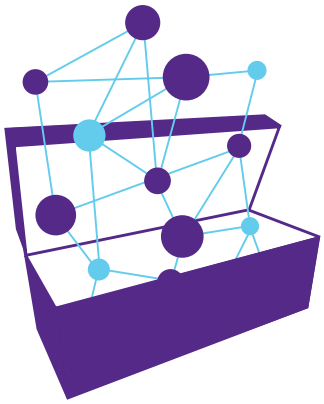

TEFCE Toolbox

An Institutional Self-Reflection Framework for Community Engagement in Higher Education

Thomas Farnell, Paul Benneworth, Bojana Ćulum Ilić, Marco Seeber, Ninoslav Šćukanec Schmidt

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Dedication: The authors would like to dedicate this report to the memory of Paul Benneworth (1976-2020), whose intellectual leadership and academic work was central to the development of the TEFCE Toolbox and who will be sadly missed by all of us.

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1. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION: WHAT IS IT AND WHY IS IT CRUCIAL TODAY?

Defining community engagement in higher education

Community engagement in higher education is about how universities[1] address societal needs in partnership with their external communities. More precisely, the TEFCE project team proposes the following definitions of 'engagement', 'community' and 'societal needs'.

Engagement	The TEFCE project defines community engagement as a process whereby universities undertake joint activities with external communities in a way that is mutually beneficial, even if each side benefits in a different way. In practice, such joint activities can be undertaken by university staff or students, whether as a part of their teaching and research, as a part of joint projects and initiatives, or as a part of university governance and management.
Community	The TEFCE project defines the term community broadly as 'communities of place, identity or interest', thus including organisations from government, business, civil society, as well as the general population. The term community is not limited to the local community: although it is easier to sustain productive relationships with partners that are geographically close rather than more remote partners, community engagement can also have regional, national and international dimensions.
Societal needs	The TEFCE project adopts a broad definition of the term 'societal needs' that can be addressed through community engagement, by encompassing all political, economic, cultural, social, technological and environmental factors that can influence quality of life in society.

Community engagement is emerging as a policy priority in higher education, reflecting increasing pressure on universities to demonstrate how they deliver public benefits. The European Commission features community engagement as a priority in the *Renewed Agenda for Higher Education* (2017) and the Horizon 2020 programme. Universities are also expected to contribute to the UN Sustainable Development Goals and to respond to the COVID-19 crisis, making community engagement increasingly relevant.

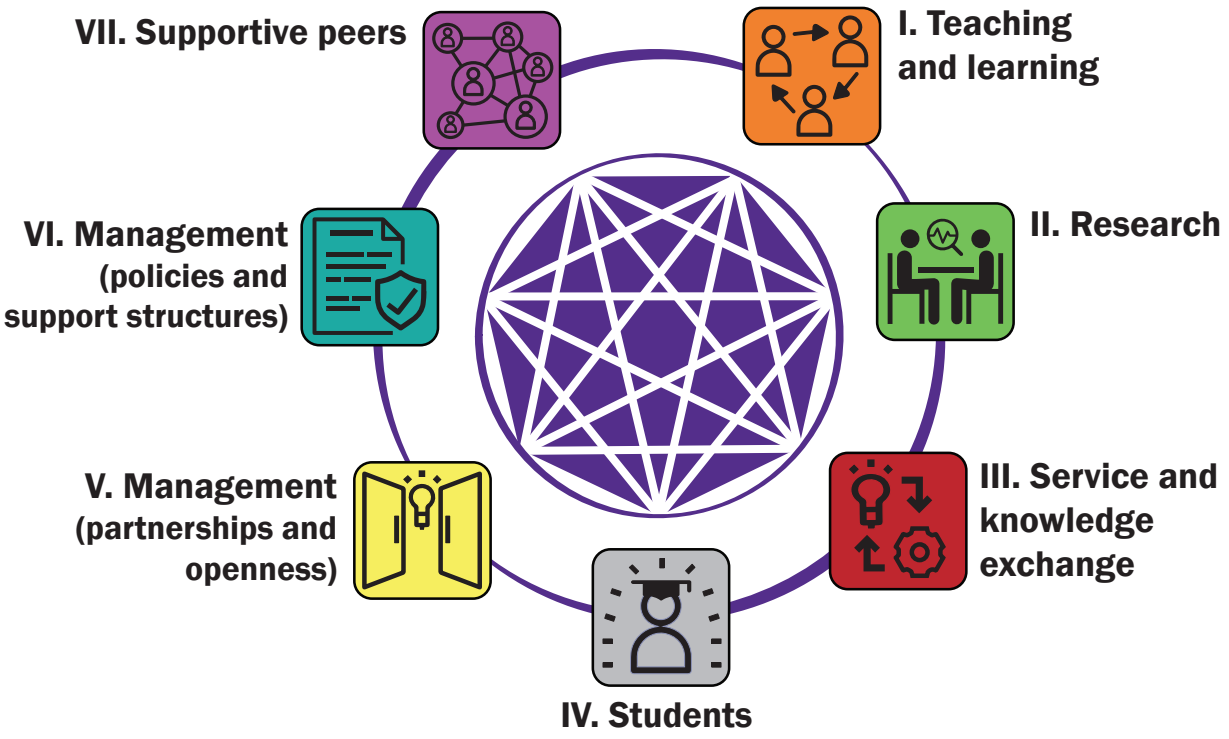
Dimensions of community engagement

The TEFCE project defines seven thematic dimensions of community engagement in higher education:

Dimensions	Brief description
I. Teaching and learning	Extent to which study programmes reflect societal needs, include community-based learning and involve external communities in teaching and learning.
II. Research	Extent to which research is carried out *about* and *with* external communities.
III. Service and knowledge exchange	Extent to which academic staff is involved in joint initiatives supporting external communities' development and empowerment.
IV. Students	Extent to which students lead their own projects and initiatives with external communities (outside the framework of their study programmes).

1 The TEFCE project uses the term 'university' to refer to all forms of tertiary education institutions, including research-intensive universities and universities of applied science.

V. Management (partnerships and openness)	Extent to which the university establishes mutually beneficially partnerships with external communities and provides them with access to facilities and resources.
VI. Management (policies and support structures)	Extent to which the university management reflects its commitment to community engagement in policies and institutional support structures.
VII. Supportive peers	Extent to which the academic and administrative/professional staff actively support community engagement.



Context-specific, authentic, multifaceted and embedded engagement

The TEFCE Toolbox for Community Engagement in Higher Education is a new framework that stimulates universities and their communities to jointly carry out a process to examine their community engagement in a robust and comprehensive way. The way in which the TEFCE Toolbox differs from previous tools for assessment of community engagement is that it focuses on four distinct features of community engagement in higher education:

Context-specific	The TEFCE definition of community engagement encompasses almost any activity that includes cooperation with external organisations. This broad approach is adopted purposefully to acknowledge that community engagement is context-specific: engagement activities depend significantly on the type of institution, its socioeconomic and historical context and on its external communities. Allowing for a broad definition ensures that no activities are excluded *a priori* based on a 'one-size-fits-all' definition of community engagement.

Authentic	In practice, community engagement can range from being 'transactional' to 'transformational', from being 'exploitative' to 'inclusive' and from fostering 'dissemination' to ensuring 'co-creation'.[2] Progress across such sequences depends on producing mutual benefits for academic and for community goals and on fostering understanding and cooperation between university and community partners. The TEFCE Toolbox focuses specifically on the extent to which a university has authentic community-engagement practices in place.
Multifaceted	Community engagement should also be multifaceted by going beyond partnerships solely with highly-structured organisations (e.g. large businesses and governmental/public institutions) and by also engaging with groups or organisations that do not have the resources to engage easily with universities. Such groups include NGOs, social enterprises, cultural organisations, schools and citizens. Similarly, the type of societal needs that are addressed through engagement reflect different levels of engagement, progressing from the needs of business and of the public sector, through to global 'grand challenges' (e,g. climate change, ageing, migrations) and to the needs of harder-to-reach and vulnerable groups.
Embedded	Community engagement can be either peripheral or embedded in the university's core activities. In the latter case, community-engagement practices will take place across a range of academic departments, will be supported by management policies and structures and will be financially and institutionally sustainable. This aspect of community engagement has been the most prominent in previous tools for assessing community engagement.

In conclusion, community engagement is a concept that encompasses how universities work with external partners to address pressing societal needs, both in their immediate local environments and in the broader regional, national and global context. The TEFCE Toolbox provides a framework for universities to undertake a learning journey to discover the range of ways in which their staff, students and external communities cooperate, to determine the level of mutual benefits achieved through this engagement and to discuss in a participative way how community engagement can be further improved.

The TEFCE project team is eager to support new institutions wishing to apply the TEFCE Toolbox, both during the TEFCE project's implementation and after the end of the project (June 2021). Please contact us at: iro@iro.hr.

2 For more details, see the TEFCE project publication *Mapping and Critical Synthesis of Current State-of-the-Art on Community Engagement in Higher Education (2018)* here: https://www.tefce.eu/publications

2. TEFCE TOOLBOX: WHAT IS IT AND WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?

Purpose of the TEFCE Toolbox

The TEFCE Toolbox for Community Engagement in Higher Education is a framework that stimulates universities and their communities to jointly carry out a process to examine their community engagement in a robust and comprehensive way. The TEFCE Toolbox serves as a reference tool for universities, communities and policymakers to better understand the dimensions of community engagement and as a practical tool for universities to determine how well they perform according to each dimension and to identify where they can improve.[3]

While building upon previous international initiatives to assess community engagement, the TEFCE Toolbox provides a novel and innovative approach based on four principles:

(1) Commitment to authentic, mutually beneficial community engagement
(2) Empowerment of individual actors within and outside university
(3) Participative approach, combining bottom-up and top-down involvement
(4) Collaborative learning rather than comparison of competitive performance

Target groups and benefits of the TEFCE Toolbox

Universities with an interest in community engagement are the primary target group of the TEFCE Toolbox and are expected to be the 'early adopters' of the TEFCE Toolbox. This could include both universities that are already community-engaged universities or that are interested in becoming more community-engaged. This target group is therefore defined by its authenticity to learn about community engagement rather than its existing level of authenticity of commitment to community engagement. Universities that do not yet see community engagement as a realistic priority may become interested in applying the TEFCE Toolbox at a later stage.

Core benefits for universities:

- Demonstrating the value that the university brings to communities in terms of public benefit (and social impact, if applicable) and the value that communities bring to the university.
- Demonstrating how the university's teaching and research is enriched and has increased relevance through co-determination and interdependence between university and community partners.

Additional benefits for universities:

- Increasing institutional knowledge of the diversity of university practices and impacts through the discovery of community-engaged practices already taking place at the university.
- Improving university capacity in terms of institutional data/research, which links to strategic capacity.
- Increasing public visibility of the ways in which the university contributes to society, and building a reputation as a community-engaged university.
- Creating an evidence basis for planning improvements to the university's performance in terms of (a) increasing social impact and (b) enriching the university's research and teaching.
- Empowering university staff and students through recognition of good practices and achievements.
- Responding to emergent policy agendas such as the sustainable development goals (SDGs), responsible research and innovation (RRI), relevance/impact of higher education.

3 For more information on how the TEFCE Toolbox was developed, see the TEFCE project publication *Building and Piloting the TEFCE Toolbox for Community Engagement in Higher Education* (2020) here: https://www.tefce.eu/publications

University staff and students that are already involved in community-engagement activities, along with their external partners, are the second target group of the TEFCE Toolbox. These groups will be those who will be intrigued, interested and intrinsically motivated to provide their time to participate in the TEFCE Toolbox application by providing narratives describing their practices and reflecting on whether their institutional environment is conducive to such activity

Benefits for individual TEFCE Toolbox participants:

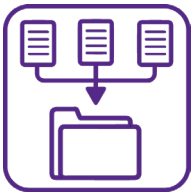
- Increasing motivation and a sense of recognition by staff and students due to the acknowledgement of the value of their community-engagement activities by the university.
- Increasing motivation and a sense of recognition by external communities due to the acknowledgement of the value of their partnership with the university and the contribution they make to enriching university teaching, research and other university activities.
- Increasing the sense of inclusion and ownership of staff, students and external partners in institutional developmental processes through active participation in discussions that shape conclusions regarding institutional performance and future directions.

Overview of the TEFCE Toolbox: the implementation stages

The application of the TEFCE Toolbox takes place through a sequence of stages undertaken by participating universities and involving university management, academic and professional staff, students and representatives of external communities.

STAGE 1: QUICK SCAN — Month 1

Setting up team of university management, staff, students and community representatives and launching initial discussion on the type and extent of community engagement at the university.



STAGE 2: EVIDENCE COLLECTION — Months 2-3

Collecting case studies of community-engaged practitioners throughout the university and from external communities.

STAGE 3: MAPPING REPORT — Month 4-5

Based on collected practices, identifying good practices and assigning a level of community engagement of the university, resulting in a ‘mapping report’ (later integrated in the overall institutional report).

STAGE 4: PARTICIPATIVE DIALOGUE — Month 5

Open discussions among university management, staff, students and the community on strengths and areas of improvement.

STAGE 5: INSTITUTIONAL REPORT — Month 6

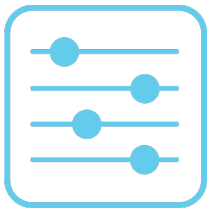
Comprehensive report which presents the TEFCE Toolbox mapping results, celebrates good practices and highlights areas for further improvement.

Overview of the TEFCE Toolbox: the tools

Each stage of the TEFCE Toolbox involves the application of a different tools, as presented below:

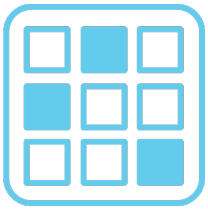
TOOL 1: DIMENSIONS OF ENGAGEMENT

The first tool provides a summary classification of the range of activities through which community engagement can take place. Its purpose is thus to help users quickly understand the scope of what is meant by a community-engaged university and to help identify engagement practices at their institution.



TOOL 2: LEVELS OF ENGAGEMENT

The second tool provides a rubric defining different levels of engagement (from beginner to advanced) for each sub-dimension of the TEFCE Toolbox. Its purpose is to allow users to critically analyse the practices they have mapped with the previous tool and to reach conclusions regarding the level of engagement.



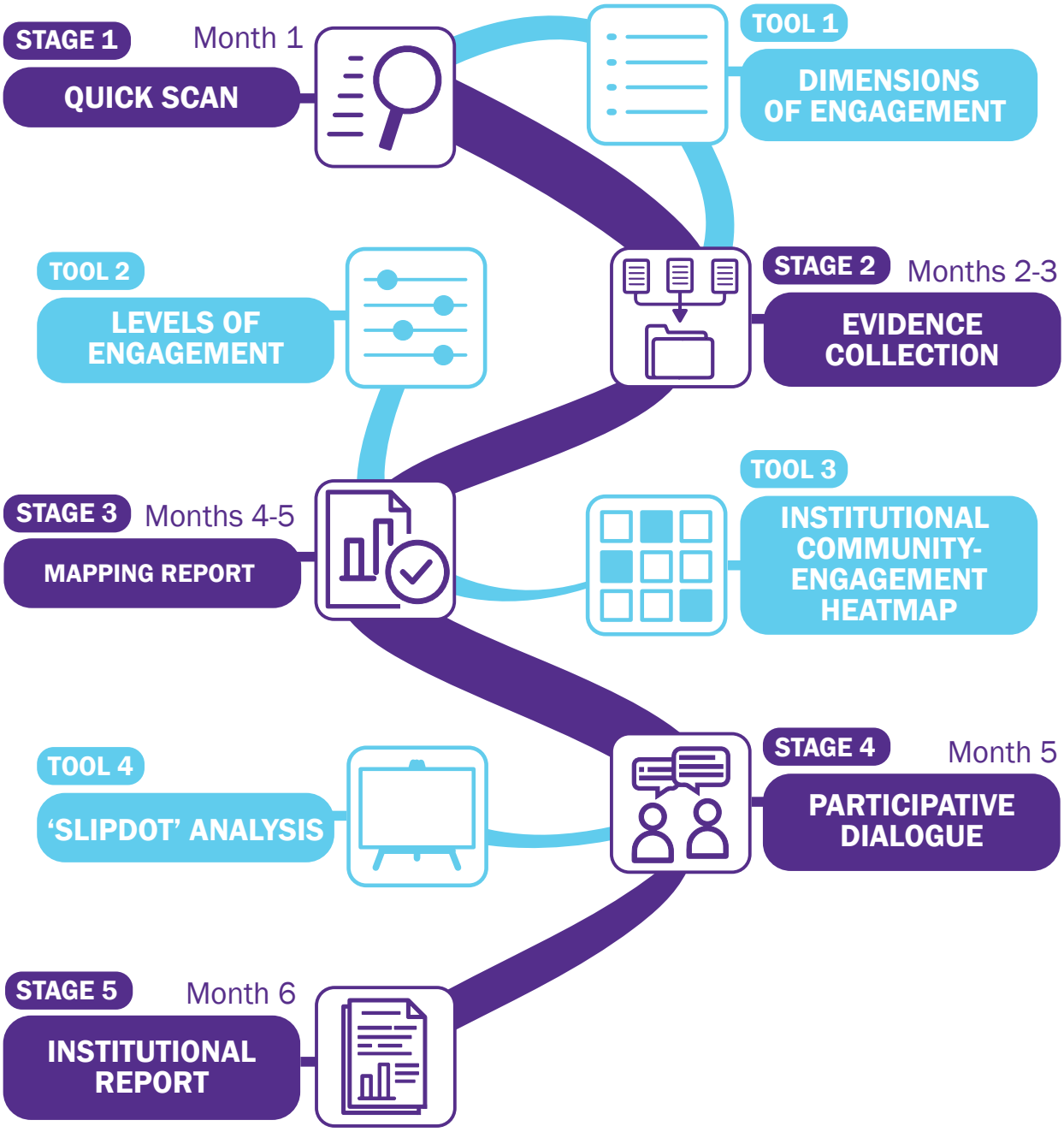
TOOL 3: INSTITUTIONAL COMMUNITY-ENGAGEMENT HEATMAP

The third tool provides a colour-coded matrix to synthesise the findings for each dimension and to further determine the extent to which community engagement is multifaceted and embedded at the university. Its purpose is to allow users to reach conclusions on the level of community engagement for each dimension and for the entire university, based on the previously mapped and analysed practices.

TOOL 4: 'SLIPDOT' ANALYSIS

The fourth and final tool provides a customised 'SWOT' analysis to facilitate self-reflection discussions (via workshops or focus groups) between all stakeholders about the results of the implementation of the entire TEFCE Toolbox process. Its purpose is to validate the conclusions, acknowledge achievements and define areas for improvements.

The TEFCE Toolbox stages and tools interact as follows in practice:



How to apply the TEFCE Toolbox

The TEFCE project team recommends to apply the TEFCE Toolbox at the level of the entire university, in order to advocate a whole-institution approach to supporting community engagement and to involve university management in the process. We also recommend to apply all stages of the TEFCE Toolbox in order to ensure a holistic approach that brings value to all participants.

However, the TEFCE Toolbox is an open-access and flexible tool that can also be applied at the department/faculty level and that could also be applied in different ways (e.g. focusing on a few dimensions only, starting only with a quick scan, etc).

The benefits of applying the TEFCE Toolbox are proportional to the efforts invested in its application. Based on our experience of piloting the Toolbox, the following resources are needed for its implementation over a 6-month period:

- one coordinator to organise the Toolbox's application, the evidence collection, meetings/ workshops and produce the resulting report (approx. 10-20 working days)
- one researcher (or expert) is needed to lead/ensure the quality of the mapping and analysis and the self-reflection process (approx. 5-10 days)
- 7-10 working group members (including management, staff, students and community representatives) to participate at meetings/workshops (approx.. 1-3 days)
- 20-40 university and community members to contribute to collection of practices (approx. 1 hour per participant to complete form).

The TEFCE project team is eager to support new institutions wishing to apply the TEFCE Toolbox, both during the TEFCE project's implementation and after the end of the project (June 2021). Please contact us at: iro@iro.hr.

Guiding principles of the TEFCE Toolbox

Finally, as mentioned in the introduction, potential users of the TEFCE Toolbox should be aware that four principles guide the TEFCE Toolbox and differentiate it from previous approaches:

(1) Commitment to authentic, mutually beneficial community engagement	The TEFCE Toolbox should promote university-community partnerships that benefit both universities and communities. The TEFCE Toolbox's interpretative framework thus differentiates engagement that provides the community with a meaningful role and tangible benefits from more superficial engagement.
(2) Empowerment of individual actors within and outside university	The TEFCE Toolbox should recognise and award value for different kinds of individual efforts and results in community engagement. The qualitative approach of the TEFCE Toolbox should ensure that good practices are acknowledged and celebrated and should examine to what extent the institution's values such achievements.
(3) Participative approach, combining bottom-up and top-down involvement	The TEFCE Toolbox is based on mapping community-engaged practices through a participative approach that combines both a bottom-up and top-down approach. This provides university management, staff, students and the community with an active role in the process, providing critical reflection on the value of the mapped engagement practices and on the overall conclusions reached.
(4) Collaborative learning rather than comparison of competitive performance	The TEFCE Toolbox results in a qualitative discovery of good practices and a critical reflection on strengths and areas to improve, achieved through a collaborative learning process. The TEFCE Toolbox thus represents a learning journey to further improve universities' community-engagement efforts, rather than as a narrow performance assessment for the purpose of ranking or competitive benchmarking.

3. TEFCE TOOLBOX IN PRACTICE

STAGE 1
QUICK SCAN

Purpose

The aim of the quick scan is to launch an initial discussion within the university and with community partners on the type and extent of community engagement at the university. The stage involves setting up a team of university management, staff, students and community representatives and organising a joint meeting during which an initial list of community-engagement initiatives can be mapped.

Timing

Month 1 of the TEFCE Toolbox implementation.

Tool: Dimensions of engagement

The first tool provides a summary classification of the range of activities through which community engagement can take place. Its purpose is thus to help users understand the scope of what is meant by a community-engaged university and to help identify engagement practices at their institution.

The tool defines seven dimensions of community engagement, encompassing the different areas of activities of the university. Each dimension is accompanied by sub-dimensions, presented as statements of what a community-engaged university can aim to achieve. Using this tool, universities identify and collect engagement practices throughout their institution.

TOOL 1
DIMENSIONS OF ENGAGEMENT

Dimensions	Sub-dimensions
I. Teaching and learning	I.1. The university has study programmes or courses to respond to societal needs that are specific to the university's context and its external communities. I.2. The university has study programmes or courses that include a community-based learning component for students. I.3. The university facilitates the participation of community representatives in the teaching and learning process (in a curricular or extra-curricular context). I.4. The university has study programmes or courses that are created, reviewed or evaluated in consultation/cooperation with the university's external communities.
II. Research	II.1. The university carries out research focusing on the societal needs of the university's external communities. II.2. The university carries out collaborative/participatory research in cooperation with the university's external communities.

III. Service and knowledge exchange	III.1. University staff contribute to debates and initiatives that address societal needs of the university's external communities. III.2. University staff provide their knowledge to support and/or build the capacity of the university's external communities. III.3. University staff community-engagement activities have demonstrable benefits for the university's external communities.
IV. Students	IV.1. Students deliver community-engagement activities independently through student organisations or initiatives. IV.2. The university facilitates and supports partnerships between students and external communities.
V. Management (partnerships and openness)	V.1. The university has a track record of mutually beneficial partnerships with its external communities. V.2. The university makes learning and research resources accessible to its external communities. V.3. The university has facilities and services that are jointly managed and/or accessible to its external communities.
VI. Management (policies and support structures)	VI.1. The university provides support and/or incentives for community-engagement achievements by its staff, students and external communities. VI.2. The university has a support structure (e.g. committee, office or staff) for embedding and coordinating community-engagement activities at the university level. VI.3. The university has staff-development policies (e.g. recruitment, tenure, promotion) that include community engagement as a criterion. VI.4. The university has a mission, strategy, leadership and (funding) instruments that specifically promote community engagement.
VII. Supportive peers	VII.1. The university has prominent academic staff members that have a strong track-record of community engagement and that advocate for its further advancement. VII.2. The university's academic staff are acceptive of the idea of university-community engagement and of the value and rigour of community-engaged teaching and research.

Instructions

Each participating university should set up a University Community Engagement Team to carry out the initial quick scan. Since the process should cover activities throughout the university, the proposed composition of the university team could include the following representatives:

- university management (vice-rector/pro-vice-chancellor; other senior management)
- academic staff members that have a strong track-record of community engagement and that advocate for its further advancement
- administrative/professional staff working of aspects of engagement in university office (e.g. engagement and outreach office) or through projects
- administrative/professional staff with good overview of institutional-level data (e.g. quality assurance office)
- student union representative
- representatives of societal partners/community groups.

The team leader or coordinator should ideally be a university staff member with extensive prior knowledge and experience of community engagement in higher education and with the ability to mobilise relevant actors and identify community-engagement initiatives around the university (e.g. university management member, community-engagement officer, researcher on community engagement, etc.).

The 'quick scan' takes the form of a meeting/workshop with the university team to present the TEFCE Toolbox objectives and process and to make an initial mapping of concrete practices of community engagement on existing knowledge of team members.

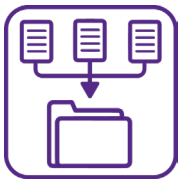
A 'simple' quick scan can be carried out using a template based on the list of the dimensions of engagement. University teams may also wish to carry out a more advanced quick scan that already considers the *level* of engagement, by using the TEFCE Toolbox mapping report template (see Stage 3). Whatever the approach adopted, each dimension of the TEFCE Toolbox is populated with an initial set of practices (and/or with notes on possible further sources of evidence). Based on the result of the quick scan, an evidence-collection process is planned to collect enough case studies of community-engagement practices to cover the various dimensions and sub-dimensions of engagement defined in the TEFCE Toolbox.

Illustrative example

I. Teaching and learning	*Examples of initial list of practices mapped by university during quick scan (fictional examples)* • *Bachelor's programme in _____studies directly responds to local and regional needs for _____.* • *Masters programme in _____studies developed as a result of cooperation with regional government.* • *Service-learning courses available in study programmes such as _____.* • *Guest lecturers from government, business and NGOs involved in study programmes _____.* • *Necessary to collect additional practices through data-collection phase.*

Template

Templates for the quick scan are available in the Appendix of this publication.



STAGE 2

EVIDENCE COLLECTION

Purpose

Based on the quick scan, the university team collects evidence in the form of case studies of academics, students and administrative/professional staff from a range of departments, as well as from external partners, on how they have participated in community-engagement initiatives. The TEFCE Toolbox is **not** intended to catalogue all community-engaged practices of a university. Instead, it aims to initiate a robust, qualitative evidence-collection process that the university team believes reflects the variety and diversity of the university's community-engagement activities. The findings are then validated through consultations and focus groups.

Timing

Months 2-3 of the TEFCE Toolbox implementation.

Instructions

Each university can adopt its own approach to evidence collection. Options include desk research, interviews with community-engaged practitioners, using university offices (engagement, communication and access offices), or even publishing a public call for practices via university media and circular emails.

The final collection of practices can include two kinds of evidence:

- In-depth case studies (using the case-study template provided below)
- Brief practice descriptions (based on summary findings of desk research).

There is no fixed number of practices to be collected. The general criterion should be to reach 'saturation point'– i.e. ensure that all of the 21 sub-dimensions are covered by the collected practices. As will be presented later in the document, one practice can cover several sub-dimensions and dimensions in parallel. A preliminary estimate based on piloting the TEFCE Toolbox is that **30-40 practices** were usually required to draw accurate university-level conclusions.

Illustrative example

*Case of practice entitled **"Connecting Hands"** from University of Twente (provided by: Laura Kräh, Connecting Hands)*

1. Description of community-engagement practice	
What are the main goals of the practice?	*Connecting Hands intends to create a platform for refugees, asylum seekers, students, Dutch people and all other people living with us. The goal of Connecting Hands is to try to help refugees and asylum seekers from all over the world to fit into their new lives, integrate into their relatively new social environment and to help them accomplish what they aim for.*
What are the main activities?	*More recently, Connecting Hands is working on the development of education and employment projects for refugees contributing to social and economic sustainability in the region through public engagement.* *The students are organizing events in the areas of culture, sports, education and events especially for women to achieve these goals. In addition, they are working together with external (non-political) parties and other organizations to have a bigger impact.*

Who is organizing the practice?	*Connecting Hands is a Student Union committee affiliated with the University of Twente.*
Who initiated it?	*It was initiated after a think tank that was organised by the Student Union. A fundraiser was organised to support refugees and employees of the UT generously contributed for the cause.*
Web link for further information	*https://su.utwente.nl/en/connectinghands/*
How is the community/target group with which you engage involved in the implementation of this practice?	*Connecting Hands works with two main partners: COA (AZC Almelo & AZC Azelo) and M-PACT.* *COA is the central agency for the reception of asylum seekers. We maintain effective communication with a contact person from AZC Almelo and AZC Azelo. We invite asylum seekers to our events through communication with a contact person that help to promote our events to asylum seekers within the AZCs.* *M-PACT is an integration partner and part of what M-PACT does is that they facilitate refugees to integrate into the Dutch culture through offering integration courses. We invite refugees to our events as well through our contact person in M-PACT.*
2. Support for community engagement	
How does the university support this community-engaged practice?	*Connecting Hands is a committee of the Student Union. Student Union provides budget, guidance and support to the committee. A mentor for the committee is also available to guide members to achieve their goals.* *The events organised do not directly fit in a broader framework of the university although the education and employment projects directly fit into the strategy of the university. These projects are aimed at "social and economic sustainability through public engagement" which is a part of the mission of the university. The events organised are continuous activities although the projects are independent and may be considered as one-off projects. However, the ambition of the committee is to develop two (new) projects each academic year.* *The committee is invited to networking events such as the Rode Loper however most promotion is done by the committee itself with direct support from the Student Union and hence, the university.*
How do partners/collaborators from the community support and value this practice?	*The response from participants at the events is very positive as they highly value the interaction with students. The activities organised are fun yet informative and there is great appreciation from students, asylum seekers and refugees for the events. Partners working towards the same goal have shown their appreciation through invitations and requests for input.*
How do your peers (university staff and management) and students support and value this practice?	*University staff is very supportive of the initiative in fact some employees are directly involved in the education and employment projects. Their guidance and support are because of their own personal interest in contributing to this initiative.*

Template

A template for the evidence-collection form (which can be adapted) is available in the Appendix to this publication.

STAGE 3

MAPPING AND ANALYSIS

Purpose

Following the collection of practices, case studies and other evidence of community engagement, the university team analyses the collected evidence and produces a 'mapping report' that provides a comprehensive overview of the range of community-engagement practices of the university and a critical assessment of the level of mutually beneficial community engagement that has been achieved.

Timing

Months 4-5 of the TEFCE Toolbox implementation.

Tool: Levels of engagement

The second tool provides a rubric defining different levels of engagement (from beginner to advanced) for each sub-dimension of the TEFCE Toolbox. Its purpose is to allow users to critically analyse the practices they have mapped with the previous tool and to reach conclusions regarding the level of engagement.

During the quick scan, a range of activities are identified involving various forms of cooperation with the community. But this, in itself, tells us little about what role the community has in such activities and the extent to which the practices follow the principle of 'authenticity' that is central to the TEFCE Toolbox, defined as ensuring mutual benefits. Using the Levels-of-Engagement tool, users can compare the collected practices to descriptors of different levels of engagement, organised in a 1-5 level rubric. An example from the TEFCE Toolbox is provided below for one of the sub-dimensions of Teaching & Learning.

TOOL 2

LEVELS OF ENGAGEMENT

Example: Sub-dimension I.2 - The university has study programmes or courses that include a community-based learning component for students.

Levels of engagement	
Community-based learning is included in study programmes or courses at the university and...	
Level 1	.. benefits students to develop their knowledge and skills, although there is little evidence yet of their benefit for the community.
Level 2	
Level 3	... has demonstrated benefits for students and support community partners address a short-term problem or need.
Level 4	
Level 5	... builds capacities of community partners and brings equal benefits to the students, teaching staff and university as a whole.
Achieved level and conclusions *(300 words per sub-dimension)*	
Estimate of achieved level (1-5):	

The process of assigning each sub-dimension with level of engagement is focused on a critical examination of collected practices only, rather than on considering to what extent these are widespread throughout the whole university or are sustainable (this will be a subject of analysis in the following Tool 3). In short, Tool 2 helps answer the question: *"To what extent are the community-engagement practices mapped at the university advanced and mutually beneficial?"*

Illustrative example

Sub-dimension I.1. The university has study programmes or courses to respond to societal needs that are specific to the university's context and its external communities.	
Levels of engagement	
The university has study programmes or courses that…	
Level 1	*…make general references to their relevance to the societal needs of the university's external communities…*
Level 2	
Level 3	*… include specific content or make specific links with the societal needs of the university's external communities….*
Level 4	
Level 5	*… are developed in cooperation with the university's external communities to address a societal need….*
Achieved level and conclusions (300 words per sub-dimension)	
• *Many of the university's study programmes point to careers that focus on social needs, partly in the region (teacher training, local government, health/medical technology), partly global (energy transition, environment), partly in the Global South.* • *Social studies at the University are intended to be linked to technological problems to address societal needs holistically. For example, the Philosophy department offers courses focused on ethical issues of technology and hence the courses "include specific content or make specific links with the societal needs of the university's external communities" although the focus is often placed on a global future citizen.* • *Boards of several study programmes at the University also include representatives of local businesses, meaning that many study programmes respond to needs defined by the university's external community.* ***Good practice: Master's programme Geo-information science and natural resource management****: this joint programme between Faculty of _____ and _____the University of _____. The hub of the course is the application of geo-information and earth observation techniques in support of natural resources management. The curriculum concentrates on methods for assessing the state of the resource base and the changes that occur and progresses to the assessment of impacts and, finally, societal response.* ***Other examples of practices:*** *Master's programme _____; Bachelor programme _____; Course _____*	

Tool: Institutional community-engagement heatmap

The third tool provides a colour-coded matrix to synthesise the findings for each dimension and to further determine the extent to which community engagement is multifaceted and embedded at the university. Its purpose is to allow users to reach conclusions on the level of community engagement for each dimension and for the entire university, based on the previously mapped and analysed practices.

The heatmap also applies a five-level scale, but uses colours in order to provide a clearer visual presentation of the overall results at the end of the TEFCE Toolbox application process. The heatmap:

- synthesises the findings regarding the **authenticity** of engagement for each of the dimensions as a whole;
- assigns levels regarding how **multifaceted** the engagement of the university is (regarding the types of social needs addressed and the communities engaged with);
- assigns levels regarding how **embedded** the engagement of the university is (reflected in how widespread and sustainable the practices are).

The assignment of heatmap levels is flexible, rather than being a precise score determined by a corresponding indicator. Levels are assigned by the university team based on discussions acknowledging the collected evidence and that are then validated by stakeholders, based on the following guidelines:

TOOL 3

INSTITUTIONAL COMMUNITY-ENGAGEMENT HEATMAP

Characteristics of engagement	Heatmap level		
	Lowest level		Highest level
1. Authenticity of engagement	A level is assigned based on a synthesises of the findings of the previous levels of engagement for each sub-dimension, to reach a conclusion for the dimension as a whole.		
2. Societal needs addressed	Lower levels: engagement that meets the traditional notion of 'use to society', such as law, medicine, public administration, industry, etc.	Middle level: engagement that responds to needs such as digitalisation, innovation, smart cities, 21st century skills, etc.	Higher levels: engagement responding to pressing global challenges such as climate change or migration and to local social problems.
3. Communities engaged with	Lower levels: large, highly-structured and well-resourced institutions such as corporations, central government, hospitals.	Middle level: institutions with less capacity for engagement such as local authorities, SMEs, cultural institutions, public bodies.	Higher levels: engagement with partners with the least capacity for engagement, such as schools, NGOs, social enterprises and citizens.
4. Institutional spread	Lower levels: community-engagement practices being only present at one or two university departments.	Middle level: community-engagement practices taking place at several different departments.	Higher levels: community-engagement practices that take place across the entire university.
5. Institutional sustainability	Lower levels: community engagement that is primarily the result of short-term projects or collaborations.	Middle level: community-engagement initiatives that have seen continuous implementation.	Higher levels: community-engagement practices that have been institutionalised, with adequate funding.

The result is a heatmap for each dimension, which are then combined to form a single institutional community-engagement heatmap. This provides a visual guide to the areas in which the university is strongest and the areas which could be further improved (depending on the university's areas of priority).

Illustrative examples

Dimension-level heatmap:

Synthesis: community-engagement heatmap and conclusions						
Characteristics of engagement	*Heatmap level*					*Heatmap levels criteria*
	Lowest level				*Highest level*	
Authenticity of engagement			x			*Lower: superficial; no evidence yet of mutual benefit* *Higher: authentic; tangible benefits for communities*
Societal needs addressed		x				*Lower: needs of labour market and industry* *Higher: 'grand challenges' (e.g. climate), social justice*
Communities engaged with			x			*Lower: well-resourced partners (e.g. business)* *Higher: low-resourced partners (e.g. schools, NGOs)*
Institutional spread				x		*Lower: only at one or two university departments* *Higher: across the entire institution*
Institutional sustainability				x		*Lower: engagement through short-term projects* *Higher: engagement institutionalised, adequate funding*

Institution-level heatmap[4]

	Characteristics of community engagement				
Dimensions of community engagement	*Authenticity*	*Social Needs*	*Communities*	*Spread*	*Sustain-ability*
I. Teaching and learning					
II. Research					
III. Service/knowledge exchange					
IV. Students					
V. Management (partnerships)					
VI. Management (policies)					
VII. Peer support					

Heatmap colour legend:	Lowest level				Highest level

4 The heatmap is focused on the dimensions of community-engagement activities. The dimensions that relate to the supportive environment for community engagement (Dimensions VI – Management/policies; and Dimension VII - Supportive peers) are only subject to the 'Authenticity' characteristic of the heatmap since those dimensions relate to ensuring the institutional conditions for engaging with communities rather than on engagement activities themselves.

Instructions

Step 1: Categorising/'coding' the collected practices	Practices are sorted into corresponding dimensions and sub-dimensions of the TEFCE Toolbox. Importantly, however, most practices can be sorted into more than one sub-dimension. • E.g. The presence of a university-level centre for service-learning will belong to Dimension I: Teaching and learning and to Dimension VI. Management (policies and support structures).
Step 2: Analysing practices and assigning level of authenticity	Each sub-dimension is assigned a level of engagement (from a 1-5 scale) based on level descriptors provided in the tool presented below. The assignment of levels is not approached as a narrow 'scoring exercise' but is intended as a framework for universities to reflect critically on where their practices fit in a set of given criteria. • Important: Taking into account the context-specific nature of community engagement, the process of assigning a numerical level of engagement is intentionally designed to be flexible and based on internal, qualitative discussions rather than as precise 'scoring' mechanism based on a precise equivalence between the collected evidence and the level descriptors. For this reason, only three of five levels are provided with descriptors. Additionally, the context-specific nature of community engagement means that not all universities should necessarily be expected to achieve Level 5 and may not even wish to aspire to a Level 5. Each university can determine which sub-dimensions should be the highest priority.
Step 3: Synthesising results and assigning dimension 'heatmap' levels	Results for each dimension are synthesised by the university team using the 'heatmap' tool, which considers to what extent the community-engagement practices are multifaceted and embedded at the university. The assignment of heatmap levels is flexible, rather than being a precise score linked to an indicator.
Step 4: Creating institutional heatmap	The result of this stage is a comprehensive 'mapping report', containing a narrative for each subdimension detailing the characteristics of the mapped practices and concluding with assigned levels and a completed heatmap. This report is the subject of discussion and validation in the next stage of the TEFCE Toolbox process.
Step 5: Drafting mapping report ('background report')	The result of this stage is a comprehensive 'mapping report', containing a narrative for each subdimension detailing the characteristics of the mapped practices and concluding with assigned levels and a completed heatmap. This report is the subject of discussion and validation in the next stage of the TEFCE Toolbox process.

Templates

A template for the mapping report and an Excel template for creating the institutional heatmap are available in the Appendix to this report.

STAGE 4

PARTICIPATIVE DIALOGUE

Purpose

A crucial part of implementing the TEFCE Toolbox is to engage in a participative discussion with university staff, students and community representatives on the findings of the mapping report. The aim of this process is to first validate the findings of the report (or supplement the report with new findings) and then to critically reflect on the strengths, areas for improvement and the opportunities and threats to making such improvements. This stage of the TEFCE Toolbox differentiates it most from other, primarily indicator-based and desk-based assessment methods and should result in greater ownership of the process by all stakeholders.

Timing

Month 5 of the TEFCE Toolbox implementation.

Tool: SLIPDOT analysis

The fourth and final tool provides a customised 'SWOT' analysis to facilitate self-reflection discussions (via workshops or focus groups) between all stakeholders about the results of the implementation of the entire TEFCE Toolbox process. Its purpose is to validate the conclusions, acknowledge achievements and define areas for improvements.

As a tool to structure such discussions, the 'SLIPDOT analysis' was developed by the TEFCE project team. Following the structure of a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats), the SLIPDOT analysis replaces 'Weaknesses' by two categories: 'Lower Intensity' and 'Potential for Development'. It also re-frames Opportunities and Threats as not only being external, but also as encompassing elements that are *internal* to the university, but that are outside the control of community-engaged practitioners (meaning that they mostly refer to university management).

TOOL 4

SLIPDOT ANALYSIS

Areas of **S**trength	Areas of **L**ower **I**ntensity	Areas with **P**otential for **D**evelopment
Areas where the university is doing particularly well in terms of community engagement.	Areas of community engagement that are not highly developed at the university (due to it not yet being a priority, due to limited capacity or other reasons).	Areas of community engagement that the university could realistically improve in the future.

Opportunities	**T**hreats
Internal: e.g. Level of support among leadership and academic staff	Internal: e.g. Level of support among leadership and academic staff
External: e.g. Level of community support; in line with national policy; availability of funds and programmes (at the national and European level)	External: e.g. Level of community support; in line with national policy; availability of funds and programmes (at the national and European level)

Instructions

The self-reflection is carried out in a participative form through workshop-style discussions between university management, staff, students and community representatives and/or through focus groups.

Step 1 in the self-reflection stage is therefore to discuss the 'mapping report' (or 'background report') drafted in the previous stage with participants of the meeting. This stage is usually carried out dimension by dimension, with meeting participants having the opportunity to provide comments or additions to the report. The aim of the meeting is to confirm whether the report findings (and proposed levels of engagement/institutional heatmap) are fair and accurate.

Step 2 in the self-reflection stage is to carry out the SLIPDOT analysis. The SLIPDOT can be carried out for each dimension or for clusters of dimensions (e.g. teaching/learning and research; service/knowledge exchange and students), with overall conclusions feeding into a single SLIPDOT analysis. Using the template below, each university can organise a workshop with university management, staff, students and community representatives to discuss the mapping report. Alternatively, such discussions can be held with focus groups by the University Community Engagement Team. The areas with potential for development and the identified opportunities can provide the recommendations for improvements and future plans.

Illustrative example

*Areas of **S**trength*	*Areas of **L**ower **I**ntensity*	*Areas with **P**otential for **D**evelopment*
• *Community-based learning is integrated into study programmes at several departments.* • *There are examples throughout the university of communities' and citizens' inclusion in research.* • *...*	• *The primary thematic focus of the university is technology and industry. This means that engagement with other groups in order to address broader societal needs has not been as high a priority so far.* • *...*	• *The university could consolidate and better interlink existing community-engagement initiatives.* • *The university could adopt more bottom-up level engagement with external communities with fewer resources.* • *....*

***O**pportunities*	***T**hreats*
Internal: • *The university is currently in a strategic planning phase for the period until 2030, which provides an opportunity to strengthen the position of community engagement.* • *...*	*Internal:* • *The university might decide to focus only on societal impact through engaging with business and industry, rather than harder-to-reach groups.* • *....*
External: • *The societal impact of research and higher education generally is becoming increasingly prominent in policy debates. Prioritising community engagement is a pathway towards achieving such an impact.* • *...*	*External:* • *The pressure of ensuring adequate funding for universities presents an obstacle to community engagement that does not have a clear funding stream.* • *...*

Template

A template for the SLIPDOT analysis is available in the Appendix to this publication.

STAGE 5

INSTITUTIONAL REPORT

Purpose

The institutional report is drafted by the university team and compiles and summarises the results of the mapping report and the SLIPDOT analysis. The report provides the basis for showcasing achievements in community engagement and for planning future community-engagement initiatives.

Timing

Month 5 of the TEFCE Toolbox implementation.

Structure of report

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	Two-page summary of the report's main content with primary focus on the SLIPDOT recommendations.
INTRODUCTION	Explaining the objective of the TEFCE Toolbox, the reasons why the process was undertaken, the TEFCE Toolbox's structure and methodology and the entire process of implementation (and who was involved and consulted in the process).
1. INSTITUTIONAL OVERVIEW	*About the university:* Short introduction (one page) with information about the university's history and profile and about whether community engagement has so far had a prominent place in the institution. *Flagship community-engagement practices:* Selection of 3-5 practices from the collected case studies that illustrate the range of ways in which the university is community-engaged.
2. MAPPING PRACTICES	Main content of the institutional report. Final version of the Mapping Report completed by the university team based on the collection and analysis of practices and based on validation by university staff and external communities through participative discussions.
3. HEATMAP	Final version of the institutional community-engagement heatmap completed as part of the Mapping Report.
4. PARTICIPATIVE DIALOGUE	Summary of the SLIPDOT analysis carried out as part of the TEFCE Toolbox process, presented as a list of Strengths, Areas of Lower Intensity, Areas with Potential for Development, and Opportunities and Threats.
APPENDIX: CASE STUDIES	Inclusion of all the texts of the case studies that were collected as part of the TEFCE Toolbox process.

Instructions

Based on the results of the self-reflection stage, the university team coordinator writes up the conclusions of the SLIPDOT analysis and (if applicable) makes changes and additions to the background report. Those texts then become the core content of the institutional report (sections 2,3 and 4), while all the collected practices are included in the Appendix to the report.

The remaining steps involve drafting an introduction (on the process of the TEFCE Toolbox implementation) and an executive summary with key findings and recommendations.

Crucially – the institutional report should be published and made visible both within the university's academic community and with its external community partners. The report can then form the basis for future improvement's to the university's community engagement and as a reference point for a subsequent application of the TEFCE Toolbox in the future.

Examples of institutional reports

Examples of completed institutional reports (by TU Dresden, TU Dublin, the University of Rijeka and the University of Twente) are available on the website of the TEFCE project: www.tefce.eu.

Templates

A template for the institutional report is available in the Appendix to this publication.

APPENDIX: TEFCE TOOLBOX TEMPLATES

Templates for the TEFCE Toolbox are included below. Templates are also available in Word and Excel format upon request – please contact the Institute for the Development of Education (TEFCE project coordinator): iro@iro.hr

TEFCE

Towards a European Framework for Community Engagement in Higher Education

APPENDIX: TEFCE TOOLBOX TEMPLATES

Templates to accompany publication:

Farnell, T., Benneworth, P., Ćulum Ilić, B., Seeber, M., Šćukanec Schmidt. N. (2020). *TEFCE Toolbox for Community Engagement in Higher Education: An Institutional Self-Reflection Framework*. Zagreb: Institute for the Development of Education

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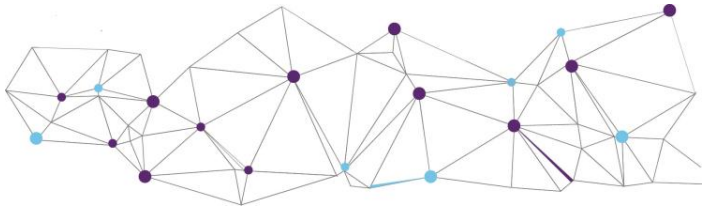
TEFCE
Towards a European Framework for Community Engagement in Higher Education



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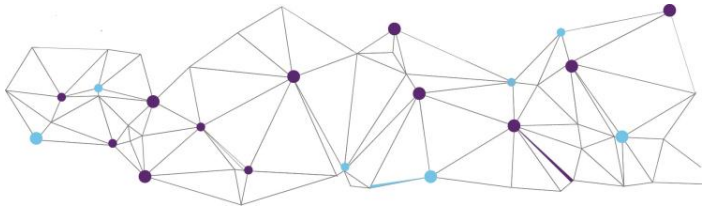
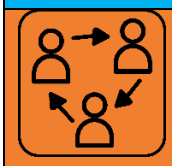


Note: The template below provides the shortest approach to carrying out a quick scan. However, universities and communities can carry out a more thorough quick scan by using the Mapping Report template (Template 3) instead, which also allows to make preliminary assessments of the level of engagement.

Dimensions	Sub-dimensions
 I. Teaching and learning	I.1. The university has study programmes or courses to respond to societal needs that are specific to the university's context and its external communities. I.2. The university has study programmes or courses that include a community-based learning component for students. I.3. The university facilitates the participation of community representatives in the teaching and learning process (in a curricular or extra-curricular context). I.4. The university has study programmes or courses that are created, reviewed or evaluated in consultation/cooperation with the university's external communities.

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II. Research	II.1. The university carries out research focusing on the societal needs of the university's external communities. II.2. The university carries out collaborative/participatory research in cooperation with the university's external communities.

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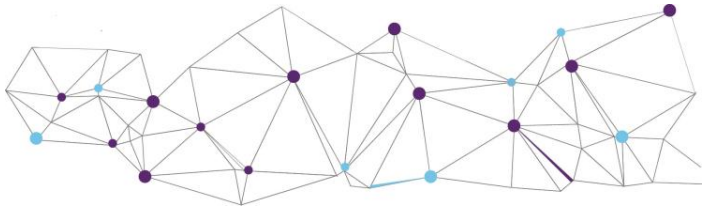

III. Service and knowledge exchange	III.1. University staff contribute to debates and initiatives that address societal needs of the university's external communities. III.2. University staff provide their knowledge to support and/or build the capacity of the university's external communities. III.3. University staff community-engagement activities have resulted in demonstrable benefits for the university's external communities.

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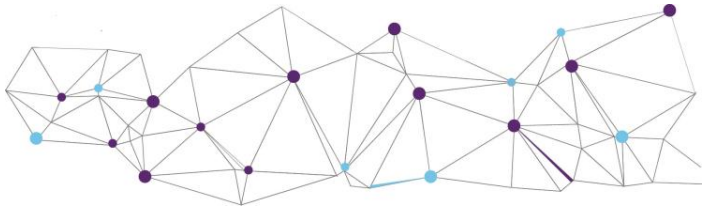

IV. Students	IV.1. Students deliver community-engagement activities independently through student organisations or initiatives. IV.2. The university facilitates and supports partnerships between students and external communities.

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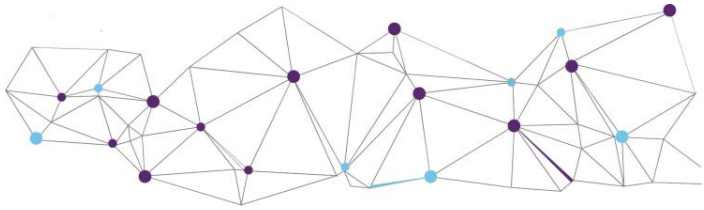

V. Management (partnerships and openness)	V.1. The university has a track record of mutually beneficial partnerships with its external communities. V.2. The university makes learning and research resources accessible to its external communities. V.3. The university has facilities and services that are jointly managed and/or accessible to its external communities.

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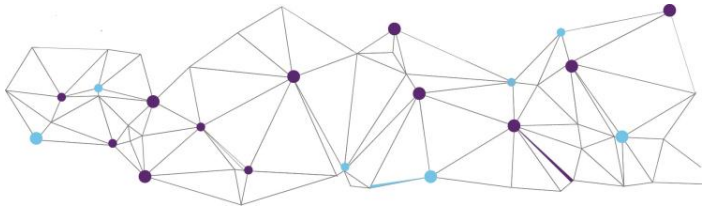

VI. Management (policies and support structures)	VI.1. The university provides support and/or incentives for community-engagement achievements by its staff, students and external communities. VI.2. The university has a support structure (e.g. committee, office or staff) for embedding and coordinating community-engagement activities at the university level. VI.3. The university has staff-development policies (e.g. recruitment, tenure, promotion) that include community engagement as a criterion. VI.4. The university has a mission, strategy, leadership and (funding) instruments that specifically promote community engagement.

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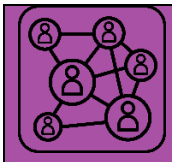 VII. Supportive peers	VII.1. The university has prominent academic staff members that have a strong track-record of community engagement and that advocate for its further advancement. VII.2. The university's academic staff are acceptive of the idea of university-community engagement and of the value and rigour of community-engaged teaching and research.

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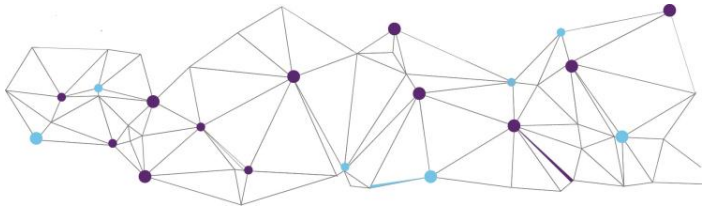

EVIDENCE COLLECTION

Case title: _____

Case study provided by: name, surname, institution

1. Description of community-engagement practice	
Brief description of practice *(Please use the sub-questions, if relevant.)*	
What are the main goals of the practice?	
What are the main activities?	
Who is organising the practice?	
Who initiated it?	
Web link	
How is the community/target group with which you engage involved in the implementation of this practice?	
2. Support for community engagement	
How does the university support this community-engaged practice?	
Does the organizer have a formal budget? Does the university provide facilities and/or administrative support?	
Does the practice fit in a broader strategy or framework of the organizer (the university)?	
Is it a continuous or a 'one-off' collaboration?	
Does the university give any form of recognition or promotion of the practice?	

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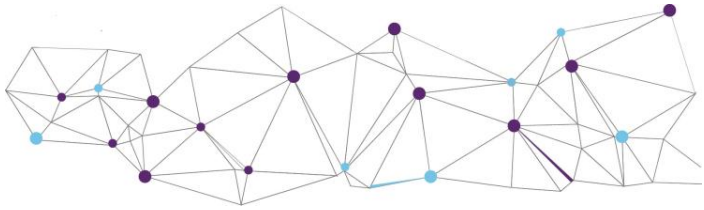

How do partners from the community support and value this practice?	
How do your peers (university staff and management) and students support and value this practice?	

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MAPPING REPORT

DIMENSION I: TEACHING AND LEARNING

Sub-dimension I.1. The university has study programmes or courses to respond to societal needs that are specific to the university's context and its external communities.

Levels of engagement	
The university has study programmes or courses that	
Level 1	...make general references to their relevance to the societal needs of the university's external communities.
Level 2	
Level 3	... include specific content or make specific links with the societal needs of the university's external communities.
Level 4	
Level 5	... are developed in cooperation with the university's external communities to address a societal need.
Achieved level and conclusions *(300 words per sub-dimension)*	
Estimate of achieved level (1-5)	

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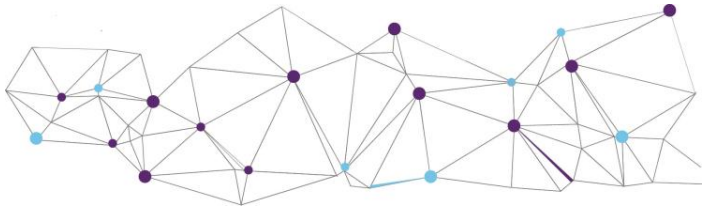

Sub-dimension I.2. The university has study programmes or courses that include a community-based learning component for students.

Levels of engagement	
Community-based learning is included in study programmes and courses at the university and...	
Level 1	.. benefits students to develop their knowledge and skills, although there is little evidence yet of their benefit for the community.
Level 2	
Level 3	... has demonstrated benefits for students and supports community partners to address a short-term problem or need.
Level 4	
Level 5	... builds capacities of community partners and bring equal benefits to the students, teaching staff and university as a whole.
Achieved level and conclusions *(300 words per sub-dimension)*	
Estimate of achieved level (1-5)	

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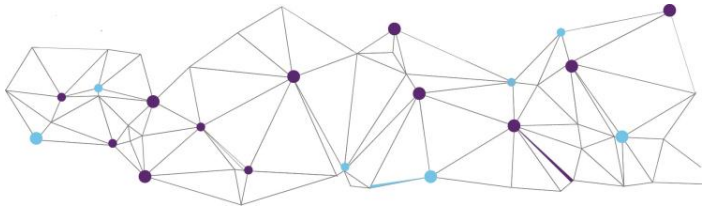

Sub-dimension I.3. The university facilitates the participation of community representatives in the teaching and learning process (in a curricular or extra-curricular context).

Levels of engagement	
External community representatives that cooperate with the university …	
Level 1	… have a partnership role that does not involve the delivery of teaching and learning.
Level 2	
Level 3	… are included occasionally in teaching and learning processes (e.g. extra-curricular guest lectures).
Level 4	
Level 5	… are included continually in teaching and learning processes (e.g. working with students on projects or research).
Achieved level and conclusions *(300 words per sub-dimension)*	
Estimate of achieved level (1-5)	

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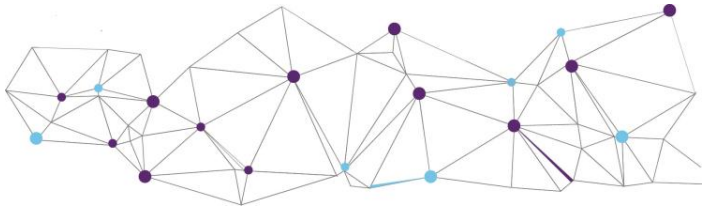

Sub-dimension I.4. The university has study programmes or courses that are created, reviewed or evaluated in consultation/cooperation with the university's external communities.

Levels of engagement	
External community representatives that cooperate with the university …	
Level 1	… are not formally consulted regarding the design of the programmes or courses with which they cooperate.
Level 2	
Level 3	… are formally consulted regarding the design of the courses with which they cooperate and their voices are taken into consideration.
Level 4	
Level 5	… co-design and co-evaluate the programmes or courses with which they cooperate.
Achieved level and conclusions *(300 words per sub-dimension)*	
Estimate of achieved level (1-5)	

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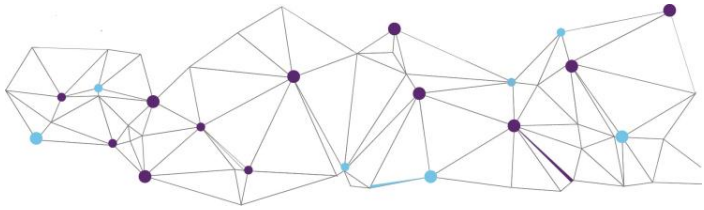

Synthesis: Community-engagement heatmap for Dimension I: Teaching and learning

Characteristics of engagement	Heatmap level					Heatmap levels criteria
	Lowest level				Highest level	
Authenticity of engagement						Lower: superficial; no evidence yet of mutual benefits Higher: authentic; tangible benefits for communities
Societal needs addressed						Lower: needs of labour market and industry Higher: 'grand challenges' (e.g. climate), social justice
Communities engaged with						Lower: well-resourced partners (e.g. business) Higher: low-resourced partners (e.g. schools, NGOs)
Institutional spread						Lower: only at one or two university departments Higher: across the entire institution
Institutional sustainability						Lower: engagement through short-term projects Higher: engagement institutionalised, adequate funding

[For each characteristic of engagement, mark with an X the heatmap level of the dimension as a whole, based on the findings of the mapping report. Insert a brief narrative explanation of the heatmap findings].

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DIMENSION II. RESEARCH

Sub-dimension II.1. The university carries out research focusing on the societal needs of the university's external communities.

Levels of engagement	
The research projects at the university that address societal needs....	
Level 1	... focus on community-specific needs and include community representatives as respondents.
Level 2	
Level 3	... include structured consultations with community stakeholders at different phases in the research process.
Level 4	
Level 5	... are developed based on a structured partnership, in which the community can co-determine the research agenda.
Achieved level and conclusions *(300 words per sub-dimension)*	
Estimate of achieved level (1-5)	

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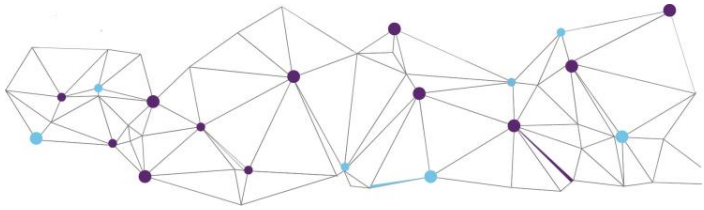

Sub-dimension II.2. The university carries out collaborative/participatory research in cooperation with the university's external communities.

Levels of engagement	
Collaborative/participatory research projects at the university…	
Level 1	… actively include community stakeholders in the process of data collection.
Level 2	
Level 3	… actively include community stakeholders' views relating to the interpretation of research results and implications for policy and/or for the community.
Level 4	
Level 5	… result in co-creation with community stakeholders (joint defining of research agenda, joint implementation and interpretation).
Achieved level and conclusions *(300 words per sub-dimension)*	
Estimate of achieved level (1-5)	

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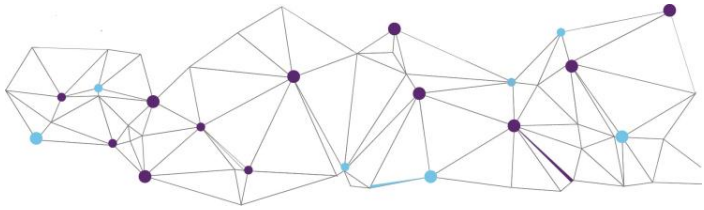

Synthesis: Community-engagement heatmap for Dimension II: Research

Characteristics of engagement	Heatmap level					Heatmap levels criteria
	Lowest level				Highest level	
Authenticity of engagement						Lower: superficial; no evidence yet of mutual benefits Higher: authentic; tangible benefits for communities
Societal needs addressed						Lower: needs of labour market and industry Higher: 'grand challenges' (e.g. climate), social justice
Communities engaged with						Lower: well-resourced partners (e.g. business) Higher: low-resourced partners (e.g. schools, NGOs)
Institutional spread						Lower: only at one or two university departments Higher: across the entire institution
Institutional sustainability						Lower: engagement through short-term projects Higher: engagement institutionalised, adequate funding

[For each characteristic of engagement, mark with an X the heatmap level of the dimension as a whole, based on the findings of the mapping report. Insert a brief narrative explanation of the heatmap findings].

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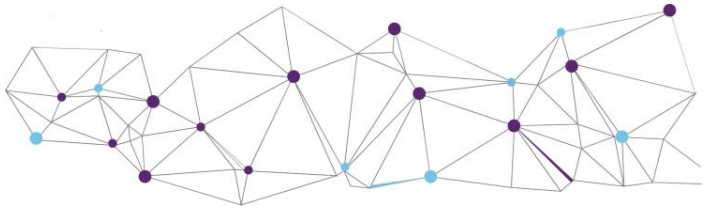

DIMENSION III. SERVICE AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

Sub-dimension III.1. University staff contribute to debates and initiatives that address societal needs of the university's external communities.

Levels of engagement	
University staff contribute to debates and initiatives that address societal needs of the university's external communities...	
Level 1	... through academic publications, public presentations and media articles.
Level 2	
Level 3	... through including community partners in university-led development projects (non-research) related to community-relevant issues.
Level 4	
Level 5	... through joint initiatives or advocacy with community groups, in which community groups are equal partners.
Achieved level and conclusions *(300 words per sub-dimension)*	
Estimate of achieved level (1-5)	

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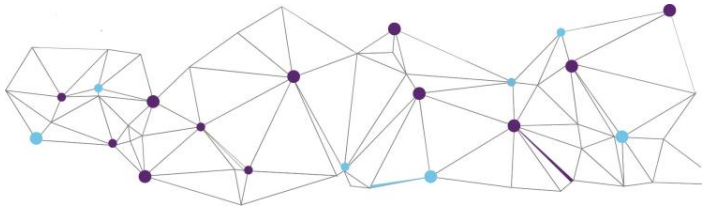

Sub-dimension III.2. University staff provide their knowledge to support and/or build the capacity of the university's external communities.

Levels of engagement	
The university contributes to building the capacity of external community groups through …	
Level 1	… occasionally including external community groups in joint projects (as partners).
Level 2	
Level 3	… regularly providing expertise to external community groups to resolve societal needs or issues that they are faced with.
Level 4	
Level 5	… continually supporting external community groups to develop their knowledge and skills and strengthen their ability to resolve challenges that they are faced with.
Achieved level and conclusions *(300 words per sub-dimension)*	
Estimate of achieved level (1-5)	

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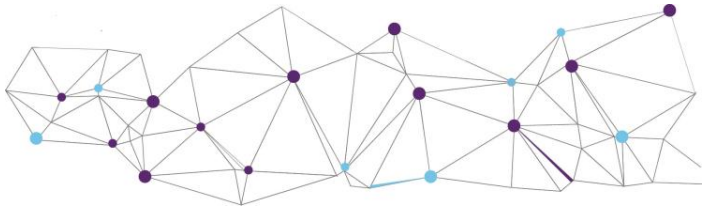

Sub-dimension III.3. University staff community-engagement activities have resulted in demonstrable benefits for the university's external communities

Levels of engagement	
The ways in which external communities benefit from service and knowledge exchange activities are …	
Level 1	… assumed, but not explicitly evaluated (quantitatively or qualitatively).
Level 2	
Level 3	… acknowledged through positive feedback from community stakeholders.
Level 4	
Level 5	… proven through tangible changes and improvements to public policy and/or to the communities involved.
Achieved level and conclusions *(300 words per sub-dimension)*	
Estimate of achieved level (1-5)	

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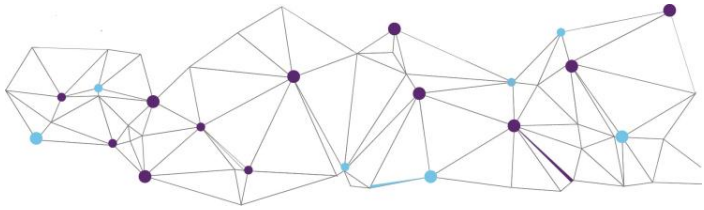

Synthesis: Community-engagement heatmap for Dimension III: Service and knowledge exchange

Characteristics of engagement	Heatmap level					Heatmap levels criteria
	Lowest level				Highest level	
Authenticity of engagement						Lower: superficial; no evidence yet of mutual benefits Higher: authentic; tangible benefits for communities
Societal needs addressed						Lower: needs of labour market and industry Higher: 'grand challenges' (e.g. climate), social justice
Communities engaged with						Lower: well-resourced partners (e.g. business) Higher: low-resourced partners (e.g. schools, NGOs)
Institutional spread						Lower: only at one or two university departments Higher: across the entire institution
Institutional sustainability						Lower: engagement through short-term projects Higher: engagement institutionalised, adequate funding

[For each characteristic of engagement, mark with an X the heatmap level of the dimension as a whole, based on the findings of the mapping report. Insert a brief narrative explanation of the heatmap findings].

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DIMENSION IV. STUDENTS

Sub-dimension IV.1. Students deliver community-engagement activities independently through student organisations or initiatives.

Levels of engagement	
Students deliver community-engagement activities through...	
Level 1	... awareness-raising campaigns to address community needs.
Level 2	
Level 3	... organising direct assistance to community groups in need (e.g. fundraising; organising charitable events; volunteering in schools).
Level 4	
Level 5	... partnerships with community groups to jointly address problems in the community.
Achieved level and conclusions *(300 words per sub-dimension)*	
Estimate of achieved level (1-5)	

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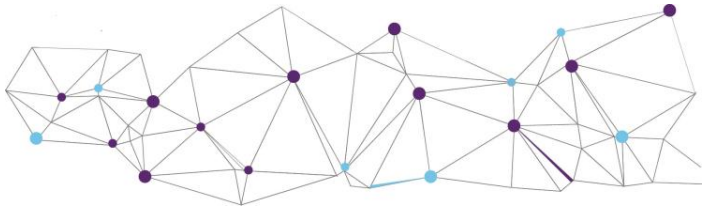

Sub-dimension IV.2. The university facilitates and supports partnerships between students and external communities

Levels of engagement	
The university facilitates and supports partnerships between community groups and students ...	
Level 1	... by providing information on extra-curricular activities to address community needs.
Level 2	
Level 3	... by supporting students in organising extra-curricular activities for community engagement.
Level 4	
Level 5	... by jointly designing extra-curricular opportunities to support students' community engagement.
Achieved level and conclusions *(300 words per sub-dimension)*	
Estimate of achieved level (1-5)	

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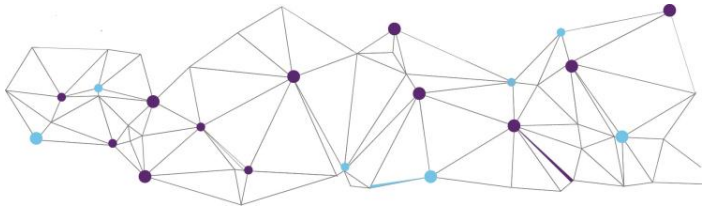

Synthesis: Community-engagement heatmap for Dimension IV: Students

Characteristics of engagement	Heatmap level					Heatmap levels criteria
	Lowest level				Highest level	
Authenticity of engagement						Lower: superficial; no evidence yet of mutual benefits Higher: authentic; tangible benefits for communities
Societal needs addressed						Lower: needs of labour market and industry Higher: 'grand challenges' (e.g. climate), social justice
Communities engaged with						Lower: well-resourced partners (e.g. business) Higher: low-resourced partners (e.g. schools, NGOs)
Institutional spread						Lower: only at one or two university departments Higher: across the entire institution
Institutional sustainability						Lower: engagement through short-term projects Higher: engagement institutionalised, adequate funding

[For each characteristic of engagement, mark with an X the heatmap level of the dimension as a whole, based on the findings of the mapping report. Insert a brief narrative explanation of the heatmap findings].

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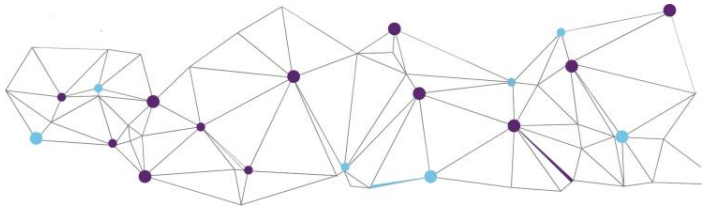

DIMENSION V. UNIVERSITY MANAGEMENT (PARTNERSHIPS AND OPENNESS)

Sub-dimension V.1. The university has a track record of mutually-beneficial partnerships with its external communities.

Levels of engagement	
The university has partnerships with external stakeholders through	
Level 1	... occasionally providing resources to community groups in need and through short-term collaborations relating to community needs.
Level 2	
Level 3	... agreements on continual areas of cooperation relating to community needs.
Level 4	
Level 5	... inclusion of community groups on university bodies that make key decisions about community engagement activities (steering groups, committees, etc).
Achieved level and conclusions *(300 words per sub-dimension)*	
Estimate of achieved level (1-5)	

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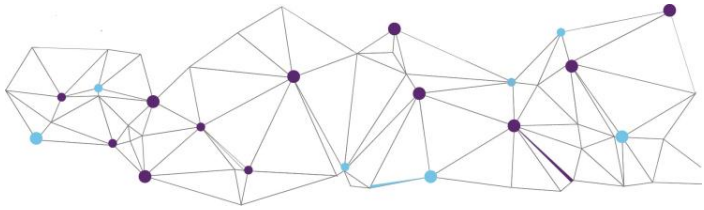

Sub-dimension V.2. The university makes learning and research resources accessible to its external communities.

Levels of engagement	
The university makes learning and research resources open and accessible to its external communities…	
Level 1	… by making educational materials open to the public via downloads and videos and by allowing open access to selected research.
Level 2	
Level 3	… by organising regular public events targeting the university's external communities (e.g. science festivals).
Level 4	
Level 5	… and can demonstrate that external communities make regular use of the university's educational/research resources.
Achieved level and conclusions *(300 words per sub-dimension)*	
Estimate of achieved level (1-5)	

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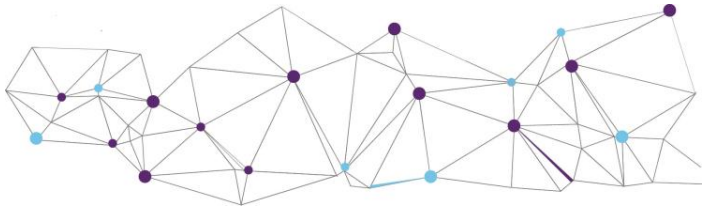

Sub-dimension V.3. The university has facilities and services that are jointly-managed and/or accessible to its external communities.

Levels of engagement	
The university has facilities and services that are	
Level 1	... accessible to the public, but rarely used by the non-university community.
Level 2	
Level 3	... accessible to the public, widely promoted and regularly used by community.
Level 4	
Level 5	... jointl -owned, shared, managed with relevant community groups and are regularly used by community-
Achieved level and conclusions *(300 words per sub-dimension)*	
Estimate of achieved level (1-5)	

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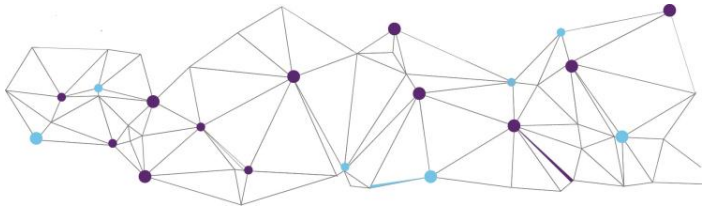

Synthesis: Community-engagement heatmap for Dimension V: University management (partnerships and openness)

Characteristics of engagement	Heatmap level					Heatmap levels criteria
	Lowest level				Highest level	
Authenticity of engagement						Lower: superficial; no evidence yet of mutual benefits Higher: authentic; tangible benefits for communities
Societal needs addressed						Lower: needs of labour market and industry Higher: 'grand challenges' (e.g. climate), social justice
Communities engaged with						Lower: well-resourced partners (e.g. business) Higher: low-resourced partners (e.g. schools, NGOs)
Institutional spread						Lower: only at one or two university departments Higher: across the entire institution
Institutional sustainability						Lower: engagement through short-term projects Higher: engagement institutionalised, adequate funding

[For each characteristic of engagement, mark with an X the heatmap level of the dimension as a whole, based on the findings of the mapping report. Insert a brief narrative explanation of the heatmap findings].

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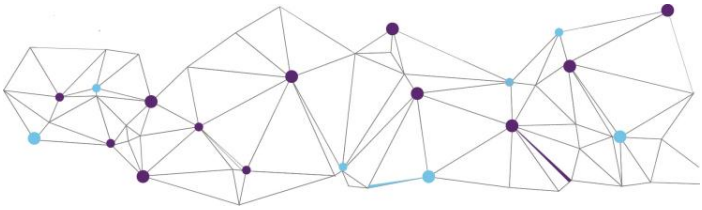

DIMENSION VI. UNIVERSITY MANAGEMENT (POLICIES AND SUPPORT STRUCTURES)

Sub-dimension VI.1. The university provides support and/or incentives for community-engagement achievements by its staff, students and external communities.

Levels of engagement	
The university provides support and/or incentives for community engagement …	
Level 1	… through occasional statements relating to the relevance of community engagement to the societal needs of universities' external communities.
Level 2	
Level 3	… regular and/or structured efforts to increase the visibility of achievements of the university's community engagement (via web sites, social media and/or through a dedicated office/body).
Level 4	
Level 5	… by providing formal recognition/awards for community engagement and/or through high-profile conferences or media promotion.
Achieved level and conclusions *(300 words per sub-dimension)*	
Estimate of achieved level (1-5)	

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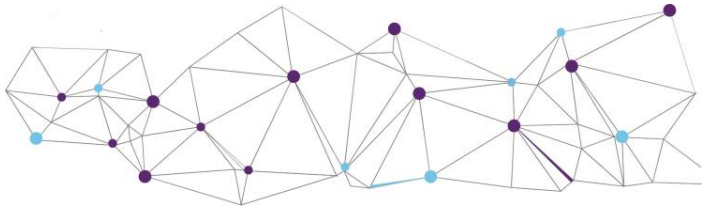

Sub-dimension VI.2. The university has a support structure (e.g. committee, office or staff) for embedding and coordinating community engagement activities at the university level.

Levels of engagement	
There is a university structure that addresses/ supports community engagement in the form of…	
Level 1	… a working group or advisory body that covers "university engagement" in its broadest sense (third mission, business engagement, civic role, etc.)
Level 2	
Level 3	… a university committee specifically focused on improving university-community engagement.
Level 4	
Level 5	… a high-level university body incorporating community partners to jointly oversee and plan community-engagement activities.
Achieved level and conclusions *(300 words per sub-dimension)*	
Estimate of achieved level (1-5)	

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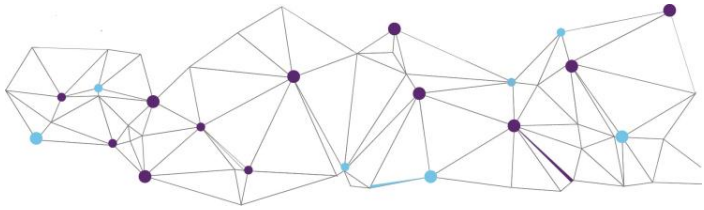

Sub-dimension VI.3. The university has staff development policies (e.g recruitment, tenure, promotion) that include community engagement as a criterion.[1]

Levels of engagement	
University policies relating to recruitment, tenure and promotion…	
Level 1	… do not yet include evaluation criteria specifically related to community engagement.
Level 2	
Level 3	… does include evaluation criteria specifically related to community engagement, although not within the evaluation criteria relating to the categories research and teaching.
Level 4	
Level 5	… prioritise community engagement by providing additional weights for community-engagement achievements in recruitment and evaluation processes, including within research and teaching.
Achieved level and conclusions *(300 words per sub-dimension)*	
Estimate of achieved level (1-5)	

[1] Assuming that the university is able to add complementary criteria to those that are set through national legislation.

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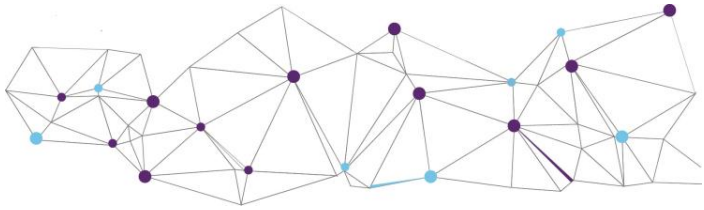

Sub-dimension VI.4. The university has a mission, strategy, leadership and (funding) instruments that specifically promote community engagement.

Levels of engagement	
The university's mission, strategy and leadership …	
Level 1	… indirectly support community engagement through a general reference to the university's role in addressing societal needs.
Level 2	
Level 3	… specifically emphasise the university role in addressing societal needs and serving the local community (without specifically mentioning community engagement).
Level 4	
Level 5	… explicitly prioritise community engagement as within its mission and have concrete engagement initiatives in place.
Achieved level and conclusions *(300 words per sub-dimension)*	
Estimate of achieved level (1-5)	

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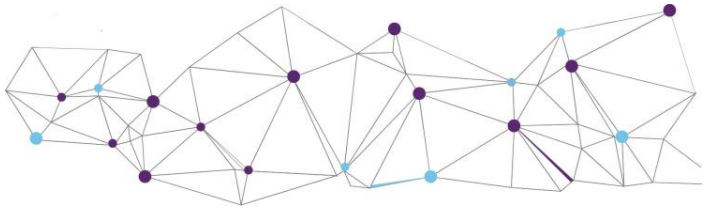

DIMENSION VII. SUPPORTIVE PEERS

Sub-dimension VII.1. The university has prominent academic staff members that have a strong track-record of community engagement and that advocate for its further advancement.

Levels of engagement	
Academic staff at the university play a prominent role in advocating and advancing community engagement and have a strong track-record of community engagement…	
Level 1	… in at least one university department.
Level 2	
Level 3	… at several university departments.
Level 4	
Level 5	… at most university departments.
Achieved level and conclusions	
Estimate of achieved level (1-5)	

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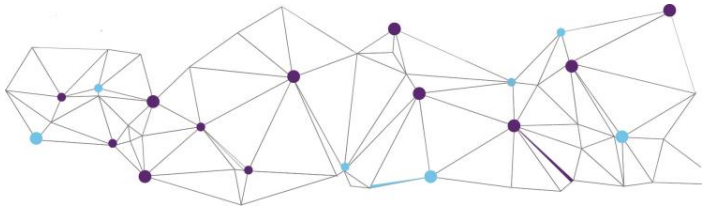

Sub-dimension VII.2. The university's academic staff are acceptive of the idea of university-community engagement and of the value and rigour of community-based teaching and research.

Levels of engagement	
Academic staff both within and outside the unit(s) where community-engaged activities are organised …	
Level 1	… have little understanding and/or express little support for community-based teaching or research.
Level 2	
Level 3	… express limited support for community-based teaching or research.
Level 4	
Level 5	… express strong support for community-based teaching or research and recognise the value and rigour of community-based teaching and research
Achieved level and conclusions	
Estimate of achieved level (1-5)	

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INSTITUTIONAL COMMUNITY-ENGAGEMENT HEATMAP

1	2	3	4	5

Dimensions of community engagement	Characteristics of community engagement: Authenticity	Societal Needs	Communities	Spread	Sustainability
I. Teaching and learning					
II. Research					
III. Service/knowledge exchange					
IV. Students					
V. Management (partnerships)					
VI. Management (policies)					
VII. Peer support					

Instructions: Using the Excel sheet template table (available upon request at iro@iro.hr), enter for each dimension and for each characteristic of engagement a value from a scale 1-5 corresponding to the colour selected from the 5-level colour scale in the mapping report. The colour of each cell will change depending on the value entered, but the actual values in the final table will remain hidden.

The heatmap is focused on the dimensions of community engagement activities. The dimensions that relate to the supportive environment for community engagement (Dimensions VI – Management/policies; and Dimension VII - Supportive peers) are only subject the 'Authenticity' characteristic of the heatmap since those dimensions relate to ensuring the institutional conditions for engaging with communities rather than on engagement activities.

TEFCE
Toolbox_institution

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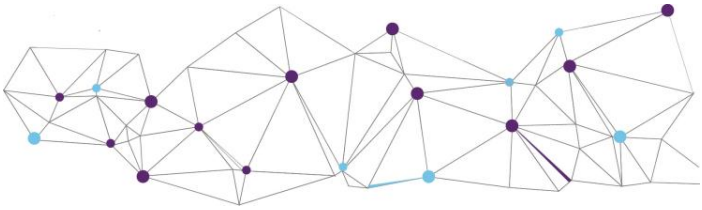

'SLIPDOT' ANALYSIS

Areas of **S**trength	Areas of **L**ower **I**ntensity	Areas with **P**otentia**l** for **D**evelopment
Areas where the university is doing particularly well in terms of community engagement.	*Areas of community engagement that are not highly developed at the university (due to it not yet being a priority, due to limited capacity or other reasons).*	*Areas of community engagement that the university could realistically improve in the future.*

Opportunities	**T**hreats
Internal: *e.g. Level of support among leadership and academic staff*	Internal: *e.g. Level of support among leadership and academic staff*
External: *e.g. Level of community support; in line with national policy; availability of funds and programmes (at the national and European level)*	External: *e.g. Level of community support; in line with national policy; availability of funds and programmes (at the national and European level)*

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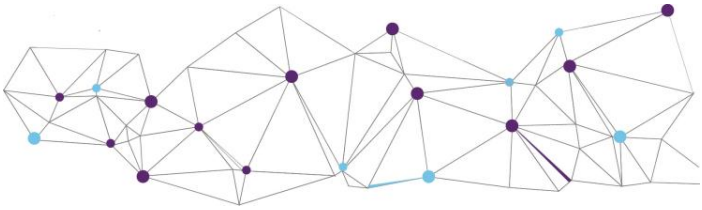
TEFCE

Towards a European Framework for Community Engagement in Higher Education



INSTITUTIONAL REPORT

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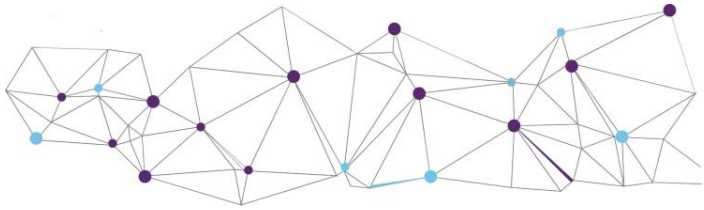
TEFCE
Towards a European Framework for Community Engagement in Higher Education



Title page

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF_____

RESULTS OF TEFCE TOOLBOX IMPLEMENTATION

LOGO OF UNIVERSITY

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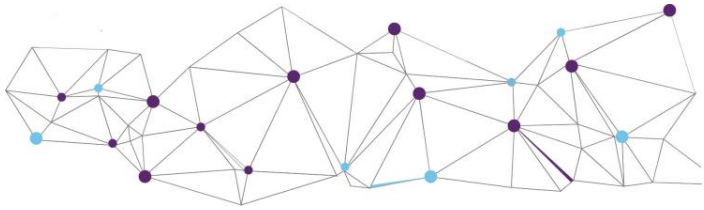

PREFACE

Consider the option for a senior management member to provide a preface supporting the conclusions of the report.

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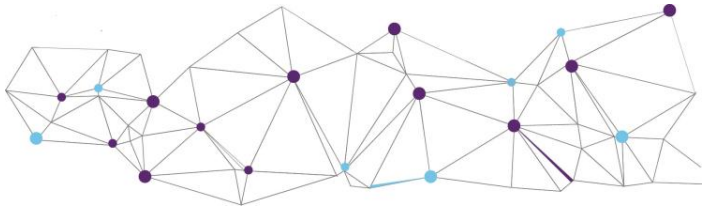

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

One-two page summary of the report's main content with primary focus on the SLIPDOT recommendations.

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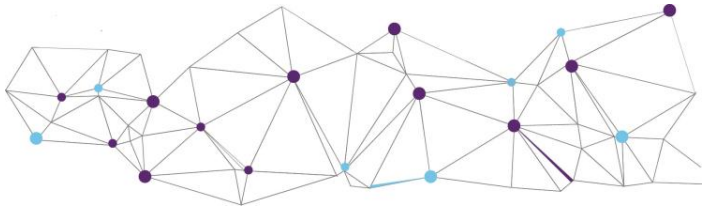

1. INTRODUCTION

Local team to provide more info below on how the TEFCE Toolbox was implemented.

About the TEFCE Toolbox for community engagement

The TEFCE Toolbox is both a reference tool to understand the dimensions of community engagement in a university context and a framework for universities to determine how well they perform according to each dimension and to identify define where they can improve. The TEFCE Toolbox allows universities to:

- **better understand** the different dimensions and levels of community engagement;
- **discover and map** their existing community-engagement practices;
- **identify and raise the visibility** of good practices of community engagement at the university;
- **reflect** upon how community-engaged the institution as a whole currently is by determining what kind of community engagement is taking place and its level of development;
- **plan** future improvements for furthering university-community engagement.

Community engagement in higher education refers to a wide variety of activities. The TEFCE Toolbox maps five thematic dimensions within which university-community engagement activities can take place:

- Teaching and learning
- Research
- Service and knowledge exchange
- Student initiatives
- University management (partnerships and openness).

The TEFCE project also identifies two dimensions of a supportive environment for community engagement:

- University management (policies and support structures)
- Supportive peers.

The TEFCE Toolbox is thus structured around a total of 7 thematic dimensions of community engagement (each with 2 to 4 sub-dimensions, thus resulting in with a total of 20 sub-dimensions).

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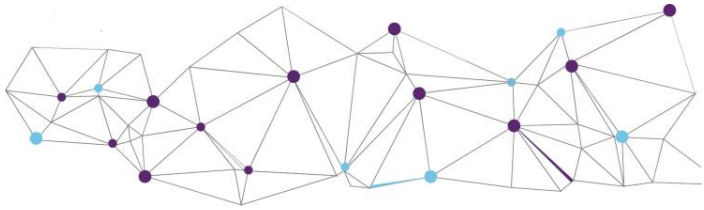

The Toolbox itself is applied through a series of steps to be undertaken by participating universities:

1. Quick scan	Initial discussion by university/community team on the type and extent of community engagement at the university.
2. Evidence collection	Collecting stories of community-engaged practitioners throughout the university.
3. Mapping report	Using a TEFCE Toolbox matrix to map the level of community engagement of the university and to identify good practices, resulting in a background report.
4. Participative dialogue	Open discussions among university management, staff, students and the community on strengths and areas of improvement.
5. Institutional report	Promoting good practices and impact, and critical self-reflection for planning improvements to university-community engagement.

Toolbox piloting methodology

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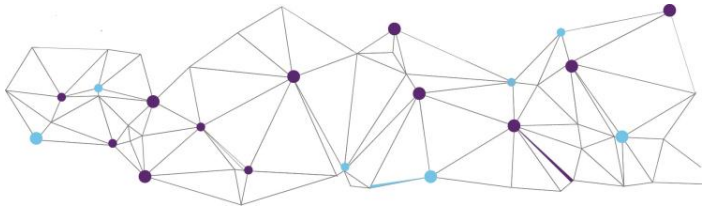

2. INSTITUTIONAL OVERVIEW

About the University of _____

Introduction to the university, its profile and its history of community engagement.

Selection of flagship community engagement practices

Selection of 3-4 practices from the case studies that illustrate different ways in which the university is community-engaged. These are not „best“ practices, just an illustration of the diversity of innovative practices that exist.

We recommend to place the content as separate boxes with content that can be copy-pasted from the „brief description“ section of the case studies included in the Annex.

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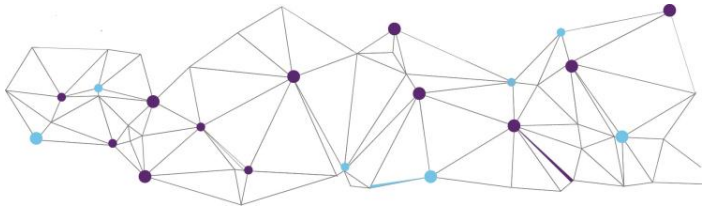

3. MAPPING PRACTICES

Main part of report. Copy-paste final version of Mapping Report completed in Stage 3 of the TEFCE Toolbox process, showing results dimension by dimension and the overall institutional heatmap.

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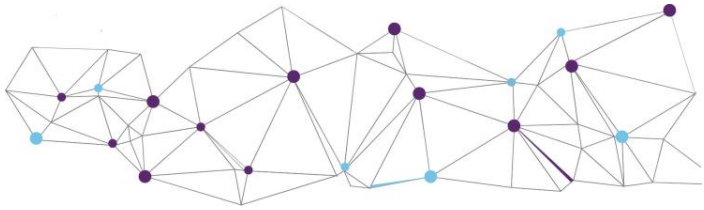

4. SELF-REFLECTION

Based on the mapping report prepared above, a series of workshops and structured discussions were organised with stakeholders at the University of ____ . The purpose of the discussions was to ascertain whether the mapping report captured the reality of community engagement at the University and to reflect upon both the achievements and the areas for improvement in terms of the University's community engagement.

The framework for the self-reflection was a so-called 'SLIPDOT analysis'. Developed by the TEFCE project, the SLIPDOT analysis follows the core structure of a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) but replaces the term 'Weaknesses' by two categories: 'Lower Intensity' and 'Potential for Development'. It also re-frames Opportunities and Threats as not only being external (as in a SWOT analysis), but also as encompassing elements that are *internal* to the university, but that are outside the control of community-engaged practitioners (meaning that they mostly refer to university management).

Areas of **S**trength	Areas of **L**ower **I**ntensity	Areas with **P**otential for **D**evelopment
Areas where the university is doing particularly well in terms of community engagement.	*Areas of community engagement that are not highly developed at the university (due to it not yet being a priority, due to limited capacity or other reasons).*	*Areas of community engagement that the university could realistically improve in the future.*

Opportunities	**T**hreats
Internal: *e.g. Level of support among leadership and academic staff*	Internal: *e.g. Level of support among leadership and academic staff*
External: *e.g. Level of community support; in line with national policy; availability of funds and programmes (at the national and European level)*	External: *e.g. Level of community support; in line with national policy; availability of funds and programmes (at the national and European level)*

The participants of the SLIPDOT workshop were the following:

Local stakeholders	*International experts*
• …	• …

The conclusions of the SLIPDOT analysis are presented below and provide a basis for further discussions about how to improve the community engagement at the University of _____.

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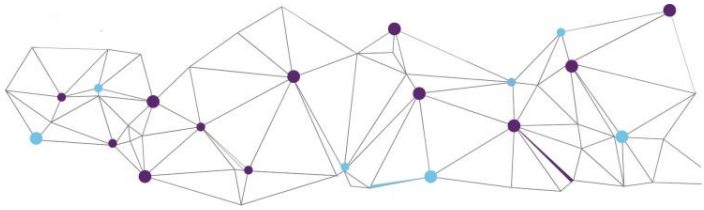

Strengths

- ...
- ...

Lower intensity

- ...
- ...

Potential for Development

- ...
- ...

Opportunities

Internal opportunities

- ...
- ...

External opportunities

- ...
- ...

Threats

Internal threats

- ...
- ...

External threats

- ...
- ...

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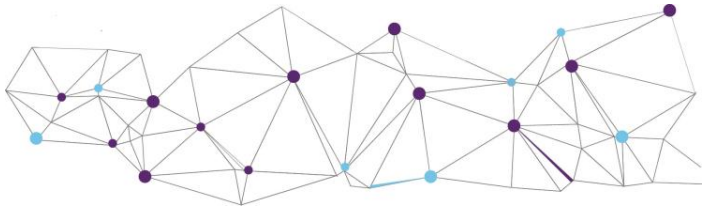

APPENDIX: CASE STUDIES

1. .....

Case study provided by: name, surname, institution

1. Description of community-engagement practice	
Brief description of practice *(Please use the sub-questions, if relevant.)*	
What are the main goals of the practice?	
What are the main activities?	
Who is organising the practice?	
Who initiated it?	
Web link	
How is the community/target group with which you engage involved in the implementation of this practice?	
2. Support for community engagement	
How does the university support this community-engaged practice?	
Does the organizer have a formal budget? Does the university provide facilities and/or administrative support?	
Does the practice fit in a broader strategy or framework of the organizer (the university)?	
Is it a continuous or a 'one-off' collaboration?	
Does the university give any form of recognition or promotion of the practice?	
How do partners from the community support and value this practice?	

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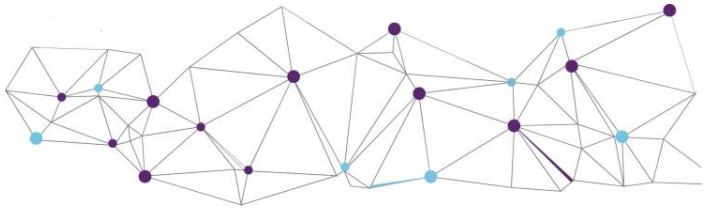

How do your peers (university staff and management) and students support and value this practice?	

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