

UASNL



A STRONGER VOICE IN EUROPE

Examples of applied research tackling global challenges

2026

PREFACE

Dear reader,

Applied research sits at the intersection of innovation and impact. By aligning academic inquiry with real-world challenges, it translates theory into solutions that matter—whether for communities, industries, or ecosystems.

This booklet showcases a range of EU-funded applied research projects driven by Dutch Universities of Applied Sciences (UASNL) and their partners, illustrating how localized knowledge and practical experimentation can generate global change.

It also presents an overview of the European University alliances in which Dutch universities of applied sciences are actively engaged, highlighting how these strategic collaborations further strengthen our collective capacity to innovate.

Applied research is uniquely positioned to bridge policy, practice, and people. It is inherently collaborative, embedding students, researchers, citizens, and enterprises in a continuous cycle of co-creation and learning.

This approach yields results that are not only scientifically sound but also socially relevant and immediately usable.

Each of the examples in this booklet demonstrates the added value of applied research: it is agile, multidisciplinary, and grounded in the contexts it seeks to transform. By connecting education with innovation ecosystems and European alliances, applied research strengthens Europe's ability to respond to pressing societal challenges—from sustainability and the digital transition to health and social cohesion.

We invite you to see this booklet not merely as a collection of projects and alliances, but as a call to champion a form of research that is purpose-driven, participatory, and powerful. Applied research is not just about knowledge—it is about enabling change, one solution at a time.

On behalf of the 23 Dutch universities of applied sciences that comprise UASNL,

Dr. Geleyn Meijer, president UASNL

Universities of Applied Sciences Netherlands is an initiative of The Netherlands Association of Universities of Applied Sciences.

Executive Board:

Marjan Hammersma (Avans University of Applied Sciences),
Jorrit Snijder (Breda University of Applied Sciences),
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PROJECT: TECHCOACH

Bringing Smart Farming Closer to Farmers

**Lead institution
(+ UASNL partner)**

International Horizon Europe consortium (coordinator in accordance with project consortium) Stichting Aeres Group (partner)

**Research Group
involved from
UASNL partner**

Lectorates Smart Farming, Innovation and Knowledge Transmission

Granting agency

European Commission – Horizon Europe

Duration

2024–2028

Project description

Smart Farming technologies have the potential to revolutionize agriculture, making it more sustainable, efficient, and data-driven. However, their adoption remains low, with many farmers lacking the support and knowledge to implement these innovations effectively.

TechCoach is an EU-funded project dedicated to bridging this gap by empowering agricultural advisors, the key intermediaries between farmers, technology providers, and research institutions. By equipping advisors with the right skills, tools, and networks, TechCoach ensures that farmers receive practical guidance to integrate Smart Farming solutions into their operations.



We bring together **farmers, advisors, Operational Groups (OGs)** and other **AKIS actors**, such as researchers, policy-makers and agri-tech providers, to **co-create practical solutions** that fit local needs. We then **share and scale what works** through national and EU networks (including **Thematic Networks** and **Multi-Actor Approach projects**). All **ready-to-use guidance** is openly available via **EU-FarmBook**.

- Empower farmers to **choose and use** SCF tools that fit their local conditions.
- Facilitate **multi-actor collaboration** in OGs and AKIS for farm-ready solutions.
- Build **facilitation and advisory capacity** through training, tools and peer learning.
- Produce **Practice Abstracts** and practical resources.
- **Scale outcomes** across countries through connected national and EU networks.

Website

[Techcoach](https://techcoach.eu)

PROJECT: WOODCIRCLES

Unlocking the Potential of Wood in Construction

**Lead institution
(+ UASNL partner)**

Danish Technological Institute

**Knowledge Center
involved from
UASNL partner**

Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences
Centre of Expertise: City Net Zero

Project description

Woodcircles is a sustainable initiative focused on reusing wood in the construction sector. The project promotes circular economy practices by transforming wood waste into high-quality building materials. By minimizing waste and encouraging environmentally friendly construction methods, Woodcircles aims to significantly reduce the carbon footprint of the building industry. Through innovative solutions, such as an urban sawmill and digital tools, cities are supported in better identifying and utilizing their available wood resources, fostering a more sustainable future.

Deliverables:

- Repurposing Wood Waste: Transforming wood that is typically destined for incineration into new construction materials.
- Digital Tools: Development of tools to map wood from existing buildings, structures, and furniture in urban areas.
- New Value Chains: Creating products from recycled wood, such as engineered wood and insulation materials.
- Urban Sawmill: Prototyping an urban sawmill that converts low-value wood waste into valuable, standardized products.
- Wood Construction System: Designing a construction system optimized for easy disassembly, enabling efficient reuse and recycling of wood materials in the future.
- Demonstration Building: Constructing a pilot building that will tour three European cities (Rotterdam, Tartu and Turin) to showcase its applications.

**Granting agency**

European Commission under the Horizon Europe programme.

Duration

Start: 2023 End: 2026

Website

[Woodcircles – wood and the circular economy.](#)

PROJECT: BECEE

Balanced and Enhanced Collaboration for an Entrepreneurship Ecosystem

**Lead institution
(+ UASNL partner)**

Hanze UAS

**Research Group
involved from
UASNL partner**

Centre of Expertise Ondernemen

Granting agency

EIT HEI

Duration

April 2025–April 2027

Project description

The Balanced and Enhanced Collaboration for an Entrepreneurship Ecosystem (BECEE, 24242) initiative has been awarded EIT funding following a rigorous evaluation under the EIT Higher Education Institutions Initiative Call for Proposals 2024. This recognition confirms BECEE's potential to deliver scalable, impactful responses to major global challenges.



BECEE positions higher education institutions as key drivers of resilience, innovation and transformative action. Through their research, education and innovation capacities, HEIs can foster entrepreneurship that is both socially responsible and future-oriented, addressing challenges such as climate change, digital transformation and inequality.

The initiative brings together four European institutions: Hanze University of Applied Sciences (Netherlands), Zurich University of Applied Sciences (Switzerland), South East Technological University (Ireland), and Universiteti "Aleksandër Moisiu" Durrës (Albania). As lead partner of the STARS EU Alliance, Hanze contributes extensive expertise and a strong European network.

BECEE connects education, research and business through the EIT Knowledge Triangle Model. Four industry partners—KPN, Innofuse, Dungarvan Enterprise Centre and Linda Laboratory—will co-develop practical plans for balanced, sustainable entrepreneurship ecosystems. Together, the consortium aims to set a new European benchmark for inclusive, resilient and impact-driven entrepreneurship.

Website

[BECEE](#)

[Hanze COE Ondernemen: BECEE](#)

PROJECT: NEST

Empowering sustainable health ecosystems in Europe

**Lead institution
(+ UASNL partner)**

Hanze

**Knowledge Center
involved from
UASNL partner**

Centre of Expertise Healthy Ageing (Lectoraat
Praktijkgerichte Sportwetenschap)

Granting agency

Erasmus +

Duration

2023 –2026

Project description

European Innovation Alliance on Healthy Living
Health is a fundamental right. And therefore, healthy living is of high priority on the EU agenda. Yet, it is a complex challenge that requires to break up the fragmented health sector. Because, to achieve health for all, aligned co-operation is vital, both at systemic and individual levels.

Ten partners from six countries plus one European network partner from higher education, VET, research, and business pick up two main learning questions:

- How to position and organise a social innovation ecosystem sustainably into long term societal transitions?
- And how to grow and maintain knowledge and collective agency of the diverse healthy living stakeholders in social innovation ecosystems?

To answer them, we implement four international communities of practice on a) social business development, b) engaged community science, c) reflexive monitoring, and d) knowledge creation. With it, we learn about appropriate governance and leadership structures, about building engagement and capacity towards sustaining, and about innovative solutions for transformative learning.

It leads to a blueprint of a Social Innovation Ecosystem for Healthy Living (SIEHL) with effective governance and sustainable implementation strategies, plus educational courses to empower change agents. A unique feature is that we dock our learning in SIEHL with existing educational structures.

This leads to greater capacity of education institutes to co-create with socio-economic stakeholders towards a quintuple helix. Ultimately leading to more innovative and sustainable solutions for healthy living in local communities, and a healthier and more resilient society in Europe.

**Website**

[Nest](#)

PROJECT: CYANOTYPES

Strategic Skills for Creative Futures

**Lead institution
(+ UASNL partner)**

HKU University of the Arts Utrecht

**Knowledge Center
involved from
UASNL partner**

OOI

Granting agency

EC ERASMUS+ Alliances for Innovation

Duration

Start: 2022 – End: 2026

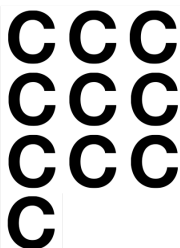
Project description

CYANOTYPES is a unique pan-European project driven to imagine new competence ecosystems for the creative sector that support artists and other creators as agents of change.

CYANOTYPES brings together a wide variety of organizations, stakeholders, and European networks to address the needs and skills gaps in the Cultural & Creative Industries. Based on innovative multidisciplinary approaches, CYANOTYPES tackles the sector's potential for innovation and competitiveness, which deals as well with challenges presented by the triple transition (social, digital, and green).

CYANOTYPES strategically adopts a triple-loop learning framework that combines the effective adoption of existing (and validated) skillsets, the co-creative development of new skill sets, and a flexible framework to respond to disruptive changes with future skill sets. Organized by a triple-loop learning framework, this will include changes in how we “learn how to learn”.

Through this applied research project, we aim to support the co-creation and delivery of a training program with future-oriented transversal competencies and concrete trans-national skills modules covering the spectrum of diverse qualifications involving VET (EQF levels 3 to 5) and Tertiary levels (EQF levels 6 to 8), as well as providing inputs for workplace training and microlearning for existing and new occupational profiles.

**Website**

<https://cyanotypes.website/>

PROJECT: TRAM4DW

Re- and upskilling for a sustainable & digital Europe

Lead institution (+ UASNL partner)

Hochschule für Angewandte Wissenschaften
Hamburg (HAW Hamburg)

UASNL partner

HU University of Applied Sciences Utrecht, research
group Organizing Decent Work

Additional partners

Arbeit und Leben Hamburg, Complutense University
of Madrid, ACCESOPhila, Bulgarian Academy of
Science, Bulgarian Red Cross, Mariupol State
University (MDU), All-Ukrainian Association of
Companies for International Employment

Granting agency

European Union, Erasmus+ program

Duration

November 2025 – October 2028

Project description

Transnational Migrant Counselling for Decent Work (TRAM4DW)

TRAM4DW addresses Europe-wide shortages of
qualified workers in sectors such as construction,
agriculture and care. The project aims to improve the
labour market and social participation of mobile
workers in the European Union by strengthening
preventive counselling and promoting the right to
decent work.

Mobile workers make an important contribution to the
European economy, but may face exploitation,
discrimination, precarious employment and de-
qualification. TRAM4DW establishes a network of
transnational hubs in Hamburg, Madrid, Sofia and Kyiv
to reduce these risks. Through early prevention and
cross-border support, the hubs protect mobile EU
citizens and migrants with regular status who work in EU
host countries.

The hubs are the project's central initiative and offer
three qualification pathways:

- advanced training seminars;
- internships in transnational migration and labour
counselling;
- international exchanges for specialists.

Each hub is tailored to local labour-market conditions
and the needs of migrant workers. Training is
developed by academic institutions in collaboration
with NGO partners and focuses on:

1. EU labour rights and equal treatment;
2. decent work and the prevention of precarity;
3. migrant workers' living and working conditions, and
social inclusion.

Universities of Applied Sciences and local NGOs
contribute evidence-based research, practical
knowledge and counselling expertise. This enables
labour-market professionals to better support migrants
working temporarily or long term in the European Union.



Website

[Tram4DW – Tram4DW](https://tram4dw.nl)

PROJECT: DIGITAL4SUSTAINABILITY



Re- and upskilling for a sustainable & digital Europe

Lead institution	European partnership (29 partners, 13 countries)
UASNL partner	HU University of Applied Sciences
Knowledge centre involved from UAS4NL partner	Lectoraat Marketing & Customer Experience, Lectoraat Organisaties in Digitale Transitie, Lectoraat Procesinnovatie & informatiesystemen
Granting agency	Erasmus+
Duration	March 2024–March 2028
Project description	Accelerating Europe's twin transition

The **Digital4Sustainability** project addresses one of Europe's most pressing challenges: the shortage of professionals equipped with the skills needed to drive the twin transition—the combined shift towards digitalisation and sustainability. As organisations increasingly rely on digital technologies to achieve sustainability goals, new competencies are required across sectors and professions.

Within a strong European consortium, Digital4Sustainability develops innovative, modular training programmes that enable professionals and organisations to apply digital technologies in responsible, human-centred, and sustainable ways. The project lays the foundation for a long-term European education and training initiative, including the use of micro-credentials to support lifelong learning.



The contribution of HU University of Applied Sciences
Within the project, HU is responsible for **Work Package 2**, conducting the **needs analysis in the Benelux region** to identify current and future digital sustainability skills gaps. In addition, HU leads **Work Package 4**, which focuses on **piloting new training programmes and educational materials** tailored to the needs of professionals and organisations, particularly SMEs.

HU brings together the expertise of three professorships—**Process Innovation & Information Systems, Organizations in Digital Transition, and Marketing & Customer Experience**—to ensure that the developed programmes are practical, interdisciplinary, and directly applicable in real-world contexts.

The collective goal is to support the twin transition in organizations in the Netherlands and across EU through innovative Training Programmes. By designing courses for organizations, particularly SMEs, Digital4Sustainability helps to advance capabilities in sustainable technologies and corporate social responsibility. Ultimately this helps shaping a future-proof, sustainable, and digital Europe.

Website

<https://digital4sustainability.eu/>

PROJECT: PLANED

Planetary Health Education in Prescribing

**Lead institution
(+ UASNL partner)**

Inholland University of Applied Sciences

**Research Group
involved from
UASNL partner**

Interprofessional Collaboration & Medication Safety

Granting agency

European Union – Erasmus+

Duration

October 2023 – October 2026

Project description

What if prescribing education helped clinicians reduce the environmental impact of medicines?

PlanED Prescribing is a European collaboration that focuses on the environmental impact of medicines and aims to raise awareness among current and future prescribers through education.

The project was awarded €400,000 from the European Erasmus+ programme and is designed as a three-year partnership across multiple countries. Inholland University of Applied Sciences participates together with Amsterdam UMC and eight other European partners, alongside associate partners including professional organisations and the World Health Organization.

Inholland's contribution is led by its endowed professorship in Interprofessional Collaboration & Medication Safety, supporting the development of educational approaches that help prescribers make more sustainable choices when clinically comparable options exist.

By linking research insights to curriculum development and professional learning, PlanED Prescribing helps integrate planetary health into health education and practice in a way that is actionable for the field.

Website

[Planed](#)

PROJECT: POCITYF

Positive Energy City Transformation Framework

**Lead institution
(+ UASNL partner)**

Inholland University of Applied Sciences

**Research Group
involved from
UASNL partner**

Data Driven Smart Society

Granting agency

European Union – Horizon 2020 (Grant Agreement 864400)

Duration

2019–2026

Project description

What if historic cities could become energy-positive—without compromising their heritage? POCITYF is an EU-funded smart city initiative helping historical cities become greener, smarter and more liveable while respecting cultural heritage.

The project focuses on implementing and testing Positive Energy Districts (PEDs)—areas where local renewable generation exceeds consumption.

Two lighthouse cities, Alkmaar (NL) and Évora (PT), demonstrate the solutions, while six fellow cities across Europe observe and replicate the model. Inholland contributes through multiple research groups, including Data Driven Smart Society, and supports Alkmaar's long-term strategy development (the Bold City Vision Alkmaar).

A key part of Inholland's work is advising on data science and AI to combine and interpret different data types—such as detailed energy measurements from demo buildings and broader city KPIs (social, mobility, ICT, governance).

Inholland supplies these data to the Municipality of Alkmaar, where they are integrated into a Digital Twin connected to sensors and multiple data sources (including the POCITYF data lake), supporting decision-making for the city and its stakeholders.

The project also strengthens education-to-innovation pathways by involving students in developing tools such as a gamification platform and energy awareness applications.

Website

[Inholland project page – POCITYF](#)

PROJECT: SOI TOOLKIT

Developing Competencies for Sustainability-Oriented Innovation

Lead institution (+ UASNL partner)	Inholland University of Applied Sciences
Research Group involved from UASNL partner	Teaching, Learning & Technology; Sustainable Business Innovations
Granting agency	European Union – Erasmus+
Duration	2024–2028
Project description	Sustainability is becoming a core theme in business, and organisations increasingly need professionals who can integrate sustainable goals into innovation practice. The SOI Toolkit is an Erasmus+ research and education project that develops a toolkit to create or adapt curricula in the economic domain so students gain—and can demonstrate—competencies for sustainability-oriented innovation. Inholland contributes through the research groups Teaching, Learning & Technology and Sustainable Business Innovations, combining educational design with applied research. The project aims to build an integrated competency framework and test it with industry partners, while also establishing educational design principles that are trialled across partner organisations. A distinctive element is the living lab approach, where students, teachers, researchers and external partners collaborate to solve practice-oriented problems—so knowledge is created and applied simultaneously. This makes the toolkit directly usable for institutions and organisations seeking future-proof curricula and graduates ready for sustainability-driven labour markets.
Website	<u>Inholland project page – SOI Toolkit</u>

PROJECT: RECEBA

Regional Circular Economy Business Acceleration

**Lead institution
(+ UASNL partner)**

SFC Sistemi Formativi Confindustria + NHL Stenden
UAS

**Research Group
involved from
UASNL partner**

Design Based Education and Innovation

Granting agency

Erasmus+ Center of Vocational Excellence

Duration

April 2026–Maart 2030

Project description

To accelerate Europe's circular transition, RECEBA confronts the critical gap between strategic ambition and operational reality, where SMEs are held back from implementing profitable circular business models by a lack of practical skills, implementation know-how, and access to integrated support.

In response, this project builds a transnational Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) across Italy, Spain, Belgium, the Netherlands, France, and Bulgaria, with its methodology poised for replication in associated regions including Albania, Catalunya (Spain), and Ireland's Eastern Midland Region. We integrate VET with regional S3/S4 strategies to create a demand-driven and resilient skills pipeline.

Our methodology is practical and impact-oriented. We begin by establishing multi-stakeholder Regional VET Excellence Panels to map real-world industry needs. This intelligence informs the co-creation of 10 modular training programs and an accompanying micro-credential system for skills recognition, spanning EQF levels 5 to 8. Learning is then brought to life within six Circular Business Labs—dynamic hubs providing direct business acceleration support, where learners and SMEs collaborate to solve authentic business challenges, supported by a network of over 100 trained industry mentors.

This integrated VET-business acceleration model directly strengthens the EU's economic resilience—a core tenet of its preparedness strategy—by localising supply chains and reducing critical material dependency. By equipping over 120 SMEs with practical skills, RECEBA prepares them to lead under the new EU Circular Economy Act, turning the ambitions of the Green Deal into profitable, ground-level innovation.

The project's ultimate impact will be a measurable acceleration in the adoption of circular models, fostering a more competitive, strategically autonomous, and sustainable European industrial landscape.

Website

[Receba](#)

PROJECT: W4S

Wind4Shipping

**Lead institution
(+ UASNL partner)**

Provincie Fryslân (+ NHL Stenden UAS)

**Research Group
involved from
UASNL partner**

Maritime Applied Research Centre

Granting agency

Interreg Noordwest Europe

Duration

2025-2028

Project description

Wind for Shipping is an Interreg North-West Europe project that brings together 12 partners from the Netherlands, Germany, Belgium, and France. The project started in December 2024. It aims to support the transition to sustainable maritime transport by advancing the use of wind propulsion technologies.

The participating regions include Pays de la Loire Bretagne (France), Weser-Ems (Germany), and Fryslân (Netherlands). Project partners include shipyards, shipping companies, research institutions, and regional authorities—each contributing their expertise to support innovation in the maritime sector.

The total project budget is €5.7 million, of which €3.4 million is co-financed by the European Union through the Interreg North-West Europe programme.

The project focuses on the development and upscaling of rotorsails and wingsails—large vertical sails or rotating structures that can be installed on ships to harness wind power. These technologies have the potential to reduce fuel consumption by 20% to 40%, significantly cutting emissions in line with European climate goals.

To make wind propulsion commercially viable, production costs must be reduced and manufacturing processes optimized. Wind for Shipping therefore explores automation in production, new logistics chains for global installation, and the development of skilled professionals and supply chains. The project also aims to strengthen regional maritime innovation ecosystems by encouraging cooperation between coastal regions.

In the coming years, the project will test several wind propulsion systems on seagoing vessels and support the wider adoption of these technologies in the maritime industry.

Together, we are setting sail for a cleaner, smarter, and more resilient future in shipping.

Website

[Wind4shipping](https://www.wind4shipping.nl)

PROJECT: SEUS

Smart European Shipbuilding



Lead institution (+ UASNL partner)

INORGES TEKNISK-NATURVITENSKAPELIGE UNIVERSITET
NTNU and NHL Stenden UAS

Research Group involved from UASNL partner

Maritime Applied Research Centre

Granting agency

Horizon Europe, Climate, Energy and Mobility

Duration

Start date 1 January 2023 and End date 31 December 2026

Project description

Europe is a global leader in the construction of complex vessels, such as large cruise ships, offshore support vessels, ferries and mega-yachts.

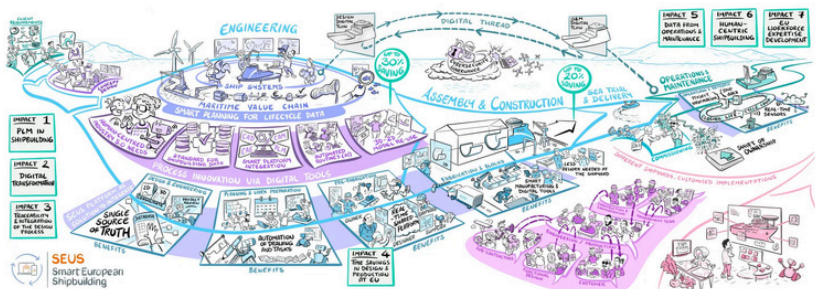
Shipbuilding is a key industry in a number of EU Member States, strongly connected with the excellence of the European waterborne transport infrastructure. In this context, the EU-funded SEUS project will create a framework for European shipyards by developing an integrated platform that combines the most modern shipbuilding life-cycle management with computer-aided design, manufacturing, engineering and product data software.

SEUS will develop novel practices for human-centric knowledge management, data-driven AI design elements, intelligent technology and an Industry 5.0 concept for shipbuilding.

The overall goal is to improve efficiency in all production stages – from engineering to assembly and construction – at European shipyards.

Website

[Cordis Europa: SEUS](#)



PROJECT: TECH.LAND

German-Dutch Cross-Border Innovation Programme

Lead institution (+ UASNL partner)

Saxion University of Applied Sciences (in cooperation with Oost NL and IHK Nord Westfalen)

Granting agency

Blended Dutch-German funding model combining partner contributions, regional development resources, in-kind contributions from knowledge institutions, EU/cross-border project funding, and event-related sponsorship.

Duration

Check website:
Open for participation;
Open for financial participation;
Running projects.

Project description

TECH.LAND is a Dutch-German cross-border ecosystem initiative connecting businesses, higher education institutions, regional authorities, and development actors through structured triple-helix collaboration in the East Netherlands-North Westphalia border region.



The ecosystem brings together 23 partners, including regional development actors, public authorities, industry/chambers and four core HEIs: Saxion University of Applied Sciences, University of Twente, Münster University of Applied Sciences and University of Münster.

Its mission is to strengthen regional competitiveness and address societal challenges by bringing Dutch and German actors together around technology, innovation, talent, and investment.

TECH.LAND has consolidated this partner base into thematic clusters, project pipelines and joint visibility activities in Energy, Circular Economy, Health & MedTech, and Advanced Manufacturing & Robotics, with similar structures now emerging in defence and chip technology.

Website

[TECH.LAND](#)

PROJECT: LEAP^{XR}

Linking Education and Applied Practice for Entrepreneurship and Innovation in eXtended Reality

Lead institution (+ UASNL partner)

Saxion University of Applied Sciences

Knowledge Centre involved from UASNL partner

XR Lab, Entrepreneurship & Innovation, Health and Technology research groups

Granting agency

Supported by EIT Higher Education Initiative (EIT-HEI) and funded by the European Union

Duration

April 2025 – May 2027

Project description

Transforming healthcare through extended reality and entrepreneurship

Europe faces major healthcare challenges, including ageing populations, chronic diseases, and unequal access to care. LEAP^{XR} addresses these challenges by combining applied research, entrepreneurial education, and cutting-edge Extended Reality (XR) technologies to develop scalable healthcare solutions with real societal impact.

The project brings together six European Universities of Applied Sciences, industry partners, researchers, and healthcare professionals. To accelerate the adoption of XR technologies, including Virtual and Augmented Reality, in healthcare education, research, and innovation.



Building Europe's XR health innovation ecosystem

The project is establishing:

- 🌐 XR solutions for healthcare training and clinical practice
- 🚀 Entrepreneurship programmes supporting future health-tech innovators
- 🌍 A European XR Innovation Hub connecting universities, businesses, and regional ecosystems
- 👨🎓 Training opportunities for students, researchers, and professionals
- 🤝 Cross-border collaboration between academia, healthcare providers, and industry partners
- 👩🏫 Inclusive innovation through dedicated support for female entrepreneurship

What LEAP^{XR} will deliver

By 2027, LEAP^{XR} aims to support 25 startups, launch at least two new XR-health ventures, train around 1,000 students and 330 staff members, and establish 12 strategic partnerships across Europe. By connecting applied research, entrepreneurial learning, and healthcare innovation, LEAP^{XR} is helping to position Europe as a leader in XR-enabled health technologies.

Website

[LEAPXR](https://leapxr.eu)

PROJECT: SOILCRATES

Co-Regenerating And Transforming European Soils

**Lead institution
(+ UASNL partner)**

Provincie Fryslân and Hogeschool Van Hall Larenstein

**Knowledge Center
involved from
UASNL partner**

Lectoraat Sustainable Soil Management

Granting agency

Horizon Europe –MISSION SOIL

Duration

Start: Oct 2024 - End: Oct 2028

Project description

Today, an estimated 60-70% of soils in the EU are (severely) degraded due to unsustainable land use practices and pollution. The SOILCRATES consortium includes 21 partners from across the quadruple helix that fully acknowledge the importance of healthy soils and wish to work together on the tasks defined by the EU Mission 'A Soil Deal for Europe'.

The ambition of SOILCRATES is to create four sustainable and dynamic Living Labs (LLs), to monitor soil health and biodiversity beyond the state-of-the-art, to enhance soil structure and health, and to increase soil literacy in society. During the project lifetime, four LLs based in the Netherlands,

France, Ireland, and Spain, will be improving and monitoring the soil structure, soil life, and crop-growing conditions of mineral soils. In these LLs, stakeholders will work with the experimental sites (ESs) land managers to foster innovations and practices suited for the local context. Through co-creation and co-learning, the LLs will increase their knowledge of soils and the underlying soil processes. Special attention would be given to exploring crop diversity and vegetative cover, the application of organic soil amendments and irrigation techniques, and combining these practices at the farm level.

By using various educational tools, SOILCRATES will make this knowledge available to the wider public and use it further to inform science, practices, and policy briefs to reduce pressures on soils. By the end of the project, four regional LLs would be fully sustainable and operational.

Website

[Cordis Europa Soil Crates](#)

PROJECT: ATTITUDE

A transformation through improved practice:
targeting urgent sustainable development needs
by enabling restorative aquaculture

**Lead institution
(+ UASNL partner)**

TRISE Research Institutes of Sweden, Göteborg,
Sweden
Van Hall Larenstein University of Applied Sciences
Research group Coastal & Marine Systems

**Research Group
involved from
UASNL partner
Granting agency**

Biodiversa+ – NWO

Duration

April 2026 – April 2029

Project description

Shellfish as a driver of nature restoration in European coastal waters
European research into sustainable cultivation that strengthens both nature and food production

April marks the launch of the international research project ATTITUDE. Led by the Swedish RISE Environmental Research Institute, partners from five European countries are joining forces to answer a key question: how can shellfish such as mussels and oysters help restore nature while also producing food sustainably? Van Hall Larenstein University of Applied Sciences plays an important role in this effort.

Shellfish are proving to be surprisingly powerful. They purify water, provide habitat for other species and contribute to climate and biodiversity goals – all with relatively low environmental impact. Yet this potential remains underused in Europe. Regulation, economic pressures and fragmented policy still hinder scaling up.



ATTITUDE aims to accelerate the transition to restorative aquaculture: cultivation methods in which nature restoration and food production reinforce rather than compete with each other.

By studying practical examples in the Skagerrak, the Adriatic Sea, Galicia and the Wadden Sea, researchers will identify what works and what does not. The aim is to develop concrete solutions that enable shellfish farming to grow into a profitable and nature-positive sector.

The project focuses on practical outcomes, including:

- new insights into how shellfish farming can enhance biodiversity
- viable business models for producers
- better alignment between policy and practice
- recommendations for national and European strategies

A key strength of ATTITUDE is the close collaboration between scientists, entrepreneurs, governments and civil society organisations. By combining knowledge with hands-on experience, the project supports a new blue economy in which coastal food production goes hand in hand with a resilient natural environment.

Website

[Attitude](#)

PROJECT: UNLOCK15

Empowering people for transitions to UNLOCK the 15-minute City

**Lead institution
(+ UASNL partner)**

Windesheim University of Applied Sciences

**Research Group
involved from
UASNL partner**

Urban Innovation

Granting agency

Horizon Europe, European Partnership (Driving Urban Transitions)

Duration

January 2025 End: December 2027

Project description

The UNLOCK15 project aims to empower citizens and local authorities to unlock barriers that hinder the transition to 15-minute Cities, through stakeholder participation and institutional learning.

UNLOCK15 will use five learning living labs (LLL) in European cities. The project will conduct a literature review to identify pathways to unlock automobile path dependencies. It will further apply knowledge to each LLL by understanding barriers and developing tools to raise awareness. The outcome will include learnings from the LLLs, plans and policy recommendations will be communicated in webinars and videos. UNLOCK15 will serve as a framework for empowering citizens and incorporating their needs into the development of 15-minute cities.

**Understand Transition Pathways**

Investigate transition pathways to the 15-Minute City and the public discourses surrounding these transitions to better comprehend the socio-technical dynamics involved.

Empower Citizens

Compile, develop, and test various tools designed to empower citizens in the transition process towards the 15-Minute City, enhancing their engagement and participation

Co-create Narratives

Develop and apply methods for co-creating common local narratives and envisioning possible futures with community stakeholders, ensuring inclusive and participatory planning processes.

Foster Institutional Learning

Promote institutional learning and citizen empowerment through the implementation and evaluation of Learning Living Labs, facilitating reflection, action, and knowledge exchange between partner cities.

Website

[Driving Urban Transitions: Unlock15](#)

[Unlock15](#)

UASNL EUI Community of Practice

European University Alliances

UASNL brings together Dutch Universities of Applied Sciences that participate in European University Alliances under the European Universities Initiative (EUI).

Through a dedicated Community of Practice, partners in alliances such as E3UDRES2, HEROES, KreatieveU, RUN-EU, STARS EU, PIONEER, UniNovis, UREKA SHIFT, EU.ACE, DIVERSE and UP University share experiences, good practices and challenges on joint education, mobility and practice-oriented research.

The Community of Practice helps institutions to learn from each other, to coordinate their strategies and to speak with a joint voice towards national and European policymakers.

In this way, UASNL supports strong, future-proof alliances and a visible role for Universities of Applied Sciences in the European Higher Education Area.

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UASNL EUI Community of Practice

European University Alliances

Alliance	Universities of Applied Science partner	Status
<u>E3UDRES2 alliance</u>	Saxion University of Applied Sciences	EUI financed by Erasmus+
<u>Higher Education for Resilience-Oriented and Empowered Societies (HEROES)</u>	Fontys University of Applied Sciences	EUI financed by Erasmus+
<u>Knowledge and Creativity European University (KreativEU)</u>	Breda University of Applied Sciences	EUI financed by Erasmus+
<u>RUN-EU alliance</u>	NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences	EUI financed by Erasmus+
<u>STARS EU alliance</u>	Hanze University of Applied Sciences	EUI financed by Erasmus+
<u>The European University for Future Cities (PIONEER)</u>	Avans University of Applied Sciences	EUI financed by Erasmus+
<u>UniNovis</u>	The Hague University of Applied Sciences	EUI financed by Erasmus+
<u>UREKA SHIFT alliance</u>	Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences	EUI financed by Erasmus+
<u>EU.ACE</u>	University of Applied Sciences Utrecht	Long-term partnership
<u>DIVERSE</u>	Windesheim University of Applied Sciences	Seal of Excellence (EUI without E+ financing)
<u>UP University</u>	HAN University of Applied Sciences	Seal of Excellence (EUI without E+ financing)

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VOICE IN EUROPE**

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