Observation Framework

A cheat sheet for identifying barriers to community engagement

Use these six dimensions to help you observe and analyze what makes community engagement difficult to implement and sustain. Not every dimension will be relevant to every situation.

1. Ownership & Responsibilities

Who is responsible, involved and following up?

- Is there a clear initiative owner?
- Are roles and responsibilities clearly defined?
- Can the work continue if a key person leaves or becomes unavailable?

2. Governance & Decision-Making

Who has the authority to decide, coordinate and provide support?

- Are approvals needed from other departments, universities or management?
- Who makes decisions when priorities conflict or disagreements arise?
- Are there clear coordination and escalation mechanisms?

3. Resources & Capacity

Are sufficient people, time, funding and skills available?

- Does the initiative rely on a few motivated individuals making extra efforts?
- Are funding, tools, expertise and training available?
- Do the people involved have sufficient time and capacity to participate?

4. Processes & Continuity

Are there clear, repeatable and sustainable ways of working?

- How are participants recruited, onboarded, contacted and followed up?
- Are there clear steps, timelines and handover arrangements?
- Is there follow-up after activities, and are experiences captured for future use?

5. Information Flow & Coordination

How does information circulate, and who knows what?

- Are target audiences aware of relevant opportunities and resources?
- Does information reach them through appropriate and trusted channels?

- Do different universities, departments and teams share information and experience?

6. Incentives, Motivation & Institutional Recognition

Is participation meaningful, motivating and recognized?

- Do participants understand the practical value of engaging with 4EU+?
- Does participation align with their work objectives, professional development or learning needs?
- Does the organization recognize the time, effort and contributions involved?