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Connecting Policy, Practice and Quality:
Tools for Advancing Inclusive Teaching and Learning

- *Presentation and joint reflection by Szilvia Besze,*
- *PROFFORMANCE Impact Team, Tempus Public Foundation*

- *Peer Learning Activity "'We make a change': Making institutional cultures in higher education more inclusive"*
- *18 February, 2026 - Bibliotheksaula, Hofstallgasse 2-4, 5020 Salzburg, Austria*

Coordinators:

Co-funded by the European Union

European Higher Education Area (EHEA) - Initiative to support the implementation of reforms ERASMUS-EDU-2021-EHEA-IBA Action Grant

Full Partners: Bundesministerium Bildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung; Ministry of Science and Education; FOUNDATION TEMPUS

Associated Partners: ACA ACADEMIC COOPERATION ASSOCIATION; HEA HIGHER EDUCATION AUTHORITY; MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE OF GEORGIA; universidade de aveiro; SZÉCHENYI EGYETEM

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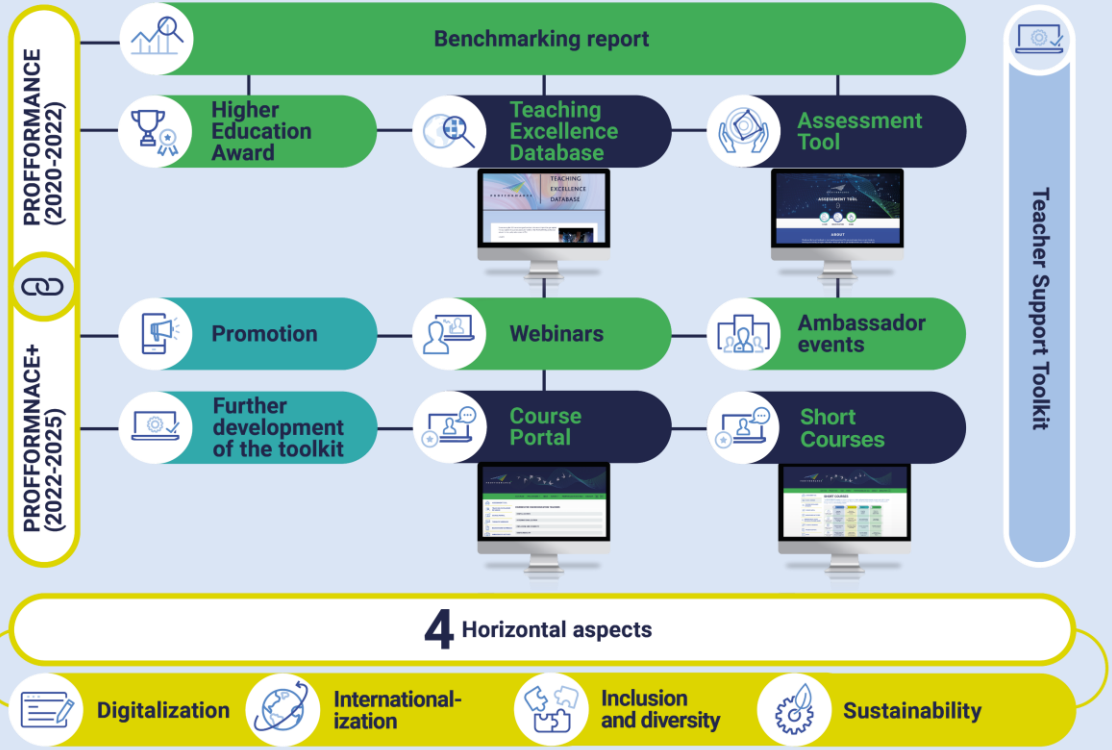
Objectives

- Developing teachers' performance
- Quality enhancement of teaching and learning
- Forming and adjusting students' competences
- Solving societal and economic challenges

Main products and activities



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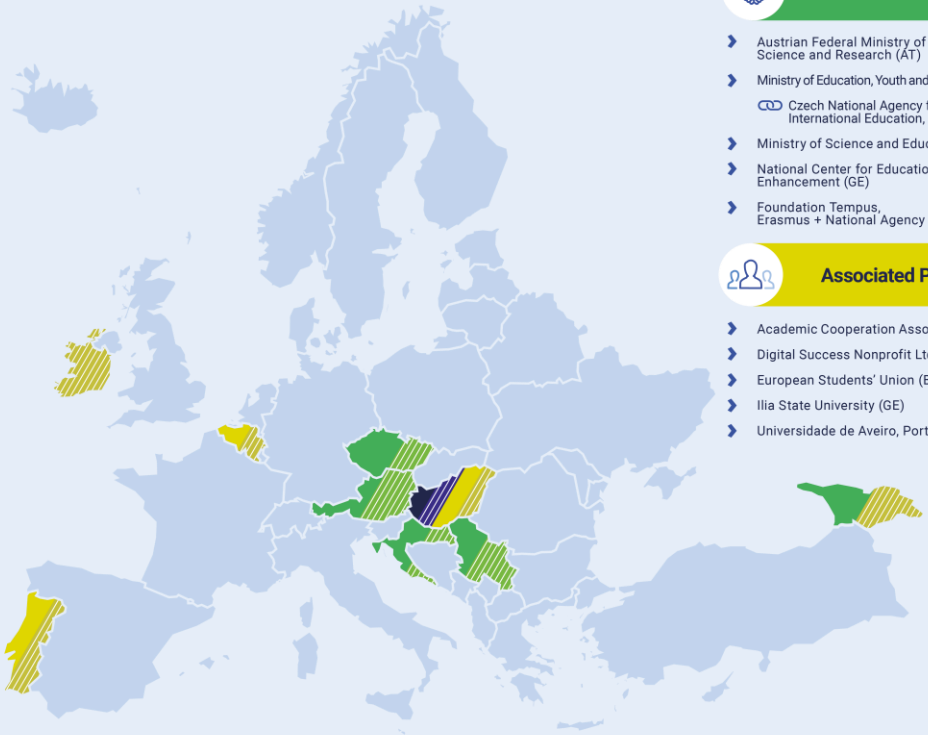
Project participants



PROFFORMANCE (2020-2022)	PROFFORMNACE+ (2022-2025)
Coordinators	
Ministry for Innovation and Technology (HU)	Ministry of Innovation and Culture (HU)
Tempus Public Foundation (HU)	Tempus Public Foundation (HU)
Full Partners	
Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research (AT)	Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research (AT)
Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (CZ)	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (CZ)
Czech National Agency for International Education, DZS (CZ)	Czech National Agency for International Education, DZS (CZ)
Ministry of Science and Education (HR)	Ministry of Science and Education (HR)
National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement (GE)	Foundation Tempus, Erasmus + National Agency (RS)
Foundation Tempus, Erasmus + National Agency (RS)	Ministry of Education (RS)
Associated Partners	
Academic Cooperation Association (BEL)	National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement (GE)
Digital Success Nonprofit Ltd. (HU)	Academic Cooperation Association (BEL)
European Students' Union (BEL)	Higher Education Authority, Ireland (IRL)
Ilia State University (GE)	European Students' Union (BEL)
Universidade de Aveiro, Portugal (PT)	Universidade de Aveiro, Portugal (PT)
	Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia (Moes) (GE)
	Széchenyi István University, Győr, Representing RUN-EU European University Alliance (HU)

Experts

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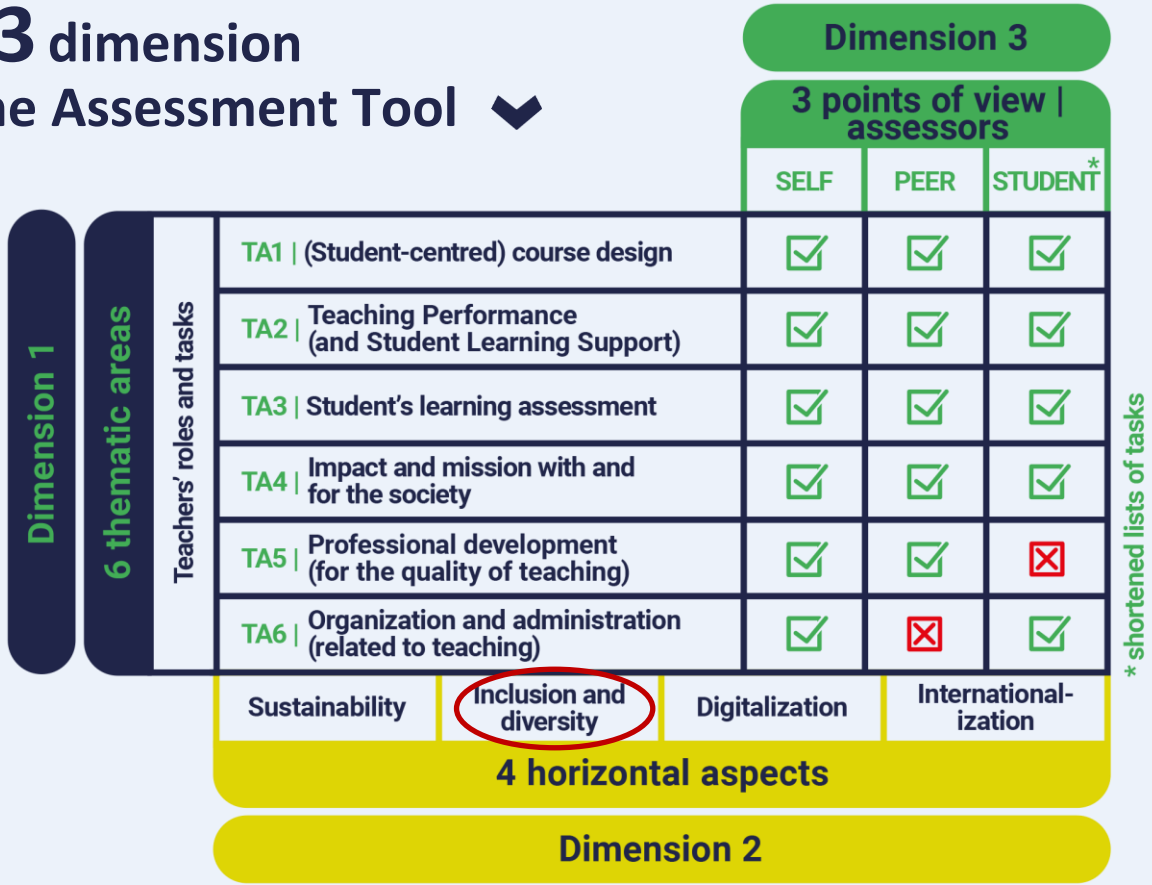
The 3 dimension of the Assessment Tool



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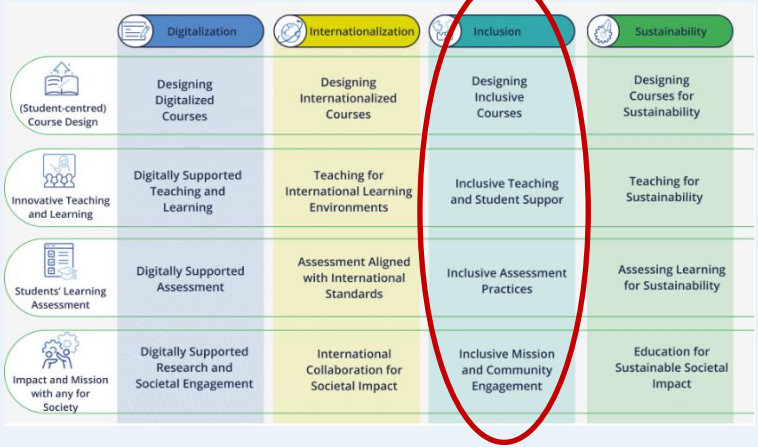
Each tool based on the same structure

Teaching excellence database

PROFFORMANCE Short courses



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How PROFFORMANCE tools can support goals set in the Principles and Guidelines to Strengthen the Social Dimension of Higher Education in the EHEA?

Principle 7

Public authorities – support HEIs

- **responding to the divers student needs** and staff body
- create **inclusive learning environments** and **inclusive institutional cultures.**

a. Adequate **means to higher education institutions to improve initial and continuing professional training for academic** and administrative **staff.**

b. External **quality assurance systems** should address how the **social dimension, diversity, accessibility, equity and inclusion** respecting the principle of autonomy of higher education institutions.

Indicators for which PROFFORMANCE provides a good practice

7.1 HEIs enabled to offer training on inclusion for staff and students

Online short courses: https://profformance.eu/en/short-courses

Course portal: https://profformance.eu/en/course-portal

7.2 Mentoring network, exchange of knowledge, peer learning–

Institutional PROFFORMANCE Ambassador Network,
Teaching excellence database
International Higher Education Teacher Award

7.4. Monitoring – National level assessment based on voluntary participation – Assessment tool https://tool.profformance.eu/

HOW?

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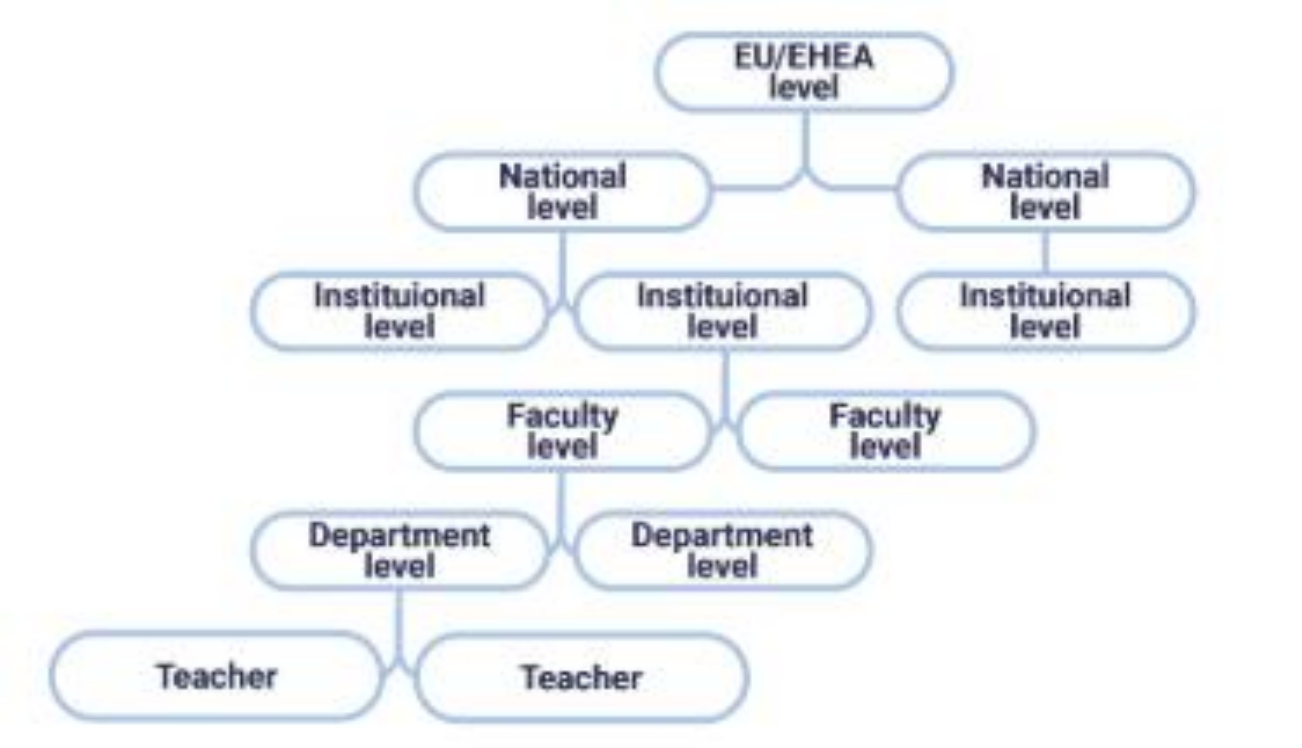
PROFFORMANCE toolkit can be used at all levels – by all stakeholders of HE



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Stakeholder engagement at all levels – fostering intra and inter-level dialogue

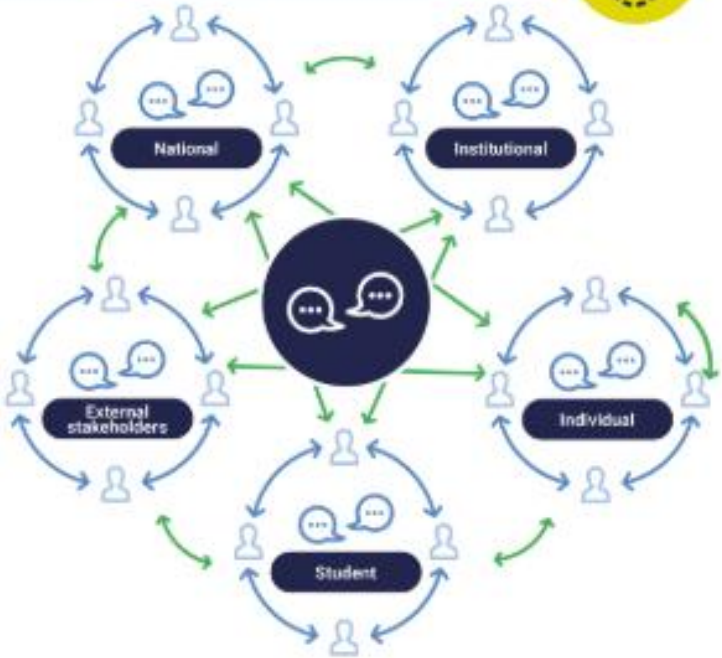
National
- Accreditation Committee
- Rectors' conference
- Educational Authority
- Ministries
- Professional Bodies
- Doctoral Associations
- National Student Bodies

Institutional
- Management
- QA units
- HR
- T&L centers
- Programme leaders
- Student representatives
- External stakeholders

Students
- National representatives
- Students
- Doctoral students
- International students

External stakeholders
- International partners
- Business/industrial partners
- Local authorities
- RDI centres
- Social partners

Teachers
- Multidisciplinary teams
- Working groups
- Teaching teams



See the Cycle in Action

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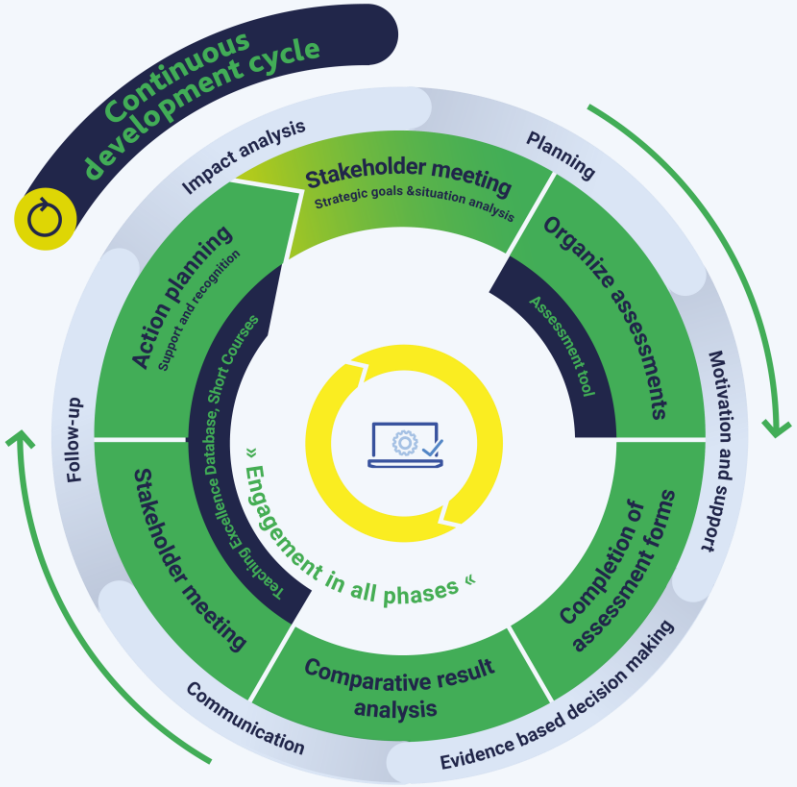
How to use the toolkit?
Continuous development cycle



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Joint reflection – simulation game

1. Defining a common deficiency in inclusivity in T&L
2. Defining a common overall goal by all participants
3. Defining a SMART objective for 1 year
4. Writing 5 actions to be implemented
5. Reflection – what the chance accomplish it
    a. what are the hindering factors, risks
    b. what risk mitigation measures can be taken

Common deficiency in inclusive T&L

- **Policy-level goals and institutional strategies** are not sufficiently reflected **in daily teaching practice**
- Lack of **structured assessment** on inclusive T&L
- Slow adaptation to student diversity – **lack of appropriate, updated training**
- Missing **continuous improvement cycle**

Common overall goal

1. Make inclusive T&L a **core quality dimension**
2. Support **evidence-based development and continuous improvement culture**
3. Strengthen **institutional capacity** to respond to diversity – targeted training programmes

BUT!

- Respect **institutional autonomy**

SMART objective (1 year)

Within **1 year**, at least **X% of HEIs** introduce an **assessment tool** focused on teacher **competencies on inclusive teaching** and implement at least **one concrete improvement action** based on the results.

(SMART elements)

S – Structured assessment and action on inclusive T&L
M – Percentage / number of participating institutions
A – Builds on existing tools and frameworks (eg. PROFFORMANCE toolkit)
R – Fits current QA, CPD and strategic frameworks(inclusion, diversity, equity) Principle 7
T – 12 months

Supported by **PROFFORMANCE tools** and a **continuous development cycle**

Key actions

1. **Select pilot higher education institutions** representing different institutional profiles
2. **Set the PROFFORMANCE Assessment tool statements** on inclusive T&L to the national/institutional context and **engage stakeholders**
3. **Apply the assessment task** to identify strengths and development needs
4. **Provide targeted professional development** for academic staff
5. **Collect feedback and share lessons learned** at national and institutional level

Reflection: risks and mitigation

Risks and hindering factors

- Perception of inclusivity and another assessment tool as additional administrative burden
- Different interpretations of inclusivity across institutions
- Limited staff motivation, capacity and time
- Concerns about links to external quality assurance and limitation of autonomy

Risk mitigation measures

- Engagement of stakeholders from the beginning – common planinng
- Emphasise the **developmental** goals, recognition of good achievements
- Ensure **voluntary and gradual implementation**
- Highlight concrete benefits
- Align with existing QA and CPD frameworks, avoiding parallel systems

JOINT REFLECTION starts

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