

PRINCIPLES OF BUILDING A STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS AND TERRITORIAL COMMUNITIES BASED ON THE EXPERIENCE OF DNIPRO UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY: LEGAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL DIMENSIONS

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Introduction

In the current conditions of a radical transformation of the higher education system in Ukraine, accompanied by the growing role of universities as drivers of social progress, the issue of building effective and sustainable interaction between higher education institutions (HEIs) and territorial communities is becoming particularly relevant. Decentralization processes, combined with the challenges of full-scale armed aggression and the critical need to restore regions, lead to a rethinking of the role of universities. They are increasingly becoming not only educational and scientific centers, but also active participants in local and regional development [1].

Traditionally, the educational and scientific activities of universities have a predominantly indirect impact on society, but the implementation of the concept of the “third mission” requires a transition to direct, practical interaction with society. In the context of overcoming the consequences of the war, this actualizes the expansion of applied aspects of HEI activities and the joining of efforts through strengthening partnership cooperation with local self-government bodies [5]. Despite the established practice of formalizing relations through memoranda, such interaction is often formal in nature and does not ensure the achievement of clear strategic results. This necessitates a scientific rethinking of approaches to the structure of partnerships and the identification

of fundamental principles that would guarantee their effectiveness, sustainability, and practical value for both parties.

The purpose of the study is to systematically substantiate the key principles of building effective partnerships between universities and territorial communities in the unity of legal and organizational dimensions, as well as to verify them based on practical experience.

Empirical basis and research methodology

The study is based on a thorough analysis of the development of the partner network of Dnipro University of Technology, which as of March 2025 unites 23 territorial communities of the Dnipropetrovsk region. The chronology of the concluded agreements illustrates a steady trend towards expanding cooperation: from the first projects with the Pidhorodnenskaya and Novooleksandrivskaya communities (November 2022) to the involvement of various types of municipal entities – from powerful urban centers to rural and settlement areas. Such a diversity of partners allowed us to confirm the universality of the developed approaches in various socio-economic and security conditions.

The process of forming interaction included the identification of potential partners, establishment of communication channels, negotiations and detailed elaboration of the regulatory framework. The author's direct participation in the coordination of these processes allowed to identify restraining factors (difference in expectations of the parties, intermittent communication) and develop mechanisms for their elimination. The experience gained confirms that the quantitative growth of the network should be accompanied by a qualitative update of the content of the partnership.

Legal context and regulatory basis

Substantiating the principles of building a partnership is important for the transition from a declarative to an effective model of cooperation. The defined principles serve as the basis for strategic planning and monitoring of joint initiatives, ensuring the coordination of interests and the formation of a high level of trust between organizations.

In the dimension of state policy, this issue corresponds to the guidelines of the Strategy for the Development of Higher Education in Ukraine for 2022–2032, where one of the goals is the

active participation of HEIs in socio-economic development [2]. At the same time, an analysis of the Laws of Ukraine “On Higher Education” and “On Local Self-Government in Ukraine” shows that these acts do not contain clear rules regarding models and principles of partnership interaction [3, 4]. Thus, the legislative recognition of the possibility of cooperation needs to be supplemented with specific mechanisms and scientifically based principles at the level of individual institutions and communities.

System of key principles for building effective partnerships

Based on the practical experience of Dnipro University of Technology, it is proposed to single out the following principles:

1. The principle of value trust and transparency. It is the basic foundation formed through openness of intentions, consistency of actions and clear fulfillment of commitments. Trust reduces organizational costs, while its absence levels the potential of even legally impeccable relationships.
2. The principle of systemic dialogue and feedback. It involves creating conditions for constant communication, which allows for timely correction of joint projects. Ignoring this principle leads to the risk of creating unnecessary products (for example, complex digital services without taking into account the needs and capabilities of the population), which entails ineffective planning and waste of resources.
3. The principle of joint planning and consistency of goals. It consists in the transition to an equal partnership, where the needs of the territories are combined with the intellectual potential of the HEI at the stage of developing ideas. The lack of a single strategic vision leads to the creation of “cabinet” projects that cannot be implemented, including due to a lack of resources in communities.
4. The principle of mutual benefit (Win-Win). Defines partnership as a strategic exchange: the community receives scientifically sound solutions to its problems, and the university – practical verification of developments in real conditions and strengthening its social role.
5. The principle of institutional sustainability and long-term sustainability. Aimed at transforming individual activities into permanent interaction through the creation of joint structures (councils, development offices). This allows us to preserve the

experience of cooperation and ensure the continuity of processes, including when changing leadership.

6. The principle of knowledge and technology transfer. It consists in introducing innovative developments into the activities of local government and business. This contributes to the economic development of territories and the introduction of modern management models (data-driven decisions).

7. The principle of adaptive innovation. It assumes the partnership's ability to flexibly respond to various challenges (from military threats to digitalization) through the use of the "Living Labs" format, where the community becomes a platform for testing the latest technologies.

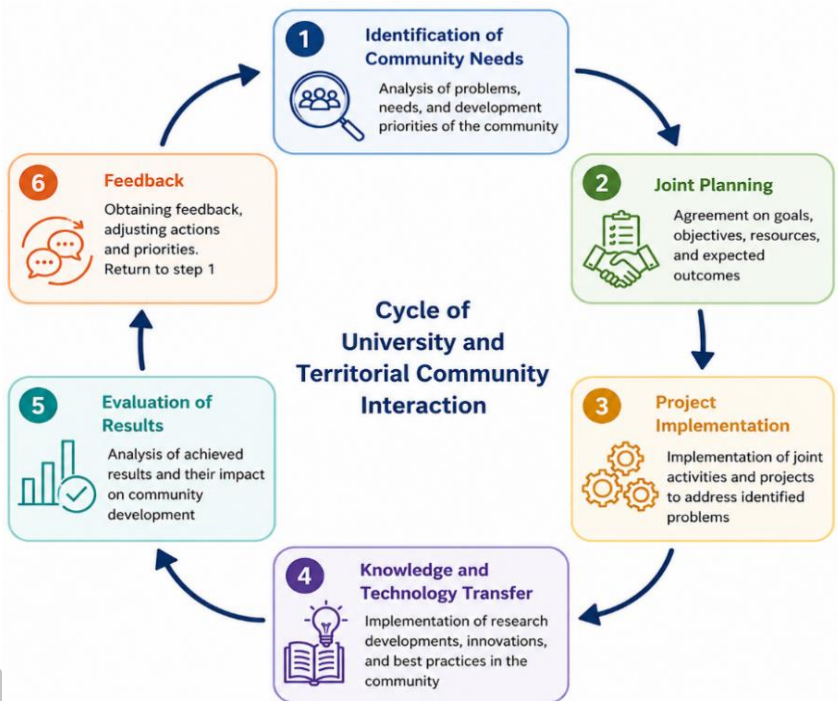


Fig. 1. Cycle of University and Territorial Community Interaction

These examples illustrate the implementation of the “third mission” of the university, where scientists become active participants in the restoration and modernization of territories.

Conclusions

The study proves that successful interaction between HEIs and communities is based on a combination of legal instruments and organizational flexibility. The implementation of systemic principles of partnership allows to overcome formal barriers and combine academic potential with practical needs of regions. This creates a reliable basis for transforming universities into key participants in regional development, capable of ensuring sustainable progress of the country in the conditions of recovery.

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