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Transforming Regions for an Inclusive Europe

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Executive Report on NEOLAIa Gateway Implementation

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1. Used terms and abbreviations

BIP – Blended Intensive Programme

EC – Executive Committee

FA – Focus Academy

GA – Grant Agreement

LMS – Learning Management System

NGO – Non-governmental Organisation

PDC – Plan for Dissemination and Communication

USV - Ștefan cel Mare University of Suceava

UT – University of Tours

WP – Work package

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4. Introduction

NEOLAIa, with its motto 'Transforming Regions for an Inclusive Europe', is an Alliance of nine European Universities co-funded by the European Commission in its 2023 call for the period 2024-2027. The aim of NEOLAIa is to transform regional connectivity by embracing (i) digital transformation, through (ii) inclusion and diversity in a context of (iii) enhanced mobility, which are the three pillars of the project. To achieve this end, "NEOLAIa, Transforming Regions for an Inclusive Europe" is based on ten lines of action:

- WP1 Project Management.

- WP2 Improving Teaching and Learning
- WP3 Diversity and inclusion - Overcoming barriers to participation
- WP4 Enhanced Mobility
- WP5 Increasing Regional Research Impact
- WP6 Entrepreneurship - NEOLAIa Capabilities for the society of tomorrow
- WP7 Towards a multilingual and intercultural European university
- WP8 Adopting and Sustaining Open Science
- WP9 Digital Transformation
- WP10 Sustainability and dissemination

The NEOLAIa Alliance consists of nine partners: University of Jaén, Örebro University, Bielefeld University, University of Ostrava, University of Nicosia, Ștefan cel Mare University of Suceava, University of Tours, University of Salerno, and Šiauliai State University of Applied Sciences.

The aim of WP10, Sustainability and Dissemination, is to inform and involve all stakeholders – both internal (students, staff, academics and researchers of the partner universities) and external (regional researchers outside NEOLAIa, citizens, local authorities, regional companies, associations and NGOs, policy-makers, local and regional media) – in all activities through a complete range of means of dissemination and communication.

The specific objectives of this package according to the Grant Agreement (2023) are:

- Developing a plan for dissemination and communication activities (PDC) (T10.1).
- Facilitating communication among NEOLAIa alliance members (researchers, faculty, students, alumni communities) and society as a whole, focusing on the alliance's mission statement, activities and achievements (T10.2).
- Raising awareness towards society at large, businesses and regional governments on the pace of ongoing projects and collaborations through the use of inclusive communication channels (digital fora) with a particular focus on a strong digital presence and branding (T10.3).
- Ensuring the continuity of the NEOLAIa alliance beyond the European Universities funding, through a periodical and transparent financial and sustainability reporting (T10.4) (2023: 40).

Thus, achieving these objectives helps to secure effective communication and dissemination, foster active stakeholder involvement and guarantee the continuity of NEOLAIa beyond the current funding framework.

5. Executive summary/abstract

The NEOLAIa Gateway will be a strategic, internal digital platform designed to centralise information on study and teaching activities across the NEOLAIa Alliance. Its primary purpose is to enhance accessibility, streamline enrolment processes (at the advanced stage of the development of the platform), and promote internationalisation and collaborative learning. The platform will consolidate offerings such as Focus Academy courses, Summer Schools courses, Multiple and joint degrees, and other English-taught subjects, providing students with a single, user-friendly access point.

This report presents the NEOLAIa Gateway's concept, objectives, and content, as well as its anticipated benefits, implementation and dissemination strategies, regional significance, and approaches to challenges and risk management. It also outlines the staged development process of the Gateway.

The NEOLAIa Gateway will strengthen the Alliance's international profile, facilitate cross-border academic collaboration and enhance regional impact by supporting knowledge exchange and attracting international participants. Dissemination strategies are outlined, identifying key audiences, communication channels, and promotional actions to ensure engagement and maximise visibility.

Key elements emphasised in the report include clear strategic objectives, detailed information about the platform's development, and the demonstration of both international and regional relevance. Once a unified enrolment procedure will be established (latest stages of the development), the NEOLAIa Gateway will evolve into a user-friendly, scalable platform, developed and upgraded in stages, that will ultimately enable students to complete application forms for Multiple and Joint Degrees as well as short courses, while advancing the Alliance's educational, academic, and strategic goals.

6. Description

6.1. Concept of the NEOLAIa Gateway

The NEOLAIa Gateway will serve as both a communication tool and a functional database designed to showcase the Alliance's courses and degree programmes. Its primary purpose will be to ensure that all relevant courses and learning opportunities are presented to students in a clear, consistent, and easily searchable format—by topic, institution, and mode of delivery.

The concept of the NEOLAIa Gateway is built upon four key pillars: **accessibility**, **inclusivity**, **interactivity**, and **scalability**.

- **Accessibility** will focus on ensuring that the platform is usable by everyone, including people with disabilities. The NEOLAIa Gateway will comply with recognised web accessibility standards, offering features such as readable layouts, keyboard navigation,

alternative text for images, and compatibility with assistive technologies. This approach will ensure that all students, regardless of their individual needs or level of familiarity with other Alliance institutions, can navigate and benefit from the platform equally.

- **Inclusivity** will ensure that the academic offerings of all nine partner universities will be equally represented and promoted, reflecting the diversity and collaborative spirit of the Alliance.
- **Interactivity** will allow users to go beyond browsing, enabling them to register, save courses of interest, and receive updates.
- **Scalability** will guarantee that the NEOLAIa Gateway can grow and adapt over time, incorporating new functionalities, programmes, and tools as the Alliance evolves.

6.2. Scope of the NEOLAIa Gateway

The NEOLAIa Gateway will consolidate information about Multiple and Joint degrees, Focus Academy courses, Summer School courses and Blended Intensive Programmes. It will serve as a tool to publish and promote before mentioned courses. The platform's scope will extend beyond that of a simple catalogue. It will be designed to foster internationalisation, inclusivity, and academic collaboration by ensuring that all partner universities' offerings are equally visible and accessible.

6.3. Content and Structure of the Platform

At the full launch of the NEOLAIa Gateway, it will host four main categories of activities: Focus Academy courses, Summer Schools, Blended Intensive Programmes and Multiple and Joint degrees taught in English (by the end of 2025). Each entry will include comprehensive information: course description, learning outcomes, teaching methods, responsible institution, schedule, location, mode of delivery, and eligibility criteria.

As the platform develops, it will also incorporate a catalogue of English-taught degree programmes and courses within NEOLAIa Alliance open to international and exchange students. The inclusion of an application function (approximately by the end of 2027 if the universities unanimously decide to implement it) will enable students to apply directly on the platform, thereby simplifying administration. Advanced search and filtering options will further increase usability, allowing users to find courses and programmes that align with their academic pathway, interests, and mobility ambitions.

6.3.1. Focus Academy Courses

Focus Academy courses represent a central element of the Alliance's teaching and learning activities. These short, intensive and interdisciplinary courses hosted by different partner universities in blended intensive format, address key societal challenges such as climate, health, democracy, and artificial intelligence. Listed below are the upcoming Focus Academy courses for the academic year 2025-2026 that will be available for students on NEOLAIa Gateway:

- **Global Competencies and Multicultural Identity** will be hosted by Šiauliai State University of Applied Sciences in Lithuania. Activity period from 14 October to 7 November 2025, combining online teaching with an on-site week in Šiauliai from 3–7 November 2025. The course is designed to help students develop intercultural awareness and prepare for work in multicultural teams. Link to the course: <https://gateway.neolaiacampus.eu/courses/global-competencies-and-multicultural-identity/>.
- **Digital Transformation and Entrepreneurship** will be hosted by Bielefeld University in Germany. Activity period: online in November and December 2025, with a face-to-face week from 24–28 November 2025 in Bielefeld. The module introduces students to digital business models and entrepreneurship in a European context. Link to the course: <https://gateway.neolaiacampus.eu/courses/digital-transformation-and-entrepreneurship/>
- **European Citizenship** will be hosted by University of Tours in collaboration with University of Bielefeld, Universidad de Jaén, Örebro University, University of Salerno, and University of Suceava. The course will take place online from January to February 2026, followed by the face-to-face sessions from 23 to 27 March 2026. <https://gateway.neolaiacampus.eu/courses/european-citizenship/>
- **Eyes Wide Open: learning to see possible inclusive** will be hosted by University of Nicosia in collaboration with University of Salerno and University of Tours. The course will take place online from late March to April 2026, followed by the face-to-face sessions from the 18th to the 22nd of May, 2026 in Nicosia, Cyprus. Link to the course: <https://gateway.neolaiacampus.eu/courses/eyes-wide-open/>
- **Visual Competence and Gender in the Digital World** will be hosted by University of Ostrava in collaboration with Bielefeld University and Šiauliai State University of Applied Sciences. Activity period: The course starts online, the online sessions are held on February 23, March 16, and April 27, 2026. The face-to-face workshops will take place in Ostrava from June 8 to June 12, 2026. Link to the course: <https://gateway.neolaiacampus.eu/courses/visual-competence-and-gender-in-digital-world/>

- **Data Analytics for Inclusion and Diversity** will be hosted by University of Jaén in collaboration with Bielefeld University, Örebro University, and "Ștefan cel Mare" University of Suceava. The course will take place face-to-face from 8 to 12 June, followed by online sessions from 15 to 19 June, 2026. Link to the course: <https://gateway.neolaiacampus.eu/courses/data-analytics-for-inclusion-and-diversity/>

Through the NEOLAIa Gateway, all modules will be presented with standardised information, ensuring students can easily compare and select the course that best matches their interests and needs.

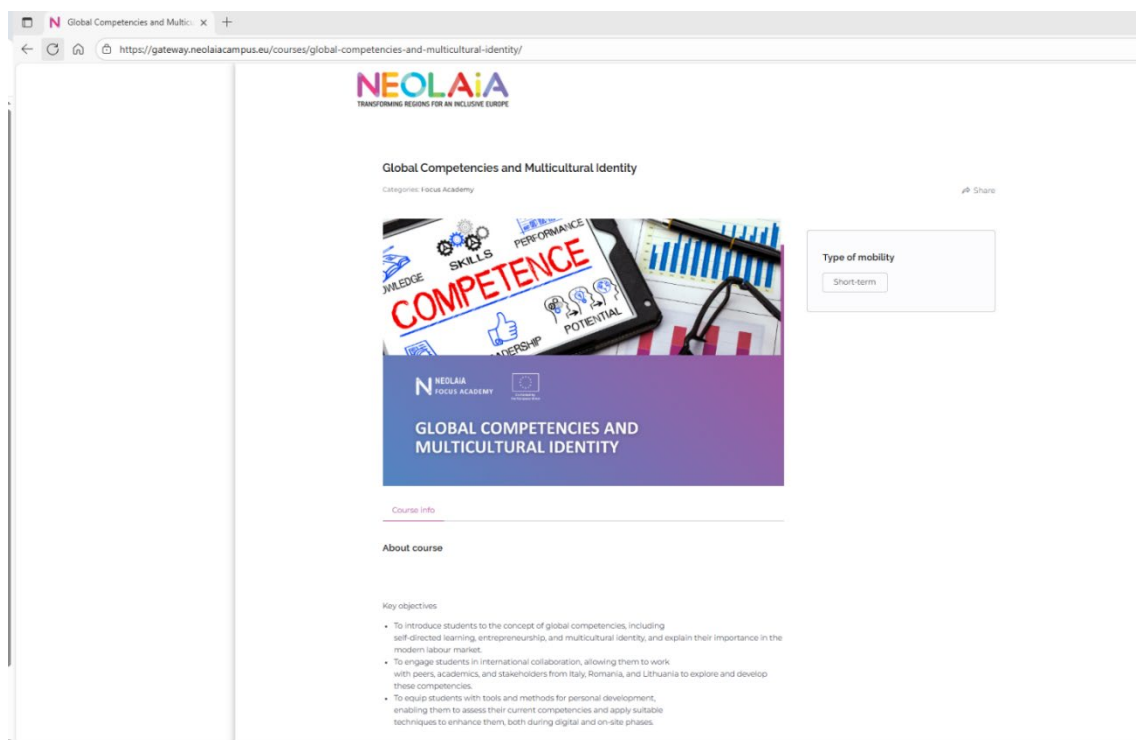


Figure No. 1: Focus Academy course *Global Competencies and Multicultural Identity* on NEOLAIa Gateway

6.3.2. Summer Schools

The NEOLAIa Summer Schools are short, intensive, and immersive programmes that foster innovative teaching and learning practices. They are designed to engage students in thematic areas through a challenge-based learning model, encouraging the exploration of regionally relevant topics within the Humanities and Social Sciences.

The NEOLAIa Gateway will serve as the primary platform for presenting these Summer Schools, providing comprehensive information on each programme. This will include detailed

descriptions, logistical and practical guidance on travel and accommodation, as well as direct links for registration.

Planned Summer Schools include the following:

- **Work package 2 – Improving Teaching and Learning:** scheduled for **June 2027** in **Tours, France**.
- **Work package 6 – Entrepreneurship:**
 - **SUMMA BAC**, to be held in **May 2026** in **Salerno, Italy**.
 - **SUMMA MAST**, planned for **July 2026** in **Suceava, Romania**.
 - **SUMMA PhD**, scheduled for **May 2027** in **Tours, France**.

6.3.3. Multiple and Joint Degrees

Multiple and Joint Degrees represent a key milestone in the integration process within the NEOLAIa Alliance. These programmes will be delivered in English and exemplify the Alliance's commitment to developing shared academic standards and fostering student mobility across partner institutions.

Through the NEOLAIa Gateway, comprehensive and transparent information about these programmes will be made available. The platform will help prospective students understand the programme structure, mobility pathways, and related career opportunities.

The following programmes are planned for launch in the **academic year 2026/2027**:

- **Bachelor's Degree in Science, Management and Politics in Global Health** (*Joint Degree*)
- **Master's Degree in Artificial Intelligence and Social Robotics Applied to Global Health** (*Multiple Degree*)

In addition, the following programme is foreseen for the **academic year 2027/2028**:

- **Master's Degree in Inclusion Studies** (*Multiple Degree*)

6.4. International significance

The NEOLAIa Gateway is central to NEOLAIa's commitment to internationalisation. By ensuring that all courses taught in English are visible in one place, it lowers barriers to mobility. It also demonstrates the Alliance's joint identity to external audiences, showcasing the collaborative academic environment fostered across nine regions of Europe.

6.5. Regional Importance

Each member university plays a vital role in its local and regional ecosystem, contributing to knowledge creation, skills development and innovation. The NEOLAIa Gateway highlights these contributions and enhances the visibility of higher education institutions as drivers of regional development within the European and global context. By attracting international students and staff, the Alliance not only generates cultural and economic benefits for host regions but also fosters inclusiveness, diversity and intercultural dialogue. Furthermore, NEOLAIa promotes innovative teaching and learning practices that are closely aligned with regional priorities and societal challenges—such as sustainability, health, democracy and digital transformation—ensuring that global perspectives translate into tangible regional impact. In this way, the NEOLAIa Gateway strengthens the capacity of its member universities to act as key stakeholders in regional innovation ecosystems and to contribute to the objectives of the European Higher Education Area and the European Research Area.

6.6. Dissemination Strategy

The NEOLAIa Gateway will be not only a central digital platform for academic information but also a strategic instrument for dissemination and communication within the Alliance. By consolidating details on Multiple and Joint degrees, Focus Academy courses, Summer Schools and other educational initiatives, the NEOLAIa Gateway increases the visibility, accessibility and overall impact of NEOLAIa's activities across students, staff, partner institutions and external stakeholders. Its function will go beyond providing information; the platform itself will become a dynamic tool of dissemination, ensuring that educational opportunities are presented in a coherent, user-friendly and widely accessible manner.

To maximise outreach and engagement, the NEOLAIa Gateway will be continuously promoted through multiple communication channels

- **NEOLAIa Website Integration:** NEOLAIa Gateway will be integrated on the homepage next to other NEOLAIa's digital platforms.
- **Newsletters:** Regular newsletters will highlight new courses, upcoming events, and platform updates, directly engaging students and staff.

- **Social Media Campaigns:** Key announcements, success stories, and user testimonials will be shared across LinkedIn, Facebook, and Instagram to reach a broader audience and encourage interaction.

These activities will be closely aligned with academic cycles, such as enrolment periods and beginnings of the semesters, to ensure that communication is timely and effective. The dissemination of the activities will be closely coordinated with relevant work packages and activity organisers to maintain consistency and maximise impact.

In addition, the dissemination strategy will incorporate practical support mechanisms. Targeted outreach to both internal and external stakeholders will reinforce NEOLAIa's identity as a forward-looking, collaborative Alliance, while continuous feedback loops will inform the evolution of both content and communication practices. In this way, the Gateway simultaneously will function as a repository of information, a promotional showcase, and a dissemination engine, reinforcing NEOLAIa's international visibility and regional relevance.

6.6.1. User Guidance and Support

To support effective dissemination and ensure smooth user experience, a dedicated Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section will be developed within the NEOLAIa Gateway. This section will address common queries related to course information, enrolment procedures, and platform navigation. It will serve as a practical, self-help resource, enabling users to find quick answers and guidance without requiring direct assistance.

6.6.2. Dissemination KPIs

To ensure measurable impact and continuous improvement, the dissemination and communication activities related to the NEOLAIa Gateway will be monitored through key performance indicators (KPIs). These KPIs focus on visibility, engagement, content development, and stakeholder participation.

KPI Category	Indicator	Target / Timeline	Responsible Partner(s)
Platform Visibility	Number of visits to the NEOLAIa Gateway	100 visits during the first year after launch; 200 by end of 2026	WP10
Content Availability	Number of courses uploaded to the Gateway	15 courses by end of 2026; 20 by 2027 ¹	All partner universities
User Engagement	Number of newsletter issues highlighting Gateway updates	Minimum 2 per year	WP10

¹ Number of Focus Academy courses will change with each academic year.

KPI Category	Indicator	Target / Timeline	Responsible Partner(s)
Social Media Reach	Number of social media posts promoting the Gateway	Minimum 1 post / announcement per quarter across NEOLAIa channels	WP10

Table No. 1 Key Performance Indicators

6.7. The development of the NEOLAIa Gateway

The development of the NEOLAIa Gateway will follow a structured, staged approach designed to ensure a user-centred, technically robust and sustainable digital platform. Each stage will focus on clear objectives, stakeholder engagement, and iterative improvement, aligning with the Alliance's goals of academic mobility, accessibility, and collaboration across its nine partner institutions.

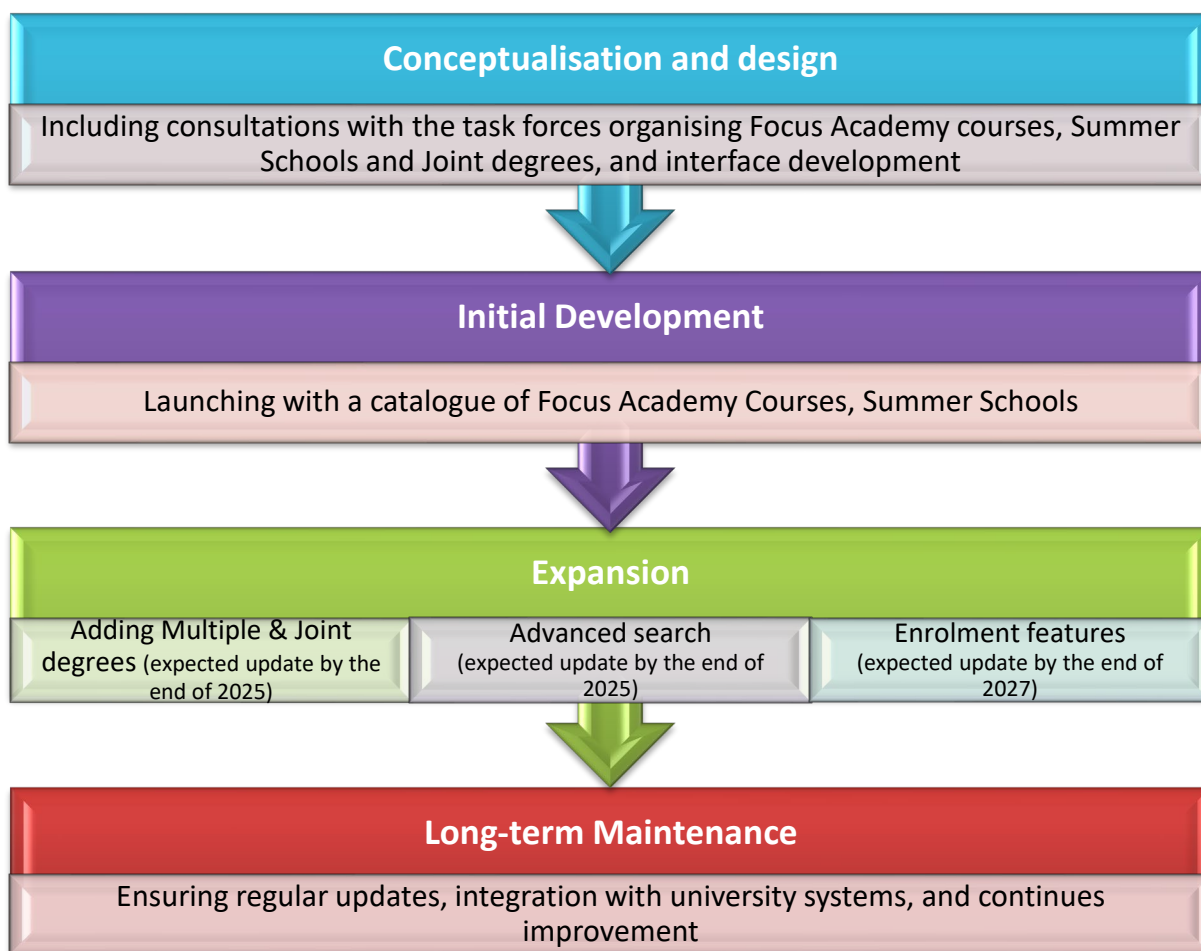


Figure No. 2: The NEOLAIa Gateway platform development stages

6.8. Technical specification

During its initial stage, the NEOLAIa Gateway was built using Tutor LMS, an e-learning and online course platform, and is accessible at <https://gateway.neolaiacampus.eu>. The system has been designed to help users easily navigate and filter information according to their needs. To ensure clarity and accessibility, the information is organised into several categories, including:

- **Type of Programme** – Focus Academy, Summer Schools, Multiple and Joint degrees, and (in later stages) Blended Intensive Programmes (BIPs), Virtual courses.
- **Country** – Allowing users to filter courses and programmes by country.
- **Type of mobility** – Blended Intensive Programme (BIP), short courses and degree programme.

This structured approach will ensure that all users can quickly locate relevant opportunities and resources, while laying the foundation for future upgrades and additional features.

In later stages, students will be able to access the NEOLAIa Gateway through secure authentication mechanisms, once the online course booking system is fully implemented. This authentication process will be based on the NEOLAIa digital identity framework, ensuring seamless, standardised access for all users across the Alliance. By integrating this framework, the platform will provide a secure, unified login experience that respects data protection regulations while enabling personalised access to course information, booking functionalities.

The platform will be updated regularly with the information about academic activities, software updates.

6.9. Challenges and Risk Management

The implementation and maintenance of the NEOLAIa Gateway, while highly beneficial, come with inherent challenges and risks. Addressing these proactively is critical to ensure the platform remains a reliable, accurate, and widely adopted tool for students, faculty, and administrators across the nine partner institutions.

6.9.1. Key Challenges

The successful implementation and long-term operation of the NEOLAIa Gateway depend on addressing a number of key challenges identified during the planning and development phases. These challenges encompass both technical and organisational aspects and require coordinated action across all partner institutions. The main issues to be considered are outlined below:

- **Harmonizing Data Formats Across Institutions**

Each partner university has its own systems for storing and managing course data. Failure to harmonize data properly could lead to inconsistent or confusing information for students navigating multiple institutions.

- **Ensuring Timely and Consistent Updates**

The accuracy of course information depends on regular updates from all participating institutions. Delays in updating schedules, course content, or programme details may result in students receiving outdated or incorrect information, potentially affecting their academic planning and mobility decisions. Establishing a structured workflow and responsibility assignments for content management is crucial to maintain the integrity of the platform.

Updates in the information should be performed no less than twice a year.

- **Encouraging Adoption Among Students and Staff**

Even with a well-designed platform, adoption depends on stakeholder engagement. Students must perceive the NEOLAIa Gateway as the primary source for information, while faculty and administrative staff must be motivated to input and maintain accurate data. Resistance to change, limited digital literacy, or competing systems could reduce usage and diminish the platform's impact.

- **Technical Integration and System Compatibility**

Integrating the NEOLAIa Gateway with existing Learning Management Systems (LMS), institutional databases, and authentication systems across nine institutions presents technical challenges. Variations in software, infrastructure, and security protocols must be addressed to ensure seamless access, stable performance, and secure data handling.

- **Sustaining Long-Term Maintenance and Quality Assurance**

Over time, the platform must evolve to accommodate new courses, programmes, and features. Ensuring sustainable resources for continuous maintenance, updates, and technical support is critical to prevent platform degradation or user dissatisfaction.

6.9.2. Risk Assessment

A proactive risk management approach has been designed to address these challenges:

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation Strategy
Data inconsistencies due to varied formats	Medium	High	Develop standardised data templates; conduct workshops with institutional data teams.
Outdated course information	Low	High	Implement scheduled content updates and automated reminders; assign content managers at each university.
Low stakeholder adoption	Medium	Medium	Conduct training sessions, awareness campaigns, and feedback surveys; integrate platform use in student and staff onboarding.
Technical integration failures	Low	High	Use modular, flexible architecture; carry out rigorous testing and staged deployment.
Insufficient resources for maintenance	High	Medium	Establish clear resource allocation, define roles and responsibilities, and monitor platform usage to justify ongoing investment.
Incompatibility with different LMS systems across universities	Medium	High	Develop interoperability standards (e.g., LTI, SCORM, xAPI); provide APIs and middleware for cross-platform synchronisation; pilot-test with multiple LMS before full roll-out.
Limited user engagement beyond initial launch	Medium	Medium	Establish a continuous engagement strategy: gamified participation elements, regular updates on new opportunities, and integration with social media and mobile notifications.
Data quality and reliability issues	Medium	High	Introduce automated validation checks, data-entry guidelines, and periodic audits; implement version control for course

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation Strategy
			content and ensure transparent change logs.
Cybersecurity and privacy risks	Medium / High	High	Build authentication on the NEOLAIa digital identity framework; apply GDPR-compliant data policies, encrypted communications, and regular penetration testing.

Table No. 2 Risks and mitigation strategy

6.9.3. Mitigation Strategies and Best Practices

To address the identified risks and ensure the long-term reliability of the NEOLAIa Gateway, a set of mitigation strategies and best practices has been defined. These measures focus on maintaining data quality, building institutional capacity, ensuring continuous monitoring, fostering collaboration across partners, and safeguarding the platform's technical integrity. The key strategies are outlined below.

- **Clear Data Standards and Governance**

The WP10 team will establish standardised formats for course information, metadata, and multilingual descriptions ensures consistency across all institutions. A governance framework will define who is responsible for updates, validation, and oversight.

- **Training and Capacity Building**

Regular workshops and training sessions for administrative staff and faculty will help ensure proper content management and data entry. Similarly, student orientation sessions will highlight the NEOLAIa Gateway's benefits and demonstrate how to access and navigate the platform effectively.

- **Regular Monitoring and Evaluation**

Analytics tools will monitor platform usage, detect inconsistencies, and track engagement levels. Feedback loops will allow continuous improvement by addressing user concerns, updating content, and refining features.

- **Collaborative Communication**

Task force will hold open discussions once a year with WPs or at the Executive Committee level regarding the development of the platform.

- **Technical Safeguards**

Redundant systems, secure backups, and scalable architecture will protect the platform from data loss, downtime, and performance issues. Regular security audits will maintain compliance with institutional and legal requirements.

6.10. Long-term vision and Governance

The NEOLAIa Gateway will evolve into a fully integrated portal for Alliance's teaching and learning activities. Its governance will be overseen by a dedicated working group within the Sustainability and Dissemination Work Package, ensuring quality control, relevance, and strategic alignment.

7. Conclusion

The NEOLAIa Gateway will represent a strategic milestone in the Alliance's efforts to strengthen collaboration, knowledge sharing, and academic mobility across its nine partner institutions. By providing a centralized digital platform where all universities can maintain comprehensive information about courses in English offered to international exchange students within NEOLAIa Alliance, the NEOLAIa Gateway will ensure that students have easy, reliable access to essential academic and administrative resources. This unified access will not only enhance transparency but also empower students to make informed decisions about study opportunities, mobility programs, and academic pathways within the Alliance.

For students, the NEOLAIa Gateway will significantly improve the user experience by offering a single-entry point to explore course offerings across multiple institutions. Clear navigation and advanced search functionalities streamline the process of finding relevant courses, comparing curricula, and planning their academic trajectory. This digital integration supports mobility, intercultural learning, and the development of global competencies, which are central objectives of the NEOLAIa Alliance.

However, maintaining the platform presents notable challenges for partner universities. Keeping course information up to date will require regular coordination, consistent data formatting, and timely input from multiple administrative offices and academic departments. Differences in institutional systems, data management practices, and workflows can create friction and

increase the risk of outdated or inconsistent information. To address these challenges, universities must commit to clear protocols for content updates, designate responsible staff members, and establish periodic audits to ensure accuracy and completeness.

Despite these challenges, the benefits of the NEOLAIa Gateway far outweigh the difficulties. By fostering a culture of collaboration and digital literacy across the Alliance, the platform strengthens institutional visibility, facilitates cross-border student engagement, and lays the groundwork for future enhancements in teaching, learning, and mobility management. The Gateway is not only a tool for information dissemination but also a cornerstone of NEOLAIa's vision for a more connected, accessible, and student-centered European higher education ecosystem.

8. References

1. Grant Agreement. Project 101124794 — NEOLAIa (2023).