

## **SCHOOL OF MEDICINE, UNIVERSITY OF MOSTAR**

### **STRATEGY OF INTERNATIONALIZATION FOR THE SCHOOL OF MEDICINE 2023-2028**

**Approved by Deanship Decision 01-I-1804/24, 29.07.2024**

**JULY 2024**



**Erasmus+ KA2 Capacity Building in the field of Higher Education**

Strengthening capacities and digital competences in biomedical education through internationalization  
at home BIOSINT

101082863-BIOSINT-ERASMUS-EDU-2022-CBHE

## **THE CONTENT:**

1. .... Introduction, mission of School of Medicine, University of Mostar
2. .... What is internationalization at home (IaH)
3. .... Why a strategy for the internationalization at home for the School of medicine
4. Current situation of internationalization for the School of medicine for the period 2018-2023
5. ....SWOT analysis
6. .... Strategy for the internationalization at home

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The strategic plan is in accordance with:

- The framework document approved by the participating institutions of the BIOSINT project
- Strategic Development Plan of the School of Medicine and University of Mostar 2023-2028
- University of Mostar Education Strategy 2023-2028
- Annual reports of SUM

The process of drafting the "Internationalization at home" strategy went through several stages:

1.1 Analysis of the situation. For the analysis of the situation, during the year 2023, questionnaires were carried out with the students of the School of Medicine, the academic staff and the dean, regarding the situation, motivation, obstacles with the internationalization process. Based on the results of questionnaires and annual reports of the School of Medicine, a SWOT analysis was performed. Regarding this document, a workshop was held in Podgorica, June 27-28, 2023 (T2.3).

1.2 Defining strategic objectives, indicators, target values for the strategy of internationalization.

1.3 Drafting of the Internationalization Strategy. During the workshop in Podgorica, the first draft of the strategy framework and roadmap was created and revised and discussed at the second EU training organized by EU partners in Vrdnik, Serbia. The strategy framework has six strategic themes, in which we suggested appropriate activities, target values and indicators for each of the activities. This framework is supposed to be integrative and recognized by every participating institution of the Western Balkans involved in the project.

1.4 Inclusion of suggestions and finalization of the Strategic Plan document

1.5 Approval of the Strategic Internationalization Plan by the Dean's Office of the School of Medicine.

## **THE MISSION OF THE SCHOOL OF MEDICINE, UNIVERSITY OF MOSTAR**

University of Mostar, and therefore School of Medicine, mission is to:

organizes and implements undergraduate, graduate, postgraduate and lifelong education based on research and the development of scientific research, artistic creation and professional work contributes to social and economic development. The university ensures and implements the mobility of students and teachers, the rational use of human and material resources, with constant monitoring of the quality, competitiveness and international competitiveness of scientific research, teaching, artistic and professional work.

At the School of medicine, the studies are organized as follows:

1. Integrated cycle with duration of 6 years, at which student is awarded with the title of Medical Doctor (MD) or Doctor of Dental Medicine (DMD).
2. Postgraduate study, with duration of 3 years, at the end of which, the student is awarded with Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) title.
3. Long-term specialization programs, of the third cycle of studies, in the different fields of Dental Medicine (duration 2-4 years).

## **2. WHAT IS INTERNATIONALISATION AT HOME**

"Internationalization at home" refers to the integration of international and intercultural perspectives, experiences, and activities into the academic environment without the necessity of physical mobility abroad. In other words, it involves creating opportunities for students to engage with global issues, diverse cultures, and international experiences within their own academic environment.

This approach recognizes that not all students have the opportunity or ability to participate in study abroad programs, yet it is still important for them to develop global competence and intercultural understanding. Therefore, internationalization at home focuses on bringing the world to the students, rather than sending students out into the world.

The goal of internationalization at home is to ensure that students are exposed to different perspectives, languages, and cultures, and that they develop the skills and attitudes necessary to develop in an interconnected and multicultural world. This can be achieved through various means such as curriculum integration, language learning, cultural events, virtual exchanges, and collaboration with international partners.

**Evolution of Internationalization at Home:** The concept of laH has evolved in response to the growing recognition that not all students have the means or opportunity to engage in traditional study abroad experiences. As such, teachers and institutions have sought to bring the world to their campuses, inserting global perspectives in their curricula, co-curricular activities, and academic environment. The evolution of laH reflects a shift towards inclusivity and accessibility in internationalization efforts.

**Implementation Strategies:** The goal of laH is to incorporate global and multicultural viewpoints into the local academic environment through a variety of implementation tactics. These tactics include virtual exchanges, faculty development programs, internationalization of curricula, language learning efforts, cultural events and activities, and institutional support systems. By using these strategies, educational institutions hope to enhance global competency, foster diversity and inclusivity on the academic environment, and advance in the cultural understanding.

**Effect on Students:** Research indicates that involvement in laH programs enhances students' intercultural, intellectual, and personal growth. Cultural competency, empathy, and critical thinking abilities are strengthened by exposure to a variety of viewpoints and experiences.

Participating in IaH activities also helps students feel like they belong and gets them ready for success in a world that is getting more varied and connected. Through the facilitation of cross- cultural contacts, IaH assists students in cultivating a global perspective and the proficiencies required to confront intricate global issues.

**Impact on Institutions:** IaH programs support the academic community's internationalization at the institutional level, enhancing higher education institutions' standing and ability to compete globally. Institutions can draw in and keep a diverse faculty and student body by cultivating a lively and welcoming campus culture. Furthermore, through fostering institutional relationships and collaborations, IaH projects enable chances for cross-cultural learning and knowledge sharing.

**Challenges and Future Directions:** IaH has a lot of potential, but it is not without difficulties. Obstacles to implementation could include: faculty resistance, resource constraints, and institutional inertia. Furthermore, continual assessment and evaluation are necessary to guarantee the viability and efficacy of IaH activities. To meet these obstacles and optimize the effects of internationalization initiatives in higher education, the field of internationalization of higher education will require ongoing study, cooperation, and innovation.

**Conclusion:** In conclusion, Internationalization at Home represents a paradigm shift in higher education towards inclusivity, accessibility, and global engagement. By bringing the world to their academic environment, institutions can provide all students with opportunities to develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to thrive in an interconnected world. As we navigate the complexities of the 21st century, the importance of embracing global perspectives at home has never been clearer.

### **3. WHY A STRATEGY FOR THE INTERNATIONALIZATION AT HOME FOR THE SCHOOL OF MEDICINE**

Here are several reasons why internationalization is crucial for the School of Medicine, University of Medicine:

**Global Competency Development:** The students of the School of Medicine must possess knowledge and abilities that transcend the local context in today's globalized society. By exposing students to a range of viewpoints, internationalizing curricula fosters cultural awareness, adaptation, and successful cross-cultural communication.

**Preparation for Global Careers:** The global nature of the employment market means that employers are looking for applicants that have an international mindset. Internationalized curricula enable our students to effectively contribute to global enterprises by preparing them for a variety of workplaces.

**Enhanced Educational Quality:** Integrating international content enriches the academic experience, providing our students with a broader understanding of their courses. The inclusion of global perspectives enhances critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity.

**Cultural and Linguistic Diversity:** Internationalizing curricula promotes appreciation for cultural diversity and multilingualism. Students of the School of Medicine should learn to behave respectfully with individuals from different backgrounds, contributing to a more inclusive and tolerant society.

**Global Citizenship and Social Responsibility:** School of Medicine should encourage students to become responsible global citizens. Internationalized curricula encourage a sense of social responsibility by addressing global challenges, such as sustainability, poverty, and inequality.

**Competitive Advantage for Institutions:** School of Medicine by offering internationalized curricula will attract a diverse group of students and lecturers. This diversity contributes to a vibrant academic community and enhances our institution's reputation on the global area.

**Research and Innovation:** International cooperation stimulates research and innovation. Exposure to different research methodologies, perspectives and challenges promotes a stronger intellectual environment and increases the quality of academic research in the dental field.

**Global Networking and Partnerships:** The internationalized curriculum facilitates the development of global networks and partnerships. The cooperation of the School of Medicine with institutions, businesses and international organizations paves the way for joint research, student exchanges and shared resources.

**Preparing for a Developing Economy:** As the global economy evolves, our students need skills that transcend local boundaries. Internationalization prepares them to work in economic change, contribute to innovation and participate in a world where economic activities are increasingly interconnected.

**Adapting to technological advances:** Technological advances enable global communication and collaboration. The internationalized curriculum prepares our students to use technology to learn, work and collaborate across borders.

**Accomplishment of the institutional mission and vision:** School of Medicine includes global perspectives as part of the mission and vision. The internationalization of the curricula is in line with these institutional goals, demonstrating a commitment to provide an appropriate and forward-looking education.

**Meeting Student Expectations:** Our students continuously are looking for educational experiences that prepare them for a globalized world. The internationalized curriculum meets these expectations and contributes to their overall student satisfaction.



#### **4. CURRENT SITUATION OF INTERNATIONALIZATION FOR THE SCHOOL OF MEDICINE FOR THE PERIOD 2018-2023**

**Quality Assurance** at University of Mostar (SUM) and School of Medicine is a continuous process within the framework of improving curricula, teaching methods, learning, assessment, promotion and further qualification of academic, administrative and support staff.

Students are organized in student councils. These councils operate on the basis of regulatory acts approved by them. In the main units of SUM, Student Service Center and Human Resources Service function to support students in relation to the labor market, ensuring appropriate contacts with potential employers; in the development of annual activities to bring students close to graduation with potential employers (job fairs, etc.); in providing counseling and guidance regarding the orientation and development of students' professional careers.

University of Mostar have a strong collaboration in different projects in the field of education and research. As a result of this active cooperation between, it became possible to have international doctoral studies The International Joint Cross-Border PhD Programme in International Economic Relations and Management and International Cooperative Cross-Border Interdisciplinary Doctoral Programme in Educational & Communication Sciences.

Risk factors for the activation of joint programs:

- The development of learning in the foreign languages
- Lack of certificate and knowledge for the studying abroad

## **TRAININGS AND MOBILITIES OF ACADEMIC, ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF AND STUDENTS**

BIOSINT. Kick Off Meeting, February 2023: 1 academic staff. 1 administrative staff

BIOSINT. Training in Leuven, Belgium, June 2023: 2 academic staff. 1 administrative staff

BIOSINT, Workshop in Podgorice, June 2023: 1 academic staff, 1 administrative staff, 1 student

BIOSINT. Training in Serbia. September 2023 online, 2 academic staff. 1 administrative staff. 5 students

BIOSINT. Training in Romania. October 2023: 1 academic staff, 1 administrative staff. 2 students

BIOSINT. Trajnim në Bosnie-Hercegovine, Prill 2024: 1 staf akademik. 1 staf administrativ, 2 students

## **MAIN PROJECTS**

1) INTERREG IPA CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION PROGRAMME CROATIA - BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA - MONTENEGRO 2014-2020. Title: “Mobile Access Dental Clinic” HR-BA-ME570

2) INTERREG IPA CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION PROGRAMME CROATIA - BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA - MONTENEGRO 2014-2020. Title: „Joint Delivery of Sleep Medicine Diagnostic and Therapeutic Services in the Cross-Border Area of Southern Croatia and Western Bosnia and Herzegovina“ Operation ID: HR-BA-ME219. Duration: 30 months

3) INTERREG IPA CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION PROGRAMME CROATIA - BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA - MONTENEGRO 2014-2020. Title: „ Early Detection of Skin, Mucosal and Ocular Melanoma “ Operation ID: HR-BA-ME163

4) 544464-TEMPUS-1-2013-1-DE-TEMPUS-SMHES Tempus IV (2007-2013): Reform of higher education through International University Cooperation 01/01/2013

5) CCNURCA-54416-TEMPUS-1-2013-BE-TEMPUS-JPCR (Competency Based Curriculum Reform in Nursing and Caring in Western Balkan Universities)

6) 544595-TEMPUS- 1-2013-1-HRTEMPUS-JPHES “Lifelong learning for sustainable agriculture in Alps-Danube- Adriatic Region - LifeADA

7) Towards Sustainable and Equitable Financing of Higher Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia - FINHED

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- 8) Benchmarking as a tool for improvement of higher education institution performance - BIHTEK
- 9) 610251-EPP-1-2019-1-RS-EPPKA2-CBHE-SP Strengthening capacities for the implementation of dual education in BH higher education/DUALSCI
- 10) Partners in the "BIOSINT" project, entitled: "Strengthening capacities and digital competencies in biomedical education through internationalization at home", ERASMUS- EDU-2022-CBHE-STRAND-2, No. 101082863, whose main coordinator is the University of Kragujevac, Serbia, January 2023-January 2026.

## **EXCHANGE MOBILITIES WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE ERASMUS+ PROGRAM FOR THE SCHOOL OF MEDICINE, MOSTAR**

School of Medicine, Mostar cooperates with several foreign universities, within the Erasmus+ programs. The academic, administrative staff and students of the School of Medicine have carried out mobilities in international institutions with which SUM has agreements and partnerships within the Erasmus Plus programs. During the period 2018- 2023, multiple outgoing and incoming mobilities were realized in the School of Medicine.

## **ACTIVE AGREEMENT WITH INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

- Currently, SUM has 139 active agreements with international HEIs (<https://www.sum.ba/sum/medunarodna/medunarodni-sveucilisni-sporazumi>).

## **MEMBERSHIP OF UMT IN THE INTERNATIONAL NETWORK**

- **Currently, SUM is a member of 18 international university networks, like:** DRC – Danube Rectors' Conference, EUA – European University Association, RCAA – Rectors' Conference of the Alps-Adriatic Universities, UniAdriatic, and others (<https://www.sum.ba/sum/medunarodna/medunarodne-mreze>)

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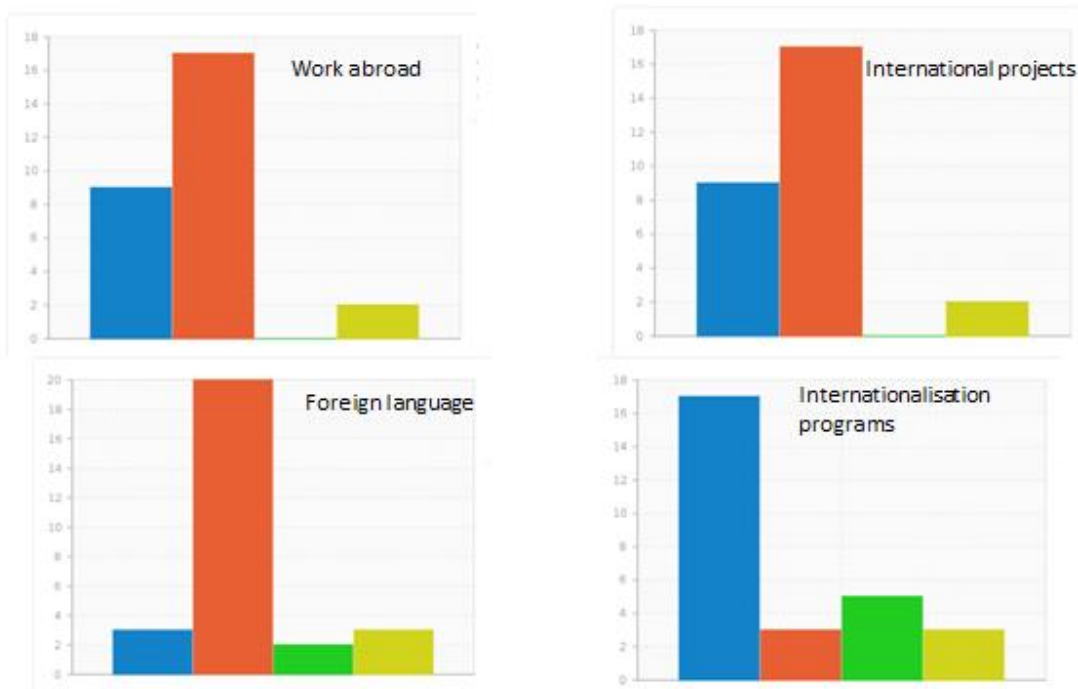
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## 5. SWOT ANALYSIS

SWOT analysis was developed for the School of Medicine, based on: student, teacher and Dean surveys, every day work and annual report of the School of Medicine.

Survey for students – main points were:

1. There is strong motivation for studying abroad at least one semester
2. Most of the students did not go abroad during their study
3. Most of the students are fluent in English, but not in their languages
4. They are involved in different exchange programs
5. Why they did not apply – different reasons
5. Self-financing is dominant
6. They would like to be better informed about exchange programs (Figure 1).



**Table 1.** SWOT ANALYSIS OF THE SCHOOL OF MEDICINE MOSTAR REGARDING INTERNATIONALIZATION

	Positive	Negative
<b>Internal environment</b>	<b>Strengths</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- evidence based curricula and postgraduate training</li> <li>- well trained and experienced teaching staff</li> <li>- international recognition of curricula</li> <li>- relatively modern and well equipped facilities</li> <li>- geographical position</li> </ul>	<b>Weaknesses</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- lack of personalized education</li> <li>- self-financing majority of the students</li> <li>- dependence on the small number of experienced researchers and mentors</li> <li>- support for young researchers and PhD students in biomedical research</li> <li>- collaborations</li> <li>- lack of carrier pathways and incentives</li> <li>- improving awareness about the need for basic medical research and clinical trials</li> </ul>
<b>External environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Opportunities</b></li> <li>- increase in domestic and international visibility of the school of medicine through international research and educational project</li> <li>- attention from university and hospital management</li> <li>- community engagement</li> <li>- stronger collaboration with industry</li> <li>- technological advancements</li> </ul>	<b>Threats</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- decreasing number of students</li> <li>- resource constraints (non-regulated government financing)</li> <li>- unstable political environment</li> <li>- little control of recruitment of researchers and medical/dental doctors</li> <li>- brain drain</li> <li>- overburden of health facilities</li> </ul>

## 6. STRATEGY OF INTERNATIONALIZATION AT HOME

### 1. STRATEGIC THEME 1. PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND RECOGNITION.

The theme concerns staffs and students and it involves training, mentoring and professional learning opportunities related to internationalization engagements and achievements. It should lead to some form of institutional recognition, reward and/or accreditation, supported with esteem indicators.

#### **Strategic objective 1.1. – Involve the decision makers for internationalization issues.**

This involves the management of the institution since it concerns changes in the internal organization and rulebooks. With this objective we try to raise the awareness of decision makers about needed changes in structure in order to facilitate the process of internationalization.

#### **Operational objective 1.1.1. Provide appropriate policies for academic recognitions of internationalized engagement of staff.**

The main activity within this objective concerns updating the rules and conditions for selection and/or promotion of the faculty staff. The target value includes at least one new criterion for the staff.

Activity	Indicator	Target value	Road-map time
-Updating criteria for the selection and promotion of university teachers and associates	-Number of criteria related to engagement in internationalization	-One new criterion, at least for the academic staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2024</li> </ul>

#### **Operational objective 1.1.2. Assigning the responsibilities for the internationalization activities**

This requires the update of the rulebook on the internal organization of work and the systematization of job posts – to hire new/ improve function of employees – teachers, associates, and administrative staff, depending on needs and possibilities and their current staff involvement. Mainly in faculties/ universities in the region there are no designated posts for people (teachers, associates, administrative staff, and students) involved in process of internationalization. Some have solved the issues by adding these new assignments to employees in charge for international cooperation and mobility, but since the process of IaH is more complex it would probably require some new posts, in faculties and universities, contact persons which would be connected through the implementation. This of course will have financial impact so it represents the risk for the implementation and requires more time and decisions on higher level of management. For additional motivation it is proposed to create reward system in a form of certificate for internationalization.

Activity	Indicator	Target value	Road-map time
-Improve the functions of job	-Number of working posts / improved functions for	-One new post or improved function at least, for	2024

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posts	academic/ administrative staff/ students  -Extend the functions and obligations of Vice Dean for internationalization at home related affairs” -The officially established rulebook	academic/ administrative staff/ students -Extend the functions and obligations of Vice Dean for international cooperation -The officially established rulebook	
-Create a reward system for students involved in internationalisation	-Certificate for internationalisation  -Bonus for future mobilities	-2 or more certificates for internationalisation -2 or more students rewarded with a bonus for future mobility	2024

**Operational objective 1.1.3. Ensure that all students receive equal opportunities for participation in international activities.**

One of the main characteristics of IaH is inclusiveness – the process is focused on all students. The process includes development of proper and inclusive mobility, but also strongly promotes teaching and learning in diverse home environment. IaH targets not only students interested in internationalization, but the whole community, with the idea to bring them closer the concept of internationalization.

Therefore, all the relevant information about IaH in general should be publicly available and transparent through the official website, as well as through bilingual posts shared in social media information. The goal is to raise awareness of all the possibilities that students, but also others involved –teachers, associates, administrative staff can gain through internationalization.

Activity	Indicator	Target value	Road-map time
-Involving students in international activities	-Number of students involved in international activities.	-5 students involved in internationalization	2024
-Make relevant information about internationalization publicly available and transparent on the website of universities and faculties	-Bilingual web page	-One webpage/ section on webpage dedicated to internationalization	2024
-Ensure bilingual information for students	-Bilingual news relevant to internationalization on web page/social media post and information board	-The posts on the web page, media social	2024

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-Utilize the insights from international students or students who conducted mobilities and their contact persons to guide others in communication techniques associated with internationalization.	-Number of meetings/trainings	-2 annual meetings/trainings	2025
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## 2. STRATEGIC THEME 2. INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGIZING

The theme involves key tasks on the roadmap of IaH implementation and subsequent quality improvement. It also encompasses monitoring and evaluation systems, definition of explicit goals, ways to assess them as well as institutional bodies to oversee the progress.

### **Strategic objective 2.1. – The faculty provides the framework, means, agreements and procedures for internalization.**

One of the major activities in the EU HEIs is the faculty and staff development and includes means and procedures that provide staff' language proficiency, competence for various activities in the process of IaH including internationalization of curricula, ability to teach in an international and/or virtual classroom. These activities should include continuous education in English language, joint programs with partner universities for developing international, intercultural and digital capacities, promotion of staff/student mobility.

#### **Operational objective 2.1.1. Establish cooperation agreements with international partners with comparable curricula.**

Newly signed and approved agreements with foreign HEIs are one of fundamentals for development of internationalization. Those will help in transfer of knowledge for students and staff through mobility, joint participation in scientific projects, as well as in developing/creating new joint academic courses/programs which can facilitate mobility.

Activity	Indicator	Target value	Road-map time
- Increase the degree of use of signed agreements and/or established the new on cooperation with foreign universities	- Number of revised/reactivated/new agreements with foreign universities;	- 2 signed contracts (re) activated per year	- 2025

#### **Operational objective 2.1.2. Integration of knowledge from international lecturers**

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The ultimate goal is to provide the opportunity for students to receive knowledge from lecturers from foreign universities.

Activity	Indicator	Target value	Road-map time
Lectures/ seminar/ training from foreign lecturers	- Number of lecturers/trainings/seminars organized	-5% lecture/seminar/ trainings more	2025

### **Operational objective 2.1.3. Monitor international levels of achievements with a set of indicators.**

One of the important aspects of internationalization process is internationalization of research as well, since it can have impact on research and education productivity through cooperation and exchange of experience and resources, but also on project financing and strengthening excellence. It is important to increase the number of young researchers/teachers, to attract foreign partners and enhance visibility at the international research panel.

What can represent risk in this field is lack of motivation and financial resources, not enough compatibility among research teams, established but underutilized cooperation, difficult rules and conditions for research applications.

Activity	Indicator	Target value	Road-map time
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adoption of a quality system indicators for monitoring of teaching and research achievements of international ranges</li> <li>Evaluation of Teaching and research activity of international ranges</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of educational events regarding projects</li> <li>Number of project applications</li> <li>Number of Conferences of international ranges</li> <li>Number of days implemented throw international activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5% or more</li> <li>5% or more</li> <li>Twice a year</li> <li>5% or more</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2025</li> <li>2025</li> <li>2025</li> <li>2025</li> </ul>

### **Operational Objective 2.1.4. The involvement of the staff/students in different associations/organizations**

Activity	Indicator	Target value	Road-map time
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integrate academic staff in the int'l activities</li> <li>Integrate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of the academic involved</li> <li>Number of the</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-3 academic staff</li> <li>-1 administrative staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2024</li> <li>2025</li> </ul>

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administrative staff in the int'l activities	administrative staff involved	-2 staff/students registered per year	2025
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integrate staff and students in organizations/associations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of staff /students registered</li> </ul>		

### 3. **STRATEGIC THEME 3. – CURRICULUM AND CO-CURRICULUM**

The theme includes activities that are designed to ensure a meaningful internationalized, academic experience of students and staffs. They aim to promote international and intercultural competences, including the formal and non-formal acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes about IaH.

#### **Strategic objective 3.1. Internationalize existing and new curricula and co-curricula**

In order for students to be more active and competitive in global job market it is necessary to have opportunity to gain adequate skills and knowledge through internationalized curricula, formal and non-formal. The process of IoC should be one of the main goals through the process of internationalization, but it also represents the most complex part, both theoretically and practically. It includes accreditation of study programs, creating new courses/study programs which can bring some diversity and make academic offer more appealing for home and foreign students. Since this project is being common for different HEIs and Universities, although in the same field, there will be many obstacles in order to harmonize all the differences between the existing curricula, environments, intercultural dimensions. Also, this process will have to include strategy for validation, monitoring and evaluation systems for creation and implementations. Therefore, the recommendations from our EU partners include careful selection of the existing courses, targeting those with the greatest potential for quality improvement, the simplify implementation and the usefulness in global market, and also means for constant evaluation, according to institutional and international practices.

#### **Operational objective 3.1.1. Internationalize existing curricula.**

Having on mind the fact that BIOSINT involves HEI in biomedical sciences, this operational objective gives an opportunity to choose courses that are same/similar in different study programs and do the joint internationalization, which is going to be approved by different universities and will facilitate future cooperation in terms of student/staff mobility. The process will start with proper selection of courses, which focus on the cultural elements, educational systems, structure of health in different countries, but also have both global perspective and future-looking perceptions, the ones related to research in medicine, bioinformatics and statistics. One of the criteria should also be the complexity of the course, and for the start of the internationalization process it is needed to begin from least demanding ones.

Activity	Indicator	Target value	Road-map time
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Select and internationa</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of ECTS from current curricula which are</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Up to 30 ECTS are internationalized</li> </ul>	2025

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lize curricula from current/com mon courses	internationalized. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of changed syllabi/courses from current curricula which are internationalized</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4 internationalised syllabi/courses</li> </ul>	
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### **Operational objective 3.1.2. Internationalize new curricula.**

Many universities in WB area set the new goal of accreditation with new study programs in English language which will make them more visible and present on international level with purpose of attracting new foreign students, easier cooperation with foreign universities and promotion of mobility. It is planned to achieve this goal through creation of new courses/syllabi, organization of summer/winter schools up to forming entire accredited study programs in English language, mainly postgraduate. In this project we will focus on developing and forming joint plan for 3 new virtual elective courses that can be applicable on every study program. Since the process of accreditation of curricula itself is different in each WB country, the target value for this activity will be 3 new course applications.

This process is very complex and will have certain risks, with the first one being language barrier, with teachers and students. It is required to educate staff to perform lectures in English language. Also language barrier in students, lack of motivation for IaH and overload with regular/current curricula can have negative impact on number of home students willing to enroll in these new courses. Finally the process of accreditation itself can be very complex, so this indicator can represent the main challenge in this project.

Activity	Indicator	Target value	Road-map time
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop new internationalized curricula for virtual courses (ICVC)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of developed curricula for new internationalized virtual courses</li> <li>Number of IT tools* used during new ICVC</li> <li>Number of students enrolled in new ICVC</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3 accredited, new, internationalized virtual courses</li> <li>3 per each accredited, new, internationalized virtual courses</li> <li>Minimum 5 per each new ICVC/ per HEI</li> </ul>	2025

**Operational objective 3.1.3. Organize workshops for the staff related to IoC and development of intercultural competences.**

-Organize workshops for the staff related to IoC and development of intercultural competences

Activity	Indicator	Target value	Road-map time
-Organize workshops for the staff related to IoC and development of intercultural competences	-Organize workshops for the staff related to IoC and development of intercultural competences	1 workshop	2024

**Operational objective 3.1.4. International benchmarking of study programs and international networks.**

Since the knowledge and educational processes are in the continuous evolution and development around the world, with continuous establishment of different HEIs and curricula, the need for constant evaluation of its performance. Therefore, many countries have started to embrace the concept of benchmarking in different fields, including the higher education area. The concept is based mainly on comparing the organization with one or more others that are identified as a reference in respective field, but also in learning from differences and developing adequate methodology to be used in organization in question. Given the fact that V.L. Meek and J.J. van der Lee states that “benchmarking involves two mandatory elements: the existence of an agreement of the institutional leaders to take into account the results of the benchmarking and to make the necessary improvements; and the existence of a collaboration between all the parties involved in benchmarking”, one of the main activities in this objectives should be establishing the cooperation/collaboration with the respective international benchmarking resources (IBR).

Activity	Indicator	Target value	Road-map time
Connecting with and evaluating from the international benchmarking resources (IBR) in higher education area	Number of IBR with established connections and evaluations	One additional IBR	2025

**4. STRATEGIC THEME 4. ENGAGEMENT AND INFLUENCE**

The strategic theme endorse internal actions for engagement of students and staffs in IaH plans and delivery. The recommendations from EU partners are that faculty and staff should enhance their knowledge and skills related to internationalization and intercultural communication. Therefore, careful planning of the types/formats and content of development actions and programs should be a one of the vital parts of the overall institutional operational objectives.

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#### **Strategic objective 4.1. Offer international experience for students and involve all staff members in internalization**

Since the concept and implementation of IaH is broad and complex it is recommended that both internal and external stakeholders should be partners and involved in process. The first and the most important role goes to academic staff, who is responsible for the changes in curricula, teaching about internationalization, educating other members of HEI staff and students, but also for evaluation of the progress. To be effective educators they have to first themselves realize the value of global learning, to promote it outside the classrooms as well, to be ready to acquire new skills, to guide students through this change by connecting students' international and intercultural experience with formal learning. Second major part of involved participants are students which are also target group of the process, so the role of the HEIs and Universities is to create the environment for them to learn about IaH, help in implementation and use the benefits.

##### **Operational objective 4.1.1. Increase in English course offer and provide sufficient language attestation for teachers.**

Courses taught in English can be considered the one of the first steps to increase the attention of larger number of students interested in mobility to our Universities. In order to increase the number of courses it is needed to provide adequate education in English language primary for teachers, and then for home students as well.

Activity	Indicator	Target value	Road-map time
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organize training of teachers, associates and administrative staff for an advanced level of English language skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The number of employees who have obtained a certificate of advanced level of English language skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>increase of at least 5%</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2025</li> </ul>

##### **Operational objective 4.1.2. Learning track on intercultural competences**

The strategy should include clearly defined competences and instruments for implementation and follow up, with strategic goals being formal recognition for academic, administrative and managerial staff, students learning outcomes and graduate competencies. Also adequate non formal outside classroom activities organized with home students and external stakeholders contribute to intercultural competency development. Design a plan for international students, facilitated by host students, to familiarize them with the cultural, historical, and natural treasures of the country they are studying in.

Activity	Indicator	Target value	Road-map time
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Designing and implementation of</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of students and staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5 staff/students involved</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2025</li> </ul>

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intercultural activities for students and staff	engaged		
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## 5. **STRATEGIC THEME 5. SUPPORT SERVICES**

This theme fosters the strengthening of administrative, financial and technical resources allocated to the strategic planning and implementation of IaH. It also assigns responsibilities across institutional services, giving the visibility to the end-users of institutional IaH efforts.

### **Strategic objective 5.1. Increase financial, human and organizational resources for internationalization activities**

Student and staff mobility offer opportunities to exchange experiences with other cultures, environments, educational systems, increase the value of domestic and foreign HEI, encourage development of knowledge and can provide multiple benefits to both students and staff. This also requires some administrative measures to facilitate mobility.

#### **Operational objective 5.1.1. Provide the support programs from basic and advanced costs**

In order to increase the outgoing mobilities it is important to create better conditions for realisation of mobility and recognition of the achievements gained during mobility. It can also help employees acquire the language and intercultural experience required for successful participation in internationalization process. Since the financial situation is one of the main obstacle in mobility programs one aspect of strategy is to implement new cooperation for scholarships.

Activity	Indicator	Target value	Road-map time
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement cooperation / increase the number of applications, for student mobility.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of student mobility.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>0,5% or more of students in outgoing mobility</li> </ul>	2025

#### **Operational objective 5.1.2. Increase motivation for internationalization activities, buddy and mentoring programs**

Local student associations, student unions, local students in general, never mind being already involved in any sort of organization or not, have an important role in overcoming the gap between formal and non-formal dimensions of IaH. Therefore the concept of IaH and its benefits should be carefully explained through meetings and workshops since they can have some reluctances in terms of integration with international students. For this activity there is a plan to establish annual workshops and meeting, which will be held by teachers/student with mobility/internationalization experience to introduce the staff and students with concept of internationalization. The goal is to increase the number of intercultural workshops, establish buddy program, language tandems, cultural programmes.

Activity	Indicator	Target value	Road-map time
• Train and educate more actively teachers and students on participation in international cooperation programs.	• Number of workshops and/or training meetings, organized annually	• Two workshops and/or training meetings are organized annually, at least	2025

### **Operational objective 5.1.3. Enhance information environment about internationalization**

Besides already proposed means of dissemination of internationalization information through official websites and posts on social media, it is also planned to make joint document/guide for internationalization from the institution part of the BIOSINT project, to be printed on different forms of promotional material. These means of disseminations are supposed to be used for other various internationalization programs.

Activity	Indicator	Target value	Road-map time
• Production of leaflets, brochures, instructions and multimedia material on various internationalization programs	• Number of different print forms and media communication channel of promotional material	• A minimum of three forms of different promotional material, and media channel available	• 2024

### **Operational objective 5.1.4. Creation of the buddy system**

The creation of buddy systems. The aim is to have buddy system which will matches incoming international students with domestic students. Domestic students will help international students to feel comfortable in another country, with administrative procedures, guidance about culture and local traditions. Buddy system toolkit will comprise selection of international mentors of local students, recruitment volunteers, promoting mentoring, certification, buddy matching. Buddy system will be also available in digital form to everyone.

Activity	Indicator	Target value	Road-map time
The creation of the Buddy system	The creation of the Buddy system	1 created system	• 2025

### **Operational objective 5.1.5. Creating a solid support system**

Creating a solid support system for international students for their safety and security (S&S) is an important foundation of internationalization. Support systems will be created through faculty web page in the form of detailed manual what to do during indoor accident, S&S event types, how to be prepared,

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establishing emergency action plan at the level of faculty, quarantine challenges, life in cultural diversity environment etc.

The proposed protocol for international students and staff will contain information about country, region, academic institution, academic study and administration, campus life, health, safety and disabilities, student support, accommodation on campus, services, policies and regulations.

## 6. **STRATEGIC THEME 6. INTERNATIONALIZED UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE**

The strategic theme ensures the access to an internationalized university experience to all those who may benefit of it, including but not limiting to students, staffs and community members. It also enables the transparent demonstration of institutional IaH competences.

### **Strategic objective 6.1. Collaborate with external partners regarding sustainability, multiculturalism and capacity building of internationalization.**

As explained in the analysis of IaH by EU partners in BIOSINT project, community partnership have high impact on authentic intercultural experience, beyond formal education, and provide different perspective for students in domain of societal challenges, community-driven internationalization policies in different areas beyond biomedical sciences, insight in activities of various governmental and non-governmental organization, etc. Therefore, the recommendations are to gradually increase and develop cooperation with community stakeholders, selecting the most appropriate arrangements which will have the best academic and societal impact.

#### **Operational objective 6.1.1. Use comparative advantages of West Balkan region: cultural heritage, natural resources, lower cost of living**

Cultural diversity in the classroom enhances inclusive learning, teaching and assessment practice and what is an advantage in WB region is that cultural diversity already exists among home students (gender, age, nationality, religion, various experiences etc.) despite common background and similar language. So these kind of events may promote several dimensions of cultural diversity, like religion, ethnicity and social class which is important in fostering students' understanding and making a positive and safe classroom environment.

Activity	Indicator	Target value	Road-map time
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Connect and co-operate with local stakeholders which promote cultural heritage and natural resources of the community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of organized events dedicated to promotion of cultural and natural values of local community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One specific event organized</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2024</li> </ul>



**Operational objective 6.1.2. Organize new social events, specially dedicated to the internationalized topics, engaging alumni people, students and public**

The international students, staff members and students with international experience as well as foreign guest professors are often engaged actively in internationalization process, which helps create truly multicultural and internationalized environments and experiences.

IaH process should create opportunities for student engagement with ‘cultural others’ in local society (i.e. community research projects; engagement with local cultural, ethnic or religious groups) which can be done by involving employers, local NGOs and other actors in the local society.

Activity	Indicator	Target value	Road-map time
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Connect and co-operate with external stakeholders for campaigning of IaH</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of organized events dedicated to promotion of IaH</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One specific event organized</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2024</li> </ul>

**Operational objective 6.1.3. Increase publicity and visibility to support sustainability**

Activity	Indicator	Target value	Road-map time
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Connect and co-operate with media marketing stakeholders for IaH sustainability assistance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of media marketing event</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One event supported with marketing organisation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2024</li> </ul>

## ANNEX

The graph below summarise the results of survey performed by the management of all BIOSINT partners. The main challenges for the implementation of BIOSINT activities at all partners institution and country would be:

### *In dimension of management system*

- The lack of policy, procedures and regulation (no 50%, n/a 12.5%);
- The teacher and admin staff not familiar with IaH (no 62,5%, n/a 12.5%);
- The top management directed themselves (yes 75%) and sometime operated activities alone (not regular meeting between the admin staff and teachers – (no 50%, n/a 37%).

### *In dimensions of QA learning*

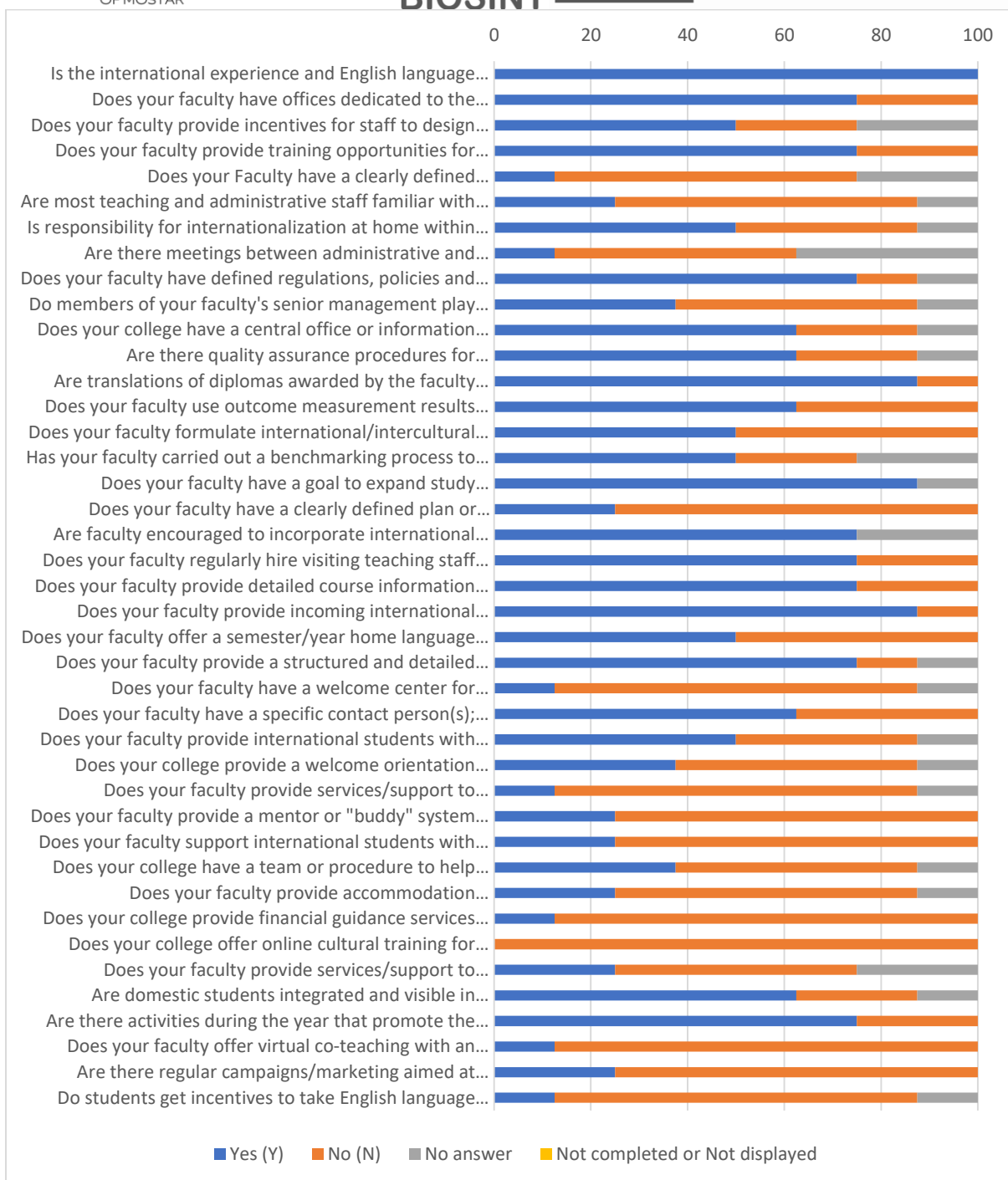
- The lack of specific QA indicator for the measurement of IaH outcomes;
- Benchmarking process (yes 50%);
- Classroom integration (yes 50%);

### *In dimensions of supporting services*

- The welcome center for the international students is not established (no 75%);
- The Faculty does not provide a mentor or "buddy" system for the international students (no 75%)

### *In dimensions of external/social life*

- The lack of support for international students on special non-academic needs (no 75%)
- To provide the accommodation rental/insurance services for international students (no 62%, n/a 12.5)



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