# CHARM-EU In-Person Meeting Policy

## 1. Context

**From the CHARM-EU** Mission and Vision Statement**:**

*CHARM-EU represents a Challenge-Driven, Accessible, Research-based and Mobile model for the co-creation of a European University aligned with the European Values and the sustainable development goals (SDGs).*

*The diversity of educational systems and the differing geographical, regional, cultural, lingual, economic and historical perspectives/challenges of the eight CHARM-EU members contribute to consolidating the university of the future revealing our common goals on the path towards a more sustainable and inclusive future.*

In an effort to foster collaboration and maintain effective communication within the Alliance, it is imperative to strike a balance between remote/online and in-person meetings. While remote/online meetings are a convenient and efficient means of communication, there are occasions when face-to-face interactions become necessary for the successful execution of project activities and overall Alliance objectives. However, excessive in-person meetings can lead to financial strain and resource allocation challenges. Hence, this policy aims to establish guidelines for organising and attending in-person meetings with careful consideration of their necessity, frequency, and rationale.

## 2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to define the circumstances under which in-person meetings are deemed appropriate, set limits on the number of in-person meetings per year for each of the Work Packages and/or other groups within the Alliance, and provide a framework for the justification of such meetings. By doing so, we aim to optimise resources, reduce costs, and improve the efficiency of the Alliance's operations. We also look to ensure that travel occurs only when there is no other alternative in order to minimise the Alliance's carbon footprint.

## 3. Definitions

For the purpose of this policy, a face-to-face meeting is one where all the participants are physically in the same place. Travel refers to the modes of transport used by attendees in order to be present at the event. Within the Alliance, a group is defined as representatives or staff who are participating in CHARM Eight∞ Work Packages and/or in CHARM-EU Boards/Councils/Offices as outlined in the Alliance's Governance Terms of Reference.

## 4. Scope

This In-Person Meeting Policy and related procedures applies to all individuals, including employees, students, and guests travelling to and attending face-to-face events on behalf of CHARM-EU, particularly those who are participating in groups associated with the CHARM Eight∞ Project.

## 5. Benefits

5.1. The Alliance can strengthen collaboration and build stronger personal connections and mutual understanding among members by accommodating in-person meetings.
5.2. Managers and the hosts of meetings have sufficient time to prepare for events especially in relation to room requirements, meals, and other resources.
5.3. Organisers of face-to-face meetings can plan events in a consistent and transparent fashion following guidelines that apply to all groups within the Alliance.
5.4. The necessity for environmentally damaging air travel is minimised.
5.5. Expenditure on travel and accommodation is reduced or kept within agreed budget limitations.

## 6. Principles

6.1. Each group within the Alliance is encouraged to hold in-person meetings no more than once a year, depending on their specific needs and requirements.
6.2. In-person meetings should be planned with efficiency in mind to minimise disruptions to regular work schedules. Whenever possible, consider consolidating related meetings into a single session or scheduling meetings to align with other CHARM-EU events such as the Annual Conference.
6.3. While it is essential to have key stakeholders present at in-person meetings, the number of attendees should be kept reasonable to maximise the benefits and minimise costs. Having one representative from each partner attend a meeting in-person should, in most cases, be adequate for all related activities to proceed. Of course, in instances where the journey is short or inexpensive for a particular university, or a partner feels that having multiple representatives is justified (e.g. when staff from several Work Package Sub-Groups are asked to attend), they will have the option to send more than one representative (depending on budget available).

6.4 If staff are being asked to travel for an event/meeting, there must be a minimum duration for activities. i.e. one full day or 1.5 days.

6.5. In-person meetings should only be organised when virtual alternatives are impractical to achieve the meeting's objectives or when it is necessary to collaborate in-person to produce a project deliverable. Nonetheless, all face-to-face meetings should be conducted in a manner that allows representatives attend remotely if required (hybrid event).

6.6. The rationale for holding an in-person meeting must be clearly articulated and documented in advance, specifying the outcomes expected from the meeting.

6.7. Organisers should consider cost implications, including travel expenses and venue charges, while planning in-person meetings and seek the most efficient and economical solution whenever possible.

6.8. It must also be taken into consideration that for some Alliance partners, the number of viable travel options available can often be very limited (sometimes air travel is the only way of reaching a destination) and depends largely on the location of the meeting and time of year (due to seasonal routes).

6.9. In all cases, the preferred maximum requirement for overnight accommodation for any staff attending in-person meetings should be two nights and organisers should be mindful of this when finalising plans for the event.

6.10. At all times, organisers and attendees must adhere to their own university's Travel and Accommodation policies and ensure that any internal procedures for travel approval are in place. (see Section 9).

6.11. Organisers should maximise the opportunity of physical meetings by ensuring that any hands-on actvities, such as workshops, brainstorming, etc. are scheduled as part of the event.

## 7. Process

7.1. After consultation and agreement with the relevant group members, the Head/Leader contacts the Manager of their university by email **at least 90 days before the proposed event** with the following meeting details:

- Purpose/Objectives/Justification of Meeting
- List of Suggested Attendees (Name and University)
- Time and Date of Meeting (Including Expected Duration)
- Venue of Meeting

7.2. The Manager who is contacted initially circulates the request to the Managers of the other university partners for approval (either by email or at the next available Managers Meeting).

7.3. Once approved (by consenus in the Managers Meeting), the Manager informs the requesting Head/Leader of the outcome. Each of the proposed attendee(s) then contacts the Manager from their own university in order to agree travel and accommodations plans.

7.4. Travel and accommodation must be finalised and booked **at least 60 days before the proposed event.**

7.5. In exceptional circumstances, a group may request a second meeting in a year where a key project deliverable is dependent on face-to-face interactions. Such requests will be submitted with a recommendation by the Managers to the Executive Board for approval

7.6. After each in-person meeting, the Head/Leader of the group should conduct a brief assessment of its effectiveness and document the achieved outcomes. This evaluation will aid in refining future meeting strategies and improve the decision-making process regarding in-person meetings.

7.7. A signed attendance list should also be maintained for record purposes.

## 8. Responsibility

8.1. Organiser: The Head/Leader is responsible for making the meeting request in a timely fashion, adheres to the process outlined above at all times and communicates updates and decisions as required to all relevant parties.

8.2. Manager: The Manager approves any request that meets the criteria and principles outlined above in a prompt manner and ensures that costs are minimised and all local policies are followed.

8.3. Attendees: All members of the group attending the meeting must have relevant event details available in order to suggest a preferred option for travel from their home university and accommodation at the destination. Attendees are expected to be present at all aspects of the organised event for which they are required and must follow the principles outlined in this document at all times.

8.4. All staff travelling for CHARM-EU activities are expected to have adequate travel and health insurance coverage or be in possession of a valid European Health Insurance Card (EHIC).

8.5. The CHARM-EU Executive Board is responsible for the oversight of this policy.

## 9. Related Documents

9.1 Green Erasmus: Sustainable Internationalisation for a Sustainable Europe

9.2 Trinity College Dublin: Travel Policy

9.3 Ruhr West UoAS: State Travel Expense Act Northrhine-Westphalia

9.4 University of Barcelona: UB Travel Policy (only in Catalan)

9.5 Åbo Akademi University: Travel Regulations (ÅAU intranet)

9.6 University of Bergen: Travel | Employee Pages | UiB

9.7 Utrecht University: Travel Policy UU

9.8 University of Montpellier: Guide des Missions de l'Université de Montpellier

9.9 Julius Maximilian University Bavarian Regulations for Public Service (JMU intranet)

9.10 Eötvös Loránd University ELTE Travel Policy (only in Hungarian)

## 10. Document Control

10.1 Date of initial approval: Executive Board 25th January 2024

10.2 Date policy effective from: 19th February 2024

10.3 Date of next review: Sprint 4 Meeting 2024