



Cambodian
Higher education Advancing
in Internationalisation

MS5. 2 Study Visit Report

WP2: Need Analysis and Mission Sharing

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Work Package 2 – Need Analysis and Mission Sharing
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Contenido

1. Introduction to the milestone	3
2. Study Visit for Top Management Staff to Saarland University	4
2.1 Description.....	4
2.2 Advancing internationalisation for Top Management staff.....	4
3. Study Visit for IRO Staff to University of Alicante.....	10
3.1 Description.....	10
3.2 Advancing internationalisation for IRO staff	10
4. Advancing internationalisation through the exchange of best practices from the EU partners.....	16
4.1 Key actions to advance internationalisation in HEIs.....	16
4.2 Implementing these best practices in the Cambodian HEIs	20
5. Conclusions	23
6. Annexes.....	24
6.1 Annex 1: Materials Study Visits.....	24
6.2 Annex 2: Published News Study Visits p.....	25

1. Introduction to the milestone

This milestone (MS5) summarises some of the outcomes of the study visits held in the two EU partners' institutions. In order to write a relevant document, data from the Cambodian partners participating in these Study Visits was collected. This served to better understand not only what was delivered during these events, but also what was interesting for the partners and will help them in the development of internationalisation in their HEIs. This document will also be used for the future development of training and workshop materials.

CHAIN focuses on the improvement of internationalisation in HEIs as a means to advance and overcome many of the pressing challenges. It is therefore transversally aligned with the priorities of the Erasmus+ CBHE programme (inclusion and diversity, digital transformation, environment and fight against climate change and participation in democratic life, common values and civic engagement), as it contributes to the exchange and transfer of knowledge and, consequently, to the improvement of research and teaching quality that will ultimately have an impact on responding to these priorities.

These Study Visits directly contributed to one of the outcomes of the project, the Reform of the Need Analysis and Institutional Building. They provided a space to further discuss the main barriers for internationalisation of the Cambodian Higher Education System and they intended to give some tools and methodologies to overcome these obstacles. Thus, these study visits not only served to assess the current problems for internationalisation in Cambodia but also effectively intended to ensure the applicability and transferability of international models from the EU partners to the Cambodian partners.

In order to contribute to that aim of applicability and transferability, the discovery phase of the project was divided into two levels. The first study visit, in Saarland University (USAAR), focused on Top-Management level Staff while the second study visit, in University of Alicante (UA), focused on IRO Staff level.

To sum up, these study visits aimed at providing a space to:

- Discuss the current barriers faced in Cambodia for the internationalisation of the Higher Education Institutions.

- Share best practices and transfer knowledge on internationalisation from the EU partners to the Cambodian partners.
- Contribute to enhancing the know-how on the strategic, managerial and administrative levels for the implementation of internationalisation policies and structures.

2. Study Visit for Top Management Staff to Saarland University

2.1 Description

The Study Visit to Saarland University took place between the 24th and the 26th of April of 2024, in combination with the Kick off Meeting (KoM) of CHAIN. This event targeted Top-Management level staff and provided an insight on Saarland University Internationalisation's strategies and structure.

The Study Visit for Top Management Staff focused on:

- Highlighting the benefits of applying internationalisation at an institutional level.
- Enhancing the know-how to implement internationalisation policies at an strategic and institutional level.
- Facilitate peer learning and create leadership at the strategic level.
- Create the basis for the development of international strategies on internationalisation.

2.2 Advancing internationalisation for Top Management staff

These outcomes were achieved through the elaboration of a thorough-planned agenda with a series of activities conducted by Saarland University. that consisted, among others, in internationalisation strategies of UA & USAAR, partnerships and networks, leadership, international programmes and internationalisation within the HEIs infrastructure.

❖ Internationalisation strategies of UA & USAAR

Saarland University and the University of Alicante have a strong experience in internationalisation as a result of many years of work. However, these internationalisation

efforts would not have been successful without a clear internationalisation strategy, which has set the objectives and priorities for this action at institutional level.

This was the message communicated by the two experts that presented the internationalisation strategy of both the University of Alicante and Saarland University. These strategies included a series of actions in different areas affecting internationalisation. In the case of UA, the strategic international goals were to follow a global model with a qualitative approach with strategic partners instead of a quantitative one, to strengthen collaboration with relevant partners both to the direct beneficiaries of the mobility and to the university. In the case of Saarland, there were four key goals for internationalisation: (1) internationally attractive: win excellence-level students, scientists, and academics from abroad; (2) internationally organised: organisational structures and personnel; (3) internationally networked: expanding strategic partnerships; (4) internationally successful: optimally qualify graduates for the global labour market.

Efforts to monitor the good implementation of this plan as well as to improve the university performance in terms of internationalisation include:

- To make it an essential part of the general Institution Strategic Plan and structure.
- To sustain and upgrade the resources and skills of the staff of the International Relations Office (IROs).
- To quantify the number of incoming and outgoing students.
- To quantify and increase the number of courses offered in English.
- To maintain and achieve new relevant partnership agreements.
- To analyse and continuously invest in language courses.

Internationalisation Strategy of the University of Alicante

Juan Llopis – *Vice Rector of International Relations and Institutional Projects*

Internationalisation Strategy of Saarland University

Dominik Brodowski and Cornelius König

❖ Partnerships and networks

During the Study Visit, Saarland University provided the Top Management staff some clues to establish relevant international partnerships and networks. By exposing their experience with the East European Mobility Programme (DAAD, Erasmus+ and KA171), the speaker shared with the participants a series of steps that they follow in these programmes:

1. Establish bilateral agreements based on scientific ties in at least 3 of the university faculties. This ensures the involvement of the faculty from the beginning.
2. Follow funding principles of the institution.
3. Flexibility to start new agreements and projects (they can start at any time and receive funds).

The Saarland University, as coordinator of one of the European University Alliances (EUA), Transform4Europe Alliance also shared its experience with this programme that aims at creating an international (European) campus by bringing together universities from all over Europe. This alliance served as an example of "Strategic Partnership", which refers to the cooperation on an institutional level, with a long-term strategy with a common vision, and the creation of a high degree of integration among the institutions: joint governance bodies and management structures.

Partnerships and networks

Ekaterina Klüh– *International Office, Project Coordinator of the East European Mobility Programme (DAAD, Erasmus+ and KA171).*

Carola Hodyas - *Project Manager of Transform4Europe*

How to win potential partners and initiate collaboration

Dr. Nida Bajwa - *Project Manager of UNICATION (Unify Communication by International Projects in Cambodia and Philippines)*

❖ Leadership

As this Study Visit was targeting Top Management Staff that, as highlighted have an essential role to ensure that internationalisation is successfully placed as a priority of the institution, the host university also organised a workshop on leadership. This workshop served the participants to self-assess what skills, attributes and attitudes they find important for effective leadership. Also, the speaker proposed to the Top Management staff the new model of leadership, the 5 seconds' model. This model that emphasises how high performance teams work well while assuming the presence of 10 concepts that although they seem to collide actually contribute to a good leadership performance: adventure, democracy, energy, success, hierarchy, concentration, necessity, sense, fun, perfection.

Leadership: A Workshop

Prof. Dr. Astrid M. Fellner

❖ International Programmes

During the Study visit the benefits of establishing international programmes was also highlighted as one of the key contributors to internationalisation. The experience of the faculty of EUSMAT, European School of Materials, within the Saarland University was highlighted. This faculty has recognised prestige and a high number of incoming students thanks to the establishment of numerous programmes at a Doctorate, Master and Bachelor level with institutions from several different countries. Some examples are: the PhD-Track DFH offered both in Germany and France; the Master of Advanced Materials Science & Engineering (AMASE) in collaboration with institutions in Sweden, Italy, Spain, France and Austria, or the Bachelor ATLANTIS with an institution in the United States.

Both USAAR and UA have developed international programmes by including the use of English, French and German or Spanish to attract international students, and also to encourage mobility of home students. International programmes are one of the foundations of internationalisation. They ensure a strong faculty engagement, minimised cost, and account with the strong support of related IRO staff

Developing and operating international programs by collaborating with other universities within the region or under different international projects are good practices, a clear example of this is the AMASE programme In Saarland University. This Master programme has been running since 2005, and brings together 6 partners and it is delivered in 4 languages (the students select 2 out of these 4). It has a transversal skill scheme that includes mobility actions and focuses on different aspects such language and intercultural skills and outreach. AMASE evidences as a best practice not only because of those aspects, but more importantly because of the results that it has achieved:

- A high degree of international students attending the programme. From 2005 to 2023, 473 students followed the AMASE programme. These students came from 58 different countries, distributed as follows: 31% Latin America, 30% Asia, 27% Europe, 9% Africa, 3% North America.
- An improvement on gender gap reduction. While national programmes have only 20% of female presence, this programme has a 40% female enrolment.

International Study Programme (AMASE)
Dr. Flavio Soldera- Managing Director of EUSMAT

❖ Internationalisation within the university structure: USAAR's IRO, Student Services and Welcome Center

The EU partners emphasised the importance of embedding internationalisation not only in the strategic policies of the HEI but also within the structure of the institution: allocating resources and building different services that facilitate its advancement. The host institution ensured that the Top Managers had an overview of the importance of not only having an International Relations Office, but of including internationalisation as a priority in other centres that are essential for incoming and outgoing students such as the Welcome Center and the GoOut! Service Center for students of Saarland University.

Visit the Welcome Center and GoOut! Service Center

Saarland University's International Relations Office
 Johannes Abele - *Head of International Relations Office*

In short, this experience served the participants, the Top Management level staff, to understand the different dimensions of Internationalisation and how the needed work for advancing it in the Cambodian Higher Education System passes through acknowledging that it is not enough to simply cite internationalisation as a priority, but that this has to be evidenced in the leadership, in the drafting and implementation of a strategic plan of action and in the construction of a series of services that truly enable the institution to immerse itself in a process of internationalisation at all levels.

Photos at the Study Visit at USAAR.

- Photo 1. First photo of the CHAIIn consortium



Photo 2. Group photo at USAAR



Photo 3. Photo at the International Cooperation Office



Photo 4. CHAIN Meeting In USAAR



3. Study Visit for IRO Staff to University of Alicante

3.1 Description

The Study Visit to the University of Alicante took place between the 10th and the 14th of June of 2024. This event targeted IRO staff and combined both theoretical and participative activities that allowed the attendants to better understand and acquire some of the tools and actions needed to advance internationalisation.

The Study Visit for IRO staff focused on:

- Providing internationalisation practices and managerial skills at an institutional level - through the International Relations Office - and at a faculty level.
- Transferring good practices to improve international collaboration for research.
- Facilitating peer learning and creating leadership at the IRO level.
- Highlighting the importance of communication for encouraging outbound mobility and attracting incoming mobility.
- Discussing the current situation on internationalisation in Cambodia in order to identify gaps and needs to be addressed in the workshops in WP4.
- Establishing a basis for the development of IRO services.

3.2 Advancing internationalisation for IRO staff

These results were attained by developing a well-thought-out schedule that featured several activities and actions within the University of Alicante. that comprised, among other things: IRO Management of mobility programmes (student, administration and academic staff mobility), faculty strategies for internationalisation, credit recognition and transfer, international research collaboration, and knowledge diplomacy.

❖ **IRO Management of mobility programmes - student mobility, administration and academic staff mobility.**

Different relevant actors working on internationalisation in the University of Alicante participated in the event: the Vice Rector of International Relations and Cooperation, the Vice Rector of International Relations and Institutional Projects, the Director of the Secretariat Mobility, etc. Their participation was really valuable as they did not only provide

an overview of the structure for internationalisation established within the university, but the participants could ask their questions and solve the doubts and challenges that they had experienced when implementing internationalisation actions in their own institutions.

The participants reported that they could see that the UA has a clear supporting division to internationalisation which included different services:

- Permanent personnel in-charge of international mobility.
- A language centre to support international students and out-going students.
- Harmonisation and coordination with the faculty's international actions.

Presentation of Secretariat Mobility

José Luís Oliver – *Director of Secretariat Mobility (UA)*

International Partnerships (workshop)

Elena Agulló Sánchez – *Deputy Director of Mobility Projects (UA)*

Benefits of internationalisation for students

Elena Olmos - *Graduate student & Junior Project Manager (OGPI-UA)*

❖ Faculty Strategies for Internationalisation

During the Study Visit the IRO staff also learnt on how to promote internationalisation not at an institutional level but instead at a faculty level. The Vice Dean of Faculty of Education External Internship and Mobility highlighted a journey to promote internationalisation which had not been easy but evidenced to be successful (in only 5 years has gone from barely nothing to having one of the highest mobility participation within the university). The Vice Dean shared with the participants some of the methods used that have been very diverse and have been tailored according to the target, but that both began with the implementation of the ARA Groups (High-achieving groups), in which the conducting language of a high percentage of the classes is English.

- For the **students**:
 - Participating in ARA Groups benefited the students by:
 - Privileges for the mobility application process.
 - Smaller groups and better timetable.
 - European Degree Supplement.

- Encouraging word-of-mouth between students. By increasing the number of both incoming and outgoing students, there was a better engagement of the students to go on a mobility.
- For the **academic staff**:
 - Teaching in ARA Groups was beneficial for them because:
 - They had smaller groups and better timetable.
 - The credits counted per ARA group was higher (normal course 6 ECTS; ARA Group 9 ECTS).
 - More points towards participation on Mobility programmes.
 - Getting involved in the faculty's internationalisation efforts gave them a role (prestige), the possibility to participate in the university decision-making process, networking, and a small retribution.
 - When learning about the programme they also realised the benefits of these mobility programmes and where participating in it.

As a consequence of the involvement of these people, who became active agents of the internationalisation of the faculty, there was an increased academic participation in the different programmes both for students and for academics, causing a domino effect.

Internationalisation from a Faculty perspective

Maria Tabuenca - Vice Dean of Faculty of Education External Internship and Mobility

❖ Credit recognition and transfer

The University of Alicante shared with the participants some of the methods used to ensure credit recognition and transfer in mobility programmes. Which included:

- The completion of a learning agreement before mobility with the continuous mentoring of an assigned tutor from the home institution's faculty.
- Importance of updating the curricula of courses to ensure that the learning agreement is done adequately.

- The establishment of formal agreements between institutions, detailing the terms and conditions for credit transfer.
- Well-documented policies on credit transfer accessible to students, administrative and academic staff.

The speakers also remarked that while credit recognition and transfer is very important for mobility, there is always a need to be flexible in this sense as it is almost impossible to find programmes at different universities that completely match their curricula. For that reason, the UA is satisfied with finding programmes that match in a 70/75%.

Presentation of Secretariat Mobility

José Luís Oliver – *Director of Secretariat Mobility (UA)*

International Partnerships (workshop)

Elena Agulló Sánchez – *Deputy Director of Mobility Projects (UA)*

❖ International Research Collaboration

During this Study Visit, the importance of international research collaboration for advancing science and innovation was also highlighted. The Deputy Director of the International Doctoral School of UA talked about the experience and key actions of the Doctoral School to promote internationalisation in research.

Among others, some of the good practices highlighted by the participants included:

- Promoting joint research projects with international partners.
- Securing funding and resources for collaborative research initiatives.
- Co-supervision (supervisors of the thesis of different institutions) as an effective approach to encourage international research collaboration.
- Development of a detailed project plan with timelines, milestones and deliverables.

Some of the benefits of these good practices according to the participants is the enhancement of the academic quality and reputation of the university, the ability to broaden research horizons and resources, the cultural exchange and building of international (professional) networks and the preparation of students for a globalised world.

Internationalisation of the Doctoral School: EIDUA

Carmen Pire – *Deputy Director EIDUA (International Doctoral School of UA)*

❖ Knowledge Diplomacy

A specific discussion panel on Knowledge Diplomacy (KD) was organised by the University of Alicante to discuss how HEIs can contribute to face current global issues (e.g. climate change, food security, epidemics, peace and security, human rights and social justice, etc.). Knowledge Diplomacy refers to the role of IHERI in building/strengthening relations between and among countries, and it involves both (1) the role of IHERI in managing and strengthening international relations and (2) the role of international relations in enhancing IHE, research and innovation.

Some of the learning outcomes of this discussion highlighted by the participants are:

- Erasmus + projects and international partnerships contribute to KD.
- The importance of leveraging Higher Education to foster international cooperation.
- That Knowledge Diplomacy can directly contribute to the promotion of global transformation, being developed both at an internal and external level.
- The role of the HEIs not only for teaching/learning, research and knowledge production, but also for providing a service to society.

Panel Discussion - Knowledge Diplomacy: how HEIs contribute to global transformation

Moderator: Carolina Madeleine, Director of the Service of Institutional Project Management Office

Leticia Díaz Platero, Servicio de Dimensión Internacional en la Unidad de Educación Superior del SEPIE

Bunlay Nith, Deputy Director General of Higher Education of Cambodia

Rosa María Martínez, Vice-Rector of International Relations of University of Alicante

In short, this experience served the participants, the IRO staff, to acknowledge the changes needed to pave the way for their HEIs to advance internationalisation, and to acquire the needed skills to implement and to manage the internationalisation efforts. It facilitated peer learning and knowledge transfer.

Photos at the Study Visit at UA.

- Photo 1. Group photo at UA.



- Photo 2. Panel Discussion 2.



- Photo 3. Consortium photo at the hand – the symbol of UA



- Photo 4. CHAIN Rectors and CHAIN coordinator meeting the UA Rector



4. Advancing internationalisation through the exchange of best practices from the EU partners

4.1 Key actions to advance internationalisation in HEIs

Although the two Study Visits had a different approach and targeted different professional profiles - the first one assessing the top managers and the need of embedding internationalisation at an institutional level, while the second SV focusing on the actions and methods needed to ensure the successful performance of internationalisation efforts -, they both referred to a series of common topics. These best practices can, then, be recognised as central to advance internationalisation at all levels. They include:

- Strategic Planning
- Organisational Structure
- International Programmes
- Communication
- International Partnerships
- Financial Management

❖ Strategic Planning

This point was already brought up in the first Study Visit when the EU partners presented the strategic plans for internationalisation of their institutions, but it was highlighted during

the second Study Visit when referring to overcoming the recognised obstacles and barriers. Many of these obstacles acknowledged- such as insufficient financial resources - could be lowered with a good plan with indicators and specific goals and means to achieve them. Both USAAR and UA remarked how this long-term strategy and actions has been central for their internationalisation process.

Some of the points highlighted by the participants were:

- The need of integrating internationalisation into the university's structure and policies, particularly through its inclusion in the institution's strategic plan.
- Advancing internationalisation requires clear goals and strategies.
- The importance of developing an Strategic Plan FOR Internationalisation (and not only including it in the general one), which should include:
 - Structure or staff in charge of IRO activities.
 - Geographic areas prioritised.
 - Partnership strategies: prioritise strategic international partners.
 - Communication actions to attract international students and to engage outgoing students.
 - Funding strategy and financial management.
- For the development of this strategy a macro-level should be avoided and instead an approach that involves interested individuals from various areas must be taken.

❖ **Organisational Structure**

Effective organisation structure with clearly defined and dedicated roles and responsibilities for International Relations is essential for advancing internationalisation. These roles and structures may include: a Vice Rector for International Relations, Director and an Office of International Relations Office (in the case of the UA there are two sub-sections: that of Mobility Service and that of International Cooperation Service), with some fixed personnel, and other services such as a Language Center supporting student mobilities and attracting international students.

This organisational chart for internationalisation can also be done by embedding it within the existent bodies of the university, such as the example of the Welcome Center or the case of the internationalisation being promoted within the faculties. However, this requires strong

communication of different departments, teams and individuals. A good connection and relationship between IRO Services and Support Centers for mobility beneficiaries is fundamental for international cooperation to be successful.

❖ **Communication:**

One key factor to ensure the success of internationalisation efforts is to also have a good communication strategy and tools. In both Study Visits, the hosting EU partners transversally highlighted this aspect.

Some of the key points that the participants recognised as necessary for successfully advancing internationalisation were:

- Effective communication that promotes international opportunities. With a clear direction, that is concrete and engaging.
- Tailor the communication differently for different types of targets.
- Utilising digital platforms for engagement (of students, academic and administrative staff) and information sharing.
- Ensure that administration services and personnel are engaged in exchange programmes and in communicating with partner institutions.
- Communication is key at two levels, external, but also **internal** – between different services, different faculties, etc.- to maintain consistent communication through meetings, emails or collaborative platforms.

All these points importantly rely on having IRO staff who are motivated and well-trained to communicate with international groups by different means (E-mail, phone calls, Social Media, etc.); that have good skills on communicating people-to-people; are able of speaking in English (ongoing skill improvement); and have some proficiency in information technology as it is crucial for effective communication.

In this realm, the participants also remarked as a good practice to have a service such as the Welcome Centre and Student GoOut! Centre of the University of Saarland, as a way to provide a warm support to students and help them with any information they may need during their stay in the institution or when going abroad. In the UA, apart from the IRO, the

Language Center provides a similar service and there is a tutor assigned to outgoing students at a faculty level who helps the student with all the process.

❖ **International partnerships**

During the two Study Visits, one point that was brought up repeatedly was the EU partners' experience when establishing new international partnerships. The different experts in internationalisation from both institutions pointed out that the focus should not be on achieving new partnerships agreements but rather on maintaining functional and relevant partnerships overtime. It is important to have international partnerships which last beyond the MoU. In order to do this, there is a need to start from mutual interests which make the agreement mutually beneficial (to avoid unbalanced situations) and which aligns with institutional goals. The focus should always be on the quality of the partnerships and not the quantity of them. Deeper relationships with partners would be more fruitful.

To achieve this, it is important to establish clear principles and goals and to have the needed funding, the human resources and the infrastructure. When establishing a new partnership, it is essential to define its scope and the specific activities that each party will undertake.

Some activities (fellowship programmes, student and staff programmes, international conference, international joint research projects, etc.) should be initiated and encouraged so that faculty members have chances to meet their future international collaborators.

International partnerships are of a great value to the institutions as it:

- Can improve the reputation and recognition of an institution globally.
- Strengthens capacity building and knowledge transfer.
- Encourages and facilitates student and staff mobility.

❖ **Financial management**

According to the Cambodian partners, limited funding is one of the main factors hindering internationalisation of the Higher Education System of Cambodia. The EU partners shared their experiences in this realm and some key points shared by both the UA and USAAR and that the Cambodian participants noticed were:

- The preparation of a detailed annual budget for the operation over the year, which included all scheduled activities and mobilities, all expected revenues and expenditures. And which defines a set of goals aligned with the university’s objectives in terms of academic coordinators, faculty administration, research, etc.
- Clear annual budget and plan requires continuous support from the university. For example, the UA has a concrete annual university budget allocation.
- Conduct financial monitoring periodically.
- Learn to identify and apply for external funding sources and programmes such as Erasmus KA171.

4.2 Implementing these best practices in the Cambodian HEIs

The key point of these exchange experiences was to transfer these good practices to advance internationalisation so that there could be a real change in Cambodia’s Higher Education System. That is why, the focus is not only on training the top management and the IRO staff, but rather to ensure that these good practices are acquired and implemented (tailored to their context) back in Cambodia.

For that reason, for elaborating this report, one aspect that tried to be assessed was that of how the Cambodian Institutions were going to implement in their own institutions some of these key actions that had been recognised to be essential for internationalisation during the both study visits.

	How the Cambodian partners will implement these best practices in their HEIs
Strategic Planning	<p>Some declared that they would take different steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ First, to conduct a strategic review to assess current efforts and perform a SWOT analysis ○ Secondly, develop a comprehensive strategy document which aligns with institutional policies, secures necessary funding, and establishes dedicated roles. <p>One institution declared that it had already managed to include internationalisation in its 5-year strategic plan. And that when going back home, they will work on preparing a separate strategic plan on internationalisation.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This plan will also cover the communication and financial strategies to follow for internationalisation. ○ One of the most evident outcomes of this exchange experience is the acknowledgement on the Cambodian partners' side of the need of this document and the compromise of developing a template within the CHAIN project that the partners can use, in collaboration with the Ministry of Higher Education, Youth and Sport.
<p>Organisational Structure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Enhance their institution's internationalisation efforts back home by implementing an effective organisational structure with dedicated roles and responsibilities for international relations. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Establishment of an International Relations Office by those that still don't have one. ○ Dedicated roles which will streamline the management of student and faculty exchanges, international partnerships, and collaborative projects. ○ Assigned responsibilities that ensure more efficient coordination and support for all international activities and ultimately foster a more globally engaged campus. ○ Implementing an approach such as UA and USAAR that integrates internationalisation in other centres. E.g. by having a person in charge or an office similar to the UA's Language Centre (CSI) that supports student mobility and coordinates with the faculties to improve mobility. ○ One institution declared that after SV 1 and 2 they had already started procedures to create divisions for the IRO support staff: one team for incoming inbound students and another teams for outgoing caretakers.

<p>Communication</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To establish a communication plan that includes the elaboration of promotional materials, including website and social media, which is both attractive and informative. E.g. creating a dedicated online portal and leveraging social media to disseminate information about international programmes, partnerships and events. Regular updates, success stories, and opportunities to be shared through newsletters and email campaigns. ○ Start tailoring better the communication methods depending on the target. E.g. improve communication with students by taking into consideration their needs and interests (not only academic, but also cultural and of life experience).
<p>International partnerships</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Strengthen the partnership agreements already established (ensure overtime sustainability of these relations) and get more “practical” agreements which ensure the applicability of the agreement terms (not only in paper). ○ Some claim that they will focus these international partnerships on strategic ones that support academic exchange, collaborative research and shared resources, to enhance the quality and impact of the international engagement. ○ Expand for new networks and exploring new areas of research and activities ○ Work on expanding international partners for academic collaboration
<p>Financial Management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure continuous funding for internationalisation by applying an strategy that combines both university budget allocation (internal) and use of external funding sources. ○ Identify external funding sources for internationalisation. Funding sources are available, but the capacity for resource mobilisation is still limited. ○ Pursuing partnerships with international institutions, organisations, and donors to supplement funding. ○ Develop a financial plan and budget to support the implementation of the annual active plan and individual projects.

5. Conclusions

In overall, these study visits provided valuable insights into best practices and innovative strategies for the internationalisation of the Higher Education System. The EU partners' experts highlighted the importance of a well-structured IRO, strong leadership and effective partnerships in order to achieve internationalisation goals. The participants highlighted three key aspects for improving internationalisation at HEIs:

- **Strategic Approach.** Establishing an internationalisation strategic plan that guides the activities for successful implementation of internationalisation and considers all the key efforts for advancing internationalisation: organisational chart, communication strategy, international partnerships, mobility programmes, etc. And that establishes clear goals and indicators to this end.
- **Human Capital.** Having skilled and knowledgeable management and staff is essential for successfully implementing internationalisation. These study visits and the CHAIN project with all the planned training activities and workshops will equip the Cambodian HEIs to advance internationalisation.
- **Capital/ Financial resources:** internationalisation would not happen without financial resources; budget allocation and generation are essential.
 - Internal budget allocation passes through the establishment of internationalisation as a priority. Extra funding is necessary and advantageous, but to ensure the sustainability of internationalisation efforts overtime, a specific budget must be assigned for this purpose.
 - External funding sources. The capacity to mobilise financial resources is limited for HEIs in Cambodia, but this exchange experience has evidenced the availability of different funding sources and has given the Cambodian partners some methodologies to optimise the available resources and to improve the financial management for internationalisation.

The participants also highlighted that these events have provided the Cambodian partners an opportunity to extend their collaboration to universities in Europe and to find new opportunities for student and staff mobility. This exchange has contributed as well to the cooperation between the different Cambodian partners.

Furthermore, these visits also enabled the Cambodian partners the acquisition of good practices and methods to implement them at their institutions. The participants highlighted that some of the direct expected benefits of these exchange experiences include the adoption of successful internationalisation practices, improved capacity to attract and support international students and to strengthen global partnerships.

Moreover, this internationalisation process aims to go beyond the partners directly involved in the consortium and it targets the transformation of the whole Higher Education of Cambodia. The ultimate goal is that by implementing the lessons learned by each institution, the quality of education is enhanced, a global academic community is fostered and there is a direct contribution to the internationalisation of Higher Education in Cambodia. This is ensured thanks to the continuous involvement of the Ministry of Higher Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS) in the meetings, agreements, and particularly in obtaining the tools to overcome the current barriers to Internationalisation of Cambodian Higher Education System and achieve one of the HE Vision for 2030 and Roadmap 2017-2030's goals: 3) internationalisation and regionalisation.

Consequently, these Study Visits and the CHAI project as a whole, facilitates meaningful exchanges and learning opportunities that pave the way for sustainable internationalisation strategies that align with each institutional goals and the broader national objectives for internationalisation of Higher Education in Cambodia.

6. Annexes

6.1 Annex 1: Materials Study Visits

	Presentations	Agenda	Attendance List
SV USAAR	https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/11eaOWBzBvxKB3KEmfTHMLttvEjxrLUm?usp=drive_link	https://drive.google.com/file/d/1iEz5Y85C6YIFZslyne/CcQm92BVx-ow6c-/view?usp=drive_link	https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1L-RaL1E1tVcqFc_CCwWri2yicfg49X5c?usp=sharing

SV UA	https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1wStODHwszzKHNmxBSaOqL8ILWt2Yc6Zj?usp=drive_link	https://drive.google.com/file/d/1OtqPohh4VpZtrptIruNUYjcAVMu0CuSR/view?usp=drive_link	https://drive.google.com/file/d/1VwZdrQ1YipBHpUel8x3hRfWlwAy6ZUII/view?usp=drive_link
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6.2. Annex 2: Published News Study Visits

	SV USAAR	SV UA
CHAIN Website	https://www.chain-cambodia.eu/news/chains-consortium-meets-first-time-face-face-saarbrucken-germany	https://drive.google.com/file/d/1iEz5Y85C6YIFZslynCcQm92BVx-ow6c-/view?usp=drive_link
Partner websites	<p>UA (OGPI) - https://web.ua.es/en/ogpi/noticias/2024/launching-of-chain-erasmus-project.html</p> <p>CHAIN coordinator's LinkedIn https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7191051431204843520/</p>	<p>UA (OGPI) - https://web.ua.es/en/ogpi/noticias/2024/boosting-internationalisation-in-cambodia-higher-education-system.html</p> <p>UA (institutional) - https://web.ua.es/es/actualidad-universitaria/2024/junio2024/1-9/la-ua-organiza-las-jornadas-perspectivas-sobre-la-internacionalizacion-colaboracion-entre-espana-y-camboya.html</p> <p>UA (institutional) - https://web.ua.es/es/actualidad-universitaria/2024/junio2024/10-16/la-ua-recibe-a-representantes-de-universidades-camboyanas.html</p>
Regional Newspaper		<p>EL INFORMACIÓN (Regional newspaper of Alicante) - https://www.informacion.es/universidad/ua/2024/06/10/ua-organiza-jornada-perspectivas-internacionalizacion-103597371.html</p>

