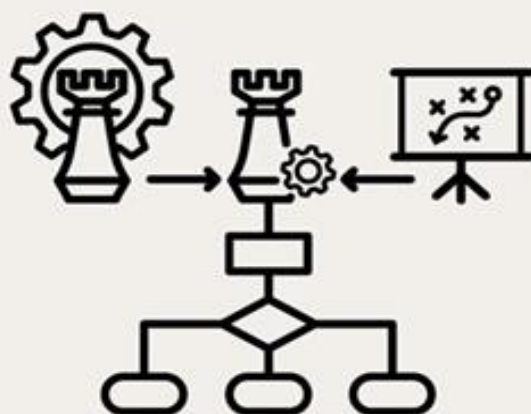




UNIVERSITY OF
THESSALY

STRATEGIC PLAN



December 2024

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	4
1. Legal Framework and the Connection of Strategic Planning with Law 4957/2022	5
2. Mission, Vision and Values of the University of Thessaly	6
2.1 Mission.....	6
2.2 Vision	6
2.3 Values	6
3. Current Situation.....	8
3.1 The University of Thessaly	8
3.2 Schools and Departments of the University of Thessaly	9
3.3 Innovation – Technology Transfer Unit and the "One Planet Thessaly" Entrepreneurship Center of the University of Thessaly	11
4. SWOT Analysis	12
4.1 Strengths	13
4.2 Weaknesses	14
4.3 Opportunities	15
4.4 Threats	16
4.5 Specific Points Resulting from the Establishment of the Department of Psychology	17
5. PESTEL Analysis for the Identification of External Factors Affecting the Institution	19
5.1 Political Factors.....	19
5.2 Economic Factors.....	20
5.3 Social Factors	21
5.4 Technological Factors.....	22
5.5 Environmental Factors	23
5.6 Legal Factors.....	24
6. Methodology for Selecting Strategic Priority Areas.....	25
Strategic Priority Areas.....	26
7. Strategic Objectives (Short-Term and Medium-Term) & Actions	29
7.1. Priority Area 1	30
7.2. Priority Area2.....	33
7.3. Priority Area3.....	36
7.4. Priority Area4.....	40
7.5. Priority Area5.....	43

7.6. Priority Area6..... 3

7.7. Priority Area7..... 6

7.8. Priority Area8..... 9

8. Financial Forecasts 12

9. Methodology for Monitoring the Strategic Plan (Institutional/Legal Style) 13

10. ANNEXES..... 14

Introduction

Strategic planning constitutes one of the most critical factors for the development and continuous improvement of the operation of every modern university institution. The University of Thessaly (UTH), with its long-standing tradition of academic excellence, innovation, and social contribution, implements a comprehensive strategic plan that responds to the contemporary demands of education, research, and social engagement.

This document presents the Strategic Plan of the University of Thessaly for the period 2024–2027, founded upon the framework of Law 4957/2022 and guided by the principles of sustainable development, quality and inclusion. Through this plan, a clear vision, a defined mission and values are articulated, reflecting the Institution's priorities for the continuous enhancement of its educational and research activities.

The strategic plan encompasses the analysis of the current situation, the assessment of strengths and challenges through SWOT and PESTEL methodologies, as well as the identification of strategic priority areas. The key areas include the improvement of the educational experience, the strengthening of research and innovation, internationalization, the promotion of green and digital development, and the integration of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. At the same time, specific objectives and actions are set, supported by financial projections and monitoring mechanisms, ensuring effectiveness and transparency throughout every phase of implementation.

With a future-oriented perspective, the University of Thessaly aspires to remain a leader in education and research, making a decisive contribution to development and innovation both at the national and international level.

The drafting of the present strategic plan has been a complex and demanding process, based on a clear vision, effective collaboration, collective reflection and systematic methodology, the exchange of ideas and the adoption of best practices. This challenging endeavor, which embodies common values, visions, and goals for the future, was undertaken by the Strategic Planning Committee of the University of Thessaly, established by Decision No. 4324/24/GP/11.03.2024 (ADA: Ψ10K469B7Ξ-ΞΣΤ) of the Governing Council of the University of Thessaly, pursuant to the provisions of Article 216 of Law 4957/2022 (Government Gazette A' 141), and reconstituted by Decision No. 26563/24/GP/04.11.2024 of the Governing Council of the University of Thessaly. The Committee is composed of the following members:

1. **Charalampos Billinis** – Rector, Professor, Department of Veterinary Medicine, School of Health Sciences, University of Thessaly
2. **Chrysi Laspidou** – Vice-Rector for Innovation, Internationalization, Partnerships and Digital Governance, Professor, Department of Civil Engineering, School of Engineering, University of Thessaly
3. **Ioannis Anagnostopoulos** – Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs, Student Issues and Quality Assurance, Professor, Department of Computer Science and Biomedical Informatics, School of Science, University of Thessaly
4. **Ioannis Stefanidis** – Vice-Rector for Research and Lifelong Learning, Professor, Department of Medicine, School of Health Sciences, University of Thessaly
5. **Panagiotis Plageras** – Vice-Rector for Financial and Administrative Affairs, Professor, Department of Animal Production Science, School of Agricultural Sciences, University of Thessaly
6. **Marianthe Chatziioannou** – Associate Professor, Department of Agriculture, Ichthyology and Aquatic Environment, School of Agricultural Sciences, University of Thessaly

Additionally, Ms. Lambrini Karageorgou, who served as Coordinator of the Strategic Planning Program, contributed to the drafting of the strategic plan, while the services of the University of Thessaly also played a significant role by providing data essential for shaping the Plan.

1. Legal Framework and the Connection of Strategic Planning with Law 4957/2022

Law 4957/2022, titled *"New Horizons in Higher Education Institutions: Enhancement of Quality, Functionality, and the Connection of HEIs with Society, and Other Provisions"*, constitutes the principal legal framework governing the contemporary operation of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Greece. The University of Thessaly, in response to these requirements, has developed its four-year Strategic Plan focusing on the following eight Strategic Priority Areas (SPAs).

Strategic Priority Areas of the University of Thessaly (Period: 2024–2027)	
1	Strengthening, upgrading, and modernizing the educational activities
2	Development of Research and Innovation
3	Connection with the State, the economy, and society
4	Internationalization and Outreach
5	Enhancement of academic environment quality and inclusion
6	Green and Digital University
7	Alignment with the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
8	Quality Assurance

According to current legislation, Greek HEIs are required to align with the objectives established by the National Strategy for Higher Education. Pursuant to the provisions of Article 16 of Law 4653/2020 and the specific provisions of Ministerial Decision 75165/Z1/17-06-2022 (Government Gazette 3131/B/20-06-2022), the evaluation of HEIs in the country is conducted.

Through this evaluation, the annual regular funding provided by the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs is allocated to the HEIs. Specifically:

- 70% of the regular funding** is distributed based on the following key criteria:
 - the total number of enrolled students per program of study,
 - the estimated annual cost of studies per student for each program,
 - the duration of study programs,
 - the size and geographical distribution of the institution.
- 30% of the regular funding** is allocated based on quality and performance indicators, which may be used to evaluate each HEI.

2. Mission, Vision and Values of the University of Thessaly

2.1 Mission

The mission of the University of Thessaly is to provide high-quality education through innovative study programs that respond to contemporary developments across scientific fields. The University seeks to promote the creation and dissemination of pioneering scientific knowledge by enhancing research and lifelong learning. Through these activities, it substantially contributes to the professional education and the skills development of its students, supporting their continuous advancement.

At the same time, the University of Thessaly invests in the establishment of strong partnerships with higher education institutions, research organizations, social actors, and productive sectors, both at the national and international level. Particular emphasis is placed on the connection with the labor market, with the aim of addressing the developmental needs of the country and enhancing the employability of its graduates.

The mission of the University of Thessaly is founded on fundamental values such as respect for human rights, justice, solidarity, and meritocracy. Through its actions, the University aspires to shape responsible and conscious citizens who possess social, scientific, and professional sensitivity and contribute actively to the progress of society.

2.2 Vision

The central vision of the University of Thessaly is its establishment as a modern, pioneering European university that plays a leading role in education, research, and social contribution. It aspires to respond with speed, flexibility, and effectiveness to the challenges of an ever-evolving, internationalized, and multidimensional academic and social environment.

This vision rests on four key pillars:

Excellence in Research: The University of Thessaly aims at the production of innovative and groundbreaking scientific knowledge, promoting academic excellence through cutting-edge research. Its objective is to elevate the Institution into a center of knowledge, creativity, and scientific innovation.

Innovation: The University promotes the linkage of research with its application in society and the economy, encouraging the development and implementation of innovative ideas. The integration of new technologies and the reinforcement of digital transformation constitute fundamental elements of its strategy.

Dynamic Partnerships: The Institution invests in the establishment of strong and mutually beneficial partnerships with leading academic institutions, research bodies, and social and productive organizations, both nationally and internationally. These synergies enhance the University's extroversion and networking, positioning it as an important actor in international developments.

Inclusion, Diversity, and Social Equity: The University of Thessaly is committed to providing an academic environment that fosters inclusion, multiculturalism, and equality. It supports the participation of all individuals regardless of origin, gender, age, or other social characteristics, promoting justice and solidarity throughout the academic community.

Based on these four pillars, the University of Thessaly aspires to act as a catalyst for change, cultivating a sustainable, resilient, and socially just academic community that combines scientific and educational excellence with social contribution and global perspective.

2.3 Values

The values of the University of Thessaly reflect its firm commitment to academic integrity and the creation of an environment that supports excellence, transparency, and justice.

Academic freedom is one of the fundamental principles of the Institution. The University of Thessaly encourages members of its academic community—students and staff alike—to explore, innovate, and express their ideas without restriction. At the same time, adherence to high ethical and deontological standards ensures the integrity and credibility of academic work, strengthening trust both within the Institution and in society at large.

Collaboration and creativity are at the heart of the University's functioning. The enhancement of teamwork and the promotion of innovation contribute to the formulation of new ideas and practices. The University invests in interdisciplinarity and the development of initiatives that lead to progress and advancement. Cooperation among students, faculty, and researchers is encouraged, while partnerships with research bodies, enterprises, and organizations—national and international—are actively promoted.

Sustainability is also a core value of the Institution. Acknowledging its responsibility toward the environment and future generations, the University of Thessaly adopts practices and strategies that reinforce sustainability. The protection of the natural environment and the promotion of sustainable development are embedded in all aspects of its operations, from the educational process to infrastructure management.

Open dialogue is a cornerstone of the University's culture. The Institution encourages the exchange of views and the appreciation of different perspectives, fostering a democratic and pluralistic environment. Students, academics, and administrative staff have the opportunity to participate actively in shaping policies and practices, strengthening both the sense of belonging and engagement.

Inclusion and diversity are fundamental principles of the University. The Institution is committed to providing equal opportunities for all, regardless of gender, age, origin, religion, or other social characteristics. It promotes multiculturalism and ensures that every member of its community feels accepted, safe, and supported.

Equal opportunity is likewise a primary goal. The University of Thessaly strives to ensure the conditions necessary for each member of its community to realize their full potential. The provision of educational, research, and professional opportunities is firmly grounded in the principles of justice and meritocracy.

Finally, **solidarity** is a value that reinforces the cohesion of the academic community. Through support and cooperation, the Institution creates strong bonds among students, faculty, and society at large, promoting mutual assistance and social responsibility.

With democracy, meritocracy, and accountability at its core, the University of Thessaly seeks to shape an academic institution open to society. These values constitute the driving force behind its continuous progress, academic excellence, and consolidation of international recognition in education and research.

3. Current Situation

3.1 The University of Thessaly

The University of Thessaly was established (together with the University of the Aegean and the Ionian University) in 1984 by Presidential Decree 83/1984, subsequently amended by Presidential Decrees 302/1985 and 107/1986. Initially, the governance of the University was entrusted to an Administrative Committee, as provided for in Presidential Decree 83/1984. The first Administrative Committee was appointed in March 1984, with its seat in Athens, while in September 1994 the seat of the Administrative Committee was transferred to the University's headquarters in Volos. Elections for the appointment of the first Rectoral Authorities of the University of Thessaly were held in December 1998, and since then, the following Professors have been successively elected as Rectors of the Institution: Mr. Pantelis Lazaridis, Mr. Konstantinos Bagiatis, Mr. Konstantinos Gourgoulianis, Mr. Ioannis Messinis, Mr. Georgios Petrakos, Mr. Zisis Mamouris, and Mr. Charalampos Billinis.

According to its founding decree, the University of Thessaly initially operated with five (5) Departments and admitted its first students in the academic year 1988–1989. During the 1990s, the number of Departments in the four capitals of Thessaly increased, while in 2013–2014 two additional Departments were established in the city of Lamia. A decisive point in the development of the University of Thessaly was the incorporation, in January 2019, of the Technological Educational Institute (TEI) of Thessaly and part of the TEI of Central Greece, which simultaneously resulted in the establishment of 17 new Departments.

The University of Thessaly is today **the third-largest university in the country**, with a **geographical presence across two administrative regions and five cities**. It is structured into **eight Schools and thirty-six (36) Departments**¹, while its educational, research, and administrative facilities extend across the cities of **Volos, Larissa, Karditsa, Trikala, and Lamia**, with a total surface area of approximately **250,000 m²**. The University's complexes **house auditoriums and teaching rooms equipped with modern information and visual systems, fully equipped educational and research laboratories**, as well as other support facilities.

In the city of Volos, the under-establishment Department of Psychology of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences will be located. For the installation and operation of this Department—including its educational, research, and administrative activities—the Municipality of Volos has approved the granting, for a period of eleven (11) years (until 17/06/2036), of the former premises of the Public Revenue Office (DOY) of Nea Ionia, with a total surface area of 1,300 m², located on Agios Nektarios Street.

The total student population amounts to 51,395, of which 44,994 are undergraduate students, 4,661 are postgraduate students, and 1,740 are doctoral candidates. The teaching and research staff comprises 1,218 members in total, including 703 members of the Teaching and Research Faculty (D.E.P.), 116 members of the Special Teaching Staff (E.D.I.P.), 84 members of the Special Technical Laboratory Staff (E.T.E.P.), 35 members of the Special Scientific Staff (E.E.P.), 77

¹ The upcoming Department of Psychology is included (311th/27-09-2024 Meeting of the University of Thessaly Senate). A proposal is expected from the Ministers of Education, Religious Affairs and Sports, National Economy and Finance, and Interior, as well as the opinion of the Hellenic Authority for Higher Education (HAHE).

Contract Lecturers, 1 Scientific Associate, and 202 Academic Fellows. In addition, the necessary administrative staff supporting the smooth operation of the Institution numbers 418 members.

The University of Thessaly offers ninety-nine (99) Postgraduate Study Programs, of which sixteen (16) are inter-departmental, six (6) inter-institutional, and two (2) international. The Postgraduate Programs of the University of Thessaly constitute a continuously expanding field of teaching and research, attracting considerable interest from students both from Greece and abroad. They operate under modern academic standards, encourage interdisciplinary collaboration and synergy with other research entities, and represent a significant portion of the University's international and inter-university collaborations. The University of Thessaly ensures the continuous support of its postgraduate students by improving laboratory and research infrastructure, providing opportunities for the advancement of their research, and linking postgraduate studies to society and the economy.

It is worth noting that the University of Thessaly contributes decisively to the development of the Regions of Thessaly and Central Greece, as well as the country as a whole. Its research activities, together with the consequent influx of student and academic populations into the cities hosting its Departments, substantially support the economic and social development of the wider area of Thessaly and Central Greece. For more than thirty (30) years, the graduates of the University of Thessaly have contributed to the scientific and cultural fabric of the country, drawing on the high level of education they have received.

3.2 Schools and Departments of the University of Thessaly

Today, the University of Thessaly consists of eight (8) Schools and a total of thirty-six (36) Departments³. Specifically:

I. School of Humanities and Social Sciences (Seat: Volos)

- Department of Early Childhood Education
- Department of Primary Education
- Department of Special Education
- Department of History, Archaeology and Social Anthropology
- Department of Linguistic and Intercultural Studies
- Department of Culture and Creative Media Industries
- Department of Psychology

II. School of Engineering (Seat: Volos)

- Department of Spatial Planning, Urban Planning and Regional Development Engineering
- Department of Mechanical Engineering
- Department of Civil Engineering

³ The upcoming **Department of Psychology** is included (311th/27-09-2024 Meeting of the University of Thessaly Senate). A proposal is expected from the Ministers of Education, Religious Affairs and Sports, National Economy and Finance, and Interior, as well as the opinion of the **Hellenic Authority for Higher Education (HAHE)**.

- Department of Architecture
- Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering

III. School of Health Sciences

- Department of Medicine (Seat: Larissa)
- Department of Biochemistry and Biotechnology (Seat: Larissa)
- Department of Nursing (Seat: Larissa)
- Department of Veterinary Medicine (Seat: Karditsa)
- Department of Public and Integrated Health (Seat: Karditsa)
- Department of Physiotherapy (Seat: Lamia)

IV. School of Agricultural Sciences

- Department of Agriculture, Crop Production and Rural Environment (Seat: Volos)
- Department of Agriculture, Ichthyology and Aquatic Environment (Seat: Volos)
- Department of Agriculture – Agrotechnology (Seat: Larissa)
- Department of Animal Production Science (Seat: Larissa)
- Department of Food Science and Nutrition (Seat: Karditsa)

V. School of Economics and Administrative Sciences

- Department of Accounting and Finance (Seat: Larissa)
- Department of Business Administration (Seat: Larissa)
- Department of Economics (Seat: Volos)

VI. School of Technology

- Department of Digital Systems (Seat: Larissa)
- Department of Energy Systems (Seat: Larissa)
- Department of Environmental Studies (Seat: Larissa)
- Department of Forestry, Wood Sciences and Design (Seat: Karditsa)

VII. School of Science (Seat: Lamia)

- Department of Informatics and Telecommunications
- Department of Informatics with Applications in Biomedicine
- Department of Mathematics
- Department of Physics

VIII. School of Physical Education, Sport and Dietetics (Seat: Trikala)

- Department of Physical Education and Sport Science
- Department of Dietetics and Nutrition Science

3.3 Innovation – Technology Transfer Unit and the "One Planet Thessaly" Entrepreneurship Center of the University of Thessaly

The University of Thessaly has placed innovation and sustainable development at the core of its strategy by establishing the **Innovation – Technology Transfer Unit** and the **"One Planet Thessaly" Entrepreneurship Center**. These institutions strengthen the University's connection with the market, society, and the economy, promoting new technologies, entrepreneurship, and responsible innovation.

Innovation – Technology Transfer Unit

The Innovation – Technology Transfer Unit plays a pivotal role in promoting and utilizing the innovation and technological development generated at the University of Thessaly. Its objectives include strengthening collaboration with industry and the market, protecting intellectual property, and commercially exploiting research results. The Unit's mission comprises:

- **Development of new products and services:** Facilitating the transition from research to market by creating new solutions and business opportunities.
- **Technology transfer:** Promoting and applying university research in the business sector through licensing, collaboration agreements, and the creation of spin-offs.
- **Entrepreneurship support:** Assisting researchers and students of the University of Thessaly in developing their entrepreneurial ideas and establishing startups.
- **Strategic partnerships:** Establishing collaborations with other academic and research institutions, industries and public bodies to enhance competitiveness and innovation.

The Unit's core activities include managing intellectual property and patents, providing support and advisory services to researchers for the commercial exploitation of their ideas, organizing educational events and workshops that promote innovation and collaboration and cooperating with businesses and market actors for the development of new technologies and products.

"One Planet Thessaly" Entrepreneurship Center

The "One Planet Thessaly" Center is the University of Thessaly's entrepreneurship hub, aiming to support sustainable development and promote innovative business models. It focuses on developing entrepreneurial solutions aligned with sustainability and social responsibility principles.

The Center's mission includes:

- **Promoting entrepreneurial thinking:** Cultivating entrepreneurial skills among students and young professionals, equipping them to create sustainable and responsible business initiatives.
- **Supporting startups:** Providing a supportive ecosystem for the growth of new ventures, offering consultancy, guidance and assistance in financing.
- **Creating sustainable and responsible business models:** Supporting entrepreneurial initiatives that integrate sustainability, social responsibility and environmental protection.
- **Outreach and collaboration:** Enhancing international partnerships and the exchange of knowledge and experience among entrepreneurs and researchers worldwide.

Key activities of "One Planet Thessaly" include:

- **Business incubation:** Supporting the development of new business ventures from inception to full commercial implementation.
- **Educational programs:** Organizing seminars, workshops and training programs to help students and young entrepreneurs understand contemporary trends and practices in entrepreneurship.
- **Networking and funding:** Facilitating connections between entrepreneurs and investors or funding institutions.
- **Promotion of sustainable solutions:** Supporting initiatives focused on the development of green and sustainable products and services, encouraging sustainable development.

The Innovation – Technology Transfer Unit and "One Planet Thessaly" operate as strategic instruments for the University of Thessaly, contributing to:

- Strengthening the connection between the academic community and the real economy and market.
- Developing research and innovation with practical applications, enhancing competitiveness and sustainability.
- Creating new jobs and business opportunities, promoting local and national development.
- Fostering a responsible and sustainable entrepreneurial culture aligned with social and environmental needs.

By integrating innovation, entrepreneurship, and sustainability into its academic strategy, the University of Thessaly promotes a dynamic and outward-looking trajectory for society and the economy.

4. SWOT Analysis

For the formulation of the University of Thessaly's long-term development strategy, it is essential first to identify and record the institution's strengths and weaknesses in relation to its competitors, as well as the opportunities and threats arising from the external environment. This process is captured through a **SWOT Analysis**, which serves as a useful strategic planning tool. The SWOT Analysis is divided into two main parts: the analysis of the internal environment, concerning the **Strengths** and **Weaknesses** of the University, and the analysis of the external environment, focusing on the **Opportunities** and **Threats** faced by the University of Thessaly.

SWOT ANALYSIS



Figure 1 SWOT Analysis

4.1 Strengths

1	High quality and diverse study programs with multidisciplinary and applied orientation, promoting the connection of education with the labor market.
2	Specialized and highly qualified academic staff with internationally recognized work and a strong publication record in scientific journals.
3	Support for an ever-growing student body under challenging conditions, through flexible approaches and effective organizational structure.
4	Close collaboration and direct interaction between academic staff and students, fostering a learning environment that enhances cooperation and engagement.
5	Continuous evaluation and upgrading of study programs, with an emphasis on updating based on social and technological developments.
6	Strengthening of the University's research footprint and international standing through participation in national and European research programs.
7	Robust quality assurance system and a culture of continuous improvement based on performance indicators and collective decision-making processes.
8	Student-centered approach allowing student participation in decision-making and active engagement in the learning process.

9	Provision of support services for students with disabilities through the "Access" structure, enhancing inclusion and participation in the university community.
10	Strong ties and collaboration with local society and external stakeholders, including businesses and local authorities, supporting local needs.
11	Culture of collegiality and student welfare aimed at comprehensive support of students.
12	Adaptability to multiple crises, demonstrating resilience and flexibility in response to economic and social changes.
13	Commitment to research, excellence, and innovation for green and digital transition.
14	Commitment to knowledge dissemination.
15	Enhancement of outreach, close cooperation with institutions, businesses, organizations, broader communities, and stakeholders.

The strengths of the University of Thessaly highlight its ability to combine high-quality education with social and scientific innovation. Multidisciplinary programs with strong practical components facilitate smooth integration of graduates into the labor market, while the academic staff's high level of expertise guarantees academic excellence. Continuous program evaluation and adaptation ensure that the University remains modern and competitive, focusing on contemporary skills and new scientific developments. Research activities, supported by participation in international programs, provide the University with strong positioning and international recognition. Furthermore, the student-centered approach and support for students with disabilities promote inclusion, ensuring the academic community is accessible to all. Collaboration with local society underlines the University's social role, creating a mutually beneficial relationship.

4.2 Weaknesses

1	Significant understaffing in academic and support personnel, leading to a high student-to-faculty ratio affecting teaching quality.
2	Insufficient administrative support and excessive bureaucracy hindering the management of research projects and programs.
3	Low graduation rates within the prescribed study duration and high numbers of inactive students.
4	Lack of Academic Advisors and limited personal support services for students.
5	Early-stage implementation of a student-centered approach, with a primary emphasis on lecture-based teaching and examinations.
6	Lack of career guidance for students and limited connection with the labor market.
7	Insufficient internationalization, with few English-language programs and absence of English-language websites for Schools to attract international faculty and students.

8	Limited online presence and lack of systems for alumni support.
9	Lack of organized procedures for collaboration with external stakeholders and utilization of their feedback.
10	Geographical dispersion.
11	In most Schools, the number of required courses remains high.
12	Lack of student dormitories meeting housing demand and serious shortage of sports and cultural facilities.
13	Insufficient student participation in course evaluations; absence of formal evaluation of academic staff aimed at improving teaching quality.
14	Lack of entrepreneurial culture, resulting in limited production of intellectual and industrial property.

These weaknesses reflect challenges related to funding, administrative support, and infrastructure. Severe understaffing affects education quality and increases the student-to-faculty ratio, while limited administrative support and bureaucracy reduce research productivity. The absence of an organized career guidance system, limited internationalization, and lack of English-language programs weaken the University's competitiveness internationally. Additionally, the lack of coordinated strategies for collaboration with external stakeholders limits practical training opportunities and market connections.

4.3 Opportunities

1	Increased demand for online education and lifelong learning, enabling the development of new study programs.
2	European and national funding for infrastructure and research development.
3	Partnerships with local authorities and businesses to promote social responsibility and address local challenges.
4	Promotion of internationalization through the development of English-language programs and enhanced online presence.
5	Opportunities to develop innovative educational and research initiatives in sustainable and green development.
6	Strengthening the University's relationship with alumni to support employability and networking.
7	Leveraging trends in intercultural education and interdisciplinary studies to meet emerging educational requirements.
8	Use of new digital tools to enhance teaching and learning.

9	Creation of an ecosystem of research, excellence and innovation, with strong research infrastructure and equal access for all.
10	Highlighting the University's central role in strategic planning for the Thessaly Region, particularly following the destructive Daniel and Elias floods.

The University of Thessaly can capitalize on modern educational trends and European funding opportunities to strengthen teaching and research. Growing demand for online and lifelong learning enables the creation of programs targeting a broader audience, while internationalization through English-language programs and a stronger online presence can enhance its global image. Collaboration with local authorities and businesses provides a framework to strengthen ties with society and the labor market. Initiatives promoting sustainable development and intercultural education could differentiate the University and reinforce its reputation as a socially responsible and environmentally conscious institution.

4.4 Threats

1	Climate change and pandemic consequences affecting educational and research operations.
2	Restrictions on public funding impacting education quality and infrastructure.
3	Overly regulated university operating framework limiting institutional flexibility.
4	Rapid technological advances requiring frequent updates to curricula and infrastructure.
5	Risk of declining student numbers due to competition with domestic or international institutions, demographic decline, etc.
6	Potential entry of private universities into the Greek market, increasing competition for students and resources.
7	Limited labor market opportunities potentially restricting graduate employment prospects.
8	Insufficient adaptation to sustainable development and green initiatives in line with international trends.
9	Highly competitive, dynamic and continuously evolving higher education environment with funding uncertainties and potential regulatory changes.
10	Leakage of faculty members after short-term appointments at the University of Thessaly to universities in Athens and/or Thessaloniki.

Threats primarily relate to limited public funding and the ongoing outflow of students and academic staff abroad, which reduces the quality and dynamism of the academic environment. Competition from Greek and international institutions, along with oversupply of similar programs, increases the need for innovation and differentiation. The impacts of climate change and the pandemic represent additional external risks, while strict regulatory frameworks hinder the University's adaptation to new conditions. Finally, potential private university activity in Greece will intensify competition, pressuring the University of Thessaly to improve its competitiveness.

4.5 Specific Points Resulting from the Establishment of the Department of Psychology

Based on the above SWOT analysis for the long-term development strategy of the University of Thessaly, a separate and detailed analysis follows of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats identified by the University regarding the planning and support of the proposed **Department of Psychology** within the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, based in the city of Volos.

Strengths

- Psychology is a cutting-edge science with an upward trajectory both internationally and in Greece, attracting interest at both the scientific and educational levels. The addition of a Department of Psychology to the University of Thessaly strengthens research in high-demand areas and increases the availability of study programs that attract student interest.
- Psychology departments have high entry requirements and consistently strong demand; therefore, the addition of this Department allows the University to attract high-achieving students.
- Psychology studies offer broad professional career opportunities (academic and applied perspectives). Consequently, the establishment of the Department can enhance the University's profile regarding the linkage between studies and employment.
- The subject matter of the Department of Psychology is interdisciplinary and flexible, allowing connections with other Departments (e.g., Education, Medicine), thereby enhancing interdepartmental collaboration.

Weaknesses

- Increased demand for student housing and potential difficulties in meeting this need through existing dormitories.
- Geographic location may pose challenges in attracting faculty and collaborators from major urban centers.

Opportunities

- The operation of a department in a key field (Psychology) can strengthen synergies within the University (e.g., student psychological support services)⁴.
- Significant growth in size and interdisciplinary reach of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences (SHSS).
- New opportunities arise for participation in European and national funding programs, such as NSRF (ESPA) and Horizon Europe, in areas such as education, mental health, and social inclusion.
- Strengthening postgraduate education and professional development programs, as the Department of Psychology will support existing programs and develop new postgraduate and specialized training seminars, taking into account the strong component of lifelong learning for professionals in the field.
- Opportunities for strategic collaborations with hospitals (particularly the University Hospital), mental health institutions, municipalities, and NGOs for research and internships.

Threats

⁴ Hub sciences are those sciences which, apart from their own domain, also contribute to a multitude of neighboring sciences, as shown by bibliometric and scientometric analyses (see, e.g., <https://www.psychologicalscience.org/observer/psychology-is-a-hub-science>)

- Low flexibility in certain aspects of the general regulatory framework (laws, regulations, etc.) may hinder the recruitment of high-level academic staff, as well as the development and funding of innovative research initiatives.
- Underfunding with potentially insufficient support for new administrative staff for the department.
- Competition from other Psychology departments. Central universities attract high-achieving students and already have substantial research infrastructure. In addition, the establishment of Psychology departments in private universities is anticipated.

5. PESTEL Analysis for the Identification of External Factors Affecting the Institution

The PESTEL Analysis constitutes a strategic tool that examines the external factors influencing the operation of an organization, such as a university. For the University of Thessaly, this analysis includes the following factors:

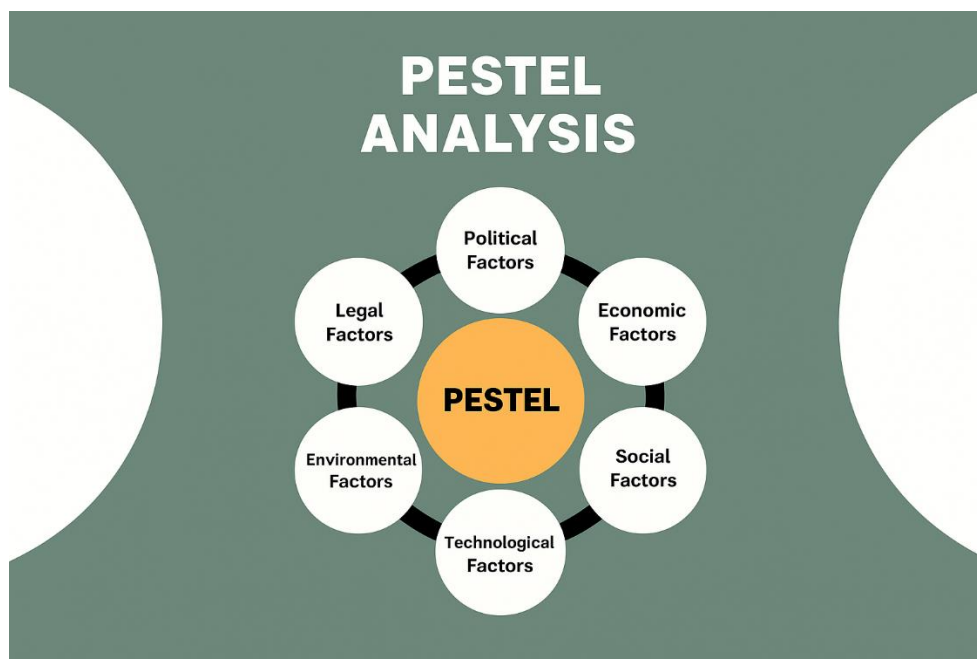


Figure 2 PESTEL Analysis

5.1 Political Factors

1	Educational Policy	Legislative changes in higher education, such as Law 4957/2022, directly affect the functioning and strategic orientation of the University
2	State Funding	Government decisions regarding the funding of universities determine the resources available for educational and research activities.
3	International Relations	Greece's political relations with other countries influence international collaborations and the ability to attract foreign students
4	European Educational Policies	Participation in European educational programs, such as Erasmus+, enhances the internationalization of the University.

5	Research and Innovation Policy	National and European policies on research and innovation strengthen the University's research activity and its international partnerships.
6	Collaboration with Local Authorities)	Owing to its presence across two regions and five cities, the University develops cooperative relationships with local and regional authorities (first- and second-level local government

Educational policy, and in particular the linkage of a significant share of state funding to the performance of each university against predefined indicators, has provided a clear direction of continuous improvement across higher education institutions. Furthermore, the participation of the University of Thessaly in European educational programs and partnerships with Higher Education Institutions from across the EU (e.g., **European University Alliances**) strengthens its internationalization and outward orientation. National and European policies on **research and innovation** open new perspectives for U.Th., facilitating collaboration with other research bodies and the development of innovative research programs. Finally, due to the geographical dispersion of the institution across multiple regions, there are both significant opportunities and challenges in its cooperation with local and regional authorities. Such collaborations can foster the development of innovative solutions, the strengthening of local economies, education and training initiatives, new funding streams, as well as responses to pressing social challenges.

5.2 Economic Factors

1	Economic Crisis	The condition of public finances affects both the feasibility and the level of state funding.
2	Labor Market.	Economic conditions and the competitiveness of enterprises determine the demand for specific fields of expertise, thereby influencing graduate employability
3	Funding Programs	Access to European funds for research and development represents a significant opportunity for the University. Other funding instruments, such as measures from the Recovery and Resilience Facility and the new programming period of the NSRF 2021–2027, can also serve as important sources of financial support.
4	Rising Cost of Infrastructure Investment	The sharp increase in the cost of materials and services in recent years limits the ability to implement new infrastructure investments.
5	Youth Unemployment	It reinforces the need for stronger links between knowledge, skills, research, and the labor market.

6	Creation of Self-Funding Sources	The current legal framework allows the University to provide products and services in order to increase its private resources (e.g., partnerships with private organizations, use of laboratories for the provision of scientific services, lifelong learning programs, fee-paying programs for employees, collaboration with industry, etc.).
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The condition of public finances directly impacts the capacity and consequently the extent of state funding. Moreover, the economic crisis and the increased cost of living have limited the ability of Greek families to financially support their children's studies away from their permanent residence, creating particular pressures on regional universities. Labor market conditions, and especially the competitiveness of enterprises, determine the demand for specific specialties, significantly influencing graduates' employment opportunities and, by extension, young people's professional orientation.

The utilization of European programs enhances opportunities for research and innovation, leveraging international collaborations while simultaneously creating significant employment opportunities for young researchers and contributing to the upgrade of the University's infrastructure. High unemployment is expected to increase the demand for lifelong learning programs, while the rising cost of materials and services restricts the ability to carry out new infrastructure investments as well as maintenance works. High labor market competition makes it imperative to further strengthen the connection between knowledge, skills, and research with the market.

Finally, the University of Thessaly has the capacity to independently develop initiatives to increase its private resources. Such initiatives include cooperation with private bodies, the use of laboratories for scientific services, the provision of lifelong learning programs and fee-based training for employees. These strengthen ties with the labor market and provide new revenue streams. At the same time, collaboration with industry creates opportunities for innovation and the practical application of research results. However, the success of these initiatives requires strategic planning, appropriate infrastructures, and sufficient expertise. With proper management, these actions can reinforce the University's sustainability and make it more competitive and autonomous.

5.3 Social Factors

Demographic Changes.	The decline in birth rates, a particularly acute phenomenon in Greece, is expected to reduce the overall demand for studies, primarily affecting less popular Undergraduate Programs. Therefore, their modernization and adaptation to contemporary social needs become necessary.
Cultural Trends	The emphasis on lifelong learning and multiculturalism requires adjustments in curricula.
Social Inequalities.	The need for equal access to education requires the development of support structures for vulnerable groups.
Youth Migration.	The emigration of talented young people abroad reduces the student potential and affects the competitiveness of the Institution.

Growing Importance of Mental Health	The need to support the mental health of students highlights the necessity of upgrading psychological support structures.
Socio-Economic Transformation	The interests of today's youth have largely shifted from traditional fields of study toward those that ensure career advancement in the domestic, and especially the international, labor market

Social factors affect the University of Thessaly mainly through demographic changes, which reduce the number of potential candidates. Furthermore, there is a steady trend among young candidates to choose universities abroad for their studies, a phenomenon that weakens the student body. Multiculturalism and the emphasis on lifelong learning encourage the development of programs that respond to contemporary needs, while social inequalities highlight the necessity of upgrading support services for vulnerable groups. The growing importance of mental health underscores the need to enhance psychological support structures. Social transformation affects the educational preferences of young people, as their interest has shifted away from traditional academic fields toward disciplines offering greater prospects for professional advancement. In particular, there is a clear turn toward fields that respond to the demands of both the domestic and international labor market, such as technological and innovative sciences. This underscores the need to modernize academic programs so that they align with new trends and provide graduates with competitive qualifications. At the same time, adapting to social changes can enhance the attractiveness of the University of Thessaly and attract students with high expectations and ambitions.

5.4 Technological Factors

Digital Transformation	The development of online programs provides flexibility and attracts students from remote areas
Distance Learning	The development of online programs provides flexibility and attracts students from remote areas.
Research and Innovation	Investment in cutting-edge technologies strengthens research activity and collaboration with industry.
Artificial Intelligence Development	The use of AI enhances the learning process, management, and data analysis
Cybersecurity	The need for data protection and system security increases the importance of technological safety

Digital transformation has a decisive impact on the competitiveness of the University of Thessaly, with the Institution prioritizing the integration of new technologies in teaching and research. Online study programs open new horizons in education by offering flexibility and enabling students from remote areas, or even abroad, to participate.

At the same time, investments in technological infrastructures and cutting-edge technologies enhance research activity and facilitate cooperation with industry, driving innovation and bringing the academic community closer to the market.

The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) provides an additional advantage, as it supports learning, automates data management, and improves the analysis of complex information, offering more personalized educational experiences. Nevertheless, the promotion of digital transformation brings the need to ensure cybersecurity. Data protection and the security of systems are fundamental, both for safeguarding the privacy of students and staff and for maintaining the Institution's credibility.

Overall, the shift toward the digital realm opens up significant opportunities to improve the quality of education and research, to attract more students, and to create an environment that combines innovation with security, strengthening the reputation of the University of Thessaly at both national and international levels. The integration of new technologies into teaching and research is essential for competitiveness.

5.5 Environmental Factors

Sustainable Development	The adoption of environmentally friendly practices in the University's infrastructures and operations constitutes an important priority.
Climate Change / Extreme Weather Events.	Addressing the impacts of climate change and extreme weather events, especially after the experience and the damages caused by Storm Daniel, requires the proper adaptation and reinforcement of the infrastructures of the University of Thessaly
Environmental Awareness / Education.	Raising awareness and educating the human resources and the student community of the University of Thessaly on environmental protection and the response to extreme weather events enhances the safety of human life.
Energy Saving – Recycling and Waste Management.	Energy saving, the utilization of Renewable Energy Sources (RES), and the adoption of circular economy practices reduce the environmental footprint of the Institution, while saving valuable resources and strengthening sustainability

Sustainable development constitutes a core strategic axis for the University of Thessaly, aiming to reduce its environmental footprint through environmentally friendly practices in its infrastructures and operations. The adoption of energy-saving measures, the use of Renewable Energy Sources (RES), and the implementation of circular economy practices—such as recycling and rational waste management—reinforce sustainability and contribute to the saving of valuable resources.

Climate change and extreme weather events, such as the damages caused by Storm Daniel, highlight the need for adaptation and reinforcement of the University's infrastructures. The resilience of buildings and the development of crisis management plans are central priorities for protecting human life as well as educational and research activities.

At the same time, raising environmental awareness among the student community and staff is critical for fostering a culture of respect for the environment. Educational programs and awareness-raising initiatives can strengthen the understanding of environmental issues and promote practices that safeguard safety and quality of life.

Overall, the University of Thessaly's strategy for environmental protection and adaptation to contemporary environmental challenges strengthens its position as a model of sustainable development and environmental responsibility within the academic community.

5.6 Legal Factors

Legislation	The operational framework of every university institution is precisely defined by the applicable legal framework
Intellectual Property Rights	The safeguarding of Intellectual Property Rights is a critical factor for the flourishing of the research process..
Protection of the Health and Safety of Students and Staff	Greek legislation on Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) is specified in concrete rules.
Personal Data Protection	Compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is essential for the security of personal data.
Labor Law	Social dimension (Social) – Legal dimension (Legal).

The operational framework of university institutions in Greece is precisely defined by Law 4957/2022 *"New Horizons in Higher Education Institutions: Enhancing quality, functionality and the connection of HEIs with society and other provisions"*, as analyzed in the first chapter.

A critical field for the modern functioning of universities is the **protection of intellectual property rights**, which safeguards researchers' intellectual property and constitutes a basic prerequisite for the development of innovative research activities.

At the same time, Greek legislation on **Occupational Health and Safety (OHS)** lays down specific rules for the protection of the health and safety of students and staff, contributing to the creation of a safe educational environment.

Furthermore, compliance with the **General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)** is equally essential, ensuring the privacy and security of the personal data of students, staff, and partners. Labor law also influences the development environment of the University, as changes in labor regulations affect labor relations, working conditions, and the rights of university staff. Moreover, compliance with contemporary requirements for fair treatment and equality influences the working climate and the ability to attract competent academic and administrative personnel.

Finally, developments in labor law—such as regulations concerning employment contracts, leave entitlements, teleworking, and employee protection—shape the legal framework within which the University operates. The implementation of these legal provisions enhances the operational effectiveness of the University of Thessaly, ensures compliance with national and international requirements, and strengthens its position as an organization operating with responsibility, transparency, and respect toward its human resources and society.

6. Methodology for Selecting Strategic Priority Areas

In the preparation of the Strategic Plan, a methodical and systematic approach was followed for the selection of the Strategic Priority Areas, so as to ensure the coherence and effectiveness of the final design. The process included the analysis of the internal and external environment, alignment with national and international strategies, assessment of available resources, definition of objectives, and prioritization of actions.

Initially, the internal environment of the organization was evaluated through a SWOT analysis, in order to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. This analysis highlighted areas where the University has a comparative advantage, as well as domains that require improvement or reinforcement. Subsequently, an analysis of the external environment was carried out to identify the main trends and challenges affecting higher education. Factors such as social and economic developments, technological and legal changes, and sustainable development prospects were taken into account. In addition, emphasis was placed on the study of strategies adopted at the international level, such as the integration of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and the emphasis on research, innovation, and digital transition.

Alignment with national and international strategies constituted a fundamental stage of the process. The Strategic Plan was designed to comply with national priorities for higher education, while also capitalizing on opportunities offered by European programs such as Erasmus+, Horizon Europe, etc. Furthermore, the incorporation of the Sustainable Development Goals contributes to strengthening the social role of the University and aligning it with global challenges.

During the evaluation of available resources, both human and financial resources, as well as the University's infrastructures, were examined. This process ensured that the selected axes of action were feasible and implementable. Particular emphasis was placed on identifying ways to utilize the available resources in the best possible way.

The objectives defined for each axis are **specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART)**. These objectives formed the basis for the development of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), through which the progress of the implementation of the plan will be monitored and evaluated.

Finally, a prioritization of strategic areas was carried out based on criteria such as academic quality, social impact, internationalization potential, and sustainability. This process assisted in identifying the areas of greatest strategic importance and contributed to the overall effectiveness of the Strategic Plan. The above methodical approach ensured that the Strategic Plan responds to the needs of the university community, is aligned with international trends, and possesses the necessary flexibility to address future challenges.

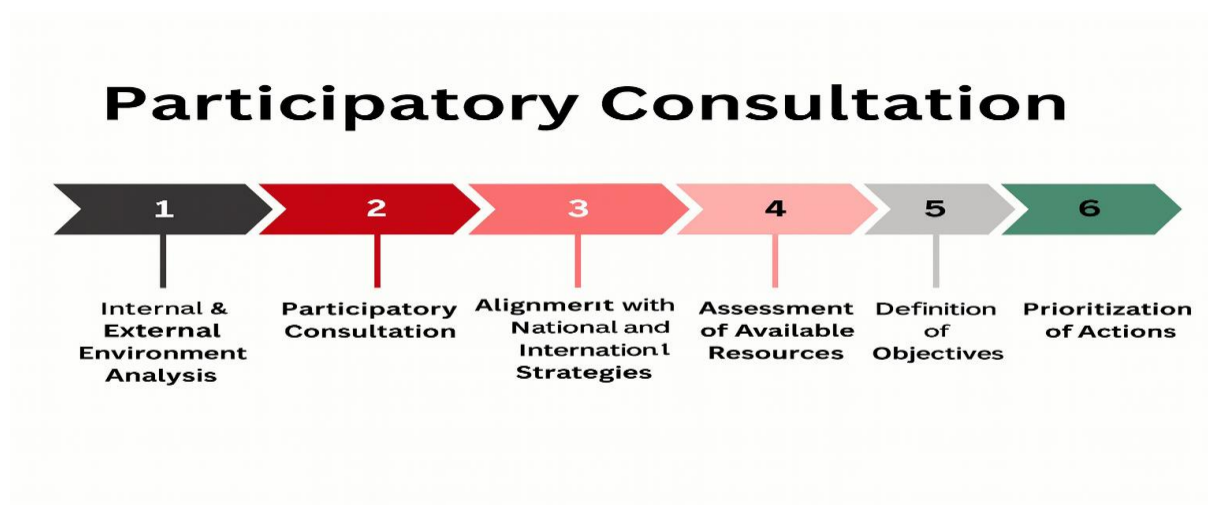


Figure 3: Methodology for Selecting Priority Areas

Strategic Priority Areas

The competitive position of the University of Thessaly is determined by the combination of internal and external factors as analyzed above. The results of the analysis constitute the coherent framework for selecting the appropriate strategy of the University, decision-making, and undertaking actions. Within this framework, the University aims at the optimal utilization of its strengths and opportunities to address its weaknesses and manage threats, and will follow a **strategy mix** that includes all four types of alternative strategic options, depending on the conditions and data it will face during the period 2024–2027:

The four alternative strategic options to be applied are the following:

- A) **Dynamic Strategy (S-O)**: Utilizing strengths to exploit opportunities.
- B) **Cautious Strategy (S-T)**: Utilizing strengths to avoid or mitigate threats.
- C) **Defensive Strategy (W-T)**: Addressing weaknesses to avoid threats.
- D) **Adaptation and Improvement Strategy (W-O)**: Leveraging opportunities to address weaknesses.

The above-mentioned strategy mix will be applied to the following **strategic priority areas** for the four-year period 2024–2027:

1. Excellence in Education and Teaching
2. Excellence in Research
3. Lifelong Learning and Education
4. Internationalization and Extroversion
5. Engagement with Society and the Economy
6. Infrastructures, Accessibility, and an Upgraded University Environment
7. Alignment with the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals
8. Quality Assurance

Each strategic priority area is specified in sub-strategic objectives, which constitute a concise yet carefully focused articulation of the University's aspirations for its overall activity.

A) Dynamic Strategy (S-O): Utilizing strengths to exploit opportunities

This strategy focuses on exploiting the internal strengths of the organization to capitalize on the opportunities provided by the external environment. In the context of the University of Thessaly, this strategy includes using the academic excellence and research capacity of the institution to take advantage of new opportunities created by national and international demand for innovative programs, collaborations, and funding from European and international programs. The aim of this strategy is the rapid exploitation of opportunities that arise in the fields of technology, partnerships, and research projects.

B) Cautious Strategy (S-T): Utilizing strengths to avoid or mitigate threats

This strategy focuses on leveraging the University's strengths to protect against threats from the external environment. This means that the University can use the high quality of its teaching, infrastructures, or research capabilities to offset threats arising from economic crises, declining demand for traditional programs, or strong competition from other institutions. The goal of this strategy is to minimize risks and maintain the institution's competitiveness.

C) Defensive Strategy (W-T): Addressing weaknesses to avoid threats

This strategy aims to strengthen the University's weaknesses in order to protect it from external threats. In this framework, the University must address potential limitations in resources, infrastructures, or academic capacity, so that it can withstand external pressures, such as reduced funding or increasing competition from other institutions. Efforts may include restructuring study programs, improving efficiency, or enhancing internal communication and collaboration to increase the institution's resilience.

D) Adaptation and Improvement Strategy (W-O): Leveraging opportunities to address weaknesses

This strategy focuses on using external opportunities to strengthen the University's weaknesses. This approach recognizes the institution's shortcomings and transforms them into advantages by utilizing opportunities from the external environment. For example, the University may strengthen its academic weaknesses through collaborations with other academic institutions or companies, or by participating in European research programs. In addition, it can take advantage of the trend toward digital education or the growing demand for interdisciplinary studies to reinforce weak points and expand into new educational areas.

These strategies provide the University of Thessaly with a variety of options for its development and for strengthening its position in the academic world. Each strategy has a different focus and combines the exploitation of internal capabilities with the external reality, aiming to improve the University's competitiveness under different conditions and challenges.

STRATEGIC PLAN



7. Strategic Objectives (Short-Term and Medium-Term) & Actions

This section presents the short-term and medium-term objectives and actions of the Strategic Plan of the University of Thessaly, which have been designed to upgrade processes, ensure continuous evaluation, and promote transparency in the functioning of the institution. The aim is to enhance efficiency by reducing bureaucracy and applying automated procedures, establishing mechanisms for feedback and evaluation, and strengthening the quality of study programs through accreditation and continuous assessment.

More specifically, the actions are those that will enable the Institution to fulfill its strategic priority areas and realize its ambitious vision, while preserving its integrity and remaining true to its values. These actions include the creation of tools that will strengthen transparency and the development of mechanisms for the effective monitoring of academic and administrative processes.

In the following sections, all priority areas are analyzed together with their corresponding objectives and actions.

Priority Area 1:

Strengthening, upgrading and modernization of the educational mission.

Table 7.1 presents the short-term (S) objectives and actions of Priority Area 1, which relate to the upgrading and modernization of the educational mission.

The objectives include strengthening the teaching staff through training and skills development provided by the Teaching and Learning Center (TLC), improving the student-to-faculty ratio, and enhancing the active participation of students in the curriculum.

The actions for each objective are detailed in Table 7.1 and include, among others the organization of training seminars and workshops, the development of e-learning platforms, the establishment of faculty exchange programs with leading international universities, and the design of a strategy for attracting international academic staff.

In addition, actions include the utilization of advanced technological tools, such as virtual classrooms, and the reinforcement of the Academic Advisor role to support students throughout their studies.

Finally, the actions are accompanied by indicators, which will be used to measure progress and evaluate results, ensuring that the objectives are clear, measurable, and achievable.

Table 7.1 Short-Term Objectives & Actions of Priority Area 1 (PA1)

Objective B1.1:	Strengthening the teaching staff through training and skills development
Indicators (indicative):	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number of faculty members who have participated in training programs through TLC.• Number of training or professional development programs for faculty members that have been developed.• Operation of a Teaching Support Office
Action B1.1.1:	Organization of regular training seminars and workshops for academic staff through the Teaching and Learning Center (TLC)
Action B1.1.2:	Establishment of faculty exchange programs with leading international universities
Action B1.1.3:	Development of an e-learning platform for academic staff, with topics such as modern teaching methods and the use of digital tools
Action B1.1.4:	Enhancement of academic staff skills in modern university pedagogy and the use of new technologies (e.g., VR)
Action B1.1.5:	Development of an official evaluation process for teaching staff, aiming at improving the quality of teaching, with the participation of students and the publication of results.
Objective B1.2:	Improvement of the student-to-faculty ratio.

Indicators (Indicative):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student-to-faculty ratio in Undergraduate Programs (UG). • Student-to-faculty ratio in Postgraduate Programs (PG)
Action B1.2.1:	Increase the coverage rate of faculty positions through targeted funding and programs (e.g., Acquisition of Academic Experience program)
Action B1.2.2:	Development of a strategy for attracting international academic staff.
Action B1.2.3:	Utilization of technological tools (virtual classrooms) to support teaching in large-scale departments.
Objective B1.3:	Strengthening the active participation of students in undergraduate programs and achieving a satisfactory student graduation rate
Indicators (Indicative):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graduation rate per year in relation to new yearly enrollments. • Percentage of graduates completing their studies within the standard duration of the program. • Average time to degree completion
Action B1.3.1:	Analysis of student performance data in courses, theses, study duration, and inactive students, with the aim of mapping the current situation and exploring ways to address problematic areas
Action B1.3.2:	Strengthening the role of the Academic Advisor in order to monitor student progress and provide support throughout the duration of their studies
Action B1.3.3:	Exploration of the introduction of preparatory courses in undergraduate programs, as well as the increase of tutorial hours in courses identified as challenging
Action B1.3.4:	Utilization of doctoral candidates to support teaching activities.

Table 7.2 presents the medium-term (M) objectives and actions related to the upgrading and modernization of the educational mission, aiming at the integration of new fields of knowledge and the improvement of accessibility to education.

The objective is to adapt curricula to labor market needs, foster the development of interdisciplinary collaborations, and strengthen lifelong learning.

The actions include, among others the redesign of curricula to incorporate emerging fields,

- the updating of study programs (undergraduate, postgraduate, doctoral), and
- the establishment of advisory committees with representatives from the labor market for the evaluation of programs.

In addition, the organization of open workshops with students and alumni is foreseen for the collection of proposals.

With regard to improving accessibility, actions include the development of flexible programs for professionals, the enhancement of infrastructures for distance learning, and the design of special programs for vulnerable social groups.

Table 7.2 Medium-Term Objectives and Actions PA1

Objective M1.1:	Redesign of curricula
Indicators (Indicative):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of active Postgraduate Programs (PG) in relation to the number of Departments. • Percentage of Undergraduate Programs (UG) in which students acquire digital skills and are awarded a certification
Action M1.1.1:	Revision of existing undergraduate programs based on evaluation feedback, so that they respond to the needs of society and the labor market
Action M1.1.2:	Updating and revision of Postgraduate and Doctoral Programs through their accreditation process by the Hellenic Authority for Higher Education (HAHE).
Action M1.1.3:	Integration of interdepartmental courses and collaborations for the development of multidisciplinary programs.
Action M1.1.4:	Establishment of advisory committees with the participation of labor market representatives for the evaluation and revision of curricula
Action M1.1.5:	Organization of open workshops with students and alumni to collect proposals regarding the upgrading of curricula
Objective M1.2:	Improvement of the linkage between education and lifelong learning support.
Indicators (Indicative):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of Lifelong Learning Center (TLC) programs in relation to the number of faculty members • Percentage of students enrolled in TLC programs in relation to the total number of active students
Action M1.2.1:	Development of flexible lifelong learning programs for professionals through the Lifelong Learning Center (TLC)
Action M1.2.2:	Development of special programs for vulnerable social groups (e.g., persons with disabilities, refugees)
Action M1.2.3:	Strengthening cooperation with local stakeholders and businesses to promote lifelong learning within the local community

Priority Area 2: Development of Research and Innovation

Table 7.3 presents the main short-term (S) objectives and related actions within the framework of Strategic Pillar PA2. These objectives focus on strengthening funding, supporting young researchers, expanding international participation, and increasing research productivity. Specific actions are outlined, describing the necessary steps to achieve these objectives, such as the creation of collaboration networks, support for innovation, strengthening international cooperation, and improving research performance.

Table 7.3 Short-Term Objectives & Actions PA2

Objective B2.1:	Strengthening funding for the development of research projects
Indicators (indicative):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total funding for the Institution from competitive R&D projects (European and national). • Annual number of active research projects at the Institution. • Annual number of active research projects at the Institution under coordination. • Establishment of a University Research Institute
Action B2.1.1:	Collaboration with public bodies for the signing of program contracts and the securing of state funding through research partnerships
Action B2.1.2:	Collaboration with the General Secretariat for Research and Innovation (GSRI) to strengthen initiatives in the agri-food sector, serving as a driver of development for Thessaly and as a means to reverse brain drain
Action B2.1.3:	Establishment of a University Research Institute in accordance with the provisions of Law 4957/2022 on the establishment of University Research Institutes
Action B2.1.4:	Capacity-building seminars for faculty members and researchers on proposal writing and submission, with the aim of attracting funding from European resources.
Action B2.1.5:	Enhancing the participation of faculty members and researchers in information sessions through the presentation of funding calls, as well as in events that strengthen networking in Greece and Europe
Action B2.1.6:	Enhancing the participation of faculty members and researchers in international conferences as invited or keynote speakers
Action B2.1.7:	Organization of an annual Excellence Awards event to recognize outstanding research work, with recipients including faculty members, researchers, doctoral candidates, and other staff

Action B2.1.8	Enhancing the participation of doctoral candidates in international conferences and funding part of the publication costs in scientific journals through the utilization of ELKE resources.
Action B2.1.9:	Strengthening the connection with the National Contact Point for the analysis of calls published for the submission of research proposals
Objective B2.2:	Supporting researchers and promoting innovation across the full spectrum of research activity
Indicators (Indicative):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operation of a Technology Transfer Office and/or incubator. • Number of departments offering horizontal and interdisciplinary innovation courses provided by the Innovation and Technology Transfer Unit and the One Planet Thessaly Entrepreneurship Center • Number of students attending the horizontal and interdisciplinary innovation courses provided by the Innovation and Technology Transfer Unit and the One Planet Thessaly Entrepreneurship Center
Action B2.2.1:	Strengthening the scholarship program for researchers and providing incentives to promote innovation at the University
Action B2.2.2:	Establishment of an incubator to support start-ups created by young researchers
Action B2.2.3:	Implementation of business acceleration training programs
Action B2.2.4:	Development of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) for training in innovation-related subjects
Action B2.2.5:	Horizontal teaching of courses on Innovation and Business Plan Development across all University departments
Action B2.2.6:	Student coaching through face-to-face sessions.

Table 7.4 records the medium-term (M) objectives and corresponding actions of Strategic Pillar PA2, focusing on the promotion of sustainability, digital transition, health, the agri-food sector, interdisciplinarity, and the recognition of research excellence.

The objectives describe ambitious and innovative approaches, implemented through specific actions such as the creation of interdisciplinary centers, experiential laboratories, and collaboration networks, the integration of modern methods and technologies, as well as the strengthening of the University's international presence and visibility. These actions promote interdisciplinarity, participation, and a focus on social needs, while also including indicators and monitoring mechanisms to measure progress and evaluate effectiveness. The table presents a comprehensive roadmap of strategic initiatives that support research and academic development, enhancing the social and scientific impact of the University.

Table 7.4 Medium-term (M) objectives and actions PA2

Objective M2.1:	Creation and strengthening of the Foundation's innovation ecosystem
Indicators (indicative):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of stakeholders constituting the Foundation's innovation ecosystem • Scale of the ecosystem's operations (regional, national, international) • Diversity of the stakeholders involved • The role of the Foundation (leading or following)
Action M2.1.1:	Systematic mapping of the stakeholders that would ideally constitute the Foundation's innovation ecosystem.
Action M2.1.2:	Categorization of the stakeholders of the innovation ecosystem according to the strength of their interest and their influence, with the aim of identifying those with the highest power and strongest interest.
Action M2.1.3:	Systematic networking and building of ties with the potential members of the innovation ecosystem.
Action M2.1.4:	Creation of Thematic Living Labs for Exploring the Adoption of Innovative Solutions
Objective M2.2:	Attraction of flagship projects, collaborations, and distinctions of international scope, with significant impact not only for the Foundation but also for the Region and the country.
Indicators (indicative):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposals submitted to flagship initiatives (e.g., National Centers of Excellence under Horizon Europe). • Securing an ERC grant. • Recognition and international distinctions received by the Institution's faculty members.
Action M2.2.1:	Recording the high-level distinctions of the Institution's faculty members and recognizing and rewarding them.
Action M2.2.2:	Pursuit of collaborations with leading international institutions and signing of Memoranda of Understanding, aiming to enhance the visibility and impact of research.
Action M2.2.3:	Establishment of thematic Interdisciplinary and Inter-institutional Research and Development Centers of high impact.
Action M2.2.4:	Organization of communication activities through specific channels with the aim of disseminating the Foundation's achievements and informing/raising awareness of citizens on cutting-edge research topics.

Priority Area 3: Engagement with the State, the Economy, and Society

Table 7.5 presents the short-term (S) objectives and actions for strengthening the connection with the State, the economy, and society, with the aim of enhancing cooperation with public authorities and enterprises, promoting actions of social responsibility, and improving students' accessibility to the labor market.

The actions include, inter alia, the creation of a digital networking platform between the University, public authorities, and enterprises, the organization of cooperation fora, and the signing of memoranda of understanding for strategic partnerships.

For the promotion of social responsibility actions, the plan foresees educational programs, voluntary initiatives, and cultural activities to address the needs of local communities, as well as the development of partnerships with organizations for the implementation of social programs. In addition, the organization of student groups is planned for activities such as environmental campaigns and support of vulnerable groups.

In the framework of improving students' accessibility to the labor market, actions include the reinforcement of the Career Office, the creation of mentoring programs, and the organization of "Career Days" events with the participation of enterprises. Furthermore, the establishment of an electronic platform is envisaged for connecting students with employers and posting available internship and employment opportunities.

Table 7.5 Short-term (S) objectives and actions PA3

Objective B3.1:	Promotion of collaborations with public authorities and enterprises.
Indicators (indicative)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Networking initiatives at the Institutional level. Number of Memoranda of Cooperation concluded by the Institution with strategic stakeholders from the public and private sectors. Number of events organized/attended by the Institution in the framework of informational forums aimed at interaction and co-design, implementation, and adoption of solutions for a sustainable society.
Action B3.1.1:	Development of further collaborations with secondary education.
Action B3.1.2:	Conclusion of Memoranda of Understanding with strategic stakeholders for long-term partnerships.

Action B3.1.3:	Undertaking of initiatives for the design and implementation of actions (seminars, scientific meetings, summer or winter schools, etc.), in cooperation with public or private sector entities, with the objective of strengthening the connection between members of the academic community and the country's productive sectors.
Action B3.1.4:	Development of a "Network" for knowledge/technology transfer, in collaboration with other universities and institutions.
Action B3.1.5:	Participation of faculty members in National or Regional Research and Innovation Councils, with the aim of ensuring the Institution's involvement in decision-making processes.
Objective B3.2:	Promotion of social responsibility initiatives and enhancement of social impact.
Indicator (indicative)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of volunteer activities. • Number of educational programs aimed at raising societal awareness. • Number of student groups engaged in social issues.
Action B3.2.1:	Implementation of educational programs aimed at addressing the needs of local communities.
Action B3.2.2:	Development of partnerships with organizations and entities for the implementation of social contribution programs.
Action B3.2.3:	Organization of student groups to carry out activities such as environmental campaigns and the provision of support to vulnerable groups.
Action B3.2.4:	Implementation of educational programs that raise awareness on social issues, including equality, sustainability, and inclusion.
Action B3.2.5:	Development of volunteer initiatives and cultural projects.
Action B3.2.6:	Strengthening the connection with the Healthcare Sector: tertiary care at the University Hospital of Larissa, primary care at University Primary Care Centers (TOMY), and secondary care through collaboration with all hospitals within the 5th Health Region (YPE).
Objective B3.3:	Improvement of accessibility to the labor market for students and graduates.
Indicators (indicative)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of Departments participating in internship programs. • Percentage of active students engaged in internship programs. • Number of administrative staff in the Career Services Office. • Number of graduates identified and recorded.
Action B3.3.1:	Strengthening the Career Services Office with additional resources and personnel, and establishing networks with local and regional businesses to secure internship programs.

Action B3.3.2:	Creation of mentoring programs in which professionals from various sectors provide guidance to students regarding their career development, highlighting best business practices.
Action B3.3.3:	Organization of "Career Days" events with the participation of companies for interviews and presentation of employment opportunities, including involvement of successful University of Thessaly alumni entrepreneurs.
Action B3.3.4:	Establishment of an Alumni Office with the identification and registration of graduates.

Table 7.6 presents the medium-term (M) objectives and actions for the University's engagement with the state, the economy, and society, focusing on the support of start-up enterprises and local investment initiatives, as well as the enhancement of alumni participation and their role within the Institution. The actions include, inter alia, the provision of advisory services to young entrepreneurs through business incubators and participation in local exhibitions and conferences, the development of specialized educational programs aimed at strengthening entrepreneurial skills, and the reinforcement of connections between the University's research laboratories and start-up enterprises for the implementation of innovations.

To enhance alumni engagement, the establishment of an Alumni Office is planned, along with the updating of the University's website and the organization of annual events. Furthermore, the recording and creation of a registry of entrepreneur-alumni is planned, based on studies of graduates' professional integration.

Table 7.6 Medium-term objectives and actions PA3

Objective M3.1	Support for start-up enterprises and local investment initiatives
Indicators (indicative)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operation of a Technology Transfer Office and/or business incubator. • Number of spin-offs or start-ups established. • Number of patent applications submitted and approved • Number of joint/dual degrees. • Number of active international collaborations per Department.
Action M3.1.1	Provision of advisory services to young entrepreneurs through business incubators, and participation in local exhibitions and conferences.
Action M3.1.2:	Provision of specialized educational programs aimed at developing entrepreneurial skills, including marketing and project management.
Action M3.1.3:	Strengthening the connection between the University's research laboratories and start-up enterprises for the implementation of innovations.

Action M3.1.4:	Establishment of the "Committee on Technology Transfer, Innovation, and Start-up Entrepreneurship," as provided under Law 4957/2022, with the objective of linking the University with society and the economy in matters of technology transfer, innovation, and start-up entrepreneurship.
Action M3.1.5:	Creation of a Network of University Technology Transfer Units with other domestic Universities to increase outreach and facilitate the transfer of knowledge and best practices.
Action M3.1.6:	Provision of financial and technical support for the establishment of spin-offs, with the assistance of the Innovation, Technology Transfer, and Entrepreneurship Unit of One Planet Thessaly.
Objective M3.2:	Enhancement of alumni participation and their role within the Institution.
Indicators (Indicative):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of graduates participating in the Institution's activities. • Number of events organized for alumni.
Action M3.2.1:	Development of the Institution's Alumni Office, including the updating of the website, monitoring and analysis of alumni career paths, organization of events with their participation, and recognition of individuals with distinguished achievements.
Action M3.2.2:	Recording and creation of a registry of entrepreneur-alumni of the University of Thessaly, based on studies concerning the professional integration of graduates.

Priority Area 4: Internationalization and Extroversion

Table 7.7 presents the short-term (S) objectives and actions for internationalization and outward engagement, focusing on the development of English-taught study programs, the strengthening of international collaborations with academic institutions, and the enhancement of student and staff mobility. Among other actions, this includes the design and promotion of English-taught programs in fields such as health sciences and technology, the establishment of partnerships with international educational organizations, and the organization of “Open Days” for international students to showcase the University’s programs and facilities.

To strengthen international collaborations, actions include the development of joint study programs with foreign universities, the signing of memoranda of understanding for the exchange of students and staff, and participation in international educational forums and exhibitions. Furthermore, the creation of research consortia with foreign universities is planned to implement international projects.

Within the framework of enhancing mobility, actions include the expansion of the Erasmus program, the establishment of funding mechanisms to cover mobility expenses, and the organization of workshops for students and staff regarding opportunities for participation in international programs.

Table 7.7 Short-term (S) objectives and actions PA4

Objective B4.1:	Development of English-taught study programs and the expansion of international student recruitment within the framework of the Institution’s objectives
Indicators (indicative)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of foreign-language courses for international students as a percentage of the total number of courses. • Number of foreign-language undergraduate programs. • Number of foreign-language postgraduate programs. • Number of short-term winter or summer schools.
Action B4.1.1:	Design and promotion of English-taught programs (undergraduate and postgraduate), with particular emphasis on high-demand fields.
Action B4.1.2:	Establishment of partnerships with international educational organizations to promote study programs globally.
Action B4.1.4:	Organization of short-term winter or summer schools.
Objective B4.2:	Strengthening international collaborations with academic institutions.

Indicators (Indicative):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of joint/dual degrees. • Number of active international collaborations per Department.
Action B4.2.1:	Development of joint postgraduate programs with foreign universities.
Action B4.2.2:	Participation in the "European Universities" initiative through alliances.
Action B4.2.3:	Signing of memoranda of understanding for student and staff exchange with foreign universities.
Action B4.2.4:	Development of bilateral collaborations with leading universities and research centers worldwide.
Action B4.2.5:	Participation in international educational forums and exhibitions to promote collaborations.
Action B4.2.6:	Participation of the University as a member of European Thematic Networks of Innovation and Technology (European Institute of Innovation and Technology—EIT)
Objective B4.3:	Participation of the University as a member of European Thematic Innovation and Technology Networks (European Institute of Innovation and Technology—EIT).
Indicators (indicative)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual percentage of outgoing Erasmus students relative to the total number of active students. • Number of incoming Erasmus students. • Number of staff members participating in mobility through the Erasmus program.
Action B4.3.1:	Expansion of the Erasmus program through additional cooperation agreements and the promotion of scholarships for international exchanges.
Action B4.3.2:	Creation of funding mechanisms to cover mobility expenses for students and staff.
Action B4.3.3:	Enhancement of the University's international profile and promotion on social media, aiming at broad recognition and the acquisition of a large following.

Table 7.8 presents the medium-term (M) objectives and actions for the University's internationalization and outward engagement, focusing on promoting international reputation and academic distinction, as well as strengthening the operation of summer schools. Among other actions, this includes participation in international competitions and rankings, organization of international conferences, and the development of videos and multimedia content showcasing the University's research achievements and academic excellence. The objective is to enhance international recognition and strategic participation in global rankings through specific quality indicators.

To promote international reputation, actions also include the development of collaborations with international media to highlight specific programs or achievements of the University. Within the framework of

strengthening the operation of summer schools, actions include the conclusion of agreements with other institutions and the monitoring of school implementation. Additionally, the integration of innovative teaching methods and the development of interactive programs are planned.

Table 7.8 Medium-term (M) objectives and actions PA4

Objective M4.1:	Promotion of the University's international reputation and academic distinction within the framework of its objectives.
Indicators (indicative)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of international scientific conferences organized or co-organized by the Institution relative to the number of Departments. • Position of the University in international rankings. • Position of the University's scientific fields in international thematic evaluations.
Action M4.1.1:	Participation in international competitions and rankings, as well as organization of international conferences.
Action M4.1.2:	Production of videos and multimedia content showcasing the University's research achievements and academic excellence.
Action M4.1.3:	Implementation of a strategic approach for participation in targeted international rankings based on specific quality indicators.
Action M4.1.4:	Promotion of the University's achievements in international media outlets.
Action M4.1.6:	Implementation of a continuous monitoring mechanism for the University's position in international rankings based on research outcomes, alongside systematic recording and dissemination of all publications and recognitions of faculty members and researchers.
Action M4.1.6:	Conclusion of relevant agreements with other institutions, as well as planning and monitoring the implementation of short-term winter or summer schools.

Priority Area 5: Upgrading the Quality of the Academic Environment and Inclusion

Table 7.9 presents the short-term (S) objectives and actions for upgrading the quality of the academic environment and fostering inclusion, with particular emphasis on creating equal access for all students, promoting students' mental health and well-being, and upgrading technological infrastructures.

For the creation of an environment of equal access, actions include, among others, the design of appropriate educational programs for students with disabilities, the establishment of an electronic platform of accessible educational resources, training of teaching and administrative staff on inclusion issues, ensuring physical accessibility to learning spaces, and raising awareness within the academic community on the rights of persons with disabilities.

In the field of mental health and well-being, plans include the provision of counseling and psychological services, the creation of an online psychological support platform, and the organization of group activities to promote well-being ("eu zēn"). In addition, peer-support programs will be established, where trained students will provide assistance to their fellow students.

As regards the upgrading of technological infrastructures, actions include the enhancement of computing and networking infrastructures, as well as the strengthening of the Academic Advisor institution and the student progress monitoring system.

Table 7.9 Short-Term Objectives & Actions – Priority Area 5 (PA5)

Objective B5.1:	Creation of an environment of equal access for all students.
Indicators (indicative):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expenditures for student support actions. Accessibility projects for students with disabilities as a proportion of the Regular Budget. Percentage of classrooms accessible to students with disabilities. Operation of the Committee on Gender Equality and Anti-Discrimination.
Action B5.1.1:	Training of teaching and administrative staff on issues of inclusion and equal access.
Action B5.1.2:	Enhancement of accessible content and educational resources in the Undergraduate and Postgraduate Programs of UTH departments.
Action B5.1.3:	Training of teaching and administrative staff on issues of inclusion and equal access
Action B5.1.4:	Ensuring full accessibility in learning facilities.

Action B5.1.5:	Awareness-raising and training of members of the academic community on issues of access to education and the rights of persons with disabilities, learning difficulties, and neurodiversity.
Action B5.1.6:	Strengthening of the "Committee on Gender Equality and Anti-Discrimination" and the "Ethics Committee.
Action B5.1.7:	Participation of the University in Inclusion Promotion Networks, such as the network " <i>Autism-Friendly University Environments</i> ." Publication of relevant awareness and training guides for the academic community regarding the integration of individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) into the academic environment.
Objective B5.2:	Promotion of students' mental health and well-being.
Indicators (indicative):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existence of a Psychological Support Service. • Number of students served by the University's Psychological Support Services.
Action B5.2.1:	Provision of counseling and psychological support services, as well as the organization of awareness-raising activities to enhance mental well-being.
Action B5.2.2:	Updating and upgrading of the online psychological support platform for direct communication with specialists.

Table 7.10 presents the medium-term (M) objectives and actions for upgrading the quality of the academic environment and fostering inclusion, focusing on strengthening diversity and cultural inclusion, cultivating an academic culture that promotes interaction, upgrading building infrastructures, and reinforcing student support structures.

In the context of strengthening diversity, actions include, among others, the organization of events and workshops that promote inclusion and the understanding of different cultures, the establishment of International Cultural Weeks, the creation of student groups promoting diversity, and the implementation of exchange programs between international and local students.

For cultivating an academic culture that promotes interaction, planned initiatives include the creation of common learning and collaboration spaces, the organization of hackathons and workshops bringing together students from different disciplines, as well as the establishment of weekly *"Open Learning Spaces"* for open learning and idea exchange. In addition, student associations will be strengthened through funding and infrastructure support.

Regarding the upgrading of building infrastructures, actions include the maintenance and improvement of existing facilities, as well as the design and development of technology parks.

Finally, in terms of reinforcing student support structures, plans include the establishment of a Student Support Unit (SSU), the upgrading of the Internship Office, the strengthening of the Counseling and Psychological Support Center, the enhancement of the Career Office through events and career days, as well as the establishment of a digital platform for student support.

Table 7.10 Medium-Term Objectives & Actions – Priority Area 5 (PA5)

Objective M5.1:	Strengthening diversity and cultural inclusion.
Indicators (indicative):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operation of the Committee on Gender Equality and Anti-Discrimination. • Number of events organized to raise awareness on persons with disabilities, learning difficulties, and neurodiversity.
Action M5.1.1:	Number of events and workshops promoting inclusion and intercultural understanding
Action M5.1.2:	Number of student groups established to promote diversity
Objective M5.3:	Upgrading of building infrastructures to ensure unobstructed access for all.
Indicators (indicative):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amount of funding allocated for the upgrading of building infrastructures. • Number of square meters of facilities upgraded to ensure universal access for all. • Number of students who gained access following the upgrading of building infrastructures.

Action M5.3.1:	Completion of the Building Complex of the School of Engineering.
Action M5.3.2:	Maintenance and upgrading of existing building facilities and their surrounding areas.
Action M5.3.3:	Construction of new student residence halls and other educational, research, and related facilities of the University of Thessaly in the cities of Volos and Lamia through Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs).
Action M5.3.4:	Renovation of a 6,000 sq.m. building in Karditsa, following a Memorandum of Cooperation with the Region of Thessaly, to house the Department of Public and Integrated Health and the Department of Food Science and Nutrition.
Action M5.3.5:	Renovation of buildings in Volos, following a Memorandum of Cooperation with the Municipality of Volos, to house the Innovation, Technology Transfer and Entrepreneurship Center <i>One Planet Thessaly</i> , as well as a Department of the School of Humanities.
Objective M5.4:	Strengthening student support structures.
Indicators (indicative):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operation of the Student Support Unit (SSU). • Percentage of administrative staff assigned to the SSU. • Existence of a Psychological Support Service
Action M5.4.1:	Establishment and staffing of the Student Support Unit (SSU).
Action M5.4.2:	Strengthening of the Internship Office with additional resources and staff.
Action M5.4.4:	Continuous support of psychological, psychiatric, and counseling services for students.
Action M5.4.6:	Strengthening the institution of the Academic Advisor.
Action M5.4.7:	Enhancement of the Library and creation of modern reading rooms for each School.
Action M5.4.8:	Development of a plan for the modernization and simplification of operational procedures and service delivery by the services and structures of the University of Thessaly.

Priority Area 6: Green and Digital University

Table 7.11 presents the short-term (S) objectives and actions for promoting a Green and Digital University, aiming at the implementation of sustainable practices across all sectors. Among other actions, this includes the implementation of recycling systems and the installation of green infrastructure across University premises, the creation of electric vehicle charging stations, and the implementation of composting systems for organic waste. Furthermore, the organization of seminars and events is planned to raise awareness among the University community regarding sustainability.

Table 7.11 Short-term (S) objectives and actions PA6

Objective B6.1:	Promotion of green practices across all sectors within the framework of the Institution's objectives.
Indicators (indicative)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of electric vehicle charging stations installed. • Number of electric bicycles available for student transportation. • Quantity of food waste and/or agricultural residues utilized in the composting unit. • Number of square meters of buildings upgraded for energy efficiency.
Action B6.1.1:	Implementation of recycling systems across University premises.
Action B6.1.2:	Installation of electric vehicle charging stations on University grounds as part of sustainable mobility initiatives.
Action B6.1.3:	Acquisition of an electric bus for student transportation to educational activities within the framework of sustainable mobility initiatives.
Action B6.1.4:	Acquisition of electric bicycles for student transportation within the city as part of sustainable mobility initiatives.
Action B6.1.5:	Implementation of composting systems for organic waste from food and agricultural residues in the corresponding departments of the School of Agricultural Sciences.
Action B6.1.6:	Energy upgrade of buildings from category C to category A (energy efficiency and conservation interventions).
Action B6.1.7:	Utilization of Renewable Energy Sources (RES): installation of a 628 kWp photovoltaic system.

Action B6.1.8:	Organization of seminars and events to raise awareness among the University community regarding sustainability.
Objective B6.2:	Enhancement of Digital Transformation.
Indicators (indicative)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of operations carried out digitally. • Number of information systems interconnected and interoperable.
Action B6.2.1:	Strengthening educational platforms, software, and equipment to respond to modern technological developments.
Action B6.2.2:	Elimination of paper use in administrative and educational processes.
Action B6.2.3:	Interconnection and interoperability of the University's information systems with those of Public Administration.
Action B6.2.4:	Digital operation of the University with protection of personal data of all stakeholders, ensuring the security of its systems and services.
Action B6.2.5:	Establishment of the role of Data Protection Officer (DPO) for the University.
Action B6.2.6:	Monitoring and implementation of guidelines from the National Cybersecurity Authority and other competent Independent and Regulatory Authorities, aiming at safeguarding the University in matters of Cybersecurity.

Table 7.12 presents the medium-term (M) objectives and actions for promoting a Green and Digital University, focusing on reducing the energy footprint, strengthening digital infrastructure, and developing an ecological learning and research ecosystem.

In the area of reducing the energy footprint, actions include the installation of photovoltaic systems and the implementation of energy-saving programs, replacement of existing lighting with energy-efficient LED lamps, creation of awareness programs on energy conservation, and implementation of an energy consumption monitoring system to identify and reduce waste.

In the area of digital infrastructure, actions include the digitization of academic processes and the creation of a distance learning platform, development of a mobile application providing access to academic services and educational material, installation of modern videoconferencing systems, and establishment of a digital skills support center for students and staff.

In the development of an ecological learning and research ecosystem, actions include the creation of green laboratories and the involvement of students in environmental projects, introduction of courses on environmental sustainability, establishment of innovation competitions for students focused on

developing green solutions, and the creation of a network of collaborations with environmental organizations.

Table 7.12 Medium-term (M) objectives and actions PA6

Objective M6.1:	Reduction of the University's energy footprint within the framework of its objectives.
Indicators (indicative):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of photovoltaic systems installed and operational. • Number of kWh saved through building energy upgrades. • Amount of money saved through building energy upgrades.
Action M6.1.1:	Installation of photovoltaic systems and implementation of energy-saving programs.
Action M6.1.2:	Replacement of existing lighting with energy-efficient LED lamps across all premises.
Action M6.1.3:	Development of awareness programs for students and staff on energy conservation.
Action M6.1.4:	Implementation of an energy consumption monitoring system to identify and reduce waste.
Objective M6.2:	Enhancement of digital infrastructure to improve education and administration.
Indicators (indicative):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of rooms equipped with modern videoconferencing systems. • Number of rooms equipped with digital whiteboards.
Action M6.2.1:	Digitization of academic processes to enable distance learning and flexible access.
Action M6.2.2:	Development of a mobile application providing access to academic services and educational materials.
Action M6.2.3:	Installation of modern videoconferencing systems in classrooms and administrative offices.
Action M6.2.4:	Equipping classrooms with digital whiteboards.

Priority Area 7:

Alignment with the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) within the framework of the Institution's objectives

Table 7.13 presents the short-term (S) objectives and corresponding actions in the priority areas of the University's strategic planning. These objectives concern the enhancement and modernization of educational activities, the development of research and innovation, the connection with society and the state, internationalization, the upgrading of the academic environment, the promotion of green and digital transition, and the improvement of governance.

The recorded actions include specific steps such as establishing partnerships, developing new educational and research programs, enhancing participation and inclusion, and implementing sustainable practices across the full spectrum of the University's operations. These actions are aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), promoting sustainability, equality, transparency, and innovation, and are accompanied by specific indicators to measure progress and assess effectiveness. The table serves as a comprehensive guide to strategic initiatives for creating a modern, sustainable, and outward-looking academic environment.

Table 7.13 Short-term (S) objectives and corresponding actions PA7

Objective B7.1:	Enhancement of Education and Integration of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into the Institution's Study Programs within the framework of its objectives.
Indicators (indicative)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number of faculty members designated as Ambassadors for a Sustainable Development Goal (SDG).• Number of Departments involved in developing material for the integration of SDGs into their course curricula.
Action B7.1.1:	Study and understanding of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by faculty members. Selection of specific Goals by each Department of the University and development of corresponding educational material.
Action B7.1.2:	Organization of seminars to foster understanding of the Goals and their integration into higher education.
Action B7.1.3:	Establishment of a dedicated role for faculty members as "SDG Ambassadors" to explain and promote the Goals within the University community.
Action B7.1.4	Development of Learning Objectives for each SDG at three levels: cognitive, socio-emotional, and behavioral, ensuring that the SDG is integrated into all aspects of daily academic life.

Action B7.1.5	Recognition and promotion of the successful integration of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in teaching, interaction with society, or any other University activity.
Objective B7.2:	Utilization of the University's position as a member of the United Nations Academic Impact (UNAI) international network of universities.
Indicators (indicative)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of informational events on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). • Participation in initiatives with other universities within the UNAI network.
Action B7.2.1	Public awareness campaign on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through media presentations, public lectures, and other related activities.
Action B7.2.2	Establishment of connections with other institutions in Greece and abroad that are members of the same network, and organization of joint initiatives.

Table 7.14 presents the medium-term (M) objectives of the University and the corresponding actions for the integration of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into education and society.

Table 7.14 Medium-term (M) objectives and actions PS7

Objective M7.1:	Expansion of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) throughout the University, beyond the Study Programs, within the framework of its objectives.
Indicators (indicative)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of short courses developed by faculty members for the training of public sector personnel. • Number of building upgrades and greening of infrastructures quantified and mapped to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). • Number of artistic interventions in University buildings illustrating the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
Action M7.1.1:	Popularization of the material developed within study programs by the Departments and development of corresponding educational material for the training of public sector personnel or company staff.
Action M7.1.2:	Training of farmers and stakeholders in the agri-food sector regarding the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Action M7.1.3:	Linking building upgrades and unobstructed access to buildings with the achievement of the SDGs. Calculation and quantification of improvements according to the SDG indicators and publication of the results.
Action M7.1.4:	Rewarding collaborations between departments and schools in order to promote interdisciplinarity as a tool for achieving sustainability.
Action M7.1.5:	Promotion of the SDGs through artistic interventions at various locations across the University's campuses in the five cities of the Institution.
Objective M7.2	Recognition of collaborations between Departments and Schools to promote interdisciplinarity as a tool for achieving sustainability.
Indicators (indicative)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the engagement of faculty members with governmental bodies at all levels—local, regional, national, and international. • Organization of at least two inclusion and equality initiatives involving the local community.
Action M7.2.1:	Description and promotion of practices for establishing relationships with the local community in a manner that enhances the University's role as a source of knowledge and proper guidance on sustainability issues.
Action M7.2.2:	Promotion and recognition of inclusion, diversity, and social equality across culture, language, gender, identity, and experiences as a source of strength for academic excellence, research, and innovation.
Action M7.2.3:	Direct linkage of the actions of the proposed Strategic Plan with the integration of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into education and society.

Priority Area 8: Quality Assurance

Table 7.15 presents in detail the short-term (S) objectives and actions for quality assurance at the University of Thessaly. The objectives include strengthening the operation of the Internal Quality Assurance Unit (IQAU) and the regulatory framework for Quality Assurance, to continuously support its institutional role and assist the Academic Units and the Centre for Lifelong Learning in ongoing accreditation processes across all cycles of study (undergraduate, postgraduate, and doctoral programs).

Among other actions, the focus is on enhancing MODIP staffing, continuous processing of quality data and creation of new procedures for its collection, ongoing communication with the Hellenic Authority for Higher Education (HAHE), compliance with quality standards and Quality Assurance principles of the European Higher Education Area (ESG), as well as monitoring the University of Thessaly's performance in international rankings.

Table 7.15 short-term (S) objectives and actions PA8

Objective B8.1:	Strengthening the operation of the Internal Quality Assurance Unit (MODIP).
Indicators (indicative)	Percentage of administrative staff in the Internal Quality Assurance Unit (MODIP) in relation to the total administrative staff of the University
Action B8.1.1:	Strengthening the staffing of the Internal Quality Assurance Unit (MODIP).
Objective B8.2:	Strengthening the regulatory framework of Quality Assurance at the University of Thessaly (UTH).
Indicators (indicative)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updating the Internal Regulation for Postgraduate and Doctoral Studies. • Updating the Standard Regulation for Laboratories and Clinics. • Updating the Internal Quality Assurance System. • Issuance of the Internal Regulation for the Internal Quality Assurance Unit
Action B8.2.1:	Collaboration with the Departments, Schools, and the Centre for Lifelong Learning for the implementation of quality assurance practices and standards.
Action B8.2.2:	Compliance with the quality standards of the Hellenic Authority for Higher Education (HAHE) and the Quality Assurance Principles of the European Higher Education Area (ESG).

Action B8.2.3:	Processing of quality data for the University of Thessaly and creation of new procedures for their collection.
Action B8.2.4:	Support of processes for the preparation of the development plans of the University's Schools.
Action B8.2.5:	Monitoring the University of Thessaly's performance in international rankings.
Objective B8.3	Accreditation and continuous evaluation of all study programs of the University.
Indicators (indicative)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual number of accredited and re-accredited Undergraduate Study Programs. • Annual number of accredited Postgraduate Study Programs. • Annual number of accredited Doctoral Study Programs. • Accreditation of the Centre for Lifelong Learning.
Action B8.3.1:	Continuous support by the Internal Quality Assurance Unit in the accreditation and re-accreditation processes of Undergraduate, Postgraduate, and Doctoral Study Programs (USP, PSP, DSP) by the Hellenic Authority for Higher Education (HAHE).
Action B8.3.2	Strengthening the mechanism for evaluation and feedback of the study programs of Academic Units by external stakeholders.
Action B8.3.3	Creation of student evaluation groups actively participating in the feedback process in collaboration with the University's Departments.

Table 7.16 presents the medium-term (M) objective, indicators, and actions for quality assurance at the University. It includes the systematic establishment of feedback and evaluation mechanisms to ensure the continuous improvement of quality assurance processes. Among other actions, it encompasses conducting student and staff satisfaction surveys, strengthening the University of Thessaly's collaboration with domestic and international institutions for knowledge transfer and the exchange of best practices in quality assurance, as well as adopting relevant best practices from collaborating stakeholders, organizations, and companies. Additionally, the actions include the automation of quality indicator collection and monitoring, with concurrent enhancement of interoperability between internal information systems and external sources, as well as the design and implementation of new quality procedures wherever deemed necessary.

Table 7.16 Medium-term (M) objective and actions PA8

Objective M8.1:	Establishment of feedback and evaluation mechanisms for the continuous improvement of quality assurance processes
Indicators (indicative)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of student and staff satisfaction surveys conducted. • Number of working groups established to analyze survey results. • Number of standardized documents created for automated workflows and quality assurance.
Action M8.1.1:	Conducting satisfaction surveys for students and staff, and utilizing the results for the continuous improvement of quality assurance processes.
Action M8.1.2:	Establishment of working groups comprising students, academic staff, and administrative personnel to analyze the results of the surveys under Action M8.1.1 and formulate improvement proposals.
Action M8.1.3:	Strengthening the University of Thessaly's collaboration with domestic and international institutions for knowledge transfer and the exchange of best practices in quality assurance.
Action M8.1.4:	Development of strategies and partnerships with businesses and organizations for the implementation of quality assurance practices and standards.
Action M8.1.5:	Establishment of standardized documents and automated workflows for quality assurance matters.
Action M8.1.6:	Automation of the collection of statistical data and monitoring of performance indicators through the IQAU system.
Action M8.1.7:	Implementation of new quality procedures where required, including the design and application of new internal evaluation processes and quality assurance strategies.

8. Financial Forecasts

In the present financial forecast (Table 8.1) for the development of the University of Thessaly, general assumptions are made regarding the financial status of the Institution for the next four years (2024–2027). The financial forecasts (Revenue) pertain solely to the Organization of the University of Thessaly and do not include the other Legal Entities of Private or Public Law affiliated with the University.

Type of Inflow		Reference Year 2023 (€)	2024 (€)	2025 (€)	2026 (€)	2027 (€)
Subsidies	Payroll expenses from the regular budget for temporary staff salaries		356.400	330.000	330.000	330.000
	Operating expenses	10.060.742	9.257.946	9.257.946	9.257.946	9.257.946
	Social welfare expenditure: Catering / Housing allowance	10.742.334	12.786.659	12.800.000	12.800.000	12.800.000
	Contributions from Legal Entities of Public Law (LEPLs)	60.000	60.000	100.000	100.000	100.000
	Surcharges, fines, monetary penalties	0	0	2.300	2.300	2.300
	Other income	1.113.728	1.630.000	1.510.750	1.510.750	1.510.750
Income from business activities		91.000	64.000	67.000	67.000	67.000
TOTAL		22.067.804	24.155.005	24.067.996	24.067.996	24.067.996
Public Investment Program (PIP)		6.133.773	16.675.918	14.000.000	14.000.000	14.000.000
GRAND TOTAL		28.201.577	40.830.923	38.067.996	38.067.996	38.067.996

9. Methodology for Monitoring the Strategic Plan (Institutional/Legal Style)

Monitoring the implementation of the strategic planning of the University of Thessaly is a critical element for ensuring its success. The creation of a comprehensive Monitoring Plan, implemented by the Strategic Planning Unit (SPU), guarantees the continuous evaluation, optimization, and updating of the strategic plan. This plan is based on clear procedures that enhance transparency, flexibility, and efficiency.

Monitoring constitutes the cornerstone of the plan. The SPU is tasked with the regular collection of data from all individual units of the University, aiming to capture the progress of strategic actions. Monitoring is carried out through the use of modern tools, such as Key Performance Indicator (KPI) dashboards, which provide quantified data and progress reports at regular intervals.

Evaluation follows monitoring and focuses on measuring the efficiency and effectiveness of actions. This process allows for determining the degree of goal achievement and drawing valuable conclusions. Through quantitative analysis of data derived from performance indicators, as well as qualitative analysis via satisfaction surveys, the SPU identifies areas that require improvement. Additionally, comparative evaluation with other universities strengthens the University's strategic positioning in the national and international academic environment.

Based on the results of monitoring and evaluation, the **optimization** process emerges as a critical tool for enhancing the performance of strategic actions. The SPU implements targeted adjustments, such as revising timelines, reallocating resources, and strengthening collaborations that yield high added value. This dynamic approach ensures that the University adapts quickly and effectively to emerging needs.

Updating constitutes the final stage of the Monitoring Plan and ensures the continuous alignment of strategic planning with changes in the environment. The SPU closely monitors developments in the social, technological, political, and economic environment, while simultaneously integrating new strategic priorities arising from national and European policies. Open dialogue with stakeholders, such as students, academic staff, and external partners, enhances the inclusiveness and validity of the updating process.

The Monitoring Plan is not a static tool but a dynamic process that promotes continuous development and adaptability. In this way, the University of Thessaly remains committed to achieving its strategic objectives, fostering accountability, quality, and academic excellence.

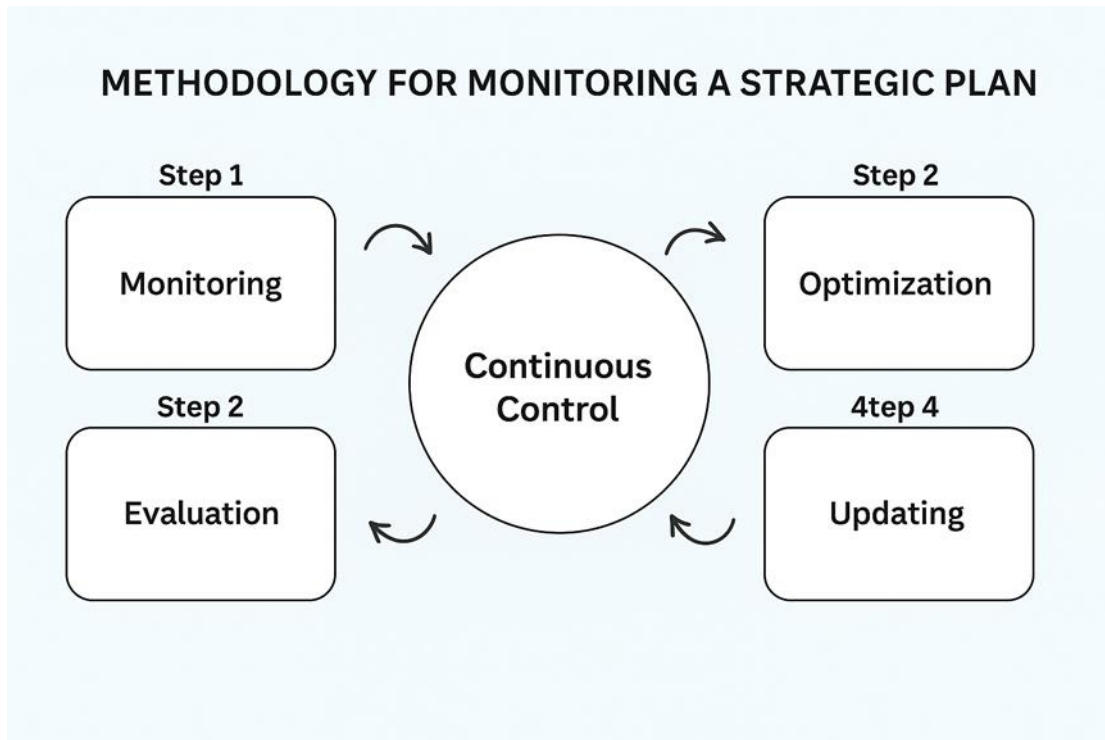


Figure 6. Methodology for Monitoring the Strategic Plan of the University of Thessaly

10. ANNEXES

10.1 Sustainable Development Plan

10.2 Equal Access Plan

10.3 Digital Transformation Plan