



Excellent peripheries for a strong
European Research Area

D2.2 Action Plans developed

Grant Agreement n°. 101071329



Funded by
the European Union

Version History			
Ver.	Date	Comments/Changes	Author
0.0	15-12-2023	Consults and decision-making process on the initial structure of the deliverable.	Sebastián López – ULPGC Tanausú J. Dávila – FCPCT Michelle Perello – CE Víctor Martínez - CE
0.1	15-01-2024	SWOT Analysis received to be included in the document.	Néstor Rodríguez – ATRINEO Thor Rodrigues - ATRINEO
1.0	15-01-2024	Request for drafting the UAc Action Plan.	Emanuel Mendonça - UAc
2.0	11-03-2024	UAc contributions received for revision and feedback	Emanuel Mendonça - UAc
3.0	18-03-2024	ULPGC's revision and final remarks	Sebastián López – ULPGC Juan Alberto Corbera - ULPGC Tanausú J. Dávila – FCPCT
3.0	20-03-2024	Last version sent to the SC for revision and feedback	Tanausú J. Dávila – FCPCT
3.0	22-03-2024	UNICAL contributions received for revision and corrections	Andrea Attanasio – UNICAL
3.0	25-03-2024	Deliverable submitted to the EC	Tanausú J. Dávila – FCPCT

Deliverable information	
Project Acronym	EXPER
Project Title	Excellent peripheries for a strong European Research Area
Type of action	HORIZON Coordination and Support Actions
Topic	HORIZON-WIDERA-2021-ACCESS-05-01
Call	HORIZON-WIDERA-2021-ACCESS-05
Granting authority	European Research Executive Agency
Project Start Date	01/10/2022
Project end date	31/03/2025
Project duration	30 months
Work Package	WP2 Co-designing modernization with surrounding ecosystems
Deliverable	D2.2 Action Plans developed
Due Date	31/03/2024
Submission date	26/09/2023
Dissemination Level	PU
Responsible	University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (ULPGC)
Version	3

Author(s)	Tanausú J. Dávila	FCPCT-ULPGC
	Emanuel Mendonça	UAc
	Víctor Martínez	CE
	Néstor Rodríguez	ATRINEO
	Thor Rodrigues	ATRINEO
Reviewers	Juan Alberto Corbera	ULPGC
	Andrea Attanasio	UNICAL
	Néstor Rodríguez	ATRINEO
	Lucía Dobarro	ITC
	Michelle Perello	CE

Acronyms & Abbreviations	
AAUA	Academic Association of UAc
CE	Consulta Europa
CLAB	Contamination laboratories
D	Deliverable
EC	European Commission
EUA	European University Alliance
ERUA	European Reform University Alliance
GA	Grant Agreement
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HRRTDD	Human Resources and Research and Technological Development departments of ULPGC
HRS4R	Human Resources Strategy for Researchers
InUAc	Technology-based Incubator of UAc
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
OPE	Spanish acronym for European Project Office

ORs	Outermost regions
OTC	Spanish acronym for Knowledge Transfer Office
ProCIED	Pro-Rectorate for Cooperation, Internationalisation and Distance Learning of UAc
RTTP	Registered Technology Transfer Professional
SC	Steering committee
SCWG	Societal challenges working groups
SDGs	Sustainable development goals
SVCT	Science and Technology Service department of UAc
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
UAc	University of the Azores
ULPGC	University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria
VReAPI	Vice-Rectorate for Administration, Planning and Infrastructures of UAc
VReBECI	Vice-Rectorate for Students, Well-being and Institutional of UAc
VReEGA	Vice-Rectorate for Education and Academic Affairs of UAc
VReCITC	Vice-Rectorate for Science, Innovation and Knowledge Transfer of UAc
VRIMIP	Vice-Rectorate of Internationalisation, Mobility and International Projection of ULPGC
VRRT	Vice-Rectorate for Research and Transfer of ULPGC
WP	Work Package

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

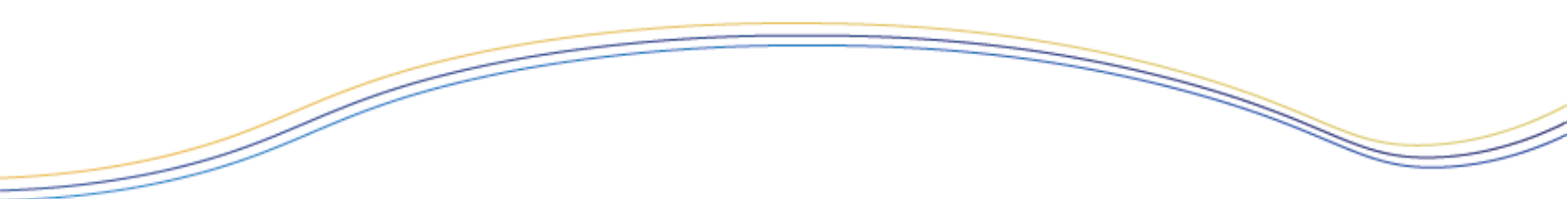
The overall objective of the EXPER project is to support the institutional transformation of University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (ULPGC) and Azores University (UAc) through capacity building activities and through international cooperation with the leading Universities of Rostock University (UROS) and Calabria (UNICAL).

In order to improve the capabilities of the Widening universities (ULPGC and UAc), the capital areas of work are the attraction and retention of talent, the promotion of excellent research based on social, environmental (in terms of blue and circular economy), and economic responsibility, and finally the knowledge transfer and the connection with businesses in the environment in which these universities develop their activity. To achieve this, the first phase of the EXPER project was to conduct an assessment and analysis of the current situation of both entities in this respect.

In this sense, under the umbrella of WP1 (WP1. Regional ecosystems assessment and cooperation models) a regional ecosystems assessment and an internal assessment of the HEI widening partners (ULPGC and UAc), was performed to identify barriers at institutional/regional and national level which could hamper HEIs' potential role as driver of regional development and competitiveness.

On the other hand, the objective of WP2 (Co-designing modernization with surrounding ecosystems) of EXPER project is to gather all relevant actors in each Widening ecosystems and co-design Modernization strategies for transformations of Widening HEI based on research and innovation. This WP started their activities by developing a co-design methodology (D2.1). The co-design methodology aimed at providing a comprehensive framework for engaging stakeholders in the development of a vision and mission, the Individual Strategy and a Joint Strategy for the Widening Universities involving stakeholders. This methodology entails a series of activities including stakeholder engagement, baseline workshops, online consultations, and validation workshops. The methodology seeks to ensure that the overall of WP2 are reflective of the needs and aspirations of the wider community. As the first co-design phase, the vision and mission of each Widening University was established in order to identify areas of improvement, which informed the creation of a cohesive and impactful vision for the future.

The next phase of the co-design approach is to elaborate a baseline strategy for each Widening University. This objective will be developed in two separate phases. In the first phase, an Individual Strategy will be developed for each university, whose main objective will be to effectively advance and improve the capacities of both universities, regarding the weaknesses and deficiencies detected during the implementation of WP1 (Regional ecosystems assessment and cooperation models). In a second phase, a Joint Strategy (Task 2.3 Developing a joint strategy), will be developed between ULPGC and UAc, for the establishment of a shared vision and agenda for institutional transformation in three



main lines of action: a) Excellent and responsible research; b) Attraction and retention of talents; c) KTT, cooperation with surrounding ecosystems.

The conceptual and strategic line of actions conducted so far, outlined in the preceding paragraphs, is the starting point from which two action plans (one per University, ULPGC and UAc) will be developed detailing activities to be executed, in order to reach the objectives previously set in the strategy. This is the main objective of the present deliverable, in line with the planned activities and goals of Task 2.4 Developing Action Plans.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. PURPOSE OF THE DOCUMENT

The present deliverable develops and details the Action Plans of the Widening Universities (ULPGC and UAc), based on the results obtained after the implementation of WP1, as well as in the previously established objectives in the Strategy of both institutions. In this sense, the main objectives of the document are:

- a. To briefly present the current situation of ULPGC and UAc, based on the conclusions of the internal and external assessments conducted in the framework of WP1.
- b. Perform a comprehensive SWOT analysis to detect opportunities, strengths, threats and weaknesses of the Widening Universities.
- c. To depict the strategic formulation, objectives and KPIs established during the implementation of Task 2.3 Developing a Joint Strategy of the project.
- d. Develop and stage a concrete Action Plan, one per University, realistic in terms of available resources and effective implementation time, as well as adjusted to the needs and weaknesses previously identified.

In brief, this deliverable describes and develops the actions to be conducted by each institution (ULPGC & UAc) under the EXPER project framework and within the planned schedule, with the ultimate goal of reaching the objectives previously established both in the Individual Strategy and the Joint Strategy of both entities.

Table 1. List of active WPs and status of associated tasks during the first year of project execution.





WP No ¹	Task	Task leader	Status
1	1.1 Methodology for assessment (M1-M3)	ATRINEO	Implemented
	1.2 Widening Universities assessment (M3-M9)	ATRINEO	Implemented
	1.3 Assessment of surrounding ecosystems (M4-M9)	ULPGC	Implemented
	1.4 Good practices from leading universities (M6-M12)	UROS	Implemented
	1.5 Good practices from European universities alliances (M3-M12)	CE	Implemented
2	2.1 Stakeholder involvement and co-design methodology (M3-M6)	CE	Implemented
	2.2 Creating a community-based vision of the University (M6-M10)	ULPGC	Implemented
	2.3 Developing a joint strategy (M10-M14)	ULPGC	Implemented
	2.4 Developing Action Plans (M14-M18)	ULPGC	Implemented
4	4.1 Establishment and coordination of “societal challenges working groups” (M12-M30)	ITC	In progress
	4.2 Implementation of Societal Challenges Action Plans (M18-M30)	ITC	In progress
	4.3 Transversal skills for excellent and responsible research (M18-M30)	ULPGC	In progress
6	6.1 Analysis of institutional, legal, and administrative barriers (M6-M12)	ULPGC	Implemented
	6.2 Monitoring and impact assessment of Action plans implementation (M18-M30)	ULPGC	In progress
	6.3 Feasibility studies and partnership agreement for establishment of spin-offs supporting offices (M18-M30)	SPEGC	In progress
	6.4 Creation of a forum of peripheral Universities (M6-M30)	CE	In progress
7	7.1 Dissemination strategy & visual identity (M1-M30)	CE	In progress
	7.2 Project website and media dissemination (M1-M30)	CE	In progress
	7.3 Focused communication campaigns (M1-M30)	CE	In progress

¹ WP1: Regional ecosystems assessment and cooperation models
 WP2: Co-designing modernization with surrounding ecosystems
 WP3: Attracting and retaining talents
 WP4: Promoting Excellent and Responsible Research
 WP5: Connection with business environment: knowledge transfer and spin-offs
 WP6: Sustainability and exploitation
 WP7: Dissemination
 WP8: Project management

WP No	Task	Task leader	Status
7	7.4 Outreach to citizens, organization and participation in events (M7-M30)	CE	In progress
	7.5 Outreach to children and schools (M7-M30)	CE	In progress
8	8.1 Coordination, reporting, and data management (M1-M30)	ULPGC	In progress
	8.2 Kick-off and other periodic meetings (M1-M30)	ULPGC	In progress
	8.3 Internal evaluation, quality and risk management (M1-M30)	ULPGC	In progress

1.2. STRUCTURE OF THE DOCUMENT

This deliverable has the following content and structure:

-  Strategic formulation (section 2)
-  UAc Action Plan (section 3).
-  ULPGC Action Plan (section 4).
-  Joint Strategy (section 5).

2. STRATEGIC FORMULATION

The outputs from WP1, once both the internal assessment and the regional ecosystem assessment of the universities (UAc and ULPGC) were performed, constituted the starting point for the elaboration of the co-design methodology foreseen in WP2. This methodology is revealed as a procedural figure that outlines the path to be followed by both entities in order to achieve the objectives placed by the EXPER project.

As just mentioned, the co-design methodology, previously developed in “D2.1 Co-design methodology”, outlined a series of phases that have culminated in the elaboration of the Joint Strategy for both universities. These phases are as follows:

1. First Co-design Phase: HEIs’ Vision and Mission. The results and analysis of this phase will be presented in this deliverable (see sections 3.2 and 4.2 for UAc and ULPGC, respectively).
2. Second co-design phase: HEI Individual Strategy.
3. Third co-design phase: EXPER Joint Strategy (according to the Task 2.3 Developing a Joint Strategy of the project).

Ultimately, the development of the Joint Strategy will share the vision and agenda for institutional transformation, as well as provisions tailored to each Widening University. The Joint Strategy includes three main lines of action:

- a. Excellent and responsible research which encompass capacity building activities for researchers (transversal skills, entrepreneurial skills and Open Science skills and tools); networking activities to develop multidisciplinary research projects and identify news research strands.
- b. Strengthening attractiveness of researchers’ careers including improvement in career assessment and researchers’ conditions and fostering gender equality and diversity.
- c. Co-operation with surrounding ecosystem actors for the transmission of knowledge and talents, e.g. through creation or reinforcing of technology transfer and spin-offs offices and fostering cooperation with citizens.

Phases two and three of the Co-design methodology have allowed us to establish both the Individual and the Joint Strategy formulation of the two Widening universities, ULPGC and UAc. That is to say, the Individual Strategic Objectives (SOs) of ULPGC and UAc have been defined within the framework of the EXPER project; on the other hand, a series of KPIs associated with these Individual SOs have been established, what will allow us to monitor the compliance level of these objectives over time.

Therefore, in order to deploy the strategic formulation, the following sections present the strategic objectives of the ULPGC and UAc both individually and jointly.

3. UAC ACTION PLAN

3.1. ANALYSIS OF CURRENT SITUATION

3.1.1. DESCRIPTION

Following the planned actions of WP1, under Task 1.1 Methodology for assessment, Task 1.2 Widening Universities assessment and Task 1.3 Assessment of surrounding ecosystems of the project, the conducted assessments of both Widening Universities (internal or "Widening Universities assessment" and external or "Assessment of surrounding ecosystems") identified challenges and opportunities for cooperation between Widening universities and their ecosystems, and how to efficiently enhance the role of the HEIs as driver for regional development and competitiveness.

Through the common methodology implemented in Task 1.1, the above-mentioned internal assessment of ULPGC and UAc was accomplished by involving internal members of each organization with the aim of understanding in depth the strengths, weaknesses and operational capabilities of both universities in terms of scientific excellence, talent attraction and retention, and knowledge and technology transfer.

On the other hand, the feedback provided by stakeholders to the universities was obtained by conducting interviews with these external agents, conforming these invaluable inputs and their thorough analysis the external assessment of the ecosystem surrounding the Widening Universities. This analysis allowed us to know their criteria regarding the role that these two entities (ULPGC & UAc) should play in terms of promotion and support for regional development, and how cooperation between agents of the ecosystem itself should be developed.

The following sections present and summarize the main conclusions and challenges detected during both the internal and external assessments of the UAc. Also, a guidance list of proposed measures to address these challenges is included. The information has been separated into three pivotal blocks, each of them being one of the three main pillars tackled by the EXPER project: Excellence in research, Talent acquisition and retention and Knowledge and Technology transfer. Finally, an exhaustive list of actions and initiatives from UAc has also been incorporated in this section, on which the organisation is currently working to improve and overcome the challenges detected.

3.1.1.1. MAIN FINDINGS OF THE INTERNAL ASSESSMENT

The following table details and analyses the challenges detected during the internal assessment of the UAc and presents the proposed measures to address these challenges. The information has been separated into three pivotal blocks, each of them being one of the three main pillars tackled by the EXPER project: Excellence in research, Talent acquisition and retention and Knowledge and Technology transfer.

Table 2. Challenges identified and proposed measures in the UAc's internal assessment

PILLAR	ASPECT UNDER ASSESSMENT	BARRIER/CHALLENGE DETECTED	PROPOSED MEASURES/SOLUTIONS
EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH	Educational capacities	<i>Resource limitations, absence of sufficient resources.</i>	Strategic planning and budgeting, prioritizing the most critical areas first. To explore alternative funding sources, such as grants, partnerships, philanthropy, endowments, and industry partnerships would be highly recommended. Investing in maintaining and upgrading infrastructure can ensure resources are used most effectively.
		<i>Staffing concerns: shortage of both teaching and non-teaching staff, a high workload burden on the existing staff, and a perceived need for an increased presence of career researchers and internationally recognized researchers.</i>	To implement a comprehensive hiring plan that aligns with the institution's strategic objectives. Reducing faculty workload by delegating certain tasks to administrative or support staff or even employing technology where feasible to automate routine tasks.
		<i>Communication and collaboration: insufficient internal communication within the institution and a perceived lack of collaboration.</i>	To develop comprehensive communication strategies to keep faculty, researchers, teachers and students informed about the university's initiatives.
		<i>Promotion of excellence research activities.</i>	To establish a dedicated public relations or communications team responsible for showcasing research achievements, both internally and externally.
	Advanced Research Production	<i>Insufficient funding: the bulk of financial resources come from public entities, at regional, federal, or European levels.</i>	To explore the potential of joint programs with private entities, co-financing initiatives of mutual interest.

PILLAR	ASPECT UNDER ASSESSMENT	BARRIER/CHALLENGE DETECTED	PROPOSED MEASURES/SOLUTIONS
		<i>Limited research time.</i>	To establish a short, medium and long-term strategy for the optimisation of tasks and resources available to researchers, especially in the administrative field.
		<i>Inadequate equipment.</i>	Comprehensively review the resource allocation processes for inefficiencies.
		<i>Lack of partnerships with external enterprises.</i>	To foster partnerships.
		<i>Low student engagement.</i>	To offer students promotion and information on research careers, substantially improving the working conditions associated with research careers.
		<i>Interdisciplinarity: current advanced research activities remain restricted to traditional divisions in the branch of sciences.</i>	Acquisition of new skills for researchers and fostering strategies to step them outside their comfort zones. To facilitate and encourage research centres to host specialists from different scientific fields.
		<i>Insufficient technical and supporting staff.</i>	To implement a comprehensive hiring plan that aligns with the institution's strategic objectives.
TALENT ACQUISITION AND RETENTION	Recruitment of new talent	<i>Low recruitment rate/numbers.</i>	To design an onboarding system that includes orientation and facilitates new staff to familiarise with the institution. On the other hand, offering compensation packages, including housing assistance, travel allowances, etc. will be a differential point. More funding will attract potential candidates, also providing them with the resources they need to conduct high-level research.
		<i>Not providing competitive salaries.</i>	To improve remuneration packages should be a priority. To reallocate resources or securing additional funding through methods such as governmental lobbying, fundraising initiatives, or industry partnerships.
		<i>Inadequate research funding.</i>	To foster a grant-application-friendly environment. Some proposals to achieve this are the following: to organize grant-writing workshops or creating a dedicated office to support faculty members in their grant applications.

PILLAR	ASPECT UNDER ASSESSMENT	BARRIER/CHALLENGE DETECTED	PROPOSED MEASURES/SOLUTIONS
		<i>Competition from more prominent institutions.</i>	To improve competitiveness by focusing resources on specific disciplines in which UAC excels and present a competitive advantage.
			Strengthening ties with international institutions and networks.
	Career development opportunities	<i>Not tracking career progression.</i>	To establish a formal system for tracking the career progression of researchers and staff.
			To communicate career progression policies, expectations, and opportunities clearly and regularly to all staff. To provide feedback, conducting performance reviews, and openly discussing career objectives and paths.
			To establish clear, objective criteria for promotions and ensure these are applied consistently across the board.
			To recognize and celebrate achievements, contributions, and milestones.
			Feedback mechanisms: implement channels for employees to share their feedback, concerns and suggestions.
		<i>No additional training opportunities at their respective institutions</i>	To offer opportunities for professional growth such as training, workshops, or further education. Encourage and support participation in these activities.
	Workplace balance and wellbeing	<i>Excessive workloads</i>	Regular reviews of workload and compensation policies to ensure fairness and prevent overworking
		<i>Ineffective communication</i>	To enhance communication channels: create open and robust channels for communication within the organization: regular meetings at various levels (departmental, faculty, and university-wide) to discuss ongoing issues and ideas, implement feedback mechanisms, etc.
		<i>Management practices and recognition of merit</i>	To foster recognition and Merit-Based Systems: to implement a system that recognizes not just the quantity but also the quality of work done, encouraging the sharing of best practices across the organization, promoting a culture of learning and improvement.

PILLAR	ASPECT UNDER ASSESSMENT	BARRIER/CHALLENGE DETECTED	PROPOSED MEASURES/SOLUTIONS
		<i>Working conditions and organizational culture</i>	Review and improve the working conditions, including addressing personal conflicts, providing contractual stability, and fostering opportunities for career progression.
			To provide spaces for informal and social activities to build camaraderie among staff members.
			To foster an open dialogue about mental health and stress management.
	Culture of innovation	<i>Leadership Endorsement and Involvement</i>	To promote the leadership's involvement in championing innovative ideas and initiatives and involve themselves in their execution.
		<i>Environment for experimentation</i>	To foster a fail-fast, learn-fast culture where mistakes during innovative pursuits are viewed as learning opportunities rather than failures.
			To implement a system to monitor progress, gather opinions, and adjust policies or practices accordingly
	Ethical excellence	<i>Ethical Awareness and Understanding</i>	To cultivate a comprehensive understanding of the university's ethical guidelines and the function of the Ethics Committee: through periodic newsletters, emails, or updates regarding ethical policies and committee activities.
		<i>Access to Anonymous Complaints System and Due Credit Systems</i>	To communicate about these systems and provide instructions on their use through regular channels, workshops, and information sessions. These systems should be user-friendly and easily accessible, with clear visibility on the university's website and internal platforms
		<i>Regular Ethical Training</i>	To ensure adherence to ethical guidelines, mandatory regular training or workshops on good ethical practices should be organized for all university members.
		<i>Proactive Ethical Monitoring (particularly among scientific members)</i>	Regular audits or checks of research projects for compliance with ethical guidelines
			To implement a reward system to incentivize adherence to ethical guidelines and best practices.
KNOWLEDGE AND TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER	KTT Strategies and organizations	<i>Uncertainty about KTT</i>	To strengthen KTT Literacy, implementing, training programs, seminars, and workshops for staff members and researchers. This will help build a comprehensive understanding of KTT processes, importance, and benefits.

PILLAR	ASPECT UNDER ASSESSMENT	BARRIER/CHALLENGE DETECTED	PROPOSED MEASURES/SOLUTIONS
		<i>Lack of clear communication channels</i>	To ensure open, transparent, and frequent communication within the institution about KTT. Regular updates and reviews on KTT progress should be communicated across all levels of the institution.
		<i>KTT resources</i>	To Identify the resource needs of KTT securing additional funding, hiring or training skilled personnel, and efficiently utilizing existing resources. Seek out public, private, and governmental funding opportunities, grants, and partnerships.
			To strengthen the role of the KTT Office, to coordinate, support, and promote KTT activities across the institution.
		<i>Inadequate regulatory system</i>	A review of the existing policies and procedures relating to KTT is required, to make them clearer and fairer. In addition, intellectual property regulations should be reviewed to ensure they are conducive to KTT, while still protecting the rights of the researchers and the institution.
	Structures and processes towards patent and IP activities	<i>Gaps in communication and institutional support.</i>	Boosting awareness and perception on invention disclosure: to hold regular information sessions, to publicize successful patent applications, to implement a reward system for consistent invention disclosure.
		<i>Deficiencies in capability and strategy</i>	To seek external advice from global IP experts and providing workshops on international patents, in order to improve the university's patent internationalization capability
			To establish a dedicated IP Management team and offering workshops on commercialization strategies, also forming strategic alliances with industry partners.
	Partnership development	<i>Engagement with external partners</i>	To develop a clear strategy for partnerships, highlighting the benefits and roles of partners and providing a roadmap for improving and expanding partnerships over time.
			Actively involve industry and commercial entities in curriculum development and research projects. Host industry events, guest lectures, and seminars to expose the university community to market trends and the latest industry developments.
			To foster a culture of partnership: training sessions, recognition of successful partnerships and incentives.
			To incorporate feedback from partners and stakeholders to continually improve relationships and collaborations. Regularly review and update the partnership strategy, ensuring it remains effective and relevant.

PILLAR	ASPECT UNDER ASSESSMENT	BARRIER/CHALLENGE DETECTED	PROPOSED MEASURES/SOLUTIONS
		<i>Communication strategies</i>	To implement frequent and transparent communication channels with partners: regular meetings, updates, newsletters, information portals, etc.
		<i>Access to facilities</i>	To review current policies and procedures to identify and address any barriers to access, in order to encourage collaboration and demonstrate the value the university places on partnerships.
	Start-Up support and incubation	<i>Provision and communication of start-up support and incubation services</i>	To enhance communication about the existence and benefits of its start-up support services: dedicated website, regular newsletters, social media platforms, and presentations at various university events. To effectively communicate success stories from the incubation program.
			To host regular start-up competitions and entrepreneurial events.
			To offer entrepreneurship training and workshops would help to equip students, faculty, and alumni with the necessary skills for business start-up and development.
			To collaborate with external business incubators, accelerators, venture capitalists, and industry partners
		<i>In general terms, lack of awareness within the university community regarding start-ups and spin-offs.</i>	To organize awareness campaigns, workshops, and seminars on entrepreneurship and the benefits of start-up support.

3.1.1.2. MAIN FINDINGS OF THE EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT

The following are the most important findings extracted from the interviews with the stakeholders (Table 3), including the core challenges highlighted by the interviewees, their potential impact on the entity's capabilities, as well as the measures proposed to overcome these challenges.

Table 3. Barriers, impacts and proposed measures in the UAc's external assessment.

BARRIER/CHALLENGE DETECTED	IMPACT/CONSEQUENCE	PROPOSED MEASURES/SOLUTIONS
<i>Collaboration and communication</i>	Hurdles to establish partnerships with stakeholders, communicative inefficiencies	To enhance communication processes, also reducing bureaucratic procediments.
<i>Practical application of research</i>	Disconnection between the theoretical research produced by UAc and the practical needs of the market.	To foster and promote projects and strategies with focus on ensuring the practical application.
<i>Community relationships and networking</i>	Improvable integration and cooperation of the UAC with the surrounding ecosystem.	To enhance better networking, promote local enterprises, and increase its integration and cooperation with the surrounding community
<i>Culture of entrepreneurship and innovation</i>	Process to create innovative businesses is undermined.	To improve engagement with start-up incubators, encourage entrepreneurship among its students, and prioritise the recruitment of new talent geared towards applied science.
<i>Bureaucratic and management challenges</i>	To hinder collaboration and cooperation with the surrounding ecosystem.	To implement strategies to streamline the UAC's activity when establishing partnerships, also reducing costs. In addition, strengthen the entity's management units to improve funding for project development.
<i>Knowledge and skill gap</i>	Lack of qualified personnel in pivotal fields including engineering, IT or artificial intelligence.	To expand the UAC's educational offerings and introducing specialised courses in these fields/sectors.

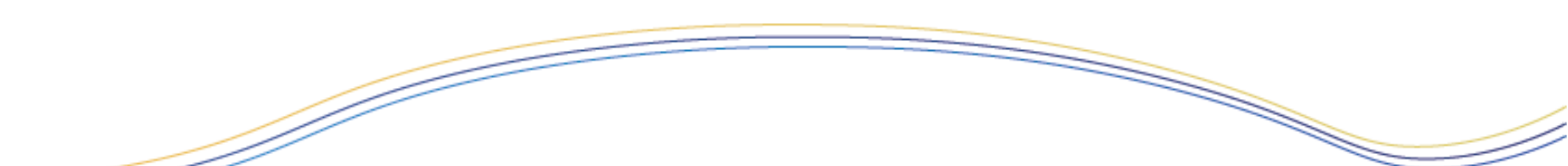
3.1.1.3. ACTIONS PERFORMED BY UAC

The next table exposes a set of concrete actions and work done up to the moment by UAc, to improve some of the challenges that were identified in the assessments conducted during WP1 (internal and external assessments). The selected actions are thoroughly described, also including the planned and future activities to achieve this substantial improvement as complementary information.

Table 4. List of actions implemented by UAc in reference to the challenges detected during the implementation of WP1

Associated Project Task & Project Pillar	Challenge detected	Proposed measures and comments	Actions implemented/in progress by ULPGC in this specific area
T1.2 Widening Universities assessment / Excellence in Research	<i>Resource limitations, absence of sufficient resources.</i>	Strategic planning and budgeting, prioritizing the most critical areas first.	UAc continue to advocate for compensation from the Republic for the additional costs associated with ultra-peripheral and insular status to overcome its financial constraints. There is an expectation for a gradual increase in support for tripolarity, negotiated with the Regional Government for the current legislative period, which must be ensured for subsequent years. Outside of the State Budget, the University has a multi-year contract with the Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT) and the State Financial Management Institute (IGeFE) for the payment of wages for employees within the institution under the Extraordinary Regularization Program of Precarious Employment in the Public Administration (PREVPAP). However, it is noted that FCT has not fulfilled its part of the contract, and this issue must continue to be contested.
		To explore alternative funding sources, such as grants, partnerships, philanthropy, endowments, and industry partnerships would be highly recommended.	Another source of self-generated funds is the funding of R&D projects and services from regional, national, and international programs. These funds have increased in recent years, which is expected to continue. While these funds are almost entirely allocated to project and service implementation, certain programs include payments for the wages of faculty and researchers within the UAc framework, who are dedicated to the tasks at hand, as well as general operational costs (overheads). The coming years will be marked by the existence of new funding programs supported by European funds, including the PRR, the National Operational Program 2030, and the Azores Operational Program 2030. The University should seize the opportunities arising from these programs by conceiving projects and submitting applications to the measures in which it is deemed an eligible beneficiary.
		Investing in maintaining and upgrading infrastructure can ensure resources are used most effectively.	The UAc has also sought support from the Region's City Councils to install equipment to improve the campuses. Examples are the ongoing negotiations for the replacement and/or installation of outdoor lampposts, pavement repairs, a pavilion to support training and research in renewable energy, and the construction of new student residences. Another important vector in the attraction of funding is the establishment of agreements with companies, individuals and associations, which, under patronage programmes, create bonds with the UAc. This is the case, in particular, of the Santander universities programme, to support, namely, technological innovation associated with the digital transition, the creation of a support laboratory for EaD, entrepreneurship and the UAc' Alumni Network. An example of this is the renovation of spaces and the installation of teaching laboratories, as has recently been done in the area of nursing.

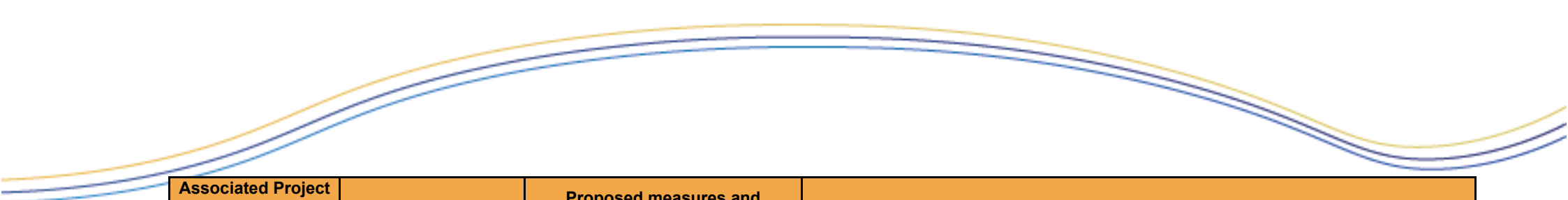
	<p><i>Staffing concerns: shortage of both teaching and non-teaching staff, a high workload burden on the existing staff, and a perceived need for an increased presence of career researchers and internationally recognized researchers.</i></p>	<p>To implement a comprehensive hiring plan that aligns with the institution's strategic objectives.</p>	<p>Data show that the permanent teaching staff at UAc does not fully meet the institution's teaching needs. However, this is not necessarily a disadvantage since hiring resources from the public sector and the business world, particularly for advanced training, enhances practical and experiential knowledge in education and strengthens the connection with the community and the job market. It also allows for the more efficient and financially sustainable satisfaction of specific and/or punctual needs. Nevertheless, the numbers require continuous analysis and monitoring of the number of FTE's hired, the supply-demand relationship, the efficiency of the distribution of teaching workload, and the decisions regarding opening teaching competitions to meet actual needs and minimize inefficiencies and additional burdens. While in recent years, after overcoming the institution's financial crisis, 21 new professors have been hired for the career, resulting in some reinforcement and renewal of the permanent staff, the number of retirements, and the quantity and speed at which circumstances allow for new hirings have only slowed down the impact of the annual aging of the teaching staff. The pace of hiring new teachers, in addition to the replacement regime that is intended to be maintained, depends on several factors, including (i) UAc's financial availability; (ii) the annual limit set by the State Budget Law for the increase in personnel expenses; (iii) the requirements for increasing the number of tenure-track teachers for the accreditation of study cycles, as stipulated in Decree-Law No. 65/2018, of August 16, which entails expenses with internal progressions and/or external hiring of associated or full professors. Also, the requirements to reduce the teacher-student ratio in almost all UAc courses, as required by the budget calculation formula for higher education institutions under the current legislation, impact this level. The various mentioned variables demand a balanced and strategic personnel management policy, aiming to ensure: (i) the continuity of successful courses (with quality and demand); (ii) the capacity for teaching in the opening of courses in areas relevant to the Region and with potential to attract new audiences; (iii) the continuity and growth of relevant scientific areas for the development project of UAc; (iv) and the financial sustainability of the institution. In this regard, the hiring process for three doctoral teachers in medicine to ensure the continuity of the Basic Medicine Cycle is still pending. This realization will only be possible by signing a multi-year agreement with the Regional Government of the Azores (GRA), similar to the one signed, for the same purpose, between the University of Madeira and the Regional Government. A similar need is foreseen to guarantee the constitution of the teaching staff of ESTA. In the current context, the most pressing situation is the one arising from Decree-Law No. 65/2018, of August 16, which imposes a minimum of 50% of associated and/or full professors as a condition for the accreditation of operating study cycles. This is an ambitious but critical target for UAc, and it corresponds to a legitimate expectation of the institution's teaching staff after a long period of career stagnation with no prospects for progression, which has only recently been interrupted. In this context, the budget allocation for the necessary competitions to achieve the 50% of</p>
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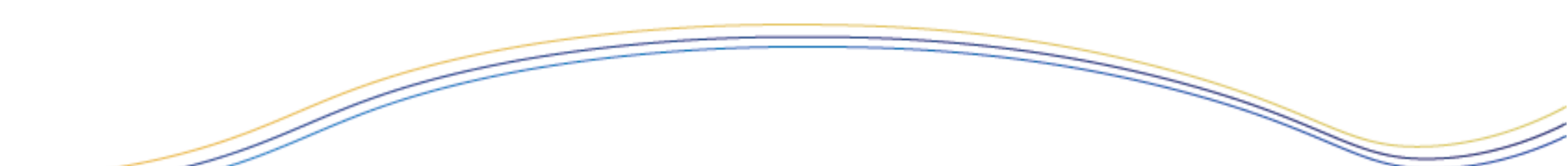
Associated Project Task & Project Pillar	Challenge detected	Proposed measures and comments	Actions implemented/in progress by ULPGC in this specific area
			professors with tenure in each UOEI and for each course has been coordinated between the rectorate and the organic units in a dialogue process intended to continue respecting their autonomy and choices.
		Reducing faculty workload by delegating certain tasks to administrative or support staff or even employing technology where feasible to automate routine tasks.	During the recent years there was a notable positive development, with a 35% increase in senior staff members and a 7% reduction in technical assistants. This evolution stemmed from internal career mobility and recruiting new senior staff members (12) across various services. The aim was to address increased workload in specific areas and enhance the quality and efficiency of services provided to students, teachers, researchers, and other university departments. The recruitment process targeted key areas, attracting highly qualified candidates in strategically important training fields to improve productivity and service responsiveness. Some noteworthy hires during this period included legal counsels for the academic, HR management, and procurement and supply areas, as well as business graduates for administrative, academic, and social services-related roles. Moreover, from 2017 to 2022, UAc strengthened its workforce by hiring three technical assistants, one IT specialist, and 11 operational assistants. Recently, the UAc has restructured its services, segmenting areas, reallocating people and reorganizing processes to optimize and streamline processes. Examples of this restructuring include the creation of the procurement and resource management service and the science and technology service, among others, managed directly by service directors who are in charge of highly focused and specialized teams in the areas in question. Despite the new hires, the UAc still needs to continue strengthening its technical, administrative, and management staff, particularly in infrastructure maintenance, cleaning, quality, archiving, and communication, and it intends to continue these efforts in the coming years.

Associated Project Task & Project Pillar	Challenge detected	Proposed measures and comments	Actions implemented/in progress by ULPGC in this specific area
	<i>Communication and collaboration: insufficient internal communication within the institution and a perceived lack of collaboration.</i>	To develop comprehensive communication strategies to keep faculty, researchers, teachers and students informed about the university's initiatives.	The UAc Portal (uac.pt) ensures the regular publication of information for the academic community, external partners and society. The portal provides up-to-date information on various topics, including the Institution's history, organizational structure, legislation, regulations, plans, reports, quality, evaluation, and codes of conduct and ethics. It also offers information on Teaching and Student Support, such as educational programs, exams, regulations, directives, orders, academic management (academic calendar, schedules, exam calendar, fees, certificates, enrolments and applications), library, archive, social action service (scholarships, accommodation, food, school insurance, health and welfare office, support for students with special educational needs). Additionally, the Portal provides support for international students and information on mobility programs, with a dedicated page in English at international.uac.pt. It covers Research and Innovation, including institutes, research centers and a business incubator. Community Services are also featured, including the Junior Academy, Senior Academy, Career Lab for training and employment, Alumni Network, Sports, Language Exams, Short Courses and Visits to the UAc by basic, secondary, and vocational education students. Moreover, the Portal promotes the "UAc speaks Science" initiative, which aims to disseminate science to the general public, particularly focusing on basic, secondary, and vocational students. The UAc maintains a news page at noticias.uac.pt and has active accounts on popular social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn. Through these channels, the university continuously promotes events and initiatives of the academic community, training opportunities, contests and more. Furthermore, the Office of Public Relations and Communication regularly sends out emails to both the academic community and the media, disseminating important information. Additionally, a newsletter is sent out every Monday, summarizing the key events of the previous week.
	<i>Promotion of excellence research activities.</i>	To establish a dedicated public relations or communications team responsible for showcasing research achievements, both internally and externally.	The Office for Public Relations and Communication regularly sends out emails to both the academic community and the media, disseminating important information. Additionally, a newsletter is sent out every Monday, summarizing the key events of the previous week.

Associated Project Task & Project Pillar	Challenge detected	Proposed measures and comments	Actions implemented/in progress by ULPGC in this specific area
	<i>Insufficient funding: the bulk of financial resources come from public entities, at regional, federal, or European levels.</i>	To explore the potential of joint programs with private entities, co-financing initiatives of mutual interest.	Another source of self-generated funds is the funding of R&D projects and services from regional, national, and international programs. These funds have increased in recent years, which is expected to continue. While these funds are almost entirely allocated to project and service implementation, certain programs include payments for the wages of faculty and researchers within the UAc framework, who are dedicated to the tasks at hand, as well as general operational costs (overheads). The coming years will be marked by the existence of new funding programs supported by European funds, including the PRR, the National Operational Program 2030, and the Azores Operational Program 2030. The University should seize the opportunities arising from these programs by conceiving projects and submitting applications to the measures in which it is deemed an eligible beneficiary.
	<i>Limited research time.</i>	To establish a short, medium and long-term strategy for the optimisation of tasks and resources available to researchers, especially in the administrative field.	The existing technical support structure for science and technology activities, embodied by the Science and Technology Service (SVCT) and the Gaspar Frutuoso Foundation, has also contributed to this progress. The establishment of the UAc Science and Technology Service (SVCT) in 2017 significantly contributed to the remarkable growth of the S&T indicators of the UAc's R&D units. The SVCT offers a wide range of services for promoting, managing, monitoring, and communicating scientific activities directly under the institution's umbrella. This allows the R&D units and researchers to focus more on knowledge production (fundamental and/or applied research) and on its communication, dissemination and societal impact through knowledge transfer, with the SVCT taking on administrative and financial tasks.
	<i>Inadequate equipment.</i>	Comprehensively review the resource allocation processes for inefficiencies.	As for the capacity of the research centres and institutes in this matter, it is worth mentioning that these structures benefited in 2021 from a specific measure of scientific equipment support funded by the Regional Directorate of Science and Technology. The funds were allocated based on the FCT classification of the research units, having the measure reached about 1 million euros. This measure had a significant technological impact on the renewal of scientific equipment in the research units, namely through the acquisition of new high-performance computers, electronic microscopes, sensors, drones, and other equipment.



Associated Project Task & Project Pillar	Challenge detected	Proposed measures and comments	Actions implemented/in progress by ULPGC in this specific area
	<i>Lack of partnerships with external enterprises.</i>	To foster partnerships.	UAc is committed to ensuring that the results of its research can be applied for the benefit of society. To achieve this, the UAc has various agreements and protocols with regional, national, and international entities, institutions, and companies, promoting the involvement of its research units (UIs) in research projects, provision of services, knowledge transfer, and innovation activities. The Vice-Rectorate for Science, Innovation, and Knowledge Transfer, along with its supporting structures (SVCT and INUAc), maintains continuous coordination with GRA departments responsible for the field, science and technology parks, companies, and other organizations involved in research and development or collaborating with the UAc in project implementation and scientific and technological services. Within this context, between 2020/2022 and 2023/2024, the UAc has signed 35 agreements with companies, 23 with national and regional hospitals and other healthcare facilities, 54 with educational institutions, 15 with community centers and parish centers, 3 with municipalities, and over 70 with other entities based in the region or on the mainland.
	<i>Low student engagement.</i>	To offer students promotion and information on research careers, substantially improving the working conditions associated with research careers.	According to the scientific domain, area(s) of study, number of integrated PhD researchers, and available financial and logistical resources, the R&D units of UAc have adopted various strategies, all complementary to each other, to promote and stimulate the participation of students (undergraduate, master's, and doctoral) in their production activities, dissemination, and transfer of scientific knowledge. The integration of undergraduate and master's students in "fieldwork" activities, which allow learning in a work-like context, is the most commonly used strategy, especially in the field of natural sciences, agricultural and veterinary sciences, and social and human sciences. Additionally, within the academic context, most undergraduate programmes offered at UAc include a seminar/internship component with included technical-scientific supervision, often aimed at supporting production activities, dissemination, and transfer of scientific knowledge developed in the R&D units of UAc. Moreover, active collaboration of groups of volunteer students in organizing scientific events led by UAc's research units (workshops, boot camps, lectures, seminars/webinars, conferences, scientific expeditions) is a common practice. Finally, UAc's R&D units regularly recruit students (especially final-year undergraduates and master's students) and recent graduates (bachelor's, master's, and doctoral) through paid internships (e.g., the ESTAGIAR Regional Program), scientific research grants, or employment contracts for specific tasks within the scope of services or R&D projects.



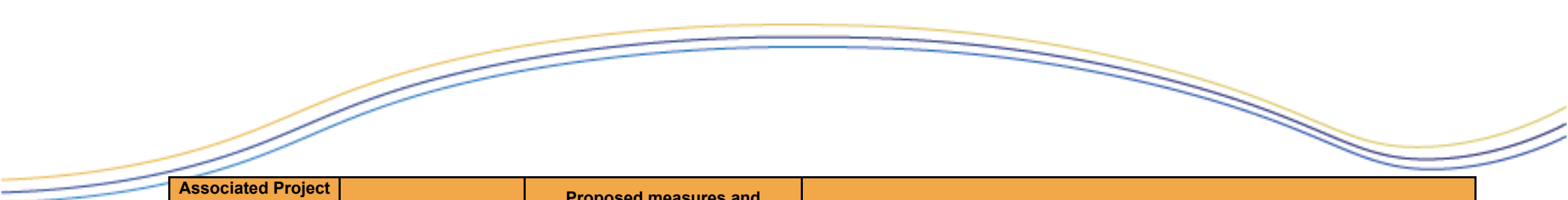
Associated Project Task & Project Pillar	Challenge detected	Proposed measures and comments	Actions implemented/in progress by ULPGC in this specific area
	<i>Interdisciplinarity: current advanced research activities remain restricted to traditional divisions in the branch of sciences.</i>	Acquisition of new skills for researchers and fostering strategies to step them outside their comfort zones. To facilitate and encourage research centres to host specialists from different scientific fields.	UAc is aware of the importance of interdisciplinary projects and encourages the interdisciplinarity work between research units and teams. Recently, a delegation from the University of the Azores (UAc), composed of doctoral students from diverse UAc faculties and led by FCT Assistant Researcher, Andrea Zita Botelho, was present at the Hackathon organized between the 20th and 24th of November 2023 by the University of Sassari (Sardinia Island, Italy). Participants were challenged to reflect on the challenges and opportunities of the ocean and find solutions to them from a multidisciplinary perspective, with the possibility of exchanging ideas and contacting resident researchers.
	<i>Insufficient technical and supporting staff.</i>	To implement a comprehensive hiring plan that aligns with the institution's strategic objectives.	From 2018 to 2022, there was a notable positive development, with a 35% increase in the number of senior staff members and a 7% reduction in the number of technical assistants. This evolution stemmed from both internal career mobility and the recruitment of new senior staff members (12) across various services. The aim was to address increased workload in specific areas and enhance the quality and efficiency of services provided to students, teachers, researchers, and other university departments. The recruitment process targeted key areas, attracting highly qualified candidates in strategically important training fields to improve overall productivity and service responsiveness. Some noteworthy hires during this period included legal counsels for the academic, HR management, and procurement and supply areas, as well as business graduates for administrative, academic, and Social Services-related roles. Moreover, from 2017/2018 to 2021/2022, the UAc further strengthened its workforce by hiring 3 technical assistants, 1 IT specialist, and 11 operational assistants. Despite the new hires, the UAc still needs to continue strengthening its technical, administrative, and management staff, particularly in terms of infrastructure maintenance, cleaning, quality, archiving, and communication, and it intends to continue these efforts in the coming years.

Associated Project Task & Project Pillar	Challenge detected	Proposed measures and comments	Actions implemented/in progress by ULPGC in this specific area
T1.2 Widening Universities assessment / Talent acquisition and retention	<i>Low recruitment rate/numbers.</i>	To design an onboarding system that includes orientation and facilitates new staff to familiarise with the institution. On the other hand, offering compensation packages, including housing assistance, travel allowances, etc. will be a differential point. More funding will attract potential candidates, also providing them with the resources they need to conduct high-level research.	Between 2018 and 2022, the UAc had an average of 200 faculty members, with 10 on long-term sick leave and 18 serving full-time roles in the rectorate, Regional Government of the Azores, Regional Legislative Assembly, or on special leave. To ensure the continuity of its educational programs, the UAc hired an average of 53 part-time instructors during that period, which corresponds to 22% of the active teaching staff. Regarding research, 83% of the teaching and research staff are integrated into UAc research centers. UAc hired an additional 7 assistant researchers for permanent positions, as well as 1 principal researcher, 14 assistant researchers, and 7 junior researchers on fixed-term contracts through research projects and scientific employment programs. To comply with the provisions of the ECDU and Decree-Law No. 74/2006, March 24, the UAc opened 52 promotion processes in 2022 and 2023 under Decree-Law No. 112/2021, December 14. The goal is to achieve a tenure rate of 50% for professors. Regarding the promotions based on performance evaluation, the UAc is currently in the process of evaluating the 2020/2022 triennium. In the previous evaluation conducted in 2019, 30.5% of the teaching staff advanced in their career progression. The UAc does not have specific internal regulations for the advancement of researchers, but there is a plan to facilitate discussions and develop specific regulations applicable to researchers.
	<i>Not providing competitive salaries.</i>	To improve remuneration packages should be a priority. To reallocate resources or securing additional funding through methods such as governmental lobbying, fundraising initiatives, or industry partnerships.	Currently, there's a lack of attractiveness and ability to retain experienced and recognized international researchers in the country and the Region, given the remuneration, contractual and career progression conditions on offer. Remuneration is unfortunately fixed by State law regulation and unable to be change by each HEIs.
	<i>Inadequate research funding.</i>	To foster a grant-application-friendly environment. Some proposals to achieve this are the following: to organize grant-writing workshops or creating a dedicated office to support faculty members in their grant applications.	The establishment of the UAc Science and Technology Service (SVCT) in 2017 significantly contributed to the remarkable growth of the S&T indicators of the UAc's R&D units. The SVCT offers a wide range of services for promoting, managing, monitoring, and communicating scientific activities directly under the institution's umbrella. This allows the R&D units and researchers to focus more on knowledge production (fundamental and/or applied research) and on its communication, dissemination and societal impact through knowledge transfer, with the SVCT taking on administrative and financial tasks.

Associated Project Task & Project Pillar	Challenge detected	Proposed measures and comments	Actions implemented/in progress by ULPGC in this specific area
	<i>Competition from more prominent institutions.</i>	To improve competitiveness by focusing resources on specific disciplines in which UAC excels and present a competitive advantage.	In terms of its scientific project, in conjunction with its educational project, the UAc has three institutes with organic unit status in strategically important fields for both the institution and the RAA (Agricultural Sciences, Marine Sciences, and Volcanology). Additionally, there are seven research centers and three research nuclei in various other areas of knowledge (biodiversity and biotechnology, social and human sciences, economics and tourism, and technologies).
		Strengthening ties with international institutions and networks.	Within this framework, there are several successful examples of integration of UAC research units and researchers into international networks/partnerships/collaborations in various scientific fields, with a focus on Natural Sciences and Social Sciences and Humanities (e.g., EMSO, COST, Equine Genetic Diversity Consortium, International Paleontological Association, RETI – Excellence Network of Island Territories, Macaronesian Biotechnology Excellence Network, National Roadmap for Research Infrastructures of Strategic Interest, and Iberian Network of Philosophy of Science). Recently, the creation of RIU-RUP (International Research Network of the Universities of the Outermost Regions of the European Union) and the UNESCO Chair on Biodiversity and Sustainability in Atlantic Islands were noteworthy; Participation in international R&D projects and attraction of international faculty and researchers: UAc research units participated in 33 internationally funded projects (cf. 4.1.1). Three are the INT-UAc, FORWARD (already concluded), and EXPER (currently ongoing). The UAc's international R&D projects primarily encompass Natural Sciences and benefit from various types of scientific funding, including H2020, Horizon Europe, Biodiversa+, INTERREG-MAC, EEA Grants, and Erasmus+ Grants. Noteworthy projects funded by the USA include the SARHome and COSTA IV projects.
	<i>Not tracking career progression.</i>	To establish a formal system for tracking the career progression of researchers and staff.	Between 2018 and 2022, the UAc had an average of 200 faculty members, with 10 on long-term sick leave and 18 serving full-time roles in the rectorate, Regional Government of the Azores, Regional Legislative Assembly, or on special leave. To ensure the continuity of its educational programs, the UAc hired an average of 53 part-time instructors during that period, which corresponds to 22% of the active teaching staff. Regarding research, 83% of the teaching and research staff are integrated into UAc research centers. UAc hired an additional 7 assistant researchers for permanent positions, as well as 1 principal researcher, 14 assistant researchers, and 7 junior researchers on fixed-term contracts through research projects and scientific employment programs. To comply with the provisions of the ECDU and Decree-Law No. 74/2006,
		To communicate career progression policies, expectations, and opportunities clearly and regularly to all staff. To provide feedback, conducting performance reviews, and openly discussing career objectives and paths.	

Associated Project Task & Project Pillar	Challenge detected	Proposed measures and comments	Actions implemented/in progress by ULPGC in this specific area
		To establish clear, objective criteria for promotions and ensure these are applied consistently across the board.	March 24, the UAc opened 52 promotion processes in 2022 and 2023 under Decree-Law No. 112/2021, December 14. The goal is to achieve a tenure rate of 50% for professors. Regarding the promotions based on performance evaluation, the UAc is currently in the process of evaluating the 2020/2022 triennium. In the previous evaluation conducted in 2019, 30.5% of the teaching staff advanced in their career progression. The UAc does not have specific internal regulations for the advancement of researchers, but there is a plan to facilitate discussions and develop specific regulations applicable to researchers.
		To recognize and celebrate achievements, contributions, and milestones.	
		Feedback mechanisms: implement channels for employees to share their feedback, concerns and suggestions.	
	<i>No additional training opportunities at their respective institutions</i>	To offer opportunities for professional growth such as training, workshops, or further education. Encourage and support participation in these activities.	Support for teachers and researchers includes various training opportunities. It is worth noting that the UAc is now part of a network of institutions that organize Inter-Institutional Conferences for Pedagogical Development, which are open to higher education teachers interested in enhancing their pedagogical skills. These conferences provide valuable opportunities for interaction with national experts and the exchange of experiences with colleagues from other institutions. The conferences offer a diverse range of pedagogical training programs, all of which are conducted online. Over the past two years, five editions of the conferences have been held, providing around 140 training sessions. On average, 25 UAc teachers have participated in each edition. In addition to these conferences, the CFC internally organizes various training sessions. These sessions aim to improve the digital literacy of teachers and researchers and enhance their abilities for teaching, researching, and participating in academic activities conducted remotely. The first training session is already underway in collaboration with the Open University, focusing on certifying UAc teachers and researchers for distance education.
	<i>Excessive workloads</i>	Regular reviews of workload and compensation policies to ensure fairness and prevent overworking	From 2018 to 2022, there was a notable positive development, with a 35% increase in the number of senior staff members and a 7% reduction in the number of technical assistants. This evolution stemmed from both internal career mobility and the recruitment of new senior staff members (12) across various services. The aim was to address increased workload in specific areas and enhance the quality and efficiency of services provided to students, teachers, researchers, and other university departments.

Associated Project Task & Project Pillar	Challenge detected	Proposed measures and comments	Actions implemented/in progress by ULPGC in this specific area
	<i>Ineffective communication</i>	To enhance communication channels: create open and robust channels for communication within the organization: regular meetings at various levels (departmental, faculty, and university-wide) to discuss ongoing issues and ideas, implement feedback mechanisms, etc.	The UAc operates under a legal framework (RJIES) that establishes a specific organizational and management structure comprising three governing bodies — the General Council (CGer), the Rector (R), and the Management Council (CGest) — as well as three advisory bodies — the Senate, the Council of Teaching and Research Units (COUEI), and the Council of Research Units (CUI). In addition to the overall governance structure, there is the internal governance of the different UOEI and UI. There are six schools in the university system and two in the polytechnic system.
	<i>Management practices and recognition of merit</i>	To foster recognition and Merit-Based Systems: to implement a system that recognizes not just the quantity but also the quality of work done, encouraging the sharing of best practices across the organization, promoting a culture of learning and improvement.	Regarding the specific teaching community of UAc, attention will be given to two subjects somewhat related to each other: the allocation of faculty members to a diverse set of activities beyond teaching and research, whose efforts are not always adequately recognized and valued, and the evaluation of performance, whose regulations date back to 2010 and require deep internal reflection and updating to adapt to current concerns and demands in teaching and research and to reward the work and merit of faculty members in different areas of university activity. In this regard, the main objectives are as follows: Approve the table for the allocation of hours to activities beyond teaching and research; Review and approve the regulation of faculty performance evaluation in time for its implementation in the 2026-2028 triennium.
	<i>Working conditions and organizational culture</i>	Review and improve the working conditions, including addressing personal conflicts, providing contractual stability, and fostering opportunities for career progression.	The UAc has been actively working on initiatives to promote the well-being of its teaching and research staff. The Social Services also play a significant role in enhancing the well-being of the entire academic community. They have established the Health and Well-being Office, offering family medicine, psychology and nutrition services. UAc actively promotes engagement in physical activities, including sports, exercise and leisure. This is accomplished by providing access to sports facilities for training and tournaments. To foster conviviality and well-being within the UAc, there is a close collaboration between the Rector, Social Services, student associations and groups, and the tunas (music groups). Together, they organize a wide range of events that promote conviviality across the Academy. These events include a Christmas dinner on the three campuses, a soup festival, thematic/commemorative lunches, a masked ball, a Christmas cantata, karaoke nights, and four international music festivals featuring tunas, among many other activities.
		To provide spaces for informal and social activities to build camaraderie among staff members. To foster an open dialogue about mental health and stress management.	



Associated Project Task & Project Pillar	Challenge detected	Proposed measures and comments	Actions implemented/in progress by ULPGC in this specific area
	<i>Leadership Endorsement and Involvement</i>	To promote the leadership's involvement in championing innovative ideas and initiatives and involve themselves in their execution.	UAc recently integrated an entrepreneurship curriculum unit into several degrees at its Faculty of Economics and Management (FEG). This have introduce students to the basic principles of entrepreneurship. It is intended that students become aware of the set of elements necessary for their entrance in business, by developing skills that allow them to broaden their understanding and subsequent adaptation to the business fabric, both in terms of integration into the world of work, and through the possibility of creating a business and, obviously, their own job.
	<i>Environment for experimentation</i>	To foster a fail-fast, learn-fast culture where mistakes during innovative pursuits are viewed as learning opportunities rather than failures.	
		To implement a system to monitor progress, gather opinions, and adjust policies or practices accordingly	
	<i>Ethical Awareness and Understanding</i>	To cultivate a comprehensive understanding of the university's ethical guidelines and the function of the Ethics Committee: through periodic newsletters, emails, or updates regarding ethical policies and committee activities.	The UAc adopts several measures to defend the integrity of its conducted research, following the guidelines established by the Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT) in its "Code of Ethics in Research". Through the publication of the "Code of Ethics of the University of the Azores", UAc has established clear codes of conduct and ethical principles that guide the behavior of researchers and their practices, guided by three main objectives: (1) ensuring the highest standards of scientific integrity, (2) ensuring the highest ethical standards, and (3) using transparent, fair, and effective processes in evaluating allegations of misconduct that violate the institution's code of ethics. UAc also has an "Ethics Committee", appointed by the Rector, and responsible for analyzing ethical and research integrity issues as well as for issuing opinions and recommendations as deemed necessary. This committee is composed of ethics experts and representatives from the academic community, ensuring an impartial and rigorous review of the issues under analysis.

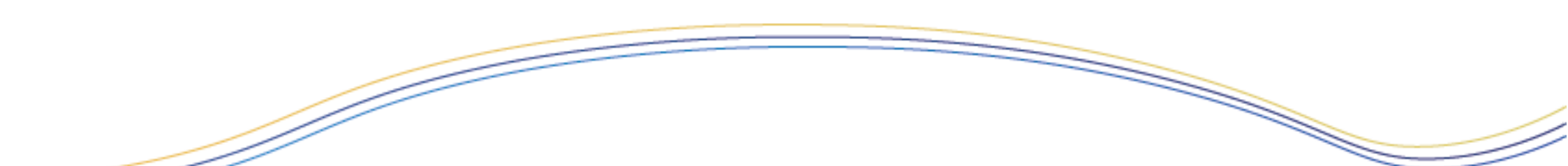
Associated Project Task & Project Pillar	Challenge detected	Proposed measures and comments	Actions implemented/in progress by ULPGC in this specific area
	<i>Access to Anonymous Complaints System and Due Credit Systems</i>	To communicate about these systems and provide instructions on their use through regular channels, workshops, and information sessions. These systems should be user-friendly and easily accessible, with clear visibility on the university's website and internal platforms	In addition to the "Code of Ethics", UAc also has other tools that strongly contribute to defending the integrity of its research, including its "Personal Data Privacy Policy", its "Plan for the Prevention of Corruption Risks and Related Offenses", which led to the recent creation, in 2022, of the "Office for the Prevention of Corruption and Related Offenses", which includes the Whistleblowing Channel portal, an impartial and independent channel, which will receive your report(s) anonymously or identified, treating them with secrecy and confidentiality.
	<i>Regular Ethical Training</i>	To ensure adherence to ethical guidelines, mandatory regular training or workshops on good ethical practices should be organized for all university members.	In 2022, UAc elaborated its "Plan for Gender Equality, Inclusion, and Non-Discrimination". This plan focuses on creating a supportive structure, fostering a culture of equality and implementing actions to promote equal opportunities and reduce inequalities and includes the sharing good practices and training actions. It will have a monitoring and implementation timeframe from 2022-2025.
	<i>Proactive Ethical Monitoring (particularly among scientific members)</i>	Regular audits or checks of research projects for compliance with ethical guidelines To implement a reward system to incentivize adherence to ethical guidelines and best practices.	The UAc adopts several measures to defend the integrity of its conducted research, following the guidelines established by the Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT) in its "Code of Ethics in Research". Through the publication of the "Code of Ethics of the University of the Azores", UAc has established clear codes of conduct and ethical principles that guide the behavior of researchers and their practices, guided by three main objectives: (1) ensuring the highest standards of scientific integrity, (2) ensuring the highest ethical standards, and (3) using transparent, fair, and effective processes in evaluating allegations of misconduct that violate the institution's code of ethics. This code emphasizes honesty, transparency, impartiality, and responsibility at all stages of the R&D process. UAc also has an "Ethics Committee", appointed by the Rector, and responsible for analyzing ethical and research integrity issues as well as for issuing opinions and recommendations as deemed necessary.

Associated Project Task & Project Pillar	Challenge detected	Proposed measures and comments	Actions implemented/in progress by ULPGC in this specific area
T1.2 Widening Universities assessment / Knowledge and Technology Transfer	<i>Uncertainty about KTT</i>	To strengthen KTT Literacy, implementing, training programs, seminars, and workshops for staff members and researchers. This will help build a comprehensive understanding of KTT processes, importance, and benefits.	In terms of the institutional strategy and policies for knowledge and technology transfer, the creation of InUAc - UAc Technological Incubator in 2020 marked a significant shift in the R&D&I paradigm at the UAc. It has enabled the institution to foster academic entrepreneurship, create an ecosystem to support innovation and knowledge transfer to society, and enhance the UAc's engagement with the business sector. Moreover, the UAc's In its second year of activities, the incubator continued to have a regular presence on digital platforms and social networks and increased its activity by establishing over 20 partnerships, joining 2 incubation networks, involving more than 35 mentors, organizing four events, increasing the number of incubated projects to 11 since 2021, and conducting over 20 mentoring sessions. Overall, InUAc's activities involved over 650 participants and held more than 80 meetings with various stakeholders.
	<i>Lack of clear communication channels</i>	To ensure open, transparent, and frequent communication within the institution about KTT. Regular updates and reviews on KTT progress should be communicated across all levels of the institution.	InUAc disseminates its activities through the UAc news portal and social networks and the activities are often included in UAc periodic newsletter sent to all academic staff community.
	<i>KTT resources</i>	To Identify the resource needs of KTT. securing additional funding, hiring or training skilled personnel, and efficiently utilizing existing resources. Seek out public, private, and governmental funding opportunities, grants, and partnerships.	It has been recognized since 2022 that InUAc should also be a "Center for Knowledge Transfer and Appreciation". Therefore, by incorporating the "Office for Knowledge Transfer and Appreciation" into InUAc, the UAc aims to strengthen itself as a knowledge-producing institution and reinforce its link to the productive sector, fostering the dissemination of knowledge and technologies while promoting synergies. This office will be responsible for intellectual property protection and its market promotion, ensuring economic benefits for all stakeholders, including the UAc. It will serve as a valuable resource for researchers, students and teachers, facilitating the transformation of the knowledge generated at the UAc into innovation and added value. This office should be able to support the socio-economic application of the knowledge generated at the UAc and facilitate intellectual property protection to safeguard competitive advantages and commercial returns on the investment in innovation. To address these challenges, InUAc is currently providing training to its three employees in technology-based entrepreneurship, knowledge transfer, intellectual property, and the creation of technology-based businesses.
		To strengthen the role of the KTT Office, to coordinate, support, and promote KTT activities across the institution.	The aim is to make this service an integral and relevant part of the Knowledge Transfer and Valorization Network within Portuguese Higher Education, as defined by the National Innovation Agency (ANI).

Associated Project Task & Project Pillar	Challenge detected	Proposed measures and comments	Actions implemented/in progress by ULPGC in this specific area
	<i>Inadequate regulatory system</i>	A review of the existing policies and procedures relating to KTT is required, to make them clearer and fairer. In addition, intellectual property regulations should be reviewed to ensure they are conducive to KTT, while still protecting the rights of the researchers and the institution.	The creation of the “Office for Knowledge Transfer and Appreciation” into InUAc would allow to increase intellectual property protection and its market promotion, ensuring economic benefits for all stakeholders, including the UAc. It will serve as a valuable resource for researchers, students and teachers, facilitating the transformation of the knowledge generated at the UAc into innovation and added value.
	<i>Gaps in communication and institutional support.</i>	Boosting awareness and perception on invention disclosure: to hold regular information sessions, to publicize successful patent applications, to implement a reward system for consistent invention disclosure.	InUAc disseminates its activities through the UAc news portal and social networks and the activities are often included in UAc periodic newsletter sent to all academic staff community. However, the amount of knowledge transferred to society, including companies, industrial entities, public administration and non-governmental organizations, was only a fraction of the scientific knowledge generated by the UAc's R&D units over their relatively short history. In fact, since 2007, only seven patents have been registered and accepted by UAc researchers. Out of these, five were registered in 2007 by the same group of researchers in the field of extracting compounds from natural endogenous products. The sixth patent was obtained in 2012 in the field of biomedical sciences, and the seventh and most recent patent was obtained in 2015 in the field of agro-industry.
	<i>Deficiencies in capability and strategy</i>	<p>To seek external advice from global IP experts and providing workshops on international patents, in order to improve the university's patent internationalization capability</p> <p>To establish a dedicated IP Management team and offering workshops on commercialization strategies, also forming strategic alliances with industry partners.</p>	<p>Consultancy and legal advice related to intellectual property protection and the establishment of technology-based businesses have been provided through a productive partnership with the law firm PRA - Raposo, Sá Miranda & Associados since 2021. They bring extensive experience in these areas and offer assistance to both InUAc staff and incubates, as well as researchers and science managers from the R&D units.</p> <p>The creation of the “Office for Knowledge Transfer and Appreciation” into InUAc would allow to increase intellectual property protection and its market promotion, ensuring economic benefits for all stakeholders, including the UAc. InUAc is currently providing training to its three employees in technology-based entrepreneurship, knowledge transfer, intellectual property, and the creation of technology-based businesses.</p>

Associated Project Task & Project Pillar	Challenge detected	Proposed measures and comments	Actions implemented/in progress by ULPGC in this specific area
	<i>Engagement with external partners</i>	To develop a clear strategy for partnerships, highlighting the benefits and roles of partners and providing a roadmap for improving and expanding partnerships over time.	InUAc is a member of the following networks: 1) RIEA (Azores Business Incubator Network), which facilitates collaboration and knowledge exchange among incubators in the Azores Autonomous Region (RAA). This network is coordinated by the Regional Directorate for Entrepreneurship and Competitiveness (DREC) of the Azores, which defines the lines of funding in this area. 2) MetaRedX (Collaborative Network of Entrepreneurship Units and Workshops in Ibero-American Higher Education Institutions), which aims to promote entrepreneurship in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) through active collaboration among eight countries, fostering a collaborative workspace and the sharing of best practices.
		Actively involve industry and commercial entities in curriculum development and research projects. Host industry events, guest lectures, and seminars to expose the university community to market trends and the latest industry developments.	Between 2020/2022 and 2023/2024, the UAc has signed 35 agreements with companies. To consolidate educational offerings and R&D&I in key areas for the development of the Azores Autonomous Region (RAA), strategic collaboration agreements have been signed in the fields of engineering and IT (with three major international technology companies: Altice SA, Jolera, and Globestar Systems), Biotechnology (Cell4Food – Cellular Culture Lda), Tourism (Futurismo), and Sustainability (Grace – Empresas Responsáveis)
		To foster a culture of partnership: training sessions, recognition of successful partnerships and incentives.	
		To incorporate feedback from partners and stakeholders to continually improve relationships and collaborations. Regularly review and update the partnership strategy, ensuring it remains effective and relevant.	
	<i>Communication strategies</i>	To implement frequent and transparent communication channels with partners: regular meetings, updates, newsletters, information portals, etc.	InUAc disseminates its activities through the UAc news portal and social networks and the activities are often included in UAc periodic newsletter sent to all academic staff community.

Associated Project Task & Project Pillar	Challenge detected	Proposed measures and comments	Actions implemented/in progress by ULPGC in this specific area
	<i>Access to facilities</i>	To review current policies and procedures to identify and address any barriers to access, in order to encourage collaboration and demonstrate the value the university places on partnerships.	The key impacts we expect by establishing the “Office for Knowledge Transfer and Appreciation” include the development and regular update of the “UAc Services Catalogue” in collaboration with the UAc’s R&D units; the creation of a user-friendly web platform that connects incubators, researchers/R&D units, entrepreneurs and companies; an increase in the number of patents registered by UAc researchers; the creation of new spinoffs/start-ups under the UAc umbrella; and an expansion of R&D projects in collaboration with non-academic entities that are able to generate value-added products based on the UAc’s scientific knowledge. Additionally, this office will facilitate technical visits, work meetings, and human resource exchanges between the UAc’s R&D units (or specific groups of researchers) and regional, national and international companies to identify collaboration opportunities, optimize available resources and enhance synergies.
	<i>Provision and communication of start-up support and incubation services</i>	To enhance communication about the existence and benefits of its start-up support services: dedicated website, regular newsletters, social media platforms, and presentations at various university events. To effectively communicate success stories from the incubation program.	InUAc disseminates its activities through the UAc news portal and social networks and the activities are often included in UAc periodic newsletter sent to all academic staff community.
		To host regular start-up competitions and entrepreneurial events.	In its second year of activities, the incubator continued to have a regular presence on digital platforms and social networks and increased its activity by establishing over 20 partnerships, joining 2 incubation networks, involving more than 35 mentors, organizing 4 events, increasing the number of incubated projects to 11 since 2021, and conducting over 20 mentoring sessions. Overall, InUAc’s activities involved over 650 participants and held more than 80 meetings with various stakeholders.
		To offer entrepreneurship training and workshops would help to equip students, faculty, and alumni with the necessary skills for business start-up and development.	
		To collaborate with external business incubators, accelerators, venture capitalists, and industry partners	







Associated Project Task & Project Pillar	Challenge detected	Proposed measures and comments	Actions implemented/in progress by ULPGC in this specific area
	<i>In general terms, lack of awareness within the university community regarding start-ups and spin-offs.</i>	To organize awareness campaigns, workshops, and seminars on entrepreneurship and the benefits of start-up support.	<p>Since its establishing, InUAc has been directly involved in the following main initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - BlueBio Value Ideation Program - Green Up Ideation Program - Tourism Explorers Ideation Program - Bootcamp InUAc - Entrepreneur Fair - InUAc Friday Workshops <p>Many of these events awarded the winners incubation program periods at InUAc. The same practices will be adopted in the next events.</p>









3.1.2. SWOT ANALYSIS

Based on the results of the previous ecosystem assessment (D1.2 Azores and Canary Islands Regional ecosystem assessment reports), including the internal and external evaluations, the following SWOT analysis is presented:



Strengths

-  **Educational Excellence in Specific Fields:** UAc excels in Marine and Environmental Sciences, Geology/Volcanology, Biology, and Social & Human Sciences.
-  **Dedicated Research Focus:** UAc has established research focus efforts in key areas like Marine Biology, Earth Sciences, and Biodiversity.
-  **International Collaborations:** UAc actively seeks global collaborations and participates in European projects.
-  **Commitment to Sustainable Development:** The university emphasizes its role in environmental and societal sustainability.

Weaknesses





-  **Resource Limitations:** UAc faces challenges in financial and infrastructural resources, impacting effectiveness in academic and administrative activities.
-  **Staffing Issues:** There are concerns regarding staffing shortages, high workloads, and a need for more career researchers.
-  **Internal Communication Gaps:** Inadequate internal communication within UAc hinders collaboration and efficient operation.
-  **Career Development and Transparency:** Lack of clearly communicated career progression paths leads to staff retention problems and low engagement.
-  **Geographical Isolation:** The university's location on an archipelago can lead to logistical challenges and may impact the ability to attract faculty and students from mainland regions.
-  **Limited IP Management:** UAc could enhance its strategies and resources dedicated to managing and protecting intellectual property.
-  **Weak KTT Infrastructure:** The university faces deficiencies in its KTT infrastructure, hindering the effective transfer of knowledge and technology to industry and other external entities.
-  **Insufficient Industry Collaboration:** According to external stakeholders, there is a lack of strong partnerships with industry, limiting opportunities for practical application of research and IP commercialization.

Opportunities

-  **Promoting Interdisciplinarity:** There is potential for integrating diverse scientific perspectives in education and research.
-  **Enhancing KTT and Innovation:** Opportunities to improve Knowledge and Technology Transfer activities and support, and foster a culture of innovation.

-  **Developing Entrepreneurship Programs:** Establish entrepreneurship programs and start-up incubators to foster innovation and practical business skills among students.
-  **Strengthening Industry Partnerships:** Form strategic partnerships with industries to enhance practical learning opportunities, internships, and research collaborations.
-  **Enhancing Multidisciplinary Research:** Adapt multidisciplinary research initiatives to address complex global issues, encouraging collaboration between different academic disciplines.
-  **Boosting Staff Development Programs:** Invest in staff development programs to enhance teaching skills, research capabilities, and overall job satisfaction.
-  **Incentivizing Patent Development:** Implement incentives for researchers and faculty to develop patents, thereby enhancing the university's intellectual property portfolio and creating new avenues for commercialization.
-  **Expanding Research Commercialization:** Focus on strategies to commercialize research outcomes, potentially creating new revenue streams and enhancing the university's reputation in innovation.
-  **Enhancing Networking Opportunities:** Create networking events and forums that bring together researchers, industry experts, and entrepreneurs to facilitate knowledge exchange and collaborative opportunities.

Threats

-  **Competitive Academic Landscape:** Challenges in attracting and retaining talent due to non-competitive salaries and limited research funding.
-  **External Engagement Issues:** External partners express dissatisfaction with engagement levels and communication strategies.
-  **Innovation and Ethical Standards:** A need for a unified approach to innovation and a broader understanding of ethical practices exists.
-  **Competition for Talent:** Competition from more prominent institutions and the private sector in the acquisition of workforce talent.

UAc possesses strengths in educational excellence, research focus areas, and international collaborations, yet faces challenges including resource limitations, internal communication gaps, and geographical isolation. However, there are significant opportunities to promote interdisciplinarity, enhance innovation, strengthen industry partnerships, and boost staff development programmes. Addressing these weaknesses and capitalising on opportunities will be essential for UAc to navigate the competitive academic landscape and realise its potential for growth and impact.

3.2. VISION & MISSION

The EXPER project plans to co-design modernization strategies for transformations of the Widening HEIs based on research and innovation. The co-design aims to ensure that the final product meets the needs of its intended users. As the first co-design phase, the vision and mission of each Widening University was established in order to identify areas of improvement, which informed the creation of a cohesive and impactful vision for the future. The conducted workshops brought together high-level representatives of each university, representatives of students, businesses association representatives and local authorities.

Through a series of questions, valuable inputs were collected that reflect the aspirations and needs of the university community as well as organizations in the local environment. In this analysis, the data collected was examined in detail in order to propose a mission and vision that encompasses all the inputs and guides the future direction of the institution based on the results obtained after the questioning of the participants.

- Workshop Questions:

- 🌐 What is the current role of the university in regional development and how can it be improved?
- 🌐 What societal challenges does the university currently address and what additional challenges could it address in the future?
- 🌐 What areas of improvement should the university focus on in order to achieve its goals?
- 🌐 What concrete actions can the university take to support the local community and economy?
- 🌐 How can the university better engage with stakeholders and the wider community?
- 🌐 What are the long-term goals of the university and how can they be achieved through the vision and mission?
- 🌐 What values and principles should guide the university's activities and decision-making in pursuit of its vision and mission?

3.2.1. VISION

The following table shows the data collected to obtain the UAc's Vision in the framework of the EXPER project.

Table 5. Collected data. UAc's Vision

DATA COLLECTED FOR THE VISION DEVELOPMENT
Promote knowledge as a factor of progress and education as a driver of development
Increase the culture and scientific literacy
Promote an ethical view of research
Active role in promoting sustainability and social responsibility
Spirit of collaboration
Human values, plurality, free expression, inclusiveness, tolerance, respect, openness
Internationalized university, connected with the continent and the world
Adoption of behaviors that benefit the physical and psychological health of the entire community
Drives the creation of partnerships and networks
Promotion of culture, arts and sport
Privileged international partner in research in areas such as tourism, sea, climate/climate change, volcanology, tourism
Strong connection with companies in the Azores for the innovation of products and services, as well as training their staff
Inspiring the scientific community through good sustainability practice, taking advantage of the "natural laboratory" in which it operates.
Promote the dissemination of research, providing effective transfer of knowledge, closer to the business fabric, with a focus on contributing to solutions to problems of regional companies and increasing entrepreneurial culture.
Deconstruct the barrier (often) that exists between academia and the "outside"
Decisive in the social, economic and cultural development of the region.
National and international recognition for the excellence of its scientific production and teaching quality
Promote links between different Faculties, creating synergies between the research carried out by each of them

- Analysis of collected data:

During the joint co-design workshop organized by the EXPER project, we collected several contributions from participants with the aim of defining the UAc Vision. From the analysis of these contributions, it was observed that there are several recurring themes

so that the University can, more effectively, fulfill its role as a driver of the region's social, economic and cultural development.

One of them is openness and the spirit of collaboration, deconstructing the barriers (often) existing between academia and the “outside”, an aspect that was reflected in the participants' intention to convert UAc into an international reference for teaching and research. To this end, collaboration between the different Faculties must initially be encouraged, creating synergies between the research carried out in each of them, as well as increasing connections with other regional stakeholders with a view to the design and innovation of products and services, but also to the training of its staff. International collaboration should also be carried out, through the promotion of networks and new partnerships in projects of interest, as well as through student exchanges.

Another key aspect to consider in developing the Vision was a people-centered approach that values behaviors that benefit the physical and psychological well-being of the entire community. UAc must seek to be a University with social responsibility, promoting inclusion, plurality, tolerance and respect, in all profiles within its Institution. Furthermore, there is still a strong concern to promote the development of critical and creative thinking, but also freedom of expression, which is reflected in the comprehensive training of students, and which values their international exchange and cooperation.

Regarding the strategy for the future, there was also a need to have a vision that favors research where the Azores have a natural competitive advantage and/or a differentiation in terms of national or even international ranking, such as in the areas of Tourism, Sea, Climate / Climate Change and Volcanology and inspire the scientific community through its good sustainability practices, taking advantage of the “natural laboratory” in which the Autonomous Region of the Azores is located.

It was also identified as a critical factor, the development of governance that allows the institution to adapt to the new needs of the surrounding social, business and academic environment and that seeks to get closer to the reality and demands of the business sector, with a strong orientation towards innovation and solving real problems in the labor market.

Likewise, there is a need for UAc to promote greater proximity to society, through greater dissemination of its training offer and the research carried out, as well as through the promotion of an entrepreneurial culture that allows for an effective transfer of knowledge.

In this sense, the vision suggests the creation of an institution open to the world, collaborative, centered on people and the future, that promotes inclusion, dialogue, critical thinking and innovation, and that is a national and international reference of quality and excellence in teaching and scientific production.

3.2.2. MISSION

The following table shows the data collected to obtain the UAc's Mission in the framework of the EXPER project.

Table 6. Collected data. UAc's Mission

DATA COLLECTED FOR THE MISSION ELABORATION
Create a culture of reducing administrative bureaucracy
Obtain a framework for stable and predictable financing
Form critical citizens, empowered, confident and prepared to deal with the job market
Adapt its training offer to local and global needs, developing teaching programs with a significant practical component, adapted to the needs of companies
Provide attractive conditions for foreign students and student exchanges
Create opportunities for scientific and professional development and growth
Promote the personal and professional development of students, through stimulating critical thinking, creativity and leadership
Encourage sessions between students and researchers (from different scientific areas) with a view to creating and exchanging ideas resulting from R&D with a view to boosting innovation and new businesses
Production of relevant and applied knowledge, in order to support public policies and informed decision-making
Improve internal dialogue and empowerment of the Faculties, creating synergies between them, as well as between the three centers of the Academy (São Miguel, Terceira and Faial)
Promote a culture and insistent practice in terms of partnerships and collaborations with various actors (companies, business associations, science and technology parks, schools, public entities and civil society) regionally, nationally and, eventually, internationally
Establish protocols and collaborations with regional companies to provide innovative solutions and specialized knowledge to solve specific problems and challenges of these companies through university work (whether within the scope of bachelor's/master's/doctorate degrees or research carried out in R&D centers)
Encourage the presentation of R&D results to entrepreneurs, encouraging the exchange of ideas and the transfer of knowledge and technologies
Encourage the protection of intellectual property and the transfer of research technology developed at the Academy
Encourage the presence of researchers in the context of S&T Parks, boosting innovation, entrepreneurship and technology transfer to the productive sector
Promote projects, networks and partnerships that include science centers and national and international entities
Carry out initiatives in scientific dissemination spaces open to the community, promoting the image and openness of the UAc
Attract high-level researchers by encouraging post-doctoral fellowships
Promote the creation of start-ups and spin-offs and the practical application of research results

DATA COLLECTED FOR THE MISSION ELABORATION

Provide quality of life and working conditions as competitive advantages to attract and retain talent

Effort to hire young people to replace aging teaching/research staff

- Analysis of collected data:

In the joint co-design session to define the Mission, there was once again a need to anticipate and adapt the University in the face of constant technological, social and climatic changes, with regard to the preparation of qualified human resources prepared for the labour market and also adapting its training offer to local and global needs (particularly in the area of ICT, namely in Artificial Intelligence, Cybersecurity, High Performance Computing), stimulating the participation of students in scientific and technological activities, awakening their interest through different areas of knowledge and a culture of permanent learning, and developing teaching programs with a significant practical component, adapted to the needs of companies. To this end, efforts should also be made to promote internships for young students and/or researchers in a business context, as well as creating an internship office that facilitates the connection between graduates and the job market. Taking the regional context of tourism and real estate market value increases, especially on São Miguel island, accommodation conditions for visiting students and researchers should also be reinforced, in order to better attract external students and researchers.

Another key element mentioned in the definition of the Mission is to ensure effective internal dialogue and external cooperation, either through the empowerment of Faculties (creating synergies between them, as well as between the three poles of the Academy - São Miguel, Terceira and Faial), as well as promoting a culture and insistent practice in terms of partnerships and collaborations with other quadruple helix actors (companies, business associations, science and technology parks, schools, public entities and civil society) regionally, nationally and, eventually, internationally.

The university must also respond to region-specific niches and social needs, in order to support public policies and informed decision-making, as well as stimulate the transfer of technology and applied research with real impact on society, encouraging creation of start-ups and spin-offs and the practical application of the research results. To this end, it will be important to establish protocols and collaborations with regional companies in order to provide innovative solutions and specialized knowledge to solve specific problems of these companies through the university daily work (whether within the scope of bachelors/masters/doctorates or research carried out at UAc R&D centers), as well as promoting frequent sessions between researchers and the business sector in order to align and coordinate lines of research and common projects of interest, boosting innovation, entrepreneurship and technology transfer to the productive sector.

Furthermore, and given the more recent HEI funding constraints to the Academy, increased efforts should be made in order to obtain a framework for stable and predictable funding, as well as encouraging applications for research projects (integrating networks/partnerships with institutions where the UAc may be an added value) and other external financing, through the creation of a support office.

Regarding the improvement of academic conditions with a view to attracting and retaining talent, steps should also be taken to improve academic/scientific careers, and to modernize existing services, infrastructures and equipment. In a region internationally recognized as a sustainable and nature-based tourist destination, it will be important to promote the RAA as a natural laboratory for R&D and a place with quality of life, providing a greater balance between professional/personal life conditions, as competitive advantages to attract and retain talent. As additional support measures/actions, the need to ensure funding to attract visiting professors, hire high-level researchers with the encouragement of a greater number of post-doctoral scholarships, as well as create incentives (galas, competitions, among others) to reward and promote existing talents. Furthermore, and taking into account UAc's current staff, an effort should be made to hire young people to replace the aging teaching/research personnel.

In general terms, the data collected in this joint co-design session highlighted the importance of anticipating and preparing human resources for the surrounding technological, social and climate changes, valuing training and professionalization, responding to the region's specific niches and business needs, promoting a change in the paradigm of collaboration with other regional actors and encouraging participation in European projects and international cooperation, innovation and knowledge transfer. On the other hand, it is vital to focus and invest in improving academic conditions with a view for attracting and retaining talent, by reviewing academic/scientific careers, and modernizing existing services, infrastructures and equipment. These will be essential elements to better define UAc's Mission and to ensure that the institution is aligned with the needs of society and the environment in which it operates.

3.3. UAC INDIVIDUAL STRATEGY: STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

The following table presents the individual strategic objectives of the UAc under the framework of the EXPER project, established during the elaboration of the UAc Individual Strategy.

Table 7. Individual strategic objectives of UAc

Strategic Objective	Description
1. Foster applied research,	This objective aims to promote excellence in research and innovation, by investing on applied responsible research (expanding the frontiers of fundamental research) aligned with the S3 strategies and SDGs. It includes training of research

Strategic Objective	Description
interdisciplinarity and internationalization	staff in the fields of Open Science good practices, responsible research and science communication and intensify the active participation in multidisciplinary research projects, international networks and alliances.
2. Promote a culture of innovation and technology transfer	The objective aims to consolidate the innovation ecosystem at the UAc, by promoting an entrepreneurial culture among students and researchers, supporting the technology transfer, entrepreneurship, incubation, and acceleration processes, based on the research carried out at the University, and strengthen proximity and permanent interaction with the business community and other entities. It will include administrative TTO and research staff training in different skills for a better performance in research and technology transfer activities, such as IPR management, business models, market analysis and value formulation.
3. Invest in a people-centric University	This objective emphasizes the university's commitment to value and care for the academic community, as people are the most important asset of UAc. To achieve this, UAc will focus on the professional and personal development of its staff and be a safe and healthy environment to promote the life quality of the academic community. This includes a better provision of services, as enhancing the well-being through its Health Office, promoting access to culture and sport through a range of activities, and creating a diverse strategy at UAc. Furthermore, hiring efforts will be made to reach 50% of teaching staff with tenure in the relevant areas, promote continuous scientific qualification courses, and make an institutional application for the HRS4R strategy to enhance the working conditions for researchers and offer incentives to attract talents.
4. Stimulate cooperation, external communication	This objective highlights the importance of UAc identity matrix and its responsibilities towards the region and its actors. Our mission is based on creating knowledge, research and services provision, and the differentiation should be made by constructing fruitful and continued relations with our surroundings, by enhancing a rich and transformative dialogue between the university and the general society. UAc

Strategic Objective	Description
and social connection	seeks to boost the participation of primary and secondary education students in scientific exploration activities and increase the number of study visits to UAc, boosting institution's external visibility among schools. Moreover, informative-educational activities will be organized with primary and secondary schools to bring children and teenagers closer to science and participation in events to disseminate research results and raise awareness of citizen science will be prioritized.

3.4. ACTIONS

The fulfilment of the Strategic Objectives will be achieved through the deployment of the actions described below.

4 Strategic Objectives (SO) and 23 related Actions (A) have been defined:

Table 8. UAc's Strategic Objectives and corresponding actions

Strategic Objective	Actions
Strategic Objective 1: Foster applied research, interdisciplinarity and internationalization	<p>A1.1. Offer an updated informational platform for the external funded projects.</p> <p>A1.2. Preparation of joint research projects under European funded calls.</p> <p>A1.3. Establishment and participation in multidisciplinary working groups contributing to the achievement of SDGs and response to societal challenges.</p> <p>A1.4. Participate in international workshops to develop transversal scientific skills (Open Science, Data Management, Responsible Research, Science Communication, etc).</p> <p>A1.5. Establish actions to promote cooperation and institutional internationalization, such as international networks and alliances.</p> <p>A1.6. Maintain and increase UAc's scientific research activity outputs, such as bibliometric indicators</p>
Strategic Objective 2: Promote a culture of innovation and technology transfer	<p>A2.1. Increase in the participation of the university community in activities related to businesses and entrepreneurship.</p>

Strategic Objective	Actions
	<p>A2.2. Promote training of teaching and research staff in various skills to enhance their performance in technology transfer activities.</p> <p>A2.3. Foster the creation of Technology Transfer Office (TTO) within InUAc department, support office with the objective of assisting and coordinating technology transfer processes, as well as acting as a bridge for the establishment of external projects and partnerships.</p> <p>A2.4. Promote dynamics that can create value, based on the knowledge produced at the University, transforming the research outputs in social and economic value, through InUAc support services for pre-incubation, incubation, and post-incubation purposes, increasing the number of incubated projects and spinoffs creation.</p>
<p>Strategic Objective 3: Invest in a people-centric University</p>	<p>A3.1. Review and approve the teaching staff performance evaluation regulation to improve the well-being and increase productivity and career satisfaction.</p> <p>A3.2. Reduce job insecurity, by increasing hiring efforts to reach 50% of teaching staff with tenure.</p> <p>A3.3. Submit an institutional application for the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R).</p> <p>A3.4. Modernise the existing or create new infrastructures, such as university residences.</p> <p>A3.5. Promote physical activity through sports, maintenance or leisure activities, which can contribute to physical and psychological well-being, and also promote informal coexistence between its members.</p> <p>A3.6. Foster gender equality and promote diversity, by formulating a diverse strategy.</p>
<p>Strategic Objective 4: Stimulate cooperation, external communication and social connection</p>	<p>A4.1. Foster a culture of collaboration with relevant actors such as science and technology parks, science centres, governmental bodies and local authorities, businesses associations, companies and NGOs, among others.</p> <p>A4.2. Foster the involvement of young people in the university activities and research.</p> <p>A4.3. Promote study visits to increase the institutional external visibility within primary, preparatory, secondary and vocational schools.</p> <p>A4.4. Maintain and increase the current student mobility through the Erasmus+, Euroeudisseia and other programs.</p> <p>A4.5. Maintain and increase the current academic staff mobility (teaching and training assignments).</p>

Strategic Objective	Actions
	<p>A4.6. Carry out educational games with primary and secondary schools to bring young students closer to science.</p> <p>A4.7. Promote the external institutional visibility through fairs and science events participation (regional, national or abroad).</p>

3.5. ACTIONS

3.5.1. GOVERNANCE

The deployment of the Action Plan at the UAc requires coordination among the University's management structures, both at the level of the Vice-Rectorate for Science, Innovation and Knowledge Transfer (VReCITC), Vice-Rectorate for Education and Academic Affairs (VReEGA), Vice-Rectorate for Administration, Planning and Infrastructures (VReAPI), Vice-Rectorate for Students, Well-being and Institutional (VReEBECI), Pro-Rectorate for Cooperation, Internationalisation and Distance Learning (ProCIED), as well as the Academic Association (AAUA), Technology-based Incubator (InUAc) and the Science and Technology Service (SVCT) departments.

For its deployment, a working group will be formed, led by the Science, Innovation and Knowledge Transfer and the Director of Science and Technology Service department. Adaptive monitoring and execution tracking of the Action Plan will be conducted through the European Projects Office at the Science and Technology Service department and will be led by the Project Manager of the EXPER project. Monitoring will be conducted through bi-monthly follow-up meetings.

3.5.2. KPIS

The aim of this plan is to develop and achieve the objectives of the Individual and Joint Strategies of the Widening universities, which were established in previous stages of the EXPER project. As far as UAc is concerned, the indicators that will be used to monitor the implementation of the presented actions are the following:

Table 9. UAc's Strategic Objectives and corresponding Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Strategic Objective (SO)	KPIs	Responsible department/s
SO1 - Foster applied research, interdisciplinarity and internationalization	<p>K1.1. No. of project proposals submitted to European funded calls, namely Horizon Europe and Interreg funding programs.</p> <p>K1.2. No. of projects in the Information Platform for external funded projects.</p> <p>K1.3. No. of workshops participation aiming to develop transversal scientific skills.</p> <p>K1.4. No. of researchers involved in the societal challenges working groups.</p> <p>K1.5. No. of European University Alliances (EUAs) proposals submitted.</p> <p>K1.6. No. of scientific articles indexed in the international Web of Science database.</p>	SVCT
SO2 - Promote a culture of innovation and technology transfer	<p>K2.1. No. of UAc staff participating in training schemes certified by Association of European Science and Technology Transfer Professionals (ASTP).</p> <p>K2.2. No. of UAc staff with training in key skills for technology transfer (market analysis, IPR management, business models, grow hacking techniques, etc).</p> <p>K2.3. Implementation of the Technology Transfer Office (TTO) within InUAc department.</p> <p>K2.4. % increase of incubated projects within InUAc</p> <p>K2.5. No. of UAc created spinoffs.</p>	SVCT / InUAc

Strategic Objective (SO)	KPIs	Responsible department/s
SO3 - Invest in a people-centric University	K3.1. Review and approve the teaching staff performance evaluation regulation. K3.2. Achieve and secure the maintenance of the minimum percentage of 50% of teaching staff with tenure. K3.3. Submit a HRS4R application in 2025. K3.4. No. of consultations promoting the entire academic community well-being, through UAc's Health Office. K3.5. No. of participants from the academic community in sports, maintenance or leisure activities promoted by UAc. K3.6. No. of students involved in UAc Senior Academy. K3.7. No. of infrastructures modernization or creation.	VReEGA / VReEBECI / VReAPI / VReCITC / AAUA
SO4 - Stimulate cooperation, external communication and social connection	K4.1. No. of collaborative projects initiated with regional actors. K4.2. No. of students involved in UAc summer school "Verão Jovem na UAc". K4.3. No. of incoming study visits. K4.4. No. of incoming/outcoming mobility students from Erasmus+, Eurodisseia and other programs. K4.5. No. of incoming/outcoming staff mobility. K4.6. No. of primary/secondary schools involved in educational games.	SVCT / ProCIED

3.5.3. TIMELINE

The foreseen deployment of the actions throughout the validity period of the Action Plan (effective period of EXPER project execution) is indicated below. In addition, the actions that the HEI (UAc) intends to endure beyond the EXPER project lifetime (in the

medium/long term) are indicated, with the aim of keeping pace and productive dynamics that EXPER project has promoted as an institutional transformation engine of the UAc.

Table 10. UAc Action Plan Schedule

Actions	2024	2025	Medium-Long term
A1.1. Offer an updated informational platform for the external funded projects.			
A1.2. Preparation of joint research projects under European funded calls.			
A1.3. Establishment and participation in multidisciplinary working groups contributing to the achievement of SDGs and response to societal challenges.			
A1.4. Participate in international workshops to develop transversal scientific skills (Open Science, Data Management, Responsible Research, Science Communication, etc).			
A1.5. Establish actions to promote cooperation and institutional internationalization, such as international networks and alliances.			
A1.6. Maintain and increase UAc's scientific research activity outputs, such as bibliometric indicators			
A2.1. Increase in the participation of the university community in activities related to businesses and entrepreneurship.			
A2.2. Promote training of teaching and research staff in various skills to enhance their performance in technology transfer activities.			
A2.3. Foster the creation of Technology Transfer Office (TTO) within InUAc department, support office with the objective of assisting and coordinating technology transfer processes, as well as acting as a bridge for the establishment of external projects and partnerships.			

Actions	2024	2025	Medium-Long term
A2.4. Promote dynamics that can create value, based on the knowledge produced at the University, transforming the research outputs in social and economic value, through InUAc support services for pre-incubation, incubation, and post-incubation purposes, increasing the number of incubated projects and spinoffs creation.			
A3.1. Review and approve the teaching staff performance evaluation regulation to improve the well-being and increase productivity and career satisfaction.			
A3.2. Reduce job insecurity, by increasing hiring efforts to reach 50% of teaching staff with tenure.			
A3.3. Submit an institutional application for the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R).			
A3.4. Modernise the existing or create new infrastructures, such as university residences.			
A3.5. Promote physical activity through sports, maintenance or leisure activities, which can contribute to physical and psychological well-being, and also promote informal coexistence between its members.			
A3.6. Foster gender equality and promote diversity, by formulating a diverse strategy.			
A4.1. Foster a culture of collaboration with relevant actors such as science and technology parks, science centres, governmental bodies and local authorities, businesses associations, companies and NGOs, among others.			
A4.2. Foster the involvement of young people in the university activities and research.			
A4.3. Promote study visits to increase the institutional external visibility within primary, preparatory, secondary and vocational schools.			

Actions	2024	2025	Medium-Long term
A4.4. Maintain and increase the current student mobility through the Erasmus+, Euroeudisseia and other programs.			
A4.5. Maintain and increase the current academic staff mobility (teaching and training assignments).			
A4.6. Carry out educational games with primary and secondary schools to bring young students closer to science.			
A4.7. Promote the external institutional visibility through fairs and science events participation (regional, national or abroad).			

4. UPGC ACTION PLAN

4.1. ANALYSIS OF CURRENT SITUATION

4.1.1. DESCRIPTION

As already presented in previous sections of this report, the internal and external assessments of the two universities (UAc and UPGC) conducted in the framework of WP1 allowed us to identify challenges and opportunities for cooperation between the universities and their corresponding ecosystems, as well as elements for improvement to reach the objectives pursued by the EXPER project.

In this sense, the following sections present and summarize the main conclusions and challenges detected during both the internal and external assessments of the UPGC. Also, a guidance list of proposed measures to address these challenges is included. The information has been separated into three pivotal blocks, each of them being one of the three main pillars tackled by the EXPER project: Excellence in research, Talent acquisition and retention and Knowledge and Technology transfer. Finally, an exhaustive list of actions and initiatives from UPGC has also been incorporated in this section, on which the organisation is currently working to improve and overcome the challenges detected.

4.1.1.1. MAIN FINDINGS OF THE INTERNAL ASSESSMENT

The following table details and analyses the challenges detected during the internal assessment of the UPGC and presents the proposed measures to address these challenges. The information has been separated into three pivotal blocks, each of them being one of the three main pillars tackled by the EXPER project: Excellence in research, Talent acquisition and retention and Knowledge and Technology transfer.

Table 11. Challenges identified and proposed measures in the UPGC's internal assessment.

PILLAR	ASPECT UNDER ASSESSMENT	BARRIER/CHALLENGE DETECTED	PROPOSED MEASURES/SOLUTIONS
EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH	Educational capacities	<i>Resource allocation</i>	To implement effective resource management strategies to ensure funds are distributed efficiently, targeting the areas in need to align the educational offerings with the institution's objectives.
		<i>Communication strategies</i>	To develop comprehensive communication strategies to keep faculty and students informed about the university's initiatives.

PILLAR	ASPECT UNDER ASSESSMENT	BARRIER/CHALLENGE DETECTED	PROPOSED MEASURES/SOLUTIONS
EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH		<i>Collaborations and partnerships</i>	To foster partnerships with external companies and participate more in international collaborations, extending the range of opportunities available for students and faculty alike.
		<i>Interdepartmental cooperation</i>	To encourage interaction and cooperation between different departments, allowing them to learn from each other's best practices and address common challenges.
	Advanced Research Production	<i>Interdisciplinary collaboration and academic networks</i>	To stimulate interdisciplinary research by creating interdisciplinary research centers, offering incentives for cross-department collaboration, and fostering an organizational culture that values such cooperation. On the other hand, continued efforts should be made to build academic networks by participating in international conferences, collaborative research projects, and student exchange programs.
		<i>Research and equipment facilities and equipment management</i>	Comprehensively review the resource allocation processes for inefficiencies. To invest in ongoing training programs for technical staff to enhance their operational skills.

PILLAR	ASPECT UNDER ASSESSMENT	BARRIER/CHALLENGE DETECTED	PROPOSED MEASURES/SOLUTIONS
EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH	Advanced Research Production	<i>Transparency</i>	In relation to preferential treatment and lack of awareness about corrective measures: regular communication updates and open forums could serve as effective platforms for disseminating such information and addressing concerns.
TALENT ACQUISITION AND RETENTION	Recruitment of new talent	<i>Absence of an effective onboarding system</i>	To establish a comprehensive onboarding program including an orientation to familiarize new staff with the institution's culture, norms, administrative processes, and available resources and support services. The program ideally should also include networking opportunities and mentorship programs.
		<i>Not providing attractive compensation packages</i>	To offer competitive benefits packages including housing assistance, travel allowances, or relocation packages for those moving to the Canary Islands.
		<i>Inadequate research funding</i>	More funding not only attracts potential candidates but also provides them with the resources they need to conduct high-level research.
	Career development opportunities	<i>No clear career progression system in place</i>	To create a transparent, performance-based system that rewards high-performing researchers with recognitions, grants, or opportunities. For less productive researchers, implement a mentorship system to improve their productivity and enhance the research culture within the university.
		<i>Development of complementary competencies</i>	To replace standalone courses with interconnected, comprehensive skill-building programs. Develop courses with a common theme. Introduce a competency-based learning system to ensure students have mastered the necessary skills before advancing.

PILLAR	ASPECT UNDER ASSESSMENT	BARRIER/CHALLENGE DETECTED	PROPOSED MEASURES/SOLUTIONS
TALENT ACQUISITION AND RETENTION	Career development opportunities	<i>Feedback mechanisms</i>	To conduct regular satisfaction surveys involving students to continuously improve the quality of education and services. Share the outcomes publicly.
	Workplace balance and wellbeing Workplace balance and wellbeing	<i>Work stability and balanced workload</i>	For contract workers, to implement strategies to promote job security. In addition, to ensure equal distribution of workload, mechanisms should be put in place to regularly assess and balance workloads.
		<i>Communication with management</i>	To implement more transparent and frequent communication strategies, increasing satisfaction in communication with university management.
		<i>Data collection and surveys</i>	To establish a regular process for data collection or opinion surveys to keep track of staff sentiment and needs about workplace balance and well-being.
		<i>Diversity and inclusion initiatives</i>	Establish specific programs to incentivize and support workforce diversity, including training, hiring practices or community-building initiatives.
		<i>Concerns about stress and burnout</i>	To provide resources to mitigate psychological stress: access to counselling services, stress management workshops, mental health days, and training for managers on how to support their teams' mental health.
	Ethical excellence	<i>Awareness and accessibility of ethical standards</i>	To ensure that all members of the institution are aware of and can easily access the existing code of ethics. To make this information more readily available (website, new staff and student orientation materials, etc.).
		<i>Ethics training programs</i>	To develop regular training programs on ethical standards for both research staff and students.

PILLAR	ASPECT UNDER ASSESSMENT	BARRIER/CHALLENGE DETECTED	PROPOSED MEASURES/SOLUTIONS
KNOWLEDGE AND TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER	KTT Strategies and organizations	<i>KTT Education and training programs</i>	Invest in the creation of comprehensive yet concise workshops, seminars, or webinars. These should focus on imparting a clear understanding of KTT processes, their benefits, and crucial aspects of start-up development
		<i>Bureaucratic procedures</i>	To proceed with a detailed review and audit of the existing bureaucratic processes. Identify the bottlenecks that slow down the KTT process and make it daunting for participants.
	Partnership development	<i>Management professionals</i>	Prioritize investment in hiring or training dedicated personnel who can manage partnerships effectively.
		<i>Flexible research design</i>	To promote a more application-oriented approach to research design by implementing programs where researchers work closely with industry professionals.
		<i>Internal communication</i>	Set up an internal communication channel for disseminating information about emerging technological trends to the research staff.
		<i>Open feedback</i>	To foster a conducive environment to receive feedback from students, staff, and external partners to provide insights on how the university can improve its collaborations and research objectives.

4.1.1.2. MAIN FINDINGS OF THE EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT

The following are the most important findings extracted from the interviews with the stakeholders (Table 6), including the core challenges highlighted by the interviewees, their potential impact on the entity's capabilities, as well as the measures proposed to overcome these challenges.

Table 12. Barriers, impacts and proposed measures in the ULPGC's external assessment.

BARRIER/CHALLENGE DETECTED	IMPACT/CONSEQUENCE	PROPOSED MEASURES/SOLUTIONS
<i>Alignment of educational programs and internships with industry needs</i>	Real-world needs of businesses remain unmet.	To redesign educational programs, ensuring that students acquire both theoretical knowledge and applicable skills. Longer internships will provide substantial benefits to both students and companies.
<i>Skill gaps in the workforce</i>	Students often lack the practical skills required in the industry	To foster educational programs which enhance and focus on applied learning.
<i>Collaborative research programs</i>	Low quantity of joint research programs between academia and industry.	To foster industry-relevant research programs between academia and industry.
<i>Communication and collaboration</i>	Ineffective partnerships	To enhance communication strategies, also implementing a more collaborative approach.
<i>Administrative hurdles and slow response times</i>	Strong hinders to progress of research and collaborative projects. Limiting opportunities for innovation and development.	To streamline administrative processes and improve responsiveness.

4.1.1.3. ACTIONS PERFORMED BY ULPGC

The next table exposes a set of concrete actions and work done up to the moment by ULPGC, to improve some of the challenges that were identified in the assessments conducted during WP1 (internal and external assessments). The selected actions are thoroughly described, also including the planned and future activities to achieve this substantial improvement as complementary information.

Table 13. List of actions implemented by ULPGC in reference to the challenges detected during the implementation of WP1

Associated Project Task & Project Pillar	Challenge detected	Proposed measures and comments	Actions implemented/in progress by ULPGC in this specific area
T1.2 Widening Universities assessment / Excellence in Research	Resource allocation	To implement effective resource management strategies to ensure funds are distributed efficiently, targeting the areas in need to align the educational offerings with the institution's objectives.	The proper management of available resources is of vital importance, especially in public institutions such as the ULPGC. In this regard, in October 2022, the ULPGC's Social Council drafted a report proposing an organisational reform of the university departments, which implied a significant reduction and grouping of them (click here to go directly to the new). This report also highlighted the ULPGC's efforts to improve academic management, initiating a profound modification of the degrees that are currently based on bachelor's and master's degrees. For this reason, the departments have had to adapt to the needs required by the degrees, and, in this way, there are departments that have grown and continue to grow, while others have clearly evolved towards an appreciable reduction in their number.
	Communication strategies	To develop comprehensive communication strategies to keep faculty and students informed about the university's initiatives.	The ULPGC has defined strategic communication objectives aimed, among other things, at improving communication within the university community. The tools most used to achieve these objectives are, among others, the ULPGC website through its news section (https://www.ulpgc.es/noticias), Radio ULPGC including the #SerULPGC initiative (https://www.ulpgc.es/radioulpgc), and the "ULPGC Informa" channel through the sending of emails to the entire university community or by sector, as well as the usual social networks. A Newsletter is also planned for the near future. Messages are sent through the Communication Office (web news and social networks) or through one of the members of the team of the Vice-Rectorate for Social Projection and Communication (ULPGC Informa, Radio ULPGC, #SerULPGC and Newsletter). Other communication tools with students are the Student Information Service (SIE): https://sie.ulpgc.es/ , and the APP ULPGC application, which includes news, services, and a direct consultation channel to the SIE.
	Collaborations and partnerships	To foster partnerships with external companies and participate more in international collaborations, extending the range of opportunities available for students and faculty alike.	ULPGC actively promotes collaborations with external companies, as well as collaborations at international level. Among others, during 2022 a four-year collaboration agreement was signed with the company Livingsea (click here to go directly to the new). The aim of this collaboration is to develop jointly training activities aimed at students and teachers and researchers, in order to fulfil objectives such as the development and dissemination of education, culture and sport, or the development of higher education and scientific and technological research. A second collaboration of relevance is the one signed in October 2022 with the company Naturgy, within the framework of the University Master of Renewable Energy and Energy Transition of the ULPGC (click here to go directly to the new). According to this agreement, Naturgy would assume a part of the cost of enrolment of all students enrolled in the first edition of this master's degree, with the aim of promoting equal opportunities for access to quality higher education. Naturgy's technical team would be involved in part of the training itinerary, giving classes and sharing their professional experience. Another relevant collaboration, in this case to strengthen cultural, scientific and academic links, is the one signed by the ULPGC in 2022 with the European

Associated Project Task & Project Pillar	Challenge detected	Proposed measures and comments	Actions implemented/in progress by ULPGC in this specific area
			University of the Atlantic, the Ibero-American University Foundation and the Universidade Internacional do Cuanza (Angola), (read the news here).
T1.2 Widening Universities assessment / Excellence in Research	Transparency	In relation to preferential treatment and lack of awareness about corrective measures: regular communication updates and open forums could serve as effective platforms for disseminating such information and addressing concerns.	The Transparency Commissioner of the Canary Islands (CTC) annually evaluates the compliance of all public entities through the Canary Islands Transparency Index ITCanarias, which assesses the information corresponding to the previous year. This information is published on the ULPGC's Transparency Portal . The last rating obtained by the ULPGC, for the year 2021, was 9.07 out of 10. On the other hand, the evaluation and ratings for the years 2022 and 2023 have not been published so far. This evaluation involves the assessment of different types of information, among others, the following: elected members and freely appointed staff, employment in the public sector or services and procedures.
T1.2 Widening Universities assessment / Talent acquisition and retention	Absence of an effective onboarding system	To establish a comprehensive onboarding program including an orientation to familiarize new staff with the institution's culture, norms, administrative processes, and available resources and support services. The program ideally should also include networking opportunities and mentorship programs.	The ULPGC website has been completely redesigned, including an exclusive section for Research Human Resources , thus increasing the visibility of the information offered to new researchers. On the other hand, a Welcome Guide has been created which includes a manual with all the information necessary for new researchers to fully integrate into the ULPGC. This Welcome Guide also includes documentation on rights and obligations, the first steps to take when starting at ULPGC, information on career options, the training plan and the guide to supervision of researchers. The first mentoring programme following the REBECA project has also been launched. Finally, the information provided at the Welcome Day of the ULPGC Doctoral School has also been renewed.
	No clear career progression system in place	To create a transparent, performance-based system that rewards high-performing researchers with recognitions, grants, or opportunities. For less productive researchers, --	The ULPGC has created a Welcome Guide that includes information on career options , a training plan and a supervision guide for researchers. On the other hand, the predoc and postdoc portals have been developed, where all the specific information for these groups is shown, regarding contracting options, grants and subsidies, evaluation systems, accreditation or recognition of research activity.

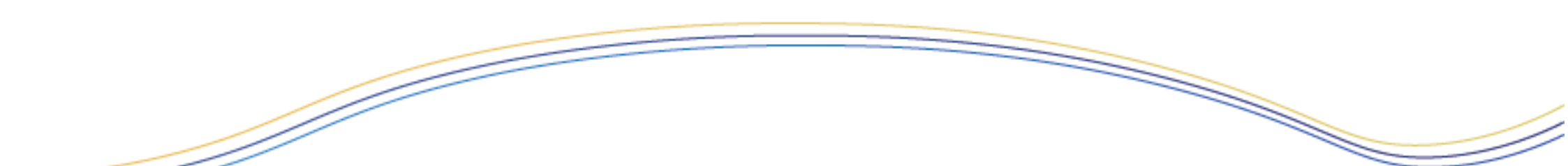
Associated Project Task & Project Pillar	Challenge detected	Proposed measures and comments	Actions implemented/in progress by ULPGC in this specific area
		implement a mentorship system to improve their productivity and enhance the research culture within the university.	
	Feedback mechanisms	To conduct regular satisfaction surveys involving students to continuously improve the quality of education and services. Share the outcomes publicly.	<p>The ULPGC, through the Institutional Assessment Office of the Vice-Rector's Office for Undergraduate, Postgraduate, and New Degrees, periodically carries out surveys to gather the perception, satisfaction, and accountability of its interest groups: students, graduates, PDI, PTGAS, as well as society in general. In addition, surveys are conducted with potential employers of graduates and students once they have completed the corresponding business internships. This second block of surveys is carried out through the Employment and Employability Observatory of the Vice Rectorate for Students, Alumni, and Employability and also functions as a mechanism for detecting potential talent. The data from these surveys are evaluated by each faculty, school, or institute within the university itself, where the information is analysed and, in the event of any deviation, the corresponding improvements are proposed. The results of the satisfaction of the different interest groups are reflected in different reports that are published on the ULPGC website as a way of being accountable to the university community and the general public.</p> <p>All these mechanisms and procedures are part of the quality management system implemented by each centre (faculty, school, or institute), based on the criteria established by ANECA to certify the internal quality assurance systems of institutions (SAIC), through the AUDIT programme.</p>
T1.2 Widening Universities assessment / Talent acquisition and retention	Work stability and balanced workload	For contract workers, to implement strategies to promote job security. In addition, to ensure equal distribution of workload, mechanisms should be put in place to regularly assess and balance workloads.	<p>Job stability is achieved through promotion to permanent positions. This is regulated by Spanish law and it is not possible to stabilise all researchers. In this sense, rules are clear and set out in the career options. Researchers must be accredited by the National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation (Agencia Nacional de Evaluación de la Calidad y Acreditación, ANECA) and with this accreditation they can apply for the positions created according to academic needs which are reviewed and updated annually by the Vice-Rectorate for Academic Organisation, Teaching Staff and Educational Innovation of the ULPGC. The workload is regulated by the ULPGC Academic Organisation Regulations, which establishes a number of teaching hours per year for each category. Research activity is not regulated by a time control for researchers. Only technicians are obliged to clock in and the timetable is the one established in the Spanish labour regulations (37.5 hours per week). The ULPGC cannot modify the time dedicated to work activities.</p>

Associated Project Task & Project Pillar	Challenge detected	Proposed measures and comments	Actions implemented/in progress by ULPGC in this specific area
T1.2 Widening Universities assessment / Talent acquisition and retention	Awareness and accessibility of ethical standards	To ensure that all members of the institution are aware of and can easily access the existing code of ethics. To make this information more readily available (website, new staff and student orientation materials, etc.).	The ULPGC regulations governing doctoral studies, approved in the BOULPGC on 27 January 2023, are as follows: - Regulations for Doctoral Studies at the ULPGC . - Internal Regulations and Code of Good Practice . In addition, a new regulation for research staff is about to be approved which includes an appendix on ethical standards.
	Ethics training programs	To develop regular training programs on ethical standards for both research staff and students.	The ULPGC, through its Vice-Rectorate for Teaching Staff, Academic Planning, and Educational Innovation, is organising the course "Ethics, Responsibility, and Good Practices in Scientific Research." This is a transversal training course on the ethical aspects of research and to encourage reflection on this in all areas of knowledge, assessing its impact on the world in which we live. It is mainly aimed at teaching and research staff and has been given in the first semester of the 2021–2022 and 2022–2023 academic years.
T1.2 Widening Universities assessment / Knowledge and Technology Transfer	KTT Education and training programs	Invest in the creation of comprehensive yet concise workshops, seminars, or webinars. These should focus on imparting a clear understanding of KTT processes, their benefits, and crucial aspects of start-up development	Through its Knowledge Transfer Office (OTC), integrated in the Fundación Canaria Parque Científico y Tecnológico de la ULPGC, the ULPGC's main objective is to promote knowledge transfer and relations between the ULPGC's research staff, the university community in general and business. One of the actions managed and promoted by this office is training in knowledge and technology transfer, such as the introductory courses on innovation and knowledge transfer aimed at PhD and Master's students , as well as teaching and research staff.
	Internal communication	Set up an internal communication channel for disseminating information about emerging technological trends to the research staff.	The ULPGC has, within the Radio ULPGC tool and in podcast format, two programmes out of a total of 7 that address, although not exclusively, aspects related to emerging technological trends. These programmes are " ULPGC Conocimiento compartido ", which is broadcast weekly, and " ULPGC: InnovaciónAbierta ", which is broadcast monthly on the IVOOX and Spotify platforms.
T1.3 Assessment of surrounding ecosystems / Knowledge and Technology Transfer	Alignment of educational programs and internships with industry needs. Skill gaps in the workforce	To redesign educational programs, ensuring that students acquire both theoretical knowledge and applicable skills. To foster educational programs which	The ULPGC collaborates closely with the Canarian Confederation of Employers, with the aim of promoting innovation and lifelong learning for the business sector in the Canary Islands, as well as adapting the offer of future university degrees to the professional profiles most in demand by the business sector. This collaboration materialised in February 2022, through the signing of the first agreement signed by a Spanish university within the framework agreement between the Conference of Social Councils and the CEOE (Spanish Confederation of Business Organisations) and promoted by the Social Council of the ULPGC (read the news here).

Associated Project Task & Project Pillar	Challenge detected	Proposed measures and comments	Actions implemented/in progress by ULPGC in this specific area
		enhance and focus on applied learning.	
	Collaborative research programs	To foster industry-relevant research programs between academia and industry.	The ULPGC, through the Fundación Canaria Parque Científico Tecnológico de la Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (FCPCT ULPGC), continuously encourages collaboration between the university's own research groups and local companies. Last year 2023, the Office for the Transfer of Research Results (OTRI), part of the FCPCT ULPGC, organised the presentation of the OPEN B2ULPGC programme , which aims to promote open innovation projects in emerging Canarian technology-based companies in collaboration with ULPGC research groups and institutions for their participation in national, European and international projects in competitive calls. On the other hand, the FCPCT ULPGC seeks lines of funding for projects in national and international calls, offering consultancy services to tutor the drafting of projects within the framework of the aforementioned calls.
T2.2 Creating a community-based vision of the University	How to make the Canary Islands a business benchmark (new industries and businesses, professionalisation, etc)	-	<p>The ULPGC has been actively working to promote the local and regional productive fabric, leading or participating in various initiatives in this field. For the 2022-2023 biennium, the following are worth mentioning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The RRTO of the ULPGC participates in the APTENISA programme, for the ideation and acceleration of technology-based companies. The main objective of this programme is to facilitate the creation of new technology-based companies, as well as to reduce the obstacles they face during their growth. - The ULPGC, together with the ULL and the Government of the Canary Islands, is promoting the first Observatory of entrepreneurship and small and medium-sized enterprises. This is an information tool to bring together academic studies in this field and promote business activity in the archipelago. - During 2023, the RRTO of the ULPGC promoted the management of 8 knowledge-based companies, 6 start-ups and 2 spinoffs, all of them the result of the scientific work carried out in the research groups and institutes of the ULPGC.
T2.2 Creating a community-based vision of the University	Respond to the specific niches of the Canary Islands	-	The ULPGC is committed to open innovation and maintains frequent contact and fluid communication with the region's entrepreneurs, including direct lines of cooperation in this field. The aim is to foster university-business collaboration and to advance towards an effective Knowledge transfer process, which are crucial to local progress and economic diversification.
	Anticipating and preparing human	-	Climate change adaptation and mitigation is an inescapable global reality. In this respect, and more specifically in the Canary Islands, coastal protection actions are particularly relevant. In this regard, the ULPGC actively collaborated in the drafting of the National Strategic Plan for the

Associated Project Task & Project Pillar	Challenge detected	Proposed measures and comments	Actions implemented/in progress by ULPGC in this specific area
	resources for climate change		Protection of the Coast against the effects of climate change, of the Spanish Ministry for Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge (MITERD). The public consultation process for this plan was carried out in 2022.
	Reporting job opportunities	-	The web page called "Bolsa de Empleo" has been updated to show all the options for working at the ULPGC. In particular, all job offers in research projects have been centralised, which were previously only posted on physical notice boards with little diffusion. On the other hand, the new ULPGC regulations for research personnel include the requirement that all researcher contracts with a duration of more than 1 year must be published in Euraxess (art. 10.2)
	To improve the employability of the region	-	<p>The OTC's Knowledge-Based Companies service (FCPCT-ULPGC) promotes the creation and consolidation of start-ups and spin-offs, which are a guarantee of job creation with high added value in our environment. Due to the scalability potential of this type of company, job creation is guaranteed not only in the early stages but also in the medium and long term.</p> <p>Among the actions aimed at supporting this type of companies, it is worth highlighting the "SpinOn by ULPGC" programme, whose objective is to promote creative, innovative, and entrepreneurial talent derived from the research and knowledge generated at the ULPGC. This programme seeks to transform the productive sector and society through the transfer and commercialization of knowledge, motivating the creation of knowledge-based companies (EBCs) among research staff and students. Through a process of accompaniment, training, and mentoring, ideas and disruptive and innovative business models are rewarded. SpinOn by ULPGC is funded by the Canary Islands Agency for Research, Innovation, and the Information Society (ACIISI) of the Ministry of Universities, Science, Innovation, and Culture of the Government of the Canary Islands and the Social Council of the ULPGC.</p> <p>Since the launch of this service in 2022, 2 spin-offs and 6 start-ups have been recognised and are currently in the consolidation phase.</p>
T2.2 Creating a community-based vision of the University	Specialisation and micro-titles	-	As part of its permanent academic training offer, the ULPGC has shown its full support for the implementation of micro-qualifications. ULPGC is preparing to offer this new academic background aimed at people over 25 years old. They are expected to start in January 2024, and will be focused on areas such as new technologies, energy transition or sustainable development.
	Promoting Linguistic competences	-	The Language Policy of the ULPGC promotes quality training, independent of language accreditation, as established in the CRUE (Conference of Spanish university rectors) Language Roundtables. In this sense, the ULPGC periodically offers language and international communication courses, both to the university community and general society.

Associated Project Task & Project Pillar	Challenge detected	Proposed measures and comments	Actions implemented/in progress by ULPGC in this specific area
	Social impact, actions to reach society	-	The ULPGC has an unequivocal impact on its environment. In this sense, all the actions that exemplify the ULPGC's social commitment can be consulted in the University Social Responsibility and Social Impact reports, published periodically on the ULPGC's Transparency portal . These reports detail all the institutional actions conducted, the training offer, research, transfer and innovation carried out at the ULPGC, as well as social participation actions or environmental and equality issues, among others.
	Promote business participation in European projects	-	The ULPGC coordinates the project LidERA OPE-ULPGC: "Leadership Training in the European Research Area", a national project that aims to increase the participation of the ULPGC in European projects. The role of the Canary Islands, for its scientific excellence in areas such as the Blue Economy, Bioeconomy, Tourism, Renewable Energies or ICTs; for its unique condition of being one of the 9 Outermost Regions of the EU; for the potential that still needs to be mobilised, especially in terms of attracting/retaining research talent; as well as for the road that still remains to be travelled to mobilise the incorporation of the business fabric as participants in European proposals, makes LidERA a strategic project not only for the ULPGC but for the context of the Canary Islands region. In short, LidERA proposes the consolidation of the ULPGC as an active and attractive participant in European consortia of the Framework Programme. In fact, one of the indicators of the project is the effective inclusion of companies in the consortia of future projects. Among other actions, training courses and info-days are being held where public and private agents of the Canarian R+D+I ecosystem, including companies, are invited to learn how to coordinate a European project, or how to address the impact part of the proposals, including topics in which the ULPGC has capabilities and a greater potential, such as the Blue Economy, Bioeconomy or tourism.
T2.2 Creating a community-based vision of the University	Contribution to the knowledge needed for ecological transition	-	In its commitment to the fight against climate change and the achievement of sustainable development objectives, the ULPGC maintains direct lines of collaboration with the Government of the Canary Islands through the Department of Ecological Transition, climate change and territorial planning. To this end, both institutions have various projects underway that are developed through collaboration agreements. In addition, in October 2022, up to 9 ULPGC projects received funding from the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation in the field of ecological and digital transition. The Canarian universities, and especially the ULPGC, thus play a key role at regional level in terms of ecological transition, mitigation and adaptation to climate change.
	Respond to Africa's specific needs & Cooperation with Latin America	-	The ULPGC's Fifth Institutional Strategic Plan (2022-2026) continues to emphasise the tricontinental character of the University and its geostrategic position between Europe, Africa and Latin America. Therefore, it is the intention of the ULPGC to increasingly strengthen these relations through different actions and programmes. These include, among others, the following:







Associated Project Task & Project Pillar	Challenge detected	Proposed measures and comments	Actions implemented/in progress by ULPGC in this specific area
			<p>Training of health and care personnel in biomedicine, maternal-perinatal clinical simulation, etc. (read the news here).</p> <p>Analysis of technology transfer processes in Africa and their economic and social impact (read the news here).</p> <p>Projects to promote and enhance knowledge about Africa in Spanish society, particularly in the Canary Islands (read the news here).</p>






4.1.2. SWOT ANALYSIS

Based on the results of the previous ecosystem assessment (D1.2 Azores and Canary Islands Regional ecosystem assessment reports), including the internal and external evaluations, the following SWOT analysis is presented:







Strengths

-  **Diverse Academic Excellence:** ULPGC has a variety of strong academic programs and experienced faculty, particularly in tourism, computer engineering, animal medicine, aquaculture, ocean sciences, data analytics, and engineering, according to the self-assessment participants.
-  **Promotion of Diversity and Tolerance:** ULPGC is an environment that promotes and supports diversity and inclusion among its personnel and student body.
-  **Culture Towards Innovation:** The university fosters an organisational culture that values innovation and entrepreneurship within its members.
-  **International Engagement:** ULPGC actively engages in international collaborations and European projects.




Weaknesses

-  **Resource Management and Communication Issues:** There is a perceived challenge in efficient resource management and internal communication systems, potentially hindering collaboration and strategic alignment.
-  **Talent Management and Career Development:** Challenges in faculty recruitment, retention, and development due to limited competitive advantages, unclear career progression paths, and workload issues.
-  **Industry Partnerships and Start-up Support:** Processes for establishing and maintaining industry partnerships are not consistent, leading to missed opportunities. The support system for startups and spin-offs lacks sufficient visibility and resources.
-  **Financial Limitations for Infrastructure:** The university lacks access to the latest pieces of equipment required to execute research projects at a higher level.
-  **Geographical Isolation:** The university's location on an archipelago can lead to logistical challenges and may impact the ability to attract faculty and students from mainland regions.

Opportunities

-  **Interdisciplinary Collaboration and Academic Networking:** There is an opportunity to stimulate interdisciplinary research by creating research centres and offering incentives for cross-department collaboration. Building academic networks through international conferences, collaborative research projects, and student exchange programs would also expand the university's reach and impact.
-  **Increased Engagement with Local Community:** Improving engagement with the local community can increase the university's societal impact and contributions.
-  **Strengthening Quality Assurance Processes:** Enhancing quality assurance processes can lead to higher standards of performance and accountability, boosting the university's reputation.
-  **Effective Resource Management and Communication:** ULPGC can implement effective resource management strategies to ensure the efficient distribution of funds and develop comprehensive communication strategies to keep faculty and students informed about the university's initiatives. These steps would enhance the alignment of educational offerings with the institution's objectives and improve awareness of strategic initiatives.
-  **Career Development and Skill-Building Programs:** Developing transparent career progression systems, comprehensive skill-building programs, and a formal feedback mechanism would nurture and retain talent, enhancing the professional growth of researchers and the broader institutional reputation.
-  **Knowledge and Technology Transfer (KTT) Initiatives:** Investing in KTT education and training programs, streamlining bureaucratic procedures, and supporting the creation of knowledge-based start-ups would fortify the KTT ecosystem within the university, promoting economic and societal growth.

Threats

-  **Financial Constraints:** Insufficient financial resources could limit the university's ability to support research, digital transformation, infrastructural developments, and maintain faculty competencies.
-  **Competitive Academic Landscape:** The rapidly evolving academic landscape requires continuous innovation and adaptation, posing a threat if the university cannot keep pace.
-  **Talent Attraction and Retention:** Geographical seclusion and limited career advancement opportunities may affect the university's ability to attract and retain talent.

ULPGC demonstrates diverse academic excellence and a supportive culture of innovation and international engagement. However, challenges in resource management, talent retention, and geographical isolation require attention. Opportunities lie in interdisciplinary collaboration, community engagement, and quality enhancement. Proactive measures are essential to overcome financial constraints, competitive pressures, and talent attraction challenges for sustained success.

4.2. VISION & MISSION

The following sections contain the data and main conclusions obtained during the elaboration of the Vision and Mission of the ULPGC in the framework of the EXPER project.

4.2.1. VISION

The following table shows the data collected to obtain the ULPGC's Vision in the framework of the EXPER project.

Table 14. Collected data. ULPGC's Vision

DATA COLLECTED FOR THE VISION DEVELOPMENT
Openness and collaboration
Dialogue
Promoting a fair, equitable model of remuneration
Stay focused on people
Medium-long term vision
Making the Canary Islands a business benchmark
Getting closer to reality
Focus on Governance
Agility - Flexibility
Map of needs
Inclusion of all profiles within the ULPGC
Developing critical thinking
Focus on our sector of specialisation
Commitment to Micro-titles

- Analysis of collected data:

During the co-design workshop organised by the EXPER project, several inputs were collected from the participants in order to define the ULPGC's Vision. After analysing these inputs, it can be observed that there are several recurring topics.

One of them is openness and collaboration, which is reflected in the university's intention to become a business reference in the Canary Islands. To this end, it seeks to encourage dialogue and the inclusion of all profiles within the institution, as well as to develop a map of needs that allows it to adapt to the demands of the business and academic environment.

Another of the crucial aspects to be considered in the development of the university's vision is to generate a people-oriented approach. The ULPGC seeks to develop a fair and equitable model of remuneration that benefits all members of the university community and promotes the inclusion of all profiles within the institution. It also seeks to encourage the development of critical thinking, which reflects a concern for the comprehensive training of students.

In terms of the focus on the future, it is observed that university seeks to have a medium-long term vision and is focused on developing agile and flexible governance that allows it to adapt to the changing needs of the social, business and academic environment. It also seeks to get closer to the reality and needs of the business environment, which indicates a strong orientation towards innovation and the resolution of real problems.

Similarly, it can be observed that the ULPGC pursues a focus on specialisation and is committed to micro-degrees (short programs for people who are no longer active in the university) as a way of advancing in this direction. This reflects a concern for academic excellence and the development of specific competences in each area of knowledge.

In this sense, the vision suggests creating an institution that is open, collaborative, focused on people and the future, which promotes inclusion, dialogue, critical thinking and innovation, being a business benchmark in the Canary Islands. Furthermore, it should seek to develop a fair and equitable model of remuneration for all members of the university community and an agile and flexible governance that allows it to adapt to the changing needs of the business and academic environment.

4.2.2. MISSION

The following table shows the data collected to obtain the ULPGC's Mission in the framework of the EXPER project.

Table 15. Collected data. ULPGC's Mission

DATA COLLECTED FOR THE MISSION ELABORATION
Anticipating and preparing human resources for technological and climate change
Enhancing the importance of training
Professionalisation (generating a change of mindset)
Improving the employability of the environment
Addressing specific niches of the Canary Islands
Responding to societal needs
To become a tractor in new industries
Generate social impact - social duty - reach out more to citizens (penetrate society)
Provide information about job opportunities
Promote regulatory changes
Promote business participation in European projects
Respond to Africa's specific needs (proximity)
Cooperation with Latin America
Contribute to knowledge needed for the ecological transition
Promoting language competences (multilingualism)

- Analysis of collected data:

One of the main aspects highlighted in the data collected is the importance of anticipating and preparing human resources for technological and climate change. In a constantly evolving world, the ULPGC must be forward-looking and train its students in the skills and knowledge necessary to adapt to the changes that are coming in the world of work. This will enable the university to respond effectively to the needs of the labour market and society at large and suggests that the ULPGC recognises the importance of addressing climate change and is committed to preparing its academic community to meet this challenge through research and innovation in related areas.

Another key element in the definition of the ULPGC's mission is the valuing of training and professionalisation. Participants in the co-design workshop highlighted the

importance of fostering a culture of lifelong learning to improve the employability of the environment. To achieve this goal, the university must generate a change of mentality in students and foster a culture of lifelong learning.

The university must also respond to the specific niches of the Canary Islands and to social needs. In this sense, the data collected point to the need for the institution to be a tractor for new industries and to generate a positive social impact on society through social duty and reaching out more to citizens. This implies that the ULPGC must be aligned with the needs of society and the environment in which it is located.

In addition, the promotion of regulatory change and the involvement of companies in European projects are other key elements highlighted in the data collected. Universities should be open to cooperate with other countries and to participate in projects that allow them to be at the forefront of knowledge and innovation.

On the other hand, the university representatives participating in the co-design workshop highlighted the importance of promoting language competence through multilingualism, graduating professionals with diverse languages to broaden connections with other nations and people. Furthermore, the need to contribute to the knowledge needed for the ecological transition was underlined, as well as to respond to the specific needs of Africa due to geographical proximity.

It is also important to consider establishing partnerships and collaborations with higher education institutions and companies in Latin America to exchange knowledge and foster development in both regions. As well as developing business in key areas, attracting talent and sharing their experience and knowledge in areas where they have strengths to contribute to the mutual development of both regions.

Overall, the data collected in the co-design workshop underline the importance of anticipating and preparing human resources for technological and climate change, valuing training and professionalisation, responding to specific Canarian niches and social needs, promoting regulatory change and business participation in European projects, promoting linguistic competence through multilingualism, contributing to the knowledge needed for the ecological transition and responding to the specific needs of Africa due to geographical proximity. These elements are fundamental to define the mission of the ULPGC and to ensure that the institution is aligned with the needs of society and the environment in which it is located.

4.3. ULPGC INDIVIDUAL STRATEGY: STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

The following table presents the individual strategic objectives of the ULPGC under the framework of the EXPER project, established during the elaboration of the ULPGC Individual Strategy.

Table 16. Individual strategic objectives of the ULPGC

Strategic Objective	Description
1. Fostering an Entrepreneurial Culture	This objective centers on nurturing an entrepreneurial culture within the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (ULPGC). Leveraging insights from the EXPER Project, ULPGC aims to cultivate a more robust entrepreneurial culture among students, researchers, and future generations. The goal is to actively engage researchers, pre/postdoctoral researchers, and students involved in research and development (I+D+I), as well as prospective university students. This involves disseminating ULPGC's entrepreneurial initiatives and creating an environment conducive to innovation.
2. Promoting Research, Knowledge Transfer, and Innovation	This objective aims to position the university as a center of excellence in research, innovation, and technology transfer. It encompasses the crucial aspect of training teaching and research staff (PDI) in various skills to enhance their performance in research and technology transfer activities.
3. Developing a Committed University	This objective underscores the university's commitment to expanding its research and innovation activities in the social sphere. It aligns with the broader social impact goals of the project and aims to foster a culture of research and innovation addressing societal challenges. Implementation of the HRS4R strategy will improve working conditions for researchers and offer incentives to attract talented individuals.
4. Fostering an Open and Connected University	This objective shifts the focus from promoting international cooperation among researchers and innovators to establishing partnerships with European universities. It positions the EXPER Project as a central platform for discussions on European university alliances within the Outermost Regions (ORs). Emphasising the collaborative nature of the project, it highlights the importance of international cooperation and the creation of a platform for forming alliances.

4.4.ACTIONS

The fulfilment of the Strategic Objectives will be achieved through the deployment of the actions described below.

4 Strategic Objectives (SO) and 17 related Actions (A) have been defined:

Table 17. ULPGC's Strategic Objectives and corresponding actions

Strategic Objective	Actions
SO1. Fostering an Entrepreneurial Culture	<p>A1.1. Staff exchanges with project partners to improve the training and skills of ULPGC staff in knowledge transfer, innovation, and spin-offs.</p> <p>A1.2. Pilot implementation of the CLAB (Contamination LAB) model at the ULPGC.</p> <p>A1.3. Organisation of events and/or courses related to entrepreneurship and business for the Research Community, including expert visits and workshops.</p> <p>A1.4. Elaboration of a feasibility study (administrative, economic, and legal aspects will be addressed) for establishment of permanent spin-offs supporting offices and services.</p> <p>A1.5. Organisation of dissemination actions in schools to promote entrepreneurial culture in new generations.</p>
SO2. Promoting Research, Knowledge Transfer, and Innovation	<p>A2.1. Promotion of the training required for RTTP (Registered Technology Transfer Professionals) accreditation of Technical, Administration and Management Staff of the ULPGC.</p> <p>A2.2. Organisation of courses, seminars and/or workshops on Knowledge transfer and Innovation for the ULPGC Teaching and Research staff.</p> <p>A2.3. Promotion of activities to disseminate research results through the organisation of summer schools, conferences and/or workshops.</p> <p>A2.4. Encourage the incorporation of Invited Collaborative Researchers (ICR) from EXPER partners in the Recognised Research Groups of the ULPGC, in order to increase their participation in projects implemented by the ULPGC.</p>

Strategic Objective	Actions
SO3. Developing a Committed University	<p>A3.1. Training plan development for ULPGC Teaching and Research staff, addressing transversal skills in research such as Open Science Practices, research data management, responsible research and science education.</p> <p>A3.2. Organisation of forums and Open Science Practices to promote social initiatives and to enable the incorporation of ideas or initiatives to be developed at the ULPGC.</p> <p>A3.3. Promotion of applications for collaborative research projects with other institutions in Blue and Circular Economy, through the European Projects Office of the ULPGC, and in the framework of the SCWGs of the EXPER project.</p> <p>A3.4. Improvement in the communication and dissemination of calls for Research Human Resources.</p> <p>A3.5. Promotion of the incorporation of researchers from other institutions (European and/or abroad).</p> <p>A3.6. Promotion of researchers' participation in staff stabilisation processes and improvement of their evaluation to facilitate accreditation to stable positions.</p>
SO4. Fostering an Open and Connected University	<p>A4.1. Organisation of dissemination and participative events on the European University Alliance of which the ULPGC is a member (ERUA2).</p> <p>A4.2. Promoting the participation of researchers with success probabilities in calls for projects to be funded in the Horizon Europe program.</p>

4.5. ACTION PLAN MANAGEMENT

4.5.1. GOVERNANCE

The deployment of the Action Plan at the ULPGC requires coordination among the University's management structures, at the level of the Vice-Rectorate for Research and Transfer (VRRT), Vice-Rectorate of Internationalisation, Mobility and International Projection (VRIMIP), the Human Resources and Research and Technological Development departments (HRRTDD), and the ULPGC European Project Office (OPE).

For its deployment, a working group will be formed, led by the Vice-Rector for Research and Transfer and the Directors of Human Resources for Research, Technological Development, Innovation and Transfer, and Scientific Infrastructure and Business Relations, respectively. Adaptive monitoring and execution tracking of the Action Plan will be conducted through the European Projects Office of the FCPCT and will be led by the Project Manager of the EXPER project. Monitoring will be conducted through bi-monthly follow-up meetings.

4.5.2. KPIS

The aim of this plan is to develop and achieve the objectives of the Individual and Joint Strategies of the Widening universities, which were established in previous stages of the EXPER project. As far as the ULPGC is concerned, the indicators that will be used to monitor the implementation of the presented actions are the following:

Table 18. ULPGC's Strategic Objectives and corresponding Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Strategic Objective	KPIs	Responsible department/s
SO1 - Fostering an Entrepreneurial Culture	K1.1. Increase in the participation of the university community in activities related to businesses and entrepreneurship.	VRRT
	K1.2. Number of outreach programmes aimed at fostering an entrepreneurial culture in children.	
SO2 - Promoting Research, Knowledge Transfer, and Innovation	K2.1. Number of ULPGC staff with Registered Technology Transfer Professional (RTTP) certification.	VRRT, OPE
	K2.2. Number of PDI members trained in key skills for technology transfer.	
	K2.3. Percentage increase in the dissemination of the university's scientific results.	

Strategic Objective	KPIs	Responsible department/s
SO2 - Promoting Research, Knowledge Transfer, and Innovation	K2.4. Number of projects involving external researchers.	VRRT, OPE
SO3 - Developing a Committed University	K3.1. Number of initiatives focused on social innovation.	VRRT, OPE, HRRTDD
	K3.2. Percentage increase in participation in collaborative projects within the Blue Economy and Circular Economy sectors.	
	K3.3. Number of candidates applying to human resources research calls.	
	K3.4. Number of researchers hired from international institutions and organisations.	
	K3.5. Percentage of hired researchers who secure a stable and permanent contract at ULPGC.	
SO4 - Fostering an Open and Connected University	K4.1. Number of events organised on European university alliances in the Outermost Regions (ORs).	VRIMIP, VRRT, OPE
	K4.2. Number of project proposals submitted to European projects (European calls).	

4.5.3. TIMELINE

The foreseen deployment of the actions throughout the validity period of the Action Plan (effective period of EXPER project execution) is indicated below. In addition, the actions that the HEI (ULPGC) intends to endure beyond the EXPER project lifetime (in the medium/long term) are indicated, with the aim of keeping pace and productive dynamics

that EXPER project has promoted as an institutional transformation engine of the ULPGC.

Table 19. ULPGC Action Plan Schedule

Actions	2024	2025	Medium-Long term
A1.1. Staff exchanges with project partners to improve the training and skills of ULPGC staff in knowledge transfer, innovation, and spin-offs.			
A1.2. Pilot implementation of the CLAB (Contamination LAB) model at the ULPGC.			
A1.3. Organisation of events and/or courses related to entrepreneurship and business for the Research Community, including expert visits and workshops.			
A1.4. Elaboration of a feasibility study (administrative, economic, and legal aspects will be addressed) for establishment of permanent spin-offs supporting offices and services.			
A1.5. Organisation of dissemination actions in schools to promote entrepreneurial culture in new generations.			
A2.1. Promotion of the training required for RTTP (Registered Technology Transfer Professionals) accreditation of Technical, Administration and Management Staff of the ULPGC.			
A2.2. Organisation of courses, seminars and/or workshops on Knowledge transfer and Innovation for the ULPGC Teaching and Research staff.			
A2.3. Promotion of activities to disseminate research results through the organisation of summer schools, conferences and/or workshops.			
A2.4. Encourage the incorporation of Invited Collaborative Researchers (ICR) from EXPER partners in the Recognised Research Groups of the ULPGC, in order to increase their participation in projects implemented by the ULPGC.			
A3.1. Training plan development for ULPGC Teaching and Research staff, addressing transversal skills in research such as Open Science Practices, research data management, responsible research and science education.			
A3.2. Organisation of forums and Open Science Practices to promote social initiatives and to enable the incorporation of ideas or initiatives to be developed at the ULPGC.			

Actions	2024	2025	Medium-Long term
A3.3. Promotion of applications for collaborative research projects with other institutions in Blue and Circular Economy, through the European Projects Office of the ULPGC, and in the framework of the SCWGs of the EXPER project.			
A3.4. Improvement in the communication and dissemination of calls for Research Human Resources.			
A3.5. Promotion of the incorporation of researchers from other institutions (European and/or abroad).			
A3.6. Promotion of researchers' participation in staff stabilisation processes and improvement of their evaluation to facilitate accreditation to stable positions.			
A4.1. Organisation of dissemination and participative events on the European University Alliance of which the ULPGC is a member (ERUA2).			
A4.2. Promoting the participation of researchers with success probabilities in calls for projects to be funded in the Horizon Europe program.			

5. JOINT STRATEGY

On March 1, 2024, the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (ULPGC) and the University of the Azores (UAc) convened in a strategic discussion aimed at fostering future collaborations under the umbrella of the EXPER project. This initiative (Joint Strategy Workshop) constituted the next step in the establishment of the individual strategies from WP2 (previously presented in this report) and culminated in the development of a Joint Strategy designed to propel the current progress of the EXPER Action Plans.

The Joint Strategy, a collaborative effort stemming from the Co-Design Strategy of WP2, implies a significant step forward in exploring avenues for cooperation between the two institutions. Stakeholders from diverse backgrounds, including innovation leaders, researchers, gender equality experts, internationalisation specialists, and educators, converged to chart a course for inter-institutional collaboration. This collaborative endeavour drew insights from both the widening ecosystems represented by the Canary Islands and the Azores.

After introducing the purpose of the activity and the Strategic Objectives (SOs) of each institution, actors from both the ULPGC and the UAc articulated their commitment to collaborate jointly in order to reach these objectives.

The Joint Strategy of both Universities, including the main conclusions and drawn actions is presented in Table 20. This is a conceptual matrix, which relates the key EXPER WPs (which are ultimately the three main lines of action of EXPER Project: a) Excellent and responsible research; b) Attraction and retention of talents; c) KTT, cooperation with surrounding ecosystems), the Individual SOs of each University (UAc and ULPGC), and the joint actions defined between both entities. A series of KPIs for the actions to be implemented is also defined, as well as an approximate execution timetable in the medium-long term, which of course contains the EXPER project execution period remaining (2024 to March 2025).

Table 20. UAc & ULPGC Joint Strategy






Exper WP	Entity & Related Individual SO ²	Action	Proposed Indicators (I)/KPIs	Actions Timeline		
				2024	2025	Medium-Long Term
2	UAc: SO1 & SO4 ULPGC: SO4	A.1. UAc joining a EUA	I.1. Creation of a forum to bring the interest ORs and share information, good practices and integrate new European Universities Alliances.			
3	UAc: SO2 & SO3 ULPGC: SO1	A.2. Implementing the CLAB model in Widening Universities	I.2. No. of UAc/ULPGC working groups participating in the CLAB model implementation at the ULPGC.			
	UAc: SO3 ULPGC: SO3	A.3. Implementing the HRS4R at UAc & ULPGC	I.3. Best practices for the HRS4R certification procedure. Knowledge exchange with ULPGC			
4	UAc: SO1 & SO4 ULPGC: SO2, SO3 & SO4	A.4. Encourage joint participation in collaborative projects that contribute to achieving SDGs and address the social challenges of the ORs.	I.4. No. of collaborative European projects proposals submitted with ULPGC.			
			I.5. Creation of a Working Group for identifying funding opportunities of on-going specific calls and topics of interest.			
			I.6. Best practices workshop for writing projects proposals. Knowledge exchange with EXPER universities partners.			
	UAc: SO1 & SO2 ULPGC: SO2	A.5. Improving the dissemination of research results between Widening Universities (UAc/ULPGC) and entrepreneurial/business ecosystem in both regions.	I.7. No. of joint open days to disseminate research results developed at ULPGC and UAc close to the business sector (collaborative companies will explain their collaboration with the HEIs, ideally with the same departments).			

² UAc & ULPGC SOs

UAc Individual Strategic Objectives	ULPGC Individual Strategic Objectives
SO1: Foster applied research, interdisciplinarity and internationalization.	SO1: Fostering an Entrepreneurial Culture
SO2: Promote a culture of innovation and technology transfer.	SO2: Promoting Research, Knowledge Transfer, and Innovation
SO3: Invest in a people-centric University.	SO3: Developing a Committed University
SO4: Stimulate cooperation, external communication and social connection.	SO4: Fostering an Open and Connected University

Exper WP	Entity & Related Individual SO ²	Action	Proposed Indicators (I)/KPIs	Actions Timeline		
				2024	2025	Medium-Long Term
		A.6. Developing a joint summer-school.	I.8. No. of joint summer-schools organised.			
	UAc: SO1 & SO4 ULPGC: SO2 & SO3	A.7. Capacity building plan elaboration for UAc/ULPGC, including open science practices, research data management, scientific education, etc.	I.9. Capacity building plan report/deliverable			
5	UAc: SO2 ULPGC: SO1 & SO2	A.8. Promote the capacities and training of UAc/ULPGC staff in KTT and innovation.	I.10.No. of UAc/ULPGC staff participating in training schemes certified by Association of European Science and Technology Transfer Professionals (ASTP).			
			I.11. No. of UAc/ULPGC staff with training in key skills for technology transfer (market analysis, IPR management, business models, grow hacking techniques, etc).			
			I.12.No. of Staff exchanges within the project foreseen activities.			
	UAc: SO2	A.9. Establishment of an OTC at the University of the Azores	I.13.Best practices workshop for OTC creation. Knowledge exchange with ULPGC.			
7	UAc: SO4 ULPGC: SO3	A.10. Promote informative-educational activities in primary and secondary schools in both ORs, with the aim of bringing research and science closer to the new generations and fostering their critical and creative thinking.	I.14.No. of Azores-Canaries primary/secondary schools involved in EXPER educational games.			
-	UAC: SO1, SO3 & SO4 ULPGC: SO3 & SO4	A.11. Transversal actions	I.15.No. of incoming ULPGC mobility students from Erasmus+, Eurodisseia and other programs.			
			I.16.Continuing the ongoing joint PhD programs between UAc and ULPGC (namely on Atlantic islands: History, heritage, and legal-institutional framework)			

In summary, during the Joint Strategy workshop with representatives from both UAc and ULPGC, relevant conclusions were reached to foster a strong entrepreneurial culture and strengthen research and innovation collaboration between the Widening Universities. In general terms, the main conclusions drawn from the workshop were the following:

-  The importance of organizing joint activities to raise awareness on value creation from scientific results, such as workshops to boost the creation of promising business projects (CLAB model as an example, training for the creation of spin-offs and start-ups, etc.) and KTT was highlighted.
-  Connection between Incubator Programs: it was agreed to establish a connection between the incubator programs of both universities to facilitate information exchanges and/or knowledge, as well as available resources for entrepreneurs.
-  Promoting entrepreneurship: The need to promote entrepreneurship and innovation in academia was emphasized, including the cross-cutting integration of the entrepreneurial discipline in all academic courses.
-  Excellent Research Collaboration: Several areas of research collaboration were identified, such as the creation and preparation of joint calls (Horizon Europe calls or others), multidisciplinary participation in research projects and organization of open days to disseminate research results.
-  Addressing Social Challenges: The importance of addressing social challenges through collaboration in social entrepreneurship programs and the possible creation of joint observatories to collect relevant data in this field was highlighted.
-  Cooperation in the Framework of the HRS4R Strategy and European University Alliances: It was agreed to share experiences on the HRS4R certification process, as well as to explore opportunities for collaboration and learning (good/best practices) from other European University Alliances.

These results reflect the commitment of both universities to promote entrepreneurship, cutting-edge research and strategic collaboration to address social and economic challenges in their territories in an effective and transversal manner.



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