

Discussion Report 3

Conditions for success

Winter Meeting 2024

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Executive summary

This report, part of a trilogy including the Discussion Report 1 on "Charting INESC's Future in EU Research Funding and Positioning" and the Discussion Report 2 on "EU R&I Funding Post-2027," focuses on defining the conditions necessary for achieving structural success in the evolving EU Research & Innovation (R&I) landscape. It builds upon the trends and implications outlined in the previous reports, discussing the strategic needs of INESC institutes and how the INESC Brussels HUB can effectively support these needs.

Key areas of exploration include:

Structural adaptability and success: Investigating how INESC institutes define and achieve success within the EU R&I framework, considering the diverse institutional cultures and strategic approaches.

Balance and synergy: Assessing the balance between agenda-setting, project development, and support within the institutes, and identifying ways the INESC Brussels HUB can enhance its support.

Investment and dedication: Evaluating the different paths, resources and time commitments required from INESC institutes to increase success in EU R&I and leverage the HUB's services effectively.

Collaboration and autonomy: Exploring mechanisms to maintain researcher autonomy while fostering institutional collaboration.

Strategic alignment and service utilization: Ensuring that strategic planning within INESC institutes aligns with EU R&I agendas and that the HUB's services are in-line with the priorities and are fully utilized.

Communication enhancement: Focusing on improving the communication of needs and strategic goals between INESC institutes and between the institutes and the HUB.

The report concludes with a series of discussion points aimed at stimulating a collaborative reflection among INESC institutes. These points highlight the role of the INESC Brussels HUB in supporting INESC's positioning in the European R&I scene and underline the need for a coordinated approach to maximize success in the upcoming competitive landscape post-2027.

Introduction

Defining 'success' in EU R&I: A multifaceted perspective

In the landscape of European Research and Innovation (R&I), defining 'success' is crucial for institutes like INESC to align their strategic objectives with broader EU goals. Success in this context transcends traditional metrics, encompassing a multifaceted approach to research excellence, societal impact, and policy contribution. To construct a robust framework, we conducted an international benchmark analysis, drawing insights from leading European research institutes such as VTT (Finland), CEA (France), RISE (Sweden), and Tecnalia (Spain). These insights helped shape a comprehensive understanding of success, integrating aspects like strategic integration across technology readiness levels, collaborative excellence, policy influence, and sustainable funding models.

Principles of success in EU Research & Innovation

1. **Strategic integration across TRLs**

This principle involves a comprehensive engagement in R&D across various Technology Readiness Levels (TRLs), blending fundamental research with market-driven innovation. For instance, VTT's approach of integrating application-oriented research with curiosity-driven projects exemplifies this principle, enabling them to address practical needs while exploring new scientific frontiers.

2. **Societal and economic impact**

Success in EU R&I is also defined by the ability to create significant societal and economic impacts. This principle aligns with major EU initiatives like the European Green Deal, which focuses on sustainable development. CEA's research contributing to sustainable energy solutions serves as an apt example.

3. **Collaborative excellence and interdisciplinarity:**

Collaboration across disciplines and sectors is pivotal in EU R&I. This principle is exemplified in EU collaborative project models like public-private partnerships. RISE's interdisciplinary approach, connecting industries and academic fields, reflects the importance of such collaborations.

4. **Influencing policy and setting trends:**

Influencing public policy and setting scientific trends is a hallmark of success. Institutions like Tecnalia demonstrate this through their involvement in policy discussions and advisory roles, shaping the trajectory of EU R&I.

5. **Formal recognition and accreditation:**

Achieving formal recognition within the EU R&I community is crucial. This includes active participation in EU programs and collaborations with international partners, as seen in CEA's and VTT's engagement in various EU initiatives.

6. Proactive global trend analysis and adaptation:

Staying ahead of global trends and adapting research focus accordingly is essential. This principle is evident in how VTT and RISE analyze and predict future societal needs, ensuring their research remains relevant and impactful.

7. Balanced intellectual property strategy:

A strategic approach to intellectual property management, fostering innovation and competitiveness, is key. This involves not only protecting innovations but also facilitating knowledge transfer, as seen in RISE's approach to patent activities and collaborations with industry.

The Role of funding in defining success in EU R&I

Funding as a means, not an end: Success in EU R&I extends beyond just acquiring funding. It is crucial to use the funds effectively to realize strategic objectives, such as generating societal impact, driving technological innovation, and fostering collaborative excellence. This perspective shifts the focus from merely securing funds to leveraging them for meaningful achievements.

Funding as an enabler: EU funding serves as a vital enabler, allowing institutes to pursue ambitious research goals, establish collaborations, and contribute to shaping policies. It's a catalyst for institutes to execute their strategic plans and attain broader goals.

Balancing funding with strategic goals: Institutes must strike a balance between pursuing funding and adhering to their strategic vision and mission. An overemphasis on funding can lead to a diversion from core research objectives and societal contributions, diluting the institute's impact.

Sustainability and diversification of funding sources: Sustainable funding models are key. Institutes should diversify their funding sources to mitigate the risks associated with dependency on specific grants or programs.

While securing funding is a significant aspect of success in EU R&I, it should be viewed in the larger context of achieving strategic research and innovation objectives. This holistic approach ensures that institutes like INESC not only secure necessary funds but also use them to drive impactful and sustainable advancements in their respective fields.

Exploring the diversity in definitions of success across INESC

Following our exploration of the principles of success in EU Research & Innovation, this section goes into the diverse definitions of success across different INESC institutes. The INESC system presents a unique opportunity to examine how varied institutional cultures, strategic priorities, and operational models shape the perception and pursuit of success. This exploration is not just an academic exercise but a crucial step in understanding the broader landscape of research and innovation within Europe.

The importance of understanding diverse perspectives

The diversity in definitions of success among institutions like INESC is not just inevitable, but invaluable. Each institute's approach offers insights into how different organizational structures, historical backgrounds, and strategic focuses can lead to varied interpretations of what

constitutes success. This diversity mirrors the wider European landscape, where renowned institutions such as VTT (Finland), Tecnalia (Spain), CEA (France), Fraunhofer (Germany), and the RISE Institutes of Sweden have each carved out distinct niches. These organizations collectively shape their strategies to not only achieve individual institutional success but also contribute to the overarching goals of European research and innovation. Understanding these diverse perspectives is pivotal. It enables us to draw lessons and insights applicable across the European R&I spectrum, fostering a more cohesive and collaborative approach towards common goals. By examining how INESC institutes and their European counterparts define and measure success, we can identify best practices, potential areas for synergy, and strategies that might be adapted or adopted for broader application.

This section will therefore provide an initial comparative analysis of INESC institutes, highlighting how their unique characteristics influence their definitions of success. We will investigate how these definitions align with, diverge from, or complement the broader objectives of EU R&I, and what this means for strategic decision-making. The insights gained will not only enrich our understanding of INESC's role within the European R&I ecosystem but also inform future strategies and collaborations across similar institutions in the EU. As we proceed, we will also consider the implications of these diverse definitions of success on the structural and strategic dynamics within INESC institutes. This analysis will set the stage for a deeper discussion on how the diversity in institutional structures impacts the pursuit and realization of success in the context of EU research and innovation policy.

Comparative analysis and discussion

Below we present a comparative analysis of INESC institutes, revealing very diverse approaches to defining and achieving success. Each institute, with its unique blend of historical context, strategic orientation, and institutional structure, contributes distinctly to the overarching goals of research advancement and innovation impact. Understanding these differences is crucial for fostering collaborative synergies, guiding strategic decisions, and navigating the complex ecosystem of research and innovation in the EU, but also nationally.

INESC Coimbra

Structure & strategy: Composed of researchers affiliated with local universities and polytechnics, INESC Coimbra's strategy is heavily influenced by its academic orientation.

Path dependency: Its reliance on University of Coimbra for EU project submissions indicates a path dependent on academic infrastructure and resources.

Management perspective: The management, being academics with multiple duties, prioritizing research over organizational expansion to avoid the complexities of financial obligations and management duties.

Implications for success: Success here is defined more in terms of academic progress and less on institutional growth or financial metrics.

INESC MN

Structure & strategy: A structure with its own administrative support, INESC MN balances research with technology infrastructure, focusing on material science, microelectronics, and optoelectronics.

Unique assets: The presence of a clean room and specific capabilities provides a special advantage in the research and technology domain.

Future goals: There's an aspiration for more EU projects, suggesting a move towards greater external funding and project diversity.

Success definition: Success is seen as a blend of technological advancement and increased project engagement.

INOV

Applied research focus: INOV stands out as an institute with a strong emphasis on applied research and technological development.

Collaborative dynamics: Its ability to work across the R&I value-chain and collaborate with other INESC institutes showcases a versatile and dynamic approach.

Reassessment and expansion: The current reassessment of orientation and team expansion indicates a strategic pivot to diversify and grow.

Success metrics: Success for INOV includes achieving a strong track record in specific domains and expanding its impact both nationally and internationally.

INESC ID

Institutional association: Very close to IST, INESC ID has significant academic influence.

Structural changes: Ongoing changes and professionalization of support services show an evolution towards a more structured research environment.

EU project focus: A growing number of EU projects indicates a focus on expanding research scope and funding sources.

Success criteria: Success involves balancing academic excellence with structural growth and increased project participation.

INESC TEC

Size and scope: INESC TEC has a comprehensive approach, with a significant portion of directly hired researchers, staff, and turnover.

Professional management: A professional management team and strong support services indicate a more corporate-like structure within the academic context.

Strategic outlook: INESC TEC demonstrates a strategic outlook, particularly in preparing for post-2027 EU funding scenarios, showing foresight in planning and capacity building.

Balancing funding sources: The emphasis on balancing national and regional funding with EU project participation and direct contracts with companies shows a multifaceted approach to financial stability.

Definition of success: For INESC TEC, success is defined by institutional consolidation, research and innovation impact, and sustainable financial management.

Overall trends and commonalities

Researcher-centric model: All institutes heavily emphasize researcher autonomy, with decision-making and EU project development centered around internal research teams.

Academic-industry balance: There's a varying degree of balance between academic pursuits and industry collaboration, with each institute finding its own equilibrium based on its history and strategic goals.

Structural evolution: Most institutes show signs of evolving their structures to better support their growing ambitions and changing research landscape.

Strategic internal dynamics: sculpting INESC's path in EU Research & Innovation

As INESC institutes navigate the alignment with EU R&I objectives, a crucial dimension that warrants closer examination is how this external alignment reflects in their internal conditions for success. This focused analysis aims to stir discussions among Board Members, researchers and other core staff on internal strategic choices, operational methodologies, and institutional readiness, directly impacting their ability to thrive in the evolving EU R&I landscape.

Focused reflections, considerations, and questions

Strategic integration and internal readiness

How does the alignment with EU R&I objectives translate into internal strategic planning within each INESC institute?

What are the current internal readiness levels to adapt to and benefit from EU R&I trends and funding mechanisms?

Internal conditions vs. external opportunities

Are the internal structures and strategies of INESC institutes primarily shaped by external funding opportunities, or driven by a proactive vision for research and innovation?

How do these internal conditions influence the institutes' ability to seize external opportunities?

Autonomy, collaboration, and strategic direction

Within the context of researcher autonomy and collaboration, how is strategic direction maintained and operationalized in each institute?

What mechanisms are in place to ensure that individual autonomy and collaborative efforts align with the institute's overall strategic objectives and EU R&I goals?

Success metrics and institutional growth

Beyond project-based achievements, what internal success metrics are employed to evaluate alignment with EU priorities?

How do these metrics influence decision-making, resource allocation, and the pursuit of institutional growth?

Capacity building and competitiveness

What internal capacity building measures are being taken to enhance competitiveness, especially in preparation for the post-2027 funding landscape?

How are these measures evaluated for effectiveness and alignment with both internal goals and external EU R&I objectives?

Institute-specific strategies and collective impact

Considering the diverse focus areas of each INESC institute, how are institute-specific strategies formulated and implemented to align with broader EU trends?

What does this strategic diversity mean for the collective impact of INESC institutes in the European R&I ecosystem?

Optimizing INESC's internal framework for EU R&I success

A strategic approach to EU R&I engagement requires INESC institutes to critically evaluate and prepare for different types of initiatives. This analysis focuses on the implications of each initiative type for internal structures, resource allocation, and strategic planning. Key questions are proposed to guide researchers and administrators in aligning their efforts with the necessary conditions, skills, infrastructure, and positioning required for success. This does not intend to be an exhaustive list of questions but an indicative for discussion.

Individual fundamental research projects

ERC grants focus: Despite their competitive nature and INESC's current absence in grant attainment, strategically targeting ERC grants necessitates a specific set of institutional supports.

HR policy and career accompaniment: Is there a systematic approach to career development for researchers likely to succeed in ERC applications?

Preparation timeframe: Are we investing in the 3-4 year preparation period typical in leading European institutions?

Incentives and support mechanisms: How are we incentivizing and supporting researchers' preparation, including CV reviews, mentorship (for Starting Grants), and peer reviews of applications?

Career path diversification: Are we acknowledging that ERC grants are not the sole path, and equally valuing researchers inclined towards collaborative projects?

Collaborative research projects

Consortium engagement: Participation in consortium-based projects demands different skills and institutional support compared to individual research grants.

Interdisciplinary collaboration: How effectively are we fostering interdisciplinary collaboration skills among our researchers?

Strategic trend analysis and directionality: Are we actively conducting strategic trend analysis to align with the concept of directionality in EU R&I? How are we ensuring our research agendas are strategically oriented towards emerging trends and societal needs?

Ecosystem-based approach sensitivity: How are we adapting to an ecosystem-based approach in R&I, which involves interfacing with diverse organizations across various sectors? Are we equipped to navigate and contribute effectively within these multifaceted research ecosystems?

Administrative support: Is there sufficient administrative support to manage the complexities of consortium agreements and coordination?

Development and demonstration activities

Bridging gap between research and application: These projects require robust infrastructure and practical application skills.

Facilities and equipment: Do our institutes have the necessary facilities and equipment to move from theory to practice?

Industry linkages: How strong are our industry linkages at EU level to facilitate the transition from development to demonstration? Do we know which are the strategic linkages and what we can both take out and bring into the collaboration?

Investment in structuring projects: Are we prepared to invest time and resources to gain access and recognition in large-scale structuring projects, such as Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs), that are often crucial in EU R&I contexts? Do we have strategies for engaging in such high-investment collaborations?

Financial engineering for lower funding rates: How equipped are we to financially engineer projects with lower rates of funding, especially for key initiatives within the EU framework? Do we have the capacity to leverage available resources and maximize the impact of reduced funding?

Strategic network building and policy contribution

Influencing R&I Policy: Engagement in policy and network building demands a different strategic approach.

Policy expertise development: Are we investing the necessary time and resources to build expertise in R&I policy? How are we ensuring continuous development in understanding EU policy intricacies?

Networking strategies at the EU level: What strategies are we implementing to build and maintain strategic networks within the EU?

Institutional culture shift: How are we fostering a culture that appreciates the importance and potential of policy influence and networking? Are efforts made to envision and understand the indirect linkages between such activities and structural success?

Clarity of purpose in policy influence and networking: Do we have a clear and articulated purpose in our policy influence and networking activities? How is this purpose aligned with our institutional strategy and consciously integrated with EU priorities?

Strategic questioning and alignment: Are we adept at asking the right questions to guide our policy involvement? How do we ensure that our engagement is not just generically aligned with broad EU themes like ICT or renewable energy, but is strategically tailored to specific EU policies and priorities?

Technology commercialization

Market-ready research: Commercialization requires a blend of entrepreneurial skills and research excellence.

Entrepreneurial training: Are we providing sufficient training and support for researchers to develop entrepreneurial skills?

IP management: How robust are our processes for intellectual property management and commercialization?

Mission-driven research projects

Addressing societal and industry needs: These projects require a keen understanding of societal challenges and industry demands.

Alignment with societal goals: Are our research agendas aligned with current societal and industry needs?

Impact assessment: How are we measuring the societal and industrial impact of our research?

Human capital development

Training and mentoring researchers: Crucial for sustained R&I success, this requires a strategic approach to human resource development.

Mentoring programs: Do we have structured mentoring programs that align with EU R&I funding opportunities?

Skill development: How are we ensuring the continuous development of skills necessary for evolving R&I landscapes?

For INESC institutes, strategically engaging in EU R&I initiatives goes beyond project participation; it demands a critical appraisal of internal conditions and resources. The institutes must continuously evaluate and adapt their strategies, structures, and resources to align with the diverse requirements of these initiatives. By addressing these key questions, INESC institutes can not only enhance their readiness for various types of R&I engagements but also position themselves effectively within the EU's competitive research landscape. This approach will allow INESC to capitalize on its diverse strengths, foster innovative research, and ensure meaningful contributions to society and industry. Ultimately, the strategic preparation and critical self-assessment will be instrumental in defining INESC's path forward in the evolving world of EU research and innovation.

Support structures for project participation and agenda-setting

Leading institutions in the EU R&I differentiate and simultaneously combine and optimize their approaches to project participation and agenda setting support. These two areas, while interconnected, require distinct sets of skills, strategies, and institutional commitments. This analysis critically explores these differences and the specific needs for success in each area, especially considering the varied paths and requirements of individual INESC institutes.

Project participation support

Core focus: Emphasizes administrative, financial, and regulatory expertise for EU project preparation and management. It includes scientific and technical capacity, domain-specific communication, and engagement, alongside intellectual property knowledge.

Specific needs:

Expertise in EU funding mechanisms: Dedicated teams with deep knowledge of EU funding rules, application processes, and compliance requirements.

Scientific and technical excellence: Strong emphasis on maintaining high scientific standards and technological capabilities to meet the stringent demands of EU-funded projects.

Pre-award activities: Robust support in proposal writing, budget planning, and consortium formation.

Agenda setting support

Core focus: Involves strategic activities like communication, visibility, representation, networking, strategic project participation, and policy development contribution.

Specific needs:

Strategic communication and branding: Developing narratives that position INESC institutes as thought leaders and influencers in their respective fields.

Networking and representation: Active participation in policy discussions, EU forums, and networking events to shape and align with the R&I agenda.

Policy insight and contribution: Engaging in policy development, providing expert opinions and insights to influence EU R&I directions.

Interdependence and integration

Overlapping areas: Both support areas are interconnected, particularly in opportunity identification, networking, understanding policy frameworks, and branding.

Synergy in execution: Successful project participation can bolster an institute's reputation, aiding agenda setting efforts. Conversely, effective agenda setting can open new opportunities for project participation.

Institutional machinery and individual institute needs

Institutional integration: Both project participation and agenda setting should be integral parts of an institute's strategic framework, requiring time, resources, and a unified approach.

Diverse paths of INESC institutes

Recognizing individual strengths and needs: The INESC institutes, with their varied focuses and strengths, require different approaches to project participation and agenda setting. It's essential to acknowledge that each institute's path to success in the EU R&I landscape is unique, influenced by its specific expertise, mission, and strategic goals.

Collaborative approach for enhanced impact: While individual strategies are crucial, there's also an intrinsic value in a collaborative approach. Leveraging the collective strengths and diverse capabilities of the INESC network can lead to more significant impacts in both project participation and agenda setting. This collective effort can enhance the visibility and influence of INESC institutes in the EU R&I domain.

Tailored strategies

Developing customized approaches: Each INESC institute must craft strategies that best suit its individual context. This involves identifying and focusing on areas where they can make the most substantial contributions, whether in technical project participation, policy influence, or a blend of both.

Synergizing individual and collective goals: The strategy development process should consider not only the individual institute's goals but also how these goals align with and contribute to the collective objectives of the INESC network. This synergy can potentiate the impact and reach of each institute within the broader EU R&I framework.

INESC institutes must balance the development of individualized strategies with the recognition of the power of collective action. By understanding and embracing the diversity in their needs and strengths, and fostering collaborative approaches, the INESC institutes can effectively enhance their role and positioning in the European research and innovation landscape.

Role of INESC Brussels HUB

In this final chapter, we explore the role of the INESC Brussels HUB in enhancing INESC's participation within the European R&I landscape. The HUB serves as a strategic facilitator. This chapter describes the HUB's operational model and its key activities.

We begin by examining the functioning model of the HUB, detailing its structure, roles, and missions. This leads into an analysis of the HUB's efforts in communications and visibility, showcasing how it elevates INESC's profile within the EU R&I landscape. The chapter then addresses the HUB's role in representing INESC in various EU bodies, highlighting its influence in policy-making and decision-making circles.

Furthermore, we assess the HUB's contributions to funding and capacity building, focusing on its support in identifying funding sources and enhancing the institutes' capacity to secure and manage EU R&I funds. The chapter also covers the HUB's strategies in intelligence gathering and lobbying efforts, illustrating how it actively collects strategic information and lobbies to advance INESC's research agenda within the EU framework.

Each section of this chapter is intended to provide a clear and objective perspective on the HUB's internal functioning and its foundational role in promoting joint projects, capacity building, strategic communication, and increasing visibility, recognition, and reputation. The chapter concludes by reflecting on the HUB's operational synergy with INESC institutes and its overall impact on INESC's strategic positioning within the EU R&I context.

The INESC Brussels HUB is more than a physical office; it is a dynamic structure that captures the pulse of European R&I developments. It is a strategic instrument that catalyzes our collective strengths, amplifies our voice, and propels our vision forward in the European R&I arena.

Functioning model

The INESC Brussels HUB operates under a well-defined organizational structure that was endorsed by the Management Committee in 2023, setting the course for its functioning from 2024 onwards. This structure is designed to ensure strategic coherence and operational efficiency across the HUB's activities.

Management Committee: At the helm is the Management Committee, comprising the President, an Administrator or Senior Board Member from each INESC institute, along with the Head of the INESC Brussels HUB. For the 2023-2025 mandate, the Committee is chaired by Inês Lynce and vice-chaired by José Carlos Caldeira. This body is not only the strategic decision-making core but also directly nominates Thematic Delegates for two-year terms, assigning them specific goals that align with the organization's strategic vision.

HUB: The central operational unit, the HUB, is tasked with the development and coordination of the Activities Plan, ensuring that all cross-thematic activities align with the strategic directives of the Management Committee.

Policy and Operations Board (POB): The POB, a permanent group within the HUB, is comprised of Senior R&I Managers. Its role is to facilitate swift decision-making processes and to provide continuous updates on strategic orientations and operational needs, thereby ensuring the implementation of the annual plan and contributing to structural operations.

Work Group Communications: As a fundamental and enduring element of the HUB, this group is coordinated by the HUB Head of Communication. It executes all communication and visibility activities, linking the communication efforts of the five institutes with those at the EU level, all while aligning with the broader communication strategy of the INESC Holding.

Thematic Delegates: These delegates are appointed for specific thematic areas, with a clear objective to achieve results that are strategically significant for the nominating institute. Their role is to represent the interests of their respective areas, facilitating networking, policy understanding, and project participation.

Task Forces: Task Forces are set up to address specific missions, with clear milestones, deliverables, and timelines. Comprised of Thematic Delegates and other members of the INESC research and innovation community, including support services, they are formed based on the relevance to the task at hand. On occasion, it may also be justified to include external experts outside of INESC to bring additional expertise and perspectives to the Task Forces. This inclusive approach ensures that the Task Forces are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to achieve their objectives effectively.

The INESC Brussels HUB's functioning model, articulated through its structure and strategic governance, sets a solid foundation for its broad spectrum of activities. As the decision-making and operational strategies are laid out by the Management Committee, HUB, POB, and Thematic Delegates, these components will synchronize to transition into the HUB's active roles in communication, representation, funding, capacity building, and intelligence gathering. The latter 4 pillars of the Strategic Plan are not just a set of tasks but a manifestation of the HUB's core functioning, demonstrating how structured governance is interwoven with proactive initiatives. To achieve this seamless integration ensures that the HUB's strategic model is not merely a static framework but a living system that drives forward its mission in research and innovation at the European level. Now, let us dive into the specific activities that embody this strategic intent and operational synergy.

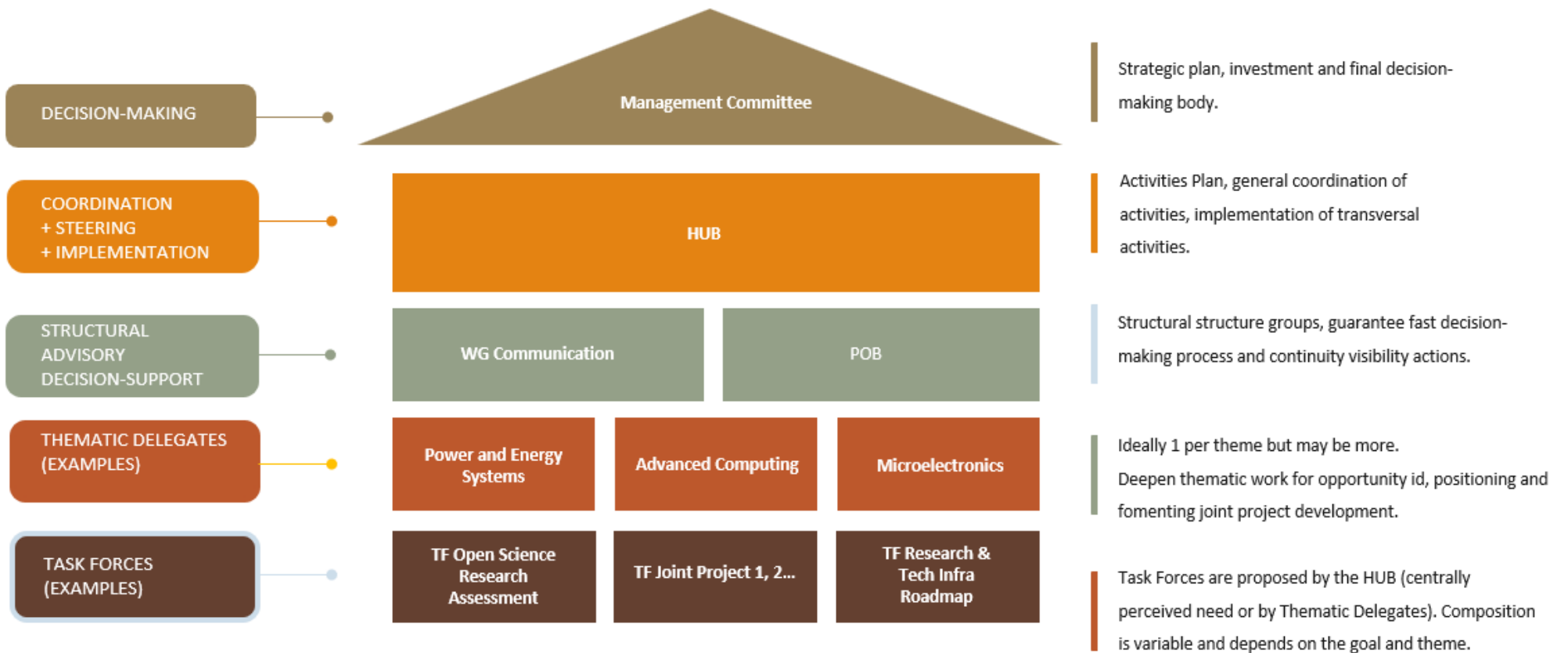


Figure X: INESC Brussels HUB functioning model

Communications and visibility

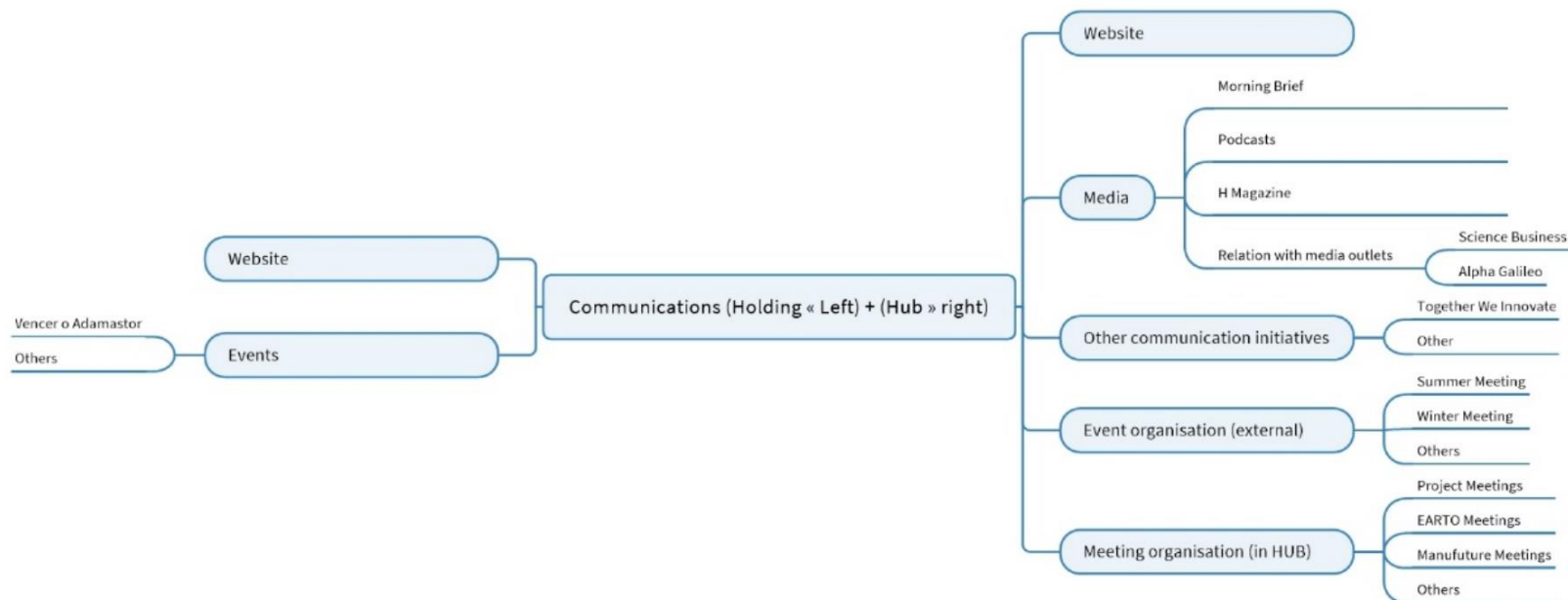
Multi-channel communication strategy: INESC HUB employs a diverse range of communication channels, including social media, a dedicated website, and partnerships with media outlets. This broad approach ensures wide visibility across different platforms.

Targeted media outreach: The HUB engages in media collaborations, utilizing platforms like Science Business and Alpha Galileo for specialized outreach. This targeted approach allows for reaching specific audiences relevant to INESC's research domains.

Regular updates and briefings: Regular briefings, such as morning briefs and podcasts, keep stakeholders informed about current affairs and developments within INESC, fostering continuous engagement.

Event organization and participation: INESC HUB, hosts, organizes and participates in various events, both internally and externally. These events serve as platforms for showcasing INESC's research capabilities and for networking with key stakeholders in the EU R&I community.

Publications: The production of the Morning Brief, podcasts, a magazine and other publications provides in-depth insights into INESC's activities and achievements, further enhancing its profile and contributes to inform and linking with its research community and management in each institute and increasing linkages between institutes.



Representation in EU bodies

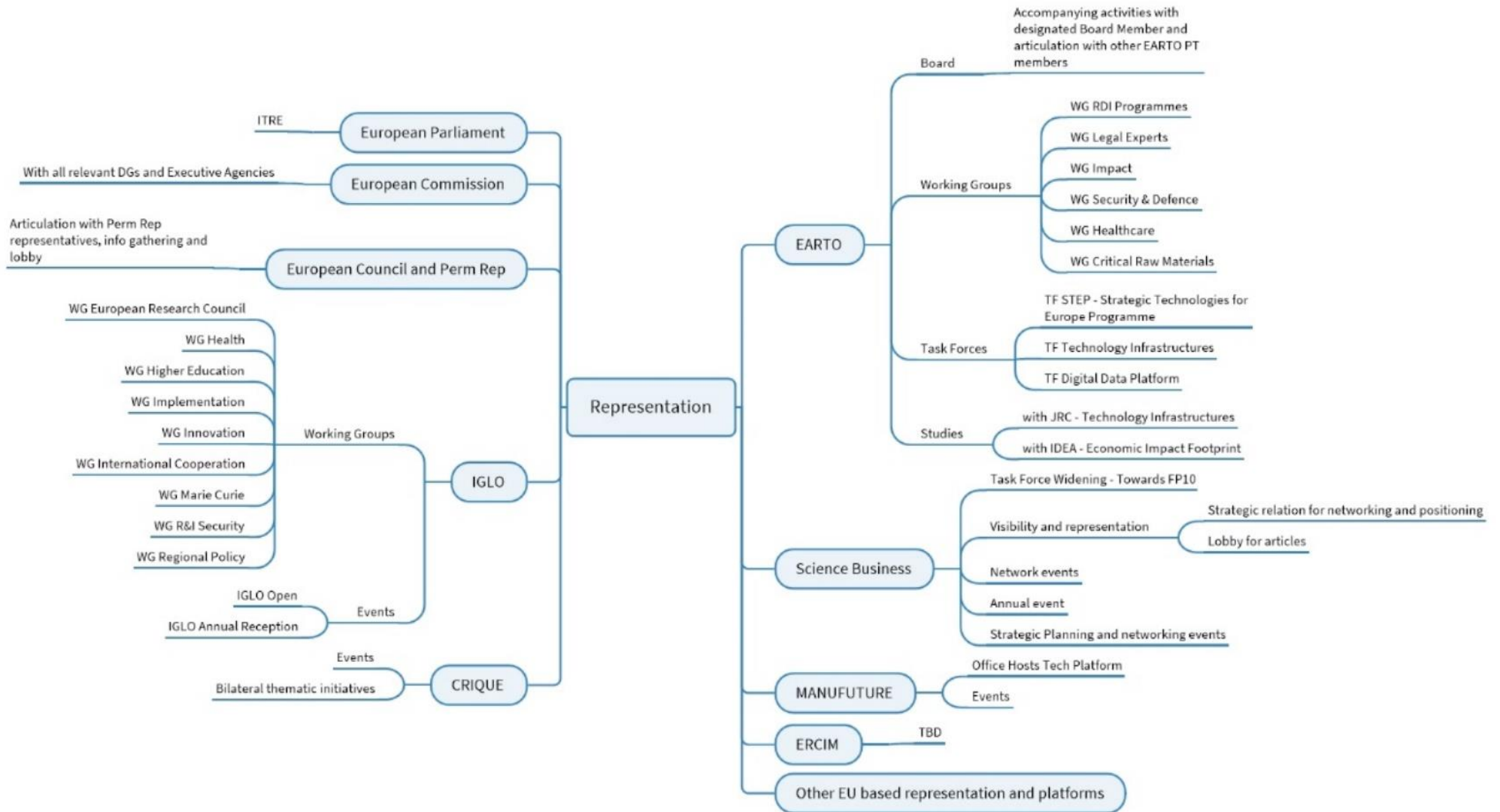
Engagement with EU institutions: INESC HUB actively engages with key EU bodies, including the European Parliament, the European Commission, and various EU agencies. This involves participation in meetings, consultations, and committees to represent and advocate for INESC's interests.

Influence in policy development: The HUB plays a role in shaping EU research policies and agendas, contributing insights and feedback to policy drafts and participating in public consultations.

Collaboration with EU networks and platforms: INESC HUB collaborates with EU-level networks and platforms, leveraging these connections to influence R&I policies and gain insights into upcoming initiatives.

Dissemination of policy positions: The HUB actively disseminates INESC's policy positions, ensuring that its viewpoints are represented in relevant EU discussions and decisions.

Facilitating INESC's direct involvement: The HUB facilitates direct involvement of INESC researchers and administrators in EU bodies, ensuring that INESC's expertise is directly represented and contributes to the EU R&I landscape.



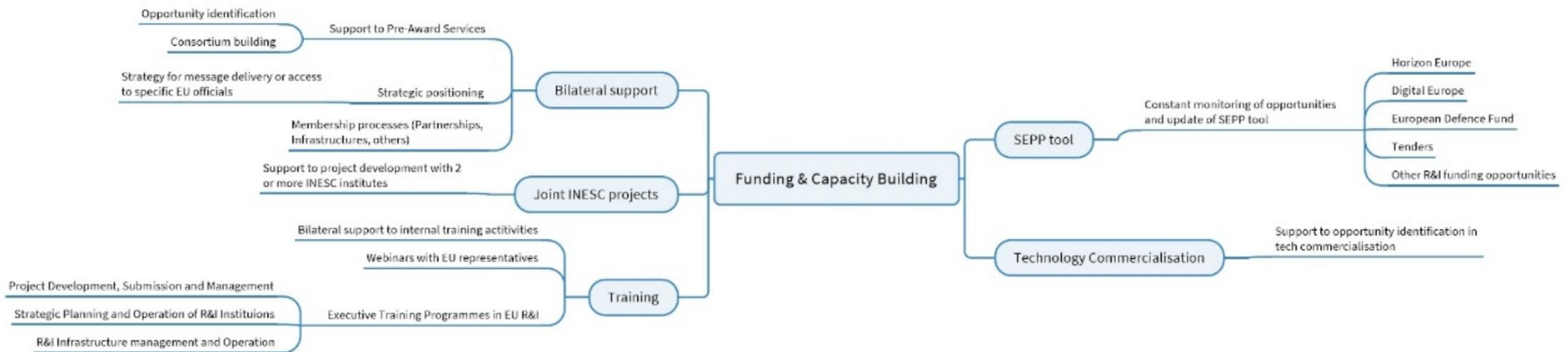
Funding and capacity building

Funding opportunity identification: The HUB actively identifies EU funding opportunities relevant to INESC's research areas, informing and guiding the institutes on potential grant applications.

Support to Pre-Award: Offers support to pre-award services in each institute, assists in forming strategic consortia for EU projects, leveraging its network to create collaborations that enhance the competitiveness of INESC's applications.

Training and Capacity Enhancement: Provides training programs to INESC staff, enhancing their skills in EU project management, proposal writing, and compliance with EU regulations.

Feedback and Improvement Mechanisms: Implements feedback loops for continuous improvement in proposal submissions and project management, ensuring that learnings from each cycle are integrated into future efforts.



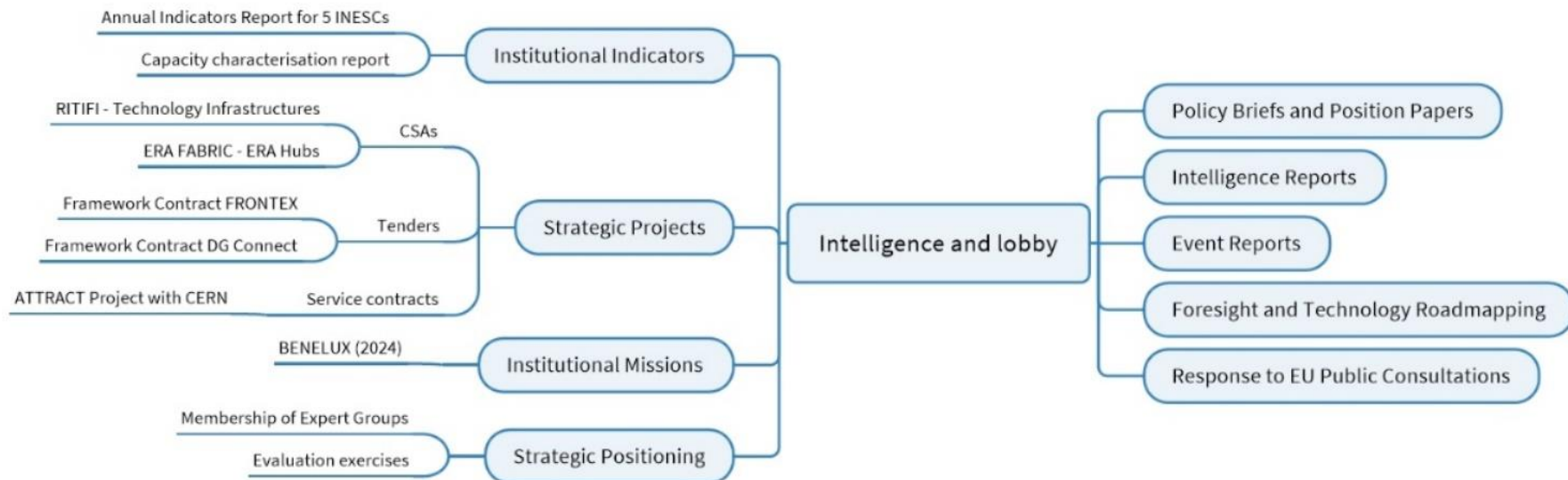
Intelligence gathering and lobbying efforts

Policy briefs and Intelligence Reports: The HUB actively produces policy briefs and Intelligence Reports that capture key insights on EU R&I developments. These documents inform INESC's strategy and contribute to broader EU policy discussions.

Strategic projects: Promoting the participation in strategic projects key to networking, EU R&I agenda-setting and capacity building of INESC researchers and HUB staff.

Responses to EU public consultations: The HUB ensures that INESC's voice is heard in EU public consultations, shaping policies and regulations that impact the R&I sector.

EU R&I strategy development: By gathering intelligence on upcoming EU initiatives and trends, the HUB aids INESC in aligning its research strategy with European priorities, enhancing its relevance and impact.



Discussion points for debate

As we approach the conclusion of this report, it is imperative to shift our focus towards a series of pivotal discussion points. These points are designed not only to provoke thoughtful debate but also to foster a deeper understanding and collaborative reflection among the INESC institutes. They are tailored to address the diverse nature of our engagement with the EU R&I framework and the integral role of the INESC Brussels HUB in supporting our collective success. In going through these discussion points, we aim to uncover insights that will guide us in refining our strategies, enhancing our operational frameworks, and optimizing our collaborative efforts. Let us explore these critical questions, each serving as a catalyst for productive discourse and strategic refinement.

All the questions below are anchored in the goal of more and better participation in EU programmes and initiatives.

Structural adaptability and success

How do INESC institutes define success within their various R&I activities, and how do these definitions influence their structural and strategic decisions?

What are the critical structural changes that INESC institutes need to implement to support a diverse range of R&I activities, from fundamental research to collaborative innovation projects?

Balance and synergy

How can INESC institutes strike a balance between contributing to agenda-setting and actively engaging in project development and support?

In what ways can the INESC Brussels HUB's activities be optimized to better support the individual and collective objectives of the institutes?

Investment and dedication

What are the key investments, in terms of resources and time, that INESC institutes need to commit to maximize the benefits from the services provided by the INESC Brussels HUB?

How can the INESC Brussels HUB adapt its services to cater to the evolving needs of the institutes and ensure that their time and resource investment is efficiently utilized?

Collaboration and autonomy

What mechanisms can be put in place to ensure that the autonomy of INESC researchers is maintained while fostering collaboration within and across institutes?

How can the institutes' internal policies be aligned to promote a culture of collaboration that complements their autonomous research pursuits?

Strategic alignment and service utilization

How can INESC institutes ensure that their strategic planning is in harmony with the EU R&I agenda, and how does this alignment influence their use of the INESC Brussels HUB services?

What steps can be taken to ensure that the HUB's services are fully utilized by the institutes, and how can these services be tailored to meet institute-specific needs?

Enhancing communication of needs and goals

In what ways can the institutes better communicate their needs and strategic goals to the INESC Brussels HUB?

How can we establish a more effective feedback loop that allows institutes to convey their evolving research priorities and strategic objectives clearly and promptly to the HUB?

What role can structured communication platforms or regular strategy meetings play in ensuring that the HUB is continuously aligned with the institutes' needs?

Evaluating and improving communication channels

How effectively are the current communication channels between the institutes and the HUB? What improvements can be made?

Are there specific communication channels (like direct liaisons, digital platforms, periodic meetings) that have proven more effective, and how can these be optimized?

What are the existing challenges or barriers in the current communication processes, and how can these be addressed to facilitate more seamless and transparent interactions?

These questions, while not exhaustive, are intended to spark a dynamic and forward-thinking discussion, crucial for the ongoing evolution and strengthening of our collective endeavors within the European R&I landscape. By engaging openly and critically with these topics, at the Winter Meeting 2024 and beyond this event, we can pave the way for a more integrated, effective, and successful INESC community, fully leveraging the support and resources of the INESC Brussels HUB.