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SMARTT (Screening, mapping, analyzing, recommending, transferring and transforming HE international programmes)

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Author(s)	Romiță IUCU, Simona IFTIMESCU, Angela MELLEY, Alexandru CARȚIȘ
Contributors	Nadia FERNÁNDEZ DE PINEDO, Susannah VERNEY, Mattea CAPELLI, Sophia PAPAIOANNOU, George GUNNESCH-LUCA

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ABOUT THE SMARTT PROJECT

SMARTT is an innovative project aiming at analysing, testing, and piloting the new European Degree label criteria, improving the quality, and increasing the transferability of future developments of European Degrees across Europe and beyond.

SMARTT is formed by the **CIVIS - Europe's Civic University Alliance** in cooperation with the European Universities Alliances EUTOPIA, NEUROTECHEU, and UNITA, alongside higher education institutions, national and regional stakeholders, and relevant actors. Based on significant experience in designing and delivering joint and multiple degree programmes at transnational level, the higher education institutions involved in the SMARTT project propose to expand this experience and draw, based on clear methodologies and thorough analyses, recommendations, and proposals both for the European Commission and the member states, to support the development of a European Approach for designing and implementing Joint European Degrees in the future. The consortium partners possess an extensive history of successful international collaboration and have consistently played a leading role in the co-development of the European Degree policy initiative since its inception.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report builds on Deliverable 4: EUROSUD Report on quantitative and qualitative analysis and Deliverable 5: Set of recommendations EUROSUD, providing an overview of the first stage of the SMARTT project dedicated to the in-depth analysis of The International Master in South European Studies (EUROSUD), which was used as a case-study to pre-test the European Degree Label criteria. To offer a comprehensive overview, the Report provides a general context, both in relation to the SMARTT Project overall and to the EUROSUD programme, presents details on the process and the methodology, as well as on the results, obstacles and recommendations derived from the analysis. Finally, the report formulates some preliminary conclusions on the ELD and presents the upcoming steps for the SMARTT Project in relation to EUROSUD.

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1

OVERVIEW

1. OVERVIEW

The European Degree Label (EDL) can be seen as a crucial project, or as a `European policy experimentation in higher education` initiative (European Commission, 2022), considering the ever-changing and increasingly complex educational landscape. Building on the Bologna Process and the expanding potential of the EHEA, the EDL proposes a seal of quality for joint degree programs, signifying a commitment to excellence in transnational education and enhancing the visibility and attractiveness of European higher education globally.

In this context, SMARTT is an innovative project aiming at analysing, testing, and piloting the new European Degree label criteria, improving the quality, and increasing the transferability of future developments of European Degrees across Europe and beyond.

1.1. Specific objectives of the SMARTT project

- **Mapping the different regulations** and goals at the national and European levels.
- Establishing a **catalogue of indicators for European criteria**.
 - Proposing an approach that could be **commonly agreed** on for the delivery of joint degrees based on co-created European criteria by European countries at all education levels.
 - **Testing** the relevance of these criteria.
 - Conducting a **joint reflection** on possible scenarios for the delivery of a joint degree at all levels, based on these co-created European criteria.
 - Exploring and recommending possible **optimization** of the proposed set of criteria.
 - Sharing **good practices** at all levels.
- Organizing a **large dissemination** event and elaborating materials.

SMARTT is comprised of four Work Packages, two of them dedicated to management, communication and dissemination (WP1 and WP4) and the other two dedicated to testing the EDL criteria by using the EUROSUD Programme as a pilot (WP2) and to replicating the pilot in CIVIS and its partner alliances. As described in the project application:

WP2 is particularly devoted to the testing, validation, and quality assurance of the EUROSUD programme. WP2 includes the following tasks:

1. screening the criteria for the Joint Program;
2. designing the indicators and testing for the criteria with experts from the EMJM and from CIVIS (curricula design and multilingualism, quality assurance, learning strategies, recognition accreditation, innovative pedagogies, inclusiveness and sustainability);
3. co-creating the template with the Commission;
4. collecting data, summarizing, and analysing the results; and
5. summarising the set of recommendations in a final report / policy paper.

WP3 oversees mapping and selecting the programmes, covering different areas and levels (bachelor, master) in 50 CIVIS international programmes and educational activities developed by CIVIS Alliance member universities by:

1. replicating the screening and testing process on a larger scale;

2. testing and collecting the results from the tools and procedures approved by the Commission;
3. analysing and discussing the results with different stakeholders and experts;
4. comparing the results with the ones of EUROSUD and
5. summarising the main findings in a guideline document.

WP3 will allow the coverage of the recommendations to be extended to broader geographical and educational areas, as UNITA, EUTOPIA, and NeurotechEU partners will focus on specific criteria related to their expertise. Based on the lessons learned from the testing of the European Degree Label criteria, more precise and accurate recommendations will thus be formulated.

1.2. Specific objectives of Work Package 2

1. Analyse the extent to which the specific criteria outlined in the European Degree Label¹ align with the EUROSUD program, determine the degree of compliance, and identify areas of alignment or potential gaps.
2. Identify the strengths and weaknesses of the European Degree Label in relation to the EUROSUD program.
3. Gather diverse perspectives from stakeholders, including students, faculty, staff, management team, experts, and external stakeholders, regarding the alignment of the European Degree Label criteria with the EUROSUD.
4. Contribute to the ongoing development and optimization of the European Degree Label by using the EUROSUD program as a benchmark.
5. Provide evidence-based insights to inform decision-making processes regarding the alignment of the EUROSUD program with the European Degree Label.
6. Validate the relevance of the European Degree Label criteria in the context of the EUROSUD program.
7. Assess whether the criteria effectively capture the essential elements required for a high-quality joint degree program and provide feedback on their applicability.
8. Evaluate the potential benefits of aligning the EUROSUD program with the European Degree Label criteria. Determine how the alignment can enhance the value, recognition, and credibility of the program among students, stakeholders, and external entities.

This report builds on Deliverable 4: EUROSUD Report on quantitative and qualitative analysis and Deliverable 5: Set of recommendations EUROSUD, providing an overview of the first stage of the SMARTT project dedicated to the in-depth analysis of The International Master in South European Studies (EUROSUD), which was used as a case-study to pre-test the European Degree Label criteria.

1.3. EUROSUD – South European Studies Programme

The joint programme presented in this pilot is the **‘International Master in South European Studies’ - an Erasmus Mundus Joint Master’s Degree (EMJMD) Programme (EUROSUD)** (<https://www.southeuropeanstudies.eu/>), joining six European Consortium Partner Universities. EUROSUD is the first master’s programme with a unique geographical focus on Southern Europe with

¹ For clarity, the European Degree Label will be referred to as EDL throughout the document.

the objective to advance and promote the study of the South European region based on multi-disciplinary principles, within the bounds of Humanities and Social Sciences. It is a two-year programme (120 ECTS), jointly delivered by a Consortium of five-degree awarding Universities: University of Glasgow (UoG), the Autonomous University of Madrid (UAM), Aix-Marseille University (AMU) the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA), LUIS – Guido Carli, Rome and one Key Associate Partner (ICS-University of Lisbon).

EUROSUD students pursue three international mobilities. In the 1st Term, all students attend the University of Glasgow, where South European Studies overview courses and Methods training are provided. The 2nd Term follows a geographical pathway and is taken in either NKUA (Southern Europe and the Balkans) or in UAM (Southern Europe in the Arab World). In their second year of the programme students chose to go to one of the four-degree awarding SE partners (UAM, NKUA, LUISS or AMU). In the 3rd Term they follow the thematic pathways that are established in each of the four partners, respectively, Nationalism, Crisis and Change, Democratisation, and Borders. In the 4th Term they either write a Dissertation (Research Track) or complete an ECTS awarding internship and write a Professional Project (Professional Track). A Winter School is offered in Lisbon in the 4th Term to support both Research and Professional Track students in their independent study period.

Throughout the programme, students benefit from the acquisition of new linguistic skills, innovative training in applied research skills, developing of their communication skills in a multicultural, multilingual, and multinational environment and learning to offer effective presentations using a broad range of technological means and materials to diverse audiences.

Graduates receive the International Master in South European Studies jointly from the University of Glasgow and one or two other partners from the following group: UAM, NKUA and LUISS Guido Carli. A multiple master's degree (UofG, NKUA or UAM and AMU) is received when a mobility takes place at the University of Aix-Marseille. This EMJM was founded in 2018 and started its first academic year in 2019, meaning that three academic years have been already completed, while four intakes have been admitted (in October 2022, 102 students had been registered in the programme). The student body is highly diverse, coming from 48 different countries from all over the world and is predominantly female (60%). The first intake of EUROSUD graduates completed their studies in September 2021 (25 students) and the second in September 2022 (24 students), while the third cohort graduated in September 2023. EUROSUD maintains contact details for its alumni, who regularly contribute to the EUROSUD student blog and a dedicated Linked-in page. Annual graduate surveys are conducted after each intake's graduation.

The program is unique in examining Southern Europe as a distinct region with its own identity and global role, and addressing contemporary challenges such as democracy and protest, migration, social and economic change, nationalism, European integration, and new trade and security challenges. The program is suitable for students who are interested in pursuing a career in academia, policymaking, journalism, or civil society organizations related to Southern Europe. The program is taught in English and is open to students from all over the world.

EUROSUD is unique in that it is the only program in the world that specifically studies Southern Europe. The program director and current students describe the program as a unique opportunity to engage in the multi-disciplinary study of the South European region with partners in Greece, Spain, Portugal, Italy, France, and the United Kingdom over two years and gain a jointly awarded master's degree.

- The primary aim of EUROSUD is to deliver in-depth knowledge and expertise on Southern Europe, encompassing countries like Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece, and the Balkans. The

program is designed for students who wish to specialize in this region's unique political, social, and economic landscapes.

- Typically, EUROSUD offers a curriculum that combines coursework, research, and practical experience. This includes lectures, seminars, fieldwork, and internships, providing a holistic educational experience.
- Key areas of study often include Southern European politics, history, international relations, economics, and cultural studies. The program also delves into contemporary issues like migration, economic crises, European Union policies, and regional security concerns.
- Most programs like EUROSUD emphasize research, requiring students to engage in independent studies, dissertations, or capstone projects, often focusing on current issues or historical developments in Southern Europe.
- The program typically adopts a multidisciplinary approach, integrating insights from political science, economics, sociology, and cultural studies. This approach is intended to provide students with a well-rounded understanding of the complexities of the region.
- The unique socio-political and economic dynamics of Southern Europe, especially in the context of the European Union, make this program particularly relevant.
- Comparisons between Southern European countries and other EU member states or regions are a part of the curriculum, offering a broader perspective on the region's distinctiveness.
- Opportunities for internships or fieldwork within Southern European countries are offered, allowing students to gain practical experience and develop professional networks.
- The program aims at enhancing skills such as critical thinking, research methodology, analytical writing, and enhances language proficiency.
- Graduates of EUROSUD are likely to find career opportunities in various fields such as international relations, government and public policy, non-governmental organizations, journalism, and academia, particularly those roles that require expertise in Southern Europe.
- EUROSUD programs involves collaborations with universities and institutions within and outside Southern Europe, offering students a chance to benefit from diverse academic perspectives and resources.

2

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

Methods and instruments

2. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

2.1. Introduction

To carry out the EDL analysis and shape recommendations based on the EUROSUD case-study, we carried out an iterative process, each step building on the previous and ensuring flexibility. Moreover, we built a methodology to allow us a systematic approach throughout. Despite having specific plans for both WP2 and WP3, a series of steps were carried out in parallel, as to ensure coherence of the overall approach and allow for the results of the EUROSUD pre-testing to be integrated in the testing of the 50+ CIVIS and partners' programs.

The overall process included:

1. **Pre-Test alignment:** We conducted a pre-test of the EUROSUD program. The aim was to assess its alignment against the European Degree Label criteria. Through this preliminary assessment, we could identify both areas of alignment and potential gaps that may exist.
2. **Criteria review:** To ensure clarity in the assessment process, we reviewed the established criteria and their associated descriptors. This step involved defining explicit indicators that would serve as benchmarks for the assessment.
3. **Expert engagement:** To enhance the credibility and depth of our approach, we actively engaged two key groups: the Core Experts Group and the Enlarged Experts Group. Their role was invaluable in offering insights and feedback which would shape the trajectory of our project.

2.2. Methodology and instruments

Throughout this process, we employed a range of methods and instruments, which included, among several informal discussions and formal meetings and conferences:

1. Workshops with the Core Experts Group and the Enlarged Experts Group
2. Interviews with EUROSUD team-members
3. Focus-groups with students and alumni of EUROSUD
4. A programme selection questionnaire
5. The SMARTT survey (pre-test)

The following section comprises the detailed presentation of the processes and instruments used during this first stage of the SMARTT project.

2.2.1. Workshops with the Core Experts Group and the Enlarged Experts Group

The objectives of engaging the Core Experts and Enlarged Experts working groups were to:

- O1.** Develop a **SMARTT vision** for the European Label **criteria**.
- O2.** Develop a **SMARTT proposal** for the **revised European label criteria**.
- O3.** Propose methods for applying the **SMARTT evaluation indicators**.
- O4.** **Identify, define, and describe** the corresponding SMARTT evaluation indicators.

The workshops and working groups' sessions were carried out both online and in person, starting with the first Core Experts Group meeting taking place during the 4-5th May 2023 Project kick-off meeting in Glasgow and with the Enlarged Experts Group taking place online on the 7th of June 2023. A shared working area was created on Google Drive and communication was carried out with representatives of both groups throughout the process. In the beginning, the Core Experts Group comprised 14 members and the Enlarged Experts Group 21 members. However, given the increased interest manifested from different representatives of CIVIS and partner institutions, the Enlarged Experts Group benefitted from input from 70+ experts. Workshops and working groups' sessions have been carried out monthly or on a case-by-case basis throughout the entire first stage of the SMARTT project.

The working procedure entailed several steps, ranging from (re)defining the criteria, identifying the key dimensions (areas to be measures), determining the potential data sources that could provide the information needed to measure the criteria), developing indicators, assessing their usefulness, testing, and refining, piloting the indicators on the EUROSUD program, transposing the indicators in the programme selection questionnaire. Several drafts were created and continuously revised based on feedback and experts' feedback and input. Experts' contributions were made both on a cluster level (as the criteria was structured into clusters) and on a general level, also addressing potential obstacles in the implementation of the EDL, as well as recommendations for its development and deployment.

2.2.2. Interviews with EUROSUD team-members

Interviews with the EUROSUD team-members were carried out along with informal formal conversations throughout this first stage of the process. A detailed description of the interviews is presented below.

A. General description of the interviews:

The interviews for EUROSUD team-members aim **to gather insights and perspectives from the individuals involved in the management and implementation of the EUROSUD programme**. These interviews provide an opportunity to explore the alignment of the criteria outlined in the European Degree Label with the EUROSUD program.

The interviews focus on gathering insights regarding the management of the EUROSUD program, coordination among partner institutions, student recruitment and support, curriculum development, quality assurance processes, and any future development plans in the context of the European Degree Label criteria.

The interviews were conducted individually, allowing each team-member to provide their input, reflections, and suggestions. The duration of each interview was estimated to be approximately **45 minutes**, depending on the interviewee's availability.

It is important to note that participation in the interview is voluntary, and all information shared during the discussion will be treated with strict confidentiality. The session was recorded for reference purposes only, ensuring accurate capture of participants' ideas and viewpoints. However, individual identities will remain anonymous.

B. Interview objectives:

1. Explore the team-members' **understanding of the European Degree Label** and its criteria.

2. Determine the extent to which the EUROSUD program **currently aligns** with the European Degree Label criteria, identifying areas of strength and potential gaps or areas for improvement.
3. Explore the team-members' perspectives on the **potential benefits and advantages** of aligning the EUROSUD program with the European Degree Label, considering the impact on program reputation, student opportunities, and stakeholder engagement.
4. Identify **challenges and obstacles** that may arise during the alignment process and gather insights on **possible solutions or strategies** to address them effectively.
5. Gather **recommendations** from team-members on how to further align the European Degree Label criteria to the EUROSUD program.

C. Structure of the interviews:

To ensure consistency and reliability, a similar set of questions will be used for each interview.

1. Background:

- a. A brief overview of the SMARTT project and its objectives, as well as its connection to the EUROSUD program.
- b. The European Degree Label and its purpose in promoting joint degree programs.
- c. The aim of this discussion is to gather interviewees' perspectives on the European Degree Label in the context of the EUROSUD program.

2. Role of interviewee:

Gathering information about the interviewee's background, their role in the EUROSUD program, and their areas of expertise.

3. Program Overview:

Exploring the processes involved in implementing the EUROSUD program, including coordination among partner institutions, administrative procedures, and decision-making mechanisms etc.

4. European Degree Label Criteria:

Exploring the interviewee's understanding and interpretation of the European Degree Label criteria and its relevance to the EUROSUD program.

5. Alignment Validation:

Validating the degree to which the European Label Criteria currently aligns with the EUROSUD program, examining the different clusters and criteria in detail.

6. Strengths and Challenges:

Identifying the strengths and areas of alignment between the European Degree Label criteria and the EUROSUD program, as well as any challenges or gaps that may exist.

7. Enhancing Alignment:

Discussing strategies and recommendations to further enhance the alignment of the EUROSUD program with the European Degree Label criteria.

8. Conclusion:

- a. Thank the interviewee for their valuable input and participation in the interview.
- b. Reiterate the importance of their perspectives in shaping the EUROSUD program and its alignment with the European Degree Label.
- c. Provide any additional information regarding the next steps in incorporating the European Degree Label criteria into the EUROSUD program and how the interviewee can stay informed about its progress.

2.2.3. Focus-groups with students and alumni of EUROSUD

A detailed description of the planned focus-groups is presented below.

A. General description of the focus-group:

The focus group is an interactive and collaborative discussion session that aims **to gather the perspectives and insights of students enrolled in the EUROSUD program regarding the European Degree Label and its relevance**. This session provides an opportunity for students to share their thoughts, experiences, and recommendations on how the European Degree Label criteria align with the EUROSUD program.

During the focus group, participants will engage in open and honest conversations facilitated by a moderator. The session will explore various aspects of the European Degree Label, including its criteria clusters, potential benefits, challenges, and implications for the EUROSUD program. Students' perspectives on the existing alignment between the EUROSUD program and the European Degree Label will be sought, as well as their suggestions for further improvement.

The focus group will be a safe and respectful environment where participants can express their opinions and contribute to the ongoing development of the EUROSUD program. **The session will be conducted online, and it will last approximately 1 hour.**

It is important to note that participation in the focus group is voluntary, and all information shared during the discussion will be treated with strict confidentiality. The session may be recorded for reference purposes only, ensuring accurate capture of participants' ideas and viewpoints. However, individual identities will remain anonymous.

B. Focus-group objectives:

1. Explore students' understanding and familiarity with the European Degree Label and its criteria.
2. Gather students' perspectives on the relevance and importance of the European Degree Label within the context of the EUROSUD program.

3. Identify students' perceptions of the potential benefits and challenges associated with implementing the European Degree Label criteria in the EUROSUD program.
4. Assess students' expectations and suggestions regarding the alignment of the EUROSUD program with the European Degree Label criteria.
5. Obtain feedback on how well the EUROSUD program currently addresses the European Degree Label criteria and identify areas for improvement.
6. Explore students' experiences and examples of how the EUROSUD program already aligns with the European Degree Label criteria.
7. Encourage students to share their recommendations and suggestions for enhancing the EUROSUD program's alignment with the European Degree Label.
8. Gain insights into how the European Degree Label can contribute to improving the quality and recognition of the EUROSUD program.
9. Provide an opportunity for students to discuss their expectations and concerns regarding the implementation of the European Degree Label criteria.
10. Contribute to the ongoing development and optimization of the EUROSUD program by incorporating student perspectives on the European Degree Label and the SMARTT project.

C. Structure of the focus-group:

1. Background:

- d. A brief overview of the SMARTT project and its objectives, as well as its connection to the EUROSUD program.
- e. The European Degree Label and its purpose in promoting joint degree programs.
- f. The aim of this discussion is to gather students' perspectives on the European Degree Label in the context of the EUROSUD program.

2. Understanding the European Degree Label:

- a. The European Degree Label criteria clusters outlined in the SMARTT project (refer to the provided information).
- b. Familiarity with the European Degree Label and its specific criteria.
- c. Initial thoughts or perceptions of the European Degree Label and its potential impact on their academic journey.

3. Relevance to the EUROSUD Program:

- a. The European Degree Label alignment with the goals and values of the EUROSUD program.
- b. Students' perspectives on the specific European Degree Label criteria clusters and their relevance to the EUROSUD program.
- c. Students' expectations regarding the implementation of the European Degree Label criteria in the EUROSUD program.

4. Benefits and Challenges:

- a. Potential benefits of implementing the European Degree Label criteria in the EUROSUD program.
- b. Concerns or challenges that students anticipate in meeting the European Degree Label criteria.
- c. Possible strategies or initiatives that could help overcome these challenges and maximize the benefits of the European Degree Label.

5. Enhancing Quality and Recognition:

- a. The European Degree Label potential contribution to enhancing the quality and recognition of the EUROSUD program.
- b. Students' perspectives on how the European Degree Label can strengthen the program's reputation and improve opportunities for graduates.
- c. Specific actions or improvements that can be implemented to align the EUROSUD program with the European Degree Label criteria effectively.

6. Student Experiences and Feedback:

- a. Students' reflection on their experiences within the EUROSUD program and feedback on how well the program currently addresses the European Degree Label criteria.
- b. Specific examples or instances where the EUROSUD program already aligns with the European Degree Label criteria or where improvements could be made.
- c. Suggestions or recommendations for further enhancing the EUROSUD program's alignment with the European Degree Label.

7. Conclusion:

- a. Thank the students for their valuable input and participation in the focus group discussion.
- b. Reiterate the importance of their perspectives in shaping the EUROSUD program and its alignment with the European Degree Label.
- c. Provide any additional information regarding the next steps in incorporating the European Degree Label criteria into the EUROSUD program and how the students can stay informed about its progress.

2.2.4. Programme selection questionnaire

The programme selection questionnaire was aimed at validating the European Degree Label criteria against the selected CIVIS and partners' programs. Apart from being used as a selection tool for programs that would later participate in the SMARTT survey, the selection questionnaire also allowed us to map the existing programs in CIVIS in relation to the EDL.

Objectives:

1. Provide evidence-based insights to inform decision-making processes regarding the EDL.
2. Evaluate the extent to which the European Degree Label (EDL) criteria aligns with the selected programs.
3. Validate the relevance of the EDL criteria in the context of the selected programs.

4. Identify the strengths and weaknesses of each EDL criterion/cluster in relation to the selected programs.
5. Identify opportunities to better align program elements and the EDL criteria to further improve the quality of education and student experiences.
6. Identify best practices and lessons learned from selected joint degree programs or initiatives that can inform the EDL.
7. Provide feedback on the applicability of the EDL criteria in the context of the selected programs.
8. Identify the potential benefits of better aligning the selected programs and the EDL criteria.
9. Identify the potential drawbacks of better aligning the selected programs and the EDL criteria.
10. Explore attitudes and perception of CIVIS members and partners with regards to the EDL.

The detailed approach, including the list of criteria and the score-based selection process is described in *Deliverable 4: Report of Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis*.

2.2.5. The SMARTT survey (pre-test)

As previously mentioned, due to the iterative nature of the process, WP2 and WP3 overlapped (September – November), to ensure cohesion of the overall project. Therefore, the WP2 and WP3 leaders developed the general approach for the SMARTT survey, as well as the draft to allow for pre-testing on EUROSUD. The general approach and the draft survey are presented below, solely for the purpose of discussing the pre-testing on EUROSUD. The complete analysis of the survey in relation to the selected programmes will be presented in the final report. The detailed approach is described in *Deliverable 4: Report of Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis*.

Objectives

The survey is aimed at validating the European Degree Label criteria against the selected CIVIS and partners' programs:

1. Provide evidence-based insights to inform decision-making processes regarding the EDL.
2. Evaluate the extent to which the European Degree Label (EDL) criteria aligns with the selected programs.
3. Validate the relevance of the EDL criteria in the context of the selected programs.
4. Identify the strengths and weaknesses of each EDL criterion/cluster in relation to the selected programs.
5. Identify opportunities to better align program elements and the EDL criteria to further improve the quality of education and student experiences.
6. Identify best practices and lessons learned from selected joint degree programs or initiatives that can inform the EDL.
7. Provide feedback on the applicability of the EDL criteria in the context of the selected programs.
8. Identify the potential benefits of better aligning the selected programs and the EDL criteria.

9. Identify the potential drawbacks of better aligning the selected programs and the EDL criteria.
10. Explore attitudes and perception of CIVIS members and partners with regards to the EDL.

By addressing these objectives, the project aims to:

- provide a comprehensive assessment of the alignment between the selected programs and the EDL criteria,
- offer insights and recommendations for EDL development
- contribute to the continuous improvement of joint degree programs in higher education.

General approach

The survey is specifically addressed to representatives of the selected CIVIS and partners' programs. It aims to gather quantitative and qualitative data regarding the European Degree Label (EDL) criteria from the perspective of the selected programs. The purpose of the survey is to validate the EDL criteria through the perspective of the selected programs. The purpose of the survey is **NOT** that of evaluating the selected programs.

As the questionnaire used for the selection of the programs addressed the partial/full alignment of the programs with the EDL, the SMARTT survey attempts to analyse the EDL through specific criteria, attempting to identify its strong points and areas of improvement (while not duplicating the effort of the program selection questionnaire).

For clarity, the SMARTT survey will use the word descriptors to refer to the EDL criteria.

Participants

- Representatives of EUROSUD (pre-testing)
- Representatives of the 50+ selected CIVIS programs (based on the selection procedure)
- Representatives of the project partners' selected programs (based on a nomination process).

The primary aim of this survey is to gather valuable insights into the application and relevance of the European Degree Label (EDL) criteria within existing joint degree programs. Through the responses, we seek to understand how the EDL criteria align with the specificities and objectives of selected programmes, and how these criteria might be refined or enhanced to better support the development and recognition of high-quality joint degree programs across Europe.

The survey can be filled out by representatives from all partner institutions participating in the selected or nominated joint degree programs. This will allow for an analysis of different perceptions of the EDL within the same program. However, for the final reporting purposes, results will be based on the program's main institutional coordinators' input.

To draft the SMARTT Survey, a series of meta-criteria were identified, which helped guide the survey questions: clarity, specificity, relevance, comprehensiveness, measurability, consistency, feasibility, differentiation, applicability, adaptability, alignment, ethics.

The survey sections were developed as follows:

1. Section 1: General information

2. Section 2: EDL criteria validation against the program
3. Section 3: Attitudes and Perceptions
4. Section 4: Final considerations

Insofar Section 3 is concerned, the survey uses a theoretical predictive framework based on Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen 1991)². This section specifically looks at how attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control (PBC) affect the real and intended behaviours of important stakeholders when it comes to the adoption of EDL.

The full survey comprises of 10 open-ended questions and 54 questions with multiple choice responses on a five-point rating system.

- the first 12 and the last 2 questions refer to general information;
- 25 questions evaluate the participants' opinions about the EDL, based on 7 pre-established meta-criteria: clarity, relevance, specificity, measurability, flexibility, readiness, and consistency;
- 26 multiple-answer questions relate to the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) framework: 6 questions about Attitude (AT), 6 about Subjective Norms (SN), 9 about Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC), and 5 about Utilization Intention (UI).

The survey is distributed electronically using SoSci Survey³, a platform that ensures data privacy and ease of access for respondents. The initial versions of the SMARTT survey were presented in a workshop dedicated to both the Core Experts Group and the Enlarged Experts Group and a preliminary version was made available for the experts to share their feedback and input. Also, representatives of EUROSUD provided feedback and filled-out the survey in a pre-test phase, allowing for preliminary results and input for a final version of the SMARTT Survey.

2.2.6. Results

Based on the data collected, this report includes an integrated analysis drawing from:

- The results of the Core and Enlarged Experts Groups' working sessions/workshops.
- The results of the pre-testing of EDL criteria against EUROSUD.
- The results of the selection questionnaire results based on EUROSUD.
- The results of the pre-testing of the survey against EUROSUD.
- Results from the:
 1. Focus-groups with students and alumni of EUROSUD
 2. Interviews with team-members affiliated with EUROSUD.
 3. Consultations and workshops with:
 - The Core Experts Group
 - The Enlarged Experts Group

² Ajzen, I. (1991). The theory of planned behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes* 50(2), 179-211. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0749-5978\(91\)90020-T](https://doi.org/10.1016/0749-5978(91)90020-T)

³ <https://www.soscisurvey.de/>

The roadmap of activities and milestones also includes:

1. An ongoing process of selecting CIVIS and partner programs using the previously mentioned selection questionnaire (piloted on EUROSUD)
2. The draft survey underwent testing against EUROSUD and feedback was used to finalize the survey.
3. Results derived from the initial phase (concerning EUROSUD) were integrated in the WP3.
4. Continued collaboration with the Core Experts Group and the Enlarged Experts Group for their feedback and insights.
5. The next stage will involve rigorous data collection and subsequent analysis based on the survey responses from all chosen programs.
6. Based on the pilot test with EUROSUD, results and recommendations were compiled.

3

RESULTS AND ANALYSES

EUROSUD Data

3. RESULTS AND ANALYSES

3.1. EUROSUD Data

3.1.1. Structure of the European Degree Label criteria

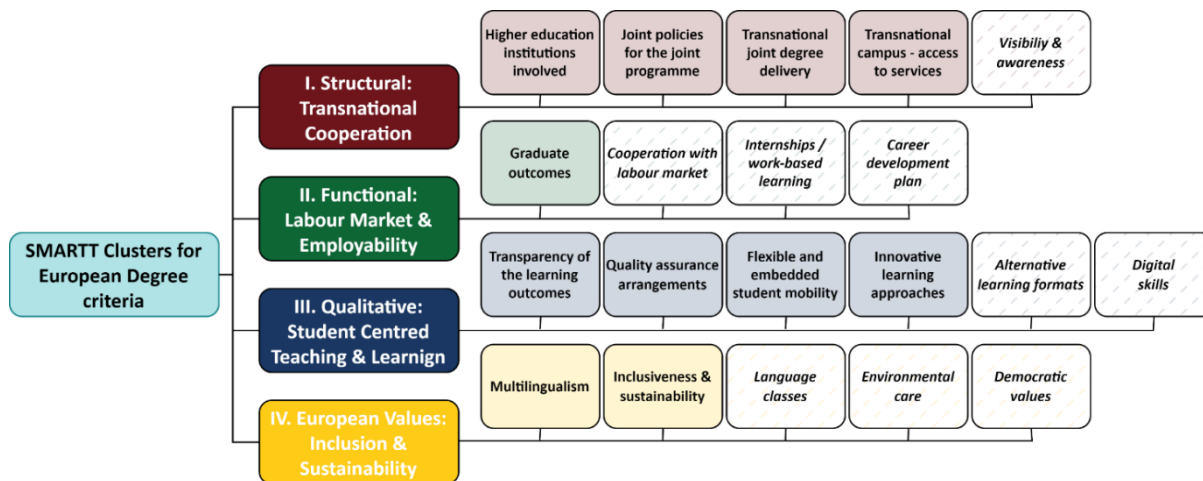
Following pre-testing of the EDL criteria on EUROSUD one recommendation is **to organize the EDL criteria into corresponding thematic clusters**, to ensure more structure, logic and to provide a clearer and more focused overview of the areas that need to be addressed for programs interested in obtaining the EDL, enhancing effectiveness in both understanding and application of the EDL.

More specifically, this restructuring of the EDL into clusters was based on the following aspects:

1. **Ease of understanding:** Thematic clusters allow for a break-down of the information into more digestible sections. This makes it easier for stakeholders to understand and assess the criteria.
2. **Cohesiveness:** Thematic clusters create a sense of cohesiveness. Stakeholders can see how individual criteria relate to each other within the broader theme, providing context and meaning.
3. **Efficient assessment:** When reviewing or (self)assessing against the criteria, having them organized by theme can streamline the process. Stakeholders can tackle one theme at a time, ensuring a thorough and systematic approach.
4. **Highlighting priority areas:** Organizing criteria into thematic clusters can also help in emphasizing certain priority areas or themes. By doing so, the European Degree Label can signal to stakeholders which areas are of paramount importance and need particular attention.
5. **Flexibility in implementation:** Programs looking to align with the European Degree Label criteria might find it easier to implement changes or enhancements in phases based on thematic clusters.
6. **Facilitates discussion & feedback:** When stakeholders or expert groups need to discuss the criteria, having them clustered by theme can facilitate more focused discussions.
7. **Supports development:** As the European Degree Label criteria evolve over time, having them organized into themes can make the development process more efficient. If updates or changes are needed in a particular area, they can be addressed within the respective thematic cluster.
8. **Communication and awareness:** Information that is organized systematically is often easier to recall. Thus, stakeholders are more likely to remember the criteria when they are grouped into thematic clusters.

Therefore, the proposal is reflected in the following structure:

- I. Structural: Transnational Cooperation
- II. Functional: Labor Market & Employability
- III. Qualitative: Student Centred Teaching & Learning
- IV. European Values: Inclusion & Sustainability



The EDL criteria were assigned to a specific cluster, based on an overlapping theme. The mandatory criteria are reflected in the cluster's corresponding colour, while the optional criteria are represented through the white-background boxes.

3.1.2. Structure of the European Degree Label criteria

While having criteria is essential, specific indicators have the potential to make them more actionable, measurable, and meaningful. Indicators serve as the bridge between more abstract principles and tangible outcomes, ensuring that the European Degree Label criteria are effectively implemented and assessed. The section below also includes proposals for additional or alternative formulations of the definitions for each criterion and/or proposals to combine overlapping criteria to reduce redundancy (these will be detailed in the Final Report).

Therefore, based on the definitions of individual criteria, we propose the inclusion of **a set of specific indicators** to help better define the EDL, as follows:

Structural: Transnational Cooperation

I.1. Higher education institutions involved

1. Definition of the criterion:

- The joint programme is jointly designed and delivered by at least 2 higher education institutions from at least 2 different EU Member States
- Addition/alternative/recommendation: joint co-creation, design, delivery and administration

2. Indicators

a. Number of Participating Institutions:

- Total number of higher education institutions involved in the joint program.
- Number of institutions from EU Member States participating in the joint program.
- The types of full and associate partners.

b. Country Representation:

- Number of different EU Member States represented among the participating institutions.
- Percentage of institutions from EU Member States relative to the total number of participating institutions.

- c. Program Collaboration:
 - Existence of a formal agreement or memorandum of understanding (MOU) among the participating institutions for joint program design and delivery.
 - Degree of participation from each institution in program design and delivery (e.g., curriculum development, teaching, assessment).
- d. Student Mobility:
 - Number of students participating in the joint program from each participating institution.
 - Percentage of students who undertake mobility periods at institutions located in different EU Member States.

I. 2. Transnational joint degree delivery

1. Definition of the criterion:

- The joint programme leads to the award of a joint degree or multiple degrees.
- Dissertations are co-evaluated by supervisors or a committee with members from at least 2 different institutions located in 2 different countries.
- Addition/alternative/recommendation: clarifying the meaning of `transnational` and defining joint and multiple degrees, also taking into account double, dual, mixed degrees (as some of these partially meet the EDL criteria).

2. Indicators

- a. Degree types:
 - Number of different degree types awarded upon program completion (e.g., single degree, joint degree, multiple degrees).
 - Percentage of graduates receiving a joint degree or multiple degrees.
- b. Documentation of degrees:
 - Existence of official documentation (e.g., diploma, certificate) specifying the joint or multiple degrees awarded.
 - Clear labeling of the degree(s) received, indicating their joint or multiple nature.
- c. Recognition by authorities:
 - Confirmation of the joint or multiple degree(s) by relevant educational authorities or accreditation bodies.
 - Inclusion of the program in official registries of recognized joint degree programs.
- d. Credit split:
 - Equitable distribution of number of ECTS between the providers.
- e. Supervising structure:
 - Percentage of dissertations with supervisors from at least two different institutions.
 - Frequency of joint supervision as compared to single-institution supervision.
- f. International committee:
 - Frequency of dissertation evaluation committees with members from at least two different countries.

- Compliance with this requirement as a percentage of all dissertations submitted.

I. 3. Joint policies for the joint programme

1. Definition of the criterion:

- The higher education institutions involved have joint policies for admission, selection, supervision, monitoring, assessment, and recognition procedures for the joint study programme.
- Addition/alternative/recommendation:

2. Indicators

a. Admission policies:

- Existence of a joint admission policy that outlines the criteria, procedures, and requirements for student admission into the joint program.
- Degree of alignment among participating institutions in terms of admission criteria and processes.

b. Selection procedures:

- Presence of a joint selection procedure that defines how students are selected for the joint program.
- Degree of consistency in selection criteria and processes among participating institutions.

c. Supervision and monitoring:

- Availability of joint policies regarding the supervision and monitoring of students' progress throughout the program.
- Establishment of mechanisms for cross-institutional supervision and monitoring of students.

d. Assessment policies:

- Existence of joint policies governing the assessment of students' academic performance, including grading criteria and evaluation methods.
- Degree of coherence in assessment practices among participating institutions.

e. Recognition procedures:

- Presence of joint recognition procedures for the joint study program, specifying how the degrees or qualifications will be awarded and recognized by the participating institutions.
- Level of harmonization in recognition practices among participating institutions.

f. Transparency and accessibility:

- Availability of clear, accessible, and widely communicated joint policies to students, faculty, and stakeholders regarding admission, selection, supervision, monitoring, assessment, and recognition procedures.

I.4. Transnational campus – access to services

1. Definition of the criterion:

- The joint programme provides enrolled students, regardless of their location, with seamless and free access to the participating HEI's services such as e.g.,

IT services, shared infrastructure, and facilities, (online) library services, faculty development and support, academic guidance and psychological counselling, career advice/mentoring, alumni systems.

- Addition/alternative/recommendation: include `equal access`; clarify `faculty development` in this context.

2. Indicators

- a. Availability of accessible IT services:
 - Existence of integrated IT services accessible to all enrolled students, allowing them to access online resources, platforms, and communication tools.
- b. Shared infrastructure and facilities:
 - Accessibility to shared physical infrastructure and facilities across participating institutions, ensuring students have equitable access to essential resources like laboratories, workshops, and study spaces.
- c. Online Library Services:
 - Availability of an online library system that provides students with access to a comprehensive collection of digital resources, academic journals, e-books, and research materials.
- d. Faculty development and support:
 - Presence of faculty development programs that support teaching staff from all participating institutions in delivering high-quality education within the joint program.
- e. Academic Guidance Services:
 - Availability of academic guidance services that offer academic advising, mentoring, and support to students, regardless of their location within the joint program.
- f. Psychological Counseling Services:
 - Provision of psychological counseling services that are accessible to enrolled students, ensuring their mental health and well-being are supported.
- g. Career advice and Mentoring:
 - Existence of career advice and mentoring programs that assist students in career planning and development, and are open to all participants.
- h. Alumni systems:
 - Maintenance of an alumni system that fosters a sense of belonging and community among graduates of the joint program, regardless of their originating institutions.
- i. Seamless access:
 - Assessment of the ease with which enrolled students can access the mentioned services across different participating institutions.
- j. Equity of access:
 - Measurement of the equity and fairness in access to services among all students, including those studying remotely or at different partner institutions.

I.5. Visibility & awareness (optional)

1. Definition of the criterion:

- The higher education institutions offering the joint study programme conducts joint promotion and awareness-raising activities to ensure visibility of the joint programme and provide the necessary information about it for students and other relevant stakeholders such as future employers.
- Addition/alternative/recommendation: `prospective students`; enhance this criterion by making it mandatory.

2. Indicators

a. Joint marketing campaigns:

- The presence of joint marketing campaigns, advertisements, or promotional materials that highlight the joint program's unique features and benefits.

b. Online presence and Social Media:

- Active and coordinated online presence, including official websites and social media platforms, to share information, updates, and success stories about the joint program.

c. Information accessibility:

- Accessibility and availability of comprehensive information about the joint program, its curriculum, admission requirements, faculty, and contact details through official websites.

d. Student testimonials and alumni engagement:

- Existence of student testimonials, success stories, or alumni engagement initiatives that showcase the positive experiences and outcomes of the joint program.

e. Engagement with future employers:

- Engagement with future employers, including businesses and sectors relevant to the joint program's field of study, to communicate the program's value and align its offerings with industry needs.

f. Participation in education fairs and events:

- Active participation in national and international education fairs, conferences, and events to promote the joint program and engage with potential students and partners.

g. Visibility in relevant publications:

- Presence of the joint program in relevant publications, rankings, and reports that assess the quality and impact of higher education offerings.

h. Feedback mechanisms:

- Establishment of feedback mechanisms to gather insights from students, alumni, and other stakeholders about the effectiveness of awareness-raising activities.

i. Monitoring and Evaluation:

- Implementation of a monitoring and evaluation system to assess the reach and impact of awareness-raising initiatives and make improvements as needed.

j. Collaboration with other institutions:

- Collaboration with other higher education institutions or organizations to jointly promote the program and leverage their networks and resources for increased visibility.

II.1. Graduate outcomes

1. Definition of the criterion:

- The joint programme has a system to monitor graduate outcomes. This system can be at the level of the programme or institutional level(s). If possible, the content is aligned to the survey content of EUROGRADUATE.
- Addition/alternative/recommendation: Potential to include an employment criterion and/or indicator (1 year after graduation) for programs with at least one graduate cohort.

2. Indicators

1. Outcome monitoring system:

- Existence of a structured system to monitor and assess graduate outcomes from the joint program. This system includes data collection, analysis, and reporting mechanisms.

2. Frequency of outcome assessment:

- Regularity of outcome assessments, indicating whether data on graduate outcomes are collected and reviewed on an ongoing basis (e.g., annually, biennially).

3. Alignment with EUROGRADUATE Survey:

- Alignment of the content and focus of the graduate outcome monitoring system with the survey content of EUROGRADUATE, ensuring compatibility and comparability of data.

4. Types of outcomes monitored:

- Specification of the types of graduate outcomes monitored, such as employment rates, further education pursuits, career advancement, and satisfaction with the program.

5. Institutional or program level:

- Clarification of whether the graduate outcome monitoring system operates at the institutional level, program level, or both, with well-defined responsibilities for data collection and analysis.

6. Feedback integration:

- Integration of feedback from graduate outcome assessments into program improvements, curriculum updates, and quality enhancement initiatives.

7. Reporting and dissemination:

- Availability of reports or summaries on graduate outcomes that are shared with relevant stakeholders, including students, faculty, and external entities.

8. Use of data for decision-making:

- Demonstration of how data on graduate outcomes are used to inform decision-making processes, program enhancements, and strategic planning.

9. Longitudinal data collection:

- Ability to collect longitudinal data on graduate outcomes, tracking graduates' progress and achievements over time.

10. Survey participation rates:

- The extent to which graduates from the joint program actively participate in the graduate outcome surveys, reflecting the effectiveness of data collection efforts.

II.2. Cooperation with the labour market (optional)

1. Definition of the criterion:

- The joint programme supports future labour market needs and/or includes cooperation with businesses and sectors in its curriculum.
- Addition/alternative/recommendation: enhancing the labour market connection – mandatory criterion.

2. Indicators

1. Labor market alignment:

- Demonstrated alignment of the joint program's curriculum with current and projected labor market needs, reflecting an understanding of industry demands.

2. Business engagement:

- Evidence of active engagement with businesses and industry sectors, including collaborations, partnerships, or advisory boards involved in curriculum development.

3. Internships and work placements:

- Inclusion of internships, work placements, or cooperative education opportunities within the joint program, providing students with practical experience in real workplace settings.

4. Employer feedback integration:

- Incorporation of feedback from employers and industry partners into curriculum updates and adjustments, demonstrating responsiveness to labor market demands.

5. Employment outcomes:

- Monitoring and reporting of graduate employment outcomes, including job placement rates, job types, and industries entered upon graduation.

6. Career Services:

- Availability of dedicated career services or counseling support for students within the joint program to facilitate job placement and career development.

7. Industry guest lecturers:

- Involvement of industry professionals as guest lecturers, speakers, or mentors in the program, offering real-world insights to students.

8. Industry projects:

- Integration of industry projects, case studies, or real-world challenges into the curriculum to provide students with practical problem-solving experiences.

9. Industry recognition:

- Recognition or awards received by the joint program for its efforts in preparing graduates for successful integration into the labor market.

10. Monitoring labor market trends:

- Evidence that the joint program continuously monitors labor market trends and adjusts its curriculum accordingly to ensure ongoing alignment with industry needs.

II.3. Internships / work-based learning* (optional)

1. Definition of the criterion:

- The joint programme provides opportunities for international professional internships/work-based learning recognised through the award of ECTS.
- Addition/alternative/recommendation: enhancing the labour market connection – mandatory criterion; potential for connecting this criterion to the `cooperation with the labour market` criterion (mandatory).

2. Indicators

1. Internship availability:

- Presence of international professional internships or work-based learning opportunities within the joint program's curriculum.

2. ECTS recognition:

- Documentation and confirmation that internships or work-based learning experiences are recognized and awarded ECTS credits towards the joint program.

3. International opportunities:

- Evidence of internships or work-based learning experiences that offer international exposure, such as placements in different countries or collaboration with international organizations.

4. Diversity of fields:

- A variety of fields and industries are represented in the available internship or work-based learning options, ensuring relevance to students with diverse career interests.

5. Internship supervision:

- Mechanisms in place for the supervision and evaluation of students during their internships or work-based learning experiences, including feedback loops with host organizations.

6. Learning outcomes integration:

- Documentation of how the learning outcomes from internships or work-based learning experiences are integrated into the joint program's curriculum to enhance students' academic and practical development.

7. Student participation:

- Data indicating the percentage of joint program students who participate in international internships or work-based learning experiences.

8. Quality Assurance:

- Measures taken to ensure the quality and relevance of international internships or work-based learning experiences, such as evaluations, assessments, or partnerships with reputable organizations.

9. Student assessments:

- Evidence of assessments or evaluations of students' performance during their internships or work-based learning experiences, including methods for grading or feedback.

10. Integration of ECTS:

- A clear process for integrating ECTS credits earned through internships or work-based learning into students' academic transcripts and program completion requirements.

II.4. Career development plan* (optional)

1. Definition of the criterion:

- The joint programme includes a career development plan devised with the candidate and/or exposure to the non-academic sector (such as internships, seminars, networking).
- Addition/alternative/recommendation: ensuring balance between non-academic sector opportunities and academic/research career paths in supporting the students' career development.

2. Indicators

1. Existence of Career Development Plan:

- Confirmation of the presence of a career development plan within the joint program's curriculum.

2. Collaboration with candidates:

- Evidence of collaboration with candidates (students) in the development of their individual career development plans, including their career goals and aspirations.

3. Non-Academic sector exposure:

- Documentation of opportunities provided to students for exposure to the non-academic sector, such as internships, seminars, workshops, or networking events.

4. Alignment with career goals:

- Evaluation of the extent to which the career development plan aligns with each student's individual career goals and interests.

5. Incorporation into curriculum:

- Details on how the career development plan is integrated into the joint program's curriculum, including specific courses, workshops, or modules dedicated to career development.

6. Access to resources:

- Availability of resources and support services, such as career advisors, mentors, or career centers, to assist students in creating and implementing their career development plans.

7. Networking opportunities:

- Evidence of networking opportunities provided to students, including access to industry professionals, alumni, and relevant organizations.

8. Internship opportunities:

- Availability and accessibility of internships or work experiences related to students' career interests and objectives.

9. Feedback and Evaluation:

- Methods for collecting feedback from students about the effectiveness and relevance of the career development plan and non-academic sector exposure.

10. Employment outcomes:

- Tracking and reporting on the employment outcomes and career success of graduates who have completed the career development plan and engaged with the non-academic sector.

III. Qualitative: Student Centred Teaching & Learning

III.1. Transparency of the learning outcomes

1. Definition of the criterion:

- The joint programme is described in ECTS.
- A joint Diploma Supplement is issued to the student at the end of the joint study programme intended learning outcomes.
- Addition/alternative/recommendation: clarifying the meaning of `intended learning outcomes` and their visibility to both applicants and employers.

2. Indicators

1. Documentation in ECTS:

- Verification of whether the joint program is documented in ECTS credits, including the total number of ECTS credits required for program completion.

2. Alignment with Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs):

- Assessment of the extent to which the ECTS documentation aligns with the intended learning outcomes (ILOs) of the joint program.

3. Issuance of Joint Diploma Supplement:

- Confirmation of whether a joint Diploma Supplement is issued to students upon completion of the joint study program.

4. Content of Diploma Supplement:

- Review of the content of the joint Diploma Supplement to ensure it includes essential information related to the program, such as program structure, learning outcomes, and institutions involved.

5. Transparency of Learning Outcomes:

- Evaluation of the clarity and transparency of the learning outcomes as described in both the ECTS documentation and the joint Diploma Supplement.

6. Accessibility to students:

- Assessment of the accessibility of the ECTS documentation and the joint Diploma Supplement to students, ensuring they have easy access to these documents.

7. Alignment with European Standards:

- Confirmation of whether the content and format of the joint Diploma Supplement adhere to European standards and guidelines for higher education documentation.

8. Verification of Learning Outcomes:

- Verification of the procedures in place to ensure that students have achieved the intended learning outcomes as stated in the joint Diploma Supplement.

9. Utilization by graduates:

- Survey or feedback from program graduates regarding their utilization of the joint Diploma Supplement in their academic or professional endeavors.

10. Alignment with Quality Assurance practices:

- Assessment of whether the joint program's documentation practices align with quality assurance practices and standards for higher education.

III.2. Quality assurance arrangements

1. Definition of the criterion:

- Internal and external QA is conducted in accordance with the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG). The programme, the study field or the institutions are accredited/evaluated by an EQAR-registered agency.
- If external quality assurance is required at programme level in the countries involved, the transnational programme should be accredited/evaluated preferably using the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes (EA).
- Addition/alternative/recommendation:

2. Indicators

1. Compliance with ESG:

- Verification of whether the internal quality assurance (QA) processes of the joint program align with the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG).

2. External QA accreditation:

- Confirmation of whether the joint program, study field, or participating institutions have received accreditation or evaluation by an EQAR-registered agency.

3. Accreditation level:

- Assessment of the accreditation or evaluation level achieved by the joint program, study field, or institutions, indicating the extent to which they meet quality standards.

4. Use of European Approach (EA):

- Confirmation of whether the transnational joint program has utilized the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programs (EA) for its external quality assurance, where required by national regulations.

5. Documentation of QA procedures:

- Review of the documentation of the internal and external QA procedures, including evidence of compliance with ESG.

6. Frequency of QA activities:

- Assessment of the frequency and regularity of internal and external QA activities, ensuring ongoing monitoring and improvement.

7. Transparency of QA results:

- Evaluation of the transparency and accessibility of QA results to students, faculty, and relevant stakeholders.

8. QA responsiveness:

- Assessment of the joint program's responsiveness to QA findings and recommendations, including evidence of continuous improvement efforts.

9. Stakeholder engagement in QA:

- Feedback from students, faculty, and external stakeholders regarding their engagement and participation in the QA processes.

10. Alignment with National Regulations:

- Confirmation of alignment with national regulations related to external quality assurance requirements at the program level in the countries involved.

11. Efficiency of QA processes:

- Evaluation of the efficiency and effectiveness of QA processes, including their impact on program quality and enhancement.

III.3. Flexible and embedded student mobility arrangements

1. Definition of the criterion:

- The joint programme includes at least 1 period of student physical mobility at another partner institution of at least 30 ECTS.
- The joint programme includes a total of at least 6 months of physical mobility at another partner institution (including secondment).
- If applicable, in addition to physical mobility, the joint programme includes opportunities for doctoral candidates to participate in one or more of these activities at another partner institution: teaching activities, international events, international conferences, joint research scientific projects between partner institutions, joint research publications with researchers from partner institutions.
- Addition/alternative/recommendation: clarifying `prospective doctoral candidates`; enhance the `virtual mobility` component.

2. Indicators

1. Student mobility periods:

- Verification of whether the joint program offers at least one period of student physical mobility at another partner institution, with a minimum of 30 ECTS credits.

2. Total student mobility duration:

- Assessment of the total duration of student physical mobility across partner institutions, confirming that it meets the minimum requirement of at least 6 months (including secondment).

3. Doctoral candidate activities:

- Evaluation of the inclusion of opportunities for doctoral candidates to engage in activities such as teaching, participation in international events, attendance at international conferences, collaboration in joint research scientific projects, and contributing to joint research publications with researchers from partner institutions.

4. Mobility planning and documentation:

- Review of documentation demonstrating the planning and implementation of student and doctoral candidate mobility, including mobility agreements, learning agreements, and related administrative processes.

5. Integration of mobility:

- Assessment of how student mobility is integrated into the joint program's curriculum and learning outcomes, ensuring that it enhances the educational experience.

6. Support for mobility:

- Feedback from students and doctoral candidates regarding the support provided for mobility, including information, financial assistance, and logistical assistance.

7. Monitoring of mobility activities:

- Confirmation of the existence of a monitoring system for student and doctoral candidate mobility activities, including tracking progress and ensuring successful completion.

8. Diversity of mobility activities:
 - Evaluation of the diversity and range of mobility activities offered, including their relevance to the joint program's goals and objectives.
9. Alignment with Learning Outcomes:
 - Verification of the alignment of mobility activities with the intended learning outcomes of the joint program, ensuring that they contribute to the development of key competencies.
10. Feedback and Evaluation:
 - Collection of feedback and evaluation from students, doctoral candidates, and partner institutions on the effectiveness and impact of mobility arrangements on their academic and professional development.

III.4. Innovative learning approaches

1. Definition of the criterion:

- The joint programme includes embedded interdisciplinary and/or transdisciplinary and/or inter-sectoral components using student-centered and/or challenged-based approaches.
- Addition/alternative/recommendation:

2. Indicators

1. Interdisciplinary/Transdisciplinary components:

- Verification of the presence of interdisciplinary and/or transdisciplinary components within the joint program's curriculum.

2. Inter-sectoral components:

- Assessment of the inclusion of inter-sectoral components that bridge academia with other sectors (e.g., industry, government, non-profits).

3. Student-centered learning:

- Evaluation of the extent to which the joint program adopts student-centered learning methodologies, such as active learning, problem-solving, and self-directed learning.

4. Challenge-based learning:

- Confirmation of the integration of challenge-based learning approaches, where students engage with real-world challenges and problem-solving.

5. Curriculum integration:

- Assessment of how these innovative learning approaches are integrated into the overall curriculum of the joint program.

6. Learning Outcomes alignment:

- Verification of the alignment of interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary, and inter-sectoral components with the intended learning outcomes of the joint program.

7. Assessment methods:

- Evaluation of the assessment methods used to measure the effectiveness of innovative learning approaches and their impact on student learning and competencies.

8. Student engagement:

- Feedback from students regarding their engagement with interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary, and inter-sectoral components and their perceived value in enhancing their learning experiences.
9. Faculty training:
- Confirmation of faculty training and development initiatives aimed at facilitating the implementation of innovative learning approaches.
10. Collaboration with external partners:
- Assessment of collaborations with external partners (e.g., industry, organizations) in designing and delivering innovative learning experiences.
11. Innovation assessment:
- Evaluation of the extent to which the joint program encourages and supports innovation in teaching and learning.
12. Student projects/challenges:
- Identification of student projects or challenges that demonstrate the application of innovative learning approaches to real-world problems.

III.5. Alternative learning formats (optional)

1. Definition of the criterion:

- In addition to physical mobility, the joint programme includes additional formats of transnational learning activities with partner higher education institutions (e.g., online or blended, in the format of regular or intensive courses, summer/winter schools).
- Addition/alternative/recommendation:

2. Indicators

1. Online/Blended course availability:
 - Verification of the availability of online or blended courses within the joint program's curriculum.
2. Course catalog:
 - Confirmation of the existence of a course catalog or list of alternative learning formats offered by partner institutions.
3. Course diversity:
 - Assessment of the diversity of alternative learning formats, including regular or intensive courses, summer/winter schools, or other transnational learning activities.
4. Credit transfer:
 - Evaluation of the mechanisms in place for credit transfer and recognition of achievements for students participating in alternative learning formats.
5. Accessibility:
 - Feedback from students on the accessibility and ease of participation in online or blended courses and other alternative learning activities.
6. Curriculum integration:
 - Assessment of how alternative learning formats are integrated into the overall curriculum of the joint program.

7. Learning Outcomes alignment:
 - Verification of the alignment of alternative learning formats with the intended learning outcomes of the joint program.
8. Quality Assurance:
 - Confirmation of quality assurance mechanisms in place for alternative learning formats, ensuring the delivery of high-quality education.
9. Faculty training:
 - Confirmation of faculty training and development initiatives aimed at facilitating the effective delivery of alternative learning formats.
10. Student engagement:
 - Feedback from students regarding their engagement with alternative learning formats and their perceived value in enhancing their learning experiences.
11. Technology infrastructure:
 - Assessment of the availability and adequacy of technology infrastructure to support online or blended learning formats.
12. Synchronous/asynchronous options:
 - Identification of the presence of both synchronous and asynchronous options within online or blended courses.
13. Summer/Winter Schools:
 - Confirmation of the availability and diversity of summer and winter schools as transnational learning opportunities.

III. 6. Digital skills (optional)

1. Definition of the criterion:

- The joint programme includes components and actions related to the development of high level digital skills of students, it offers high quality digital education content, as well as assessment of student skills.
- Addition/alternative/recommendation: this should be a mandatory criterion.

2. Indicators

1. Incorporation of Digital Skill components:

- Verification of the inclusion of digital skill development components within the joint program's curriculum.

2. Digital content quality:

- Assessment of the quality of digital education content provided within the program, including online courses, resources, and materials.

3. Assessment of Digital Skills:

- Evaluation of the mechanisms in place for assessing students' digital skills and competencies.

4. Digital Skill diversity:

- Identification of the diversity of digital skills covered within the program, including programming, data analysis, digital literacy, etc.

5. Digital Skill integration:

- Assessment of how digital skill development is integrated into the overall curriculum of the joint program.
6. Feedback from students:
 - Feedback from students on the effectiveness of digital skill development components and the quality of digital education content.
 7. Faculty expertise:
 - Confirmation of faculty expertise and training in delivering digital education content and fostering digital skill development.
 8. Technology infrastructure:
 - Assessment of the availability and adequacy of technology infrastructure to support digital education and skill development.
 9. Assessment methods:
 - Identification of the assessment methods used to evaluate students' digital skills, including practical projects, exams, or other forms of evaluation.
 10. Digital Skill assessment tools:
 - Verification of the use of specific digital skill assessment tools or platforms within the program.
 11. Digital Skill certification:
 - Confirmation of whether the joint program provides certifications or credentials for students who demonstrate high-level digital skills.
 12. Alignment with industry needs:
 - Assessment of the alignment of digital skill development components with the needs and expectations of the digital job market.

IV. European Values: Inclusion & Sustainability

IV.1. Multilingualism

1. Definition of the criterion:

- During the joint programme, each student is exposed to at least 2 different EU official languages, language classes excluded.
- Exposure to EU official languages can take place in active and/or passive use of language(s), at any level in teaching and/or learning activities, examinations, research activities, professional or civic engagement activities and during mobility periods, including by going on mobility to a country where a different EU official language is predominantly used in daily life.
- Addition/alternative/recommendation:

2. Indicators

1. Language exposure in teaching and learning:

- Assessment of the extent to which students are exposed to EU official languages in teaching and learning activities.

2. Language use in examinations:

- Verification of the active or passive use of EU official languages in examinations within the joint program.
- 3. Language use in research activities:
 - Evaluation of language use in research activities, including language diversity in publications, presentations, and collaborative research.
- 4. Language exposure during mobility:
 - Confirmation of language exposure during student mobility periods, particularly in countries where a different EU official language is predominantly used in daily life.
- 5. Language use in civic engagement:
 - Assessment of the involvement of students in civic engagement activities that require the use of EU official languages.
- 6. Language diversity levels:
 - Identification of the number of EU official languages to which students are exposed throughout the joint program.
- 7. Language assessment methods:
 - Evaluation of the methods and tools used to assess students' active and passive language skills in EU official languages.
- 8. Mobility language requirements:
 - Verification of any language requirements or expectations during mobility periods to ensure exposure to different EU official languages.
- 9. Language exposure record:
 - Maintenance of a record or documentation of each student's exposure to EU official languages during the joint program.
- 10. Feedback from students:
 - Feedback from students on their language exposure experiences and the effectiveness of language integration within the program.
- 11. Language learning opportunities:
 - Identification of opportunities for students to actively learn and practice EU official languages beyond passive exposure.

IV.2. Inclusiveness and sustainability

1. Definition of the criterion:

- The joint programme commits to wide participation through socially and geographically inclusive admission through tailored measures for all categories of disadvantaged students.
- The joint programme commits to respect the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers and commits to the principles of the MSCA Green Charter.
- Addition/alternative/recommendation: this criterion could be separated into `inclusiveness` and `sustainability`; the former one could be redefined as `diversity, equity and inclusion`

2. Indicators

1. Inclusive admission measures:

- Assessment of the presence and effectiveness of tailored admission measures to ensure socially and geographically inclusive participation in the joint program.
- 2. Disadvantaged student participation:
 - Tracking and reporting of the participation of disadvantaged students across various categories (e.g., socio-economic background, geographical location, disability) in the joint program.
- 3. Compliance with European Charter for Researchers:
 - Confirmation of the joint program's commitment and adherence to the principles outlined in the European Charter for Researchers.
- 4. Compliance with Code of Conduct for Recruitment:
 - Verification of the joint program's commitment and adherence to the principles of the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers.
- 5. MSCA Green Charter Commitment:
 - Evidence of the joint program's commitment to the principles of the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) Green Charter.
- 6. Tailored support for disadvantaged students:
 - Evaluation of the specific support measures provided to disadvantaged students to ensure their successful participation in the joint program.
- 7. Monitoring of inclusiveness:
 - Mechanisms in place to monitor and assess the inclusiveness of the joint program and its adherence to tailored measures.
- 8. Documentation of sustainability efforts:
 - Documentation of sustainability initiatives or efforts within the joint program, aligned with the principles of the MSCA Green Charter.
- 9. Feedback from disadvantaged students:
 - Gathering feedback from disadvantaged students regarding the effectiveness of tailored measures and inclusiveness efforts.
- 10. Inclusiveness reporting:
 - Reporting on the progress and outcomes of inclusiveness measures and the joint program's commitment to sustainability.

IV. 3. Language classes (optional)

1. Definition of the criterion:

- The joint programme offers the possibility to take language classes to enhance the command of multiple European languages.
- Addition/alternative/recommendation: This criterion could be included under the `multilingualism` criterion.

2. Indicators:

1. Availability of language classes:

- Confirmation of the availability of language classes as part of the joint program's curriculum.

2. Range of offered languages:

- Assessment of the number of European languages for which language classes are offered within the joint program.
- 3. Accessibility of language classes:
 - Evaluation of the ease of access for students to enroll in language classes as part of their joint program experience.
- 4. Language proficiency enhancement:
 - Measurement of the effectiveness of language classes in enhancing students' command of multiple European languages.
- 5. Student enrollment in language classes:
 - Tracking the percentage of students who choose to enroll in language classes as part of their joint program.
- 6. Language class diversity:
 - Assessment of the diversity of language classes offered, including common European languages and less commonly taught languages.
- 7. Student feedback on language classes:
 - Gathering feedback from students who have taken language classes regarding the quality and utility of these classes.
- 8. Language proficiency assessment:
 - Evaluation of students' language proficiency levels before and after participating in language classes.

IV. 4. Environmental care (optional)

1. Definition of the criterion:

- The joint programme includes components and actions related to environmental sustainability and implements measures to minimise the environmental footprint of its activities.
- Addition/alternative/recommendation: This could be included under the `sustainability` criterion (once separated from `inclusiveness`).

2. Indicators

1. Inclusion of environmental components:
 - Confirmation of the inclusion of environmental sustainability components within the joint program's curriculum or activities.
2. Environmental awareness and education:
 - Assessment of the level of environmental awareness and education provided to students within the program.
3. Environmental impact assessment:
 - Evaluation of the extent to which the joint program assesses and minimizes its environmental impact.
4. Eco-Friendly practices:
 - Identification of specific eco-friendly practices or initiatives implemented within the joint program.

5. Resource management:
 - Assessment of resource management practices, including energy conservation, waste reduction, and sustainable resource utilization.
6. Sustainability measures:
 - Evaluation of the effectiveness of sustainability measures and their alignment with environmental goals.
7. Carbon footprint reduction:
 - Measurement of efforts to reduce the carbon footprint of the joint program's activities.
8. Environmental reporting:
 - Examination of whether the joint program provides regular reporting or documentation of its environmental care initiatives.

IV.5. Democratic values (optional)

1. Definition of the criterion:

- The joint programme offers the possibility for students to participate in activities promoting democratic values and addressing societal needs of the local community(ies), including volunteering, and to receive ECTS for it.
- Addition/alternative/recommendation: the criterion could be reformulated as `democratic values and community engagement` to enhance civic responsibility and societal contribution.

2. Indicators

1. Availability of democratic value activities:
 - Verification of the existence of activities within the joint program that promote democratic values and address societal needs.
2. Participation rate in democratic activities:
 - Measurement of student participation rates in democratic value-promoting activities.
3. Documentation of participation:
 - Documentation and verification of students' participation in such activities, including the recording of ECTS credits awarded.
4. Relevance to local communities:
 - Evaluation of the relevance of these activities to the societal needs of the local community(ies).
5. Impact assessment:
 - Assessment of the impact of students' participation in democratic value activities on their understanding of democratic values and community engagement.
6. Feedback from students:
 - Collection of feedback from students regarding their experiences and perceptions of democratic value activities.
7. Integration with curriculum:
 - Examination of the extent to which these activities are integrated into the curriculum or offered as extracurricular opportunities.

8. Community involvement:

- Assessment of the level of community involvement or collaboration in these activities.

Apart from the alternatives or recommendations included for the proposed EDL criteria, there is potential to include:

- One (optional) criterion regarding **the distribution of tasks and responsibility among partners** (e.g., Set of committees and rotating Chairs, change of coordinators with each funding period, etc.).
 - a. This could be part of a new, separate criterion, under a **Structural cluster**, that would reflect indicators on **administrative and organizational effectiveness**, ensuring that minimum standards of collaboration among partner institutions are in place.
 - i. A potential definition for the `Administrative and Organizational Effectiveness` criterion would be: `This criterion focuses on the internal infrastructure and operational mechanisms that institutions must establish to effectively introduce and sustain the European Degree Label. It underscores the importance of a coordinated, transparent, and efficient administrative framework that aligns with the overarching goals and standards of the EDL.
 - ii. The indicators could include administrative infrastructure, training and development, documentation, stakeholder communication, feedback mechanisms, periodic internal reviews, collaboration framework, resource allocation, crisis management, transparency.
 - b. An optional criterion regarding **the quality of both educational provisions as well as of processes** (e.g., External International Advisory Board) could be included in the **Structural: Transnational cooperation** cluster or in a newly included **Structural cluster**.
- One (optional) criterion relating to **institutional development of the academia and research components** through joint degrees (potential integration with the European Research Area).

These proposals resulted from consultations with the EUROSUD team, as well as with the Core and Enlarged Experts Group. The following section focuses on the specific analysis of EDL in relation to EUROSUD.

3.1.3. Workshops with the Core Experts Group and the Enlarged Experts Group

Analysis of the EDL criteria validation against the program, following the cluster structure and the initial draft indicators⁴.

Cluster	Criterion	Indicators	EUROSUD
I. Structural: Transnational Cooperation	I.1. Higher education institutions involved	The joint programme is jointly designed and delivered by at least 2 higher education institutions from at least 2 different EU Member States.	YES: NKUA, UAM, AMU, LUISS, UoG are all HEIs and NKUA, UAM, AMU and LUISS are based in the respective EU states: Greece, Spain, France, and Italy.
	I.2. Transnational joint degree delivery	The joint programme leads to the award of a joint degree or multiple degrees.	YES: Where national policy allows (in EUROSUD this is possible with all partners except the French partner (AMU) due to parchment requirements). The basic model is that three partners award the

⁴ Following the analysis, these initial indicators were further refined and restructured to better reflect the corresponding criteria.

Cluster	Criterion	Indicators	EUROSUD
			joint degree or double degree (when AMU is an awarding partner) depending on where the student spends three different mobility periods: semesters 1, 2 and 3 & 4 (together) over the 2yr period.
		Dissertations are co-evaluated by supervisors or a committee with members from at least 2 different institutions located in 2 different countries.	YES: Dissertations are jointly supervised with primary and two secondary supervisors / markers from different partners. This is necessary to enable all three-degree awarding partners to award the degree (i.e. sharing in dissertation supervision and assessment credits, which is a stipulated regulation for all partners).
	I.3. Joint policies for the joint programme	The higher education institutions involved have joint policies for admission, selection, supervision, monitoring, assessment, and recognition procedures for the joint study programme.	Yes: the coordinating partner (UoG) manages application processing, using entry criteria which all partners have agreed. See text below
			Yes: assessment is managed by the consortium through an agreed grading equivalents table.
			Yes: joint recognition is managed through the various national accreditation procedures whereby each partner's HEI status, regulations, credits delivered, and QA procedures are recognised by the other degree-awarding partners. These procedures are laid out in the consortium agreement.
	I.4. Transnational campus – access to services	The joint programme provides enrolled students, regardless of their location when allowed, with seamless and free access to the participating HEI's services such as e.g., IT services, shared infrastructure, and facilities, (online) library services, faculty development and support, academic guidance and psychological counselling, career advice/mentoring, alumni systems.	YES (in relation to UoG only): EUROSUD students are enrolled at UoG (the coordinating partner) for the full two years of the programme, irrespective of where the students are based for their mobility periods, and they have access to all services throughout the two years [both academic and non-academic services].
EUROSUD students are enrolled at the other partners only for the period they are based there (eg semester 2 in year 1 or year 2 (semesters 3&4). This is because of registration requirements of the partners.			
I.5. Visibility & awareness (optional)	The higher education institutions offering the joint study programme conducts joint promotion and awareness-raising activities to ensure visibility of the joint programme and provide the necessary information about it for students and other relevant stakeholders such as future employers.	YES: EUROSUD is jointly promoted by all partners on their own websites and through the bespoke EUROSUD website and social media. Employers played a consultation role in the initial market research when the joint programme was being designed in 2016/17 and take part in periodic evaluation of the programme.	
II. Functional: Labour Marker & Employability	II.1. Graduate outcomes	The joint programme has a system to monitor graduate outcomes. This system can be at the level of the programme or institutional level(s). If possible, the content is aligned to the survey content of EUROGRADUATE.	YES: EUROSUD runs two annual Surveys upon the graduation of each cohort (Graduate Survey). There is one anonymous survey that requests information about students' experience with the programme and a second eponymous survey that requests information about current and future internships/employment as well as contact details and willingness to be involved with the programme in future as Alumni. The content is aligned to EUROGRADUATE. EUROSUD also has a Linked-in page for students and Alumni.
	II.2. Cooperation with the labour	The joint programme supports future labour market needs and/or includes cooperation	YES: EUROSUD trains experts of the South European Region for which there is rising labour market demand. Few examples: EUROSUD graduates have become employed as foreign

Cluster	Criterion	Indicators	EUROSUD
	market (optional)	with businesses and sectors in its curriculum.	correspondents, diplomats, consultants, researchers, policy analysts and project managers because of their South European Region area expertise.
			YES: EUROSUD engages in co-operation and dialogue with professionals from various sectors through its Professional Track programme and the Lisbon Winter School. Representatives of industry and the third sector are invited to give talks to students and sit on its External International Advisory Board (EIAB)
	II.3. Internships / work-based learning (optional)	The joint programme provides opportunities for international professional internships/work-based learning recognised through the award of ECTS	YES: EUROSUD has at least one placement opportunity during the 2-year programme with the option to deliver a research project/report or research dissertation, depending on the Study Track chosen by the student. Depending on the partner, these may or may not be credit-bearing.
	II.4. Career development plan (optional)	The joint programme includes a career development plan devised with the candidate and/or exposure to the non-academic sector (such as internships, seminars, networking).	YES: Mentoring Sessions take place individually with each student across partners, whose purpose is partly to discuss career plans and offer advice.
YES: students are exposed to the non-academic sector frequently, through internships, professional talks, and seminars. Employability and career sessions are organised for EUROSUD students across partners.			
III. Qualitative: Student Centred Teaching & Learning	III.1. Transparency of the learning outcomes	The joint programme is described in ECTS.	YES: EUROSUD is promoted using ECTS (in the case of UoG the equivalence of SCQF is explained in the programme handbook)
		A joint Diploma Supplement is issued to the student at the end of the joint study programme intended learning outcomes.	YES: a joint diploma supplement is issued on behalf of the joint degree EUROSUD partners by the coordinator (UoG), while the double degree partner (AMU) also produces an individual diploma supplement.
			YES: the consortium agreed ILOs (intended learning outcomes) are listed on the EUROSUD website, programme handbook and form part of the approval documentation of the respective partners.
	III.2. Quality assurance arrangements	Internal and external QA is conducted in accordance with the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG). The programme, the study field or the institutions are accredited/evaluated by an EQAR-registered agency.	YES: all EUROSUD partners have internal QA procedures and the majority of EUROSUD partner countries are recognised externally by the EQAR for at least institutional QA purposes. Some are also recognised for programme specific purposes. Please note: accreditation through the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes (EA) is being considered by the EUROSUD consortium for action during the next 3 to 4 years.
		If external quality assurance is required at programme level in the countries involved, the transnational programme should be accredited/evaluated preferably using the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes (EA).	
III.3. Flexible and embedded student mobility arrangements	The joint programme includes at least 1 period of student physical mobility at another partner institution of at least 30 ECTS.	YES: EUROSUD students spend at least 30 ECTS each with three different mobility partners over a 2yr period NOTE: EUROSUD is a master level programme (doctoral criteria is not applicable).	

Cluster	Criterion	Indicators	EUROSUD
		<p>The joint programme includes a total of at least 6 months of physical mobility at another partner institution (including secondment).</p> <p>If applicable, in addition to physical mobility, the joint programme includes opportunities for doctoral candidates to participate in one or more of these activities at another partner institution: teaching activities, international events, international conferences, joint research scientific projects between partner institutions, joint research publications with researchers from partner institutions.</p>	
	III.4. Innovative learning approaches	The joint programme includes embedded interdisciplinary and/or transdisciplinary and/or inter-sectoral components using student-centred and/or challenged-based approaches.	<p>YES: EUROSUD is delivered by a combination of faculties, facilitating interdisciplinarity: Politics, IR, Sociology, History, Law, Economics, Humanities. Courses on Research Design and Methodology are also offered from an inter-disciplinary perspective.</p> <p>YES: EUROSUD adopts a student-centred approach to learning throughout students are offered maximum curriculum choice according to their interests and strengths. They can select from among 8 different Study Track combinations; within most Study Tracks they may also choose from among a variety of optional courses; within many courses, particularly the overview courses in S1, students have the capacity to select topics and themes, work in groups, develop critical capacities and receive tailored feedback. Furthermore, EUROSUD students come from different disciplinary backgrounds and have different learning needs in this respect. Staff expertise from across CPUs is drawn to accommodate these needs particularly regarding methods training and at the Dissertation stage.</p>
	III.5. Alternative learning formats (optional)	In addition to physical mobility, the joint programme includes additional formats of transnational learning activities with partner higher education institutions (e.g., online or blended, in the format of regular or intensive courses, summer/winter schools).	YES: EUROSUD has blended learning opportunities: Some classes use reverse classroom design, combining online and offline elements; some of the Masterclasses and seminars held across CPUs and in the Lisbon winter school are hybrid and open to all EUROSUD students; an annual course on Methodological Techniques for Data Collection is offered online; Dissertation Colloquia for fourth semester students and vivas are held online.
	III. 6. Digital skills (optional)	The joint programme includes components and actions related to the development of high-level digital skills of students, it offers high quality digital education content, as well as assessment of student skills.	YES: EUROSUD graduates are expected to be fully competent users of digital technology through their active participation in online modules (ICS-ULisboa), training in producing digital content (UAM) use of digital learning platforms (all partners), and profound understanding of ethics in the digital domain (as part of Dissertation training) by the end of their time in the programme.

Cluster	Criterion	Indicators	EUROSUD
IV. European Values: Inclusion & Sustainability	IV.1. Multilingualism	During the joint programme, each student is exposed to at least 2 different EU official languages, language classes excluded.	YES: EUROSUD students are immersed in at least three different languages and cultures during the 2yr programme, where they live in three different countries (two, if one of those languages/ countries is their home language/ country).
		Exposure to EU official languages can take place in active and/or passive use of language(s), at any level in teaching and/or learning activities, examinations, research activities, professional or civic engagement activities and during mobility periods, including by going on mobility to a country where a different EU official language is predominantly used in daily life.	YES: although EUROSUD is primarily delivered and assessed in English some of the partners offer courses in other languages, which students can attend, if they have the minimum required language level: UAM offers optional courses in Spanish in Semester 2 (students are assessed in Spanish or English). AMU offers all courses in French and assessment is in French. The Dissertation is written and assessed in English in all Year 2 CPUs (NKUA, UAM, AMU, LUISS).
	IV.2. Inclusiveness and sustainability	The joint programme commits to wide participation through socially and geographically inclusive admission through tailored measures for all categories of disadvantaged students.	YES: all partners have policies for enabling students with disabilities/ individual needs to access the programme. YES: the EUROSUD programme has had ERASMUS MUNDUS funding in the past which enables it to promote scholarships in less advantaged regions of the world.
		The joint programme commits to respect the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers and commits to the principles of the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) Green Charter.	YES: EUROSUD is not in receipt of MSCA funding, but it does adhere to the principles of the Green Charter: For instance, UoG and other CPUs have adopted renewables and sustainability strategies. As a programme EUROSUD adheres to a no paper policy and all Dissertations are submitted, disseminated, and marked in electronic form. EUROSUD recommends low-emissions means of transport to access in-person meetings (i.e. train) and mostly use teleconferencing for CMBs, Exam Boards and Student-Staff Meetings.
	IV. 3. Language classes (optional)	The joint programme offers the possibility to take language classes to enhance the command of multiple European languages.	YES: students have the option to attend other 2nd language courses throughout their programme. This may include EU languages (in preparation for a following mobility period) or it may be for a third country/ world language such as Turkish or Arabic.
	IV. 4. Environmental care (optional)	The joint programme includes components and actions related to environmental sustainability and implements measures to minimise the environmental footprint of its activities.	YES: Courses on climate change and sustainability are offered in the EUROSUD curriculum in theory, law, and policymaking, particularly in the Mediterranean context. An annual Summer School on Climate Change, Migration, and the Rule of Law in the Mediterranean for 1st year EUROSUD students (Istanbul) is planned to begin in the 2024-2025 AY. See above for environmental footprint.
IV.5. Democratic values (optional)	The joint programme offers the possibility for students to participate in activities promoting democratic values and addressing societal needs of the local community (ies), including volunteering, and to receive ECTS for it.	YES: EUROSUD students commonly take up internships, which may be credit bearing, depending on their study track. Quite often these internships take place in international organisations that promote democracy, human rights and the rule of law, or non-profits, embedded in local communities or serving communities of vulnerable groups such as asylum seekers or children. Students do engage in volunteering, but it is not ECTS accredited.	

3.1.4. Interviews with EUROSUD team-members

The interviews encapsulate a multifaceted understanding of the European Degree Label and its implications for programs like EUROSUD. Key focuses include program management, understanding and applying the EDL criteria, facing, and overcoming various challenges, recognizing the benefits, and strategizing for future improvements and promotion. The interviews also touch on broader educational themes, such as multiculturalism, employability, research skills, and quality assurance in higher education. Some of the main aspects tackled during the interview focused on:

1. Program Management and Involvement:

- **Roles and responsibilities:**

There is a high bureaucratic burden, both for academic and administrative staff in relation to implementing a joint degree. Responsibilities include administrative and academic implementation, developing bids, and collaborating with consortium representatives and other staff. There are concerns that the implementation of EDL would add more pressure and there is a need to better understand what the EDL would mean in practical terms.

2. Understanding of European Degree Label:

- **Familiarity with EDL criteria:**

The interviews indicate a good understanding of EDL criteria (potentially a biased perspective as availability for interviews could have been influenced by familiarity with the EDL). However, there is a lack of clarity with regards to its role in relation to the quality assurance framework.

At the time of the interviews, EUROSUD was considering the European Approach for Quality Assurance for Joint Programmes (medium-term).

- **Perception and concerns:**

In general, the interviews indicate that the EDL is viewed positively as a tool for encouraging a collaborative approach for higher education. Once again, concerns are raised about the justification and motivation behind the EDL and its practical implementation.

4. Challenges and implementation issues:

- **Operational challenges:**

Some of the main challenges in the EDL's implementation as reflected in the interviews were the need for better clarity of criteria, and the differentiation of quality levels between programmes (meeting all criteria vs. partially meeting the criteria).

Challenges regarding EDL implementation overall with challenges faced in the implementation of joint degree programmes overall, such as issues in accreditation, visa requirements, and managing diverse regulations across institutions.

5. Benefits and added value of the EDL:

- **Advantages for stakeholders:**

Overall, the EDL is seen as beneficial for students, employers, and academic institutions.

There has been an emphasis on enhancing mobility, cultural sensitivity, and international experience.

- **Impact on education quality:**

The general perspective, as drawn from the interviews, indicates that the EDL has the potential to contribute to the recognition and assurance of quality in international education.

6. Recommendations for future development:

- **Improvement suggestions:**

All recommendations indicated the need for a clearer understanding of EDL's purpose.

Potential improvements in EDL criteria were mentioned (such as incorporating virtual campus aspects), as previously reflected in the section dedicated to the EDL clusters, criteria and indicators.

7. Launch and promotion strategies:

- **Dissemination importance:**

The interviews emphasized the need for a well-managed launch and promotion strategy, to address potential resistance.

Interviewees highlighted EDL's potential for global recognition and inclusivity beyond the European Union.

8. Financial and institutional considerations:

- **Financial model and definitions:**

One of the main concerns addressed in the interviews referred to the need for a new financial model to sustain the EDL.

There have been references to defining joint programmes more comprehensively.

9. EUROSUD:

- **Applicability of EDL Criteria:**

Reflections on the EDL criteria indicate a high level of relevance and applicability to the EUROSUD programme.

The interviews comprised a comparative analysis with Erasmus Mundus criteria, highlighting differences and similarities, indicating a significant overlap between the two.

There was a comment referring to the need to better balance employability and research skills within EDL (stemming from the EUROSUD experience).

There were several suggestions for improving EUROSUD's alignment with the EDL, including aspects like work-placement guidance.

Also, the experience of EUROSUD highlights the benefits of multiculturalism in education, particularly in Erasmus Mundus programs.

Concerns about the EDL evaluation process, suggesting it may overlook the human element.

Proposals for on-site evaluations (if funding is available) and a more holistic approach to understanding overall program quality.

3.1.5. Focus-groups with students and alumni of EUROSUD

At this point, there is no available data from students and alumni of EUROSUD. The project calendar dedicated to these specific sessions overlapped first with the summer holiday and then with the dissertation defence of the current generation of students. Even though there were some responses from students, no common decision was reached for a time and date for the focus-group. The option of carrying out individual interviews was also explored, with very low response rates. The project team intends to reinstate this process and carry out at least one focus-group with EUROSUD alumni by mid-February to be able to include the data in the final report.

3.1.6. Programme selection questionnaire

Based on the programme selection questionnaire, there are some general observations that can be referred to EUROSUD:

- Even within the same programme, there might be differences in perception and evaluation of EDL criteria;
- The differences could be based either on different practices in different partner countries, on different perceptions of the programme, or on a different understanding of the criteria and their corresponding indicators.
- Differences in evaluating the EDL criteria could also ensue from criteria and indicators which are only partially fulfilled (for example, EUROSUD students engage in volunteering, but it is not ECTS accredited), suggesting a need for increased objectivity/measurability in formulating the indicators.
- This particularly highlights the need for clarity in terms of how the EDL criteria are formulated; also, even though indicators corresponding to each criterion could be overly prescriptive for the purpose of the EDL, it might be needed to help clarify the criteria and ensure some level of measurability.

This analysis of data from the programme selection questionnaire provides a snapshot of the EUROSUD program's characteristics, highlighting its compatibility with the EDL criteria. This compatibility can also be analysed in relation to the other programmes which were included in the questionnaire (94 records in total). While a more extensive analysis of the overall results will be provided in the Final Report, these are only some highlights:

- While EUROSUD falls under the joint degree/multiple degree label (depending on the specifics of the mobility), the most common type is the Double Degree Programme (34 out of 94).
- Most programmes (57 out of 94) are not Erasmus Mundus, as it is the case for EUROSUD.
- EUROSUD comprises a transdisciplinary (Social Sciences and Humanities) approach, while in general, the most common field is Social Sciences (21 out of 94).
- Most programmes (71 out of 94) indicate an ongoing process or planned accreditation, contrasting with EUROSUD's status (no planned or ongoing process of accreditation).

- Most (68 out of 94) do not include volunteering opportunities, which places EUROSUD's offering in a smaller group of programmes which do so, even though these opportunities do not provide ECTS.
- Overall, EUROSUD complies 100% with the EDL criteria. However, if the criteria would be broken down into more specific indicators, the level of compliance would slightly decrease, particularly in relation to:
 - Specific national requirements for certification (e.g. Parchment requirements in France), which also have implications for the type of programme EUROSUD falls under: joint or double degree (e.g. The French partner is a double degree partner, also issuing an individual diploma supplement).
 - Specific national requirements for student enrolment (e.g. Students are enrolled at the coordinating partner for the entire duration of their studies; however, they are enrolled at the partner institutions solely for the duration of their mobility).
 - Third-party provisions (e.g. Depending on the partner, work-placements may or may not be credit-bearing; students' engagement in volunteering is not ECTS accredited).

3.1.7. The SMARTT survey (pre-test)

As presented in detail in Deliverable 4, the survey consists of a variety of statements and questions relating to the European Degree Label (EDL) and its applicability and perception in the context of the EUROSUD program. Based on Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behaviour, the survey also addresses several themes, including attitudes toward the EDL, its relevance, applicability, norms, and the need for adaptation. Specific topics include the impact of adopting the EDL on educational excellence, alignment with long-term goals, and the perception of the EDL in similar programs.

For all closed items/statement, responses are numerically rated. In the case of EUROSUD, it appears that the responses are consistently high (mostly rated as '5'), suggesting a positive perception or agreement with the statements. Thus, the uniformly positive responses indicate a strong alignment and favourable attitude toward the EDL within the EUROSUD program. While a more extensive analysis of the overall results will be provided in the Final Report, these are only some highlights:

1. Attitudes:

- **Mean Response:** 5.0
- **Interpretation:** This indicates an extremely positive attitude towards the EDL. Respondents strongly believe in the benefits and alignment of adopting the EDL with their educational goals.

2. Social Norms:

- **Mean Response:** 4.67
- **Interpretation:** This score suggests a strong perception of social approval or support for the EDL. It indicates favourable views from stakeholders and other similar programs.

3. Perceived Behavioural Control:

- **Mean Response:** 4.22

- **Interpretation:** This score, while slightly lower than the others, still indicates a good level of confidence in the ability to align with or adopt the EDL criteria.

4. Utilization Intent:

- **Mean Response:** 4.8
- **Interpretation:** The high score here suggests a strong intention to use or align with the EDL. This implies that respondents are not only favourable towards the EDL but are also likely to actively pursue its adoption or alignment.

Overall insights:

- The survey results show strong positive attitudes, social norms, perceived behavioural control, and utilization intent regarding the EDL within the context of the EUROSUD program.
- These findings suggest that stakeholders are not only positively inclined towards the EDL but also feel supported by their social environment and believe they have the necessary control and resources to adopt the EDL.
- The high utilization intent score indicates a likely proactive approach towards implementing or aligning with the EDL in the future.
- The program stakeholders seem to perceive the EDL positively, indicating that they see it as beneficial and aligned with their educational goals.
- The responses suggest that the EUROSUD program stakeholders view the EDL as a significant contributor to educational excellence and fitting well with long-term goals.
- There is an indication of commitment to integrating and upholding the EDL criteria, with an intention to align with these criteria in the future.
- The responses imply that the EDL criteria are seen as applicable and relevant across different cultural and educational contexts.

Implications:

- Based on Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behaviour, the strong positive responses across all categories suggest a high likelihood of the program adopting or aligning with the EDL.
- This alignment is supported by positive attitudes, perceived social norms, and the belief in the ability to successfully implement the criteria of the EDL.
- The program could leverage this strong positive inclination to further promote and integrate the EDL criteria.
- Continuous engagement with stakeholders to maintain and enhance these perceptions can be beneficial.

Limitations:

- The uniformly high scores across all categories may indicate a lack of response variance, which could limit the depth of insights.

- Responses might be influenced by the respondents' current understanding or experiences, which may change over time.

4

CHALLENGES

Developing a Joint Programme / Joint Degree

4. CHALLENGES

In the context of the development of a European Degree or Degree Label, several challenges and arguments against its implementation have been identified. These challenges include the diversity of educational systems and approaches across European countries, making it difficult to establish common standards and recognition. Differences in accreditation procedures, slow progress in reforms, and the need for a pan-European accreditation system also pose significant obstacles. Additionally, the motivations behind promoting a European degree are questioned, with concerns about diminishing national distinctiveness and serving diverging interests.

Despite these challenges, the need for international recognition of degrees and competencies is acknowledged in today's globalized world. A European Degree Label is seen as a valuable tool for facilitating this recognition and enhancing the mobility of students and graduates. However, achieving this goal will require concerted efforts to overcome the obstacles related to diverse educational systems, accreditation procedures, and the pace of change in higher education institutions and governments. Collaboration at both the European and global levels is essential to reconcile diversity with mobility in an increasingly interconnected world.

These are some of the challenges or barriers in developing and implementing a European Degree/a European Degree Label:

4.1. Curriculum

- Differences in the structure of bachelor's and master's degree programs, such as the inclusion of annual courses instead of semester courses, can create challenges for students and institutions when trying to align with international standards.
- Differences/incompatibilities in the curricula of different universities/programs.
- Achieving consistency in learning outcomes across diverse European degree programs; different interpretations of competency and skill expectations can hinder alignment.
- Challenges in developing a curriculum suitable for students from various countries.
- Real differences in various degrees' function and their formats.
- The transfer of credits between universities and degree programs can be complex due to differences in curricular structures.
- Designing interdisciplinary programs or courses that span multiple disciplines and faculties may encounter resistance due to existing academic structures.
- Lack of clarity or knowledge about how students will be evaluated in foreign universities.
- Differences in evaluation and assessment methods can impact how students are graded and certified.
- Differences in assessment methods, grading scales, and evaluation criteria can affect how degrees are assessed for equivalence and quality.
- Ensuring that the curriculum remains relevant to the evolving needs of the labour market across European countries; adapting to changing workforce demands requires flexibility in curriculum design.

- Curriculum development should strike a balance between promoting European integration and preserving national educational identities and values.

4.2. Quality Assurance, accreditation, qualifications, and standards

- Ensuring the quality of education and degree programs across Europe requires the implementation of rigorous quality assurance processes. These processes involve evaluation, accreditation, and continuous monitoring (also demanding financial resources).
- Ensuring consistent quality standards across participating countries, potentially affecting the credibility of the European Degree.
- Complex and time-consuming processes for gaining accreditation for European degrees.
- Ensuring the quality and consistency of European degrees across different countries and institutions.
- Ensuring that the quality of online and distance education programs is on par with traditional on-campus offerings.
- Variations in learning outcomes and professional attributes of degrees across different countries.
- The need for policies and practices to evaluate and develop qualifications frameworks in Europe.
- Defining functions and responsibilities of organizations assessing and validating qualifications and ensuring education quality.
- Ensuring that European degrees comply with both national regulations and overarching European standards can create regulatory complexities.
- Clear definition and harmonization of the role and authority of national and European-level quality assurance agencies to ensure consistent evaluations and accreditation processes.
- Involving employers, industry representatives, and other external stakeholders in the accreditation and quality assurance processes to align degrees with labour market needs, while ensuring representation of stakeholders from different countries/systems.

4.3. Recognition and transferability

- It may be challenging to assess the equivalence of a European Degree with national degrees, leading to uncertainty for employers and graduates.
- Existing structural barriers hindering the recognition of skills and qualifications of students and graduates within the EU.
- Limitations in the transferability and recognition of a degree for studying and working in a different country.
- Establishing clear recognition frameworks for degrees obtained through online and distance education, especially in the context of European degrees.
- Differences in the duration of Bachelor's and master's degrees in Europe, raising questions about equivalence.

- Difficulties in acknowledging and validating professional skills and qualifications obtained in another country.
- National regulations and licensing requirements for certain professions, such as healthcare or law, can create significant challenges for the recognition of degrees obtained in other European countries.
- Differences in the reputation and recognition of higher education institutions across countries can affect how European degrees are perceived and valued.
- Unequal treatment in the local labour market between domestic - and foreign-educated graduates due to limitations in recognizing and transferring degrees.
- Addressing practical challenges related to cross-border mobility, such as visa regulations, work permits, and social integration, which can affect the ability to work or study with a European degree for students outside the EU.

4.4. Administration, governance, and norms

- Implementing a European Degree would require a complex administrative process, including the creation of regulations and governance structures.
- Minimizing bureaucratic red tape and administrative hurdles that can slow down decision-making and implementation, particularly in multi-country collaborations.
- Differences in the systems and rules governing professional practices in each country.
- Challenges related to visa regulations, accommodation, and financial support for student and staff mobility.
- Challenges related to coordinating academic calendars across different institutions.
- Difficulties in determining program agendas for European degrees.
- Ensuring effective communication and coordination among stakeholders in implementing a European degree.
- Challenges in providing appropriate support services for students - including visa assistance, housing, and cultural integration.
- Ensuring thorough planning and testing in the implementation process.
- Fostering collaboration and cooperation among multiple higher education institutions across different countries, each with its own governance structures and decision-making processes.
- Balancing the autonomy of individual institutions with the need for collaboration and coordination in curriculum development, assessment, and program administration. Institutions may be resistant to relinquishing/delegate control over certain aspects of their programs.
- Ensuring transparency in decision-making processes related to curriculum development, assessment, and program administration to maintain trust and accountability.
- Developing standardized administrative procedures and protocols for managing European degrees, including admissions, student registration, credential verification, and academic support services.

- The traditional divide between vocational training and academic education can be impacted by the Europeanization processes, creating tensions between these educational sectors.
- Current Europeanization processes tend to disrupt existing patterns, leading to conflicts between actors in various fields.
- Struggles between different educational sectors can result in a widening of the institutional divide.
- There is concern about the potential loss of unique educational identities of individual countries due to standardization and unification of education and cultural norms.
- Resistance to the idea of a European degree from countries and educational institutions due to national sovereignty concerns.
- National governments may prioritize their own educational goals and policies over the implementation of a European degree system/label. Conflicting priorities at the national level can hinder the allocation of resources to support European degrees.
- Aligning national and regional policies with the goals and objectives of European degrees to ensure coherence and consistency.
- Normative/legislative barriers refer to challenges that may prevent the connection of European degrees with national higher education systems. These barriers can include legal impediments to necessary reforms.
- Potential legal obstacles related to national laws and regulations governing education.

4.5. Resources

- Financial barriers, such as insufficient grants, can be an obstacle to students and institutions looking to participate in international programs.
- Delays in receiving grant payments for student mobility programs.
- Substantial costs associated with implementing a European degree, including:
 - curriculum development
 - staff training
 - administrative changes.
- A lack of financial resources and competent personnel hindering modernization efforts.
- The need for robust technological infrastructure to support the delivery of European degrees, particularly in countries or institutions with limited resources.
- Establishing efficient data-sharing systems among universities, accreditation bodies, and government agencies is necessary for streamlining the accreditation and quality assurance processes.
- Developing and sustaining European degrees may require significant research and development efforts to ensure high-quality programs. However, limited research funding, especially in less wealthy countries or institutions, can hinder the ability to create innovative and competitive degree programs.

- To maintain high educational standards, faculty members may require additional training to align their teaching methods and content with European degree requirements. This investment in professional development can be costly and time-consuming.
- Disparities in funding and resources among European countries and institutions can create inequities in the development and implementation of European degrees.
- Europe faces global competition in higher education. To attract international students and remain competitive, investments in resources, marketing, and support services may be required.

4.6. Integration vs. homogenization and commercialization

- Non-European institutions needing to consider how degrees earned by European students can be integrated into their systems.
- Differences in education systems and standards posing challenges to integration.
- Challenges in matching the content and level of programs, preventing smooth integration.
- The implementation of a European Degree may risk homogenizing education, potentially stifling diversity, and creativity.
- The commercialization of education, including the marginalization of science (with negative consequences for scientific research, academic freedom, and the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake etc.), can be a concern when implementing major educational changes.
- The commercialization of education, including the increasing trend of treating education as a commodity, could be exacerbated by the implementation of a European Degree. This could lead to a focus on profit rather than the quality of education and the needs of students.

4.7. Cultural particularities

- Differences in how history is understood and interpreted can be a significant cultural barrier when attempting to integrate educational systems across diverse regions.
- Diverse viewpoints on how culture and identity should be developed can lead to cultural clashes and hinder educational integration efforts, particularly in Southeastern Europe.
- The presence of diverse education systems across Europe, requiring harmonization and standardization efforts for a unified European degree.
- Cultural variations affecting attitudes towards education, teaching methods, and learning styles.
- Challenges and considerations in adding a European dimension to educational programs, as well as incorporating societal and ethical dimensions into the curriculum, such as ethics, sustainability, and social responsibility.
- Language differences within the European Union can create significant language barriers when trying to implement a European Degree.
- Language barriers depriving educational institutions, teachers, and students of opportunities for pan-European or bilateral programs.

- Lack of adequate English language (or another lingua franca) training in bachelor's and master's degree programs.
- Programs offered in multiple languages or accommodating various language proficiencies can be challenging to design and administer.
- Southeastern Europe faces unique obstacles and issues specific to its region, which may require tailored approaches.
- If a European Degree is perceived as more prestigious, it could lead to a brain drain from countries with less prestigious national degrees.

4.8. Resistance to change

- Resistance from educational institutions, teachers, and students can slow down the implementation of major changes such as the introduction of a European Degree.
- Faculty may perceive changes as additional burdens or disruptions to their established routines.
- Students can perceive potential disadvantages or uncertainties in the development of European degrees. Concerns may include changes in grading systems, credit transfer, and the overall learning experience.
- Educational institutions, especially well-established ones, may resist change due to institutional inertia. They may be accustomed to traditional practices and curriculum structures, making it challenging to adapt to new European degree standards.
- Public perceptions and attitudes towards European integration in education, as resistance to changes that challenge traditional educational systems can be significant.
- Lack of awareness/information among potential participants about the possibilities and prospects of connecting through a European Degree Label, which could hinder countries' ability to engage effectively.

Addressing these challenges requires a collaborative effort from governments, higher education institutions, accreditation bodies, and other stakeholders. A successful implementation of joint degrees/European Degrees/European Degree Label hinges on finding a balance between standardization and flexibility, respecting institutional autonomy while promoting **a cohesive European educational framework**.

5

RECOMMENDATIONS

European Degree Label Criteria

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the pre-testing of the EUROSUD program, the following categories of recommendations were drafted in relation to the European Label Degree:

1. Recommendations for the European Label Degree criteria
 - Content
 - Approach
2. Structure of the European Label Degree Label criteria. (addressed in the corresponding section)
3. Indicators defining the European Label Degree criteria. (addressed in the corresponding section)
 - Preliminary results of the EDL criteria validation against EUROSUD
4. Tackling obstacles in relation to the European Label Degree implementation.
5. Preliminary policy recommendations.

5.1. European Degree Label Criteria

While many questions arose throughout the initial phase of the project, one specific category emerged as essential for developing the EDL. This category specifically refers to clarifying the overall scope of the EDL.

However, this challenge cannot be tackled before clearly differentiating between joint programmes and joint degrees, as the first category can lead to multiple, double/dual, joint or mixed degrees. Following this differentiation, it is necessary to understand whether the EDL addresses all joint programmes (certified through double/dual, multiple, joint or mixed degrees) or only joint programmes which lead to a joint degree. This clarification would be even more important as there are cases which fall under the joint degree category, meeting all the EDL criteria, while one partner is a double degree partner (due to national legislation).

After clarifying which types of programmes would be eligible for the EDL, its own definition could be revisited. At this point, the European Degree Label (EDL) can be defined as a distinctive certification (and/or accreditation?), granted to higher education programs, particularly to joint or multiple degree programmes, across the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). This label signifies adherence to a set of defined quality criteria (and standards?) that align with European educational policies and values. In other words, the European Degree Label serves as a hallmark of quality, excellence, and adherence to European educational values, distinguishing programs that not only meet high academic standards but also foster a transnational, inclusive, and student-focused learning environment.

5.1.1. Content

Following the initial analysis of the EDL criteria validation against EUROSUD, a series of recommendations were shaped, particularly addressing the content of the European Degree Label criteria.

1. Clarification/definition of **transnational** in the context of Transnational joint degree delivery.
2. Clarification regarding **the Transparency of Learning Outcomes** criterion with regards to the Intended Learning Outcomes and where those are visible to applicants and employers.

3. In what concerns the **Transnational Campus** criterion, explore the potential for the students to be registered at all degree-awarding partner institutions for the full duration of the degree (provided there are procedures in place to avoid duplicate tuition fees).
4. Enhance the **virtual mobility** component within the EDL.
5. Enhance the **labour market connection**, with regards to the work placement and internship components.
6. Enhance the **visibility and awareness** criterion (from optional to mandatory).
7. Potential to include a new criterion relating to **institutional development of the academia and research components** through the joint degrees (potential integration with the European Research Area).
8. Potential to include an **employment criterion** (1 year after graduation) for programs with at least one graduate cohort.
9. Potential to include an optional criterion regarding **distribution of tasks and responsibility among partners** (e.g., Set of committees and rotating Chairs, change of coordinators with each funding period, etc.).
 - a. This could be part of a new, separate criterion, under the Structural cluster, that would reflect indicators on **administrative and organizational effectiveness**, ensuring that minimum standards of collaboration among partner institutions are in place.
 - i. A potential definition for the `Administrative and Organizational Effectiveness` criterion would be: `This criterion focuses on the internal infrastructure and operational mechanisms that institutions must establish to effectively introduce and sustain the European Degree Label. It underscores the importance of a coordinated, transparent, and efficient administrative framework that aligns with the overarching goals and standards of the EDL.
 - ii. The indicators could include administrative infrastructure, training and development, documentation, stakeholder communication, feedback mechanisms, periodic internal reviews, collaboration framework, resource allocation, crisis management, transparency.
10. Potential to include an optional criterion regarding **the quality of both educational provisions as well as of processes** (e.g., External International Advisory Board).

5.1.2. Approach

Furthermore, several recommendations were formulated in relation to the general approach towards the European Degree Label development, launch and implementation.

1. **Motivation:** Clarify the motivation for EDL development and implementation and clearly **communicate** it to the interested parties.
2. **Differentiation:** Clarify whether the EDL is based on an all-or-nothing approach, or whether the EDL could be awarded based on different levels/percentage of alignment (e.g., Bronze, Silver, Gold, etc.).
3. **Renewal:** Clarify if/how often the EDL should be renewed and how (particularly if awarded differentiated on percentage of alignment).

4. **Financial model:** Explore the possibility of creating/allowing for a new financial model to support joint degrees under the EDL.
5. **Financial incentives:** Consider offering financial incentives (grants) for institutions that may require significant resources to align to the EDL criteria.
6. **Integration with existing systems:** Where/if possible, ensure that EDL requirements and processes integrate seamlessly with existing academic systems and infrastructures to minimize disruption.
7. **Integration with other certifications:** Explore synergies and possible integrations with other academic certifications, quality assurance systems or labels to provide added value and reduce redundancy.
8. **Visibility:** Make the EDL more visible to all interested parties to ensure buy-in.
9. **Gradual deployment:** Explore a gradual deployment of the EDL that would entail several steps throughout a longer period, to allow stakeholders to better understand the process and its scope, as well as to foresee and address any potential resistance to implementation.
 - Consider a pilot phase for deployment, first introducing EDL it to a small group of institutions. This will help identify any potential challenges or areas of improvement before a full-scale launch.
10. **Provide case-studies/best-practice example:** Following the initial deployment, showcase a range of case studies highlighting how different programs and institutions have successfully adopted and benefited from the EDL.

5.2. Tackling obstacles

Based on the obstacles identified in the process of developing and deploying the EDL, these are some of the recommendations shaped to address them (currently under revision).

5.2.1. Curriculum

1. Establish an EU-wide committee/body to ensure alignment with EDL criteria (and potentially award the EDL).
2. Develop guidelines for consistent learning outcomes for EDL, while allowing for flexibility.
3. Organize workshops and seminars to align EDL (self) assessment/validation methods.
4. Ensure curriculum relevance through continuous industry feedback and employability surveys at the European level.
5. Strike a balance between European integration and national educational identities through a modular curriculum approach, as part of the EDL.

5.2.2. Quality Assurance, Accreditation, Qualifications, and Standards

1. Streamline EDL labelling processes using best practices from successful programs.
2. Regularly audit online education to ensure parity with traditional methods.
3. Potentially develop a common qualification framework for EDL.

5.2.3. Recognition and Transferability

1. Address structural barriers through dialogue and support for legislative reforms (national/European level).
2. Streamline professional skill validation processes.
3. Organize European university fairs to enhance the reputation of European degrees.

5.2.4. Administration, Governance, and Norms

1. Develop a governance framework for the EDL, involving all stakeholders.
2. Reduce bureaucratic obstacles through e-governance and digital platforms.
3. Support the harmonization of academic calendars and the streamlining of program agendas.
4. Foster collaborative platforms for stakeholder communication.

5.2.5. Resources

1. Increase funding allocations for Erasmus and other mobility grants.
2. Provide financial support for modernization where needed to reduce gaps.
3. Facilitate infrastructure grants targeting technology for education.
4. Encourage collaborative research to pool resources, thus adding a European Research Area dimension to the EDL.
5. Ensure continuous funding for European degrees through public-private partnerships.
6. Enhance global marketing campaigns to attract international students.

5.2.6. Cultural Particularities

1. Encourage the design of curriculum modules that respect diverse historical interpretations.
2. Promote and prioritize cultural sensitivity training for educators and administrators.
3. Support the development of multilingual programs to develop language skills.

5.2.7. Resistance to Change

1. Organize awareness campaigns emphasizing the benefits of the EDL.
2. Provide training to faculty and administrative staff, highlighting the advantages of the EDL.
3. Address student concerns through interactive sessions and feedback mechanisms.
4. Overcome institutional inertia through incentives and recognition for early adopters.
5. Launch public campaigns to highlight the broader benefits of the EDL.

5.3. Preliminary policy recommendations

To establish a cohesive and effective system that facilitates the development, recognition, and quality assurance of joint degree programs within the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), some preliminary recommendations could be formulated (these will be reviewed in the Final Report):

1. Harmonization with existing policies and frameworks:

- Align the EDL with existing European educational frameworks, particularly the Bologna Process, ECTS, and the European Quality Assurance Framework to ensure compatibility and ease of integration.
- Leverage existing tools like the Diploma Supplement to provide detailed information about EDL-accredited programs.

2. Quality Assurance and accreditation standards:

- Develop specific quality assurance and accreditation standards for EDL-accredited programs, ensuring they adhere to the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG).
- Facilitate the involvement of EQAR-registered agencies in the evaluation and accreditation processes for joint programs.

3. Transparency:

- Include detailed information on program structure, learning outcomes, assessment methods, and accreditation status. This transparency is crucial for student decision-making and stakeholder recognition.

4. Flexible yet structured framework:

- Create a framework that allows for flexibility in program design to cater to different academic disciplines while maintaining a structured approach to ensure consistency in quality and delivery.
- Allow for flexibility within the EDL framework to accommodate the evolving nature of higher education and the specific needs of different academic disciplines.
- Develop a standardized template for the EDL that accommodates the diversity of joint programs while ensuring key information is uniformly presented. This includes degree titles, institutions involved, language of instruction, and mobility requirements.

5. Digitalization and technological integration:

- Leverage digital technologies to facilitate the administration of the EDL, including digital certification, online platforms for information dissemination, and virtual learning components in programs.
- Ensure the EDL's format is digitally compatible, facilitating its integration into various institutional systems and enabling easy access and verification by stakeholders, including employers and other educational institutions.

6. Funding and incentives:

- Provide financial support and incentives for institutions to develop and implement EDL-accredited programs, including grants, research funding, and enhanced program visibility.
- Implement policy measures that provide incentives for institutions to adopt the EDL, such as simplified accreditation processes, and recognition in national and European ranking systems.

7. Enhanced mobility and cooperation:

- Promote policies that facilitate student and faculty mobility, including simplified visa processes and recognition of qualifications across EU Member States.
- Encourage collaborations and partnerships beyond the EU to elevate the global standing of the EDL, its relevance and appeal to non-EU institutions.
- Prioritize student mobility and learning experiences in the EDL's design, ensuring that the label reflects a commitment to student-centred teaching and learning methodologies.

8. Inclusivity and accessibility:

- Implement policies to ensure the EDL is inclusive, catering to diverse student populations, and promoting accessibility for disadvantaged or underrepresented groups.

9. Data collection and research:

- Conduct regular research and data collection to monitor the impact of the EDL on European higher education, labour market alignment, and student mobility.

10. Stakeholder engagement and feedback:

- Engage a wide range of stakeholders in the ongoing development and refinement of the EDL, including academic institutions, students, employers, and policy makers.
- Establish a feedback mechanism to continually assess the effectiveness and relevance of the EDL.

11. Promotion and awareness campaigns:

- Implement EU-wide promotion and awareness campaigns to highlight the value of the EDL and its accredited programs to prospective students, employers, and the broader community.

6

CONCLUSIONS

Next steps

6. CONCLUSIONS

6.1. Next steps

Even though the objective of Deliverable 12 was to present the final results of the EUROSUD pilot, given the iterative nature of the project, we expect to gather more data by the end of the project based on focus-groups with EUROSUD students/alumni and from new data collected through the SMARTT Survey, as it is currently rolled-out to all the selected CIVIS and partner programmes (including EUROSUD, following the initial pre-testing). Even more so, the Final Report will also include a comparison of the EUROSUD with other relevant programmes to better understand both their commonalities and their specific contexts.

Therefore, as in the upcoming phase of the project has shifted to scaling the methods and instruments used on EUROSUD to all the selected programmes, we will not lose focus on EUROSUD.

Following this first pilot phase of the SMARTT project, focused on validating the EDL against the EUROSUD program, several conclusions can be drawn in specific relation to the pilot.

- EUROSUD, as a joint degree program with a focus on South European Studies, appears to align well with the fundamental criteria of the EDL. This includes transnational cooperation, a commitment to quality assurance, and an emphasis on student-centred learning. The program's involvement with multiple EU countries and institutions fits the EDL's emphasis on cross-border collaboration and multilingualism.
- Adopting the EDL could significantly enhance the recognition of the EUROSUD program across Europe and beyond. It would facilitate the mobility of students and academics within the EU, aligning with the EDL's goal of fostering educational and cultural exchange.
- Potential challenges in aligning EUROSUD with the EDL may involve harmonizing academic standards and procedures across participating institutions, managing cultural and linguistic diversity, and ensuring sufficient resources and support for program implementation.
- The EDL framework offers opportunities for EUROSUD to further develop in areas such as sustainability, inclusivity, and digital skills integration. Embracing these aspects can lead to a more rounded and future-oriented program.
- The EDL's focus on employability and labour market relevance aligns with EUROSUD's potential to enhance graduates' career prospects, particularly within EU institutions, NGOs, or businesses focused on South European affairs. The program's focus on real-world skills, internships, and industry partnerships aligns with the EDL's emphasis on functional employability.
- For EUROSUD to fully leverage the benefits of the EDL, strategic planning and policy development at both institutional and programmatic levels are crucial. This involves aligning with EU educational policies, meeting quality standards, and engaging in continuous program evaluation and improvement.

- In the broader context of global higher education, the EDL can elevate EUROSUD's status, making it more competitive and appealing to international students and academics.
- While the benefits are clear, there are challenges in implementing the EDL, such as harmonizing academic standards, ensuring equitable resource distribution, and maintaining program flexibility. Recommendations include developing a comprehensive framework that addresses these challenges, encourages stakeholder engagement, and supports continuous improvement through feedback mechanisms.
- For a successful integration of the EDL, strategic policy development is crucial. This includes harmonizing the EDL with existing educational frameworks, enhancing mobility and cooperation, and providing incentives for institutions to adopt the label.

In conclusion, the EDL represents a significant opportunity for the EUROSUD program to enhance its quality, recognition, and attractiveness. While challenges in alignment and implementation exist, the potential benefits in terms of educational excellence, student mobility, and labour market relevance appear to be substantial.