

# project vital newsletter



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## Start of the project

The VITAL project (Virtual Innovation and Training for the Development of Teaching Leaders, Digital Skills, and Research Excellence) is a strategic training initiative funded by the European Union through the Erasmus+ virtual exchange program. Its main objective is to transform the academic landscape in Georgia and Ukraine by training early-career faculty and researchers to become leaders capable of guiding their institutions toward excellence in the digital age. The project aims to implement a sustainable and scalable model for academic staff development, based on key European values such as inclusion, virtual collaboration, intercultural dialogue, and academic integrity.



The project focuses particularly on universities in Georgia and Ukraine, addressing structural deficiencies in mentoring systems, academic leadership, digital pedagogy, and research development. For this reason, through international cooperation and knowledge exchange, the project aims to promote innovative training, digital competencies, and collaborative research practices. The four pillars underpinning the project are academic leadership and professional development, digital skills and pedagogy, excellence in research, and, finally, the promotion of European values.



### What is its purpose?

The aim of the project is to implement a sustainable and scalable model for academic staff development, based on key European values such as inclusion, virtual collaboration, intercultural dialogue, and academic integrity.

## Our team

The project team consists of a consortium of excellence comprising six institutions from four European countries. The project is coordinated by the University of Santiago de Compostela (Spain) and is carried out in collaboration with INFOR Elea (Italy), Petre Shotadze Tbilisi Medical Academy (TMA) and the Business and Technology University (BTU) (Georgia), and the Institute of Food Biotechnology and Genomics (IFBG) and Ternopil National Medical University (Ukraine). VITAL's strength lies in the diversity and experience of its partners. The VITAL consortium is committed to minimizing its environmental impact by prioritizing virtual communication and digital collaboration over unnecessary travel, thereby reducing its carbon footprint while maximizing global connectivity.

## Kick-off Meeting

The project was officially launched with an initial meeting held at the Petre Shotadze Tbilisi Medical Academy in Georgia, from February 23 to 26, 2026. This first meeting served as a common starting point for the partners, establishing strategic objectives, expected outcomes, and performance indicators. The meeting served as a platform for strategic coordination, strengthening institutional cooperation and laying the organizational and methodological foundations for successful implementation. The meeting focused on the following work plan:

- Detail the work plan, implementation stages, and timeline.
- Establish project governance and internal communication mechanisms.
- Define financial management and reporting procedures.
- Describe approaches to quality assurance, monitoring, evaluation, and risk management.
- Approve dissemination and sustainability strategies.

The initial meeting not only marked the launch of the organization but also consolidated the partnership among the members around shared values and goals aimed at transforming higher education. Joint decision-making, role definition, and strategic vision were key to ensuring a successful implementation.



## Expected outcomes

Over the next three years, VITAL will develop a set of training activities, collaborative learning opportunities and institutional tools designed to support early-career academics.

Through international cooperation and knowledge exchange, VITAL seeks to support academic leadership and foster institutional transformation aligned with European values in higher education.



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