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ALFA III

Formulario de solicitud de subvención

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Name of applicant:	ALMA MATER STUDIORUM - UNIVERSITA' DI BOLOGNA	
Title of the action:	VERTEBRALCUE	
Location(s) of the action:	<i>In Latin America: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela, Austria, Italy, Portugal, Spain</i>	
Total eligible cost of the action (A)	Amount requested from the Contracting Authority (B)	% of total eligible cost of action (B/Ax100)
EUR 3.750.000	EUR 3.000.000	80%
Total duration of the action:	36 Months	

Dossier No	
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Any change in the addresses, phone numbers, fax numbers and in particular e-mail, must be notified in writing to the Contracting Authority. The Contracting Authority will not be held responsible in case it cannot contact an applicant.

NOTICE

All personal data (such as names, addresses, CVs, etc.) mentioned in your application form will be processed in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2000 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data by the Community institutions and bodies and on the free movement of such data. Your replies to the questions in this form are necessary in order to assess your grant application and they will be processed solely for that purpose by the department responsible for the Community grant programme concerned. On request, you may be sent personal data and correct or complete them. For any question relating to these data, please contact the Commission department to which the form must be returned. Beneficiaries may lodge a complaint against the processing of their personal data with the European Data Protection Supervisor at any time (Official Journal L 8, 12.1.2001).

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PART A. CONCEPT NOTE

1. Relevance of the Action

The process of the regional integration among Latin American Higher Education systems and the complementary ALCUE process are suffering from several limitations:

1. The proliferation in LA of sub-regional HE organizations and institutions that often do not coordinate their efforts and on the contrary compete for scarce resources and membership of HEI, closed organization, lack of horizontal coordination, the persistency of a certain rivalry and lack of articulation between public and private universities in LA,
2. The limited and unequal students' access, especially for the less favoured strata of society,
3. The weakness of relations and openness (almost an isolation) of LA Universities to Business Sector (especially Small and Medium Enterprises), Local Governments and Civil society, a lack of positive attitudes towards dialogue and cooperation with external organizations and specifically to enterprises.
4. A tendency to adopt a top down strategy of action that fails to disseminate and circulate information beyond the members of the HE Institutions and organizations
5. The insufficient level of awareness and participation towards the achievement of the policy aim among the academic community of Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean.
6. The existence of widespread prejudice on both sides of the Atlantic on, e.g., the scientific production of Latin America – that is in fact the fastest growing area of the world in this dimension-, or the suspicion that the only interest of European countries is to attract young students and researchers from Latin America to cope with the “demographic crisis” of Europe.
7. Synergies are dramatically missing among the existing networks.
8. The strategies formulated by the Follow-up Committee are relevant, but a certain gap in awareness of how the 21st century works and what it allows to do in terms of increased bottom-up participation and use of ICT is observable.
9. The lack of clarity on reciprocity and mutual benefits in the proposed increased cooperation, that feeds suspect and scepticism about the real intentions of cooperation

The VERTEBRALCUE project has been conceived as a project to offer both bottom-up and top-down complementary structural support to strengthen existing networks and to offer structural support to new lasting links, agreements and networks, and give major contributions to both different levels of articulation of academic cooperation among LA HEI and between La and EU HEI, through the design and implementation of a cooperation infrastructure at institutional, national, regional and international level.

VERTEBRALCUE intends to contribute to the promotion and consolidation of the development of regional integration among Latin American Education Systems and to the implementation process of the Common Area of Higher Education between Latin America, the Caribbean and the European Union (ALCUE).

Therefore VERTEBRALCUE is relevant to the following domains: Supporting the enhancement of awareness, participation and direct involvement of stakeholders in the implementation of the ALCUE and ALFA III priorities; Exploring and proposing different levels of articulation of cooperation at national, regional and international level (LA-EU) based on principles of reciprocity, transparency, synergy building, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability among the existing networks and newcomers; Proposing structural support for the establishment of lasting links, networks and agreement for implementing the ALFA III Program priorities in different levels of cooperation articulation; Structurally articulating and valorising, in the “vertebrating model”, results and initiatives of the many centres inside and around HEI, that are already active in cooperation projects and in modernisation of Higher Education Systems and Social Cohesion between Universities and society , addressing in particular Thematic Networks, among which University-Enterprise relations, and bi-lateral and multilateral cooperation; Structurally encouraging and supporting, in the VERTEBRALCUE infrastructure, new cooperation projects/programmes while building on what is already existing.

The following Target Groups were identified: (PDM) Policy and Decision-makers responsible for the Higher Education field from LA (at regional, sub-regional, national and local level), and EU (at regional, sub-regional, national level including the European Commission and the European Parliament). Estimated number:250. (LA HEIs) - Latin American Higher Education Institutions. Estimated number: 700 .(EU HEIs) - EU Higher Education Institutions. Estimated number: 700. (AAN) - Academic and Professional associations and HE networks. Estimated number: 100. (SOC) - Local Government, Associations of Enterprises (SMEs), Organizations of the Civil Society. Estimated number: 150.

The following final beneficiaries were identified: (P&R) – Professors and Researchers, (STU) - Students, (ASTU) - Students Associations and Networks, (PUB) - Public at large in the beneficiary countries

(Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela)

Perceived needs and constraints by Target Groups and Final Beneficiaries	Relevance of the action for the target groups The Target group will benefit from:
PDM: Systematic information and support for policy design	Increased participation and opportunities awareness, Support to the policy dialogue in the field at local, national, regional and international level (EU-LA), Increase their respective (EU-LA) knowledge and experience to enrich their learning experience
LA HEI: Need for articulation of existing academic and research programs; need for structural support for new cooperation initiatives; need for relations with Business Sector, Local Government and civil society; need for modernization, harmonization and reform of HE programs	Stronger collaboration among Latin American Higher Education Institutions on the priorities of the ALFA III Program, Modernisation of HES in LA and Social Cohesion, Valorisation and articulation of existing projects, models, infrastructures,...,Support and coordination of new cooperation projects/programmes, Valorisation of thematic cooperation with EU HEI at international level, Promotion at the level of bilateral or multilateral long term partnership among HE institutions, including the capacity to operate one in the context of another.
EU HEI: Need for support in establishing systematic and structured cooperation with LA HEIs and LA HES	VERTEBRALCUE articulation and valorisation of thematic cooperation with Latin American Higher Education Institutions at international level based upon the principles of reciprocity, transparency, synergy building, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability and, not less importantly, at the level of bilateral or multilateral long term partnership among HE institutions, including the capacity to operate one in the context of another.
AAN: Need for increased regional and international cooperation on common themes of interest to avoid overlapping and to optimize efforts an resources	The VERTEBRALCUE thematic articulation and outcomes of the project contributing to the Modernisation of higher education systems in Latin America and Social cohesion at local, national, regional and international level, contributing to coordination and articulation of cooperation opportunities.
SOC: Need to reinforce Academic-Society relationship for local development	VERTEBRALCUE piloting activities to strengthen Social Cohesion by opening and linking University and their surroundings, represented by business organisations, local governments and civil society organisations. The quality of research and the professional skills will be improved, awareness on skill demands will be updated. Local Governments will benefit from social cohesion and sustainability
(P&R) Need for information and support on cooperation opportunities and need for knowledge exchange	Academic collaboration and modernisation, synergies at regional and international level, simplification and integration, awareness of policy makers constraints and priorities .
(STU, ASTU) Need for information and access to the opportunities offered by a strengthened, integrated and modernized HES	Promotion of equitable access to HE and social integration for the most underprivileged groups, modernisation of the HESs.

2. Description of the action and its effectiveness

The proposed action, gathering a good number of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Latin America and Europe, intends to design principles, model structure, action plan, evaluation criteria and verify feasibility conditions for a “vertebrating model” for the Common Area of Higher Education between Latin America and the European Union, VERTEBRALCUE, a new collaboration infrastructure at institutional, national and regional level involving the academic community at all levels and stakeholders of higher education.

The VERTEBRALCUE Project aims to contribute to the development process of the regional integration among Latin American Higher Education Systems (HESs) and the implementing process of the Common Area of Higher Education between Latin America, the Caribbean and the European Union (ALCUE in spanish) by exploring and strengthening different levels of articulation of Latin America-Latin America and EU-Latin America academic cooperation through the design and implementation of a cooperation infrastructure at institutional, national and regional level.

Objectives	Activities	Outputs and expected Results
1. To identify strengths and weaknesses of existing cooperation models and infrastructures (networks, programmes, agencies, specialised units in HEI and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk research on existing cooperation models and infrastructures on Academic Cooperation • Open consultation on line on strength and weaknesses of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “State of the Art” Report on Academic Cooperation models and infrastructures

governments, etc.) of academic cooperation among LA HEI and between LA and EU HEI	existing models and infrastructures • Analysis and classification of existing models	
2. To identify priority actions to further develop the existing infrastructure for cooperation through a diagnostic, strategic and prospective exercise	• Organisation of a major international workshop to present results of research and analysis • Setting priorities for action through a broad consultation of the academic community and its stakeholders in their Region	• International Workshop "Towards an ALCUE HE Cooperation infrastructure" • Methodological Framework and Draft Action Plan for Modelling VERTEBRALCUE
3. To implement design principles, model structure and functions, feasibility and action plan, minimum requirements and evaluation criteria for ALCUE Units in HEI in LA	• Develop of 25 Prototypes of ALCUE Units in Latin America • Analysis of experiences and development of a mutual learning community of ALCUE Units coordinators	• Blueprint for ALCUE units within HEI • 25 pilot ALCUE units in place in LA HEI
4. To propose design principles, model structure and functions, feasibility and action plan, minimum requirements and evaluation criteria for an ALCUE National coordination Unit	• Implementation of 5 Feasibility Studies of National Coordination Units in LA • Analysis of experiences and development of a cooperation model at national level and among National Coordinate Units	• Report and recommendations on ALCUE National Coordination processes and structures. • 5 Feasibility Studies of ALCUE National Coordination Units • Agreements among HEIs at national level
5. To consolidate the Regional dimension of integration of HE systems in LA	• Study on the feasibility of a multi-polar coordination structure at regional level for Latin American integration and participation in the implementation of the ALCUE Common Area of Higher Education.	• Feasibility study and Action Plan on Regional Integration and Participation in the implementation of the ALCUE Common Area of Higher Education • Agreements of HEIs at Regional level
6. To promote thematic dialogue at national, regional and international level and the establishment of lasting Thematic Networks proposing design and implementing principles, feasibility and action plan, minimum requirements and evaluation criteria for sustainable ALCUE Thematic Networks addressing the priorities of the ALFA III Programme mentioned above and on priority actions identified by the project	• Analysis, diagnosis and development of 4 (existing) ALCUE thematic networks	• 4 Plans for sustainable development of ALCUE Thematic Networks • Report and recommendations for ALCUE Thematic Network Developers • Agreements of HEIs on the constitution of Thematic Networks at National and Regional level
7. To promote, stimulate and explore bi-lateral and multi-lateral structured co-operation among leading HEI of the two Regions	• Identification of and support to 5 exemplary experience of structural cooperation among leading universities of the two Regions	• Report on 5 concrete examples of structural cooperation in place (e.g. stable teaching and research units of an LA university in Europe and vice-versa, quadrilateral programmes for international cooperation)
8. To evaluate and integrate ALCUE cooperation infrastructure modeling and prototyping activities proposed by the project	• Organisation of 13 Local Evaluation Seminars • Organisation of 4 integration seminars • Organisation of 4 evaluation seminars • Monitoring and evaluation	• 13 Local Evaluation Seminars • 4 VERTEBRALCUE Integration Seminars • 4 VERTEBRALCUE Evaluation seminars • 2 Annual Evaluation Reports • Final Evaluation report

	activities during the life-span of the project	
9. To propose a middle-term Action Plan for the implementation of the ALCUE cooperation infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation of the Action Plan (Green Paper) • Extensive consultation on-line on proposed recommendations • Organisation of final dissemination conference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VERTEBRALCUE Website • Multistakeholders Events • Green Paper on ALCUE Cooperation Infrastructure • Final conference and Publication

All partners will establish a prototype ALCUE Unit within their institution and will participate in the feasibility studies of the National Coordination Units and will be involved in the design and evaluation activity for each VERTEBRALCUE component. For each WorkPackage one or more partners will be identified and a co-team is proposed to implement the core activities. A joint coordination is proposed in the Action Project Management.

Sustainability of the action

In terms of **sustainability**, VERTEBRALCUE has a clear strategy to be sustainable after the funding period. In fact, the whole project is about contributing to the implementation of the ALCUE area of Higher Education.

Therefore the general principle about sustainability of VERTEBRALCUE is to embody the project results into the process at institutional, national, regional and bi-regional level if these prove to respond (in their outcomes and processes) to the needs of the latinamerican HE community including those of the external stakeholder.

The strategic results of the project, such as the network of ALCUE Points that will be developed in the 25 Latin American Partners Institutions, will be conceived to last in time after the project contractual end, as the participation to the project of these institutions is based on a long term commitment.

The fact that the Thematic Networks themes and the Bilateral and Multilateral Coordination Units will be selected by integrating the ALCUE priorities for action with the ALFA areas of work will guarantee the long-term policy relevance of the project.

Furthermore, the strengthening of University-Enterprise relationship as a strategic result will lead to financing the HE activities, as the experience of University of Bologna in Buenos Aires confirms: the Center obtains over 2/3 of its financial needs from external sources.

Finally, the stakeholders involvement WP10 will have – among others – the mission of connecting the ALFA projects and the ALFA Programme with the higher education policy community in Europe and in Latin America, making sure that the policy makers in charge are not only informed but also engaged and committed to the sustainability of the ALFA projects and Programme.

The following table illustrates the results of a preliminary risk analysis, taking into consideration risks related to Project Activities, to the Complexity of the Consortium and to Political and Natural events

Preconditions and Assumptions	Risk	Contingency Plan Mitigation measures
Stakeholders, especially National Governments and HEI Policy Makers, support VERTEBRALCUE national and regional multipolar coordination units design.	1. Unsatisfactory and imbalanced involvement of relevant stakeholders for the VERTEBRALCUE sustainability	_The PMG will increase the activities planned in WP10 for the country/countries less involved.
Stakeholders of the two regions support VERTEBRALCUE bilateral-multilateral cooperation design.	2. Unsatisfactory and imbalanced involvement of the two HE regional communities.	_If EU-LA participation is not balanced, the PMG will increase the activities planned in WP10 in the region less involved.
Stakeholders will be adequately informed and involved through specific actions designed and implemented in WP10, at local, national, sub-regional, regional and international level, and develop motivation and willingness to contribute to VERTEBRALCUE	3. Change of the policy makers and stakeholders involved in the project area of influence (HE).	_In the WP10 action plan, continuous attention will be paid to the origin of the project community participants, reporting on this will be available for the EC. Immediate contact will be taken with the new policy makers in charge, facilitating the shift process of the VERTEBRALCUE contact persons.

implementation and sustainability.		
All the project partners perform in a satisfactory way.	4. Partners are not performing in a satisfactory way. 5. Financial complications arise in relation to a partner. 6. Delivery delays arise due to one partner.	Once the unsatisfactory performance has been assessed and the partner has been alerted, in a period of one month after the decision by the consortium a proposal of countermeasures is made to the EC taking in consideration the possibility to replace the partner
The project design and action plan pushes the partners to contribute to all project activities.	7. Partners do not contribute to all project activities but only to the ones under their responsibility.	Bilateral contacts will be taken with the partners that are not contributing and a specific strategy for each partner will be proposed. If this does not work, the partner will be excluded from the activities they are not contributing to, and substituted by another consortium member or, if not possible, by a new partner.
The project is conducted by Project Management Group that coordinates communication and project activities among different Partners	8. Insufficient integration among the project activities.	The cause for this lack of integration will be identified by the consortium and a redefinition of the workplan will be agreed with the EC, in order to increase integration and synergy. Continuous contact among the partners will be strengthened.
Sufficient Political and Social Stability to allow Partners regular functions Partners HEI Institutions functions and stakeholders are not effected by natural disasters	9. Political and/or social unrest or unexpected violent changes in political leadership occur , or natural disaster occur having impact on Partners of one country.	The impact of the Political and/or social unrest and/or Natural Disaster will be assessed by the Consortium and the PMG, and a redefinition of the workplan will be agreed with the EC.

PART B. FULL APPLICATION FORM

I. THE ACTION

To be submitted by all applicants

1. DESCRIPTION

1.1. Title

The Action's Title is "VERTEBRALCUE".

1.2. Location(s)

The action will be implemented in Latin America and will cover the three regions (CAN, Mercosur, CentroAmerica) The action will be implemented in the following countries:

1. Argentina
2. Bolivia
3. Brazil
4. Chile
5. Colombia
6. Costa Rica
7. Ecuador
8. Mexico
9. Nicaragua
10. Paraguay
11. Peru
12. Uruguay
13. Venezuela

As the action involves the participation of EU partners, visibility and dissemination actions will also take place in Europe. In particular in:

1. Austria
2. Italy
3. Portugal
4. Spain

1.3. Cost of the action and amount requested from the Contracting Authority

Total eligible cost of the action (A)	Amount requested from the Contracting Authority (B)	% of total eligible cost of action (B/Ax100)
EUR 3.750.000	EUR 3.000.000	80 %

Please note that the cost of the action and the contribution requested from the Contracting Authority have to be expressed in EURO.

1.4. Summary

Total duration	36 Months
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of the action	
Objectives of the action	<p>Main Objective: The proposed action, gathering a good number of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Latin America and Europe, intends to design principles, model structure, action plan, evaluation criteria and verify feasibility conditions for a “vertebrating model” for the Common Area of Higher Education between Latin America and the European Union, VERTEBRALCUE, a new collaboration infrastructure at institutional, national and regional level involving the academic community at all levels and stakeholders of higher education.</p> <p>Specific Objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To identify strengths and weaknesses of existing cooperation models and infrastructures (networks, programmes, agencies, specialised units in HEI and governments, etc.) of academic cooperation among LA HEI and between LA and EU HEI ; 2. To identify priority actions to further develop the existing infrastructure for cooperation through a diagnostic, strategic and prospective exercise; 3. To implement design principles, model structure and functions, feasibility and action plan, minimum requirements and evaluation criteria for ALCUE Units in HEI in LA; 4. To propose design principles, model structure and functions, feasibility and action plan, minimum requirements and evaluation criteria for ALCUE National coordination Units; 5. To consolidate the Regional dimension of integration of HE systems in LA ; 6. To promote thematic dialogue at national, regional and international level and the establishment of lasting Thematic Networks proposing design and implementing principles, feasibility and action plan, minimum requirements and evaluation criteria for sustainable ALCUE Thematic Networks addressing the priorities of the ALFA III Programme mentioned above and on priority actions identified by the project ; 7. To promote, stimulate and explore bi-lateral and multi-lateral structured cooperation among leading HEI and other relevant actors of the two Regions ; 8. To evaluate modelling and prototyping activities proposed by the project; 9. To propose and promote a Middle Term Action Plan of the ALCUE Cooperation Infrastructure
Partner(s)	<p>From EU: Alma Mater Studiorum – Università di Bologna (UNIBO), Scierter (SCIE), Karl-Franzens University of Graz (GRA), Universidade de Coimbra (UC), Universidad de Granada (UGR), Universitat Politècnica de Valencia (UPV), Fundacio Universitat-Empresa de les Illes Balears (FUEIB). From LA, FLACSO Argentina, Universidad Nacional de Quilmes (UNQ), Universidad Tres de Febrero (UNTREF), Universidad Loyola (LOB), Centro Boliviano de Estudios Multidisciplinarios (CEBEM), Instituto Internacional de Planeamiento Educativo (IIPE), Fundacao de Apoio a Universidade de Sao Paulo (FUSP), Universidade Federal de Santa Maria (UFSM), Universidad Central de Chile (UCCH), Universidad Austral de Chile (UACH), Asociacion Colombiana de Universidades (ASCUN), Universidad Antonio Narino (UAN), Universidad Nacional (UNA), FLACSO Ecuador, Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja (UTPL), Asociacion Nacional de Universidades e Instituciones de Educacion Superior (ANUIES), FLACSO Mexico, Universidad Autonoma Metropolitana (UAM), Universidad Centroamericana (UCA), Centro de Estudios de Derecho, de Economia y Politica (CEDEP), Universidad Autonoma de Asuncion (UAA), Pontificia Universidad Catolica del Peru (PUCP), Instituto de Estudios Peruanos (IEP), Universidad de La Republica (URE), Universidad Simon Bolivar (USB). Associate: Coneau, Argentina</p>
Target group(s) ¹	<p>Policy and Decision-makers responsible for the Higher Education field from LA (at regional, sub-regional, national and local level), and EU (at regional, sub-regional, national level including the European Commission and the European Parliament); Latin American Higher Education Institutions; EU Higher Education Institutions. Academic and Professional associations and HE networks. Local Government, Associations of Enterprises (SMEs), Organizations of the Civil Society.</p>
Final beneficiaries ²	<p>Professors and Researchers; Students; Students Associations and Networks; Public at large in the beneficiary countries (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela)</p>

¹ “Target groups” are the groups/entities who will be directly positively affected by the project at the Project Purpose level – See paragraph 2.3 in Section II for the list.

² “Final beneficiaries” are those who will benefit from the project in the long term at the level of the society or sector at large

Estimated results	<p>“State of the Art” Report on Academic Cooperation models and infrastructures; International Workshop “Towards an ALCUE HE Cooperation infrastructure”; Methodological Framework and Draft Action Plan for Modelling VERTEBRALCUE, Blueprint for ALCUE units within HEI; 25 pilot ALCUE units in place in LA HEI; Report and recommendations on ALCUE National Coordination processes and structures. 5 Feasibility Studies of ALCUE National Coordination Units; Agreements among HEIs at national level; Feasibility study and Action Plan on Regional Integration and Participation in the implementation of the ALCUE Common Area of Higher Education; Agreements of HEIs at Regional level; 4 Plans for sustainable development of ALCUE Thematic Networks; Report and recommendations for ALCUE Thematic Network Developers; Agreements of HEIs on the constitution of Thematic Networks at National and Regional level; Report on 5 concrete examples of structural cooperation in place (e.g. stable teaching and research units of an LA university in Europe and vice-versa, quadrilateral programmes for international cooperation); 13 Local Evaluation Seminars; 4 VERTEBRALCUE Integration Seminars; 4 VERTEBRALCUE Evaluation seminars; Mid term Evaluation Report; Final Evaluation report</p>
Main activities	<p>Desk research on existing cooperation models and infrastructures on Academic Cooperation; Open consultation on line on strength and weaknesses of existing models and infrastructures; Analysis and classification of existing models; Organisation of a major international workshop to present results of research and analysis</p> <p>Setting priorities for action through a broad consultation of the academic community and its stakeholders in their Region; Develop of 25 Prototypes of ALCUE Units in Latin America</p> <p>Analysis of experiences and development of a mutual learning community of ALCUE Units coordinators; Implementation of 5 Prototypes of National Coordination Units in LA</p> <p>Analysis of experiences and development of a cooperation model at national level and among National Coordinate Units; Study on the feasibility of a multi-polar coordination structure at regional level for Latin American integration and participation in the implementation of the ALCUE Common Area of Higher Education; Analysis, diagnosis and development of 4 (existing) ALCUE thematic networks; Identification of and support to 5 exemplary experience of structural cooperation among leading universities of the two Regions; Organisation of 4 integration seminars in LA; Organisation of 4 evaluation seminars in LA; Monitoring and evaluation activities during the life-span of the project; Preparation of the Action Plan (Green Paper); Extensive consultation on-line on proposed recommendations; Organisation of final dissemination conference.</p>

Where applicable, clearly indicate the sector³, theme, or geographical area specified in the call for proposals to which the proposed action would apply:

³ See paragraph 2.2 in Section II for the list of Sectors

1.5. Objectives

The proposed action, gathering a good number of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Latin America and Europe, intends to design principles, model structure, action plan, evaluation criteria and verify feasibility conditions for a “vertebrating model” for the Common Area of Higher Education between Latin America and the European Union, VERTEBRALCUE, a new collaboration infrastructure at institutional, national and regional level involving the academic community at all levels and stakeholders of higher education.

The VERTEBRALCUE Project aims to contribute to the development process of the regional integration among Latin American Higher Education Systems (HESs) and to the implementation process of the Common Area of Higher Education between Latin America, the Caribbean and the European Union (ALCUE in Spanish) by exploring and strengthening different levels of articulation of Latin America-Latin America and EU-Latin America academic cooperation through the design and implementation of a cooperation infrastructure at institutional, national and regional level.

VERTEBRALCUE, conceived as the building process of Higher Education cooperation’s infrastructure, will contribute to increase awareness, participation, openness and progress towards the process of regional integration among Latin American Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and the ALCUE Common Area of Higher Education of the academic community at all levels and of stakeholders of Higher Education by articulating and valorising results and initiatives of the many centres, inside and around the HEI, that are already active, and by encouraging newcomers to start new cooperation projects/programmes while building on what is already existing.

Furthermore, through the VERTEBRALCUE infrastructure, the project will contribute to promote the establishment of structural and lasting links and networks among Higher Education Institutions in LA (LA HEIs) and between LA HEIs and EU HEIs, with specific pilot actions and activities that will be carried in the VERTEBRALCUE Units that will also embody the action’s results. The specific activities implemented in the VERTEBRALCUE cooperation infrastructure will be designed according to the priorities of the ALFA III Programme. Specific actions will be addressed to support the reform and modernization of higher education institutions and systems in the beneficiary countries, as well as their quality, accessibility and relevance, taking into particular account the region’s poorest countries and promoting the participation of entities from these countries. The VERTEBRALCUE cooperation infrastructure will embody actions which will contribute to support the integration between universities, enterprises, local government and society, contributing therefore to local development and social cohesion.

The experience of Bologna University in Buenos Aires (the entity that coordinates this proposal), is a basis for analysis and development of initiatives to be implemented in the VERTEBRALCUE infrastructure in this last direction, while the whole partnership’s profile provides ground for building on a massive body of expertise and knowledge on Regional (within Latin America) and International (between LA and EU) Cooperation.

The specific objectives of the project are:

1. To identify strengths and weaknesses of existing cooperation models and infrastructures (networks, programs, agencies, specialised units in HEI and governments, etc.) of academic cooperation among LA HEI and between LA and EU HEI
2. To identify priority actions to further develop the existing infrastructure for cooperation through a diagnostic, strategic and prospective exercise
3. To implement and design principles, model structure and functions, feasibility and action plan, minimum requirements and evaluation criteria for ALCUE Units in HEI in LA
4. To propose and design principles, model structure and functions, feasibility and action plan, minimum requirements and evaluation criteria for ALCUE National coordination Units
5. To consolidate the Regional dimension of integration of HE systems in LA
6. To promote thematic dialogue at national, regional and international level and the establishment of lasting Thematic Networks proposing design and implementing principles, feasibility and action plan, minimum requirements and evaluation criteria for sustainable ALCUE Thematic Networks addressing the priorities of the ALFA III Programme mentioned above and on priority actions identified by the project
7. To promote, stimulate and explore bi-lateral and multi-lateral structured cooperation among leading HEI and other relevant actors of the two Regions
8. To evaluate modelling and prototyping activities proposed by the project
9. To propose and promote a Middle Term Action Plan of the ALCUE Cooperation Infrastructure

1.6. Relevance of the Action

The process of the regional integration among Latin American Higher Education systems and the complementary process of implementing a Common Area of Higher Education between Latin America, the Caribbean and the European Union (ALCUE in Spanish) are suffering from several limitations:

1. The proliferation in LA of sub-regional HE organizations and institutions that often do not coordinate their efforts and on the contrary compete for scarce resources and membership of HEI. Various networks have recently being created in Latin America, but they share a number of similar problems: closed organization, lack of horizontal coordination. Similar limitation to joint programs and projects are due to the persistency of a certain rivalry and lack of articulation between public and private universities in LA, thus restricting the area of cooperation and collaboration which would favour the exchange of relevant information, curricular convergence, agreements on quality education and the achievement of a joint Higher Education Area.
2. The limited and unequal students' access, especially for the less favoured strata of society, new regulations which increase the internal differentiation between public and private HEI, a disproportionate presence of female students, migration of professional and technicians.
3. The weakness of relations and openness (almost an isolation) of LA Universities to Business Sector (especially Small and Medium Enterprises), Local Governments and Civil society. While University-society relationship is often mentioned as a key factor for social cohesion and national and local development, universities programs and every day life academia research activities often do not provide practical information and knowledge for reciprocal exchange and support to the development needs. New demands from labour markets remain unsatisfied. In addition, there is a lack of positive attitudes towards dialogue and cooperation with external organizations and specifically to enterprises.
4. A tendency to adopt a top down strategy of action that fails to disseminate and circulate information beyond the members of the HE Institutions and organizations. Each one in its own activities tries to promote networking and coordinated efforts to improve the quality of education in the Region, but the above mentioned shortcomings limits the efficacy of their efforts.
5. The insufficient level of awareness and participation towards the achievement of the policy aim among the academic community of Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean. Many stakeholders who should know – because they are both supportive to the idea and actively involved in academic cooperation – are not aware at all of the policy aim defined nor of the implementation mechanism. This constitutes in itself a major barrier to the implementation of the Common Area.
6. The existence of widespread prejudice on both sides of the Atlantic on, e.g., the scientific production of Latin America – that is in fact the fastest growing area of the world in this dimension-, or the suspicion that the only interest of European countries is to attract young students and researchers from Latin America to cope with the “demographic crisis” of Europe. The many and convincing examples of good cooperation practice with mutual benefits are not known and promoted enough to overcome prejudice. In fact, the scientific activity in Latin-American universities has grown above the world average thanks to the promotion of science and technology –related public policies geared towards the internationalization of the scientific knowledge generated. As shown in the Appendix to this Green Paper, the international collaboration in Latin America presents a sustainable growth along the years, in line with the international trends. This growth improves the quality of the academia and enhances the international visibility of their research activities. As its presence in the world context increases, the possibility of acknowledgement at world level also increases. This process is enhanced by the political and scientific interest in promoting long lasting agreements between education and research units. This in turn is in line with the promotion of physical and virtual mobility contributing to the exchange of information and ideas vital for the generation of knowledge.
7. Synergies are dramatically missing among the existing networks. The many existing networks that promote and support LA-LA and EU-LA Academic Cooperation are not efficiently coordinated. They often compete on membership, subsidies and “institutional” status rather than converging on the major objective defined at policy level (the Common Area) – maybe without their direct involvement- but certainly not irrelevant to their activities.
8. The strategies formulated by the Follow-up Committee are relevant, but a certain gap in awareness of how the 21st century works and what it allows to do in terms of increased bottom-up participation and use of ICT is observable. In particular, the issue of removing or reducing the “elitist” character of existing academic cooperation is not adequately addressed, nor the potential of universities to be major actors of social and economic development – not only locally, but also in an international

perspective, thus giving HEIs (Higher Education Institutions) an active role in internationalisation rather than just denouncing the “threats” of globalisation.

9. The lack of clarity on reciprocity and mutual benefits in the proposed increased cooperation, that feeds suspect and scepticism about the real intentions of cooperation

Given the nature of the problems mentioned above, a new collaboration infrastructure is required in order to address both the national and regional problems and the inter-regional (ALCUE) policy aims. It is assumed that this new cooperation structure, once in place and functioning, will be capable of supporting, articulating and valorising past activities and best practices of the many HEI already active and of encouraging and motivating newcomers to start new cooperative projects/programs which will be able to count on a vertebrating structure of activities. From this consideration comes the idea of VERTEBRALCUE, as a project to design and test “a vertebrating model” for the modernization of higher education systems in LA, including the potential contribution of education to social cohesion and for the advancement of the policy aim to construct a ALCUE common area of Higher Education

The VERTEBRALCUE project has been conceived as a project to offer both bottom-up and top-down complementary structural support to strengthen existing networks and to offer structural support to new lasting links, agreements and networks, and give major contributions to both different levels of articulation of academic cooperation among LA HEI and between LA and EU HEI, through the design and implementation of a cooperation infrastructure at institutional, national, regional and international level.

VERTEBRALCUE intends to contribute to the promotion and consolidation of the development of regional integration among Latin American Education Systems and to the implementation process of the Common Area of Higher Education between Latin America, the Caribbean and the European Union (ALCUE). Therefore VERTEBRALCUE is relevant to the following domains:

- Supporting the enhancement of awareness, participation and direct involvement of stakeholders in the implementation of the ALCUE and ALFA III priorities
- Exploring and proposing different levels of articulation of cooperation at national, regional and international level (LA-EU) based on principles of reciprocity, transparency, synergy building, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability among the existing networks and newcomers
- Proposing structural support for the establishment of lasting links, networks and agreement for implementing the ALFA III Program priorities in different levels of cooperation articulation.
- Structurally articulating and valorising, in the “vertebraing model”, results and initiatives of the many centres inside and around HEI, that are already active in cooperation projects and in modernisation of Higher Education Systems and Social Cohesion between Universities and society , addressing in particular Thematic Networks, among which University-Enterprise relation, and bi-lateral and multilateral cooperation
- Structurally encouraging and supporting, in the VERTEBRALCUE infrastructure, new cooperation projects/programmes while building on what existing.

The following Target Groups were identified:

- (PDM) Policy and Decision-makers responsible for the Higher Education field from LA (at regional, sub-regional, national and local level), and EU (at regional, sub-regional, national level including the European Commission and the European Parliament). Estimated number:250.
- (LA HEIs) - Latin American Higher Education Institutions. Estimated number: 700
- (EU HEIs) - EU Higher Education Institutions. Estimated number: 700
- (AAN) - Academic and Professional associations and HE networks. Estimated number: 100.
- (SOC) - Local Government, Associations of Enterprises (SMEs), Organizations of the Civil Society. Estimated number: 150.

The following final beneficiaries were identified

- (P&R) – Professors and Researchers
- (STU) - Students
- (ASTU) - Students Associations and Networks
- (PUB) - Public at large in the beneficiary countries (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela)

In the following table we identify the relevance of the action to the target groups/final beneficiary groups and how the action will provide the desired solution.

Target Group	Perceived needs and constraints	Relevance of the action for the target groups The Target group will benefit from:	How the project will provide the desired solution
PDM	Systematic information and support for policy design	Increased participation and opportunities awareness, Support to the policy dialogue in the field at local, national, regional and international level (EU-LA), Increase their respective (EU-LA) knowledge and experience to enrich their learning experience	Stakeholder direct and continuous involvement and participation in each phase of the project
LA HEI	Need for articulation of existing academic and research programs; need for structural support for new cooperation initiatives; need for relation with Business Sector, Local Government and civil society; need for modernization, harmonization and reform of HE programs	Stronger collaboration among Latin American Higher Education Institutions on the priorities of the ALFA III Program, Modernisation of HES in LA and Social Cohesion, Valorisation and articulation of existing projects, models, infrastructures,...Support and coordination of new cooperation projects/programmes, Valorisation of thematic cooperation with EU HEI at international level, Promotion at the level of bilateral or multilateral long term partnership among HE institutions, including the capacity to operate one in the context of another.	Modelling, Prototyping and Evaluating the VERTEBRALCUE cooperation infrastructure at institutional, national, regional and international level, according to ALFAIII priorities and ALCUE process
EU HEI	Need for support in establishing systematic and structured cooperation with LA HEIs and LA HES	VERTEBRALCUE articulation and valorisation of thematic cooperation with Latin American Higher Education Institutions at international level based upon the principles of reciprocity, transparency, synergy building, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability and, not less importantly, at the level of bilateral or multilateral long term partnership among HE institutions, including the capacity to operate one in the context of another.	Modelling, Prototyping and Evaluating the VERTEBRALCUE cooperation infrastructure at institutional, national, regional and international level, according to ALFA III priorities and ALCUE process
AAN	Need for increased regional and international cooperation on common themes of interest to avoid overlapping and to optimize efforts and resources	The VERTEBRALCUE thematic articulation and outcomes of the project contributing to the Modernisation of higher education systems in Latin America and Social cohesion at local, national, regional and international level, contributing to coordination and articulation of cooperation opportunities.	Modeling, Prototyping and evaluating, in the VERTEBRALCUE infrastructure, Thematic cooperation on the Modernization of HES priority of ALFA III
SOC	Need to reinforce Academic-Society relationship for local development	VERTEBRALCUE piloting activities to strengthen Social Cohesion by opening and linking University and their surroundings, represented by business organisations, local governments and civil society organisations. The quality of research and the professional skills will be improved, awareness on skill demands will be updated. Local Governments will benefit from social cohesion and sustainability	Modelling, Prototyping and evaluating, in the VERTEBRALCUE infrastructure, Thematic cooperation on the Social Cohesion priority themes of ALFA III
P&R	Need for information and support on cooperation opportunities and need for knowledge exchange	Academic collaboration and modernisation, synergies at regional and international level, simplification and integration, awareness of policy makers constraints and priorities .	Valorisation Activities and Stakeholders involvement
STU ASTU	Need for information and access to the opportunities offered by a strengthened, integrated and modernized HES	Promotion of equitable access to HE and social integration for the most underprivileged groups, modernisation of the HESs.	Modernisation and Social Cohesion in the VERTEBRALCUE modelling and prototyping activities.

1.7. Description of the Action and its effectiveness

The proposed action, gathering a good number of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Latin America and Europe, intends to design principles, model structure, action plan, evaluation criteria and verify feasibility conditions for a “vertebrating model” for the Common Area of Higher Education between Latin America and the European Union, VERTEBRALCUE, a new collaboration infrastructure at institutional, national and regional level involving the academic community at all levels and stakeholders of higher education.

The VERTEBRALCUE Project aims to contribute to the development process of the regional integration among Latin American Higher Education Systems (HESs) and the implementing process of the Common Area of Higher Education between Latin America, the Caribbean and the European Union (ALCUE in Spanish) by exploring and strengthening different levels of articulation of Latin America-Latin America and EU-Latin America academic cooperation through the design and implementation of a cooperation infrastructure at institutional, national and regional level.

VERTEBRALCUE, conceived as the building process of Higher Education cooperation’s infrastructure, will contribute to increase awareness, participation, openness and progress towards the process of regional integration among Latin American Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and the ALCUE Common Area of Higher Education of the academic community at all levels and of stakeholders of Higher Education by articulating and valorising results and initiatives of the many centres, inside and around the HEI, that are already active, and by encouraging newcomers to start new cooperation projects/programmes while building on what is already existing.

Furthermore, through the VERTEBRALCUE infrastructure, the project will contribute to promote the establishment of structural and lasting links and networks among Higher Education Institutions in LA (LA HEIs) and between LA HEIs and EU HEIs, with specific pilot actions and activities that will be carried in the VERTEBRALCUE Units that will also embody the action’s results. The specific activities implemented in the VERTEBRALCUE cooperation infrastructure will be designed according to the priorities of the ALFA III Programme. Specific actions will be addressed to support the reform and modernization of higher education institutions and systems in the beneficiary countries, as well as their quality, accessibility and relevance, taking particular account of the region’s poorest countries promoting the participation of entities from these countries. The VERTEBRALCUE cooperation infrastructure will embody actions which will contribute to support the integration between universities, enterprises, local government and society, contributing therefore to local development and social cohesion.

The experience of Bologna University in Buenos Aires (the entity that coordinates this proposal), is a basis for analysis and development of initiatives to be implemented in the VERTEBRALCUE infrastructure in this last direction, while the whole partnership’s profile provides ground for building on a massive body of expertise and knowledge on Regional (within Latin America) and International (between LA and EU) Cooperation.

The specific objectives of the project are:

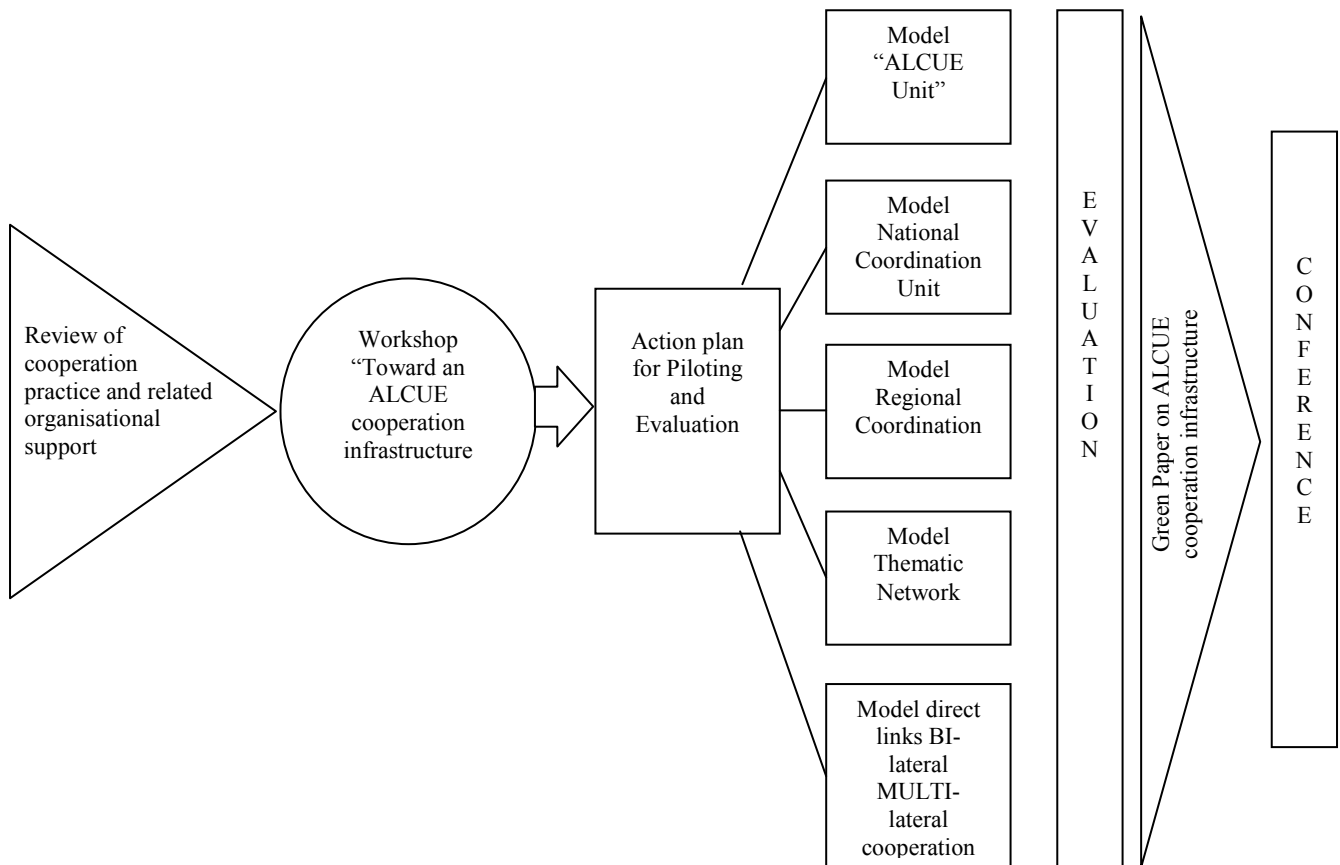
1. To identify strengths and weaknesses of existing cooperation models and infrastructures (networks, programmes, agencies, specialised units in HEI and governments, etc.) of academic cooperation among LA HEI and between LA and EU HEI
2. To identify priority actions to further develop the existing infrastructure for cooperation through a diagnostic, strategic and prospective exercise
3. To implement design principles, model structure and functions, feasibility and action plan, minimum requirements and evaluation criteria for ALCUE Units in HEI in LA
4. To propose design principles, model structure and functions, feasibility and action plan, minimum requirements and evaluation criteria for ALCUE National coordination Units
5. To consolidate the Regional dimension of integration of HE systems in LA
6. To promote thematic dialogue at national, regional and international level and the establishment of lasting Thematic Networks proposing design and implementing principles, feasibility and action plan, minimum requirements and evaluation criteria for sustainable ALCUE Thematic Networks addressing the priorities of the ALFA III Programme mentioned above and on priority actions identified by the project
7. To promote, stimulate and explore bi-lateral and multi-lateral structured cooperation among leading HEI and other relevant actors of the two Regions
8. To evaluate modeling and prototyping activities proposed by the project
9. To propose and promote a Middle Term Action Plan of the ALCUE Cooperation Infrastructure

In the following tables the main activities and expected outputs and results are reported, related to the specific objective of the proposed action

Objectives	Activities	Outputs and expected Results
1. To identify strengths and weaknesses of existing cooperation models and infrastructures (networks, programmes, agencies, specialised units in HEI and governments, etc.) of academic cooperation among LA HEI and between LA and EU HEI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk research on existing cooperation models and infrastructures on Academic Cooperation • Open consultation on line on strength and weaknesses of existing models and infrastructures • Analysis and classification of existing models 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “State of the Art” Report on Academic Cooperation models and infrastructures
2. To identify priority actions to further develop the existing infrastructure for cooperation through a diagnostic, strategic and prospective exercise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisation of a major international workshop to present results of research and analysis • Setting priorities for action through a broad consultation of the academic community and its stakeholders in their Region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Workshop “Towards an ALCUE HE Cooperation infrastructure” • Methodological Framework and Draft Action Plan for Modeling VERTEBRALCUE
3. To implement design principles, model structure and functions, feasibility and action plan, minimum requirements and evaluation criteria for ALCUE Units in HEI in LA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop of 25 Prototypes of ALCUE Units in Latin America • Analysis of experiences and development of a mutual learning community of ALCUE Units coordinators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blueprint for ALCUE units within HEI • 25 pilot ALCUE units in place in LA HEI
4. To propose design principles, model structure and functions, feasibility and action plan, minimum requirements and evaluation criteria for an ALCUE National coordination Unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of 5 Feasibility Studies of National Coordination Units in LA • Analysis of experiences and development of a cooperation model at national level and among National Coordinate Units 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report and recommendations on ALCUE National Coordination processes and structures. • 5 Feasibility Studies of ALCUE National Coordination Units • Agreements among HEIs at national level
5. To consolidate the Regional dimension of integration of HE systems in LA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study on the feasibility of a multi-polar coordination structure at regional level for Latin American integration and participation in the implementation of the ALCUE Common Area of Higher Education. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feasibility study and Action Plan on Regional Integration and Participation in the implementation of the ALCUE Common Area of Higher Education • Agreements of HEIs at Regional level
6. To promote thematic dialogue at national, regional and international level and the establishment of lasting Thematic Networks proposing design and implementing principles, feasibility and action plan, minimum requirements and evaluation criteria for sustainable ALCUE Thematic Networks addressing the priorities of the ALFA III Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis, diagnosis and development of 4 (existing) ALCUE thematic networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 Plans for sustainable development of ALCUE Thematic Networks • Report and recommendations for ALCUE Thematic Network Developers • Agreements of HEIs on the constitution of Thematic Networks at National and Regional level
7. To promote, stimulate and explore bi-lateral and multi-lateral structured co-operation among leading HEI of the two Regions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of and support to 5 exemplary experience of structural cooperation among leading universities of the two Regions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report on 5 concrete examples of structural cooperation in place (e.g. stable teaching and research units of an LA university in Europe and vice-versa, quadrilateral programmes for international cooperation) • Bi-Regional and Multilateral Agreements

Objectives	Activities	Outputs and expected Results
8. To evaluate and integrate ALCUE cooperation infrastructure modeling and prototyping activities proposed by the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisation of 13 Local Evaluation Seminars • Organisation of 4 integration seminars • Organisation of 4 evaluation seminars • Monitoring and evaluation activities during the life-span of the project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13 Local Evaluation Seminars • 4 VERTEBRALCUE Integration Seminars • 4 VERTEBRALCUE Evaluation seminars • 2 Annual Evaluation Report • Final Evaluation report
9. To propose a middle-term Action Plan for the implementation of the ALCUE cooperation infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation of the Action Plan (Green Paper) • Extensive consultation on-line on proposed recommendations • Organisation of final dissemination conference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VERTEBRALCUE Website • Multistakeholders' events • Green Paper on ALCUE Cooperation Infrastructure • Final conference and Publication

The graphic representation below intends to explain the general organization and the logical sequence of the action, giving evidence of the principle phases and the main final results.



Following the graphical representation above, the project will be articulated in the following three main phases:

PHASE 1: PRIORITY SETTINGS, ACTION PLAN, METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

It will be the preparatory phase for the design, modeling and prototyping activities of the VERTEBRALCUE infrastructure. A bottom-up and top-down approach will be organized, involving from the first moment the local units and the stakeholders at different levels. The first phase will involve all partners in a self-assessment activity on cooperation practice with other HEI, followed by an "external" review on strengths and weaknesses of existing cooperation programs, infrastructures, networks, models,.. Each partner will act,

in this first phase, as first embryonic ALCUE Unit, verifying its organization, strengths and weaknesses on academic cooperation and contributing to the general discussion and to the local stakeholders involvement. A broad consultation of the academic community and its stakeholders in their Region will be put in place to assure participation, awareness and the necessary support for the sustainability of the VERTEBRALCUE priority settings and action plan. Basing on the results of the review and on a deep discussion involving the stakeholders, a major international workshop will be organised to present results of review and analysis, to discuss and set priorities and give inputs for the draft Action plan and for the Common methodological framework, that will be put in place to support the modeling and prototyping activities.

PHASE 2: VERTEBRALCUE MODELING AND PROTOTYPING

Building on the results of the above mentioned activities, 5 main models will be designed:

- One for each of the three main “vertical levels” that constitute the VERTEBRALCUE infrastructure, ALCUE Units, ALCUE National Coordination Units, ALCUE Regional Multipolar Coordination Units
- One for ALCUE Thematic Networks and one for the ALCUE Bi-Lateral and Multilateral Cooperation, articulating linking different vertebra at different level in the VERTEBRALCUE structure.

Each model, building the Methodological Framework identified in Phase 1, will identify specific design principles, structure and functions, feasibility and action plan, minimum requirements and evaluation criteria for the VERTEBRALCUE specific “component”, keeping in mind the general Methodological frameworks. Integration activities will guarantee feed back of one model to the others and an overall integrated design. The feasibility and the implementation of the prototype of each of the models will depend also from external constraints, mainly on the level of commitment and willingness of national government, HEI and the other stakeholders, a critical issue that will be addressed throughout the whole project with target activities to which Workpackage will be dedicated (WorkPackage 10).

PHASE 3: VERTEBRALCUE EVALUATION

All of the 5 main models (for the ALCUE Units, for the ALCUE National Coordination Units, for the ALCUE Regional Multipolar Coordination Units, for Thematic Networks, for Bilateral-Multilateral Cooperation) will be integrated and evaluated. Integration Focus Groups and Evaluation seminars will be organised to integrate the VERTEBRALCUE Models and to elaborate evaluation results, that will feed back to the 5 models reports/studies.

Project management and evaluation activities, and especially valorisation and stakeholders’ involvement activities, will accompany the project activities in all of the three main phases.

The project activities will be organized in the following workpackages that will develop throughout the three project phases:

WP1 – PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND EVALUATION (all Phases)

WP2 – REVIEW ON COOPERATION MODELS AND INFRASTRUCTURES (Phase 1)

WP3 – PRIORITIES, ACTION PLAN, METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK (Phase 1)

WP4 – ALCUE UNITS (Phase 2)

WP5 – NATIONAL COORDINATION UNITS (Phase 2)

WP6 – REGIONAL MULTIPOLAR COORDINATION UNITS (Phase 2)

WP7 – THEMATIC NETWORKS (Phase2)

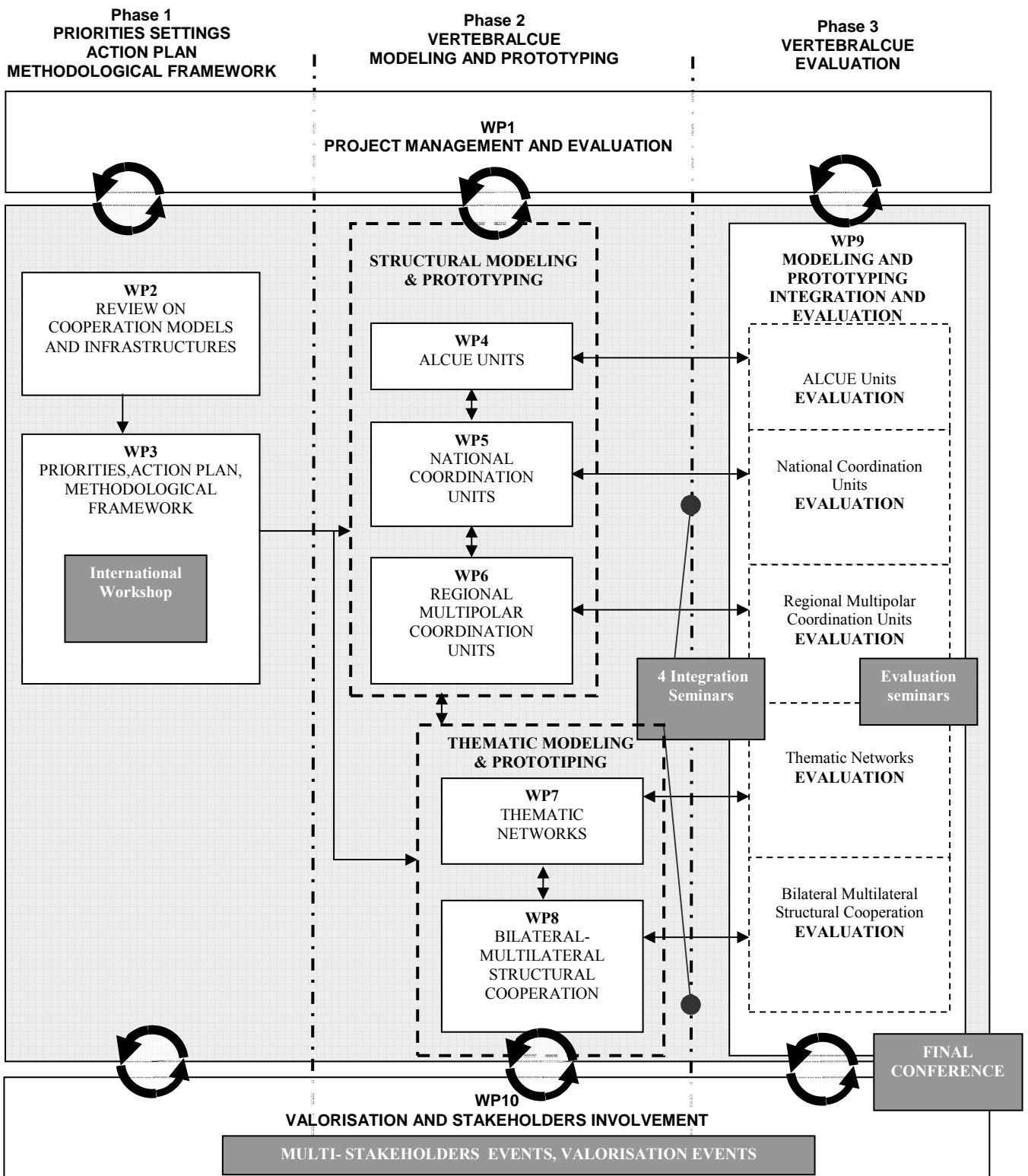
WP8 – BILATERAL-MULTILATERAL STRUCTURAL COOPERATION (Phase2)

WP9 – MODELING AND PROTOTYPING INTEGRATION AND EVALUATION (Phase 3)

WP10 - VALORISATION AND STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVEMENT (all Phases)

In the following representation, the sequence and links of the different Work Packages in relation to the three project phases is presented. Activities of WP1 and WP 10 will be implanted throughout the all project’s phases, while the other Work Packages are inserted in the correspondent phase. The main events of the proposed project are indicated:

- International Workshop, “Towards an ALCUE HE Cooperation Infrastructure”, planned for Month 10
- A local Evaluation Seminar for each of the 13 Beneficiary Countries of the Partners (planned for month 16 to month 21) and 4 Evaluation Seminars, planned in year 3 First semester and first half of the second one
- 4 Integration Seminars, to integrate ALCUE Units, National, Regional, Thematic and Bilateral-Multilateral cooperation models among each other in the VERTEBRALCUE infrastructure, planned in year 3 First semester and first half of the second one
- Multistakeholders and Dissemination Events, throughout all Phases, planned in WP10
- The Final Conference, planned for Month 35.



WP1 – PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND EVALUATION

Resp. UNIBO

WP1 Objectives

- ◆ To ensure that the project's contractual obligations are carried out;
- ◆ To guarantee the organisational, communication and economic conditions for support activities to be conducted in an effective way;
- ◆ To build a quality system able to support continuous improvement of methods and processes;
- ◆ To continuously evaluate the project results, their quality and the correspondence between those and the target groups' needs;
- ◆ To design and put in place consultation, communication and decision-making structures within the consortium;
- ◆ To co-ordinate the day to day running and management of the project;
- ◆ To contribute with significant input to identify new services that might be needed by the projects and by the broader stakeholders community.

WP2 Description of work and activities

Given the highly complex and articulated network of Partners and the articulated and complex design, prototype and piloting activities planned by VERTEBRALCUE, the management structure foresees from one side a joint coordination with a Latin American Partner (UNA) and a joint coordination for technical, networking and sustainability oriented activities by Scierter (SCIE) on the other, that will be described in chapter 1.8 Methodology.

The main activities of this Work Package will be

1.1 Project Management:

Overall project management encompasses dealing with the financial, technical and the management-administrative co-ordination and supervision of the various activities within the project and the relations with the project partners as well as with the European Commission. Project management will be structured with the aim of providing effective and high quality coordination of the involved actions/programmes and to accompany the information, cooperation and integration of the project activities in an effective and robust way. The management activities will include the coordination of the "technical" activities of the project, the overall legal, contractual, ethical, financial and administrative management of the consortium, the coordination of knowledge management and other innovation-related activities.

1.2 Project Quality Control and Assurance, from the production of the Project Quality Plan to the continuous monitoring and quality assurance activities, including risk analysis and actions to be taken.

1.3 Project Monitoring and Evaluation

Given the nature of the VERTEBRALCUE action, two complementary evaluation and monitoring activities will be carried out: on one side the overall evaluation of the project in terms of quality, efficiency and effectiveness and on the other side the evaluation of the prototyping and piloting activities foreseen for building the vertebrating infrastructure of VERTEBRALCUE.

WP1 Deliverables	Month
D1.1 Consortium Agreement	M1
D1.2 Project Quality Plan	M3
D1.3 Project Evaluation Plan	M3
D1.4 Quality and Evaluation reports (2 annual reports containing incremental improvement plan and new services action plan and final report)	M12, M24, M36
D1.5 Minutes of Project Meetings/Audioconferences	M1, M7, M11, M15, M21, M28, M32, M36

WP2 – REVIEW OF COOPERATION MODELS AND INFRASTRUCTURES

Resp. UGR, UNIBO

WP2 Objectives

- ❑ To review, map and identify strengths and weaknesses of existing cooperation models and infrastructures (networks, programmes, agencies, specialised units in HEI and governments, etc.) of academic cooperation among LA HEI and between LA and European Union HEI

WP2 Description of work

Considering that one of the main objectives of the project is to strengthen different levels of articulation of Latin America-Latin America and EU-Latin America academic cooperation among HEI through the design and implementation of a co-operation infrastructure at local, national, regional and international level, the project will start with a review of such existing models and infrastructure.

Each partner will act as first embrional ALCUE Unit, verifying its organization, strengths and weaknesses on academic cooperation and contributing to the desk research on others organizations models and infrastructures.

The review will imply the following activities:

- 2.1 Desk research on existing cooperation models and infrastructures (networks, programs, agencies, specialized units in HEI and governments, etc.) on Academic Cooperation among LA HEI and between LA and EU HEI
- 2.2 Analysis and classification of existing models, at national, regional and international level (Latin America and Europe)
- 2.3 Open consultation on line on strength and weaknesses of existing models and infrastructures
- 2.4 "State of Art" Report on Academic Cooperation existing models and infrastructures

WP2 Deliverables	Month
D2.1 "State of the Art" Report on Academic Cooperation existing models and infrastructures	M9

WP3 – PRIORITIES, ACTION PLAN, METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Resp (UNIBO, SCIE, UNA)

WP3 - Objectives

- ❑ To conduct a diagnostic, strategic and prospective exercise on priority actions to further develop the existing infrastructure for cooperation.

WP3 - Description of work

A broad consultation of the academic community and its stakeholders in their country in LA will be put in place to assure participation, awareness and the necessary support for the sustainability of the VERTEBRALCUE priority settings and action plan. Basing on the results of the WP2 REVIEW and on a deep discussion involving the stakeholders, a major international workshop will be organised to present results of review and analysis, to discuss and set priorities and give inputs for the draft Action plan and for the Common methodological framework that will be put in place to support the modelling and prototyping activities of the VERTEBRALCUE cooperation infrastructure. The priorities will keep in mind the ALFA issues on both Modernisation of Higher Education systems in Latin America (strategic plans) and Social cohesion.

Each partner will act as first embrional ALCUE Unit, will propose its concept note on priority actions to be discuss throughout broad consultation activities.

- 3.1 Broad consultation activities of the academic community and its stakeholders in their country in LA for the priority setting
- 3.2 Preparation and organization of a major international workshop to present results of Review
- 3.3 Design of a Methodological Framework for modeling VERTEBRALCUE

3.4 Designing the Draft Action Plan for VERTEBRALCUE	
WP3 Deliverables	Month
D3.1 International Workshop "Towards an ALCUE HE Cooperation Infrastructure"	M10
D3.2 Methodological Framework for Modeling VERTEBRALCUE	M11
D3.3 Draft Action Plan	M12

WP4 - ALCUE UNITS
Responsibility: UAM, UCA, UNIBO

WP4 - Objectives
<input type="checkbox"/> To propose and implement design principles, model structure and functions, feasibility and action plan, minimum requirements and evaluation criteria for ALCUE Units

WP4 - Description of work
<p>The design principles for the ALCUE Units and their prototyping will be promoted directly by the Partners, as the initial ALCUE Units prototypes will be thought in the partners organizational structure. Each partner will act as first embrional ALCUE Unit, will develop and propose a Service Plan for the ALCUE Unit, that will have to detail how the Unit is inserted in the university structure, how it communicates with external players, and especially how it is able to identify emerging needs, and make them visible to relevant local stakeholders.</p> <p>The ALCUE Units should be designed to be the real active engine of the VERTEBRALCUE infrastructure, to coordinate existing local programs but also to promote and to push bottom-up new initiatives, and to guarantee that initiatives are disseminated to a large number of stakeholders. A broad exchange of experiences among ALCUE Units coordinators is needed to assure a comprehensive BluePrint.</p> <p>The ALCUE Units should be the key actor in promoting the Alfa priorities of Modernization of HE and Social Cohesion from a bottom-up perspective, in strengthening relation with local Enterprises and Local governments, to foster great visibility of the building process of ALCUE Common area, to inform local stakeholders of the project</p> <p>The specific activities of the Work Package are:</p> <p>4.1 Development of 25 Prototypes of ALCUE Units in Latin America</p> <p>4.2 Analysis of development experiences of a mutual learning community of ALCUE Units coordinators</p> <p>4.3 Preparation of Blueprint for an ALCUE Unitt in HEI</p>

WP4 Deliverables	Month
D4.1 At least 25 Prototypes of ALCUE Units in Latin America	M15
D4.2 Blueprint for ALCUE units within HEI	M20

WP5 - NATIONAL COORDINATION UNITS

Responsability: UNIBO

WP5 - Objectives

- To propose design principles, model structure and functions, feasibility and action plan, minimum requirements and evaluation criteria for an ALCUE National Coordination Unit

WP5 - Description of work

The design principles for the ALCUE National Coordination Units and their prototyping will be the result of an intensive dialogue with stakeholders at National level of HE institution, and the level of implementation of the prototypes will be directly impacted by their commitment.

The ALCUE National Units should be designed to communicate, coordinate and operate on Priority Issues with players at national level, enabling integration and valorisation at national level of local ALCUE Units activities, and making them visible to relevant national stakeholders. In each country involved, the project will elaborate a national plan for a Coordination Unit. They will be all analysed and compared, the differences among the models will be discussed and the context-specific differences to be addressed in the model will be identified.

The specific activities of the Work Package are:

- 5.1 Preparation and reporting on recommendations for development of ALCUE National Coordination Units
- 5.2 Report on Feasibility Study for the development of an ALCUE National Coordination Units in LA

WP5 Deliverables	Month
D5.1 Report and recommendations on ALCUE National Coordination Units	M15
D5.2 Five Feasibility Studies of ALCUE National Coordination Units	M20

WP6 - REGIONAL MULTIPOLAR COORDINATION UNITS

Responsibility: UNIBO, UNA

WP6 - Objectives

- ❑ To consolidate the Regional dimension of integration of HE systems in LA

WP6 - Description of work

The proliferation in LA of sub-regional HE organizations and institutions that often do not coordinate their efforts and on the contrary compete for scarce resources and membership of HEI. Various networks have recently been created in Latin America, but they share a number of similar problems: closed organization, lack of horizontal coordination, weakness in governance. The persistency of a certain rivalry and lack of articulation between public and private universities in LA, thus restricting the area of cooperation and collaboration which would favour the exchange of relevant information, curricular convergence, agreements on quality education and the achievement of a joint Higher Education Area.

Furthermore the limited and unequal students' access, especially for the less favoured strata of society, new regulations which increase the internal differentiation between public and private HEI, a disproportionate presence of female students, migration of professional and technicians are cross-regional limitations that should be addressed with specific activities.

Therefore this Work Package was specifically thought in order to address the limitations expressed above in reaching. The study will have to deeply take into consideration different possible approaches in the articulation of subregional (CA; MERCOSUR, Central America) and regional (at Latin American level) cooperation models and structures.

The specific activities of the Work Package are:

6.1 Study on the feasibility of a multi-polar coordination structure at regional level for Latin American integration and participation in the implementation of the ALCUE Common Area of Higher Education

WP6 Deliverables	Month
D6.1 Feasibility study and Action Plan on Regional Integration and Participation in the implementation of the ALCUE Common Area of Higher Education and structures.	M27

WP7 - THEMATIC NETWORKS
Responsible: UPV, FUEIB, UNIBO

WP7 - Objectives

□ To propose design principles, model structure and functions, feasibility and action plan, minimum requirements and evaluation criteria for sustainable ALCUE Thematic Networks

WP7 - Description of work

The design principles for the ALCUE Thematic Networks and their prototyping will be the result of an intensive analysis and research on existing Thematic Partnerships while selecting specific themes among the ALFA III priority issues of Modernisation of HES and Social Cohesion to be specifically prototyped.

The Thematic Networks should be designed to articulate and coordinate projects involving when necessary different levels of the VERTEBRALCUE infrastructure, players and stakeholders at local, national, regional and international level. Therefore the Thematic Networks will operate in the VERTEBRALCUE structure in a transversal and functional way with respect to geographical hierarchy. The project will elaborate 4 plans for 4 different types of Thematic Networks to be identified. The differences among the models will be discussed and the context-specific differences to be addressed in the model will be identified. In particular, the Themes that will be specifically addressed thinking at the different levels of impact on the articulation of a Network will be, among the other:

- University-Industry Relationship
- Continuous Learning
- Common Thematic Courses focused on problems perceived by local government (as Health Management, Labour policy making) and that have direct impact on development

The partners involved, UNIBO, UPV and FUEIB have long lasting experience in this field. Specifically, the Center of Unibo in Buenos Aires, which combines advanced training and research to promote and carry out a participatory research on SME in Argentina which involves universities, governments and enterprise associations at local level. The project produces information, analysis and knowledge on territorial and sector development and problems in order to provide a sound and empirically determined data as a basis for public and private policies and initiatives. The implications for local development both at the enterprise and at the institutional levels are clear: empirical problems are detected, possible solutions are discussed by different institutional actors and policies are adopted.

The project carries out activities both at the national and provincial levels, where strategic alliances for productive development are based on the active role of UNIBO-BA in collaboration with local universities, thus providing a direct evidence on how education can contribute to social cohesion by promoting social capital which grows out of the institutional networks built by the continuous interaction among institutional local actors. Furthermore, social cohesion can also be achieved by incorporating labour in local development.

The project is being extended to other Latin American countries. By offering the same methodology of action and involvement of local institutional actors, including HEI, sets the basis for sub-regional integration on specific objectives and activities – university-society interaction, social cohesion, education for development at the like.

The specific activities of the Work Package are:

7.1 Analysis, diagnosis and eventual support for development of 4 (existing) ALCUE thematic networks
 7.2 Preparation of Four Plans for sustainable development for Thematic Networks
 7.3 Report and recommendation for ALCUE Thematic Network Developers

WP7 Deliverables	Month
D7.1 Four Plans for sustainable development of ALCUE Thematic Networks	M28
D7.2 Report and recommendations for ALCUE Thematic Network Developers	M30

WP8: BILATERAL- MULTILATERAL STRUCTURAL COOPERATION

WP8 - Objectives

- To stimulate and explore bi-lateral and multi-lateral structured co-operation among leading HEI of the two Regions

WP8 - Description of work

analisi di come il progetto alfa prende la caratteristica bi-regionale, studio ciclo di vita del partenariato, studiare questa area per capire come farli funzionare domani, insegnamento e ricerca, rete di funzioni....

Argomentare punto 7 esperienza università di Bologna ma l'idea non è di ripetere l'esperienza di bologna ma di considerare una varietà di opzioni percorso di elaborazione delle proposte sulla base di un institutional committee

Steering committee che decide dove va questo budget sul lavoro biregionale prendendo gli obiettivi di ALFA più livello di commitment istituzionale e valore di esemplarietà

The specific activities of the Work Package are:

8.1 Analysis, diagnosis and eventual support for development of 4 (existing) 5 exemplary experience of structural cooperation among leading universities of the two Regions

8.2 Reporting on 5 concrete examples of structural cooperation in place

WP8 - Deliverables

D8.1 Report on 5 concrete examples of structural cooperation in place (e.g. stable teaching and research units of an LA university in Europe and vice-versa, quadrilateral programmes for international cooperation.

WP9 – MODELLING AND PILOTING INTEGRATION AND EVALUATION

WP9 - Objectives

- ❑ To integrate the results of research, modelling and piloting activities conducted by the project
- ❑ To evaluate the ALCUE cooperation infrastructure modeling and prototyping activities implemented by the project

WP9 - Description of work

This workpackage embeds two key components supporting the sustainability and continuation of the VERTEBRALCUE action beyond its contractual end: The first component is represented by integration activities aimed at:

- integrating the results of modeling and prototyping inbetween the four level of coordination foreseen (ALCUE Unit, National coordination unit, regional coordination unit and thematic coordination level) so to guarantee that a constructive process takes place in identifying the problems, challenges encountered and the solutions found and that the final models of coordination and cooperation provided by VERTEBRALCUE address all the relevant issues and recommendations for the multiplication and expansion of the VERTEBRALCUE infrastructure.

The specific Integration activities of the Work Package are therefore::

- 9.1 Organisation of 13 Local evaluation seminars and 4 Evaluation Seminars,
- 9.2 Organisation of 4 integration seminars aimed at supporting dialogue, exchange of experience and elaboration of practical recommendations to feed the final model for the creation of the VERTEBRALCUE coordination unit (from the micro to the meso and macro level). Integration seminars will involve therefore the responsible partners for the creation and prototyping of ALCUE units, National coordination units, regional and bi regional coordination units and thematic networks units.

As far as evaluation activities are concerned, as anticipated in the description of WP1 beside overall evaluation activities of the action as a whole a key component will be represented by the evaluation of the piloting and modelling activities of the project. Whereas integration seminars as described above will be a means for internal evaluation of the outcomes of modelling and piloting, it will be crucial to involve “users” of the VERTEBRALCUE infrastructure and stakeholders to guarantee external evaluation takes place. An External Evaluation committee will be nominated, composed of the Project Coordination Group and of at least ten external members representatives of users and stakeholders community. The External evaluation committee will meet four times throughout the project duration to evaluate: the outcomes of the piloting of the ALCUE unit; the outcomes of the modelling and prototyping activities related to the National Coordination Units; the outcomes of the modelling and prototyping activities related to the Regional and bi-regional Coordination Units; the outcomes of the modelling and prototyping activities related to the thematic networking activities.

The wider community of users and stakeholders will be involved in integration and evaluation activities by means of periodic surveys launched on the project web site and widely publicised through the project valorisation channels. Two main categories of surveys will be launched: one aimed at involving the wide community of users and stakeholders in contributing to the creation of the VERTEBRALCUE infrastructure with suggestions and recommendations based on their experience, and the other aimed at getting their feedback to the outcomes of the actions implemented by VERTEBRALCUE.

The foreseen activities are also launch of online evaluation survey addressing the community of VERTEBRALCUE via the web site.

WP9 - Deliverables

- D9.1 Four VERTEBRALCUE Integration Seminars
- D9.2 Thirteen Local Evaluation Seminars and four VERTEBRALCUE Evaluation seminars

WP10 – VALORISATION and STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVEMENT

Responsibility: SCIENTER

WP10 Objectives

To ensure valorisation and dissemination of the results of the VERTEBRALCUE project, guaranteeing promotion of VERTEBRALCUE not only among the Policy Makers and the higher education communities of EU and LA, but also among all relevant actors the categories of stakeholders of the HE system, such as the media, policy makers in charge or civil society associations.

To guarantee active involvement in VERTEBRALCUE of all relevant actors and stakeholders, in particular the High Education Institutions Associations and the Policy and Decision Makers of the partners' countries and regions

To Raise awareness, participation and willingness of politicians in t Latin America

To facilitate exchange of ideas and visions of ALFA and ALCUE priorities and directions at local, national, regional and international (EU-LA) level

To guarantee a systematic approach to exchange and dialogue

To allow HEI to be kept informed of new developments on ALCUE and ALFA priorities

To propose a middle-term Action Plan for the implementation of the ALCUE cooperation infrastructure as a result of VERTEBRALCUE Project , Valorisation and Stakeholders involvement

WP10 - Description of work

The activities of this Work Package will be conducted such a way to guarantee active involvement and contribution of all relevant actors and stakeholders, in particular the High Education Institutions and Associations and the Policy and Decision Makers of the partners' countries and regions. Integrate the research and implementation results of the project in a policy perspective so to diffuse a Green Paper and Roadmap sensitizing policy makers to the role of the VERTEBRALCUE infrastructure in implementing the ALCUE process and in addressing the priorities of ALFA.

- ❑ 9.1 Policy oriented seminars, multistakeholders' events and roundables will be organised, specifically targeted to policy makers, policy makers active in the design, orientation and implementation of ALFA and ALCUE policies in LA and Europe, analysing the results of Review on existing Cooperation Models, the VERTEBRALCUE ALCUE Units, informing and involving the Policy Makers on main VERTEBRALCUE outcomes and raised opportunities
- ❑ 9.2 drafting of a Green Paper which will be widely diffused and will be aimed at providing an overview of the state of art and challenges in implementing the VERTEBRALCUE infrastructure
- ❑ 9.3 Final Conference will be organised with the aim to present the results of VERTEBRALCUE: Recommendations and suggestions to the HE community, to policy actors and to relevant stakeholders will be presented in the final conference of VERTEBRALCUE

Sustainability strategies for the continuation of the VERTEBRALCUE cooperation activities will be discussed in the virtual community by the thematic research clusters members and by the PASB and will become part of a sustainability report.

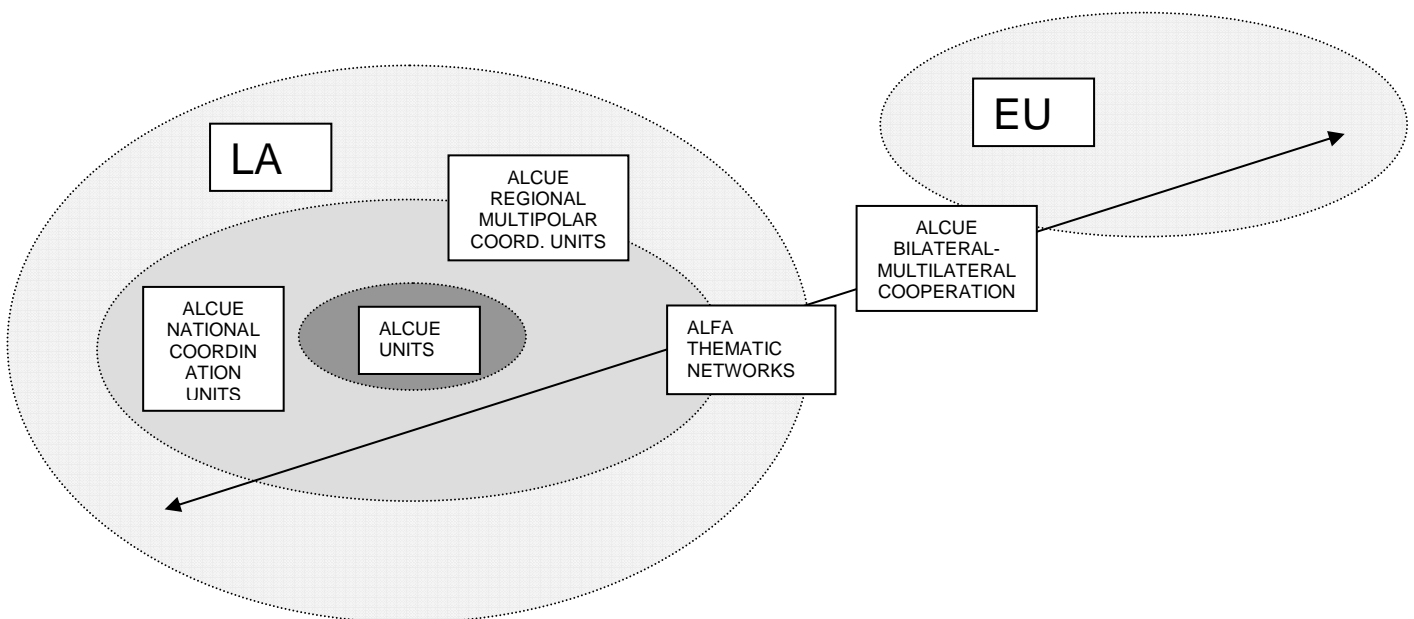
Extensive consultation on-line on proposed recommendations and on active initiatives will be put in place through the VERTEBRALCUE website. The website will be developed to enhance group-awareness among the VERTEBRALCUE Stakeholders. The website consist of a Content Management Portal including official documentation (objectives, logos, internal reports, partners, etc.) and a Intranet for project members (contacts, calendar, events, ...)

WP10 Deliverables	Month
D10.1 Website of the Project	Month 6 – first
D10.2 Dissemination and Multistakeholders events	A
D10.3 Green Paper on ALCUE Cooperation Infrastructure	M34
D10.4 Final conference and Publication	M36

1.8. Methodology

The VERTEBRALCUE project's METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK that will be designed in WP3 will adopt the following implementation principles:

1. EMPIRICAL-CONSTRUCTIVE and LOGICAL-DEDUCTIVE approach have to complement and integrate each other to contribute to an effective and sustainable design of the VERTEBRALCUE infrastructure. The first approach will arise taking in consideration and deeply analysing the cooperation experiences, projects, programmes, networks and infrastructures already in place both at regional and international level (among which the experience of the University of Bologna Center in Buenos Aires, UNIBO-BS, that will be described later in this chapter), from the experience of the VALUE previous project and from the contributes of the ALCUE Units that will be prototyped in the partners' institutions, of different dimensions and scope, also more than one in the same country. The logical-deductive approach will allow to utilize the experience of the specialists in academic management and EU-LA cooperation involved in the project as partners or active stakeholders
2. TOP DOWN POLICY MAKERS' INPUTS AND COMMITMENTS AND BOTTOM-UP TARGET GROUPS EXPECTATIONS AND CONCERNS have to be articulated and joined continuously in the project through National and Regional MULTISTAKEHOLDERS events to guarantee the expected results and future implementations
3. CONTINUOUS AND ACTIVE STAKEHOLDERS' INVOLVEMENT has to be articulated and integrated at local, national, subregional, regional and international level, in relation to ALFA and ALCUE priority issues, being the project flexible to include new actors that will be identified as relevant for project articulation and valorisation
4. A GEOGRAPHICAL ARTICULATION (from local to national, subregional, regional and bi-regional dimension) of the VERTEBRALCUE infrastructure should be able to support different kinds of THEMATIC and BILATERAL-MULTILATERAL cooperation, with specific reference to the ALFA priority issues



The complete METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK will be elaborated and defined as a main outcome in WP3 in order guarantee implementation principles and guidelines for to the main project activities, and specifically for each of the following:

- a. VERTEBRALCUE MODELING AND PROTOTYPING METHODOLOGY (ALL activities in Phase2)
- b. VERTEBRALCUE EVALUATION AND INTEGRATION METHODOLOGY (ALL activities in Phase 3)
- c. STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVEMENT, main activity of WP10.

PROJECT ORGANISATION

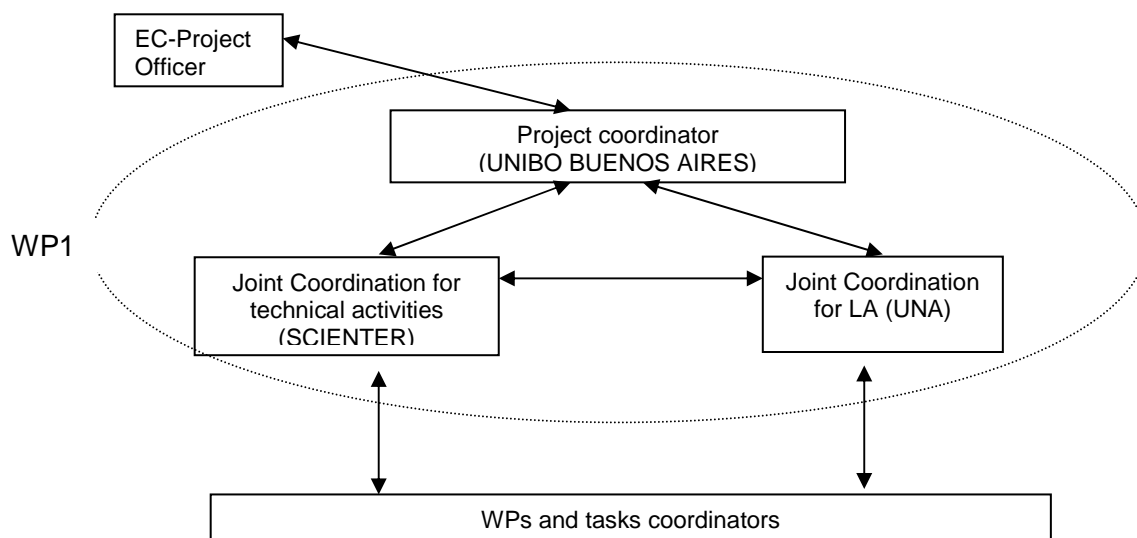
Project management and decision making bodies.

The Project Steering Committee (PSC) is the main decision-making body of the Consortium, composed by one member of each partner; it discusses financial, contractual and administrative issues and will have the authority to change the work plan, if necessary, and to adopt contingency plans.

The project will be managed by a Project Coordination Group (PCG) composed of two representatives each of the three following organization: University of Bologna (UNIBO-BS), Scierter (SCIE) and Universidad Nacional de Costa Rica (UNA). This group will be responsible of current management issues and the supervision of production and approval of the delivered outputs.

The PCG will be chaired by the Project Coordinator (PC). The PCG will meet at least every 4 months (either face to face or via audio/videoconference) and at the request of its Chairman or, if necessary, of one of the partners for solve specific unplanned difficulties.

Given the highly complex and articulated design, prototype and piloting activities planned by VERTEBRALCUE, the management structure foresees from one side a joint coordination with a Latin American Partner (UNA) and a joint coordination for technical, networking and sustainability oriented activities by Scierter on the other:



1. Overall Project Coordinator, the University of Bologna Buenos Aires Center (UNIBO-BS) dealing with the overall scientific and technical aspects of the action and the management of the project

The University of Bologna opened its first Campus abroad in Argentina in 1998. With a small grant from the Italian Ministry of Education, the new Bologna Center in Buenos Aires started its activities with a Master in International Relations: EU-LA. The aim was to begin a program capable of generating awareness, interest and knowledge about economic, political and social dimensions of comparative national development and processes of regional integration within the context of globalization, with special emphasis on the European experience. Its direct beneficiaries were, first, the students coming mainly from Argentina but also from other Latin American countries, Italy, France and Portugal, and second, the local community of

scholars, policy makers, entrepreneurs and the public at large, through an intensive program of seminar, conferences, round tables debates, etc.

At the same time the UNIBO-BS, established contacts with local education authorities in order to comply with the legal requirements necessary to be admitted to the national university system. This effort responded to our strategic objective of integrating our HE institution into the local academic community. After obtaining such legal recognition, we had to gain local legitimacy, which was achieved by developing a variety of teaching and research programs which involved a great number of Argentine universities, both in the capital city and in the provinces, and of other institutional actors of civil society and public authorities.

The necessity to become an integrated part both of the local university system and the local development community forced us to adopt a strategy of open doors towards society, thus overcoming the metaphor of the ivory applied to old and prestigious tower educational system. This strategy led to innovative approaches to post-graduate courses design, to establish permanent links with business, public sectors, labour and cooperative organizations, etc. by designing applied research projects which dealt with relevant issues in development, with a participatory methodology which involved institutional stakeholders in practical, collaborative initiatives (for example, the promotion of territorial pacts for productive development in local areas, which meant the strategic alliance and articulation of institutional actors, such as universities, business associations and governments at local levels).

The result of Unibo-BS of these activities programs have always been presented in high level national and provincial conferences, thus disseminating practical knowledge and experiences and making public the collaboration between academic institutions and government and business institutions.

Some of the teaching and research programs have been extended to other Latin American countries, fostering in this way sub-regional integration of courses, research, teaching methodologies, diffusion of relevant material and, above all, the predisposition to collaborate at a supra-national level, creating the necessary conditions of mutual trust and recognition needed to carry out such collaborative efforts.

The nature of most of our courses (we are now offering 7 Master's programs, some in collaboration with local universities) is based on the articulation of programs which are carried out both in Argentina and in Bologna, thus promoting, within a well established structural framework of action, the effective development of mobility programs for students and teachers.

After 9 years of operating in BsAs, more than 1000 Latin American students have travelled to Italy, and some have come from Europe, both to complete their course work and gain practical experience in stages in Italian and European public and private institutions.

The most direct evidence of the relevance of our academic and research activities comes from the fact that UNIBO-BS obtains over 2/3 of its financial needs from external sources.

2. A technical joint-coordinator (Scienter) that will support the technical coordinator on the scientific management of the project, dealing specifically with the coordination of all the foreseen research, design, development, prototyping, piloting, evaluation and valorisation activities and will be directly in charge of networking, dissemination and sustainability building activities, having played similar role in the @lis program
3. A regional joint-coordinator for Latin America, Universidad Nacional de Costa Rica (UNA) that will provide technical and scientific support as concerns specifically the partners of Latin America and will play a major role in establishing and animating the Latin American side of the communities

It is believed that given the nature of the action and the high number of LA institutions involved this management structure will guarantee a smooth development of the project, an easier anticipation of critical situations and problems and a faster reaction to them due to the field and methodological experience of UNIBO-BS and SCIENTER from one side and to the regional support of UNA from the other.

Work Package and Task leader. Each Work Package Leader will be responsible for ensuring the successful execution of his Work Package and the successful delivery of the Work Package deliverables; supporting the integration of the resources to achieve the goals of VERTEBRALCUE; supporting the project boards to facilitate an effective interaction among the different WPs; presenting progress reports on the state of advancement of the WP; making any proposals regarding the direction or activities of the WP; any significant modifications to the allocated budget or modifications to the partnerships; Informing the PCG of any difficulty arising in connection with the WP management; coordinating the task leaders of each workpackage.

Decision-making mechanisms. Organisation will have a central decision making structure, where PSC for the strategic aspects, and PCG, for the other activities, will take the critical decisions affecting the project's life. Information will flow from single WPs (from WP leaders) and will be examined by the PCG. On the other hand, there will be a decentralised execution of the activities through the boards and single WPs. The responsibility for the technical implementation of the work plan will be shared among the partners, which will be in charge of delivering the contractual deliverables and achieving the promised milestones of the project. Project face to face meetings will be organised regularly (and, with the exception of the Kick off meeting,

attached to foreseen events to guarantee efficiency of the action in economic terms) In addition, the web site of the project will incorporate a private working environment accessible to project partners where they will share ideas, comments on the project and news

Project Quality Control and Assurance, from the production of the Project Quality Plan to the continuous monitoring and quality assurance activities, including risk analysis and actions to be taken

The PCG has overall responsibility for liaising with the Commission and ensuring that the project meets its contractual commitments within the budget. Project Plenary meetings, chaired by the PC, will be held on a regular basis to ensure that all partners are kept informed of progress, and that any problems can be identified and handled in a timely manner. Quality Control and Quality Assurance of the results achieved by the project will be controlled by the partner in charge (University of Bologna) according to the following criteria:

- Contribution to the project objectives
- Correspondence of solutions with end-user expectations
- Accuracy and clarity of the outputs
- Respect for time and cost constraints planned for the project
- Peer Review input

Partners interaction will be regulated by a Consortium Agreement that will make reference to the main contract with the European Commission, and will set rules to deal with decision making process, controversies, delays, unsatisfactory performance.

Project Monitoring and Evaluation

Given the nature of the VERTEBRALCUE action, two complementary evaluation and monitoring activities will be carried out: on one side the overall evaluation of the project in terms of quality, efficiency and effectiveness with regard to the project proposal and on the other side the evaluation of the adequacy of the MODELING AND PROTOTYPING activities foreseen in order to contribute to the overall aim of building the Common Area of Higher Education.

In this section the approach for the overall project evaluation is described, whereas the approach related to the second point will be defined in WP 9, when all the necessary stakeholders' inputs to define success criteria will have been collected.

In terms of "classic" **project evaluation** and monitoring, an embedded formative evaluation approach will be applied to every phase of the project, with a focus on building full awareness of all stakeholders' requirements and expectations as regards the whole of the support system to be established. The main tools that will be used for internal evaluation will be the **Spider diagram** methodology and the **communication workflow**. The **Spider Diagrams** will be used to provide a visual summary of the state of the project, they will report in a snapshot the information collected through project meetings, interviews with partners and project stakeholders and field observation of project activities. The **Communication workflow will** guarantee that communication flows among all the actors involved in the project work well: face-to-face meetings, the project website internal collaboration space, audioconferences and reporting will serve this scope.

INVOLVEMENT OF IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

The reasons that have inspired the constitution of the Consortium and the involvement of partners in specific activities have to be identified in the following principles:

- Reciprocity between EU and LA
- Transparency, synergy building, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability
- The active involvement of HEI with experiences in articulating programs and project at national, regional and international level (EU-LA)
- The involvement of Universities with previous experiences in the ALCUE themes and issues
- The involvement of EU and LA Universities with strong experience in ALFA Program
- The active involvement of LA Universities from smallest and poorest countries for strengthening equitable access to information and opportunities offered by higher education cooperation among LA countries and between LA and EU
- The involvement of EU and LA Universities with specific experience on relationship University-Enterprises and social context, local governments

According to the main articulations of the VERTEBRALCUE infrastructure, the table below refers to the partners particularly involved in these articulation across the different workpackages:

In the following table, the involvement of implementing partners is reported, as well as relationship with applicant and applicant's relationship with them. All ALCUE NATIONAL Coordination Unit are also ALCUE UNITS.

All partners will establish a prototype ALCUE Unit within their institution, will participate in the feasibility studies of the National Coordination Units and will be involved in the design and evaluation activity for each VERTEBRALCUE component. For each WorkPackage one or more partner is identified and a co-team is proposed to implement the core activities.

EU PARTNERS	WP/ACTIVITY IN WHICH THE PARTNER IS INVOLVED
University of GRAZ	Thematic Networks (WP7)
SCIENTER	Joint coordination, stakeholders involvement, networking, dissemination and sustainability building activities
University of COIMBRA	Special focus on Brazil-eu cooperation
Universidad de Granada (UGR)	Links with ALCUE event during spanish presidency 2010
Universidad Politecnica de Valencia (UPV)	Continuous Education
Fundacio Universitat-Empresa de les Illes Balears (FUEIB)	University-Enterprise Cooperation

1.9. Duration and indicative Action Plan for Implementing the Action

Year 1													
ACTIVITIES	Semester 1						Semester 2						Implementing body
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
WP 1 – PROJECT MANAGEMENT and EVALUATION													Resp.: UNIBO
1.1 Project Management													UNIBO, SCIENTER, UNA
1.2 Project Quality Control and Assurance													UNIBO, SCIENTER, UNA
1.3 Project Monitoring and Evaluation													UNIBO, SCIENTER, UNA
WP 2 – REVIEW OF COOPERATION MODELS AND INFRASTRUCTURES													Resp: UGR, UNIBO
2.1a) Desk Research Preparation													UGR, UNIBO
2.1b) Implementing Desk research													UGR, UNIBO, all partners
2.2 Analysis and classification of existing models													UGR, UNIBO, all partners
2.3 Open consultation on line on strength and weaknesses of existing models and infrastructures													UGR, UNIBO, all partners
2.4 “State of Art” Report on Academic Cooperation existing models and infrastructures													UGR, UNIBO, SCIENTER, UNA
WP 3 – PRIORITIES, ACTION PLAN, METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK													Resp: UNIBO, SCIENTER, UNA
3.1a)Preparation of Broad consultation activities of the academic community and its stakeholders													UNIBO, SCIENTER, UNA, all partners
3.1b) Implementing Broad Consultation Activities of the academic community and its stakeholder													UNIBO, SCIENTER, UNA, all partners
3.2a) Preparation and organization of a major international workshop “Towards an ALCUE HE Cooperation Infrastructure”													UNIBO, SCIENTER, UNA, all partners
3.2b) Implementing international workshop “Towards an ALCUE HE Cooperation Infrastructure”													UNIBO, SCIENTER, UNA
3.3 Design of a Methodological Framework for modeling VERTEBRALCUE													UNIBO, SCIENTER
3.4 Designing the Draft Action Plan for VERTEBRALCUE													UNIBO, SCIENTER
Year 1													

ACTIVITIES	Semester 1						Semester 2						Implementing body
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
WP 4 – ALCUE UNITS													Resp: UAM, UCA, UNIBO
4.1a) Preparation for Developing 25 Prototypes of ALCUE Units													UAM, UCA, UNIBO, all partners
4.1b) Develop of 25 Prototypes of ALCUE Units in Latin America													UAM, UCA, UNIBO, all partners
4.2 Analysis of experiences and development of a mutual learning community of ALCUE Units coordinators													
4.3a) Preparation of Blueprint for ALCUE units within HEI													
4.3b) Reporting Blueprint for ALCUE units within HEI													
WP 5 – NATIONAL COORDINATION UNITS													Resp: UNIBO
5.1a) Report and recommendations on ALCUE National Coordination processes and structures													UNIBO, SCIENTER
5.1b)Preparation for Feasibility Study of ALCUE National Coordination Units in LA													UNIBO, all partners
5.2Report on Followup and Results of Feasibility Study of ALCUE National Coordination Units in LA													SCIENTER, UNA
WP6 – REGIONAL MULTIPOLAR COORDINATION UNITS													Resp: UNIBO, UNA
WP7 – THEMATIC NETWORKS													Responsible: UPV, FUEIB, UNIBO
WP8 – BILATERAL-MULTILATERAL STRUCTURAL COOPERATION													Resp: UNIBO, UNA
WP9 – MODELING AND PROTOTIPING INTEGRATION AND EVALUATION													Resp: SCIENTER, UNA
WP10 - VALORISATION AND STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVEMENT													SCIENTER
10.1 Stakeholder Roundtables at local level level													UAM all partners
10.2 Stakeholder Roundtables at national level													IIFE, all partners
10.3 Stakeholder Roundtables at regional level													FLACSO partners,all partners
10.4 Stakeholder Roundtables at bi-regional level													UNIBO, all partners
10.5 Web environment and web communities													SCIENTER

Year 2													
ACTIVITIES	Semester 1						Semester 2						Implementing body
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
WP 1 – PROJECT MANAGEMENT and EVALUATION													Responsible: UNIBO
1.1 Project Management													UNIBO, SCIENTER, UNA
1.2 Project Quality Control and Assurance													UNIBO, SCIENTER, UNA
1.3 Project Monitoring and Evaluation													UNIBO, SCIENTER, UNA
WP 2 – REVIEW OF COOPERATION MODELS AND INFRASTRUCTURES													Resp: UGR, UNIBO
WP 3 – PRIORITIES, ACTION PLAN, METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK													Responsible: UNIBO, SCIENTER, UNA
3.3 Feedbacks on the Methodological Framework basing on WP4 and WP5 results													UNIBO, SCIENTER
3.4 Feedbacks on the Action Plan basing on WP4 and WP5 results													UNIBO, SCIENTER
WP 4 – ALCUE UNITS													Resp: UAM, UCA, UNIBO
4.1a) Preparation for Developing 15 Prototypes of ALCUE Units													
4.1b) Develop of 15 Prototypes of ALCUE Units in Latin America													UAM, all partners
4.2 Analysis of experiences and development of a mutual learning community of ALCUE Units coordinators													UAM, all partners
4.3a) Preparation of Blueprint for ALCUE units within HEI													UAM, all partners
4.3b) Reporting Blueprint for ALCUE units within HEI													UAM, UNIBO, SCIENTER
WP 5 – NATIONAL COORDINATION UNITS													Resp: UNIBO
5.1a) Report and recommendations on ALCUE National Coordination processes and structures													UNIBO, SCIENTER
5.1b)Preparation for Feasibility Study of ALCUE National Coordination Units in LA													Unibo, all partners
5.2 Report on Feasibility Study of ALCUE National Coordination Units in LA													UNIBO, SCIENTER

Year 2													
ACTIVITIES	Semester 1						Semester 2						Implementing body
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
WP6 – REGIONAL MULTIPOLAR COORDINATION UNITS													Resp: UNIBO, UNA
6.1a) Preparation of the Study on the feasibility of a multi-polar coordination structure at regional-subregional level in LA													UNIBO.UNA, all partners
6.1b) Reporting Study on the feasibility of a multi-polar coordination structure at regional-sub-regional level in LA													UAM, UNIBO, SCIENTER, UNA
WP7 – THEMATIC NETWORKS													Responsible: UPV, FUEIB, UNIBO
7.1 Analysis, diagnosis and eventual support for development of 4 (existing) ALCUE thematic networks													All partners
7.2 Preparation of Four Plans for sustainable development of ALCUE Thematic Networks													UPV, FUEIB, UNIBO, Tres de Febrero, FUSP
7.9 Report and recommendations for ALCUE Thematic Network Developers													UPV, FUEIB, UNIBO
WP8 – BILATERAL-MULTILATERAL STRUCTURAL COOPERATION													Responsible: UNIBO, UNA
8.1 Identification of and support to 5 exemplary experience of structural cooperation among HESs of the two Regions (EU.LA)													UNIBO, UNA, all partners
8.2 Report on 5 concrete examples of structural cooperation in place													UNIBO, UNA

Year 2													
ACTIVITIES	Semester 1						Semester 2						Implementing body
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
WP9 – MODELING AND PROTOTYPING INTEGRATION AND EVALUATION													Responsible: SCIENTER, UNA
9.1 Defining Evaluation Framework and Evaluation Committees													SCIENTER, UNA, UNIBO
9.2 Organization of ALCUE Units Local Evaluation Seminars													SCIENTER, UNA, UAM, All partners
9.31 ALCUE National Coordination Unit Evaluation in LA													SCIENTER, UNA, IPE, 1 partner for each country in LA to be defined
9.41 ALCUE Units and ALCUE National Coordination Units Integration Local (at national level) Seminar													SCIENTER, UNA, UAM, IPE, Partners to be defined
9.32 ALCUE regional multipolar cooperation evaluation													SCIENTER, UNA, FLACSO, Partners to be defined
9.42 ALCUE regional multipolar cooperation integration													SCIENTER, UNA, FLACSO, Partners to be selected
9.33 ALCUE thematic networks evaluation													
9.43 ALCUE thematic networks integration													
9.34 ALCUE bi-regional-multilateral evaluation													
9.44 ALCUE bi-regional-multilateral integration													
WP10 - VALORISATION AND STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVEMENT													UNIBO, SCIENTER, UAM
10.1 Stakeholder Roundtables at local level													UAM all partners
10.2 Stakeholder Roundtables at national level													IPE, all partners
10.3 Stakeholder Roundtables at regional level													FLACSO partners, all partners
10.4 Stakeholder Roundtables at bi-regional level													UNIBO, all partners
10.5 Web environment and web communities													SCIENTER
10.6 Preparation of the Action Plan (Green Paper)													UNIBO, SCIENTER, UNA
10.7 Extensive consultation on-line on proposed recommendations													All partners
10.8 Organisation of final valorisation conference													UNIBO, SCIENTER, UNA

Year 3													
	Semester 1						Semester 2						
ACTIVITIES	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Implementing body
WP 1 – PROJECT MANAGEMENT and EVALUATION													Responsible: UNIBO
1.1 Project Management													UNIBO, SCIENTER, UNA
1.2 Project Quality Control and Assurance													UNIBO, SCIENTER, UNA
1.3 Project Monitoring and Evaluation													UNIBO, SCIENTER, UNA
WP 2 – REVIEW OF COOPERATION MODELS AND INFRASTRUCTURES													Resp: UGR, UNIBO
WP 3 – PRIORITIES, ACTION PLAN, METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK													Responsible: UNIBO, SCIENTER, UNA
WP 4 – ALCUE UNITS													Resp: UAM, UCA, UNIBO
WP 5 – NATIONAL COORDINATION UNITS													Responsible: UNIBO
WP6 – REGIONAL MULTIPOLAR COORDINATION UNITS													Responsible: UNIBO, UNA
6.1a) Preparation of the Study on the feasibility of a multi-polar coordination structure at regional-subregional level in LA													UNIBO, UNA, all partners
6.1b) Reporting Study on the feasibility of a multi-polar coordination structure at regional-sub-regional level in LA													UAM, UNIBO, SCIENTER, UNA
WP7 – THEMATIC NETWORKS													Responsible: UPV, FUEIB, UNIBO
7.1 Analysis, diagnosis and eventual support for development of 4 (existing) ALCUE thematic networks													All partners
7.2 Preparation of Four Plans for sustainable development of ALCUE Thematic Networks													UPV, FUEIB, UNIBO, Tres de Febrero, FUSP
7.3 Report and recommendations for ALCUE Thematic Network Developers													UPV, FUEIB, UNIBO
WP8 – BILATERAL-MULTILATERAL STRUCTURAL COOPERATION													Responsible: UNIBO, UNA
8.1 Identification of and support to 5 exemplary experience of structural cooperation among HESs of the two Regions (EU.LA)													UNIBO, UNA, all partners
8.2 Report on 5 concrete examples of structural cooperation in place													UNIBO, UNA

Year 3													
ACTIVITIES	Semester 1						Semester 2						Implementing body
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
WP9 – MODELING AND PROTOTYPING INTEGRATION AND EVALUATION													Responsible: SCIENTER, UNA
9.1 Defining Evaluation Framework and Evaluation Committees													
9.2 Organization of ALCUE Units Local Evaluation Seminars													
9.31 ALCUE National Coordination Unit Evaluation in LA													
9.41 ALCUE Units and ALCUE National Coordination Units Integration Local (at national level) Seminar													
9.32 ALCUE regional multipolar cooperation evaluation													SCIENTER, UNA, FLACSO, Partners to be selected
9.42 ALCUE regional multipolar cooperation integration													SCIENTER, UNA, UPV, FUEIB, UNIBO, partners to be defined
9.33 ALCUE thematic networks evaluation													SCIENTER, UNA, UPV, FUEIB, UNIBO, partners to be defined
9.43 ALCUE thematic networks integration													SCIENTER, UNA, UNIBO, partners to be defined
9.34 ALCUE bi-regional-multilateral evaluation													SCIENTER, UNA, UNIBO, partners to be defined
9.44 ALCUE bi-regional-multilateral integration													SCIENTER, UNA, UNIBO, partners to be defined

Year 3													
ACTIVITIES	Semester 1						Semester 2						Implementing body
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
WP10 - VALORISATION AND STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVEMENT													UNIBO, SCIENTER, UAM
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10.2 Stakeholder Roundtables at national level													IIPE, all partners
10.3 Stakeholder Roundtables at regional level													FLACSO partners,all partners
10.4 Stakeholder Roundtables at bi-regional level													UNIBO, all partners
10.5 Web environment and web communities													SCIENTER
10.6 Preparation of the Action Plan (Green Paper)													UNIBO. SCIENTER,UNA
10.7 Extensive consultation on-line on proposed recommendations													All partners
10.8 Organisation of final valorisation conference													UNIBO, SCIENTER, UNA

1.10. Sustainability

PROJECT RISKS

It is responsibility of the Project Management Group to continuously monitor VERTEBRALCUE environment to have under control whether or not the assumptions and preconditions at the basis of the project continue to exist, what new risks may be emerging, and therefore to take mitigation measures to manage these risks where possible. The following analysis is a first preliminary analysis on the possible project risks. The analyzed risks are reported divided in three types, risks related to the **Project Actions**, risk related to the **Complexity of the Consortium**, risk related to **Physical, Environmental, Political, economic and social context especially in LA countries**. For each of the identified risks, we have developed contingency plans and mitigation measures, and report preconditions and assumptions that eventually would not occur.

1. Risks related to the Project Actions

In the following table, Risks related to project actions are reported:

Project Action	Preconditions and Assumptions	Risk	Contingency Plan Mitigation measures
WP5: NATIONAL COORDINATION UNITS; WP6: REGIONAL MULTIPOLAR COORDINATION UNITS	Stakeholders, especially National Governements and HEI Policy Makers, support VERTEBRALCUE national and regional multipolar coordination units design.	_Unsatisfactory and imbalanced involvement of relevant stakeholders for the VERTEBRALCUE sustainability	_The PMG will increase the activities planned in WP10 for the country/countries less involved.
WP7, WP8: BILATERAL-MULTILATERAL STRUCTURAL COOPERATION	Stakeholders of the two regions support VERTEBRALCUE bilaterla-multilateral cooperation design and Thematic Networks models	_Unsatisfactory and imbalanced involvement of the two HE regional communities.	_If EU-LA participation is not balanced, the PMG will increase the activities planned in WP10 in the region less involved.
WP10: VALORISATION AND STAKEHOLDERS' INVOLVEMENT	Stakeholders will be adequately informed and involved through specific actions designed and implemented in WP10, at local, national, subregional, regional ad international level, and develop motivation and willingness to contribute to VERTEBRALCUE implementation and sustainability.	_ Change of the policy makers and stakeholders involved in the project area of influence (HE).	_In the WP10 action plan, continuous attention will be paid to the origin of the project community participants, reporting on this will be available for the EC. Immediate contact will be taken with the new policy makers in charge, facilitating the shift process of the VERTEBRALCUE contact persons.

2. Risks related to the Complexity of the Consortium

The VERTEBRALCUE Partners' Network is composed by HEIs of different dimensions and operating in latinamerican countries among which quality of education and management and governance of Higher Education is extremely unbalanced. This is a general issue of the Project Management Group to be taken in

consideration while organizing and planning specific responsibilities with each partner in each phase and activity of the project. In the following table, a preliminary analysis of risks related to the Complexity of the Consortium is reported.

Preconditions and Assumptions	Risks	Contingency Plan Mitigation measures
All the project partners perform. All the project partners perform in a satisfactory way.	_Partners are not performing in a satisfactory way. _Financial complications arise in relation to a partner. _Delivery delays arise due to one partner.	Once the unsatisfactory performance has been assessed and the partner has been alerted, in a period of one month after the decision by the consortium a proposal of countermeasures is made to the EC taking in consideration the possibility to replace the partner
The project design and action plan pushes the partners to contribute to all project activities.	_Partners do not contribute to all project activities but only to the ones under their responsibility.	Bilateral contacts will be taken with the partners that are not contributing and a specific strategy for each partner will be proposed. If this does not work, the partner will be excluded from the activities they are not contributing to, and substituted by another consortium member or, if not possible, by a new partner.
The project is conducted by Project Management Group that coordinates communication and project activities among different Partners	_Insufficient integration among the project activities.	The cause for this lack of integration will be identified by the consortium and a redefinition of the workplan will be agreed with the EC, in order to increase integration and synergy. Continuous contact among the partners will be strengthened.

3. Risks related to the Physical, Environmental, Political, economic and social context especially in LA countries

Preconditions and Assumptions	Risks	Contingency Plan Mitigation measures
Sufficient Political and Social Stability to allow Partners regular functions	Political and/or social unrest or unexpected violent changes in political leadership occur having impact on Partners of one country.	The impact of the Political and/or social unrest will be assessed by the Consortium and the PMG, and a redefinition of the workplan will be agreed with the EC.
Partners HEI Institutions functions and stakeholders are not effected by natural disasters	Natural disasters (like earthquakes) could impact on the infrastructure and on the regularity with which one or more Partners support the project, at local, national, subregional, regional and international level.	The impact of the Natural disaster will be assessed by the Consortium and the PMG, and a redefinition of the workplan will be agreed with the EC.
State of international relationship among Partners' LA governments and between Partners' LA and EU governments do not impact HEI possibility of collaboration	International Relationships are interrupted between two or more Partners Governments and this impacts on related HEIs possibility to collaborate.	The impact on the Project will be assessed by the Consortium and the PMG, and a redefinition of the workplan will be agreed with the EC.

SUSTAINABILITY

In terms of **sustainability**, VERTEBRALCUE has a clear strategy to be sustainable after the funding period. Infact, the whole project is about contributing to the implementation of the ALCUE area of Heigher Education.

Therefore the general principle about sustainability of VERTEBRALCUE is to embody the project results into the process at institutional, national, regional and bi-regional level if these prove to respond (in their outcomes and processes) to the needs of the latinamerican HE community including those of the external stakeholder.

The strategic results of the project, such as the network of ALCUE Points that will be developed in the 25 Latin American Partners Institutions will be conceived to last in time after the project contractual end, as the participation to the project of these institutions is based on al logn term commitment.

The fact that the Thematic Networks themes and the Bilateral ant Multilateral Coordination Units will be selected by integrating the ALCUE priorities for action with the ALFA areas of work will guarantee the long-term policy relevance of the project.

Furthermore, the strengthening of University-Enterprise relationship as a strategic result will lead to financing the HE activities, as the experience of University of Bologna in Buenos Aires confirms: the Center obtains over 2/3 of its financial needs from external sources.

Finally, the stakeholders' involvement WP10 will have – among others – the mission of connecting the ALFA projects and the ALFA Programme with the higher education policy community in Europe and in Latin America, making sure that the policy makers in charge are not only informed but also engaged and committed to the sustainability of the ALFA projects and Programme.

1.11. Logical Framework

The Annex C⁴ has been filled in and attached in the following table.

⁴ Explanations can be found at the following address:
http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/reports/index_en.pdf