Assessing the Science Diplomacy Actorness of AUF Universities in EUTOPIA

Report

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June 2025

This document is the final report of the project « La diplomatie scientifique francophone comme catalyseur dans l'alliance européenne EUTOPIA » (EUTOPIA-Francophone) financed by the AUF, January 2024-August 2025.

University coordinator and member of AUF Western Europe : CY Cergy Paris Université, France

Partners members of AUF outside Western Europe : University Babes-Bolyai, Romania ; Université Internationale de Rabat, Marocco

With the support of :

- Romanian Embassy in Paris
- European Union Science Diplomacy Alliance

Summary

Introduction

Science diplomacy has developed as an important tool for facilitating international collaboration, addressing global challenges, and strengthening the role of scientific knowledge in diplomacy and policymaking. Universities, as hubs of research, innovation, and knowledge exchange, are increasingly recognized as key actors in this evolving landscape. The European Commission's *European Strategy for Universities* underscores this, stating that universities "play a vital role in generating the evidence that underpins Europe's foreign and security policies, international agreements, and multilateral action. As key players in science diplomacy, they help build bridges." [1]

However, while their potential as science diplomacy stakeholders is widely acknowledged, there remains a significant gap in understanding the specific tools, strategies, and institutional mechanisms they employ to engage in science diplomacy effectively.

This report seeks to bridge that gap by examining the *science diplomacy actorness* — the ability of an institution to engage in and shape science diplomacy through its structures, strategies, and networks — of some of the Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF) members and global partners within the EUTOPIA alliance: Babeș-Bolyai University (UBB) in Cluj-Napoca, CY Cergy Paris Université (CY), and Global Partner, the International University of Rabat (UIR) in Morocco. By taking stock of their science diplomacy domains, this study aims to provide actionable insights into how universities can strengthen their international and interdisciplinary engagements.

Through a structured methodological approach, this research assesses science diplomacy engagement across a set of domains conceived for this project. It aims to map the current landscape within the three universities mentioned while also validating a framework for evaluating and enhancing the role of universities in global science diplomacy.

Ultimately, this report serves as a strategic guide for universities seeking to integrate science diplomacy into their institutional strategies. While focused on these EUTOPIA's AUF members, the findings are relevant to the broader higher education sector, offering a roadmap for universities worldwide to leverage their strengths in science diplomacy and maximize their global impact.

In addition to the authors of this report, several persons contributed to the conception of this project and the field research, and we thank them all: Sica Acapo (CY), Meryem El Alaoui (UIR), Adina Fodor (UBB), Sergiu Miscoiu (UBB), Hélène Rufat (University Pompeu Fabra, Barcelone), Luk Van Langhenhove (VUB).

[1] European Commission. (2022). *Communication on a European strategy for universities*: Graphic version. Publications Office of the European Union. https://education.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2022-01/communication-european-strategy-for-universities-graphic-version.pdf

Science Diplomacy: A Brief Overview

Science diplomacy can be conceptualized as a platform uniting foreign policy practitioners with science and research communities. Broadly defined, science diplomacy also includes international students and individuals engaged in intellectual endeavours abroad. While the nexus of science and foreign policy extends back to antiquity, science diplomacy emerged as a distinct field of study only in the early 2000s, gaining prominence following the influential report *New Frontiers in Science Diplomacy* by the British Royal Society and the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). This report outlined three dimensions of science diplomacy:

- *Science in Diplomacy*: the integration of scientific expertise into the diplomatic process, involving scientific advisers and attaches in ministries of foreign affairs and embassies, and the essential science underpinning diplomatic agreements, such as climate treaties and nuclear weapon limitation and reduction frameworks.
- *Science for Diplomacy*: leveraging science as a form of soft power, where science is used for public diplomacy and scientists act as informal diplomats to foster mutual respect and understanding, thereby enhancing diplomatic relations.
- *Diplomacy for Science*: facilitating scientific collaboration through diplomacy, including the establishment of intergovernmental scientific organizations and inclusion of countries into international research frameworks.

Since this foundational report, science diplomacy has experienced significant growth. Numerous countries have developed science diplomacy strategies[2], and the scholarly literature on the subject has expanded drastically. The EU has funded key science diplomacy projects under Horizon 2020 — EL-CSID, S4D4C, and InsSciDE — which collectively formed the EU Science Diplomacy Alliance in 2021. This network unites science diplomacy stakeholders across Europe and beyond.

Also in 2021, the Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF) publishes its *Livre blanc de la francophonie scientifique*. Since the early 1990s, the AUF has distinguished itself as a forerunner in this field, asserting the need to plan the scientific francophony of the future. The White Paper is based on a global survey conducted in 10 regions and 41 countries. Seven types of targets were consulted through questionnaires, interviews and focus groups: political decision-makers, the highest authorities of member institutions, university representatives, civil society, students, AUF staff and members of AUF bodies. Among the results highlighted, apart from the place of multilingualism, university governance, the future of students and entrepreneurship, some are specifically linked to science diplomacy as it is currently understood. For example, the role of higher education establishments in contemporary issues such as global warming, public health and the strengthening of the figure of the expert in the public arena. This report underlines the role to be played by universities in science diplomacy, which "represents an opportunity to put scientific knowledge back at the heart of

[2] Ruffini, P.-B. (2022). Ministries of foreign affairs and the challenge of science diplomacy. In Ministries of Foreign Affairs in the World (pp. 228–250). Brill | Nijhoff. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004505889_011

international negotiations, and to put the places where knowledge is produced back at the heart of the development of public policies adapted to the challenges of the contemporary world". [3]

Initially conceptualized in the post-Cold War era primarily as a soft power strategy, science diplomacy was viewed as a win-win approach, enhancing a country's global stature while addressing transnational challenges like climate change and pandemics. However, the geopolitical landscape has evolved. With Russia's invasion of Ukraine, strains in the transatlantic relationship, and heightened US-China competition, amongst other brewing tensions and ongoing conflicts, science is increasingly being nationalized and used to build barriers rather than bridges. The amassing power of private companies complicates the picture further. This creates an uncomfortable paradox, as these geopolitical developments occur alongside persistent existential threats that require collective action, such as the climate crisis, pandemics, and disruptive technologies.

This led the Royal Society and the AAAS to update the above mentioned framework. In February 2025, they released a new report: *Science Diplomacy in an Era of Disruption*, which responds to a rapidly changing geopolitical landscape by proposing a streamlined science diplomacy framework. The report highlights how scientific collaboration is increasingly shaped by rising global tensions, the growing influence of non-state actors like tech corporations, and the need for enhanced research security. It introduced a two-dimensional approach — *science impacting diplomacy and diplomacy impacting science* — to better reflect contemporary challenges (see Figure 1).[4]

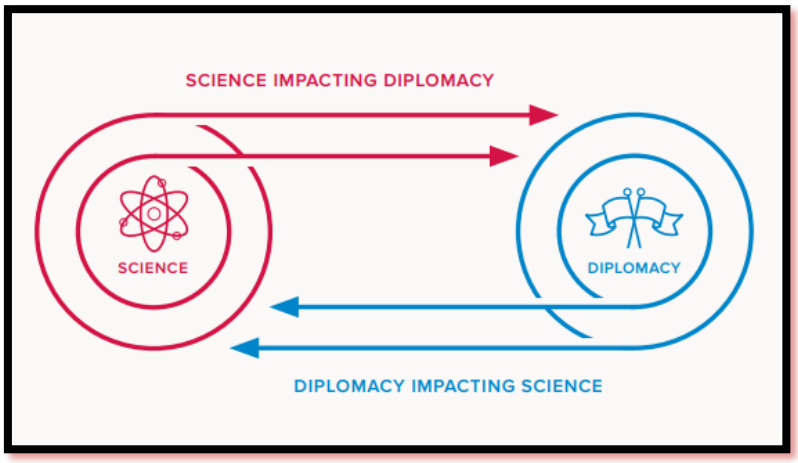

Figure 1: Science Diplomacy in an Era of Disruption (RS/AAAS, 2025, p. 12)

At the same time, the European Commission released its report, *A European Framework for Science Diplomacy*. This report, based on input from 130 experts, highlights how science diplomacy can help Europe navigate a fragmented, multipolar world while balancing cooperation and competition. It emphasizes the role of science diplomacy in tackling global challenges, whilst also strengthening European competitiveness and safeguarding research security. The report also introduced a fourth dimension (diplomacy in science) into its typology (see Figure 2), which will be discussed more in the

[3] AUF (2021). *Livre blanc de la francophonie scientifique. Consultation mondiale*. https://www.calameo.com/auf/read/0061183914d084f069e3a?page=1

[4] AAAS/Royal Society (2025). *Science Diplomacy in an Era of Disruption*. The Royal Society. https://www.aaas.org/sites/default/files/2025-02/Final_Science%20diplomacy_15%20years%20on_report_WEB.pdf

section below. The framework report also proposes strategic, operational, and enabling instruments that aim to enhance the EU's diplomatic influence through science, technology, and innovation.[5]

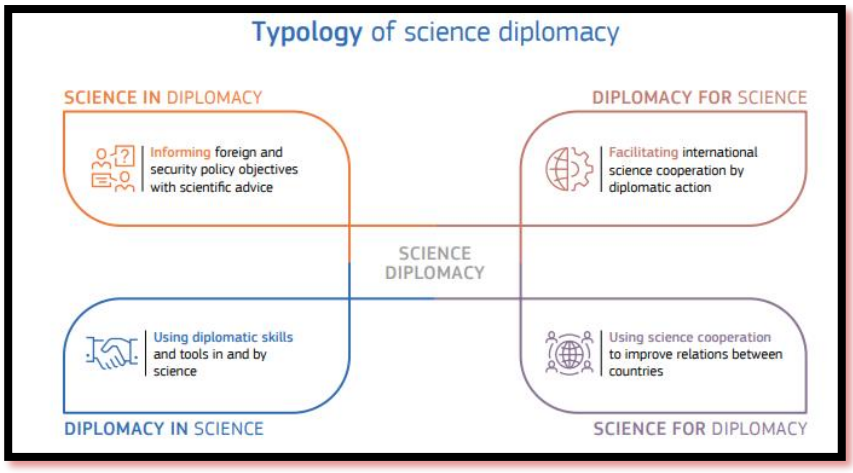

Figure 2: A European Framework for Science Diplomacy (European Commission, 2025, p. 17)

[5] European Commission (2025). *A European framework for science diplomacy : recommendations of the EU Science Diplomacy Working Groups*. https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2777/9235330

Science Diplomacy and Universities

In today's complex and uncertain world, where the EU, traditionally a conveyor of normative power, is increasingly engaged in hard power strategies such as economic sanctions and defence procurement, the role of universities in upholding the principles of collaborative science diplomacy becomes ever more critical.

Universities, as centers of knowledge and innovation, are well positioned to contribute to science diplomacy by using science to influence foreign policy, integrating scientific advice into diplomatic processes, and facilitating international scientific collaborations. This is especially pertinent as global challenges, such as climate change and health crises to name a few, require coordinated international responses grounded in scientific evidence. Moreover, universities act as facilitators of international exchange and can function as incubators for global understanding. Their unique connections to both local and global communities position them as key players in bridging the gap between immediate local needs and broader global strategies.

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In 2021, Luk Van Langenhove and Jean-Claude Burgelman from the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB) advocated for an updated approach to science diplomacy that better leverages the unique position and capabilities of universities. They proposed a "fourth dimension" of science diplomacy, termed *diplomacy in science*, focusing on advocating for the global commons of knowledge. This involves defending scientific integrity, reducing knowledge fragmentation by synthesizing research, and enhancing the impact of scientific knowledge on societal debates and policy decisions.[6] For universities to fulfil this role effectively, there is a need to prioritize and support these activities within their institutional frameworks and career development strategies. Additionally, they call for a decoupling of higher education from national innovation agendas to allow universities to operate as actors for the global commons, advocating for a more inclusive approach to open science that aligns with broader, globally shared goals. This paradigm shift would position universities at the forefront of using science as a tool for global cooperation and diplomacy.

The fourth dimension of science diplomacy was integrated into the EU Framework report mentioned in the previous section. Moreover, the report emphasizes the involvement of universities in developing expertise, providing training, and facilitating international collaboration. It notes that universities, alongside research organizations, play an important role in European science diplomacy by advancing knowledge, supporting policy development, and strengthening global networks.

[6] Van Langenhove, L. & Burgelman, J.C. (2021). *Viewpoint: Science diplomacy needs a refresh to meet contemporary European needs*. Science Business. https://sciencebusiness.net/viewpoint/viewpoint-science-diplomacy-needs-refresh-meet-contemporary-european-needs

Furthermore, the report suggests the creation of dedicated science diplomacy programs, such as PhD networks, to equip future professionals with the necessary skills. This would help mitigate the element of serendipity inherent in science diplomacy, where international relations practitioners gradually discover an appreciation for scientific aspects, or scientists learn the value of engaging with the diplomatic dimensions of their work. This often-accidental overlap between the two worlds highlights a significant gap in the systematic training of science diplomats. Universities, with their rich educational and research environments, are well-placed to address this gap. While some universities in the United States (e.g. Georgetown and Johns Hopkins), Europe (e.g. Sorbonne), and Asia (e.g. UCSI in Malaysia) have developed science diplomacy curricula, there are not enough pathways to prepare individuals for careers that blend science with diplomacy from the initial stages of their professional development. This is a critical oversight, considering the growing importance of science in shaping global policies on issues ranging from climate change to artificial intelligence regulation and public health. Universities can help mitigate this by developing specialized programs that raise awareness of science diplomacy among students of science and international relations whilst equipping them with the skills needed to navigate and influence both domains effectively.

From May to June 2024, the Higher Education Informal Diplomacy (HEIDI) Survey gathered insights from 52 alliances representing 201 universities. Conducted as part of the HEIDI MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowship project, the survey explored how universities within the European university alliances engage in *informal diplomacy*, defined as structured and unstructured exchanges of knowledge, ideas, and initiatives beyond formal diplomatic channels.[7] The questionnaire examined institutional strategies, autonomy, stakeholder influence, partnerships within and beyond the EU, the added value of alliances, and the integration measures to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It aimed to map key actors, activities, objectives, and challenges while identifying stakeholder roles and validating conceptualizations of higher education's diplomatic function. With 298 responses from 201 institutions across 33 countries, including 181 completed surveys, the data provides a foundation for further qualitative research on how alliances blend diplomatic agency with knowledge production.

In November 2024, the European University Institute in Florence hosted the KIND (Knowledge and Informal Diplomacy) Conference, which examined the evolving diplomatic roles of universities. The event underscored how universities contribute to *new diplomacies* — informal, science, and knowledge diplomacy — by facilitating collaboration, building trust, and promoting cultural exchange. European University Alliances were highlighted as important players in advancing the SDGs and strengthening European identity through education and innovation. Discussions drew on insights from the HEIDI survey and reflections from the European External Action Service on universities' roles in international cultural relations and public diplomacy. Panels showcased CIVICA as a prime example of informal diplomacy, emphasizing its resilience in crises such as Brexit, the COVID-19 pandemic, and its member Central European University's relocation from Hungary to Austria, as well as its role in addressing societal challenges through research and teaching. The conference also explored how alliances support global cooperation and resilience, with initiatives like the European Research Council's ERC for Ukraine initiative and the Alliance of Ukrainian Universities demonstrating higher education's role in crisis response. University alliances like ECIU and ForThem illustrated how institutions engage with cities and communities to address pressing issues like digital innovation and food security. The conference concluded that universities and the alliances they constitute are far more

[7] Cino Pagliarello, M. (2024). HEIDI - Higher Education Informal Diplomacy survey (2024). European University Institute. https://cadmus.eui.eu/handle/1814/77751

than just academic networks in that they also serve as bridges spanning divides, advancing dialogue, integration, and collective problem-solving.[8]

One point to keep in mind is that science diplomacy and universities can take various names and forms, such as informal diplomacy, knowledge diplomacy, public diplomacy, or cultural diplomacy. As Jane Knight points out, "There are a multitude of terms used to understand, conceptualize and label the role of international higher education, education and research (IHERI) in international relations (IR)." She points our that "A recent review of the diplomacy literature and higher education literature indicated that there are more than 13."[9] Regardless of the banner, at their core, they reflect the same fundamental function: using the university's capacity for research, teaching, and convening to bridge divides, build trust, and address transnational challenges. These overlapping diplomacies reinforce the university's evolving role as a non-state actor operating in the international arena.

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The term science can evoke different meanings across linguistic and cultural contexts. In the anglophone world, for example, it is often associated narrowly with the natural and applied sciences. However, in the context of this report, it is helpful to return to the Latin root *scientia*, meaning "knowledge." This broader interpretation allows for the inclusion of all forms of systematic knowledge production and transfer under the umbrella of science.

Meanwhile, diplomacy is predominantly thought of as a nation state's apparatus for foreign policy. However, in today's increasingly interconnected and multipolar world, diplomacy is no longer the sole preserve of states. Institutions such as universities, cities, regional governments, and even NGOs now pursue their own forms of diplomacy to advance their international agendas. For universities, this may take the form of promoting international research partnerships, attracting global talent, influencing global policy debates, or projecting institutional values on the world stage.

In his article, *4 States of Affairs in Science Diplomacy*, Jean-François Doulet reflects on how science diplomacy is shaped by shifting geopolitical dynamics, proposing four archetypal configurations that result from the tension between global openness and rising competition. He highlights an "ideal" form of science diplomacy rooted in multilateralism and shared scientific goals, but also points to more fragmented or exclusive forms, where collaboration is limited to like-minded partners or subordinated to national interests.[10] These reflections resonate strongly with work examining the role of universities as science diplomacy actors. Higher education institutions often operate across these configurations, sometimes promoting open, global collaboration, and at other times navigating political constraints that shape who they can partner with and how. As authors of this report, we aim to identify and analyse the parameters that enable universities to contribute to the ideal form of science diplomacy envisioned by Doulet.

[8] Civica (2024). Universities as Drivers of Informal Diplomacy: Reflections from the KIND Conference. https://www.civica.eu/news-events/news-blog/detail/universities-as-drivers-of-informal-diplomacy-reflections-from-the-kind-conference/

[9] Knight, J. (2022). Knowledge Diplomacy in International Relations and Higher Education. Springer. p. 2.

[10] Doulet, J.F. (2024). 4 States of Affairs in Science Diplomacy. Linkedin. https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/4-states-affairs-science-diplomacy-jean-francois-doulet-phd-epuoc/

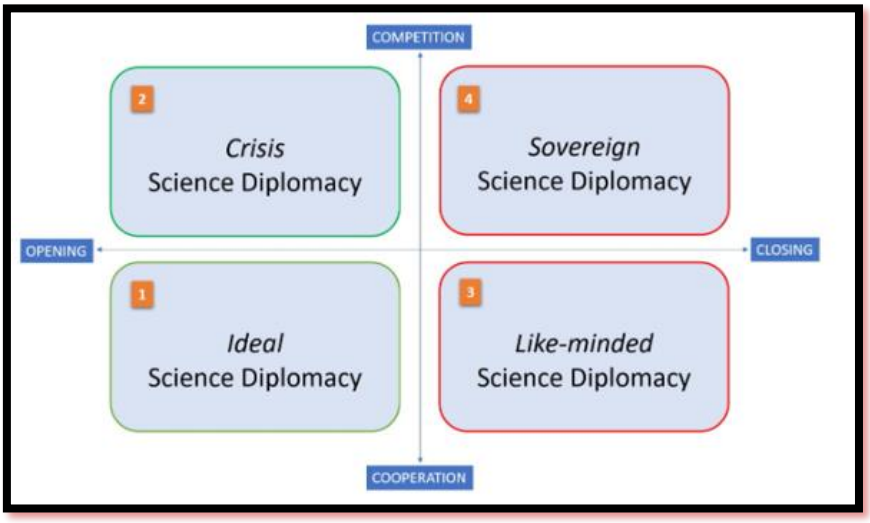

Figure 3: 4 States of Affairs in Science Diplomacy (Doulet, 2024)

As the global landscape continues to evolve, the strategic role of universities in advancing science diplomacy for the global good is growing ever larger. Universities have the potential to address complex international challenges through informed, collaborative responses. Identifying and fortifying the science diplomacy capabilities of universities stands to enhance the practical application of scientific research in diplomatic engagements and prepare future generations of professionals equipped to handle the nuances of global issues with a blend of scientific acumen and diplomatic tact.

Science Diplomacy Actorness

This report introduces the term *science diplomacy actorness.* It refers to the capacity of an entity — such as a university or network of universities — to actively participate in and shape science diplomacy through its institutional structure. It encompasses an institution's ability to mobilize scientific knowledge, expertise, and networks to influence international relations, foster cooperation, and contribute to global governance. Specifically, it refers to the aspects inherent in universities that can help them operate in the fourth dimension of science diplomacy.

The fourth dimension, referred to above as *diplomacy in science*, expands the traditional framework of science diplomacy by positioning scientists and scientific bodies, such as universities, as stewards of the global commons of knowledge. Rather than merely contributing scientific expertise to diplomatic efforts (science in diplomacy), using science as a soft power tool (science for diplomacy), or benefiting from diplomatic support to facilitate research partnerships (diplomacy for science), this dimension calls on universities to defend scientific integrity, promote open and inclusive knowledge ecosystems, and reduce the fragmentation of expertise across borders. It is inherently normative and strategic. They advocate for policies that prioritize the societal value of research, support evidence-based decision-making, and enable the free flow of ideas. In this context, science diplomacy actorness looks at what universities have that can help drive forward this vision.

Science diplomacy actorness can manifest in both implicit and explicit forms. This depends on the level of strategic engagement in diplomatic processes. Implicit actorness occurs when actors contribute to science diplomacy as a byproduct of their core activities, such as academic exchanges, collaborative research on global challenges, or transnational dialogue without explicitly framing these efforts as science diplomacy. In contrast, explicit actorness involves a deliberate and strategic approach, where institutions actively position themselves as diplomatic actors by establishing dedicated science diplomacy activities. Recognizing this distinction helps universities and networks assess their role in global affairs and enhance their contributions to international diplomacy.

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University Science Diplomacy Domains

As has been discussed in the sections above, universities have the capacity to be science diplomacy actors. However, their engagement in the field is hitherto understudied. To assess university science diplomacy actorness, various domains provide valuable insights into efforts and impact. For example, international collaborations highlight the commitment to global scientific cooperation, while diplomatic partnerships demonstrate active engagement with key diplomatic stakeholders. The presence of international students and researchers is indicative of cultural exchange and international collaborations. Engaged alumni contribute to the intersection of science and diplomacy, shaping international collaborations and policies. Research funding from international sources reflects the establishment of global networks. Science and foreign policy influence demonstrate the impact of scientific expertise on decision-making processes. Curricula, training programs, and public outreach initiatives contribute to multidisciplinary mindsets and raise awareness on important issues. By considering these domains, we aim to gain a better understanding of a university's science diplomacy actorness.

These domains are an original contribution to the project. They were developed from the current state-of-the-art in the field of science diplomacy and are meant to be widely used and applied in research of the place of science diplomacy at the university level.

It should be noted that this list of domains is not exhaustive. Further studies should develop additional indicators that capture the increasingly important area of research security, particularly in light of rising geopolitical tensions, data governance concerns, and the need to protect academic freedom. However, for the time being, the domains outlined in this report offer a robust starting point for evaluating university science diplomacy actorness. They provide a structured and replicable framework through which institutions can reflect on their global role, identify areas for strategic development, and ultimately strengthen their contributions to science diplomacy at both the national and international level.

International Collaborations

International collaborations, such as research projects, joint publications, and co-supervision of students, constitute the first domain in evaluating the engagement of universities with science diplomacy. These collaborations are tangible indicators of a university's contribution to scientific cooperation and knowledge exchange across borders. The partnering with researchers from other countries highlights universities' contribution to the global spread of knowledge and illustrates the international networks that can facilitate more comprehensive and diverse scientific inquiry. This openness to collaboration reflects the core principle of idealized science diplomacy: to leverage science as a universal language to address global challenges and contribute to warmer international relations.

Moreover, international collaborations often lead to enhanced research quality and increased innovation by combining diverse perspectives, expertise, and resources. These partnerships can also provide students and

researchers with unique opportunities to work in multi-cultural settings, thereby enhancing their skills and broadening their perspectives. In the broader context of science diplomacy, such activities can strengthen diplomatic ties between nations, as collaborative scientific projects can act as conduits for greater socio-political goodwill and understanding. Therefore, measuring the extent and depth of international collaborations offers a clear gauge of a university's science diplomacy actorness.

Diplomatic Partnerships

Diplomatic partnerships between a university and various diplomatic entities, including subnational, national, and supranational organizations like foreign ministries, embassies, missions, representations, foreign government agencies, and international organizations, represent another key domain in assessing a university's science diplomacy actorness. These partnerships shed light on a university's role in leveraging scientific expertise and international student body as tools within the broader context of international relations.

Through the establishment and maintenance of connections with diplomatic entities, universities create channels for inserting scientific insights into diplomatic discussions and move towards influencing policy-making processes. This domain also highlights how universities can act as conduits between the academic world and the diplomatic community and facilitate flows across cultural and political divides. Such collaborations are important for addressing complex global issues that require both scientific understanding and diplomatic negotiation. The presence of these partnerships is indicative of universities' capacities to contribute meaningfully to global dialogues, enhancing their stature and influence in the international arena while promoting the integration of science and education into diplomatic frameworks.

To take one example out of many, the University of Ottawa has actively engaged in science diplomacy by collaborating with embassies to advance international scientific cooperation. According to Patrick Dufour, a science diplomacy advisor at the university, embassies are pivotal in facilitating relations among scientists, governments, and other stakeholders, while educational institutions serve as flagbearers of the science diplomacy process. Through programs such as research chairs, universities can promote their scientific discoveries worldwide and enhancing their role in international relations.[11]

International Students and Researchers

The number of international students and researchers at a university serves as another significant domain in evaluating its science diplomacy actorness. This statistic reflects both the university's ability to attract global talent and its capacity to provide cultural exchange through education and research.

This domain is particularly valuable as it provides insight into the university's effectiveness in creating an inclusive and globally oriented academic atmosphere.

[11] University of Ottawa (2024). *The Rise of Science Diplomacy: Can Universities Provide the Blueprint for a National Strategy?* https://www.uottawa.ca/about-us/news-all/rise-science-diplomacy-can-universities-provide-blueprint-national-strategy

Universities that successfully draw international students and researchers are typically seen as hubs of international collaboration and cross-cultural understanding. These institutions stand at the forefront of global scientific discussions, contributing to and benefiting from the collective global intellect. Additionally, such diversity within the academic community helps to naturally foster international collaborations, as students and researchers bring with them networks and opportunities from their home countries. Thus, the presence of a high number of international participants is indicative of a university's appeal on a global stage as well as its active involvement in advancing science diplomacy by bridging cultural and intellectual gaps between countries.

For example, ETH Zurich hosts 25,380 students from approximately 120 countries, including 4,425 doctoral candidates. Notably, 35% of its student body is recruited from abroad, making it one of Europe's most international universities.[12] This global connection, in addition to its highly esteemed research, adds significant weight to its science diplomacy activities. The university co-established the Science in Diplomacy Lab (SiDLab) with the University of Geneva in 2021, which aims to integrate scientific insights into diplomatic efforts and international conflict resolution. Moreover, the university's involvement in the Geneva Science and Diplomacy Anticipator (GESDA) illustrates its commitment to bridging science and diplomacy on a global scale. ETH Zurich's diverse international student body provides an impetus to engage in these science diplomacy initiatives and provides a global audience to channel them far and wide.

Alumni

The involvement of university alumni in foreign affairs, science policy, or at the intersection of both fields is another important domain when assessing a university's role as a science diplomacy actor. Scientific diasporas play a pivotal role in science diplomacy by facilitating international collaboration and knowledge exchange. Alumni networks function similarly to diaspora networks, as they connect graduates worldwide and enable universities to extend their influence globally.

This domain sheds light on the university's success in utilizing graduates to act as bridges between scientific communities and policy-making spheres. Such alumni serve as ambassadors of their alma mater's values and educational standards, often playing significant roles in shaping international collaborations and policies. For instance, Mohammed Mostajo-Radji, an alumnus of Harvard University who studied molecular and cellular biology, was appointed as Bolivia's Ambassador for Science, Technology, and Innovation, where he led the country's scientific response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Alumni contributions can enhance their university's reputation as a leader in producing graduates who are equipped to address global challenges through informed decision-making. Additionally, these individuals often continue to engage with their universities, providing current students with valuable networking opportunities, mentorship, and real-world insights into the interplay between, inter alia, science and diplomacy. In short, alumni networks can operate as unofficial diplomatic corps of their universities.

[12] Times Higher Education (2025*). Most international universities in the world 2025*. https://www.timeshighereducation.com/student/best-universities/most-international-universities-world

Research Funding

Research funding obtained from international sources or provided to international partners is a key indicator of a university's role and effectiveness as an science diplomacy actor. This financial support reflects the institution's ability to secure and allocate resources essential for conducting collaborative research across borders. Securing these funds demonstrates the university's competence in contributing to shared global scientific goals, encompassing areas like environmental sustainability, health, and technological innovation. The capacity to attract international research funding highlights the institution's standing in the global scientific community, indicating recognition as a valuable partner capable of leading or contributing to international research projects. Conversely, providing funding to international partners strengthens global ties and promotes the exchange of knowledge and technology. This reciprocal flow of resources can enhance the university's direct impact on global challenges and establishes frameworks for collaboration. This helps to build and maintain networks of transnational partnerships that are essential for advancing scientific understanding and addressing transborder challenges.

For example, the Human Frontier Science Program (HFSP) is an international initiative that funds basic research in the life sciences, supported by countries including the United States, Japan, and members of the European Union. Universities participating in HFSP-funded projects engage in international collaborations, exemplifying the role of research funding in promoting global scientific partnerships.[13] Another example is Boston University's Combating Antibiotic-Resistant Bacteria Biopharmaceutical Accelerator (CARB-X), which has secured international funding from governments such as the United Kingdom, Germany, and Canada to advance the development of new antibacterial products.[14]

Science and Foreign Policy Influence

The domain of science and foreign policy influence, as measured by, for example, the number of policy recommendations implemented, contributions to policy reports, or participation in policy dialogues, is also key in evaluating a university's capacity as an actor in science diplomacy. This indicator assesses the direct impact that a university's scientific expertise has on shaping decision-making processes at various governmental and international levels. Universities that actively contribute to policy development demonstrate their relevance in policy debates and affirm their role in influencing effects on society.

Participation in these activities indicates a university's involvement in global issues and its role as a contributor to the policy landscape. This involvement can range from providing expert testimony to legislative bodies, contributing scientific data and analysis that inform critical policy decisions, to hosting forums that convene policymakers and researchers. Such engagement facilitates the translation of academic research into actionable policies. This amplifies the university's contribution to policy issues whilst also strengthening its networks within the policy-making community. Thus, by actively participating in and impacting policy dialogues,

[13] Human Frontier Science Program. HFSP Funding. https://www.hfsp.org/funding/hfsp-funding/research-grants

[14] Combating Antibiotic-Resistant Bacteria (CARB-X). Funding Partners. https://carb-x.org/partners/funding-partners/

a university can serve as a bridge between scientific research and policy application, heling to fulfil the fourth dimension of science diplomacy: diplomacy in science.

For example, the University of Cambridge's Centre for Science and Policy (CSaP) enhances connections between academics and policymakers, pushing the integration of scientific research into public policy. Similarly, the University of Sussex's Science Policy Research Unit (SPRU) conducts interdisciplinary research to inform policy decisions, which emphasizes the role of scientific expertise in addressing societal challenges.

Curricula

The development and implementation of curricula, courses, training programs, workshops, and conferences that bridge science and international relations serve as another key domain concerning a university's engagement in advancing science diplomacy. This domain highlights how institutions are committed to nurturing multidisciplinary mindsets among students, researchers, and practitioners, equipping them with the necessary skills and knowledge to navigate the intersecting realms of science and diplomacy effectively.

By having interdisciplinary educational offerings, universities create platforms for learning and dialogue that prepare participants to address complex global challenges through a combination of scientific and diplomatic training. Such educational initiatives stand to raise awareness of the importance of science diplomacy and forward critical thinking and communication skills that are essential for effective diplomacy. Furthermore, these programs often encourage networking and collaboration across different academic and professional communities, which enhances the participants' ability to forge partnerships and collaborations.

For instance, Georgetown University's Walsh School of Foreign Service offers a major in Science, Technology, and International Affairs (STIA), which allows students to explore the relationship between scientific and technological developments and international affairs, preparing them for careers that bridge these fields.[15] Similarly, Johns Hopkins University has established the Science Diplomacy Hub, which hosts key players in the space science diplomacy field, including astronauts, diplomats, and innovators, to share their experiences. The Hub also organizes events such as the annual Global Quantum Strategies Overview, featuring discussions on topics like quantum information science and technology.[16]

These academic and extracurricular activities are important for building a foundation for future leaders in science diplomacy. Establishing them demonstrates a university's proactive role in contributing to the global science diplomacy agenda by preparing individuals to become adept at merging scientific understanding with diplomatic acumen. Consequently, the breadth and depth of these offerings are indicative of how seriously a university takes its role as an incubator for the field of science diplomacy.

[15] Science, Technology and International Affairs (STIA) https://sfs.georgetown.edu/academics/undergraduate/majors/stia/

[16] Johns Hopkins Science Diplomacy Hub. https://washingtondc.jhu.edu/research-policy/johns-hopkins-science-diplomacy-hub/

Public Outreach

Public outreach activities, including science communication, public lectures, exhibitions, and citizen science projects, constitutes the domain for evaluating a university's contribution to cultivating dialogue and raising awareness on key issues. These initiatives demonstrate how universities can serve as active participants in engaging broader communities. Such outreach efforts serve multiple purposes. First, they help bridge the gap between scientific research and public understanding, making the science accessible and relevant to everyday concerns. This is instrumental in breaking down siloes. Second, by involving the public in scientific activities, universities cultivate a more informed citizenry, which is crucial for democratic decision-making processes, especially when these decisions impact global policies and practices. Furthermore, these activities often encourage the participation of non-academic stakeholders, including policy makers, business leaders, and community groups. This undoubtedly nurtures a more inclusive approach to solving global challenges.

Through these public engagement efforts, universities have a channel to enhance the visibility and impact of their science diplomacy actorness, build trust, and establish themselves as reliable sources of knowledge and innovation to the public. This outreach is a key component of a university's ability to advance science diplomacy, as it underscores the importance of science in public discourse and highlights the university's role in shaping these conversations.

Methodology

For each domain identified in the previous section, we planned to conduct field data collection to gather first-hand material for analysing the current or potential role of science diplomacy strategies within universities. This methodology is designed as a standardized approach that can be replicated as needed in the future. Developed through teamwork within the EUTOPIA-Francophone project, it ensures consistency and reliability across different research settings.

The data collection process includes both quantitative and qualitative components: questionnaires distributed one month before the field research and in-person interviews conducted during site visits. These visits were structured to be efficient and minimally disruptive while remaining focused on the research objectives.

A wide range of stakeholders were engaged throughout the research phases, including Vice Presidents/ Rectors for international affairs and education, research offices, alumni offices, and international offices. Within each university, designated contact persons played a key role in the project's success by assisting with research preparation, identifying relevant resource individuals, and coordinating visit logistics.

Phased Research Approach

The process was structured in several phases. **Phase 0** covered the conception of the applied research and the collaborative elaboration of the methodological tools.

Phase 1, the preparation phase of the field visits, took place at least three months before the onsite visit and aimed to identify key contact persons within the target university.

Phase 2, the research rationale phase, occurred two months before the visit. During this phase, the research rationale was shared with the university's academic leadership to provide context and ensure institutional engagement. Additionally, questionnaires were distributed to the designated contact persons with clear instructions on the intended recipients, and responses were ideally collected at least one day before the onsite visit.

Phase 3 involved the onsite visits, which lasted for two days. On day one, interviews were conducted with key stakeholders, and on day two, the collected data was analysed, with preliminary findings presented to the local team.

Phase 4, which occurred three months after the visit, focused on data analysis and reporting. During this phase, the collected data was analysed, and a comprehensive report was compiled.

Finally, **Phase 5** involved the delivery of findings, where the final results were shared with the target university. This was followed by an online or onsite meeting to discuss how science diplomacy could be integrated as a strategic priority within the university's institutional framework.

Finally, in the **Phase 6**, the report will be forwarded to the rectors of the EUTOPIA universities and presented to them.

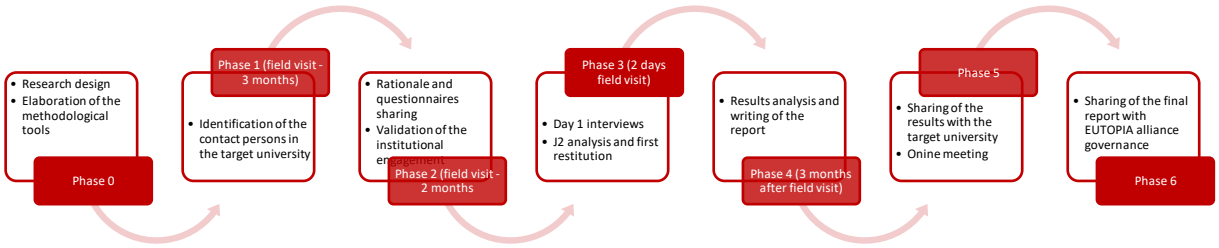

Figure 4 : Phases of the research process

Methodology Tools

During the EUTOPIA-Francophone project, the team was able to produce several tools ready to use in the future. They were applied to the field research presented below**.**

Rationale Presented to Partner Universities

Two months before the field research, the following rationale was sent to target universities:

“ Science diplomacy is a novel field that is rapidly evolving and increasingly important. When its conceptual study began in the wake of the landmark Royal Society / AAAS report, *New Frontiers in Science Diplomacy*, it found itself theorized predominantly in the framework of the nation state. However, it is abundantly clear that the nation state is not the only actor in the field. Supranational organizations, such as the EU, and international bodies, like UNESCO, have explicitly contributed to the science diplomacy platform. Subnational actors, like regions and cities, also play a key role on the platform. We say platform because that is precisely what science diplomacy is: a platform that unites researchers, scientists, diplomats, politicians, students, and everyone else that holds a stake at the intersection of foreign policy and science. Universities embody the wide range of stakeholders on the science diplomacy platform. Implicitly, they are very instrumental in the science diplomacy landscape. However, there has been little done to explicitly highlight the university domains that contribute to their positioning as science diplomacy actors in a comprehensive manner. That is what this study sets off to do: to make the implicit explicit.

Through the development of these domains and the investigation geared toward assessing their status at each AUF member of EUTOPIA, we hope to paint a wide and comprehensive picture of the state of science diplomacy in the university. Having a clear overview of the state of science diplomacy is integral for developing a university strategy for science diplomacy that can (a) augment the university’s standing on the global stage; and (b) contribute meaningfully towards the urgent demands to tackle the growing list of global challenges.

It is the purpose of the EUTOPIA-Francophone project and we thank you for the involvement of your university in this project. ”

Questionnaires

To systematically assess the different dimensions of university engagement in science diplomacy, structured questionnaires were distributed to key university offices, including the international affairs office, research office, and education office. These questionnaires aimed to gather quantitative and qualitative data on international collaborations, research funding sources, alumni engagement, and curricula related to science diplomacy. The full text of these questionnaires can be found in Annexes 1, 2, and 3.

Interviews

In addition to the questionnaires, semi-structured interviews were conducted with university representatives, including Vice Presidents/ Rectors for International Affairs and Education, alumni office representatives, and research administrators. These interviews provided deeper insights into strategic partnerships, policy influence, and the role of alumni in advancing science diplomacy. The interview guides, which outline the key themes explored during these discussions, are included in Annexes 4 and 5.

Desk Research

In parallel with the field data collection, extensive desk research was conducted to complement and contextualize the findings. This included reviewing institutional reports, strategic documents, publicly available data, and other relevant literatures to assess the universities' positioning in science diplomacy. Desk research also provided historical perspectives on international collaborations, policy engagement, and alumni impact, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of each institution's science diplomacy actorness. This secondary data analysis helped triangulate the information obtained through questionnaires and interviews.

Methodology Table

The table below highlights specific methodological tools that were employed for the collection of data.

EUTOPIA-Francophone Methodology Table	
Domain	**Method(s) and Type of Data**
International Collaborations	Questionnaire submitted to international offices gauging: • total number of international agreements. • co-publication analysis (SciVal platform) • five of the most strategically significant international partnerships detailing the partner universities, fields of cooperation, and specific legal provisions governing these collaborations.
Diplomatic Partnerships	Interview with Vice Presidents/ Rectors for International Relations/ Strategy, discussing: • 3 – 5 key partnerships in detail, including their scope and significance within the university's broader network. • the partnership-building process, including key actions taken and outcomes achieved.

	• the total number of international and national partnerships, categorized by local, regional, national, and international collaboration.
International Students and Researchers	Questionnaire submitted to international offices asking: • international student enrolment (number, origins, projected trends) • international researchers (number, origin, projected trends) • student mobility (number, destinations, anticipated trends)
Alumni	Interview with alumni offices, ascertaining: • impact of the alumni • alumni role in science and foreign affairs
Research Funding	Questionnaire submitted to Vice Presidents/ Rectors for Research, gauging within the past ten years: • sources of funding • sectors • countries • objectives • five projects (public or private) with relevance to policy impact
Science and Foreign Policy Influence	Interview with Vice Presidents/Rectors for International Relations ascertaining: • key projects: up to five impactful projects from the last 10 years • key members • core goals • policy Influence • steps taken
Curricula	Questionnaire submitted to Vice Presidents/ Rectors for Education investigating: • education programs and courses related to science diplomacy • key information for each identified program/module
Public Outreach	Interview with Vice Presidents/ Rectors for International Relations gauging: • insights on public outreach • supplementary examples

Findings 1: CY Cergy Paris Université

CY Cergy Paris University is a diverse, socially engaged, and internationally oriented institution located northwest of the Paris metropolitan area. Committed to balancing social progress with economic efficiency, quality of life with environmental sustainability, and resource preservation with innovation, the university provides a forward-thinking academic environment.

Structured around an undergraduate college (CY Sup) and four graduate schools — CY Tech, CY Arts & Humanities, CY Education, and CY Law & Political Science — it is also affiliated with ESSEC Business School through the CY Alliance and CY Initiative. Together, CY Cergy Paris University and ESSEC rank 180th in the ARWU, making it fifth amongst French universities in economics and business.

The university's CY Transfer strategy connects education and research, focusing on business, finance, management, heritage, luxury, arts, risk, security, and society. With 26,000 students, 600 PhD candidates across six doctoral schools, and 1,200 researchers working in 27 laboratories — including 10 Joint Research Units (UMR) — CY Cergy Paris University operates across 16 campuses, covering 220,000 square meters.

CY is a founding member of EUTOPIA since 2019. Its former president was elected Vice-Chair of the Presidents Board from 2020 to 2022 and its former vice-president was elected Vice-Chair of the Alliance Management Board from 2022 to 2024. The EUTOPIA Impact and Dissemination Unit is located in CY.

Field research at CY was conducted from July 11–12, 2024, using the structured methodology to assess various domains of the university's science diplomacy actorness. The findings are outlined below, supplemented by desk research to address any gaps as well as updates related to recent results.

Figure 5: The Research Team at Cergy, July 2024

International Collaborations

Over the past ten years, CY's international development strategy has been based on what has been called the "Europe-Africa-Asia axis". Strategic partnerships have been developed with universities in

Egypt, Morocco, Cameroon, South Africa, Vietnam, Japan, China and Singapore. We have also forged a strong partnership with Arizona State University, which has also become a global partner of the EUTOPIA alliance. Since 2019, EUTOPIA has represented a model for the deployment of international relations at CY.

CY actively builds global scientific exchange via strategic partnerships and joint research endeavours that enable student/staff mobility, joint curricula, and integrated research teams across countries. For example, CY and the University of the Western Cape (UWE) co-founded SYNERGYLAB, an International Associated Laboratory (LIA) in chemistry. This "wall-less" binational lab pools human and financial resources for high-level research on polymers, biosensors, and energy storage, backed by €420k over four years.[17] CY has also forged strong other links in Africa. For example, for over a decade it has maintained privileged relations with Cameroonian universities, resulting in co-supervised PhD theses, a dual Master's degree, and numerous co-publications in the field of Civil Enginnering and Computer Science.[18]

In terms of publications listed in the Scopus database, the leading foreign institutions in terms of co-publications are the Spanish Higher Council for Scientific Research (CSIC), the Italian National Institute of Astrophysics, the California Institute of Technology in the USA, the Max Planck Institute for Extraterrestrial Physics in Germany, and Harvard University in the USA.

Overall, CYU's global footprint is reflected in its extensive partnership network, consisting of 474 European and 209 international cooperation agreements.[19] These partnerships act as conduits for cross-border knowledge flow and exemplify CY's science diplomacy actorness.

Diplomatic Partnerships

Beyond academia-to-academia links, CY actively engages with diplomatic channels to enhance cooperation. In addition to links between academies, CY is actively involved in diplomatic channels to strengthen cooperation. The Val d'Oise Departmental Council's regional diplomatic cooperation with Osaka Prefecture in Japan is the basis for CY's academic cooperation with Japanese universities. France's development of Franco-international campuses is the source of CY's involvement in the Hanoi University of Science and Technology (USTH) and the French University of Egypt (UFE). CY has been coordinator of the UFE consortium since 2025, a fact hailed by the French President at the Assises franco-égyptiennes de coopération scientifique et universitaire held in Cairo in April 2025.

Its collaborations often involve embassies, other diplomatic missions, and international agencies that bridge science and foreign relations. For example, the French Embassy in Cameroon has been a key supporter of CY's programs with Cameroonian universities, providing scholarships that promote mobility. This diplomatic backing has enabled talented students (e.g. a Cameroonian laureate of the "Ma Thèse en 180 secondes" contest) to pursue research in France.

In Asia, CY's initiatives have similarly drawn embassy support. When CYU signed a Memorandum of Understanding with INTI International University in Malaysia to offer a joint bachelor's program in

[17] CY Cergy Paris University. *Joint and international laboratories*. https://www.cyu.fr/en/research-development/joint-and-international-laboratories%C2%A0

[18] CY Cergy Paris University (2022). *Cameroonian research building its future with CY*. www.cyu.fr/en/research-development/news/cameroonian-research-building-its-future-with-cy

[19] EUTOPIA. *ID card: CY Cergy Paris Université*. https://eutopia-university.eu/english-version/about-us/members/eutopia-university-of-the-month-cy-cergy-paris-univerisity

culinary arts, the French Ambassador to Malaysia (via his Cultural Counsellor) lauded the partnership as a "master stroke" and a first-ever France–INTI collaboration.[20]

CY can also boast of an established presence in Vietnam through a partnership with HUTECH University in Ho Chi Minh City. CY delivers an international program in Hospitality Management. The French Consulate in Ho Chi Mihn City actively joined the graduation ceremonies, with its Science and Technology Cooperation Officer awarding degrees to the program's graduates.[21] Such involvement of French diplomatic missions indicates CY's role as an academic envoy of French scientific expertise abroad. In turn, the French diplomatic network helps advance CY's presence on the global stage.

International Students and Researchers

CY's campus supports its science diplomacy actorness through its globally diverse academic community. The university enrols roughly 26,000 students, of whom about 20% are international. There are more than 4,000 foreign students representing dozens of nationalities, a figure that has been rising thanks to CY's expanded English-taught offerings and recruitment efforts. At the graduate level, the international presence is even more pronounced: about 19% of CY's Master's students and 50% of its PhD candidates earned their prior degrees abroad.[22] Such diversity enhances CY's science diplomacy actorness through facilitating daily cross-cultural interaction that enrich both the learning environment and the mutual understanding of students.

Since 2018, CYU has opened an *International Welcome Desk*, hosted welcome events, and built an international residence for researchers, ensuring visitors from abroad feel at home. Moreover, to overcome language barriers, CY's French Language Center offers courses and summer schools for international students.

The university's Institute for Advanced Studies (CYAS) further boosts global academic exchange by inviting 90–100 international scientists each year for fellowships, short group research residencies, and guest lectures. Meanwhile, through programs like the MCSA cofund EUTOPIA Science & Innovation Fellowship (co-funded by the EU) and a partnership with Fulbright, CYU hosts high-level foreign researchers across all disciplines.[23]

Many faculty have foreign origins or experience, and research teams are multinational. For example, a physics lab at CY led by an ERC grant winner comprises PhD students from Mauritius and Russia, an intern from Portugal, and postdoctoral fellows including one from Canada.[24]

This domain at CY illustrates the microcosm of global science that it hosts on its campus that welcomes the world's talents. Moreover, it affords the space for students and researchers to carry positive

[20] INTI News (2024). *INTI International University & Colleges Signs MoU with CY Cergy-Paris Université*. https://newinti.edu.my/inti-international-university-colleges-signs-mou-with-cy-cergy-paris-universite/
[21] HUTECH (2022). *Graduation Ceremony of International Joint Program with CY Cergy Paris University*. https://www.hutech.edu.vn/english/news/training-news/14608022-graduation-ceremony-of-international-joint-program-with-cy-cergy-paris-university
[22] EUTOPIA. *ID card: CY Cergy Paris Université*. https://eutopia-university.eu/english-version/about-us/members/eutopia-university-of-the-month-cy-cergy-paris-univerisity
[23] CY Cergy Paris University. *CY Advanced Studies Mission*. https://advancedstudies.cyu.fr/english-version/browsing/institute/missions
[24] CY Cergy Paris University (2022). *Jacopo de Nardis among the 2021 ERC Starting Grant winners*. https://www.cyu.fr/en/research-development/news/jacopo-de-nardis-among-the-2021-erc-starting-grant-winners

impressions of France and CY back to their home countries or onward to international careers, thus extending the university's public diplomatic reach through personal networks.

Alumni

Even though it is a new university without a centralized alumni office, CY demonstrates that it leverages its growing alumni network as ambassadors of its values and as connectors in international circles. Many alumni have gone on to careers in multinational companies, international research organizations, NGOs, and government, where they apply the expertise gained at CY to worldwide challenges. The university, through its different faculties (e.g. law) and schools (e.g. CY Tech) actively works to keep these alumni engaged, even though it is acknowledged that this process could be improved. CY is integrated into the France Alumni network, a global platform backed by the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs that connects over 370,000 international graduates of French institutions.[25]

Alumni engagement reinforces CY's science diplomacy footprint, as graduates spread the university's spirit into their spheres of influence and often become points of contact for new partnerships. Be it alumni working at tech startups in Silicon Valley or alumni working in sustainable development in Africa, they carry a bit of their university with them. The university, in turn, celebrates and mobilizes these alumni as partners by inviting them to speak at campus events, join research projects, or act as liaisons for opportunities abroad. This virtuous cycle means CY's impact extends beyond those currently enrolled.

Research Funding

CY's success in attracting international research funding underscores its science diplomacy actorness. In addition to the funding received under the EUTOPIA umbrella, CY researchers have also secured prestigious individual grants from the EU. For example, in 2021 a CY physicist won a highly competitive ERC Starting Grant, one of only 397 early-career researchers in Europe to do so that year.[26] ERC grants, part of the EU's Horizon framework, fund cutting-edge projects and are a marker of research excellence. CYU's ability to win such grants demonstrates its capacity to contribute at the forefront of global science.

Moreover, CY is involved in multinational research consortia tackling worldwide challenges. It has been a partner in Horizon 2020 projects such as MEET (on geothermal energy) and MOBICCON-PRO (on sustainable construction), collaborating with universities and companies across Europe. [27] [28]

Meanwhile, nearly 150 research projects have been funded under CY Initiative calls, with €13.5 million invested to "stimulate scientific excellence and the internationalisation of research".[29] Many of these grants prioritize partnerships with CY's strategic international partners. For instance, the CY Initiative explicitly encourages projects with EUTOPIA partners and with select global partners like

[25] France Alumni. *Country and Partner Websites*. https://www.francealumni.fr/en/#
[26] CY Cergy Paris University (2022). *Jacopo de Nardis among the 2021 ERC Starting Grant winners*. https://www.cyu.fr/en/research-development/news/jacopo-de-nardis-among-the-2021-erc-starting-grant-winners
[27] MEET. *Consortium: CY Cergy Paris University*. https://www.meet-h2020.com/consortium/cy-cergy-paris-university/
[28] MOBICCON-PRO. *Consortium*. https://mobiccon-pro.eu/consortium/
[29] CY Cergy Paris University. *Calls for proposals & funding programmes*. https://initiative.cyu.fr/calls-for-proposals-funding-programs

Nanyang Technological University in Singapore, the University of Mauritius, and the University of Western Cape.

CY's role in global scientific initiatives also extends to thematic networks. It co-founded the *Fondation des Sciences du Patrimoine* with the French Ministry of Culture, National Scientific Research Center (CNRS), and international museums like the Louvre.

The alignment of its research agenda with global priorities (such as sustainability, cultural heritage, digital transformation, etc.) and securing funding to address them collaboratively, CY positions itself as a contributor to international policy goals like the UN SDGs.

Science and Foreign Policy Influence

CY and its alliance partners recognize that universities can serve as key actors in science diplomacy and inform foreign policy. This is evident in its role leading EUTOPIA's work package on impact, which includes the science diplomacy work of the alliance. Through projects, events, and thought leadership, CY contributes to the dialogue on how science can aid diplomatic relations whilst mitigating global challenges. Notably, CY is the coordinating university for this AUF project, which is a step towards integrating science diplomacy more firmly within the EUTOPIA's global positioning.

Within EUTOPIA, CY also contributes to science diplomacy seminars and training that bring together researchers, students, and policymakers. Under the EUTOPIA MORE program, a series of eight seminars was organized to raise awareness and build skills in science diplomacy. These seminars covered both general concepts and specialized themes (e.g. cultural heritage protection through science diplomacy), and targeted the EUTOPIA community and beyond. Participating in and hosting such discussions has positioned CY as a catalyst for equipping academics with diplomatic mindsets and encourages them to consider the international policy context of their work.

Individual scholars at CY also interface with policy networks. For example, the university's former president, Prof. Thierry Coulhon, went on to lead France's Hcéres (research evaluation council), a body that is very relevant to the diplomatic field, as evidenced by its events under the French Presidency of the EU.[30]

On the international stage, CY engages with organizations like UNESCO. For example, it showcased its new Equality & Inclusion Plan on UNESCO's Open Science hub, which aligns the university with global norms of inclusivity in science.[31] The university's membership in international bodies (e.g. AUF, EUA) and hosting of global events further amplify its influence. Through these channels, CY advocates for science in the public interest and contributes to shaping research agendas that address global issues. In essence, CY doesn't confine its impact to labs and classrooms. Rather, it actively seeks a seat at the table where science meets international policy. Its leadership in framing science diplomacy strategies for alliances and its experts' involvement in advisory roles demonstrate how the university helps translate scientific knowledge into informed policies and the diplomatic realm.

[30] INQAAHE (2022). *INQAAHE participates in Hcéres event on March 16*. https://2023.inqaahe.org/blog/inqaahe-participates-hc%C3%A9res-event-march-16
[31] UNESCO. *Equality and Inclusion Plan (2024-2027) at CY Cergy Paris Université*. https://www.unesco.org/en/open-science/inclusive-science/equality-and-inclusion-plan-2024-2027-cy-cergy-paris-universite

Curricula

In its academic programs, CY is increasingly integrating interdisciplinary content that connects science, technology, and global affairs. In doing so, it contributes to a cohort of graduates trained to operate at the nexus of science and diplomacy. More and more of CY's master's courses are taught in English and designed to attract international students, often with curricula addressing international or cross-cultural topics. For example, CY offers a Master degree in International & European Studies and an LL.M. in French and European Law. These programmes train students in understanding European governance, law, and policy. This is essential knowledge for science advisors or diplomats dealing with regulatory aspects of science (such as climate agreements or technology policy). In the sciences, programs are likewise framed in global context: the International Bachelor Ygrec in Data Science and a Master in Big Data assume an amalgamation of mathematics and computer science with real-world problem solving.

At the intersection of science and humanities, CY's Master in *Political Ideas in a Digital Age* (PIDA) examines how technological change influences political thought, a theme relevant to crafting informed digital policy, which has a significant international aspect.[32] Such interdisciplinary curricula implicitly promote science diplomacy by teaching students to navigate both scientific concepts and societal implications.

Additionally, CY has shown commitment to special training initiatives that blend elements of science and diplomacy. Under CY Advanced Studies, the university organizes thematic interdisciplinary courses and lecture series that bring together doctoral students and researchers from various fields. One example is the *Thematic Months* program at the International Research House, which runs intensive modules on topics like sustainable cities or artificial intelligence ethics, often involving guest scholars from abroad.[33]

In the context of EUTOPIA, CY has expressed interest in co-developing a joint training program in science diplomacy. Its multidisciplinary content and focus on the public sphere and international relations make it a promising anchor for future collaboration across the alliance.

Public Outreach

CY's commitment to public engagement in science extends its science diplomacy actorness to the broader society. Through festivals, outreach programs, and partnerships, the university builds science literacy and trust. This supports the objectives of the *fourth dimension* of science diplomacy through universities serving as ambassadors of science with the aim of creating an informed, collaborative public. Each year, CY participates in France's national Fête de la Science and organizes local science outreach events, opening its laboratories and classrooms to school groups and citizens. Researchers from CY regularly take part in public talks and demonstrations, thus demystifying their work on topics like climate change, artificial intelligence, or cultural heritage preservation. CY Advanced Studies actively promotes such dissemination; one of its core missions is "promoting and disseminating research and its issues to the general public."[34]

[32] CY Cergy Paris University. *MA Political Ideas in a Digital Age*. https://fe2i.cyu.fr/medias/fichier/m-pida-2023-hd_1707817484353-pdf
[33] CY Cergy Paris University. *CY Advanced Studies Mission*. https://advancedstudies.cyu.fr/english-version/browsing/institute/missions
[34] CY Cergy Paris University. *CY Advanced Studies Mission*. https://advancedstudies.cyu.fr/english-version/browsing/institute/missions

On an international level, CY collaborates in outreach initiatives that span countries. In 2024, the university joined with University College London to organize a *Festival of Engineering,* an international festival aimed at future engineers, industry, and the general public. This showcased cutting-edge innovations and encouraged new ways of thinking about global challenges.[35] Such events illustrate the fourth dimension of science diplomacy in action: French and British institutions jointly engaging publics across borders on scientific issues of common concern.

Findings 2: Babeș-Bolyai University

Babeș-Bolyai University (UBB) in Cluj-Napoca, Romania, is the country's largest and one of its oldest universities, with an academic community of approximately 50,000 members. Nearly 45,000 students are enrolled across undergraduate, graduate, PhD, and non-traditional programs offered by 21 faculties and a teacher training department. UBB stands out as a multicultural institution, providing courses in Romanian, Hungarian, and German, along with academic programs in 17 languages.

Spanning disciplines from arts and humanities to social sciences, natural sciences, mathematics, computer science, engineering, and technology, UBB fosters a diverse academic environment. It is home to 24 cultural centres, foreign institutes, and libraries, making it the only Romanian university with such a broad cultural and academic scope.

UBB consistently ranks as Romania's top university in the University Meta Ranking, which aggregates major global rankings such as ARWU, QS, and THE. Committed to tradition, research excellence, and societal engagement, the university upholds its academic motto: *traditio nostra unacum europæ virtutibus splendet*—our tradition shines together with European values.

UBB is part of EUTOPIA since 2022 and is very commited to its governance : UBB vice-rector was elected Chair of Alliance Management Board from 2022 to 2024 and the rector, Daniel David, was elected Chair of EUTOPIA Presidents Board in November 2024. He was nominated Minister of Education of Romania in December 2024.

Field research at UBB in Cluj-Napoca was conducted from June 19–20, 2024, using the structured methodology to assess various domains of UBB's science diplomacy engagement. The findings are outlined below, supplemented by desk research to fill any gaps.

Figure 5: The Research Team at UBB

[35] CY Cergy Paris University (2024). *Festival of Engineering.* https://advancedstudies.cyu.fr/english-version/browsing/scientific-events/conferences-and-workshops/archives/festival-of-engineering

International Collaborations

UBB demonstrates a robust commitment to international collaborations, which highlights its science diplomacy actorness. The university's journey into international networks began in the 2000s, marking a significant phase where it embraced every opportunity to establish global partnerships. This foundational period was characterized by an openness to various collaborative ventures, which laid the groundwork for a more strategic and selective approach in the subsequent decade. By the 2010s, UBB entered a maturity phase, refining its partnerships and developing assessments to ensure the effectiveness and mutual benefits of these collaborations.

In addition to international networks like AUF and EUTOPIA, a notable example of UBB's international partnerships is its membership in The Guild, joined in 2021, which represents a collective of some of Europe's most distinguished research-intensive universities.[36] This membership amplifies UBB's voice in international research and policy discussions and positions it in collaborative environment conducive to addressing complex global challenges. The INSPIRE project is an initiative co-financed by the World Bank and involving partners from across the globe. It exemplifies UBB's strong positioning in international scientific collaborations. This project, aimed at advancing medical research and providing services to local hospitals using state of the art MRI, highlights how UBB leverages its international partnerships to drive impactful scientific advancements.

Diplomatic Partnerships

UBB has established diplomatic partnerships with embassies, foreign ministries, and international organizations, relationships that can help position itself as a key actor in science diplomacy. These partnerships facilitate international engagement through academic exchange, policy dialogues, and cultural cooperation.

One of UBB's most prominent partnerships is with France, reflected in its long-standing collaboration with the Institut Français (operating on UBB's campus). This partnership aligns with Romania's broader Francophonie diplomatic strategy and supports UBB's role as a hub for French-language education, with a strategy dedicated to enriching French language programmes, cooperations with Francophone higher education institutions, cultural entities and diplomatic missions. The French-Romanian Senate delegation visit to Cluj, facilitated by UBB, highlights the university's influence in shaping diplomatic discussions on higher education. Additionally, the Institut Français and UBB co-organize events such as the French-Romanian symposium on student well-being, addressing international student integration, and help UBB students access prestigious French scholarships like Bourse Excellence Europa.

UBB deliberately uses its international profile to host events of diplomatic importance. For instance, in early 2024 it hosted a joint event with the French and German ambassadors discussing the future of Europe, demonstrating UBB's role as a convenor of international dialogue in academia.[37]

UBB has also established 24 cultural centers, including Japanese, African, Nordic, and Armenian studies institutes, enriching bilateral academic ties. Engagement with embassies of the center countries comes with this. Its Confucius Institute, one of Romania's largest, strengthens UBB's cooperation with China,

[36] UBB Communication and Public Relations Department (2020). *UBB has a new international "academic home" following its admission in the Guild of European Research-Intensive Universities*. https://news.ubbcluj.ro/en/ubb-has-a-new-international-academic-home-following-its-admission-in-the-guild-of-european-research-intensive-universities/

[37] UBB Communication and Public Relations Department (2024). *The Ambassadors of France and Germany at UBB: visit at the Rectorate and Round Table on the future of Europe*. https://news.ubbcluj.ro/event/the-ambassadors-of-france-and-germany-at-ubb-visit-at-the-rectorate-and-round-table-on-the-future-of-europe/

while the Indian Cultural Center, supported by the Indian Embassy, further enhancing international cultural ties. Additionally, UBB engages with African state embassies, strengthening ties through academic cooperation.

International Students and Researchers

UBB is a leading international academic hub in Romania, attracting students and researchers from over 35 countries.[38] As of 2019/2020, UBB had 990 international undergraduate students, 290 international master's students, and around 160 international PhD candidates enrolled in degree programs. Recent statistics show that UBB registered 1,360 students enrolled for full studies in the academic year 2023-2024, coming from various countries, such as Hungary, Bangladesh, Algeria, Algeria, Morocco, Guinea, France, Germany, Cameroon, Nigeria[39]. The university's international PhD collaborations, joint degree programs, and participation in Erasmus+ and CEEPUS mobility networks further enhance cross-border academic exchange. At the doctoral and research level, UBB strongly encourages joint supervision and co-tutelle Ph.D. agreements with foreign universities. As of 2020, UBB had 434 "international" Ph.D. theses in progress or completed under joint supervision or double-degree arrangements.

The university actively promotes researcher mobility and faculty exchanges, hosting Fulbright scholars, visiting professors, and international PhD students through co-supervision agreements with institutions in Canada, France, and beyond. It has over 1,950 Erasmus+ agreements and multiple research collaborations.

Beyond academic exchange, UBB provides extensive support structures for international students and scholars, including scholarships, language courses, housing assistance, and integration programs.

Alumni

The findings from UBB provide a compelling case of how a university's alumni network can significantly enhance its science diplomacy actorness. At UBB, the alumni office has implemented a series of initiatives that harness the university's commitment to leveraging its alumni for broader societal impact. The career and professional orientation programs invite alumni with an array of backgrounds to engage with current students, offering accessible insights into complex topics. This initiative serves to broaden the scope of experience for students and highlights the university's emphasis on practical, real-world applications of academic knowledge.

One notable program is the mentorship initiative, which connects students with alumni who are professionals in various fields such as IT, finance, pharmaceuticals, banking, and academia. This program, initiated by UBB alumni in the United States, aims to boost students' confidence and provide them with career development guidance. Such mentorship offers students a global perspective on the job market, enhancing their readiness to tackle international challenges. It also benefits the alumni, enabling them to give back to their alma mater while staying connected with the university community.

UBB's alumni have made substantial contributions to science and global cohesion. The annual alumni gala celebrates individuals who have significantly impacted their fields and the university. For example, notable alumni include a researcher who contributed significantly to pharmaceutical research in the

[38] EUTOPIA. *Babeș-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca*. https://eutopia-university.eu/english-version/about-us/members/babeș-bolyai-university-cluj-napoca-romania

[39] *BBU (2025). Rector's report on the state Babeș-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca in the year 2024.* P. 101. https://www.ubbcluj.ro/ro/infoubb/documente_publice/files/raport-rector/Raportul_Rectorului_2024.pdf?v=35

Netherlands and another who established academic bridges between UBB (and Romania at large) and Oxford University.

The university also leverages its alumni network for ongoing educational initiatives. The "Meet Your Future Self" program and the weekly radio segment featuring high-profile alumni are efforts to engage current students and the public. Additionally, UBB's United States alumni chapter, comprising professionals in top American companies, not only serves as potential donors but also provides scholarships and internship opportunities for outstanding UBB students, and thus further integrates the alumni into the university's mission of global engagement.

UBB's alumni office maintains active communication channels through social media platforms like Facebook and LinkedIn that upholds a sense of community and engagement among its graduates. The university's connection with its alumni is not limited to the United States; it extends to African graduates who studied in Romania during the communist era. These graduates, particularly from Burundi, have formed networks that highlight the university's long-standing international ties. On top of that, UBB can also boast that Romania's president (2014 – 2025), Klaus Iohannis, is a member of its alumni.

Research Funding

UBB can boast of diverse international funding sources to advance its research and global scientific partnerships. Funds from an array of sources, such as European grants to World Bank programs, and private foundations, enable UBB to collaborate across borders and contribute to worldwide scientific initiatives. Meanwhile, UBB's participation in internationally funded projects strengthens scientific standing and its science diplomacy actorness.

When it comes to EU funding besides EUTOPIA, UBB actively secures EU research grants, notably through Horizon Europe. For example, it is a partner in a €3 million Horizon Europe project TWIN4DEM, which uses digital twin technology to study and strengthen democratic resilience across multiple countries.[40] UBB was also involved in Horizon 2020 initiatives like the CONVERGE project on sustainable biofuels, working towards environmental assessments for new biodiesel technologies.[41] Meanwhile, the university obtained a €35 million European Investment Bank (EIB) loan to expand its research infrastructure, supporting the InfoBioNano4Health platform that integrates IT, biotech, and nanotech solutions for challenges pertaining to health and the environment.[42]

UBB also benefits from private international funding. For instance, it is a key partner in Fondation Botnar's *OurCluj* initiative, which supports youth opportunities in Cluj-Napoca.[43] This is part of a broader multi-city program (including sites in Africa and Latin America) funded by the Swiss foundation, but it nonetheless highlights UBB's role in a global philanthropic network.

Science and Foreign Policy Influence

UBB has actively leveraged its academic expertise and global partnerships to influence science and foreign policy. Its multicultural, multilingual DNA has also afforded it significant international influence.

[40] UBB Faculty of Mathematics and Computer science (2024). *UBB takes part in a new Horizon Europe project that studies democratic resilience, with the assistance of Digital Twins*. www.cs.ubbcluj.ro/ubb-takes-part-in-a-new-horizon-europe-project-that-studies-democratic-resilience-with-the-assistance-of-digitaltwins/
[41] CONVERGE. *UBB*. www.converge-h2020.eu/consortium/universitatea-babes-bolyai-ubb/
[42] EUTOPIA. *Babeș-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca*. https://eutopia-university.eu/english-version/about-us/members/babes-bolyai-university-cluj-napoca-romania
[43] Fondation Botnar. *OurCity Initiative*.www.fondationbotnar.org/project/ourcity-initiative/

For example, UBB's long-standing multicultural profile (with instruction in Romanian, Hungarian, German, and other languages) has drawn attention from international policy bodies. Notably, the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities engaged with UBB as far back as 2000 to encourage its efforts in multilingual education. Then-High Commissioner Max van der Stoel issued formal recommendations to UBB's Senate on expanding multiculturalism at the university, praising UBB's "pioneering efforts" and envisioning it as a model for other European universities in multilingual higher education.[44] This intervention positioned UBB at the heart of an international policy dialogue on minority rights in education.

On an institutional level, UBB leadership has been vocal in national science policy debates. UBB's former Rector, Daniel David, (who in December 2024 became Romania's Minister of Education) has contributed to public policy discussions on research and innovation. In 2017, he and other university heads strongly opposed a Romanian government decision to bar foreign experts from evaluating national research projects, calling the move "a deathblow that sentences Romania to backwardness".[45]

UBB experts contribute to policy reports and strategy documents with significant foreign policy weight. For example, UBB researchers co-authored a study on EU digital political campaigning, assessing the effectiveness of European regulations against disinformation. Their findings – that the EU's strengthened Code of Practice on Disinformation is contributing to enhanced dialogue between institutions and digital platforms – provide valuable feedback to European policymakers on digital governance.[46]

Curricula

While there are no programs that explicitly link the fields of science and diplomacy, several master's programs at UBB, such as the M.A. in Cultural Diplomacy and International Relations and the M.A. in Science, Technology, and Innovation in the Public Space, train students in the fields science, culture, policy, and diplomacy. These programs emphasize evidence-based decision-making, strategic communication, and cross-sector collaboration in the process of preparing graduates for careers in international organizations, government agencies, and research institutions. UBB offers a strong foundation in international relations through undergraduate and graduate programs in European Studies, Public Administration, and Political Science. The Francophone *Études Politiques Européennes Comparées* master's, developed in collaboration with European institutions, strengthens the university's role in multilingual education and international engagement. These academic offerings are encouraging in their potential to develop both scientific literacy and the diplomatic skills needed to engage with global policy challenges.

UBB's education office expressed interest in developing a joint program in science diplomacy under EUTOPIA, recognizing it as an opportunity that aligns with its internationalization and curriculum development strategies. However, while there is institutional interest in launching such an initiative, the university acknowledges the need for a preliminary study to assess prospective student demand and ensure the program meets both academic and professional expectations.

[44] Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe High Commissioner on National Minorities (2000). *Recommendations on Expanding the Concept of Multi-culturalism at the Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania*. https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/7/4/30803.pdf

[45] Zubașcu, F. (2017). *University heads decry government reforms to science in Romania*. Science Business, https://sciencebusiness.net/news/80307/University-heads-decry-government-reforms-to-science-in-Romania

[46] Borz, 2024.

Public Outreach

UBB engages in a range of public outreach activities that bring science closer to society, reinforcing its science diplomacy actorness. UBB heeds all three academic components of its mission: research (knowledge generation); teaching (knowledge dissemination); service to community (knowledge implementation). The **UBB4Society&Economy** program strengthens UBB's status as a key player in RD&I at regional, national, European, and international levels, seeking to turn research results into innovative products and services that significantly impact the community and provide effective solutions to major societal challenges.

The university regularly organizes science communication events, such as its collaboration with the British Council on FameLab 2021, where students and researchers presented complex scientific ideas in an accessible format.[47] Similarly, UBB's public lecture series provides opportunities for internationally recognized experts to share insights on key research areas, as seen in the 2023 neuroscience talk featuring Hannah Monyer and Wolf Singer.[48] These initiatives contribute to direct dialogue between scientists and the public and help demystify research and encourage informed discussion on key scientific topics.

UBB also works to engage younger audiences, hosting science summer schools that give high school students hands-on experience in environmental research.[49] Public exhibitions provide further opportunities for citizens to interact with scientific advancements.[50] These events showcase UBB's commitment to making science interactive and accessible. Through these efforts, UBB strengthens public trust in science, encourages interdisciplinary collaboration, and ensures that its research contributes meaningfully to both local and global conversations on critical issues.

Each of these outreach activities contributes to UBB's role as a science diplomacy actor through serving as an ambassador of science and reinforcing the fourth dimension of science diplomacy, where universities function as bridges between scientific expertise and global policy discussions.

[47] UBB News (2021). *UBB students and researchers – invited to bring science closer to the public in the FameLab 2021 competition*. https://news.ubbcluj.ro/studentii-si-cercetatorii-ubb-invitati-sa-aduca-stiinta-mai-aproape-de-public-in-competitia-famelab-2021/

[48] Edupudu (2023). *Ce știm și ce nu știm despre creier" – conferință cu cercetători în neuroștiințe la Universitatea Babeș-Bolyai, joi, 8 iunie / Intrarea este liberă*. https://www.edupedu.ro/ce-stim-si-ce-nu-stim-despre-creier-conferinta-cu-cercetatori-in-neurostiinte-la-universitatea-babes-bolyai-joi-8-iunie-intrarea-este-libera/

[49] UBB (2022). *Școala de vară "Educație științifică pentru mediu* https://enviro.ubbcluj.ro/scoala-de-vara-educatie-stiintifica-pentru-mediu-2/

[50] MonitorulCJ.ro (2022). *UBB Cluj organizează Noaptea Cercetătorilor 2022! Evenimente similare au loc simultan în peste 300 de orașe din lume*. https://www.monitorulcj.ro/educatie/102965-ubb-cluj-organizeaza-noaptea-cercetatorilor-2022-evenimente-similare-au-loc-simultan-in-peste-300-de-orase-din-lume

Findings 3: International University of Rabat

The International University of Rabat (UIR) is a semi-public higher education institution in Morocco, founded in 2010 as part of an innovative public-private partnership with the Moroccan government. Recognized as a national and international reference in higher education, UIR is committed to excellence in education, research, and socio-economic development, both within Morocco and across Africa.

UIR stands out for its strong international orientation, reinforced by strategic academic partnerships that allow students to pursue high-level programs, including double-degree opportunities with prestigious institutions worldwide.

As a multidisciplinary institution, UIR offers a broad range of programs spanning engineering, architecture, law, political science, business administration, management, actuarial studies, logistics, and dentistry. Through its research initiatives and global collaborations, UIR plays an active role in shaping Morocco's higher education landscape while strengthening international scientific cooperation.

Data from UIR was electronically collected in March 2025, using the structured methodology to assess various domains of science diplomacy actorness. The findings are outlined below, supplemented by desk research to address any gaps.

International Collaborations

UIR has cultivated an extensive network of international collaborations, reinforcing its role as a science diplomacy actor. At present, UIR has established 290 agreements covering education, student and staff mobility, and joint degree programs. Beyond these, 177 agreements pertain specifically to research, development, and innovation (RDI), with 33 currently active. These figures reflect a strategic commitment to global scientific cooperation and position UIR as a key player in the internationalization of Moroccan higher education.

In terms of research collaborations, UIR has built strong co-publication ties with leading institutions, as evidenced by data from the Scopus platform over the past decade (2014–2024). While its most significant research partner is domestic (Mohammed V University in Rabat, with 282 joint publications), the second two are international: University of Leeds with 122, and the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS) with 84.

UIR's research network is largely embedded in the francophone academic space, with 159 collaborations involving universities in francophone countries or members of the AUF. The Université de Lorraine, Sorbonne Université, and Université Marie & Louis Pasteur are considered to be of the highest strategic importance to UIR. Its collaboration with Université de Lorraine, for example, extends beyond joint degrees to include co-funded research projects, such as a NATO-backed cybersecurity initiative, and the establishment of Morocco's first graduate school in renewable energies.[51]

[51] Factuel (2021). *L'Université Internationale de Rabat et l'Université de Lorraine renforcent leur partenariat historique et stratégique*. https://factuel.univ-lorraine.fr/node/18395

Outside the francophone world, institutions like the University of California, Los Angeles are also included in its list of critically strategic partners. The university's partnership with Mississippi State University has resulted in a dual-degree engineering program that immerses UIR students in a transatlantic research and training environment.[52]

Moreover, as a global partner in the EUTOPIA Alliance, UIR is engaged in co-developed curricula and research projects with European and international institutions, enhancing its scientific and educational reach.

UIR's international mobility strategy is set to evolve further as the university expands its network of academic partnerships. Currently engaged in collaborations with 59 countries, UIR aims to broaden these connections to offer its students greater opportunities for studying abroad. This expansion indicates that the university is committed to strengthening its global footprint and enhancing cross-border academic exchange.

International Students and Researchers

UIR has a growing and diverse student body that bolsters its science diplomacy actorness. Over the past three academic years, the number of international students at UIR has increased significantly, rising from 378 in 2023–2024 to 516 in 2024–2025. This upward trend aligns with the university's strategic objective of increasing its international student population to 10% of total enrolment in the coming years.

The majority of UIR's international students come from Gabon, Côte d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Chad, and the Republic of the Congo, highlighting the university's strong connections with francophone Africa.

This regional focus positions UIR as a vector for knowledge exchange between Morocco and Sub-Saharan Africa. At the same time, UIR is expanding its recruitment efforts to attract students from a wider range of countries, aiming to diversify its international student population further.

In addition to hosting international students, UIR is committed to providing its own students with global learning experiences. Through its network of partnerships in 59 countries, the university facilitates student mobility programs that allow UIR students to study abroad at leading institutions. The most popular destination countries for outbound UIR students currently include France, Italy, Spain, the United States, and Belgium.

With plans to further expand its mobility programs, UIR continues to create opportunities for students to gain international exposure and reinforces its position as a globally connected university.

Research Funding

UIR secures research funding from a diverse range of sources. Its primary funding streams include internal university funds, as well as public grants from regional authorities, the Centre National pour la Recherche Scientifique et Technique (CNRST), the Moroccan Academy of Sciences, and various public companies.

Additionally, UIR benefits from bilateral research programs, European Commission funding, and support from international networks, positioning itself as an actor in global research partnerships. The

[52] Mississippi State University. *Université Internationale de Rabat Collaboration*. https://www.bagley.msstate.edu/uir/

inclusion of funding from entities such as the American National Science Foundation (NSF) underscores UIR's ability to attract international grants beyond its regional and European engagements.

UIR's research funding is strategically allocated to six priority sectors: Artificial Intelligence and Cybersecurity, Renewable Energy and Advanced Materials, Health Sciences, Architecture and Urbanism, Global Studies, and Management Studies. This distribution aligns with Morocco's national research priorities while also addressing global challenges.

Moving forward, the university aims to expand its participation in international research networks, engage more actively in Horizon Europe programs, and establish international research laboratories. Additionally, UIR seeks to deepen its involvement in bilateral research programs and national initiatives funded by the Moroccan government, reinforcing its commitment to both domestic and global scientific collaboration.

Among its flagship projects, UIR leads several initiatives with significant policy impact. The Interdisciplinary Policy for Research in Africa (IPORA) supports knowledge production on governance and policy frameworks across the continent. The Cultures, Societies, and Religious Facts research initiative explores societal transformations and their implications for global governance, while the Migrations, Mobilities, and Cosmopolitanism project examines cross-border movements and their socio-political consequences. Additionally, UIR is advancing research in corporate social responsibility through its business school and has taken a leading role in Artificial Intelligence research with the Convolve Project, an EU-funded initiative focused on designing next-generation edge processor.

Curricula

UIR offers a range of academic programs that intersect with science diplomacy, governance, and international affairs, which positions the university as a training ground for future leaders in global policy and diplomacy. Through its Sciences Po Rabat program, UIR provides specialized courses in Governance and International Institutions, International Security, and Public Policy. These suggest the potential of equipping students with the analytical and decision-making skills needed to engage in global governance and diplomatic negotiations.[53]

Complementing this, the Center for Global Studies serves as both a research hub and a teaching center focused on geopolitical, economic, and diplomatic issues, further embedding science diplomacy themes into the university's academic framework.[54]

Beyond political and international studies, UIR integrates science diplomacy perspectives into business and management education. The Rabat Business School's Master in International Business includes courses on international policy and economic governance, preparing students to navigate the intersection of business, policy, and diplomacy in a globalized economy.[55] These interdisciplinary programs reflect UIR's support of cross-border collaboration and equipping graduates with the skills necessary for international engagement.

Looking ahead, UIR is will to consider the development of a joint program in science diplomacy within EUTOPIA, aligning with its strategic vision for enhanced North-South cooperation between Europe and Africa. The university envisions a Master's program in Science Diplomacy with a particular focus on African-European relations, covering key topics such as sustainable development, climate policy, and

[53] https://www.uir.ac.ma/fr/pole/sciences-po-rabat
[54] https://www.uir.ac.ma/fr/pole/Center-for-Global-Studies
[55] https://rbs.uir.ac.ma/master-in-international-business/

health diplomacy. This initiative would further strengthen UIR's role in international science-policy engagement and reinforce its position as a science diplomacy actor in the global academic landscape.

Recommendations and Conclusions

This study has highlighted the science diplomacy actorness of three AUF member universities within the EUTOPIA alliance. Through international collaborations, research funding, policy engagement, alumni networks, and public outreach, these institutions embody science diplomacy actorness to contribute to global scientific cooperation and diplomatic engagement. However, much of this contribution remains implicit in that it is woven into the everyday functions of academia rather than explicitly framed as science diplomacy. By making these efforts visible, this report underscores the strategic potential of universities in shaping the global science diplomacy landscape.

Key findings:

1. **Science Diplomacy Actorness Is Largely Implicit but Widespread**
2. **International Collaboration Is a Core Strength**
3. **Diplomatic Partnerships Are Present but Uneven**
4. **Alumni Networks Are Underutilized as Diplomatic Assets**
5. **Policy Engagement and Public Outreach Vary Widely**
6. **Curricular Innovation in Science Diplomacy Is Emerging but Fragmented**

Moving forward, universities can enhance their science diplomacy actorness by developing dedicated institutional strategies that integrate science diplomacy into research agendas, curricula, and external partnerships. Strengthening alumni networks as diplomatic connectors, expanding interdisciplinary training in science diplomacy, and deepening engagement with policymakers will be key steps in this process. University alliances provide a valuable framework for collective action, as member universities have more opportunities to pool expertise and amplify their global influence.

To advance their role and visibility in this field, we propose a structured set of recommendations inspired by the European Commission's *A European Framework for Science Diplomacy*, which sets out comprehensive roadmap for strengthening Europe's science diplomacy ecosystem. The Framework, drawing inspiration from Van Langenhove's 2017 *Tools for an EU Science Diplomacy*[56], organizes its proposals into three categories of instruments: **strategic instruments**, which provide overall direction and alignment with EU foreign policy goals; **operational instruments**, which translate those goals into concrete actions and institutional mechanisms; and **enabling instruments**, which build the capacities, communities, and knowledge base needed to support long-term impact. Drawing on this structure, we offer tailored recommendations that that reflect the specific capacities and international profiles of AUF universities within the EUTOPIA alliance. This framework can also be applied more broadly to other universities and the alliances they form.

[56] Van Langenhove (2017). *Tools for an EU Science Diplomacy.* European Commission: Directorate-General for Research and Innovation. https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2777/911223

Strategic Instruments

Universities can deploy a set of strategic tools to align their missions with the evolving demands of global science diplomacy. First is **developing and adopting institutional science diplomacy strategies**. These would constitute formal frameworks that integrate science diplomacy into internationalization, research, and innovation agendas. Treating science diplomacy as a distinct and strategic dimension of academic diplomacy enables universities to position themselves proactively in global affairs. A second tool involves **mapping internal science diplomacy assets**, such as research centers contributing to international policy debates, partnerships addressing global challenges, as well as academic programs focused on training new cohorts of science diplomats. This mapping is strategic, as it means institutions identify leverage points and areas for investment. For universities that are part of networks like EUTOPIA or AUF, a third strategic tool lies in the collective **positioning of science diplomacy within the shared vision** of their multilateral platforms to amplify their impact as science diplomacy actors.

Operational Instruments

Universities can also rely on a set of operational instruments to embed science diplomacy into everyday institutional practice. First is the appointment of **science diplomacy contact points** or focal units within universities. These officers – for example advisers to rectors or presidents on Science Diplomacy – would play a coordinating role, be it liaising with embassies, engaging ministries and intergovernmental organizations, and ensuring institutional alignment across science diplomacy activities. A second instrument involves **systematically monitoring and evaluating international engagements through a science diplomacy lens**. This includes tracking international research projects with policy relevance, identifying alumni working in global organizations, and reviewing co-supervised PhDs with strategic partners. Such evaluation practices help make science diplomacy both visible and measurable. A third operational tool is **leveraging international alumni as informal envoys**. Universities can build structured programs and partnerships, such as through France Alumni or embassy networks, to engage alumni in networking and joint initiatives that advance science diplomacy goals. Finally, hosting **science diplomacy events** with diplomatic and international actors offers another embedded practice. These events might include thematic roundtables on topics like climate, AI, or health, or curated networking sessions that bring together researchers, diplomats, and policymakers to showcase the university's global contributions.

Enabling Instruments

To sustain and deepen their science diplomacy actorness, universities need a set of enabling instruments that build internal capacity and expand external networks. These tools also help generate evidence for strategic action. One key tool is **developing science diplomacy training programs** targeted at students, staff, and researchers. These could complement interdisciplinary curricula that connect international relations and the sciences. A second instrument is **participation in communities of practice**, such as the EU Science Diplomacy Alliance, that allow institutions to share methodologies, opportunities, and strengthen collective expertise. A third enabling tool involves **supporting research on science diplomacy** itself. Universities can encourage social scientists to publish on institutional case studies, assess indicators of university "actorness," and conduct global comparisons. Horizon Europe and Erasmus+ calls offer promising avenues to fund such work. Finally, institutions can build long-term capacity by **tracking diaspora scientists and alumni** engaged in international policy or diplomacy.

Creating structured feedback loops between these global actors and the university can inform strategy and enhance the university's presence on the world stage.

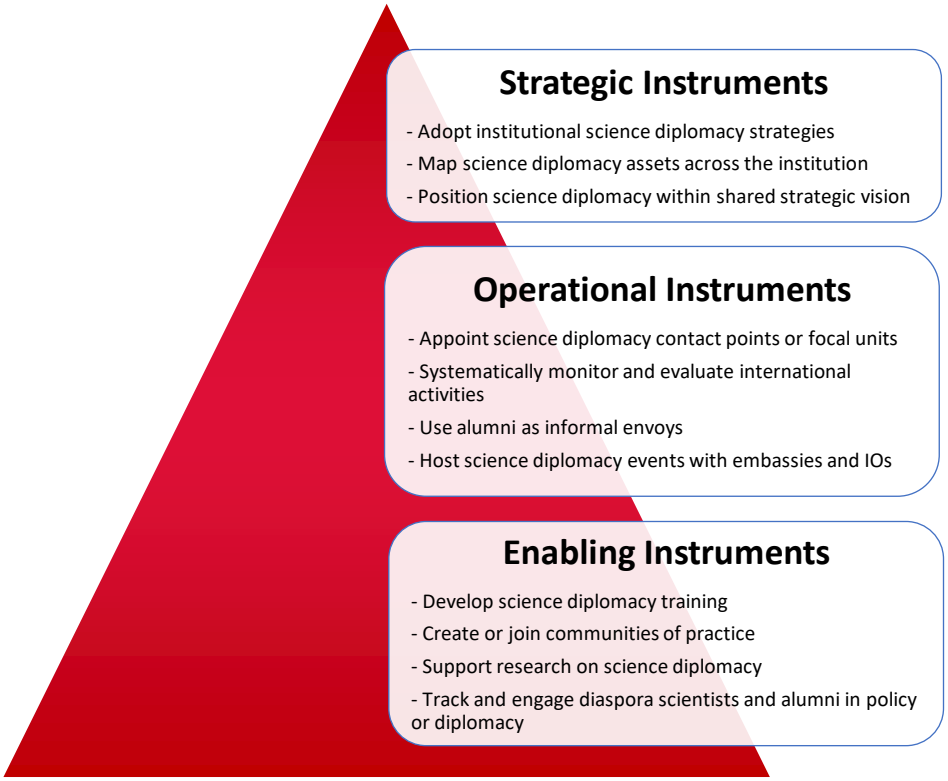

Figure 8: Instruments for University Science Diplomacy

Limitations

While this report offers a structured and in-depth analysis of university science diplomacy actorness within the AUF–EUTOPIA context, it is not without limitations. First, the empirical data remains uneven across the three case studies, with ongoing data collection efforts at the International University of Rabat (UIR). This asymmetry may limit the comparative depth of some findings, particularly in domains such as alumni engagement, science and foreign policy influence, and public outreach. Second, the reliance on self-reported questionnaires and interviews—while methodologically valuable—means that some data may reflect aspirational statements or internal perceptions rather than externally verified outcomes.

Furthermore, the concept of science diplomacy itself remains underdefined at the institutional level, which may have influenced how respondents interpreted and responded to the survey instruments. Much of what is identified as science diplomacy occurs implicitly, complicating efforts to measure it consistently. Lastly, while the domains and tools outlined in this report offer a robust framework, they may not capture emerging concerns such as research security, digital sovereignty, or the growing role of non-academic actors. Future research should refine indicators, expand geographic coverage beyond Europe and North Africa, and integrate longitudinal data to track how science diplomacy actorness evolves over time.

Annexes

Annex 1: Questionnaire to the International affairs office/Strategy office

In the framework of the EUTOPIA-francophone project, the team composed of xxx was mandated to realise a case study in your university in order to propose a framework for the implementation of science diplomacy as one of the core elements of your university's strategy. Please answer to the following questions in the order you chose. Your answers will be valuable for the analysis we'll provide, including during the interviews onsite planned for xx. Please give a special attention to francophone elements in your answers. Your answers can be approximations to the nearest ten.

The complete questionnaire is expected for xx.

1. Every university proposes a wide range of agreements for education, research, innovation, both at national and international level. Today, how many agreements does UBB have for education purposes (student and staff mobility, degrees and programmes, national and international all together)? _____

2. How many agreements does xxx university have for research and innovation (including industry, public and private organisations, nationally and internationally? _____

3. On the international SciVal platform, with which institutions does xx have the most publications during the last 10 years (2014-2024)? _____

4. Among these, how many are francophone universities (in francophone countries or members of the AUF)? _____

5. Please name the five partnerships the most strategically relevant for the strategy of the university.
   a. name of the partner _____
   b. fields of cooperation _____
   c. specific legal dispositions (if any) _____

6. In the field of the internationalisation of your university, can you provide the total number of international students (BA, MA, PhD) these last three academic years?
   a. 2021-2022 _____
   b. 2022-2023 _____
   c. 2023-2024 _____

7. Which are their five main origin countries during the current academic year?
   a. _____
   b. _____
   c. _____
   d. _____
   e. _____

8. Do you foresee a specific evolution concerning the number and the origin countries of the international students at xx ?

9. Concerning xx students in mobility aboard, what are the main destination countries during the current academic year?

a. _____
b. _____
c. _____
d. _____
e. _____

10. Do you foresee a specific evolution concerning the number and the destination countries of the international students at xx?

This questionnaire is over. Thank you for your time and effort. The results of this analysis will be finalized by xx and made available in your university through our main contact person at xx.

Annex 2: Questionnaire to the Research office/Research VP

In the framework of the EUTOPIA-Francophone project, the team composed of xxx was mandated to realise a case study in your university in order to propose a framework for the implementation of science diplomacy as one of the core elements of your university's strategy. Please answer to the following questions in the order you chose. Your answers will be valuable for the analysis we'll provide, including during the interviews onsite planned for xxx. Please give a special attention to francophone elements in your answers.

The complete questionnaire is expected for xxx. Should you have any difficulty, please contact xxx (the contact person from the university).

1. Which are the main funding sources for the research and innovation in your university? _____
2. Which are the main sector receiving substantial funding for research and innovation in your university? _____
3. Which are the main development objectives concerning research funding for the next ten years in your university? _____
4. Please identify the five main projects lead in your university with considerable impact on policy impact and give short descriptions or links to their webpages.
    a. _____
    b. _____
    c. _____
    d. _____
    e. _____

This questionnaire is over. Thank you for your time and effort. The results of this analysis will be finalized by xxx and made available in your university through our main contact person xxx.

Annex 3: Questionnaire to the Education VP

In the framework of the EUTOPIA-Francophone project, the team composed of xxx was mandated to realise a case study in your university in order to propose a framework for the implementation of science diplomacy as one of the core elements of your university's strategy. Please answer to the following questions in the order you chose. Your answers will be valuable for the analysis we'll provide, including during the interviews onsite planned for xxx. Please give a special attention to francophone elements in your answers.

The complete questionnaire is expected for xxx. Should you have any difficulty, please contact xxx (the contact person from the university).

1. In each university, there are several training programmes and degrees related to science diplomacy and dealing with the public sphere, the public decision, negotiation, policy, political sciences). Could you give the list below and a short description or the website for each one of them?
    a. _____
    b. _____
    c. _____
    d. _____

e. _____
f. .....

2. One of the objectives in EUTOPIA is to produce a joint programme in the field of science diplomacy. Please tell us if this is of interest for your university strategy and give as many details as possible on the level, the expectations, etc. _____

Thank you for your time and effort. The results of this analysis will be finalized by xxx and made available in your university through our main contact person xxx.

Annex 4: Interview guide for the VP for international

In the framework of the EUTOPIA-Francophone project, the team composed of xxx was mandated to realise a case study in your university in order to propose a framework for the implementation of science diplomacy as one of the core elements of your university's strategy. This interview is an essential contribution to this study and will last circa 2 hours. Your answers will be valuable for the analysis and recommendations we'll provide. Please give a special attention to francophone elements in your answers.

1. In the questionnaire you and your colleagues from the International office identified, five strategic partnerships were identified as the most valuable for your university strategy. Please comment on those choices and describe briefly their place in the total of partnerships you entertain.
2. Is there a standard process of engagement with partners in your university? Which are the main actors involved in this process (locally, regionally, internationally)?
3. The Research office and VP identified five main projects with relevant public impact. Could we discuss for each one of them the participation and the objectives and actions related to public influence?
4. While speaking of public impact both the impact on the policy making and the impact on the society can be considered. Are they relevant for these five examples and how?
5. The relation to the media is central in today's communication. Could you analyse it for the five examples above?
6. Have these five projects, or any other action undertaken by your university played a categorical role in the public outreach of the university itself?
7. How is conceived the role of your university in the policy making process at a regional, national or even international level?

Thank you for your time and contribution to this project.

Annex 5: Interview with the Alumni office representative/VP for Education/relevant person

In the framework of the EUTOPIA-Francophone project, the team composed of xxx was mandated to realise a case study in your university in order to propose a framework for the implementation of science diplomacy as one of the core elements of your university's strategy. This interview is an essential contribution to this study and will last circa 30 minutes. Your answers will be valuable for the analysis and recommendations we'll provide. Please give a special attention to francophone elements in your answers.

This interview will be recorded for reporting purposes. No part of it will circulate without your written permission.

1. When was created the alumni office on your university and with what purpose?
2. Are you satisfied with the monitoring of the alumni in your university?
3. What are the main objectives of this monitoring?
4. Do you entertain the relation with the alumni through specific actions or events? Quote the most important.
5. Do you consider the relation to the alumni as important in terms of public communication of the university at the national level? Can you give a few examples?

6. Do you consider the relation to the alumni as relevant to your engagement abroad? Do they or could they play an active role in the foreign public affairs in relation to your university? Please give a few examples.

Thank you for your time and contribution to this project.