

Strategic Plan

2026-2028



POLITECNICO
MILANO 1863

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STRATEGIC PLAN 2026-2028

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We imagine and design a **better world**: converging people and ideas, cultivating passion and critical thinking, valuing talent and diversity. We are committed to **sustainable and inclusive growth**: open to global discussion, empowered by our European identity deeply rooted in a humanistic background, determined to make a difference. For over 160 years, **we have combined scientific rigour with creativity, and practical approaches with long-term vision** to shape innovation with those who, with us, design the future.

Preface

The publication of this edition of the Strategic Plan comes at a critical moment charged with tension on the international scene. The geopolitical situation challenges the solidity of democracies, the European identity and the values of peace, which we consider crucial for the free circulation of both people and ideas. These are the founding principles of a multicultural community that is nurtured by mutual exchange. They are the bedrock of a **free world** to be safeguarded for the new generations of boys and girls, who remain the priority of the academic institution and the true custodians of the future.

Terms such as “impact”, “accountability” and “science diplomacy” are recurrent in these pages. Words with profound meaning, when used intentionally. They express what we believe in, and define the theme of our actions for the next three years. From the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to the war in Ukraine, from restrictions in American universities to tariffs altering the global trade balance, we are experiencing a historical moment marked by strong **polarisation**. There is a risk of this dichotomy increasing distance and hardening opinions, hindering dialogue and risking the distortion of knowledge, particularly technical expertise, towards discriminatory purposes.

At the Politecnico di Milano, we believe that technology should be a tool at the service of the common good. Hence, we feel the need to convey a clear message consistent with the achievements of the previous three-year period to consolidate a vision of sustainability as an essential trait of our activities. Once again we want to emphasise the central role of **people** in our strategy, from an education of excellence to support for the most vulnerable (hospitality, right to education, psychological and physical well-being); from

enhancement of academic careers to entrepreneurship; from staff training on new organisational challenges, to campuses as communities. Last but not least, we renew our commitment and social responsibility on the ground, especially in contexts of need.

We are convinced that **collaboration** is at the heart of our success; hence, this Plan specifically focuses on the relationship with businesses and the third sector, from the smallest companies to global organisations, to dialogue with institutions, and to the involvement of our Alumni community. As we look to the future, we feel it is our duty to embrace the challenges ahead, aware that change is achieved through the contribution of each and every one of us. Only with dedication and by adopting a team spirit can we build innovative paths capable of generating shared value. Together, as a united community, we shall be able to turn uncertainty into opportunity. We shall go on being a driving force of progress, the custodians of knowledge that enlightens tomorrow and supports the growth of a fairer and more inclusive society that is open to the world.

Donatella Sciuto

 The Rector



Introduction

With the Strategic Plan 2026-2028, the Politecnico di Milano once again states its role as a leading public university in the Italian and European scene, aware of its responsibility in an era marked by profound demographic, technological, ecological and geopolitical transitions. In this complex and ever-changing scenario, the University chooses to be a **generative platform of shared value**, capable of responsibly communicating the vision of a fair, sustainable and inclusive future.

The new Strategic Plan is **aligned** with the founding premises and principles outlined in the 2023-2025 edition. It confirms their validity and reinforces their direction. Being aware that a complex project requires time, dedication and perseverance to yield tangible results is the basis of this path. In the consistent consolidation of strategic choices we recognise the University's ability to build a solid and inclusive future, upholding the objectives of growth and innovation pursued in recent years.

In line with this approach, the Plan stems from a **participatory process** involving the entire academic community – students, researchers, professors, technical and administrative staff and Alumni – together with an extensive network of institutional, economic and social stakeholders. Hence, we have **consolidated the results** achieved in the three-year period, and mapped out development pathways aimed at strengthening the University's quality and **international standing**.

Sustainable development remains the guiding principle for all activities – research, teaching, governance and infrastructure – with climate neutrality, circular economy and urban regeneration policies. The Politecnico thus strengthens its role as a global, visionary institution.



Vision

The Politecnico di Milano is a technological university at the service of the common good, inspired by the six basic values of the **European Union** – human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, rule of law, and respect for human rights – capable of generating shared value and leading the major transitions of its time – digital, environmental, social and demographic – with vision, fairness and sustainability. The Politecnico stands out as a dynamic and inclusive academic ecosystem, where skills, talents, and diversity contribute to a fairer, more open and interconnected future.

In this context, the vision guiding our future is centred on **beauty** and **creativity**, understood not only as an expression of aesthetic quality and originality, but as drivers of ecosystem stewardship and of a harmonious relationship between places and people, between economic growth and responsible use of resources, between tradition and innovation. The **campuses** thus become vital spaces of experience, inventiveness and sharing, environments that foster encounters, planning and collective growth, landmarks for the city and the territory, nodes of networks that connect the University to major world situations we are called to face.



Mission

The Politecnico di Milano is a place where knowledge drives innovation and social development, a laboratory of ideas, solutions and visions for tackling the great challenges of our time. At the heart of the university's mission is the commitment to education and growth of **new generations**, the protagonists of future transformations. The key to our educational approach lies in the harmonious integration of technical-scientific skills and humanistic sensitivity, of logical rigour and attention to human values with the aim of developing **critical thinking** and civic awareness.

Research is a cornerstone of our academic identity, based on intellectual independence as the assurance of freedom in the production and dissemination of knowledge. In line with the **guiding principles of the next FP10 Framework Programme**, it addresses the challenges posed by emerging technologies with ethical responsibility, aware of their transformative potential and the risks involved. The Politecnico di Milano also stands out for its unwavering commitment to enhance **applied research**, directing its action towards the concrete transformation of knowledge into technology transfer.

The University also acknowledges **science diplomacy** as an essential strategic lever for its identity and mission. It is actively engaged in weaving strong networks with institutional and scientific partners, supporting and consolidating alliances within a global context characterised by rapid change and growing interdependence.



Internationalisation and sustainable growth

Our vision is defined by two trends, and our mission takes shape along them. **Internationalisation** is recognised by the Politecnico di Milano as a strategic lever and a defining dimension of its academic identity. It is not limited to the mobility of students and researchers, but permeates every area, from teaching to research, from governance to institutional cooperation.

Sustainable growth is a transversal principle of the Politecnico di Milano's actions, inspiring infrastructural, educational, scientific and cultural strategies. With this in mind, the University will draw up and implement a new integrated Sustainability Plan, which will include not only environmental and energy-related goals, but also social and cultural sustainability actions, consistently with the University's public mission. Climate neutrality, energy efficiency and circular-economy policies will be integrated with data-driven approaches and the quality of space by redefining **campuses** as smart, accessible and regenerative environments.

Research will propose ethical and sustainable solutions, oriented towards social responsibility and environmental protection, capable of responding to major global transitions. In the education sector, sustainability will be a transversal competence, developed through **innovative tools** such as the Zero Library and thematic MOOCs¹. Through territorial projects and partnerships with institutions, businesses and communities, the Politecnico will consolidate its role as a catalyst for change, promoting a widespread culture of collective well-being and urban regeneration.

›1 Massive Open Online Courses.

Ranking

The Politecnico di Milano, one of Italy's leading academic institutions, operates in a national context that still faces significant systemic challenges, such as the need to increase the number of **STEM** (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) **graduates**; the need to increase the **presence of women** in the technical-scientific field; and the obligation to strengthen the quality and dissemination of **higher education**.

The national university system suffers from a chronic lack of **attractiveness**, a level of **public funding** that is permanently below the OECD average², and **resource allocation** that rarely rewards the most efficient and effective institutions.

Against this backdrop, in the educational scene, the Politecnico has provided ample evidence of its ability to promote joint and transdisciplinary initiatives. Numerous projects have been implemented in partnership with both Italian and international universities, with the aim of tackling the complex challenges of the contemporary world, and of training professionals capable of facing ever-changing contexts.

The Politecnico has skilfully channelled its research capacity towards **competitive forms of funding**, particularly at European and international level, as well as **strategic partnerships with companies** and public institutions. The University actively contributes to the development of a dynamic and highly innovative ecosystem to support Italy's competitive presence in the international scene.

Finally, **social responsibility** is an intrinsic part of its mission. The Politecnico promotes cooperation, inclusion and educational development, confirming its role as a driving force of growth for territories and communities.

² OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development).

PEOPLE

1,336 professors - of whom
387 are women and **51** are from abroad

523 researchers - of whom
179 are women and **53** are from abroad

969 research grants - of whom
386 are women and **231** are from abroad

880 fixed contract professors - of whom
290 are women and **145** are from abroad

2,129 PhD candidates - of whom
742 are women and **580** are from
abroad (cycles 38-40)

1,449 technical and administrative staff
of whom **892** are women

225,000 members of the Alumni
community

500,000 m² for students, researchers,
companies and citizens

RESEARCH

More than **35,000** academic
publications (2018-2025)

20 PhD programmes

More than **250** research laboratories,
35 interdepartmental laboratories

50 Joint Research Platforms

Euro 189 million from Horizon 2020,
34 ERC

Euro 175 million from Horizon Europe,
39 ERC

Euro 218 million from self-financing
(2024)

EDUCATION

49,400 students - of whom
8,800 are from abroad (A.Y. 24/25)

26 Laurea (equivalent to Bachelor
of Science) programmes - of which
1 is with another university

45 Laurea Magistrale (equivalent to
Master of Science) Programmes of
which **4** are with other universities

178 Specialising Master's Degree
and Postgraduate Programmes

166 MOOCs (Massive Open Online
Courses)

97% employment rate **1** year after
graduation (2024 survey)

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

4 Off Campus activated with over
150 Initiatives promoted in the area
(2019-2025)

More than **60** projects funded
by the Polisocial Award with over **euro**
5 million raised from 5x1000 income
tax contributions (2012-2024)

More than **100** cooperation and
development projects in **30** countries
(2012-2024)

376,000 visitors for events,
exhibitions and cultural programmes
(2023-2024)

430 start-ups in PoliHub - investments
for **Euro 200** million (2023-2024)

SWOT analysis

The SWOT³ analysis, carried out with reference to the international context, confirms a **solid and competitive position**, strengthened by international recognition, as evidenced by the main world rankings. The QS World University Rankings place the University among the top one hundred in the world (a position we plan on maintaining), allowing Italy to join the ranks of academic excellence. This achievement reflects the quality of teaching and research, the efficiency of facilities, and the socio-economic impact, supported by high graduate employment rates, innovation and a sense of community.

Several **internal challenges** have been identified, including discontinuous public funding, a limited capacity for fundraising, a poor ability to bring research to market, scarce internationalisation of the teaching staff, and the low presence of women.

All this considered, we are committed to **keep improving** with increasing investments in digitisation, in the development of artificial intelligence and the culture of entrepreneurship, in expanding partnerships and joint programmes with companies, including small and medium-sized ones. Moreover, the Alumni network, more and more involved in the University's initiatives, can provide added value. The growth and redevelopment of campuses – such as Bovisa and our local campuses – along with focus on technology and bioconvergence, are strategic levers to propel the Politecnico towards new goals.

Further more, an ageing population, intensifying global competition, rising living costs and administrative burdens represent significant external pressures. Only collaboration between universities, institutions and companies can strengthen the role of the Politecnico as a driver of growth and innovation.

» 3 Strengths,
Weaknesses,
Opportunities,
Threats.



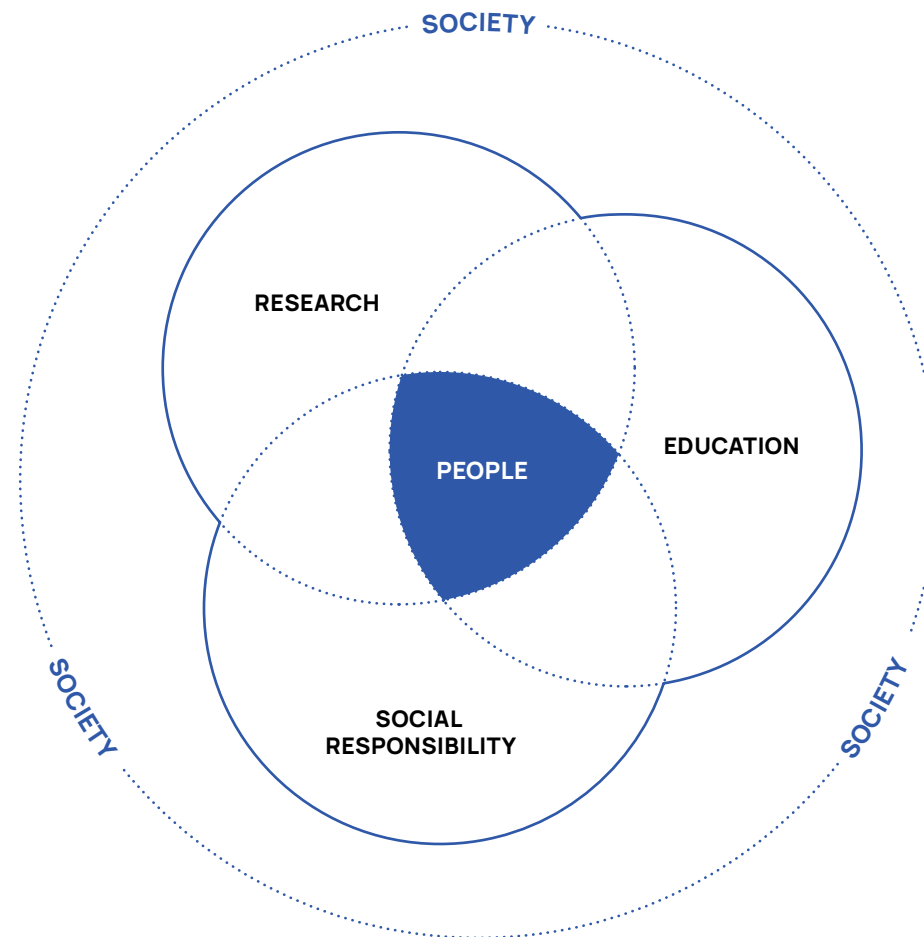


Strategic guidelines

Four pillars support the vision of a great university. **Research**, **education** and **social responsibility** mutually intersect and find a central point of convergence in **people** as the true heart and driving force of the university. This is how we want to describe our project for the future.

Research fuels the production of knowledge. It is essential for progress and to contribute to the development of society. Education shares knowledge, skills and values to new generations, enabling them to build a better world. Social responsibility links university to its civil and cultural context. These three pillars interact **dynamically**, informing and reinforcing one another. Their continuous movement generates the energy, which sustains the University's growth and its ability to respond to contemporary challenges.

People are the core around which these three main areas revolve. They give substance and meaning to the University's mission, values and aspirations, embodying the spirit of **dialogue**, **discussion** and **growth**, which has always defined places of knowledge. This image was inspired by the ideal circles depicted by Raphael in "The School of Athens", and used in the logo of the Politecnico. Just as philosophers gathered in a circle to share and build wisdom and knowledge, our University is also founded on a **community** of masters and students, united by the search for truth and the desire to evolve in a common and inclusive way.



Staff

The Politecnico di Milano plans on establishing itself as the driving force of cultural, scientific and social transformation through **the coordinated action of its community**. People, knowledge and relationships continue to be the strategic factors around which an inclusive university is built. By enhancing human capital, through internationalisation and the evolution of its spaces, the university will strengthen its role in higher education and innovation systems, actively contributing to sustainable development and social cohesion.

Making the most of human capital – students, researchers, professors, technical and administrative staff, Alumni – remains a central element, pursued through **integrated professional development policies**, working environments that guarantee psychological and physical well-being and innovative training programmes. A cohesive community, inspired by the principles of equity, sustainability and lifelong learning, is the key to building an institution capable of facing current and future challenges.

In parallel, the University's **internationalisation** process will be increasingly consolidated as a cross-cutting driver of growth, with targeted mobility actions, talent attraction and exchange of best practices capable of strengthening the global ranking of the University. The Politecnico will thus nurture a multicultural ecosystem capable of influencing the major agendas of research, innovation and higher education.

Finally, the campuses will continue their development as **platforms open to the city and the territory**. The design of sustainable spaces and the strategic use of data will be crucial in generating public value, promoting shared innovation, and fostering new forms of entrepreneurship.





People: Strategic Priorities

Enhancing human capital

Young Researchers: strengthening talent to build the future

Faculty: integrated career development in research, teaching and business

PTA: systemic development and organisational innovation

Alumni: a united community

Organisational culture: community well-being and sustainability

Internationalisation

PhD candidates, researchers and professors: protagonists of mobility and international debate

International Faculty: attracting and integrating global excellence

PTA: internationalisation through the exchange of practices

Campus and territory

Project Goccia: an integrated innovation hub

People: KPI

Enhancing human capital

600 researchers trained through targeted initiatives

900 professors and technical and administrative staff trained on AI

80% of users satisfied with welfare and well-being actions

Internationalisation

15% of researchers with experience abroad

20% of PhD Candidates with experience abroad

Campus and territory

+50,000 m² pedestrianised, green and drained

+750 new beds in residences

+95,000 m² on the Bovisa Campus

Education

The Politecnico di Milano adopts an **educational model** designed to address the complexity of contemporary society. The University encourages an interdisciplinary and customised education that integrates technical skills with critical, ethical and interpersonal expertise. The development of global professionals and responsible citizens, trained to face energy, digital and social transitions, is at the heart of this approach.

Teaching will systematically include the use of **artificial intelligence**, new laboratory methodologies and interdisciplinary projects, combining science, technology, arts and design, to make learning experience even more flexible and accessible.

In order to cope with the demographic shrink estimated for the coming years, the University will strive to ensure the continuity and stability of its student population by promoting policies aimed at both expanding **entry opportunities** and attracting talent.

Internationalisation will, therefore, be strengthened under several aspects, including mobility, the creation of joint degrees, and the development of *Laurea Triennale* (equivalent to Bachelor of Science) in English. Ongoing and digital education will evolve into a **flexible**, scalable and recognised system thanks to accredited platforms such as Polimi Open Knowledge (POK), Edvance and Joint Education Platform.

Finally, transnational education will be a new paradigm of **academic cooperation** by promoting co-designed pathways and capacity building in partner countries. The Politecnico will engage in creating resilient, inclusive and sustainable universities, actively contributing to an equitable transformation of higher education systems globally.





Education: Strategic Priorities

Custom-designed and inclusive education

Transversal and interdisciplinary competences: high level training paths

Artificial intelligence in teaching: redesigning the educational model

Libreria Zero: sustainability as a common heritage and educational lever

Right to education: promoting equity and talent development

Ongoing and digital education: access, quality and innovation

Internationalisation

Attracting national and international talent: a deep-rooted global strategy

International Degrees (equivalent to Bachelor of Science): territorial identities, global vision

Mobility and international exchanges: quality, selectivity and innovation

ENHANCE: building the European higher education area

Education: KPI

Custom-designed and inclusive education

More than **8,500** enrolled in *Laurea Triennale* (equivalent to Bachelor of Science) programmes

First-year dropout rate below **10%**

2,000 students enrolled in transversal courses of excellence

30% gender-balanced study programmes

5,000 students involved in initiatives promoting entrepreneurship

30,000 users of the Libreria Zero (MOOC on sustainability)

More than **95%** of Master of Science graduates employed one year after graduation

Internationalisation

20% of foreign students enrolled in the new *Laurea Triennale* (equivalent to Bachelor of Science) programmes provided in English in Milan

40% of foreign students enrolled in the new *Laurea Triennale* (equivalent to Bachelor of Science) programmes provided in English in other campuses

2,500 students studying abroad

1,600 ECTS credits delivered by international professors

Research

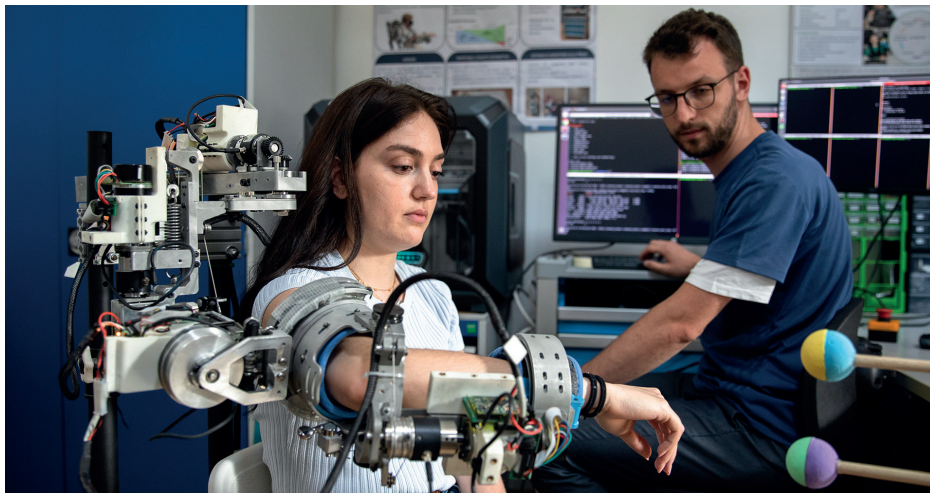
The Politecnico di Milano plans on consolidating its role in the European research system as a **strategic hub** of responsible innovation and sustainable development. Research, conducted within Departments, is understood as a transformative endeavour, capable of affecting major global transitions – digital, energy, social – through an interdisciplinary, ethical and impact-oriented approach.

The University will continue to invest in **scientific infrastructure**, enhancing advanced laboratories and shared environments accessible to the national and European community. In parallel, the monitoring of European policies will be fostered with a **permanent presence in Brussels** to strategically steer planning for the next FP10 Framework Programme.

Joint Research Platforms (JRP) will continue to be permanent spaces for co-design, mentoring and cross-fertilisation between disciplines and sectors, promoting the renewal of research directions and access to competitive funding. The PhD programme will be strengthened to train researcher-entrepreneurs with pathways **dedicated to** deeptech and socialtech **innovation** and the creation of start-ups.

Through the Technology Transfer Office, the Fondazione Politecnico di Milano (Politecnico di Milano Foundation) and TEF (Tech Europe Foundation), the University will build an integrated system for technology transfer and academic entrepreneurship. The **Innovation District** will act as a catalyst for this strategy, linking science, business and territories. Sustainability, Open Science and social responsibility will guide every step of the research process, turning it into a driver of collective impact and shared progress.





Research: Strategic Priorities

Strategic and sustainable research

Research infrastructures: environments of excellence

European research: project excellence and strategic oversight

Sustainable research development: ethics, openness and responsibility

Research, innovation and enterprise

Joint Research Platforms (JRP): research and innovation

PhD programmes and highly qualified training in technology-intensive sectors

Research: KPI

Strategic and sustainable research

120 funded projects assigned to young researchers

+25 ERCs on Horizon Europe calls

Euros +100 million from Horizon Europe

8,300 publications co-authored with international partners

450 externally funded PhD scholarships

+6,500 m² for research facilities

Research, innovation and enterprise

350 new start-ups

+15% patents and spin-offs

More than Euro 200 million of self-financing

Social responsibility

The Politecnico di Milano will continue consolidating its **public mission** as a cultural, urban and global infrastructure society, actively contributing to social cohesion, the sustainable transformation of territories and the equitable development of knowledge on a national and international scale. Hence, public engagement will be further intensified, and continuous dissemination programmes developed in cooperation with local authorities, cultural institutions and international partners.

Public engagement will also become an integral part of infrastructural development actions, educational programmes, international partnerships and technology transfer initiatives, ensuring a strategic connection between cultural impact, scientific growth and innovation. This vision will be articulated along three interconnected strategic lines, starting with the **design of campuses** as sustainable, accessible and intelligent spaces, capable of responding to the challenges of ecological transition, fair access opportunities, and everyday well-being.

The Politecnico will then consolidate its role as a cultural and civic player through an integrated system of public engagement initiatives, **urban alliances**, **collaborative platforms**, social and environmental impact assessment.

Finally, the University will extend its action beyond national borders, promoting transnational education based on equal partnerships, shared campuses and capacity-building programmes in the most disadvantaged but key contexts. **Science diplomacy** and academic inclusion will be implemented in coherence with the Mattei Plan, and with Italian and European agencies to make knowledge an accessible and generative asset, thus contributing to the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and strengthening the role of the Politecnico as an agent of cooperation, justice and sustainable development.





Social responsibility: Strategic Priorities

Accountability and territory

Sustainable campus model: data, energy and quality of space

Public engagement: an identity-based and open cultural offer

University and city: a platform for urban innovation and public value

Accountability and international cooperation

Transnational education: global, inclusive and sustainable universities

Science diplomacy: knowledge and education at the service of global development

Social responsibility: KPI

Accountability and territory

-50% CO₂ emissions per capita

-30% unsorted waste

5,000 students, young people and NEETs hired at Off Campuses

Accountability and international cooperation

500 third-sector organisations active on the A4NP (Action For Non Profit) platform

350,000 attendees at cultural and outreach events

130 researchers and professionals involved in capacity for science and innovation pathways

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