

# Strategy 2030

Globally connected,  
locally embedded



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# Table of Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>An engaged university</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Strategic goals and priorities</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Making minds matter</b>	<b>6</b>		Goal 1. Leading academic education and research	13
	Education of and for the future	6		Priority 1. Academic education and research that makes an impact	
	Independent research with societal value	6		Priority 2. An inspiring and innovative education portfolio	
	Inextricably linked to society	7		Priority 3. Lifelong Learning	
<b>3</b>	<b>In a changing world</b>	<b>8</b>		Goal 2. Collaboration in networks and with society (engagement)	14
	Technological developments	8		Priority 4. Open innovation networks	
	Growing need for development	8		Priority 5. Strategic alliances	
	Transition to a sustainable society	8		Priority 6. Diversification of income streams	
	Attract and retain talent	8		Goal 3. One connected EUR	15
	Challenges of a post-industrial region	9		Priority 7. Human-centred organisation and culture	
	Working together across borders	9		Priority 8. Connecting through leadership, empowering diverse talent, and teamwork	
	Financial uncertainties	9		Priority 9. A resilient and agile organisation	
<b>4</b>	<b>Impact domains in which we will make a difference</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>Our strategy on a page</b>	<b>16</b>
	Our impact domains	11			
	1. The resilience and robustness of our society				
	2. Sustainable entrepreneurship and inclusive prosperity				
	3. A just transition to a sustainable society				
	4. Healthy society and accessible & affordable healthcare				
	5. The responsible use of technologies				
	We are the platform	11			





# Globally connected, locally embedded

## An engaged university

**Our education and research are drivers and accelerators of positive change. Science is inextricably linked to world advancements in societal progress. Through our education and groundbreaking research, we play a role in solving societal challenges, serving global communities. In doing so, we are globally connected and locally embedded.**

Our dedicated staff at Erasmus University Rotterdam (EUR), work every day to better understand complex societal challenges. We translate insights gained from our research into novel courses and innovative teaching that prepares our students for the future. These insights also fuel our research and innovations to shape solutions for the world of tomorrow and beyond. Crucial to this is our intensive engagement with society, both regionally and internationally. We are an 'Engaged University'.

With our previous strategic plan, Strategy 2024, we initiated the transition to an impact-driven university. We realised our strategic priorities by focusing on how our education and research could have more societal impact, how we could transcend disciplinary boundaries and a more concerted focus on sustainability. This has laid a solid foundation for the next strategic period 2025-2030.

The experiences and insights gained in recent years provided valuable lessons that help us to refine our ambitions, seize new opportunities and further strengthen our societal role. Experience has taught us that we can make a difference by engaging in active collaborations, inside and outside our university, and in this way connecting what we do even more closely to societal issues. The foundation has been laid and now it is time to continue, strengthen and broaden the chosen path together.

More than ever, we need to be agile, innovative and entrepreneurial. We, as Erasmus University Rotterdam, create a positive societal impact through our academically committed and independent role, by means of our education, research and engagement. Globally connected, locally embedded. This is our challenge and ambition for our strategic period up to 2030.

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# This is us: Erasmus University Rotterdam

## Making minds matter

Since our founding in 1913, our academic foundation has been shaped by commerce, economics and business. Over the years, we have expanded this to include medical, social and legal sciences and humanities. This diverse academic base allows us to approach societal challenges in all their complexity and prepare our students for a meaningful future.

**W**e originated from a societal need for highly skilled personnel in the port of Rotterdam. That connection with society and business is embedded in our DNA. From our Erasmian values – socially engaged, as world citizens, connecting, entrepreneurial and open-minded – we create positive societal impact. We put our ideas and insights into action and empower others to do the same.

Curiosity and openness to the unknown form the basis of our science, creativity and innovation. We value our academic independence and engage with our societal mission through a scientific lens. Our science is intertwined with society and aimed at solving real problems that affect everyone.

### Education of and for the future

Through our education, we prepare current and future students for a world where regional, national and international issues are inextricably linked. A world where value encompasses more than generating profit and where learning does not stop at obtaining a diploma. Our academic education goes beyond the transfer of knowledge. Students are trained to become experts in their chosen field. They learn to develop a broad perspective on societal issues, collaborate across disciplines and domains, and apply new scientific insights. We provide everyone with the space to develop broadly, both in knowledge and the digital and human skills needed for today's global transitions.

### Independent research with societal value

In our research, we place great value on independence and encourage curiosity. Our fundamental and applied academic research often leads to solutions for societal challenges, internationally, nationally and regionally. Our researchers collaborate closely, both with each other and external partners. By combining insights from different disciplines, we create new knowledge and innovative solutions. For example, health scientists, economists and medical professionals work together to reduce health inequalities and improve access to high-quality care. Legal

scholars and criminologists join forces with sociologists to investigate, combat and prevent criminal behaviour. Additionally, psychologists, anthropologists and communication scientists collaborate with local communities in Rotterdam to explore how they experience their neighbourhood and city and what could be improved.

### Inextricably linked to society

As an Engaged University, we are aware that everything we do is intrinsically connected to (international) society. Strong, meaningful connections with society are crucial for creating a positive societal impact. We

engage in ongoing dialogue to gain a deeper understanding of the challenges we face. Through co-creation, we integrate this knowledge into scientific insights and contribute to actionable understanding and solutions. Being engaged reflects our commitment to society, both regionally and internationally. It involves how we relate to our society, how we build bridges, and how we establish reciprocal, inclusive and equal relationships with our partners.

This is Erasmus University Rotterdam: an Engaged University, globally connected, locally embedded.





# Taking responsibility In a changing world

**Our society faces major challenges such as climate change, polarisation, health inequalities and healthcare costs, the rise of artificial intelligence, the transition to a sustainable economy, good governance and a just and inclusive society. We live in a time of rapid change characterised by significant contradictions. Making it all the more important that we take responsibility.**

**A**s a university, we are an integral part of society. Within this context, we are a safe, inclusive, innovative and independent organisation. Our staff, students and collaboration partners connect with one another to explore diverse perspectives openly. Together we aim to contribute to positive and sustainable solutions for societal change through a deeper understanding of the situation.

## Technological developments

Technology is advancing rapidly, making our lives more efficient while also raising new ethical, legal and societal questions. As society becomes increasingly digital, we experience greater connectedness but also face alienation and information overload. The rise of artificial intelligence prompts questions about its impact on our society and specifically in education and research.

## Growing need for development

There is a widespread trend of increasing demand for continuous learning and personal development. This involves acquiring the knowledge and skills needed for the major global transitions of our time. We offer this both in the traditional classroom setting, as well as through hybrid or even fully digital formats. This presents an opportunity for our university to broaden and deepen our educational offering in innovative ways.

## Transition to a sustainable society

Globally, we face far-reaching sustainability challenges that impact not only the climate and environment, but also social inequality, health, economy, our democratic rule of law, and quality of life. The effects of these challenges are noticeable in our daily lives. We recognise and embrace the need for fundamental change and are committed to making a positive impact on people, the environment, the climate and society.

## Attract and retain talent

Retaining experienced employees and attracting new talent is crucial for maintaining a vital and innovative organisation. Given labour market tightness, political developments and international competition, this can be challenging. Additionally increasing work pressure and shrinking financial resources limit our flexibility. Especially in this context, we find it is more important than ever to create a truly diverse and inclusive work environment— a place where everyone feels safe, valued and connected. It is this diversity of perspectives, experiences and talents that keeps us vital, resilient and engaged.

## Challenges of a post-industrial region

Our city and region face major societal challenges closely linked to the transition towards a sustainable post-industrial period. We strive for a society where people coexist peacefully, prosperity is more equitably distributed, and the community is resilient, healthy and adaptable. We are collaborating at all levels to address these issues. From local Rotterdam neighbourhoods to the international stage.

## Working together across borders

The European Union has a comprehensive agenda to enhance Europe's competitiveness. Meanwhile investments in education funding and independent research are decreasing in the Netherlands. Given that many societal issues are often international in nature, there is a need for stronger collaborations between national and international universities. Such partnerships enable us to conduct joint research

projects, exchange knowledge and ideas, and access resources. We are intensifying our EU and international agenda with our strategic partners as well as a targeted approach to grants in education and research.

## Financial uncertainties

The financial challenges we face are significant, influenced by both global and national developments. In addition to the announced budget cuts within higher education, geopolitical shifts directly impact funding and collaboration between universities. This complex financial situation requires us to be strategic and flexible with our resources. We therefore need to become more agile and differentiate our revenue streams.



# Resilient and inclusive

## Impact domains in which we will make a difference

To create a positive societal impact, focus is essential. We identify five domains where complex challenges converge and where we can make a difference. With our knowledge, expertise and international contacts, we aim to ensure a positive impact.

The selection of these domains is rooted in our DNA, our connection with society and business, our solid foundation of subject matter expertise, our track record, innovativeness and alignment with societal issues. Thanks to our diverse scientific disciplines and collaborative approach, we can adopt

an integrated perspective on the challenge within these domains. As a result, proposed interventions go beyond simple solutions. Our domains embody our core strengths and reflect the challenges we aim to address in partnership with governments, businesses and civil society organisations.

### Our impact domains

#### 1. The resilience and robustness of our society

Our society faces major challenges, where trust in each other, as well as in our democratic government, the rule of law, the business community and market forces is becoming increasingly less obvious. We aim to find ways restore trust in our rule of law and enable society to better address these challenges.

achieve a more sustainable society and a healthy planet. Together, we explore how individuals, government and organisations can implement these changes so that the benefits and burdens are shared more equitably and new opportunities arise for as many people as possible.

#### 2. Sustainable entrepreneurship and inclusive prosperity

We recognize that prosperity encompasses more than just financial gain. We see the need for a robust economy, healthy trade and strong businesses. Simultaneously, companies face the societal task of becoming sustainable. Therefore, we assist entrepreneurs, the business community and civil society organisations to organise their activities in a future-proof way and developing new revenue models. By doing so, we contribute to the creation of broad prosperity, prosperity that is available to all.

#### 4. Healthy society and accessible & affordable healthcare

With our knowledge, we contribute to improving people's health and strive to reduce health inequalities. We seek innovative ways to address the growing demand for care by promoting new and innovative healthcare concepts. In doing so, we ensure that the accessibility and affordability of care is guaranteed.

#### 3. A just transition to a sustainable society

Transitions are necessary in various areas – such as energy, social and climate – to

#### 5. The responsible use of technologies

New innovations and technologies, such as artificial intelligence, presents both opportunities and challenges. We assist in the responsible development of (digital) technologies, deploying them address to societal problems while considering their ethical, economic and societal impacts.

### We are the platform

For these five domains, we serve as the platform for knowledge, ideas, relationships, innovations and initiatives. We are the preferred partner to develop knowledge. Connecting scholars with the professional field to create solutions that are not only theoretically sound and academically well-founded, but

also practical. We operate on the principle of equal opportunities, contributing to a just and inclusive society, where everyone has equal chances regardless of their background. We ensure that everyone can collaborate with us and benefit from our expertise, from private companies to governments, from educational institutions to civil society organisations – locally, nationally and internationally.





# Engaged, leading and connected

## Strategic goals and priorities

Our strategic goals define our focus for the coming years, aiming to create positive impact through our core activities within the selected impact domains. The action-oriented priorities provide concrete expression to these goals. They are inextricably linked, reinforcing and supporting each other. Together with the impact domains, they serve as a compass for our faculties and departments to further shape the strategy.

### Goal 1. Leading academic education and research

*By 2030, we aim to further solidify our position as a leading university recognised for high-quality academic education and research.*

We offer research- and impact-driven education that fosters critical and analytical thinking amongst our students. By collaborating with national and international partners, we provide students with opportunities to apply their scientific perspective in real societal contexts. Our research is curiosity- or demand-driven, groundbreaking and independent. Our scholars work closely with each other and external partners, leveraging insights from various disciplines to create new knowledge and innovative solutions. With this vision for education and research, we are building on our role as an Engaged University. To achieve this, we will focus on the following priorities over the next five years:

#### Priority 1. Academic education and research that makes an impact

Our research-driven education and academic research are strongly focussed on creating positive societal impact. We achieve this by actively involving our students in current issues through our academic programs. They collaborate with societal partners, critically reflect on their own assumptions and contribute to shared insights and sustainable solutions for these issues. Sustainability will be permanently integrated into all programs, for instance, by introducing a compulsory basic module in our curriculum. In the coming years digital technologies and AI will be incorporated to enhance future-oriented education. Our lecturers receive support through appropriate tools, training and guidance.

In our research we highly value on independence and encourage curiosity alongside our focus on creating impact. With our versatile academic expertise, and collaboration with experts from other knowledge institutions and technical disciplines, we work on sustainable solutions to societal problems. We actively promote mutual knowledge exchange, both within and outside the EUR, nationally and internationally.

#### Priority 2. An inspiring and innovative education portfolio

We are dedicated to enhancing our accessible, innovative and inspiring educational offerings so that every student, regardless of their background, can develop academically, personally and professionally. We are committed to reach individuals who may not naturally find their way to university. We also create learning environments where diverse insights come together. Our education offers the flexibility for students to grow in their own unique ways. We foster connections by bringing people together in learning networks and encouraging collaboration, experimentation and reflection, both physical spaces and online. By investing in learning environments and accessible infrastructures, we aim to reduce barriers and strengthen the connection between university and society.

#### Priority 3. Lifelong Learning

We are expanding our Lifelong Learning (LLL) offerings to meet the increasing demand for continuous learning, change, adaptation and personal development. Through our accessible and application-oriented education, we equip individuals and organisations for the challenges of tomorrow and beyond. We customise our offerings to meet the needs of practitioners and develop flexible learning pathways. One approach is collaborating within learning networks that includes businesses, policy-makers and other communities. In the coming years digital applications will be integrated, and we will establish a digital platform to deliver our offerings in a cohesive manner.







## Goal 2. Collaboration in networks and with society (engagement)

*By 2030, we aim to be **the engaged and active knowledge partner of choice within society.***

Our goal is to strengthen our engagement with society by fostering reciprocal and equal relationships. Together, we identify societal issues and explore how we as EUR can contribute to addressing them. To achieve this, we will focus on the following priorities over the next five years:

### Priority 4. Open innovation networks

Through open innovation networks, we connect people and societal issues, bringing together the needs of public, private and civil society partners with our expertise. This approach creates bridges between our core education and research and the broader society. We are committed to sustainable collaborations to fulfil our mission within the impact domains, utilizing resources such as our alumni networks and Lifelong Learning programs.

### Priority 5. Strategic alliances

To enhance our national and international resilience and competitive strength, we are reinforcing our strategic alliances with similar and complementary knowledge organisations within the region and across Europe. This includes initiatives like Convergence with TU Delft and Erasmus MC, LDE (Leiden University, TU Delft and Erasmus) and UNIC (European University of Post-Industrial Cities; a cooperative arrangement of European universities). We are dedicated to pursuing shared goals and combining our expertise to develop innovative solutions.

### Priority 6. Diversification of income streams

Enhancing revenue diversity is crucial for EUR to be better prepared for all challenges ahead. It will help us remain flexible and uphold our role as a reliable partner in society. Diversifying our income sources applies to both education (such as Lifelong Learning programs and private education) and research (including European or national funding and public-private partnerships).

Through our focus on the five impact domains, we are also developing a portfolio of relevant collaborations, which offers opportunities for additional and diverse income streams. By fostering entrepreneurship within our university, we can creatively and innovatively generate alternative income that aligns with our broad societal role.

## Goal 3. One connected EUR

*By 2030, we aim to be **an agile and engaged organisation, where our EUR community feels valued and inspired.***

In a world where change is constant, it is essential for us to be agile, resilient and connected. To accomplish this, over the next five years, we will focus on:

### Priority 7. Human-centred organisation and culture

We strive to create and sustain an inspiring and motivating work and learning environment where everyone feels recognised, valued and engaged. Our focus is on collaboration, inclusiveness and personal growth. We promote a culture of learning, where experimentation, feedback and adaptability drives continuous improvement. We prioritize a healthy work-life balance and value open communication, diversity, recognition and development opportunities. Just as we aim to collaborate with society, we are committed to foster cooperation within EUR. This is why we are also dedicated to building an engaged internal culture.

### Priority 8. Connecting through leadership, empowering diverse talent, and teamwork

Our leadership – grounded in our Erasmian leadership profile – is crucial to our decisiveness, employee well-being, talent development and organisational success. Continuous development of our leadership skills and strengthening cooperation are vital to achieving the strategic goals and our mission. We value and promote inclusive and dynamic teams where diverse talents and skills complement each other to enhance collaboration. By fostering effective leadership and teamwork, we break down barriers and strengthen knowledge sharing within our organisation, as one connected EUR.

### Priority 9. A resilient and agile organisation

We need to become more agile to respond swiftly and effectively to dynamic (geo)political and financial realities. This requires a clear organisational structure built on mutual trust, measures for improvement to optimise our operational management, and transparent decision-making. We strive to be a resilient organisation that fully leverages both public and private activities within EUR. By collaborating with partners and alumni and embracing innovative forms of entrepreneurship, we are building a future-proof organisation.



# Strategy on a page







# Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam

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