



VRIJE
UNIVERSITEIT
BRUSSEL

INTERNATIONAL EQUITABLE COOPERATION

STRATEGY

International Equitable Cooperation

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Abbreviations

ATP	Administrative and Technical Personnel (Adminstratief en Technisch Personeel)
BAOW	Special Advisory Body for Development Cooperation (Bijzonder Adviesorgaan voor Ontwikkelingssamenwerking) <i>Proposed name change: Special Advisory Body for International Equitable Cooperation (BAEIS, Bijzonder Adviesorgaan voor Evenwaardige Internationale Samenwerking)</i>
BVO	Policy Support Research (Beleidsvoorbereidend onderzoek)
IEC	International Equitable Cooperation (Evenwaardige Internationale Samenwerking)
EU	European Union
EUTOPIA	European Universities Transforming to an Open Inclusive Academy
FEB	Facultaire Evaluatie- en Bevorderingscommissie
FOD	Federal Government (Federale Overheidsdienst)
HEI	Higher Education Institute
IRMO	International Relations Office
OAP	Other Academic Staff (Overig Academisch Personeel)
OECD DAC ODA	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development - Development Assistance Committee - Official Development Assistance
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SG	Strategic Goal
SIPs	Strategic International Partnerships
UDC	University Development Cooperation
UN-FAO	United Nations – Food and Agriculture Organisation
VLIRUOS	Flemish Interuniversity Council for University Development Cooperation (Vlaamse Interuniversitaire Raad voor Universitaire Ontwikkelingssamenwerking)
VUB	Vrije Universiteit Brussel
ZAP	Senior Academic Staff (Zelfstandig Academisch Personeel)

Concepts Explained

Capitals: refer to different forms of collective resources—human, social, cultural, political, financial, natural, and built—that interact dynamically to shape a community's capacity for sustainable development.

A modern and colonial imaginary: is an invisible frame that shapes what can be seen as normal, reasonable, possible, or legitimate in global politics and development discourse **OR** is the shared mental map that tells the world who is developed, who is developing, who knows, who needs help, and what progress should look like—a map still shaped by colonial history.

Executive Summary

This strategy sets forth the Vrije Universiteit Brussel's (VUB) vision and commitment to transitioning from traditional University Development Cooperation (UDC) towards International Equitable Cooperation (IEC – Dutch: Evenwaardige Internationale Samenwerking). This transition responds directly to evolving global challenges and critical reflections on past cooperation models, aligning with VUB's institutional mission as a research-driven, critically-thinking, and internationally-oriented university committed to societal impact and sustainability.

Strategic Vision:

VUB aims to become a reference in equitable international partnerships, fostering context-specific research and education built upon mutual trust, transparency, co-ownership, and shared responsibility. By challenging traditional development narratives, VUB ensures equitable partnerships produce meaningful impact both locally and globally.

Strategic Goals:

The strategy is structured around three interconnected goals:

1. **Rethinking University Development Cooperation:** Shifting from development-centric approaches towards partnerships based on equity, reciprocity, and mutual growth.
2. **Contextualised Research and Education:** Ensuring that research and education are transdisciplinary, participatory, and specifically tailored to local contexts, needs, and capacities.
3. **Scientific Uptake & Educational and Research Contributions to Sustainability:** Strengthening the impact of research and education through shared ownership, involving local change agents and intermediary partners, thereby enhancing sustainability and societal transformation.

Five Key Priorities:

Within these goals, VUB identifies five key priorities:

1. Adopting the term International Equitable Cooperation (IEC), embedding this concept across all programmes and communications.
2. Moving beyond the traditional Global North–Global South dichotomy, adopting Raworth's¹ country clusters to recognise mutual development needs and sustainability challenges.
3. Proactively addressing and mitigating power imbalances often inherent in international collaborations.
4. Implementing context-specific, transdisciplinary research and educational practices.
5. Sharing ownership and responsibility to increase scientific uptake and amplify contributions towards sustainable development.

Core Actions:

Specific operational goals are outlined for each pillar, assigning clear responsibilities primarily to the International Relations Office (IRMO) and the Vice-Rectorate Internationalisation. These include for example institutionalising the use of IEC

terminology, moving beyond the Global North–Global South dichotomy through the adoption of Raworth’s country clusters, aligning evaluation criteria, expanding funding sources, strengthening the alumni network, and fostering sustainable cross-research group collaborations.

Alignment with VUB’s Mission and the EUTOPIA Alliance’s Responsible Internationalisation Position Statement:

This strategy directly supports VUB’s mission by emphasising high-quality, globally relevant, and locally grounded research and education. It reinforces VUB’s role as an internationally recognised university dedicated to critical thinking, active societal engagement, inclusivity, sustainability, and global citizenship capable of effectively addressing contemporary global issues.

Evaluation and Implementation: *(pending the new VUB governance structure)*

Implementation will be regularly reviewed by VUB’s Council of International Policy, advised by the BAOW. Progress will be documented in annual reports and presented to the Academic Council, ensuring accountability and continuous alignment with strategic objectives.

Introduction

University Development Cooperation (UDC) is a highly-valued endeavour: it is, however, not without its challenges. These challenges are related to varying political climates, budgetary challenges and discourse challenges. An important aspect of UDC has always been the creation of impact: societal, scientific and economic. Creating impact is not without its challenges and no consensus exists on what it (should) entail(s), and which expectations can be achieved within the scope of research and educational UDC projects. Furthermore, UDC mostly still exists within a modern and colonial imaginary resulting in inherent inequity. For these reasons, VUB conducted an initial research project in 2022 to enquire what the various VUB participants consider as UDC and how they envision its future. This research showed that UDC currently exists at the intersection of 'development and research & education', and 'cooperation and colonisation'. A move away from both development and colonisation towards cooperation and research & education was deemed essential for an equitable and sustainable UDC. Although this research gave a clear direction for the future, a clear pathway towards an equitable and sustainable UDC remained challenging.

For this reason, a new research project was initiated in September 2024 to translate this vision in a clear pathway. This pathway is understood to depict the position VUB takes, the ambitions it has for the future and the practical steps forward to achieve these ambitions. It is hereby necessary to recognise that UDC differs from other international partnerships as the context of this cooperation currently still exists in inequality: differences in economic development between partners, in donor dependencies, in knowledge and equipment, in contributions to social and environmental degradations –or suffering the consequences of these degradations–, differences in responsibility and power relationships, etc.

Developing this pathway to move away from colonisation and development requires VUB to self-reflect on its own position in maintaining or combatting the Global North-Global South dichotomy. Based on this willingness for self-reflection VUB has translated its ambitions and actions in a strategy for UDC and set forth ambitions to monitor and evaluate its progression in the move towards equitable and sustainable UDC.

VUB hereby takes a leading role in moving University Development Cooperation from its modernist and colonial imaginary by a semantic and ontological real-world shift towards **International Equitable Cooperation (IEC) (Dutch: Evenwaardige Internationale Samenwerking)**.

1. Vision

Our vision represents VUB's commitment to IEC. This vision draws insights from in-depth interviews conducted with VUB staff (ZAP, OAP and ATP) both active and inactive in IEC. Eighteen interviews were conducted in the period May 2021-January 2022. Of the interviewees, nine identified themselves as being non-active in IEC and nine identified themselves as being actively involved in IEC. At least two persons from each faculty were interviewedⁱⁱ. IEC is key in the VUB's strategic policy and is widely embedded, transversal and enjoys participation from many VUB faculties and stakeholders. As part of the broader internationalisation policy, IEC will lead to VUB having a worldwide reputation as a leading, engaged and international university. By placing internationalisation in an equitability frame, VUB places itself at the forefront of the move away from the modernist and colonial imaginary of science. This imaginary invisibly shapes which and whose perspectives are intelligible and thereby which questions are asked and how they are answeredⁱⁱⁱ. This imaginary most often still results in *education* being shaped after the dominant "Western" imaginary as it is still perceived as being morally and intellectually superior^{iv}, and represents *research* as parachute science, i.e. research that does not reflect local priorities, needs and capitals or engages with local researchers, change agents and intermediary partners^{vi}.

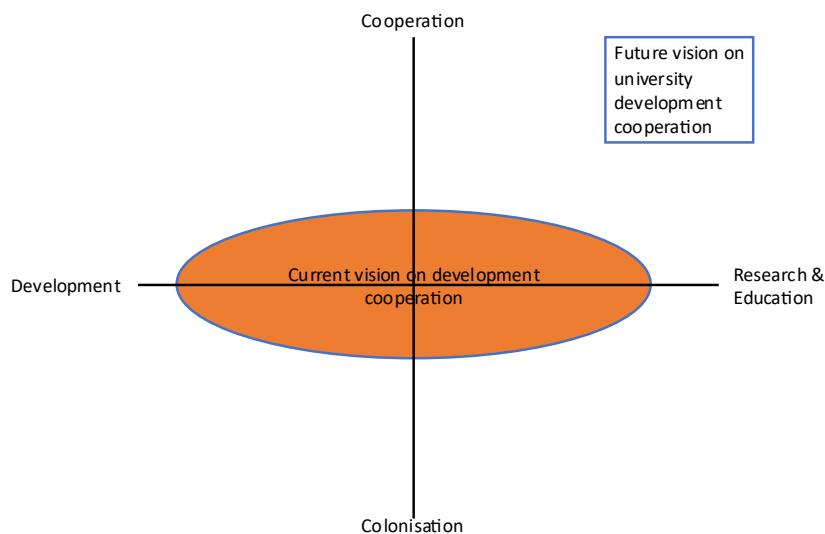


Figure 1 Visual representation of the four components of university development cooperation and the degree to which these components are present in the current and future vision.

The semantic rebranding to International Equitable Cooperation (IEC) removes the word 'development' to explain more clearly cooperation in an equitable manner in research and education. IEC hereby opens its academic practices beyond the 'Enlightened academia' and embraces other diverging cultural-philosophic movements. Cooperation takes place in an equitable manner between colleagues and is decoupled from the 'developer'/'developed' paradigm. Responsibilities are shared equitably, and research and education are co-owned ensuring contextualisation, i.e. fitting the needs and capitals of all clusters. IEC is intrinsically transdisciplinary. Furthermore, IEC is valorised for its scientific, societal, and technological and economic contributions to change towards sustainability.

2. Strategy – pillars, priorities and strategic goals

To embed our vision, VUB sets forth a strategy that rests on three pillars – Rethinking university development cooperation, contextualised research and education, and scientific uptake & research and educational contributions to change towards sustainability – each with specific goals.

Table 1 Three pillars, associated Strategic Goals (SG) and Key Priorities (KP) of International Equitable Cooperation

International Equitable Cooperation		
International Equitable Cooperation takes University Development Cooperation out of its modernist and colonial imaginary by a semantic and ontological shift. International Equitable Cooperation is institutionalised by transversal, organisation-wide participation and incorporation in all structures, policies and processes at VUB. VUB's global network will be further strengthened. VUB will take an active role in its global alliances and will employ these for contextualised research and education and increase of its research and educational contributions to change towards sustainability.		
Pillar 1: Rethinking University Development Cooperation	Pillar 2: Contextualised research and education	Pillar 3: Scientific uptake & educational and research contributions to change towards sustainability
SG1: Choosing for International Equitable Cooperation implies a move towards cooperation and away from development. This requires a semantic and an ontological shift away from colonisation.	SG2: International Equitable Cooperation implies collaborations that allow for contextualised research and education.	SG3: International Equitable Cooperation implies a shared responsibility for scientific uptake & educational and research contributions to change towards sustainability.
KP1: University Development Cooperation becomes International Equitable Cooperation KP2: VUB moves away from the Global North-Global South dichotomy	KP3: Changing power imbalances KP4: Creating contextualised research and education.	KP5: Sharing ownership to increase scientific uptake & research and educational contributions to change towards sustainability.

3. Goals

SG1: Choosing for International Equitable Cooperation implies a move towards cooperation and away from development. This requires a semantic and an ontological shift away from colonisation.

Key priority 1: University Development Cooperation becomes International Equitable Cooperation

VUB removes the semantic and heuristic colonial mindset inherent to the word 'development' (in University Development Cooperation) out of the concept and adopts the wording 'International Equitable Cooperation'. Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) in specific are most often still deployed as strategic partners in poverty reduction and economic development from the Western tradition of the universal value of scientific and technical knowledge^{vii}^{viii}. HEIs are hereby predominantly modelled as Western HEIs with the aim of bridging the knowledge gap that hinders economic development^{ix}. An equitable cooperation is hereby challenged as the transfer *from* HEIs in 'developed' economies *to* HEIs in 'developing' economies is still the reality. This reality does not, or insufficiently, recognises the value of HEIs in these 'developing' economies. VUB as an engaged university **breaks this imaginary** and moves from one-directional collaboration to **equitable cooperation**.

Key priority 2: VUB moves away from the Global North-Global South dichotomy.

To achieve IEC, VUB subscribes to **Raworth's country clusters^{xxi}** (**Error! Reference source not found.**). These clusters are comparable to the OECD's DAC ODA country lists. Raworth's clusters additionally recognise that Belgium, including its HEIs, is itself still 'in development' as it is unable to provide in the societal needs of its population without transgressing the planetary boundaries. This results in a **mutual need for cooperation**. VUB will break the modernist and colonial imaginary and develop a reciprocal IEC that serves all country clusters, thereby **breaking this dichotomy**.

Table 2 Raworth's four country clusters^{xii}

<p><i>"A. Countries that are barely crossing any planetary boundaries, but are falling very far short on meeting people's needs [...]"</i></p>	<p><i>"B. Many middle-income, 'emerging' economies [...] are both falling short on the social needs while already crossing biophysical boundaries [...]"</i></p>
<p><i>"C. Today's high-income countries [...] cannot be called developed, given that their resource consumption is greatly overshooting Earth's boundaries and, in the process [...], undermining prospects for all other countries"</i></p>	<p><i>"D. No country is yet in the sweet-spot cluster [...] where countries do not cross planetary boundaries and are meeting people's needs"</i></p>

VUB will, partly, move away from the country strategy as set by the various governments and funding bodies for development in its partnerships. This entails that VUB within IEC will set a **priority for partnerships with countries from clusters A and B**. As international cooperation with country clusters A and B still exists **in an inequity**, VUB will focus on strengthening existing partnerships to shape these into equitable ones. This indicates that cooperations will fall beyond priorities set by relevant governments, funding bodies or international organisations such as OECD. VUB will therefore explore additional funding opportunities, such as collaborations with industry. In other words, VUB sets its own (financial) priority on demonstrable collaborations, either based on past or current ones. What constitutes as existing collaborations will be set out in evaluation and selection criteria of VUB-IEC calls. Bottom-up partnerships with non-priority countries, regions or partners remain possible.

SG2: International Equitable Cooperation implies collaborations that allow for contextualised research and education.

Key priority 3: Changing power imbalances

VUB moves away from a tradition of **parachute science** resulting from the disparities between Raworth's clusters^{xiii}. This requires a **true sharing of power** and the **removal of moral and intellectual superiority**. VUB will self-reflect on its own position in the current modernist and colonial imaginary and mitigate those factors that hinder true IEC. Specifically, IRMO and BAOW will assess how changing power imbalances can be imbedded in the workings of IEC and the co-design of IEC-projects.

Key priority 4: creating contextualised research and education.

VUB aims at **collaborations that allow for contextualised research and education**. VUB places priority on **transdisciplinary** research and education in IEC, referring to it as research with non-academic partners, mainly relevant stakeholders. Transdisciplinarity is understood as an intellectual framework and "*its goal is the understanding of the present world, of which one of the imperatives is the unity of knowledge [...] Transdisciplinarity constitutes four elements: focus on 'lifeworld' problems; transcendence and integration of disciplinary paradigms; participatory research; and search for unity of knowledge beyond disciplines [...] Very importantly, [transdisciplinarity] is self-reflexive about preferred outcomes: its normative goals are open for discussion and debate, indeed defining and discussing these goals is a principal part of the research project itself*".^{xiv}

This transdisciplinary research and education limits parachute science and moves towards a contextualised research and education that is built on the **principles of equity**. To ensure this, VUB reinforces multi and interdisciplinarity and sets **criteria** to encompass collaborations in a comprehensive manner within IEC. These criteria are based not on exclusion but inclusion for IEC and are not divisive; cooperation exists across the boundaries of these criteria and exist within both or either. Both criteria allow us to move beyond traditional capacity building (not excluding it) and build upon what already exists (the partner's strengths or capitals) to collaborate in an equitable manner and increase the opportunities for **scientific uptake, and research and educational contributions to change towards sustainability**. Specifically, the aim of these collaborations is to enhance educational practices, collaborations and impact, and enhance academic research and research impact, including commercial end-goals such as spin-offs.

Criterion 1: Collaborations based on partners' needs and capitals. In this regard VUB can respond to specific country or partner needs and capitals in a particular field or from a transdisciplinary perspective. The **needs** are framed within the social, ecological and economic specificities of the partner countries (in accordance with the SDGs), and should be in line with the country's needs. Partners' **capitals** include human, natural, social, financial, infrastructural, political and cultural capitals^{xv}. The inclusion of the partners' needs and capitals should be done in an equitable manner by **sharing power** (cf. Key Priority 3) and **ownership** (cf. Key priority 5).

Criterion 2: Collaborations based on VUB's needs and capitals. These include those specifically tailored to our own progression towards cluster D or tailored to our ambitions for contributions to change towards sustainability.

This transdisciplinary approach will bridge the asymmetry between criterion 1 and 2, wherein focus is primarily placed on capacity building (mainly resulting from criterion 1), rather than merely on excellent science (mainly resulting from criterion 2). This contextualised research and education entail equitable cooperation, with mutual benefits and respect at the centre, and aims for contributions to change towards sustainability. The

transdisciplinary approach allows for sustainable, durable impact that places focus on long term contributions to change towards sustainability via the multiplier effect. Furthermore, a humanitarian and structural approach that builds not only on a 'needs' but also on a 'capitals' assessment is central in this strategy to increasing the sustainability^{xvi}.

SG3: International Equitable Cooperation implies a shared responsibility for scientific uptake & research and educational contributions to change towards sustainability.

Key Priority 5: sharing ownership to increase scientific uptake & research and educational contributions to change towards sustainability.

With strategic goal 3 VUB will place focus on increasing its **research and educational contributions to change towards sustainability** within IEC. Traditionally, societal impact, is prioritised in IEC by all partners involved, including government agencies, HEIs, funding agencies etc. However, there is no consensus on how this impact is achieved or even how it is to be measured. Due to this lack of baseline understanding on how research and education can be translated into actual societal impact or change, the argumentation is made that it is often beyond the capacity of researchers or the scope of research projects, in varying contexts, to have the capabilities to assess and achieve context-dependent impacts.

A trend can be seen in research impact to move away from societal impact to **scientific uptake**. The argumentation for this is manyfold. Firstly, there is **no consensus on assessment criteria** to measure impact - many **are not measurable** - and a **skewed importance put on economic impact**. Furthermore, societal change, even when guided by a theory of change, often occurs **outside the scope** - particularly the timeframe - of individual projects. In addition, the **applied or fundamental nature of research, as well as disciplinary differences**, strongly influences the potential for impact. Finally, this **impact is context-dependent** and should be adapted to local cultural, social, political, human, ecological, infrastructural, and economic contexts.

Assurance of **scientific uptake by academic and non-academic partners** is therefore currently considered far more reasonable and realistic to **contribute to change towards sustainability** rather than place focus on impact. It is up to the **respective societies** to **translate the scientific uptake to contributions to change towards sustainability**. VUB will therefore place priorities on **identifying change agents and intermediary partners** that can translate this uptake in **contributions to change towards sustainability**, and place priority on **educating future change agents**. Change agents and intermediary partners are individuals or organisations - both academic and non-academic - which promote and enable contributions to change towards sustainability. They possess the necessary capitals to increase scientific uptake and act as a catalyst for change towards sustainability.

Translating scientific uptake to research and educational **contributions to change towards sustainability** is not without its challenges and is a **joint responsibility** which lies with the change agents and intermediary partners, as well as with researchers and educators. **Sharing ownership** builds upon the principles of sharing power (cf. Key priority 3) and aligning research and educational efforts in IEC with partner and VUB needs and capitals (cf. Key priority 4). VUB is supported by the new European Union (EU) and Flemish regulations concerning Equitable Open Science ensuring equitable sharing of data and research infrastructure.

Contributions to change towards sustainability recognises the capacities and roles of all partners involved and requires transdisciplinary efforts that allow for contextualised research and education. From the onset, all partners in research and educational projects

in IEC should jointly identify research and educational change pathways and identify their own roles and responsibilities to, on the one hand ensure **direct scientific uptake**, and on the other hand **indirect research and educational contributions to change towards sustainability**. Rather than expecting research and educational efforts to result in direct research and educational impact, VUB will prioritise including change agents and intermediary partners. Three key pathways for IEC are prioritised: (1) **scientific**, (2) **societal, and** (3) **technological and economic contributions to change towards sustainability**. The inclusion of change agents and intermediary partners increase the opportunity to create synergies between the different pathways as they are recognised as key in achieving **positive change, mitigating negative change, increasing scientific uptake**, and **empowering the multiplier effect**.

Table 3 VUB key change pathways and their ambitions within International Equitable Cooperation

Key Change Pathways	Ambitions
<i>Scientific change</i>	The co-creation, mutual co-ownership and sharing of science by mutually building and sharing HEIs' human capital. Scientific change refers to building scientific human capital by delivering PhDs and educating new generations, sharing knowledge, methods and technologies via, among others, scientific publications, and the progression of scientific knowledge.
<i>Societal change</i>	Co-creating contextualised research and education aligned with the partners' and VUBs' priorities, as well as VUB and the partners' social, political, cultural, economic, ecological, infrastructural, and human capitals. Focus will be placed on the deliverance, inclusion and valuing of change agents and intermediary partners as key in achieving positive change, mitigating negative change and increasing scientific uptake.
<i>Technological and economic change</i>	Co-creating opportunities for technological advances and uptake, which allows for mutual innovation-based growth, is aligned with SDG 1 (Ending poverty), which allows for a multiplier effect in investment and innovation

A first step is the identification of change agents and intermediary partners. A priority to ease this identification is strengthening and expanding VUB's IEC network. Developing a strong international alumni network has been researched in a BVO-project (project put on hold by the Direction Committee). Secondly, research and education efforts will need to include a participatory component in IEC. Change agents and intermediary partners will hereby share ownership over the research outcomes (e.g. co-created knowledge, technological advances), embedding them directly in their respective societies. To ensure this, VUB prioritises the validation of this component, beyond its pure academic valorisations. Activities in the frame of IEC can be taken up in the individual Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) included in the ZAP career policy to provide sufficient stimulus.

4. Alignment with transversal issues

4.1. Internationalisation

The inherent inequality within existing collaborations within IEC are to be lifted out to become embedded in the VUB's internationalisation strategy. Through this, the IEC will align with VUBs priority on world citizenship.

4.2. Sustainability

International Equitable Cooperation places high importance on sustainability:

- Various funding agencies specifically require a link with sustainability such as Global Minds (VLIRUOS) and EU
- Green travel is promoted for all mobilities as depicted in the VUB and EU travel policy.
- IEC aligns with the VUB's low-impact goals such as environmental considerations on printing books, flyers or brochures.
- World citizenship – everyone is given the opportunity to go on an exchange within IEC (not necessarily with financial support)

4.3. Equality

International Equitable Cooperation has equality and equity as intrinsic characteristics:

- Specific attention is given to power imbalances and its implications, as well as mitigation efforts.
- Within IEC specific focus is placed on collaborations with countries from clusters A and B (cf. Raworth).
- Gender: gender equality is aimed for if it is appropriate for the IEC contexts.

4.4. Wellbeing

- The travel policy within IEC follows the advice of the Belgian Department of Foreign Affairs, specifically travelling to high-risk areas 'Reizen naar risicogebieden'.
- Inclusion projects such as Scholars at Risk and Daughters for Life will be continued.
- Virtual desk for international students; buddy programme for international students.
- Actions for specific student groups: Iran, Ukraine, etc.

4.5. Diversity

- International Student Platform (English) is a working group of the student council, or a merger is not excluded in the future.
- Articles/testimonials on international students, including those from clusters A and B.
- Students from all nationalities can apply to VUB.
- The IEC strategies align with VUBs' diversity policies.

5. Communication and network.

5.1. Unique character of International Equitable Cooperation

VUB has set up a set of IEC principles to ensure excellent contextualised research and education and increase contributions to change towards sustainability. These aim to streamline communication and highlight the VUB vision for IEC. The principles are framed at the centre of all current and future IEC, highlighting its unique characteristics:

- ***Share power in an equitable manner.***
- ***Build mutual trust and co-ownership; share responsibilities and create transparency.***
- ***Co-design contextualised objectives and change pathways.***
- ***Share information equally, develop networks and identify, include, and value change agents and intermediary partners.***
- ***Co-monitor and co-evaluate collaborations.***

5.2. Alumni network.

VUB engages to further develop and implement an international alumni network. Developing a strong international alumni network has been researched in a policy preparatory research project ('BVO-project', Beleidsvoorbereidend onderzoek). Concerning IEC, a strong alumni network will serve as a stepping stone for the sustainability of IEC via the identification, inclusion and valuing of change agents and intermediary partners for achieving scientific uptake and the indirect increase of scientific, societal, technological and economic contributions to change towards sustainability.

5.3. Network internationalisation

International Equitable Cooperation can benefit greatly from inclusion within the VUB's international network, and vice versa: the IEC network can further develop the international network to globally strengthen the reputation of VUB as an international partner in education, research, and social engagement.

6. Evaluation and monitoring

(pending the new VUB governance structure)

The implementation and progress of the International Equitable Cooperation (IEC) strategy will be monitored through VUB's existing governance and advisory structures.

The **Council for International Policy (Raad Internationaal Beleid)** holds overall responsibility for monitoring IEC progress. This monitoring takes place through six-weekly meetings, during which the strategy is discussed and advisory input is provided by the **Special Advisory Body for Development Cooperation (BAOW)**. Progress and results are reported annually in the *Internationalisation Annual Report*, which is submitted to the **Academic Council (Academische Raad)**.

The **Special Advisory Body for Development Cooperation (BAOW)** has an advisory role towards the Council for International Policy and monitors the implementation of IEC principles and practices across VUB.

Policy aspects related to international students are monitored by the **International Student Platform**, which provides advice to the **Student Council (Studentenraad)**.

Ethical considerations related to IEC activities are addressed by the relevant ethics committees, which advise the vice-rectorate when required.

At the operational level, IEC-related activities are followed up through biweekly team meetings within the **International Relations office (IRMO)**. In the context of **EUTOPIA**, monitoring takes place through meetings at various governance levels (see *EUTOPIA MORE*). To ensure coherence, a consolidated review at VUB level is proposed on a trimonthly basis.

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