KANSALLINEN KOULUTUKSEN ARVIOINTIKESKUS
NATIONELLA CENTRET FÖR UTBILDNINGSUTVÄRDERING
FINNISH EDUCATION EVALUATION CENTRE

AUDIT OF METROPOLIA UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

Tekijät **Andreas Breinbauer, Birgit Kraus, Ilkka Pollari, Mari Ruadze, Marja-Liisa Saarilammi & Niina Nurkka. Self-evaluation of Metropolia University of Applied Sciences (eds.) Virve Kentta, Eeva Viitanen & Anna Zaikova**
Auditointivuosi **2023**, Karvin julkaisu **9:2023**
Kieli **Englanti**
ISBN **978-952-206-760-9 pdf**

2.1 Managing societal engagement and impact

- Korkeakoulun itsearviointi

Strategy guides Metropolia to provide solutions for societal challenges

Metropolia has a passion for solving challenges and its goals regarding impact and interaction are based on its strategy. For the theme of **phenomenon-based innovation hubs,** the intent is for Metropolia to be known for its innovative solutions for social and global challenges and also as an impactful, ecosystem-based actor.

Metropolia has five innovation hubs (figure 10). They are based on global and social phenomena, in which Metropolia has extensive competence and for which Metropolia's RDI activities produce solutions:

- Customer-oriented wellbeing and health services
- Clean and sustainable solutions
- Data-driven construction
- Functional city for people
- Smart mobility



Figure 10 Phenomenon-based innovation hubs and campuses' collaboration platforms at Metropolia

Metropolia's innovation hubs operate on **an ecosystem basis**: partners, students and personnel join forces in cross-sectoral cooperation (culture, business, social and health care, as well as technology). Learning, research, developing, and innovation are user-oriented. Solutions are found through experimenting and practical work. The **collaboration platforms** (see 2.3) of Metropolia's campuses provide a setting for open RDI activities and teaching. The platforms are used by innovation hubs and education partners, students, and personnel. The resources available on the platforms and Metropolia's partnership model provide a foundation for long-term ecosystem partnerships. (See 2.4).

The transformational philosophy of RDIL (RDI + learning) which renews the integration of the RDI activities and education and any related activities are based on this ecosystem partnership. Metropolia's goal is to have education, RDI activities and the campus collaboration platforms operated by the innovation hubs form functional, phenomenon-based entities (see 4.). The RDI activities and education are not split into separate operations. Students complete studies in RDI projects under the supervision of their teachers. The multidisciplinary innovation project MINNO (10 credits) has been a good starting point. The principles are student- and phenomenon-orientation, openness, systemization and sustainable development.

The activities are **managed** by setting strategy-based targets for the units and by acting in accordance with the practices of the management system and operations management (see 3.1). Support is provided by strategic roadmaps, such as sustainable development, development of the EU operations and RDIL, as well as the units' annual action plans**.** Management emphasizes

systematization, dialogue and co-creation (see 2.3). Systematization supports the simultaneous consideration of several perspectives and the conceptualization of inter-dependencies. The management group monitors the progress of the impact targets in quarterly impact reviews (Vaikuttavuuskatsaus 1/2022, only in Finnish). At the moment, the most significant evidence of Metropolia achieving its impact target include Metropolia's sizable campus reform, the advancement of sustainable development goals (see 3.4), and the deployment of an innovation hub operating model.

Interaction with society directs the operations

Students are Metropolia's primary stakeholders. This is reflected by the close **interaction with Metropolia's student union METKA**. METKA and Metropolia engage in continuing dialogue with each other and their stakeholders. In recent years, METKA has assumed an increasingly active role in society as an advocate of issues important to students. For example, it has participated in a survey on the funding of student unions and in follow-ups to the survey. The survey is conducted by the Ministry of Education and Culture. It has also been involved in the implementation and development of the Tuudo mobile app serving the HEI community.

Metropolia has been named the higher education institution responsible in several socially significant projects (in Finnish only) in which Finnish higher education institutions promote competence growth, employment, digitalization, and development of higher education institutions. Examples include the responsibility for the development of the Supporting Immigrants in Higher Education in Finland (SIMHE) services since 2016; the joint electronic entrance examination of the universities of applied sciences in which Metropolia has acted as coordinator, developer, and service provider; as well as the Digivisio 2030 project common to the entire HEI sector.

Interaction on a societal level transpires in the form of an ongoing dialogue with the actors and stakeholders from different sectors. Metropolia is an active operator and developer within the innovation ecosystem in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area. In particular, cooperation with the Helsinki Metropolitan Area municipalities and the Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council is strong and based on forecast data (see also 2.3). Each of the five innovation hubs (figure 11) has profiled its RDI project portfolio based on the themes arising from society's needs. The project portfolios of Metropolia's innovation hubs are linked, for example to the programme of smart specialization run by the Uusimaa region. They are also linked to the themes of the ecosystem agreement signed by the Helsinki Metropolitan Area with the Finnish government. An example of this includes the FAIR – Finnish AI Region innovation hub, part of the EDIH (European Digital Innovation Hubs) network. In the hub, Metropolia strengthens its connections to national and European innovation environments through its HXRC collaboration platform (Helsinki XR Center).

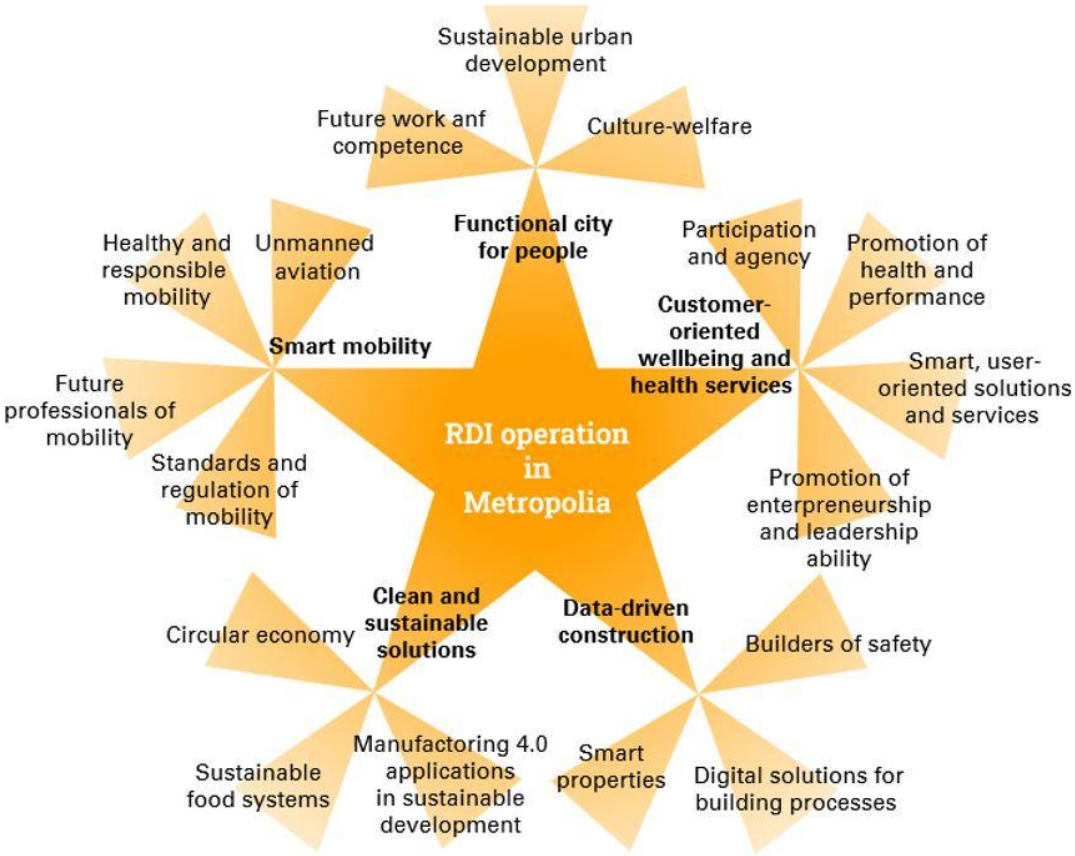


Figure 11 Phenomenon-based innovation hubs (points of the star) are profiled based on the themes arising from society's needs.

As Finland's largest UAS, Metropolia wants to lead the way in the EU activities of universities of applied sciences and have a passion for solving challenges also at the European level, in the arena of international phenomena. To promote international relations, Metropolia has in place an international action plan, in which the main goals include increasing Metropolia's impact, activity and visibility at the EU level. Metropolia also impacts globally in accordance with the goal of sustainable development through global education.

Interaction in society is managed through Metropolia's **partnership model**, which includes both ecosystem partnerships and bilateral partnerships. Since 2018, Metropolia has signed bilateral agreements on cooperation with 30 companies. The agreements aim to increase systematization and impact multidisciplinary cooperation with companies (in Finnish only). In society, the focus of the partnerships is shifting to strategic, long-term, and broad ecosystem work, and the partnership model is renewed accordingly. An indication of successful long-term work is the FAIR innovation hub in EDIH network, as mentioned earlier.

Strengths	**Enhancement areas**

Innovation hubs that enable effective and responsible innovation built on phenomena and partnerships. The innovation hubs form the foundation for co-creation and the building of ecosystems.	Sensitivity to change, made possible through internal funding (strategy funds), and more agile pilots for new operating practices.
A systematic approach in Metropolia's management that enables change processes, such as the implementation of RDIL.	Strengthening innovation hubs' communication and active participation in public debate.
Close and functional cooperation between METKA and Metropolia's management.	Knowledge management to support effective RDI activities.

2.1 Managing the societal engagement and impact

- Auditointiryhmän arvio

The new reorganisation for schools and innovation hubs supports the implementation of Metropolia's strategy

Metropolia, Finland's largest university of applied sciences, has recently been organised into a matrix structure of ten schools and five innovation hubs. The Board, composed chiefly of owners' representatives, approves the strategy and principal investments and makes the highest level decisions. The president leads the management group responsible for the strategic themes: Phenomenon-based innovation hubs, Sustainable development and growth, People and culture and Digitalization. Metropolia's Board has a lot of expertise from different sectors of society. The HEI could consider that the board should be exposed more deeply to the core plans and decisions beyond economic and financial aspects.

The reorganisation aims to enable the strive for innovation and create an innovative organisation. The audit team considers this a good start to increasing interaction between the different sectors.

The focus areas in the fields of customer-oriented well-being and health services, clean and sustainable solutions, data-driven construction, a functional city for people and smart mobility reflect well the current and expected needs of society. The owners—and the whole society—need skilled and motivated professionals for the relevant present and future areas of employment and entrepreneurship. The ten schools concentrate on education and learning in fields that are near to an ordinary person and will even gain relevance in the future. The interviews provide evidence that the new 4-campus structure is generally supported and is an excellent basis for enhancing the impact.

During the transition phase into a matrix organisation, attention should be paid to clear and regular communication with staff

The matrix organisation of schools and innovation hubs focuses well on enhanced impact renewal through innovation. Sharing limited resources within the organisation is a demanding task and requires attention. The goals of societal impact are well-defined and based on the analysis of Metropolia's analysis of its operational environment. The strategic intent is communicated well. Metropolia has set strategy-based targets for units, and they monitor the achievement of the targets through real-time reporting and impact reviews. Appropriate procedures are in place within the management system leading the societal impact work, which supports the achievement of set goals and targets.

The organisation is in the transformation phase. Therefore, much work remains to be done to ensure that the whole organisation shares the vision and main strategies. Metropolia should further support the transformation with systematic, explicit, frequent and intensive, top-down and bottom-up communication. Attention should be paid to ensuring that management processes are consistent and flexible enough for the demanding transformation.

The quarterly impact reviews in the intranet present one good example of an open culture. In order to show and emphasise continuous enhancement and quality culture, the most critical metrics and statistics of progress could be more visible and used in communication.

The main actions reflect the strategy well: The new greenfield campus in Myllypuro is in line with the strategic intent of a 'bold reformer' and an 'active partner-building society'. The Family Café on Myllypuro Campus is an excellent example of the societal aspect of 'putting people first'. Metropolia UAS uses multilevel contacts with external stakeholders in its strategic planning. There is regular feedback from local employers and stakeholders to ensure relevance and future skills for the regional labour market. Being an active member of national and international peer networks is essential in forecasting current and future trends. High-level scenario analysis could be useful for both the Management Board and staff to visualise the future and show direction.