

# HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-03

BIOECONOMY EXCELLENCE ALLIANCE FOR STIMULATING  
INNOVATIVE AND INCLUSIVE GREEN TRANSITION

BEAMING

## D4.1 – BEAMING Sustainability Plan

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Date: 6/2/2026

This document corresponds to Deliverable 4.1 and presents the Sustainability Plan for the BEAMING Excellence Alliance, under the framework of the BEAMING project (Grant Agreement No. 101137131), coordinated by BME. It provides a comprehensive framework to guide the Alliance's activities in fostering innovation, knowledge valorisation, and capacity building in the bioeconomy, with a particular emphasis on widening countries and the Western Balkans. The Roadmap defines long-term objectives, thematic priorities, and concrete actions to enhance institutional excellence, strengthen Communities of Practice, and promote cross-country collaboration. It integrates insights from stakeholder consultations, alignment with ERA policy priorities, and synergies with other European initiatives.

| Project details        |                                                                              |                        |                               |
|------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Project acronym</b> | BEAMING                                                                      | <b>Start/Duration</b>  | 1 January 2024 /48 Months     |
| <b>Topic</b>           | HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-03-01                                             | <b>Call identifier</b> | HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-03 |
| <b>Type of Action</b>  | HORIZON-CSA                                                                  | <b>Coordinator</b>     | BME                           |
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| Deliverable details            |                                                                                              |                            |                      |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Number</b>                  | <b>D4.1</b>                                                                                  |                            |                      |
| <b>Title</b>                   | BEAMING Sustainability Plan                                                                  |                            |                      |
| <b>Work Package</b>            | WP4 - Ensuring the sustainability of the BEAMING Excellence Alliance and supporting the CoPs |                            |                      |
| <b>Dissemination level</b>     | PU – Public                                                                                  | <b>Nature</b>              | R – Document, report |
| <b>Due date (M)</b>            | M22                                                                                          | <b>Submission date (M)</b> | 06/02/2026           |
| <b>Deliverable responsible</b> | 1. BME                                                                                       | <b>Contact person</b>      | Balazs Imre          |

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| Document History  |             |                  |                                                                             |
|-------------------|-------------|------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Date              | Version     | Name             | Changes                                                                     |
| <b>23.10.2025</b> | <b>V0.1</b> | Draft            | The draft version was presented to the partners at the Roadmap Workshop     |
| <b>08.12.2025</b> | <b>V0.2</b> | First version    | Updated version according to the partner's suggestions                      |
| <b>12.01.2026</b> | <b>V0.3</b> | Updated version  | The updated version was presented to the partners at the consortium meeting |
| <b>20.01.2026</b> | <b>V1.0</b> | Complete version | Updates based on the partner's feedback                                     |
| <b>23.01.2026</b> | <b>V1.1</b> | Reviewed version | Internal reviews                                                            |
| <b>06.02.2026</b> | <b>V1.2</b> | Final version    | Final review and formatting                                                 |

## Executive Summary

The Sustainability Plan is designed to ensure the long-term viability of the BEAMING Alliance beyond the duration of the Horizon-funded project (2024–2027). Building on the strategic roadmaps developed during the project, the Plan aims to provide an integrated framework for organisational, financial, and community sustainability. It reflects lessons learned from the project implementation and aligns with European Research Area (ERA) policy objectives, the EU Knowledge Valorisation framework, and the long-term ambitions of the participating institutions.

### **Lessons Learned and Starting Point**

During the project, the implementation of the strategic roadmaps has provided valuable insights into the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges of collaboration between widening and non-widening institutions.

Key lessons include:

- The added value of cross-country Communities of Practice (CoPs) in knowledge sharing and capacity building.
- The need for robust governance structures that go beyond project-based collaborations.
- The importance of diversified funding streams for continuity.
- The role of Quadruple Helix stakeholders in strengthening relevance, legitimacy, and innovation capacity.
- The need to formalise post-project arrangements and long-term commitments to ensure sustainability and impact.

These insights form the foundation of the Sustainability Plan.

The Plan explicitly addresses the transition from project-based funding to a post-project operational model, defining governance ownership, financing principles, and implementation mechanisms for the period beyond 2027.

## Abbreviations and Acronyms

| Acronyms    | Explanation                     |
|-------------|---------------------------------|
| <b>AP</b>   | Action Plan                     |
| <b>BR</b>   | Bioeconomy Research             |
| <b>CEE</b>  | Central and Eastern Europe      |
| <b>CoP</b>  | Community of Practice           |
| <b>DX.X</b> | Deliverable X.X                 |
| <b>HEI</b>  | Higher Education Institution    |
| <b>IIC</b>  | Inclusive Innovation Culture    |
| <b>KV</b>   | Knowledge Valorisation          |
| <b>OS</b>   | Open Science                    |
| <b>QH</b>   | Quadruple Helix                 |
| <b>ERA</b>  | European Research Area          |
| <b>CSA</b>  | Coordination and Support Action |
| <b>KPI</b>  | Key Performance Indicator       |

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## Introduction

The BEAMING Alliance was established under the Horizon Europe programme (Grant Agreement No. 101137131) as part of WIDERA support for the European Excellence Initiative. BEAMING stands for the Bioeconomy Excellence Alliance for Stimulating Innovative and Inclusive Green Transition project (Grant Agreement No. 101137131). The project officially began on January 1, 2024, and the formal Alliance-building phase was launched in Month 6 (June 2024), marking the start of structured cooperation among participating higher education institutions (HEIs) and other partners.

Comprising the partners participating in the BEAMING project – 17 institutions from 13 countries, predominantly located in Central-Eastern and South-Eastern Europe and the Western Balkans – The BEAMING Alliance aims to enhance excellence, collaboration, and innovation capacity in bioeconomy research, education, and knowledge valorisation. Its overarching goal is to strengthen the integration of widening countries into the European Research Area (ERA) by fostering open science practices, mutual learning, and cross-institutional cooperation, while promoting knowledge transfer, policy alignment, and inclusive stakeholder engagement. Through activities such as establishing Communities of Practice (CoPs), developing Open Science (OS) Action Plans (AP), and creating frameworks for Quadruple Helix (QH) collaboration, the Alliance aims to build long-term institutional capacity and policy coherence.

This Sustainability Plan builds upon insights from the 1<sup>st</sup> Strategic Roadmap (D3.1) and the Report on the First Phase of Alliance-building (D3.3), outlining how the BEAMING Alliance will maintain and expand its long-term impact beyond the duration of the funded project. This document represents the first version of the Sustainability Plan, serving as a baseline framework for long-term strategic development. A final version will be prepared and validated in the final stage of the project implementation, integrating the outcomes, lessons learned, and



recommendations derived from the full implementation of BEAMING activities.

As such, this deliverable serves as a transition document between the project implementation phase and the Alliance's post-project operational phase.

## Current State

The analysis of the BEAMING project documentation, partner input data, and workshop results reveals a complex environment in which the BEAMING Alliance operates, characterised by both structural challenges and promising opportunities for long-term development.

This assessment draws upon the *1st Strategic Roadmap* (**D3.1**), the *Report on the First Phase of Alliance-building* (**D3.3**), the *Quadruple Helix Assessment* (**D5.1**), the *Report on Institutional Practices in Bioeconomy Research* (**D5.2**) and the *Open Science Case Study Book and Action Plans* (**D7.1–D7.3**). This is further supported by findings from the BEAMING Alliance Co-creation Workshops and the consolidated Input for the Alliance Excel dataset, which together provide an updated overview of partner capacities, stakeholder engagement, and institutional readiness. The combined insights from these materials define the strategic priorities of the Alliance and form the basis for its sustainability actions.

One of the most persistent challenges identified across all deliverables is the fragmented collaboration between academia and industry, which does not contribute to the full extent of European competitiveness. Although individual institutions demonstrate strong research capacity, translating scientific outcomes into market-ready innovations remains limited. Strengthening Quadruple Helix cooperation and developing new channels for industry engagement—such as innovation exchange platforms and technology transfer networks—are therefore essential for achieving systemic impact. Addressing this gap is critical to the Alliance's long-term relevance and financial sustainability, as stronger

industry engagement increases opportunities for co-funded projects, service provision, and innovation-driven partnerships.

A further challenge lies in the limited institutional capacity for Open Science and Knowledge Valorisation, particularly among widening partners. Many higher education institutions lack comprehensive Open Science strategies, dedicated data repositories, and trained staff to support FAIR data management or intellectual property processes. However, this also presents an opportunity to leverage the mentorship potential of non-widening partners, such as BOKU, CluBE, and SIE, who can provide guidance, tools, and practical models for institutional reform.

Ensuring sustainable financing beyond the project's lifetime is another critical milestone for the Alliance. While BEAMING has secured strong initial momentum through Horizon Europe support, long-term stability depends on embedding the Alliance into existing European frameworks. The planned integration into the BIOEAST Uni Net and alignment with ERA Hubs will enable access to future collaborative funding streams and reinforce the Alliance's institutional permanence.

One of the main challenges identified within the BEAMING Alliance is the variation in institutional capacities among its partners. Differences in organisational maturity, human resources, and access to infrastructure have resulted in uneven levels of participation in research, project development, and knowledge valorisation activities. The BEAMING Alliance approaches institutional diversity as a shared opportunity for development. Through mentoring, targeted training, and the work of its Communities of Practice, BEAMING Alliance seeks to strengthen the capacities of all partners, ensuring more balanced participation and long-term sustainability across the network.

Policy fragmentation across participating countries and institutions remains a challenge for coordinated progress in bioeconomy research, innovation, and higher education. Differences in national priorities, institutional strategies, and governance frameworks can slow down the joint implementation of activities and hinder the exchange of good

practices. This diversity offers a valuable opportunity for policy learning and alignment. By analysing institutional and national approaches and adapting relevant models, the BEAMING Alliance can promote the gradual harmonisation of bioeconomy-related R&I and higher education policies.

This section provides an overview of the internal and external factors shaping the BEAMING Alliance's development, as described in the *1st Strategic Roadmap* (BEAMING Deliverable D3.1, Chapters 5–6) and in the *Report on the First Phase of Alliance-building* (Deliverable D3.3, Chapter 3). The analysis identifies key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, alongside the main stakeholders, current activities, and available resources that define the Alliance's initial conditions for sustainable growth. These factors underline the need for a formalised Alliance structure that can effectively sustain coordination, learning, and joint action with limited central resources.

Building on these findings, the following sections explain how the BEAMING Alliance will translate this need into practical arrangements. The governance section presents the structures for coordination, decision-making, and shared responsibility, while the financial section outlines the funding models that support long-term operation. Together, these sections show how clear governance and stable financial planning will strengthen the Alliance's capacity to operate sustainably beyond the project period.

## Baseline Analysis

This baseline analysis establishes the starting point for the BEAMING Alliance's sustainability phase, outlining existing capacities, gaps, and development needs to guide future actions. The Alliance's foundation lies in a shared commitment to strengthening bioeconomy-related research, education, and innovation, supported by Horizon Europe, Erasmus+, EIC, and COST initiatives. Partners such as BME, BOKU, CluBE, and IRI contribute extensive expertise in bioeconomy policy, innovation



ecosystems, and stakeholder engagement, while AUP, AUT, UNIBL, UKIM, and UNSFA provide strong scientific capacities in agriculture, forestry, food systems, and environmental sciences. The baseline analysis highlights both significant strengths and existing disparities across the partners. Many institutions have solid research portfolios and emerging Open Science practices, yet there remain gaps in project development skills, data management, science-policy and industrial cooperation. Open Science implementation, knowledge valorisation, and inclusive research culture are areas where several partners are still developing internal policies and human capacities. This creates a strong rationale for coordinated capacity-building, mentoring, and policy alignment within the Alliance framework.

To address these needs, the support partners—including BOKU, Fraunhofer ISI, CluBE, IRI, SIE, NIÜ, and the BIOEAST Hub CZ—offer targeted expertise in innovation management, knowledge transfer, research assessment, and communication. They provide structured mentoring, training, and access to broader European networks, helping widening HEIs strengthen their internal systems and increase participation in European research programmes. These support actions are expected to continue and further strengthen during the sustainability phase, ensuring long-term capacity development and institutional resilience.

Through this co-learning and mentoring structure, the BEAMING community transforms diversity into an advantage. The Alliance promotes mutual learning, shared excellence, and stronger integration into the European Research Area (ERA) by linking academic research with innovation ecosystems and policy frameworks such as the EU Bioeconomy Strategy, the EU Green Deal, and the BIOEAST Initiative.

## Vision, Mission, and Strategic Directions

The BEAMING Alliance was created to serve as a long-term collaboration platform that strengthens the excellence, inclusiveness, and sustainability of bioeconomy research, innovation, and higher education in Central-Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, as well as the Western Balkans.

The core purpose of the BEAMING Alliance is to bridge existing structural gaps between *widening* and *non-widening* institutions by creating a stronger, more connected, and inclusive research and innovation environment in the bioeconomy field. The Alliance aims to enhance institutional capacities in key areas, including research management, open science, and knowledge valorisation, thereby enabling all partners to participate more effectively in European projects and networks. It also aims to foster mutual learning and collaboration through active Communities of Practice (CoPs), where institutions share experiences, develop joint initiatives, and strengthen regional cooperation.

### Vision statement

To establish the BEAMING Alliance as a leading and self-sustaining network of Higher Education Institutions supported by light governance, shared resources, and diversified funding mechanisms, that drives excellence, innovation, and inclusiveness in bioeconomy research, education, open science and knowledge valorisation across Central-Eastern and South-Eastern Europe.

### Mission statement

BEAMING's mission is to establish a long-term cooperation framework that enables its members to foster collaboration in bioeconomy research and innovation, strengthen research excellence and an open science culture, and enhance knowledge valorisation and technology

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transfer. The Alliance also aims to advocate for supportive policies aligned with the BIOEAST Initiative and key EU frameworks, enabling higher education institutions, as members of the Alliance, to actively contribute to a more sustainable and inclusive European bioeconomy.

## Strategic principles

The BEAMING Alliance is guided by shared principles that support its long-term development and ensure effective cooperation among its partners.

|                       |                                                                 |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Collaboration</b>  | working together across institutions and sectors.               |
| <b>Excellence</b>     | promotes high-quality research, education, and innovation.      |
| <b>Openness</b>       | shares knowledge and applies open science practices.            |
| <b>Inclusiveness</b>  | ensures equal opportunities for all partners.                   |
| <b>Sustainability</b> | focuses on the long-term impact and efficient use of resources. |

## Strategic Objective and Priority Areas

The BEAMING Excellence Alliance defines five long-term strategic objectives that reflect its core thematic priorities and provide a foundation for sustainable collaboration, institutional growth, and policy relevance. These objectives build upon the Alliance's vision and mission, translating them into targeted directions that guide future actions across the bioeconomy, research management, and societal engagement dimensions.

### **Objective 1 – Strengthen Bioeconomy Research Collaboration through Long-Term Cooperation Mechanisms**

The Alliance aims to reinforce research cooperation and networking among member institutions to enhance their joint participation in European bioeconomy programmes. By supporting project development, shared research infrastructures, and mentoring for proposal preparation, BEAMING will enable members to engage more effectively in cross-border research and innovation initiatives.

### **Objective 2 – Advance Open Science and Data Sharing**

A central goal of the Alliance is to foster the advancement of Open Science practices within its member institutions, strengthening their capacity for transparent, collaborative, and responsible research. The Alliance promotes shared learning, adoption of FAIR data principles, and open access to research results through training, mentoring, and resource exchange. In the post-project phase, Open Science activities will be embedded in the participating institutions' internal policies and supported through the Alliance's Open Science Thematic Platform, ensuring shared ownership and long-term continuity.

### **Objective 3 – Enhance Knowledge Valorisation and Industry Collaboration**

The Alliance supports its members in establishing and strengthening effective collaborations with industry partners to improve technology transfer and innovation uptake. This objective focuses on building institutional capacity for entrepreneurship, intellectual property management, and cooperation with business and public actors in regional innovation ecosystems.

### **Objective 4 – Foster an Inclusive and Innovative Research Culture**

BEAMING Alliance encourages the development of inclusive and gender-balanced institutional environments that promote creativity, fairness, and responsible research practices. Through mentoring, training, and the exchange of best practices, the Alliance helps member institutions embed equality, diversity, and inclusion principles into their strategies and daily operations.

### **Objective 5 – Strengthen Research Management, Policy, and BIOEAST Collaboration**

To ensure long-term sustainability and policy impact, the Alliance aims to enhance institutional research management capacities and foster active engagement in European and regional policy frameworks. Collaboration with BIOEAST Thematic Working Groups and the BIOEAST Uni Net will reinforce alignment with ERA priorities and strengthen the representation of widening countries in EU-level policy dialogues.

### **Objective 6 – Strengthen Research Management and Assessment Systems for Long-Term Institutional Sustainability**

The Alliance aims to strengthen institutional capacities in research management, proposal development, and performance assessment to

support long-term participation in European research programmes. Through shared tools, mentoring, and peer learning, BEAMING will help partners improve internal systems and align their practices with ERA and CoARA principles. These capacities will be embedded in institutional structures to ensure continuity beyond the project period.

## Goals and Priority Areas

Building on its vision, mission, and strategic principles, the BEAMING Alliance defines a set of concrete goals and thematic priorities that will guide its long-term sustainability efforts. These goals translate the Alliance's strategic direction into focused actions that strengthen institutional capacities, promote collaboration, and ensure measurable impact beyond the project's duration.

The priority domains reflect the key pillars of the BEAMING Alliance's work, including **bioeconomy research collaboration, open science practices, knowledge valorisation**, and the development of **inclusive and innovative institutional cultures**. In parallel, the Alliance places strong emphasis on improving research management and assessment mechanisms to align institutional operations with European standards and ERA objectives.

These goals provide the operational bridge between the Alliance's strategic objectives and the concrete governance, financial, and monitoring mechanisms described in the following sections.

## SMART objectives

Building on these strategic directions, the BEAMING Alliance defines specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) objectives that translate its vision into actionable results. These objectives will guide the Alliance's sustainability phase over the next five years, ensuring measurable progress across its four Pillars and cross-cutting policy dimensions.

### Strengthen joint research and innovation capacity in the bioeconomy

**Specific:** Support BEAMING institutions in building and connecting research structures and project development units dedicated to bioeconomy topics.

**Measurable:** At least ten new joint or institutional research initiatives launched, and five Horizon Europe or related proposals submitted collectively by BEAMING members in the next five years.

**Achievable:** Through targeted mentoring, training, and CoP collaboration under the guidance of experienced partners.

**Relevant:** Promotes cross-border cooperation, interdisciplinary research, and joint development of bioeconomy solutions that address regional and European challenges.

**Time-bound:** Progress reviewed annually, with at least two new proposals per year.

## Advance Open Science and data sharing across the Alliance

**Specific:** Strengthen Open Science capacities by supporting the implementation of institutional OS strategies and FAIR data policies.

**Measurable:** At least 80% of partners adopt institutional Open Science guidelines, and 25% actively maintain open-access repositories, while the others contribute through National Infrastructures.

**Achievable:** Supported through dedicated training, mentoring, and resource-sharing activities under the Open Science Pillar Working Group.

**Relevant:** Enhances the alignment with the European Research Area (ERA) and CoARA principles.

**Time-bound:** Stepwise progress in developing Open Science strategies will be monitored annually, with initial institutional self-assessments.

## Enhance knowledge valorisation and industry collaboration

**Specific:** Support member institutions in developing mechanisms for effective cooperation with industry partners and strengthening knowledge valorisation capacity.

**Measurable:** Facilitate the development of new collaboration opportunities between Alliance members and industry stakeholders, aiming minimum annual increase in joint initiatives and partnership agreements over the five-year period.

**Achievable:** Through capacity-building workshops, mentoring on IP management, and the operation of a joint "Bioeconomy Innovation Exchange" platform.

**Relevant:** Improves the social and economic impact of research and enhances regional innovation ecosystems.

**Time-bound:** Continuous partner engagement and collaboration opportunities developed throughout the five-year sustainability phase.

## Foster inclusive and innovative research cultures

**Specific:** Support partner institutions in advancing inclusiveness and gender equality practices to foster diverse and innovative research environments.

**Measurable:** At least 80% of partner institutions receive targeted support and guidance to develop, update, or strengthen their Gender Equality and Inclusion Plans, introducing or improving mentoring or leadership programmes for early-career researchers.

**Achievable:** Through exchange of good practices, CoP mentoring, and capacity-building activities.

**Relevant:** Enhancing inclusiveness and equality in research environments is crucial for institutional sustainability, competitiveness, and alignment with ERA principles.

**Time-bound:** Alliance-wide mentoring, training, and inclusion support activities will be launched and continued throughout the five-year sustainability phase, with annual reviews of partner progress and needs.

## Advancing Research Management & Assessment

**Specific:** Strengthen institutional capacities in project management, proposal development, and research administration to improve coordination and participation in European bioeconomy programmes.

**Measurable:** At least 10 partner institutions will have introduced or improved internal systems for project development, performance tracking, and research impact assessment.

**Achievable:** Supported through mentoring, Communities of Practice, and targeted training activities led by experienced partners. Systems and tools will be regularly reviewed and updated in accordance with institutional needs and recommendations from ERA/CoARA.

**Relevant:** Enhancing research management and assessment capacities is essential for ensuring institutional sustainability, competitiveness, and alignment with the European Research Area (ERA) principles.

**Time-bound:** Capacity-building and peer-learning activities on research management and assessment will be initiated and maintained throughout the five-year sustainability phase.

## Membership model

The BEAMING Alliance applies an open and inclusive **two-tiered membership model** that reflects the different roles and levels of engagement of participating organisations, while keeping governance clear and efficient. Membership is formalised through the signature of a **Membership Form**, a non-binding agreement that confirms the institution's commitment to contributing to the Alliance's objectives and activities. Two membership levels will be recognised:

- **Full Members** – are primarily Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and, in justified cases, research institutes with a clear mandate in research and education related to the bioeconomy and the Alliance's thematic pillars. Full Members are the main institutional drivers of the Alliance. They are represented on the BEAMING Council with full voting rights, participate actively in at least one Thematic Platform and its internal Working Groups, and contribute to the strategic development, visibility, and sustainability of the network.
- **Associate Members** – include other relevant organisations from the bioeconomy and innovation ecosystem, such as NGOs, SMEs, industry associations, clusters, innovation agencies, public authorities, and civil society organisations. Associate Members are key partners in stakeholder engagement, practice-oriented collaboration, and societal impact. They participate in Thematic Platforms and Communities of Practice as non-voting members, and they may be invited to attend meetings of the BEAMING Council as

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observers, providing input and feedback without formal decision-making authority.

This model ensures that organisations bearing primary responsibility for research, education, and long-term institutional development shape the Alliance's strategic direction, while the Alliance remains open to a broad set of ecosystem actors whose involvement is essential for knowledge valorisation, policy relevance, and inclusive innovation.

New Full and Associate Members may join the BEAMING Alliance on a rolling basis. Membership applications are reviewed and approved by the BEAMING Council, ensuring that the Alliance's composition remains aligned with its mission, geographic focus, and thematic priorities, while allowing the network to grow and adapt over time.

## Governance Structure & Operational Model

The governance structure and operational model of the BEAMING Alliance are designed to be simple, transparent, and fit-for-purpose, ensuring effective strategic steering while keeping administrative burdens low. In the post-project sustainability phase, the Alliance will operate through two main governance bodies – the BEAMING Council and the BEAMING Secretariat – supported by Thematic Platforms that structure collaboration across the Alliance's pillars.

### Strategic oversight & decisions:

#### **Presidential Trio – President & Vice Presidents**

The BEAMING Alliance applies a rotating presidency among its Full Members to ensure shared ownership and balanced representation. The order in which Full Members assume the role of President is pre-

defined and approved by the BEAMING Council and may be periodically reviewed and updated by Council decision.

To guarantee continuity and smooth transitions, the President is supported by two Vice Presidents. One Vice President is the outgoing (previous) President, providing institutional memory and follow-up on ongoing priorities, while the other is the incoming (next) President, ensuring early involvement in strategic issues and preparation for the upcoming mandate. Together, the President and the two Vice Presidents form a Presidential Trio, which works closely with the Secretariat and Thematic Platforms to provide coherent leadership across consecutive terms.

### **BEAMING Council**

The **BEAMING Council** is the main decision-making body of the Alliance. It provides overall strategic guidance, approves key plans and reports, and oversees the long-term development of the network.

The Council is composed of representatives of all **Full Members** of the Alliance. Each Full Member designates one official representative, ensuring that higher education and research institutions driving the Alliance's mission have a clear and legitimate voice in strategic decisions. The Council:

- Approves the Alliance's annual work plan and associated sustainability actions.
- Endorses annual activity and financial overviews prepared by the Secretariat.
- Adopts key policies related to membership, governance, and collaboration with external partners.
- Provides guidance to the Thematic Platforms and reviews their annual priorities and outputs.

The current President of the BEAMING Alliance (from among the Full Members) chairs the BEAMING Council. The President convenes and moderates Council meetings, represents the Alliance in external fora, and ensures continuity between strategic decisions and day-to-day operations.

The Council meets at least once per year, with additional meetings if required, in plenary format, preferably back-to-back with a major Alliance or bioeconomy event, and may organise additional online meetings when important strategic decisions are required.

#### Day-to-day management: **BEAMING Secretariat**

The BEAMING Secretariat is responsible for the day-to-day coordination and administration of the Alliance. It operates under the leadership of the President and ensures the practical implementation of the Councils decisions. During the initial sustainability phase, the Secretariat is hosted by the institution of the President, which designates necessary staff members to carry out core coordination and communication tasks. Hosting responsibilities may rotate or be supported by in-kind contributions from other Full Members, subject to Council agreement.

The Secretariat:

- Coordinates internal communication and maintains the Alliances mailing lists, collaborative calendars, and shared workspaces.
- Prepares meetings of the BEAMING Council and supports minute-taking, documentation, and follow-up.
- Maintains the record of membership (Core and Supporting Members) and related Memoranda of Understanding or cooperation agreements.
- Collects inputs for annual reporting, including updates from Thematic Platforms and members activities.

- Supports external visibility and outreach in close cooperation with the relevant Thematic Platforms and member institutions.

Thematic implementation:

### **Thematic Platforms**

The Alliance is formed by 4 **Thematic Platforms**, which merge the existing BEAMING project's Task Forces (TFs) with the Communities of Practice (CoPs) into coherent clusters. The four thematic areas covered by them correspond to the Alliance's key pillars:

- **Bioeconomy Research (BR)**
- **Open Science (OS)**
- **Knowledge Valorisation (KV)**
- **Inclusive Innovation Culture (IIC)**

Each Thematic Platform brings together:

- Internal **Working Groups** composed of representatives of member institutions, replacing the Task Forces that operated during the project phase; and
- External stakeholders organised in **Communities of Practice**, representing Quadruple Helix actors such as industry, policy, civil society, and innovation intermediaries.

Member institutions may propose the establishment of new Thematic Working Groups based on their expertise, strategic interests, and emerging thematic needs. Proposals for new Thematic Working Groups shall be submitted to the BEAMING Council, outlining their objectives, scope, and expected contributions to the Alliance's priorities. The Council reviews and approves such proposals to ensure alignment with

the Alliance's strategic goals, available resources, and overall governance framework.

The Thematic Platforms serve as the main engines for joint activities, co-creation, and project development. Their functions include:

- Identifying thematic priorities and proposing them to the BEAMING Council for validation.
- Initiating and coordinating joint projects, training activities, and policy-relevant outputs.
- Facilitating knowledge exchange and mentoring among members.
- Maintaining active engagement with Quadruple Helix stakeholders in each pillar.

Each Platform is coordinated by a designated Platform Lead (and, where relevant, a Co-Lead) from among the Full Members. Leads are responsible for animating the Platform, convening regular meetings, and reporting annually to the BEAMING Council and the Secretariat.

The governance framework is flexible and adaptive: additional Thematic Platforms may be established in the future if new strategic domains emerge that are relevant to the Alliance's mission and membership.

### **BEAMING Alliance operational model**

The BEAMING Alliance operates as a collaborative framework primarily composed of universities and research institutions committed to strengthening their capacities in research, innovation, and governance. Its operational model is designed to support institutional development and excellence within the participating universities, while ensuring long-term cooperation and knowledge exchange.

The Alliance functions through a **multi-layered operational structure** that enables universities to jointly plan, implement, and monitor their strategic development goals:

- **Strategic Level** – coordinated by the BEAMING Council and the Presidential Trio, ensuring alignment of institutional strategies and the shared sustainability agenda.
- **Operational Level** – supported by the BEAMING Secretariat, hosted by the President, which provides administrative, communication, and coordination services to facilitate collaboration among higher education institutions.
- **Thematic Level** – implemented through the 4 Thematic Platforms (Bioeconomy Research, Open Science, Knowledge Valorisation, and Inclusive Innovation Culture), each fostering specific areas of institutional growth and cross-learning among universities.

As a network of universities, the BEAMING Alliance promotes institutional transformation through collaboration, enabling member universities to strengthen their institutional capacities and cooperation mechanisms in accordance with the Alliance's strategic objectives.

## Decision-making processes

Decision-making within the BEAMING Alliance is designed to be simple, transparent, and inclusive, while clearly distinguishing between strategic governance and thematic implementation.

**Strategic decisions** are taken by the **BEAMING Council**, composed of representatives of all Full Members with voting rights. The Council approves the annual work plan, major policy documents, membership applications, and other decisions that shape the Alliance's long-term direction. The Council strives to reach decisions by consensus; where consensus cannot be achieved, decisions are adopted by a two-thirds majority of Full Members present (including those participating online), unless otherwise specified in the internal rules of procedure.

The Council is chaired by the **President of the Alliance**, who is part of a Presidential Trio together with the previous and the next President (serving as Vice Presidents). The Presidential Trio prepares the Councils agendas, steers strategic discussions, and ensures continuity between successive presidencies. The President may take urgent decisions between Council meetings, within a mandate agreed by the Council, subject to subsequent confirmation by the Council at its next meeting or via written procedure. Any such urgent decisions shall be limited to ensuring operational continuity and do not involve long-term financial or strategic commitments.

**Operational and coordination decisions** are handled by the **BEAMING Secretariat**, under the guidance of the President and the Presidential Trio. The Secretariat organises meetings, prepares documentation, coordinates internal communication, and ensures follow-up on decisions. It may take day-to-day management decisions necessary for the implementation of the work plan, provided these remain within the frameworks approved by the Council.

At thematic level, **Thematic Platforms** and their internal **Working Groups** take **thematic and technical decisions** related to the planning and organisation of activities in their respective pillars, within the mandate and resources approved by the Council. These decisions are made collectively by participating members, following consensus-oriented procedures agreed within each Platform. Where appropriate, Platforms may submit proposals and recommendations to the Council for endorsement.

**Associate Members** participate in Thematic Platforms and Communities of Practice on an equal footing in terms of content contribution and may be invited to attend Council meetings as observers. They provide input, feedback, and recommendations but do not hold voting rights in formal Council decisions.

All governance bodies document their meetings and decisions through minutes and short decision summaries stored in the shared Alliance repository. Key decisions are communicated to all members via the Secretariat and, where relevant, summarised in periodic internal updates.

## Communication channels

Effective communication is fundamental for maintaining collaboration. The following channels and tools will support regular information flow:

- **Quarterly coordination meetings:** Online meetings between the Thematic Platform leaders and the Secretariat to monitor progress and coordinate actions.
- **Annual meeting:** A hybrid event bringing together all members to review progress, approve plans, and foster peer learning.
- **Internal communication tools:** Mailing lists, newsletters, and a collaborative calendar managed by the Secretariat to ensure continuous engagement.
- **External communication:** The BEAMING Alliance website and social media channels will share public updates, good practices, and open calls for participation, strengthening visibility and outreach.

English will serve as the working language of the BEAMING Alliance, while key documents may also be translated into selected national languages when relevant.

## Financial aspects

The BEAMING Alliance will adopt a diversified and cost-efficient funding model designed to ensure continuity beyond the project lifetime. Its financial strategy builds on shared resources, collaborative project development, and integration into existing European and regional frameworks.

The Alliance's financial strategy has been developed based on the **findings and recommendations presented in Deliverables D3.1 (1st Strategic Roadmap of the BEAMING Alliance)** and **D3.3 (Report on the First Phase of Alliance-building)**.

Drawing on these documents and the practical experience gained during the implementation of the BEAMING project, the Alliance's financial model builds on **collaborative funding approaches, shared institutional resources, and integration into existing European and regional frameworks**.

### Funding sources and opportunities

The Alliance will capitalise on upcoming EU and national funding opportunities relevant to research excellence, education, and innovation, including:

- **Horizon Europe** (WIDERA, Cluster 6, ERA and CSA calls);
- **Erasmus+** and **Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions** for training and mobility;
- **Interreg and regional cooperation programmes** supporting bioeconomy and innovation;
- **National bioeconomy and R&I initiatives** in the participating countries;
- **BIOEAST Partnership programmes**, once established, to ensure continuity at the regional level.

## Cost efficiency mechanisms

Operational sustainability will be ensured through shared training resources, cross-institutional mentoring schemes, and joint project proposal development. This collaborative approach reduces administrative overhead and maximises the use of existing institutional capacities.

## Stakeholder Engagement and Partnership Strategy

The long-term sustainability of the BEAMING Alliance relies on the continuous engagement, growth, and active participation of its stakeholder community. The Alliance's engagement and partnership strategy is designed to maintain the momentum achieved during the project, strengthen the connections between academia, policy, and industry, and ensure long-term impact and relevance. This strategy builds on the stakeholder mapping and analysis presented in **Deliverable D11.1 (Stakeholder Engagement Plan)** and the **Stakeholder Matrix developed under WP4**, which identified key actors and collaboration pathways across the bioeconomy ecosystem.

The BEAMING Alliance recognises the importance of maintaining a diverse and balanced stakeholder base to achieve its mission. The following key stakeholder groups have been identified, together with the value they gain from continued engagement:

| Stakeholder                                    | Role                                                                 | Value Proposition                                                                         |
|------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Universities and research institutions</b>  | Core members and drivers of capacity-building and knowledge exchange | Access to expertise, mentoring, collaborative projects, and shared Open Science resources |
| <b>Industry actors and bioeconomy clusters</b> | Partners in innovation, technology transfer, and market uptake       | Access to research talent, innovation exchange platform, and collaboration opportunities  |
| <b>Policymakers and BIOEAST partners</b>       | Policy alignment and strategic integration                           | Evidence-based recommendations and cross-country dialogue                                 |
| <b>Innovation agencies and funding bodies</b>  | Support mechanisms                                                   | Improved coordination and project readiness across institutions                           |
| <b>Civil society and NGOs</b>                  | Co-creation and societal engagement                                  | Inclusion in sustainable bioeconomy initiatives and education efforts                     |

The long-term success of the BEAMING Alliance depends on an **active, committed, and expanding community** that continues to collaborate beyond the project period.

To ensure this, the following measures will be implemented:

- **Continuation of Communities of Practice (CoPs):** The CoPs established during the BEAMING project will remain active as the primary collaboration and dialogue platforms of the Alliance, linking thematic expertise and regional priorities in the Four Pillar Working Groups.
- **Capacity-building activities:** Training, early-career researcher mobility programmes will foster knowledge exchange, professional growth, and institutional development.
- **Partnership development:** Targeted matchmaking and proposal-writing sessions will encourage new project collaborations among members and with external partners.

## Monitoring

The Alliance will build on the **Key Performance Indicator (KPI) monitoring system already developed and applied during the BEAMING project** (see *BEAMING KPI Framework and Monitoring Sheet*), which provides a structured basis for tracking progress across research collaboration, Open Science, knowledge valorisation, inclusiveness, and policy engagement.

In the post-project phase, this system will be adapted to the needs of the Alliance and simplified for annual reporting. The main indicators will continue to cover:

- number and diversity of active Alliance and Thematic Pillar members;
- new joint research and innovation proposals and funded projects;
- engagement of industry, policymakers, and other Quadruple Helix actors;
- level of participation in capacity-building and mentoring activities;

- visibility and policy uptake of the Alliance at national and EU levels.

Annual monitoring results will be compiled by the **Secretariat** and reviewed by the **BEAMING Council** during their annual meetings.

The monitoring approach will remain simple, inclusive, and focused on continuous improvement. Rather than focusing solely on quantitative targets, the Alliance will use monitoring as a tool to learn from members' experiences, share best practices, and adjust strategies where necessary. Data will be collected through short annual self-reporting templates aligned with the original BEAMING KPI model and complemented by qualitative feedback from Pillar Working Groups. Building on the risk assessment principles defined in the BEAMING management framework (Deliverables D3.1 and D3.3), the Alliance will maintain awareness of potential risks such as reduced member engagement, limited funding, or governance challenges. These will be reviewed annually alongside the KPI data, and mitigation actions (enhanced communication, targeted mentoring, or diversification of funding) will be agreed collectively by the ACC and the Secretariat.

## Conclusions

The BEAMING Sustainability Plan sets out a clear framework for the long-term continuation and impact of the BEAMING Alliance beyond the project period. Building on the governance structures, collaborative tools, and partnerships established under BEAMING, the Alliance is prepared to evolve into a self-sustaining network that advances bioeconomy research, open science, knowledge valorisation, and institutional innovation across widening countries. It aims to empower universities and research organisations to collaborate more effectively, strengthen their capacities, and contribute to the transition toward a sustainable bioeconomy. Through ongoing cooperation, commitment, and knowledge exchange, the Alliance will continue to build on BEAMING's achievements and serve as a lasting driver of European excellence and regional development.



Funded by the  
European Union

Funded by the European Union under grant agreement N° 101137131. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the Research Executive Agency (REA). Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.