CORE TEAM. To emphasise our point, we looked at the skill distribution per institution, and despite minor differences, all the previously stipulated trends are still valid (Figure 2).

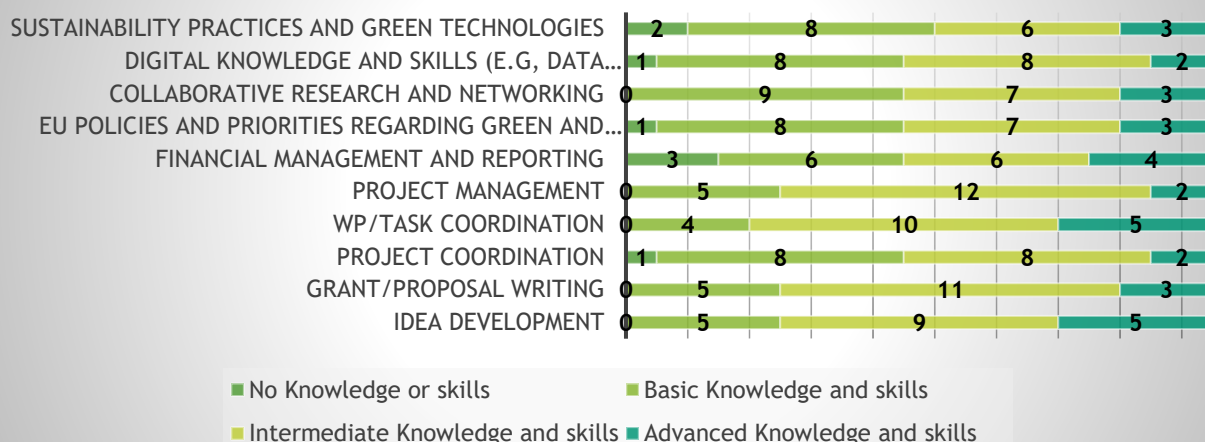




b) Skills Distribution FIS



c) Skills Distribution UCV



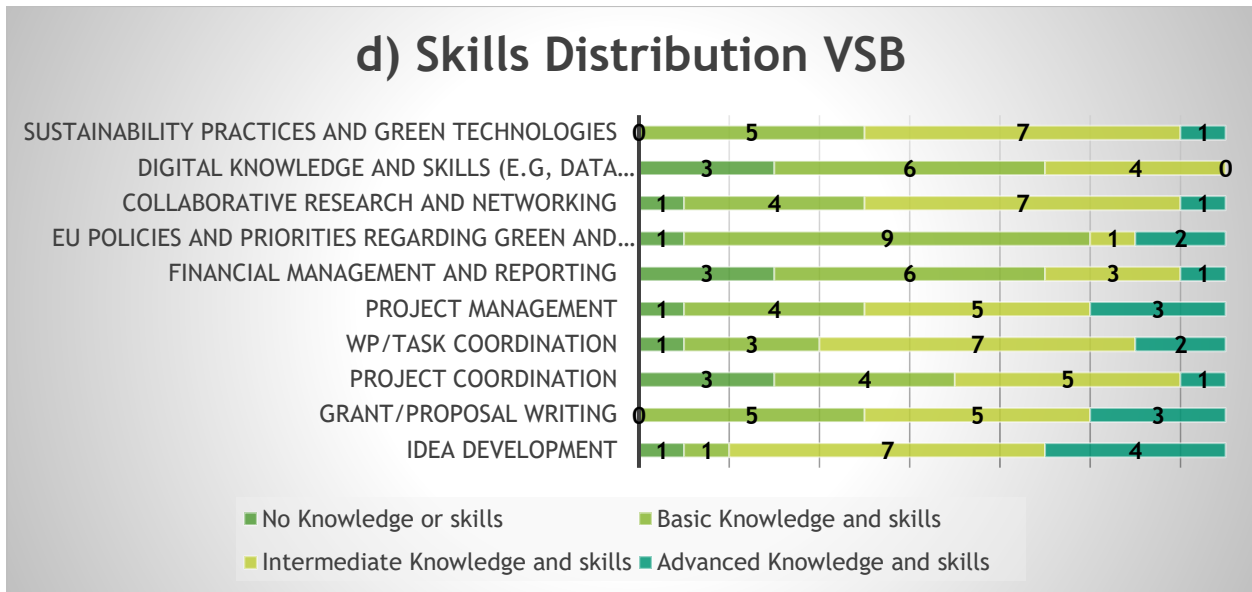


Figure 2: Skills Self-evaluation for a) AUC, b) FIS, c) UCV, d) VSB

Another essential aspect to discuss in the context of project writing and implementation performance is the condition and support offered by HEIs. As a first step, we opted to understand whether the HEI staff's lack of experience in project application and coordination was reflected in the (institutional) barriers they perceived. The question was designed as a multiple-choice option, including such perceived problems as administrative burdens, Difficulty in finding partners, Economic conditions (e.g., pre-financing, co-financing, etc.), Insufficient knowledge and skills, Lack of institutional support, and Lack of information about opportunities. Therefore, the count represents the number of total times an issue was selected from each CORE institution. The aggregated data is presented in Figure 3. The figure also highlights the total number of complaints, represented by the heights of the bars. A quick overview shows that each institution needs to address specific issues to encourage its personnel to become more active in the project application. For example, in AUC, it relates to help in finding project partners and implementing a strategy for systemically informing the team about funding opportunities. At FIS, the respondents considered the additional administrative burdens from project implementation to be one of the main barriers. The UCV could significantly benefit from training in boosting internal knowledge and skills in project application and implementation, as well as help in finding suitable institutions to build a partnership. The VSB is the least affected by these issues. Yet, this HEI can focus its attention towards easing the administrative burden and consider support for overcoming issues from the co-financing and pre-financing mechanisms.



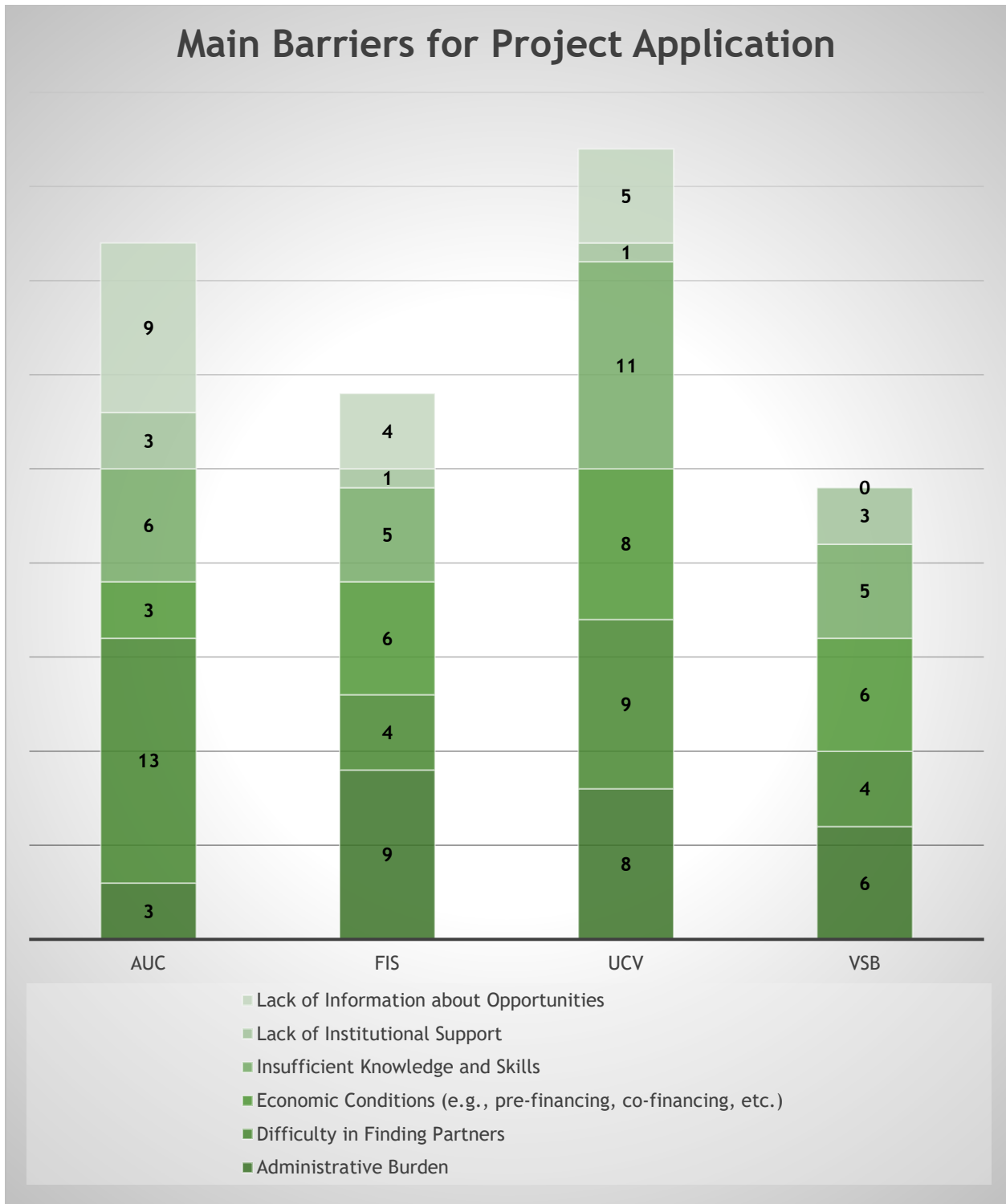


Figure 3: Main Barriers for Project Application in Each CORE HEI



An interesting observation is that the partners from Croatia and Romania identified the difficulties in finding partners for project implementation as one of the main issues. Given their reputation as innovation followers that encountered budget deficiency to support higher education and R&D programmes, this trend could indicate a discriminative attitude of EU institutions. I can also be observed from the Erasmus student exchange programme. In contrast, the outbound student exchange is far greater than inbound in countries like Romania (see “Erasmus+ annual report 2022”, Publication Office, European Union webpage). This attitude can become an issue in these countries, requiring the institutions to adapt their internal support systems and their international reputation.

To consolidate our analysis, the survey also considered a final aspect related to the institutional support received by each respondent. The data indicates that not all the HEI employees opted to ask for help at their home institutions (Table 16). There were no follow-up questions on the motivation for or not asking for institutional support. Therefore, it is impossible to conclude solely on these metrics’ relevance for project implementation, coordination and application. Nevertheless, we opted to understand the level of satisfaction with the provided aid. The quality assessment of the provided support is presented in Figure 4. The analysis offers good perspectives for the CORE TEAM institutions. The prevalence of good and excellent support is obvious in all four HEIs. Problematic aspects could be identified, especially in VSB. With most respondents (84,62%) requesting such support, the data indicates insufficient attention to Financial and Networking aid. This can be an important aspect related to the limited experience of VSB researchers in engaging as partners and not assuming the role of project coordinators (see Table 4). Only support for networking and partnership building received higher criticism in UCV, which might reflect not only an insufficient engagement from the institution but also some external factors of Widening HEI discrimination, discussed previously. It is hard to pinpoint some lacking areas in FIS and AUC, as the responses point out competent support (with minor objections). Nonetheless, it is curious that only half of FIS's respondents asked for help. It can be related to the policy of engaging most of its employees in different practices throughout their careers. This is bound to create different experiences and promote “learning by doing”, however, this does not seem like completely viable solution given their success rates in project application (see Table 6).





Table 16: Respondents Asking for Institutional Support

	AUC	FIS	UCV	VSB	Total
No		9	6	2	26,56%
Yes	14	9	13	11	73,44%
“Yes” (%)	100%	50%	68,42%	84,62%	





Figure 4: Satisfaction with Institutional Support CORE TEAM

5 Discussion and Recommendations

The report's conclusions and recommendations will guide subsequent tasks, particularly in WP3, where targeted capacity-building activities will be implemented based on the identified gaps and needs. The conclusions below highlight the existing challenges and outline growth opportunities,



focusing on enhancing skills in project management, proposal writing, and strategic networking. Recommendations are tailored to address the specific barriers reported by the participants, such as administrative burdens, lack of training, and financial constraints, to provide practical solutions that can be integrated into the project's capacity-building framework. Again, we would like to emphasise the importance of taking a proactive approach to these recommendations. Addressing the skills gaps and administrative challenges is crucial for improving participation in EU projects and boosting the overall competitiveness of institutions from Widening countries. The engagement of stakeholders and continuous progress monitoring will ensure that the proposed measures are effectively implemented and aligned with the evolving requirements of the Green & Digital Transition.

The D2.1 survey findings reveal key insights into the current state of EU project-related skills, experiences, and institutional barriers among TWIN SYNERGIES partner institutions. Most respondents (70%) come from academic roles, yet the overall experience level in grant writing and project coordination remains limited. Despite high engagement in project management (87%), fewer participants (54%) have substantial experience in proposal writing or financial management, which are critical for leading EU projects. These skill gaps contribute to lower success rates, as shown by only 39% of respondents actively involved in budget preparation - a fundamental aspect of proposal development. Such trends indicate that, while there is familiarity with implementation, there is a need for more targeted skill-building in project initiation, writing, and financial planning.

The survey highlighted significant barriers impacting project engagement, such as limited administrative support, difficulty finding suitable partners, and financial constraints related to pre-financing and co-financing. These obstacles are notably more challenging for institutions from Widening countries, where resources and networks may be more constrained than those of established EU members. Additionally, the analysis shows that support for strategic project tasks like international networking, innovation management, and policy alignment remains inconsistent across institutions, further complicating successful participation in EU-funded programs. Moreover, while many respondents expressed confidence in consortium-building skills (70%), there were clear gaps in strategic communication and business internationalisation - two essential skills for enhancing visibility and securing EU project roles. Approximately 65% lacked confidence in using digital communication and public relations strategies, limiting their ability to promote projects effectively. Developing strategic communication and cross-cultural management





competencies is especially pressing, as these are increasingly essential in a globally connected EU research landscape.

Based on the findings from the D2.1 survey are detailed recommendations to guide capacity-building efforts in TWIN SYNERGIES, aligned with both immediate project needs and long-term objectives, particularly in the context of D3.1 as:

- **Introduce training on EU Green & Digital Transition policies and funding priorities**, as respondents noted low familiarity with these crucial areas. Ensuring staff understand EU priorities will increase alignment in proposal writing and application success.
- **Targeted training programs** through the development of comprehensive training programs for proposal writing, project management, financial management, EU policies, and sustainable practices. Practical activities, including case studies and real-life proposal assessments, should be included in the training to ensure that participants can apply their knowledge in real-world project situations. This method will directly help WP3's aims of equipping participants with new transferable skills.
- **Streamline administrative** processes for EU programs to decrease strain on researchers and coordinators. Creating specialised support units to help with proposal preparation, project budgeting, and compliance needs might greatly boost participation and project success.
- **Strengthen networking and partnership-building efforts**: given the acknowledged challenges in recruiting partners, it is critical to expand networking possibilities through brokerage events, conferences, and online platforms. Creating a database of possible partners and hosting matchmaking sessions might assist institutions in finding suitable collaborators.
- **Focus on digital and strategic skills development**: following D3.1, training programs should include courses on digital tools for project management, data analysis, and communication strategy. Furthermore, coaching sessions should focus on strategic skills such as innovation management, international collaboration, and strategic communication to match the Green & Digital Transition goals.





- **Train the communication** and train participants on digital communication tools, social media strategy, and media management to improve outreach and public engagement, as gaps were noted in these areas.
- **Cross-cultural awareness** is needed to equip participants with skills to navigate international regulatory frameworks and cross-cultural management, especially those relevant to leadership roles in international consortia.
- **Addressing financial assistance** is where institutions should look for methods to give financial assistance for project preparation, such as granting grants for proposal development or securing pre-financing. Budget planning and financial management training should also be included in capacity-building programs to help participants overcome financial problems (if any).
- **Monitoring and evaluation** for implementation is a feedback mechanism to continually evaluate the success of training programs and make required changes. This will also help WP3 to evaluate the capacity-building program and ensure that it matches the changing needs of participants.

6 Annexes

Annex 1. Twin Synergy Survey in text format

Section 1: Demographic Information

1. Institution/Organization Name:

- FIS - Faculty of Information Studies in Novo Mesto
- UCV - University of Craiova
- VSB - Technical University of Ostrava
- AU - Algebra University , Zagreb[3]
- SW Oltenia RDA - Agentia pentru Dezvoltare Regionala Sud-Vest Oltenia;
- RCNM - Razvojni Center Novo Mesto Svetovanje in Razvoj Doo
- MSIC - Moravskoslezske Inovacni Centrum Ostrava
- DAZ - Razvojna Agencija Zagreb za Koordinaciju i Poticanje Regionalnog Razvoja





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- Other (please specify)

2. Department/Faculty/Division:

- [Open Text]

3. Position:

- Professor/teacher

- Researcher

- Administrative Staff

- Policy Expert

- Other (please specify)

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Section 2: Current Involvement in EU Projects

4. Do you have any experience with EU projects?

Yes

No

5. In which programmes? (multiple choice possible)

FP6

FP7

H2020

Horizon Europe

Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions

Erasmus+

Interreg

Others (please specify)

6. Do you have experience in writing proposals?

Yes





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No

7. Were you successful in last 2 years?

Yes

No

8. Do you have experience in (multiple choice possible)

Implementing EU projects as a coordinator?

Implementing EU projects as Work Package or Task leader?

Implementing EU projects as Project Partner (without any WP or task responsibilities)?

8. How many years of experience in EU projects do you have?

- [Open Text]

9. Are you currently involved in any EU-funded projects?

- Yes

- No

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10 If yes, please specify the project name, programme and your role (LP-leading or PP-partner):

- [Open Text]

Section 3: Impact

A) Innovation Management

11. Do you feel competent in Innovation Management?

YES / NO

If YES:

11a. What are the main skills you used for, when and how successful it was you were:

11.1. Innovation strategy – identify opportunities and strategic planning for innovation

YES / NO





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If YES:

- Experience (number):
- Success rate (%):

11.2. Innovation processes and tools – idea generation, creativity techniques, agile methodologies, innovation management tools

YES / NO

If YES:

- Experience (number):
- Success rate (%):

11.3. Intellectual property management – protecting and managing IP in research projects

YES / NO

If YES:

- Experience (number):
- Success rate (%):

11.4. Innovation funding and investment – identify sources of funding for innovation (EU grants, venture capital, etc.), attract investments and manage investor relations

YES / NO

If YES:

- Experience (number):
- Success rate (%):

B) Business Internationalization

5. Do you feel competent in Business Internationalization?

YES / NO

If YES:

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12a. What are the main skills you used for, when and how successful it was you were:

12.1. Market analysis and entry strategies – conduct international market research, select and evaluate entry strategies (exporting joint venture etc.)





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YES / NO

If YES:

- Experience (number):
- Success rate (%):

12.2. International business development – building international partnership / networks, negotiating and deal-making in international contexts

YES / NO

If YES:

- Experience (number):
- Success rate (%):

12.3. Regulatory and legal considerations – international regulations and compliance, navigating IPR in different jurisdictions

YES / NO

If YES:

- Experience (number):
- Success rate (%):

12.4. Cross-cultural communication and management – impact on business of cultural differences, strategies for cross-cultural communication

YES / NO

If YES:

- Experience (number):
- Success rate (%):

C) Strategic Communication

6. Do you feel competent in Strategic Communication?

YES / NO

If YES:

13a. What are the main skills you used for, when and how successful it was you were:

13.1. Developing communication strategies – crafting clear and compelling messages, identifying target audiences and tailoring communication

YES / NO





TWIN SYNERGIES

If YES:

- Experience (number):
- Success rate (%):

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13.2. Digital communication and social media – leveraging digital tools/platforms for communication and best practices for using social media in professional contexts

YES / NO

If YES:

- Experience (number):
- Success rate (%):

13.3. PR and media management – building and maintaining a positive public image, engaging with media and handling press relations

YES / NO

If YES:

- Experience (number):
- Success rate (%):

13.4. Stakeholders engagement and networking – identifying stakeholders, mapping, engaging and relation building

YES / NO

If YES:

- Experience (number):
- Success rate (%):

D) Writing Projects

7. Do you feel competent to write proposals for European / Horizon projects?

YES / NO

If YES:

14a. What are the main skills you used for, when and how successful it was you were:

“The What?”





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14.1 Define project objectives

- Experience (number):
- Success rate (%):

14.2 State-of-the-art

- Experience (number):
- Success rate (%):

14.3 Concept and approach

- Experience (number):
- Success rate (%):

14.4 Ambition

- Experience (number):
- Success rate (%):

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“The How”

14.5 Tasks

- Experience (number):
- Success rate (%):

14.6 Milestones

- Experience (number):
- Success rate (%):

14.7 Deliverables

- Experience (number):
- Success rate (%):

14.8 Budget

- Experience (number):
- Success rate (%):

Section 4: Consortium Building





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8. Do you feel competent to act for consortium/partnership building?

YES / NO

If YES:

10. What are the main skills you used for, when and how successful it was you were:

16.1. Develop strategic vision – identify areas of collaboration and define common goals

YES / NO

If YES:

- Experience (number):
- Success rate (%):

16.2. Build relationships, open communication and share information – cultivate relationships, build trust and define strengths and weaknesses of the partners

YES / NO

If YES:

- Experience (number):
- Success rate (%):

16.3. Negotiation and diplomacy - negotiate agreements, balance interests, share responsibilities, handle conflicts and /or find win-win solutions

YES / NO

If YES:

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- Experience (number):
- Success rate (%):

16.4. Pooling resources for greater stronger impact – allocating resources equitably with the benefits

YES / NO

If YES:

- Experience (number):





TWIN SYNERGIES

- Success rate (%):

16.5. Adaptability and flexibility – adapt to evolving circumstances and challenges with showing resilience by strategy adjustment and mitigating risk mitigation

YES / NO

If YES:

- Experience (number):
- Success rate (%):

Section 5: Skills and Training

11. How would you rate your knowledge and skills in the following areas related to EU research and innovation projects?

Idea development

- No Knowledge or skills
- Basic Knowledge and skills
- Intermediate Knowledge and skills
- Advanced Knowledge and skills

Grant/Proposal Writing:

- No Knowledge or skills
- Basic Knowledge and skills
- Intermediate Knowledge and skills
- Advanced Knowledge and skills

Project Coordination:

- No Knowledge or skills
- Basic Knowledge and skills
- Intermediate Knowledge and skills
- Advanced Knowledge and skills

WP/Task coordination:

- No Knowledge or skills
- Basic Knowledge and skills





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- Intermediate Knowledge and skills

- Advanced Knowledge and skills

Project Management:

- No Knowledge or skills

- Basic Knowledge and skills

- Intermediate Knowledge and skills

- Advanced Knowledge and skills

Financial Management and Reporting:

- No Knowledge or skills

- Basic Knowledge and skills

- Intermediate Knowledge and skills

- Advanced Knowledge and skills

EU Policies and Priorities regarding Green and Digital Transition:

- No Knowledge or skills

- Basic Knowledge and skills

- Intermediate Knowledge and skills

- Advanced Knowledge and skills

Collaborative Research and Networking:

- No Knowledge or skills

- Basic Knowledge and skills

- Intermediate Knowledge and skills

- Advanced Knowledge and skills

Digital Knowledge and Skills (e.g, data analysis, EU platforms, digital tools):

- No Knowledge or skills

- Basic Knowledge and skills

- Intermediate Knowledge and skills

- Advanced Knowledge and skills

Sustainability Practices and Green Technologies:

- No Knowledge or skills





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- Basic Knowledge and skills
- Intermediate Knowledge and skills
- Advanced Knowledge

12. Have you received any formal training in these areas?

- Yes

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- No

13. If yes, please specify in which areas (multiple choice possible):

Idea development

Proposal writing

Project coordination

WP/Task coordination

Project Management

14. If yes, please specify the type of training received and the provider:

- [Open Text]

Section 6: Institutional Support and Barriers

15. Have you already asked your institution for support regarding EU projects?

Yes

No

16. If yes, did you receive any support?

Yes

No

17. If yes, how did the provided support meet your needs?





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Not at all

Partly

Fully

18. If yes, how did the provided support meet your expectations?

Not at all

Partly

Fully

19. How would you rate the support provided by your institution in the following areas related to EU projects?

Information and Awareness about EU Funding Programmes and Opportunities:

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- Very Poor

- Poor

- Average

- Good

- Excellent

Administrative and Technical Support for proposal writing:

- Very Poor

- Poor

- Average

- Good

- Excellent

Financial Support for project implementation:

- Very Poor

- Poor

- Average





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- Good
- Excellent

Networking and Partnership Building:

- Very Poor
- Poor
- Average
- Good
- Excellent

20. What do you perceive as the main barriers for you personally to apply for EU-funded projects? (Select all that apply)

- Lack of Information about Opportunities
- Insufficient Knowledge and Skills
- Administrative Burden
- Lack of Institutional Support
- Difficulty in Finding Partners
- Economical Conditions (pre-financing, co-financing, etc.)
- Other (please specify)

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21. What do you perceive as the main barriers for your institution to participate in EU-funded projects? (Select all that apply)

- Lack of Information about Opportunities
- Insufficient Knowledgeable and Skilled staff
- Administrative Burden
- Insufficient International Visibility and/or Standing
- Insufficient Cooperation and Network
- Economical Conditions (pre-financing, co-financing, etc.)
- Other (please specify)





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22. What would you expect from training in EU proposal writing?

[open text]

23. Which knowledge and skills do you expect to have developed at the end of a capacity-building programme?

[open text]

Section 7: Transferable Skills and Competitiveness

24. In your opinion, which skills are crucial for enhancing the competitiveness and innovation capacities of your institution in the context of the Green & Digital transition? (Select all that apply)

- Advanced Digital Skills
- Sustainability Practices and Green Technologies
- Interdisciplinary Research Methods
- International Collaboration Techniques and Tools
- Innovation Management
- Entrepreneurship and Business Internationalization
- Strategic Communication
- Social Innovation
- Policy and Regulatory Understanding
- Other (please specify)

25. For which of the following skills does your institution provide training programmes?

- Advanced Digital Skills
- Sustainability Practices and Green Technologies
- Interdisciplinary Research Methods

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- International Collaboration Techniques and Tools
- Innovation management
- Entrepreneurship and Business Internationalization





TWIN SYNERGIES

- Strategic Communication
- Social Innovation
- Policy and Regulatory Understanding
- Other (please specify)

26. How effective are current training programmes in equipping you with these skills?

- Not Effective
- Somewhat Effective
- Effective
- Very Effective
- No Opinion

Section 8: Seeking international partnerships, interest in the programming phase and exchange of experience

27. How do you rate the success and effectiveness of the following methods for engaging in international project consortia?

(scale 1- poor, 2- weak, 3- average, 4- good, 5- excellent)

- Contacts from previous projects (1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5)
- Contacts from other joint activities from the past (1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5)
- Targeted brokerage events (1 - 2 - 3 - 3 - 4 - 5)
- Finding and reaching out to partners through portals, social networks, etc. (1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5)
- Contacts made at conferences, etc. (1 - 2 - 3 - 3 - 4 - 5)
- Recommendations obtained from trusted partners (1 - 2 - 3 - 3 - 4 - 5)

28. If you can think of other successful ways to get involved in consortium projects, please indicate them:

[OPEN????]

29. To what extent do you consider important to be involved in international (professional, research or other) networks and platforms in relation to future





participation in consortium projects seeking support from programmes such as Horizon Europe?

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- A. I have never thought about it in this way
- B. It is not relevant
- C. It plays a role
- D. It is very important
- E. It is quite essential

If you answered C, D, E to the previous question, please answer also following two questions:

30. To what extent are you personally committed to being part of these international networks or platforms?

- Not at all
- To a very limited extent
- To a very limited extent, this is a management responsibility
- I am involved
- I am very involved

31. Give examples of such platforms and networks that you consider relevant in this context:

[OPNE?]

32. To what extent do you consider it important for your organisation to be interested and possibly involved in the phase of the preparation of future grant programmes? (The actual launch of calls for proposals is preceded by a number of steps and activities; it is the initiation and preparation phase of the grant programme itself (under which calls are subsequently launched))

- I do not consider it important
- I consider it important, but it is the responsibility of the management of the organisation
- I consider it important, researchers themselves should also be interested in this





TWIN SYNERGIES

phase

33. If you consider this important, do you think your organisation is active enough in this?

Yes

No

34. Do you have any expectations from peer to peer visits to foreign entities with regard to your professional development? (multiple choice)

- No, because it is usually a waste of time
- Yes, mostly it is about getting inspiration on what and how they do elsewhere
- Yes, they allow us to make new contacts that can be used in the future
- Yes. I have had good experience of using the knowledge and contacts gained from these visits in the preparation of future projects

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- Other (please specify):

Section 9: Suggestions and Future Directions

35. In your opinion, what strategies or measures could enhance participation in EU projects at your institution? (Select all that apply)

- Enhanced Training and Capacity Building
- Improved Information Dissemination
- Increased Administrative Support
- Financial Support
- Strengthening Partnerships and Networks
- Other (please specify)

36. Please provide any suggestions or comments not addressed in previous questions:

- [Open Text]

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