



# **The Twin Campus Cooperation Model and Road Map**

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CBC 2014-2020  
SOUTH-EAST FINLAND - RUSSIA

Funded by EU, Russian Federation  
and Republic of Finland

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## INTRODUCTION

The goal of the Twin Campus project is to create suitable conditions to develop the competitiveness of university-based technologies and knowledge-based companies through cooperation. Furthermore, the project aims to increase the talent attraction of the areas by creating Twin Campus cooperation model and road map for cross-border cooperation.

The Twin Campus cooperation model is created together with the partners of the Twin Campus project. The model improves cooperation between cross-border partner organizations and establishes cooperation practices.

The Twin Campus project is carried out during the period 01.06.2019 – 30.11.2021, in cooperation with South-Eastern Finland University of Applied Sciences (FI), Kotka-Hamina regional development company Cursor (FI), Business Incubator Ingrian (RU), and St. Petersburg Foundation for SME and ITMO University (RU, project leader). The project is financed by Southeast Finland – Russia CBC 2014–2020 program.

### Cooperation work process

As the groundwork for the cooperation model, Xamk's project team investigated which operational models of business cooperation, entrepreneurial support services, and sustainable development function well in universities. During the autumn of 2020, Xamk's project team benchmarked research on Finnish



universities to see how they operate in sustainable development, entrepreneurial support services, and business cooperation. The benchmarked institutions were: Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences, University of Helsinki, and Lappeenranta-Lahti University of Technology LUT. The research also examined the actions of the South-Eastern Finland University of Applied Sciences' (Xamk). The benchmarking study was published as a series of articles in the summer of 2021 (<http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-344-370-9>).

Creating the cooperation model with partners began by conducting a survey of the partners' views, goals, and needs of international cooperation and finding out the current state of activities in this area. The core of the model was created in two co-creation workshops based on the benchmarking research and survey results. The workshops highlighted several themes, most notably systematic actions to facilitate information sharing, discussion, and cooperation.

The framework and cooperation model were formed on the basis of the workshop results. A draft of the model was created, and it was iterated in several different levels of the partner organizations. The draft was developed with feedback received from the various partners.

The actions of the cooperation model were experimentally developed so that the effectiveness of cooperation can be evaluated in the future. The operation of the cooperation model is described in this report in the following sections.



## **THE STRUCTURE OF THE COOPERATION**

The cooperation model is divided into themes that were highlighted during work process: Twin Campus International Cooperation Model & Network, and Entrepreneurial Services in Twin Campus Context. In addition, sustainability is one of the themes, but it is involved in all actions of the cooperation model.

## **Twin Campus International Cooperation Model & Network**

The cooperation is led by a steering group that guides cross-border cooperation. The steering group consists of 11 representatives of universities (education and RDI), development companies, other project partners, and possibly in the future stakeholders and experts from both sides of the border. The steering group is led by ITMO and Xamk, and all members have their roles and responsibilities clearly defined. All members implement the cooperation model activities in their organizations and share information with others. The steering group will be part of the creation and development of the long-term roadmap and operational activities.

Cooperation is supported by digital platforms that increase the fluency of internal communication and help the customer to find information about the cooperation activities. To improve internal communication, existing platforms were tested to find the most suitable one for all partners. An information website will be created for customers.

## **Entrepreneurial Services in Twin Campus Context**

In the Twin Campus, entrepreneurial services refer to services provided by ITMO, Xamk, and their partners to existing companies or students to develop early-stage business ideas. As one of the cooperation model actions, an international entrepreneurial service path will be created. The first task for creating the service path is to audit the already existing services.

The entrepreneurial services are found on the websites of the organisations. On the joint website, Services, links and contact information has been collected together, so that customers and businesses can find all information on the same platform.

## **Sustainability**

Sustainability is a core part of every cooperation action. The steering group can include sustainability experts, and their responsibility is to evaluate the sustainability of all cooperation actions. Additionally, they develop the knowledge of sustainability in cooperation activities, education and projects. Companies are offered training and mentoring on sustainability practices to manage key areas and gain a competitive advantage.

## **Benefits of The Cooperation**

The cooperation gives benefits for the partners and offers different opportunities in the international field. Companies can have the possibility to train new employees and expand business across the borders. Young entrepreneurs and startups have the opportunities for mentoring and help with their early-stage business development.

Students have the possibility for internationalization and training. Students could have the option to be employed across borders and develop their own international careers.

Higher education institutes and partner organizations have international cooperation partners, new RDI projects, and educational development. The cooperation provides opportunities to develop joint international courses and projects.

## **THE VISION AND GOALS OF THE COOPERATION MODEL**

The vision of cooperation model is to enable practical multifaceted cooperation that generates value and international talent for companies, education and other stakeholders.

The goals of the cooperation model are:

1. To find a continuous model for cooperation and improve cross-border cooperation so that it is more fluent and better functioning. The aim is that cooperation will lead to the production of various events, international courses and training programs, and educational training for companies and students.
2. To increase the talent attraction and to connect companies and individuals needs in cooperation areas. The talent spotting activities for businesses allows talented and active students, professionals, and experts to develop their skills and international career possibilities. Educational and working exchange programmes between universities and their cooperation partners can also be designed.
3. Clarify the cross-border entrepreneurial services for supporting companies. The service path for the company is clearly articulated and thus attracts cooperation with cooperation partners. The service path is built to serve companies of all sizes that are interested in internationalization, international educational cooperation and projects.

## STEERING GROUP OF THE COOPERATION

The cooperation is guided by a steering group. The mission of the steering group is to maintain and develop cooperation together with all partners. The purpose of the steering group is to organize cooperation and implement the cooperation model and road map.

The steering group meet regularly online and have discussions about the different cooperation actions. The steering group also prepare and implement cooperation projects with stakeholders, and look for potential opportunities to grow and develop the cooperation and associated networks. The steering group members also share information in their organizations and approve plans with other group members.

In setting up the functional steering group, the first steps are:

1. Finding the right members in each partner organisation to participate in cooperation;
2. Agreeing on the different roles and duties of the steering groups and its members;
3. Deciding upon the meeting schedule (e.g., once a month);
4. Setting the goals and indicators for cooperation activities;
5. Discussions about possible future cooperation projects and financing.

### **Objectives:**

The steering group generates activities and joint projects between ITMO, Xamk and their partners. When the steering group is active, the cooperation model is clear and functional.

### **Indicators:**

1. Joint international projects and student events between ITMO and Xamk;
2. Educational cooperation with students and companies;
3. A growing amount of yearly cooperation events, projects and participators.

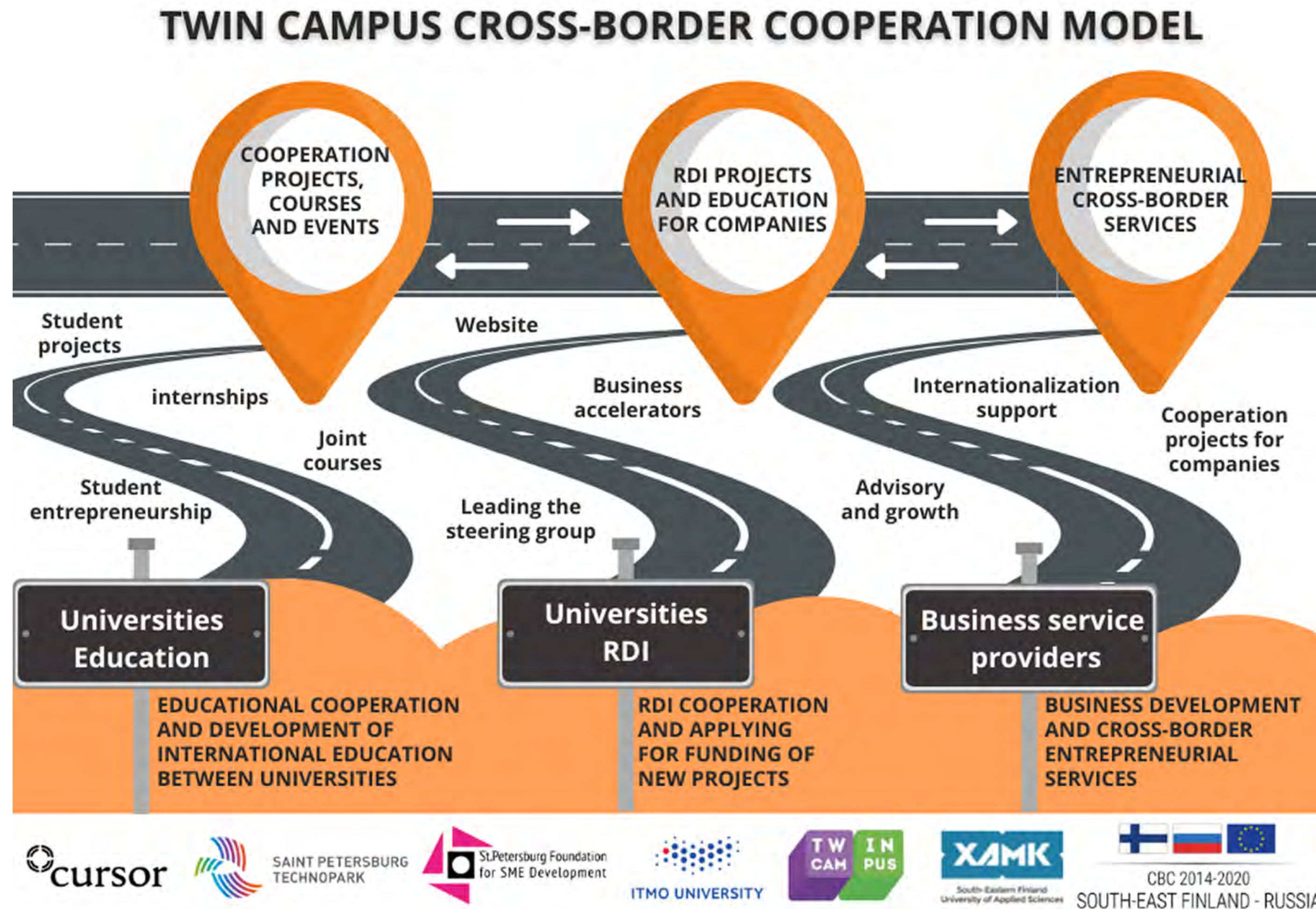




## **THE TWIN CAMPUS COOPERATION MODEL**

The cooperation has been modeled and divided into three areas: educational, projective and entrepreneurial. The cooperation model is designed to give the main themes for activities, but without directing the specific actions too much. Each cooperation partner is an expert in their work and know what kind of cooperation is most beneficial. The model engages its users and allows them to develop the cooperation actions in the way they want.

Picture 1. The Cross-Border Cooperation Model (Minna Nieminen 2021). The cross-border cooperation model shows all partners and their role in the implementing the cooperation actions. Together, both the partners and the actions comprise the cross-border cooperation model.



## EDUCATIONAL COOPERATION

The aim of the educational cooperation is to explore and test new ways of cooperation and establish operating models for educational activities. ITMO and Xamk provide entrepreneurial services for students and offer entrepreneurial education. Together they can provide international education courses about different themes, events, and projects. As well as organise different kinds of accelerators, hackathons and other startup activities with cooperation partners.

An excellent example of a cooperation accelerator program is the Doers Summer School and the \*ship Startup Festival in August 2021. International Startup School Doers is a startup accelerator program for students of ITMO and Xamk to help develop their business idea. Doers include lectures and tasks for startup teams as well as mentoring sessions with startup professionals. In the summer of 2021, the best three teams in Doers participated in the Pitch Captain pitching competition of \*ship Startup Festival. The \*ship Startup Festival is a startup event that consists of a mentor program and the Pitch Captain pitching competition. Annually \*ship brings together 50 startup teams to compete for the 5000€ prize fund.

The next cooperative education project will be the Technology Broker School in November 2021. It is a lecture series about technology transfer for students and staff of Xamk and ITMO.

### **Objectives:**

Universities have international programs, events, and courses provided together with partners. Students have different educational opportunities to develop their international careers and network. Students are actively participating in international activities.

### **Indicators:**

1. Number of tested methods in educational cooperation;
2. Number of international joint courses or student projects;
3. Events and projects provided together with partners;
4. Number of participating students.



## **PROJECTIVE COOPERATION**

Projective cooperation concerns cooperation in research, development, and innovation (RDI) activities. It serves as the bridge between educational and entrepreneurial cooperation and also to businesses. The primary responsibilities are to find new possibilities in projects and business cooperation. Development in cross-border university-business cooperation allows fruitful experiments in innovation services which can form the basis of future cooperation. Interaction and cooperation with local authorities can offer new projects for students and possibilities for partners.

### **Digital platforms supporting cooperation**

Cooperation is supported with a digital platform that is divided into a communication platform for partners and an information site for customers. The mission is to develop a functioning communication platform for internal communication between the partners and an information site for customers to find all the information in the same place.

To develop the internal communication, existing platforms will be tested to find the best solution. The platform should offer a place for communication, sharing materials, and working together. The Covid-19 pandemic has shown that almost everything could be done online, and there are many effective platforms for online co-working. Therefore, face-to-face meetings are not always necessary, even though they have many positive effects.



The aim for the information site is that it would be simple to use, easily findable, with a clear structure. The sites gather all information on cross-border cooperation and entrepreneurial services on the same page, and offer links for additional information. The main target groups are students and scientists interested in entrepreneurship, companies interested in internationalization, modernization and innovation, and everyone who is interested in RDI expertise. Similar informative sites in English will be under ITMO's and Xamk's websites. The responsible moderators in ITMO and Xamk will be decided in the steering group.

### **Objectives:**

The website will be published and will be updated regularly. The website is an information channel and is actively updated. Companies and students have found the website, and it provides them the information they need.

### **Indicators:**

1. The joint platform is published by November 2021;
2. Companies that have found information on the website;
3. The number of new posts on the website per year
4. The number of visitors.

## ENTREPRENEURIAL COOPERATION

Entrepreneurial cooperation aims to provide services for entrepreneurs from the first stage of business to cross-border actions. Partners that are business service providers describe a clear entrepreneurial service path where they present their services for entrepreneurs and companies interested in international business between Finland and Russia. Business service providers also map the companies' internationalization needs and capacities.

The business service provider partners are Cursor/Kasvutehdas, St. Petersburg Foundation of SME Development (SPBFRB) and Business Incubator Ingria. Also, ITMO and Xamk are responsible for student entrepreneurship services. ITMO and Xamk will guide students to entrepreneurial services and provide entrepreneurial education.

The service provider partners create and visualize together the service path on both sides of the border. They offer information on many matters relating to expanding business activities across the borders (inc. legal matters of international companies). They are also responsible for sharing the updates of the entrepreneurial services to ITMO and Xamk, and updating the joint websites.

### Objectives:

Entrepreneurship service providers have developed the entrepreneurial service path for companies, including information about internationalization services, legal matters, and other issues. The entrepreneurial service path is ready for piloting by companies by the end of 2022.

### Indicators:

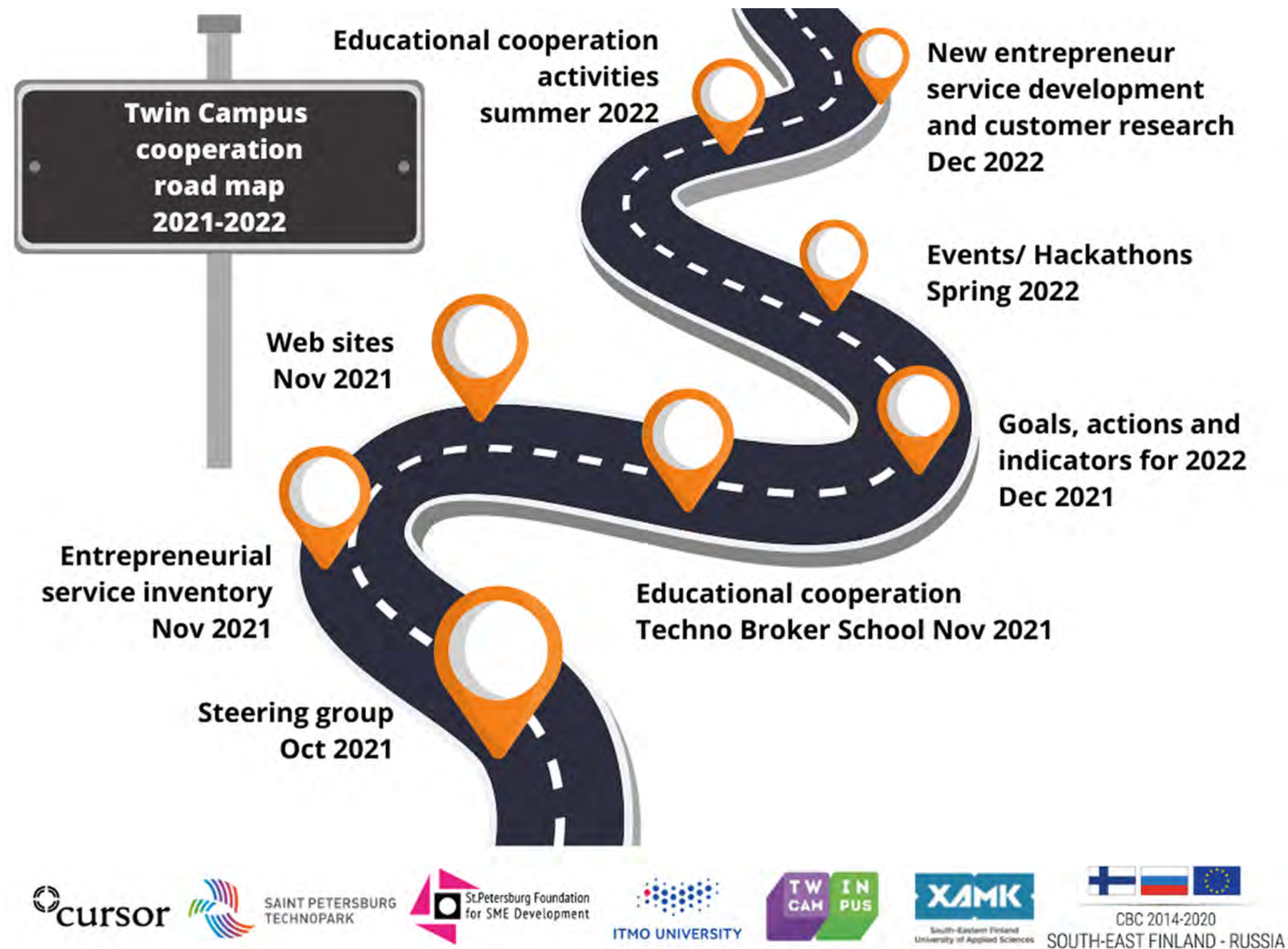
1. The international entrepreneurial service path is developed and visualized, and uploaded to the project website by the end of May 2022;
2. The number of companies participating in the activities and mentoring in the international entrepreneur services path;
3. The number of conducted services, and educational and entrepreneurial events (accelerators, hackathons etc.);
4. The number of companies that have participated in the mapping of internationalization needs and development of internationalization capacities;
5. The number of companies that have launched their operations on the other side of the border (Finnish/Russian market).



## ROAD MAP

A road map has been created for the implementation of the cooperation model. The road map indicates what activities are planned to implement the cooperation for 2021–2022 ([Picture 2 on page 16](#)). The partners will evaluate the implementation of the roadmap's functions ([Picture 3 on page 18](#)) and set new goals for the cooperation and devise an action plans.

Picture 2. Cooperation Road Map (Minna Nieminen 2021). Picture 2 shows what manner of tasks the steering group have identified for the period 2021–2022.



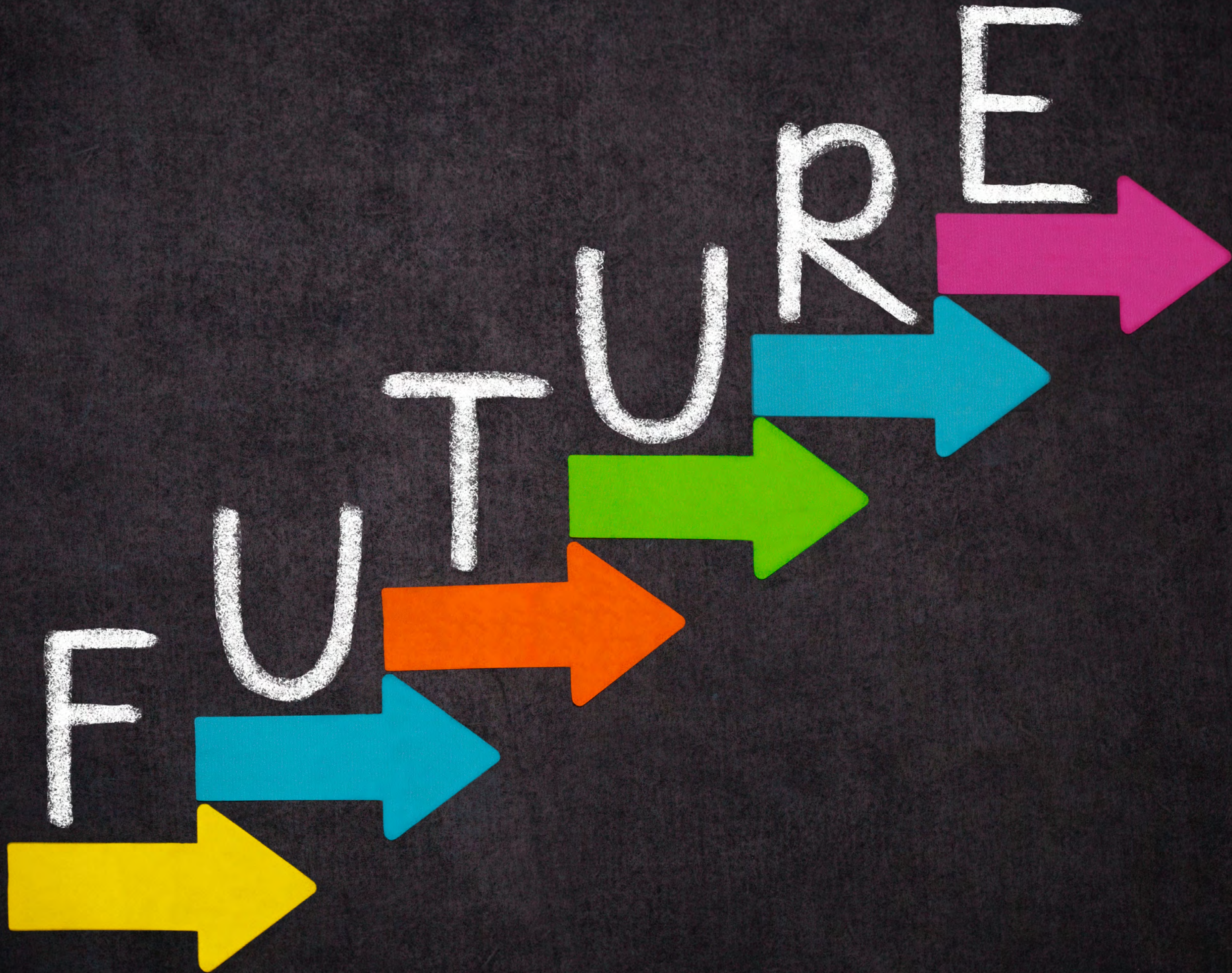




The continuous operating model for co-operation was one of the main priorities of all the cooperation partners. The steering group will start operation in October 2021, and the group's activities are already at the practical level of cooperation. The operation of the steering group and partners will determine the activity of cooperation in the future. International cooperation forms an active network that offers many opportunities for each participant. The common goal, the development of international cooperation, begins with small steps that, it is hoped, will turn into giant leaps in the future.

Picture 3. The cooperation road map clarifies and guides actions (Minna Nieminen 2021).





## **FUTURE COOPERATION DEVELOPMENT**

With this cooperation model, it is hoped that the future of cross-border cooperation and its continuity is ensured. The cooperation model will be under development during the implementation, and its functionality will be evaluated continually. Furthermore, the cooperation model will be modified according to the needs of the cooperation partners.



The partners will map out what kind of new services are needed. The new services could be, for example, Sustainability training for companies or internationalization training to expand their business to Finland or Russia. They will also develop cooperation events, such as, hackathons, educational events or startup accelerators, and international entrepreneurial services for students and companies. The partners will arrange different activities and find new ways for cooperation to be more attractive for potential partners, businesses, students and entrepreneurs.

### **Objectives:**

The steering group is active. The partners evaluate and develop the cooperation model on a regular basis. The number of stakeholders is growing and cooperation is on-going.

### **Indicators:**

1. Number of stakeholders and businesses;
2. Number of services;
3. Number of new jobs in areas;
4. Number of joint projects.

## Xamk's Twin Campus Project Team



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## EPILOGUE

In the future, with the support of developing technology international cooperation will develop into an everyday way of action everywhere in the world. Universities have huge potential to create cooperation networks and offer their students new development opportunities and education in the international field. Furthermore, international business cooperation and business services enable the growth of global companies' operations and their location in the St. Petersburg and Kymenlaakso region.

Research, development and innovation projects provide new types of innovation and research information to support international business and education activities. Therefore, goals must be set for the global operational cooperation model, which helps growth in all areas of cooperation. We hope that this cooperation model will be the basis for growing international cooperation, and will find its place in international development work.

The Twin Campus project's official ending is at the end of November 2021, but the negotiations regarding the six-month prolongation are under process when this publication is published. The cooperation actions continues and establishes its place in the world with international operations.