

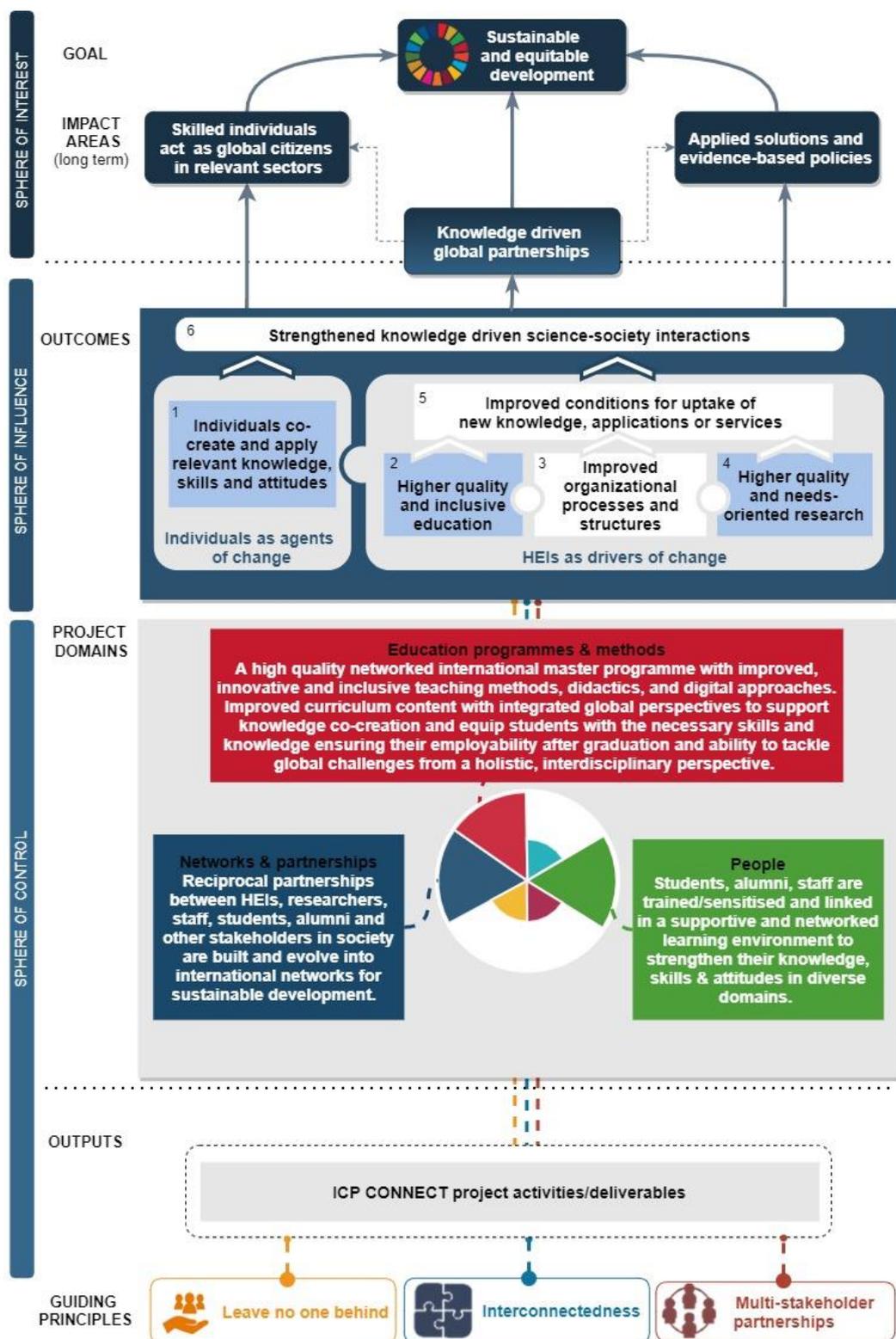
Theory of Change ICP Connect

ICP Connect aims to more systematically integrate global perspectives and strengthen global south and network dimensions into existing master's programmes. By doing so, the projects aim at contributing to a number of outcome areas of which the following three are defined as the primary ones:

- (1) **'Individuals co-create and apply relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes'**;
- (2) **'Higher quality and more inclusive education'**;
- (4) **'Higher quality and needs-oriented research'**.

Each ICP Connect project focuses on these outcomes depending on its priorities and main objectives, meaning that some might focus more on (1) and (2) while others focus more on (1) and (4) for example. In the long term, all ICP Connect projects combined, contribute to development changes (cfr. Sustainable and equitable development via the SDGs and Agenda 2030)¹, resonating with the impact areas of the general theory of change of VLIR-UOS. This does not mean that ICP Connect projects do not contribute to other outcomes (e.g. 'science society interface) but the starting point and emphasis is on higher quality and more inclusive education, individuals applying new skills and knowledge and higher quality and needs-oriented research'.

¹ Education is considered both a goal in itself (SDG 4: Quality Education) and a means for attaining other SDGs. There is no selection of specific SDGs that ICP Connect projects can contribute to as in principle they can contribute to all SDGs in different ways by e.g. supporting students to become change agents in specific areas, by supporting research in certain areas, by building networks with other HEI on specific topics worldwide, by supporting more inclusive educational practices...



An ICP Connect project can focus on different **project domains** that contribute to the different outcomes, with 'Education programme and methods', 'People' and 'Networks and partnerships' being the main ones. The most important changes resulting from ICP Connect projects and examples of deliverables for these three domains are outlined in the table in annex 1. It is possible that ICP Connect projects focus on one or more of the other project domains (outreach and policy support; research programmes and methods; systems, policies and infrastructure) and if this would be the case, promoters are then

invited to clarify their focus on one of these additional domains. Minimally, focus should however be on the three defined main domains:

Education programmes and methods

Part of an ICP Connect project is the focus on the **content, didactics, lecturers and curriculum components** of the **educational programme**. This also entails that a **positive learning environment** is created, allowing for skills development and acquisition of broad knowledge and competences, thereby reinforcing understanding of the interconnected challenges of the SDGs/Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and increasing employability in relevant sectors. It also means that students find themselves in a **supportive environment** improving their well-being and motivation with for example access to sources like the library or online databases, organisation of extra-curricular activities, offering of networking opportunities, stimulation of exchange and collective knowledge generation, opportunities to co-create learning environments, additional supporting systems for students with special needs, support to the transition from education to employment, etc. These initiatives also stimulate **interaction between diverse student profiles**.

People

Closely linked to the educational programme is the focus on the 'students', more specifically **ensuring quality participation** and **personal and professional development of international students** and especially VLIR-UOS scholarship holders. Students participate in a high quality programme and gain **transversal competences** (attitudes, knowledge and skills) such as global citizenship, critical thinking, leadership skills apart from top-of-the art scientific knowledge, enabling them to become experts and critical world citizens who are capacitated and motivated to engage in global society (Change Agents). A first aspect in this regard is the **selection of scholarship holders**. A programme develops a specific **scholarship selection strategy** in line with the project objectives and aligned with the overall VLIR-UOS scholarship selection criteria. Programmes can for example actively promote their programme and the scholarship opportunity in specific countries/at specific (potential) partner institutions in order to build or strengthen partnerships there. It is noteworthy to explicitly mention the SDG principle of 'Leaving No-one Behind' since scholarships can be an important tool to empower students who are traditionally overlooked by or have less opportunities in higher education (e.g. minorities, women, students with disabilities,...). During the study, the ICP Connect project helps build/maintain a qualitative and relevant master programme that capacitates students with broad skills and knowledge, whereby support measures are in place. As part of ICP Connect projects, measures are also taken to **stay connected** with graduates of the master programme, at connecting **alumni** with each other and with students and (network) partners, at providing **learning opportunities** and create **support mechanisms** for alumni.

Networks and partnerships

Within ICP Connect projects, reciprocal partnerships and networks with relevant educational or research institutions, as well as other organisations (e.g. NGO', private sector) or institutes (e.g. government bodies) are built or strengthened, allowing for **co-teaching, co-creation of courses and curricula components, co-organization of (online) courses, co-hosting of fieldwork and thesis research, co-planning of major curricular and extra-curricular activities, shared responsibilities in double degrees, mutual involvement in boards, etc**. These partnerships not only enrich, reinforce and engage the programme (team) at the Flemish institution, thereby also increasing the visibility of teaching staff and their educational/research topics in their institute and adding to the profile of the institution. Moreover, they also allow for capacity building of the partner institutions. In the longer term this leads to

the **creation of broad international thematic networks** of Higher Education Institutions (HEI) and alumni, possibly with involvement of research institutes and other organisations and with a central core in Flanders. As part of these partnerships and networks, additional funding can be framed and research capacities of involved departments can be strengthened. This e.g. can lead to collaborative research projects with involvement of alumni and students to contribute to positive societal change.

Outputs and outcomes:

Programme: ICP Connect ²			
Domains of change	Principal programme change	Programme outputs/activities	Linkages VLIR-UOS outcomes
Education programmes & methods	A high quality networked international master programme with improved, innovative and inclusive teaching methods, didactics, and digital approaches. Improved curriculum content with integrated global perspectives to support knowledge co-creation and equip students with the necessary skills and knowledge ensuring their employability after graduation and ability to tackle global challenges from a holistic, interdisciplinary perspective.	<p>A high quality International Master Programme is organized, with relevant content, appropriate didactics and innovative approaches and methodologies. It focuses on transfer and exchange of state-of-the-art knowledge, skills and attitudes that can be applied in a professional context and society after graduation.</p> <p><i>For example:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Innovative curricula and teaching methods are developed, often in co-creation with partner institutions   - New content is created, with improved integration of concepts of equity and equality e.g. gender concepts, intersectionality, inclusion, (implicit) bias ...   - Non-academic study goals are built into the international study, such as leadership development, intercultural competency and exposure to civic participation.  - A supportive, dynamic, interactive and multi-faceted e-learning environment is developed. - Curriculum components that shift away from a 'classical classroom' constellation and introduce students to fieldwork, groupwork, collaboration with non-academic actors etc., are developed, often in collaboration with partner institutions and alumni.  	<p>This contributes to the outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 'higher quality and inclusive education' - 'individuals co-creating and applying newly acquired knowledge and skills' - 'higher quality and needs-oriented research'

² The symbols indicate when one of the underlying SDG-principles is at play: Leaving no one behind & inclusiveness: ; Interconnectedness & indivisibility: ; Multi-stakeholder partnerships: 

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Virtual collaborations expand perspectives in classroom discussions and sensitise students to other forms of knowledge production and modes of conducting scientific research. - ... 	
<p>Networks & partnerships</p>	<p>Reciprocal partnerships between HEIs, researchers, staff, students, alumni and other stakeholders in society (public actors, private actors, other CSOs, communities, etc.) are built and evolve into international networks for sustainable development.</p>	<p>The programme built partnerships with relevant educational or research institutions (first five years of ICP connect funding - phase 1). In the longer term this leads to a broad international thematic network of Higher Education Institutions (HEI), research institutes and alumni (second period of ICP connect funding for 5 years- phase 2)³.</p> <p><i>For Example:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (Phase 1) A number of potential partners are identified. - (Phase 1) A strategy aimed at gradually building a network that can support and feed into the master programme, as well as stimulate research capacity building, is developed. - (Phase 1/2) Partnerships that stimulate student and/or staff mobility and exchange are in place. - (Phase 1/2) Equity, diversity, and inclusion in teaching and learning are promoted to professionals. 🧑🏫 - (Phase 1/2) Blended learning opportunities are initiated, collaboratively planned by partners using their specific expertise when relevant. - (Phase 1/2) A network providing access to facilities, resources (including funding) and ideas is in place. - (Phase 1/2) Steps are taken, often in collaboration with partners, to secure other funding (e.g. proposal writing, maintaining relationships with potential donors,...) - (Phase 2) Innovative practices are developed, tested, exchanged and implemented in the framework of a network of institutions, students and alumni. 	<p>This contributes to the outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 'higher quality and inclusive education' - 'individuals co-creating and applying newly acquired knowledge and skills' - 'higher quality and needs-oriented research'

³ The capacity-building networks, developed out of a Flemish master program, require a rather lengthy lifespan so funding is foreseen for 10 years max. in order to ensure that partnerships can be build and further developed. A master program can receive incremental funding for maximum 2x5 years, after positive evaluation by a selection commission. A distinction is made between the first 5 years of funding (phase 1) and the second 5 years of funding with regard to activities and results. Phase 1 and phase 2 of incremental funding have a slightly different focus, especially with regard to partnerships and alumni.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (Phase 2) Alliances to tackle skill gaps and foster innovation in and through higher education together with e.g. the private sector are in place. 🏠 - (Phase 1/2) New research methods and improved data collection methods and analysis techniques are shared and used. - (Phase 2) collaborative research projects are developed, with involvement of alumni. - ... 	
<p>People</p>	<p>Students, alumni, staff are trained/sensitised and linked in a supportive and networked learning environment to strengthen their knowledge, skills & attitudes in diverse domains (e.g. leadership, global citizenship).</p>	<p>Students (incl. individual scholarship holders) follow a relevant educational programme of high quality with supportive measures in place. Skills, knowledge and attitudes of students are effectively strengthened during the study. The programme maintains contact with alumni and connects them to academic, scientific, thematic or diplomatic networks and support systems, as well as provides them with or links them to additional lifelong learning options.</p> <p><i>For example</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An inclusive recruitment strategy is developed and applied. 👤 - Scholarships are also provided to individuals (from communities) who are typically overlooked by, or unprepared to participate in traditional educational and scholarship selection processes. 👤 - Students are supported to become change agents through a variety of practices (like case studies, field work, internships, ...). 🏠 - Students find themselves in a supportive environment with for example extra-curricular activities that stimulate interaction, exchange and networking. - Additional support offers are in place, such as assistance with practical issues and additional trainings, support to the transition from education to employment, etc... - Students get introduced to new approaches and different norms and standards, allowing for the development of certain world citizens skills and gaining of global understanding. 🌐 	<p>This contributes to the outcome:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 'individuals co-creating and applying newly acquired knowledge and skills'

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opportunities for engagement with other (domestic and international) students and European and international organisations are created. - (Phase 1) An alumni policy is in place, explicating the programme's strategy to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o follow-up on its alumni; o ensure input and involvement from alumni with regard to e.g. programme content and approaches, research topics, ...; o content provision and lifelong learning opportunities for alumni; o supporting alumni in finding their way in the world of employment and for identifying innovative ways of supporting alumni as actors of change in their environment; o create a strong network of alumni (and others), allowing for cross-sectoral collaboration. - (Phase 2) An alumni network is created, linked to the broader programme's network. 🧩 - (Phase 2) Alumni make use of supportive measures/initiatives like mentorships, useful training resources, acknowledging articles/publications by using e.g. award systems, support in writing articles, access to a research network, etc. ... 	
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