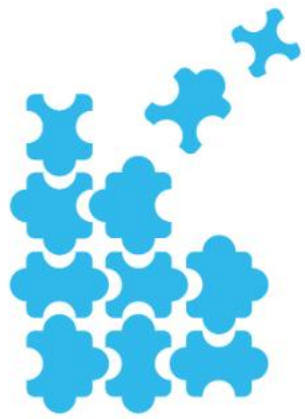# Monitoring Fundamental Values in the EHEA: Technical Policy Framework of Indicators

BFUG MEETING, Warsaw, Poland

February 24–25, 2025

Cezar Mihai Haj, Co-chair WG on Fundamental Values

Purpose and mandate

Enhance self-reflection, constructive dialogue, and peer learning.

Assess the protection and promotion of fundamental values as defined in ministerial communiqués.

"Assess the degree to which these [fundamental values] are honored and implemented in our systems" (EHEA, 2020a).

"As a reliable monitoring of their implementation within all our education systems is required, we welcome the work on creating a technical monitoring framework, and we ask the BFUG to report back to us at our 2027 Ministerial Conference." (EHEA, 2024)

Design process

1 Initial phase

Comprehensive inventory of existing monitoring tools (desk research, expert consultation).
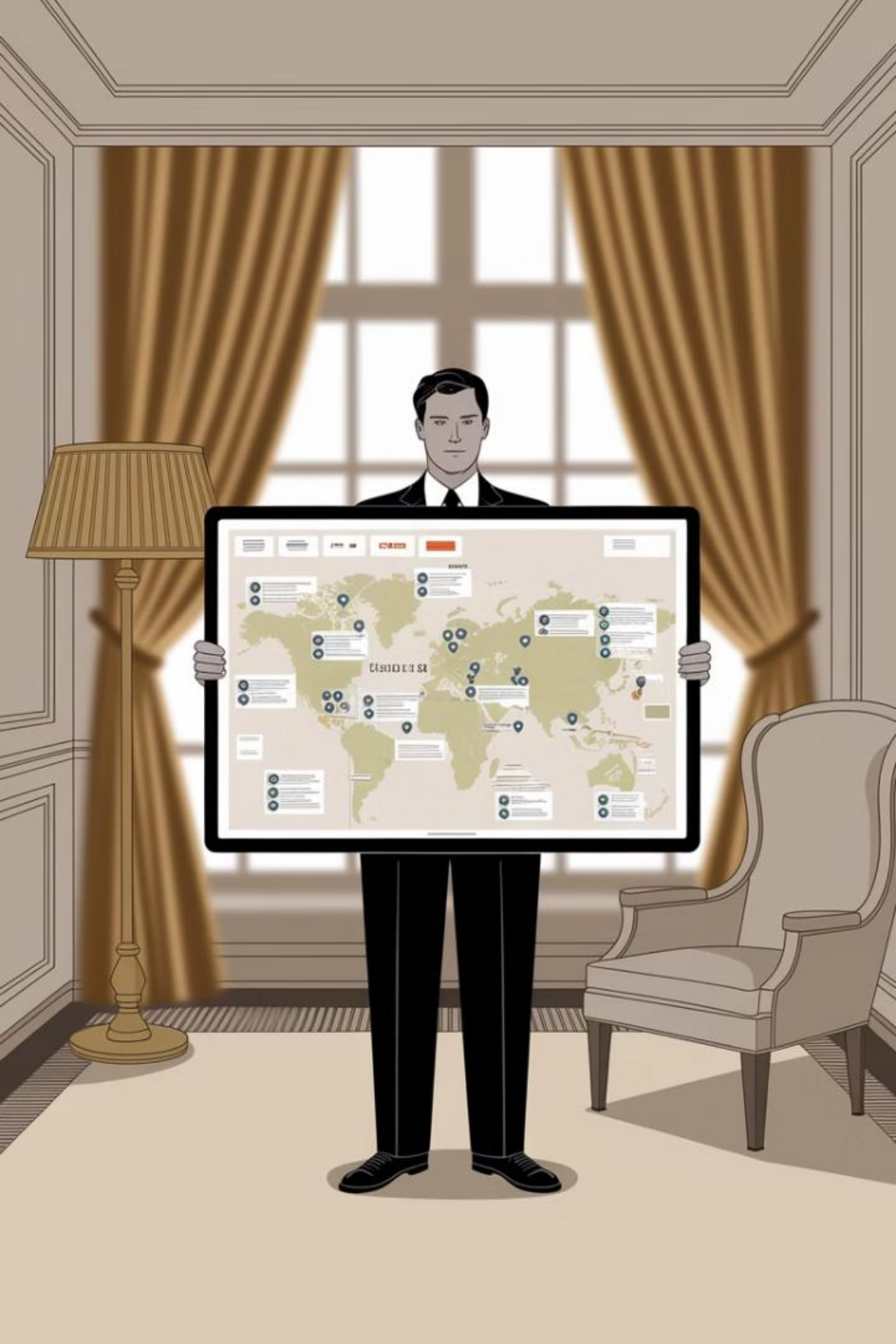
2 Adaptation

Development of EHEA–adapted indicators.

3 Testing

Pilot implementation in four EHEA systems (system results anonymized).

4 Continuous stakeholder consultations throughout the process.

Key concepts

Monitoring Framework

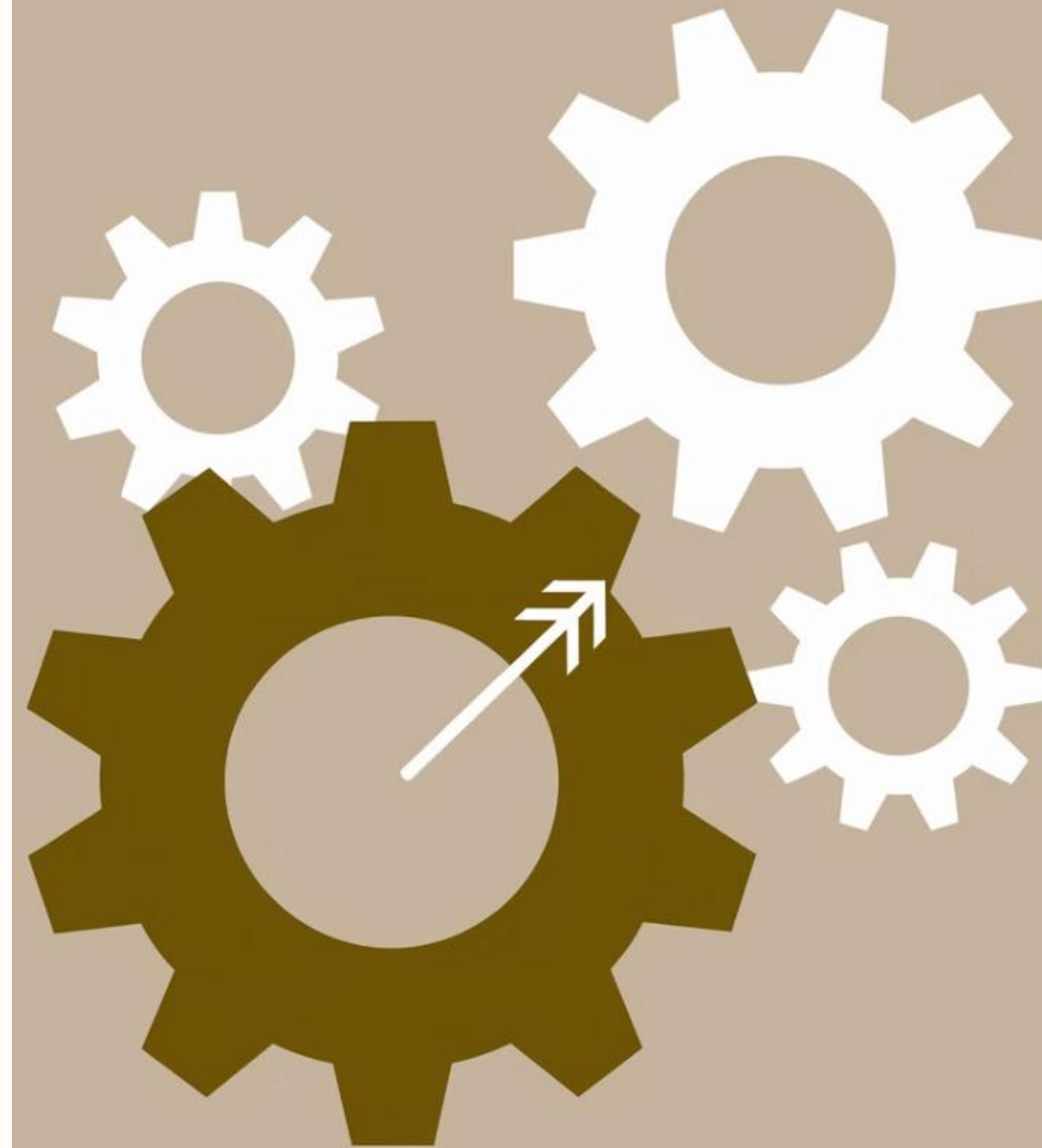Conceptual structure presenting indicators and methodologies.
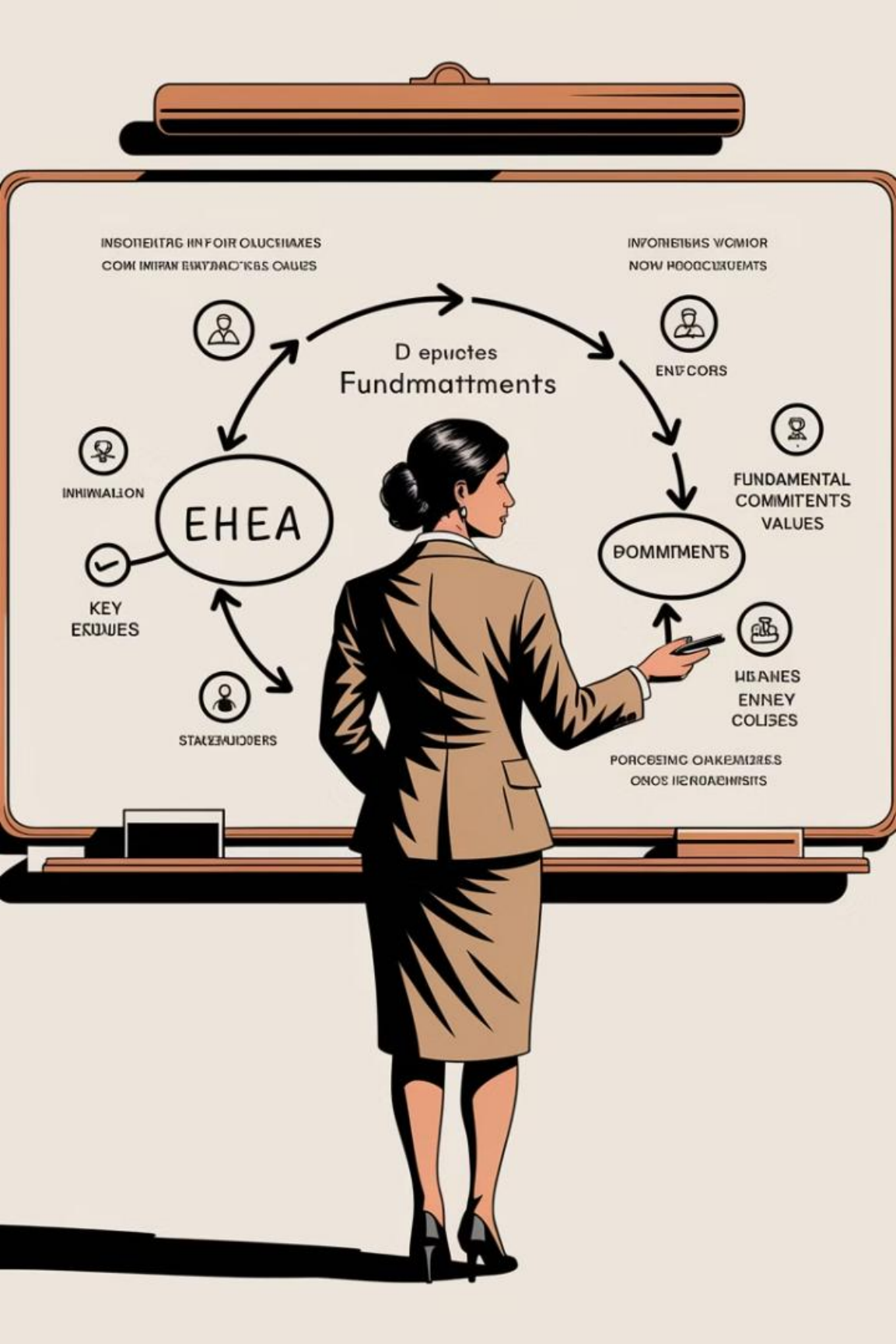
Monitoring Tool

The questionnaire used for data collection, processing, and reporting.

Monitoring Mechanism

Combination of the tool and organizational arrangements within EHEA governance.

General approach of the monitoring framework

1 Monitoring Implementation of Commitments adopted by ministers

2 Builds on Bologna Process tradition of monitoring **commitments**.

Categories of fundamental values, and indicators

VALUES	TYPE OF MONITORING and INDICATORS		
Rights/Freedoms			
- Academic freedom - Institutional autonomy - Participation of students and staff in university governance	*De jure*		
	Protection	Outlook	
	Promotion		
	De facto		
	Infringements		
	Threats		
	Positive developments		

VALUES	TYPE OF MONITORING and INDICATORS		
Duties/Obligations			
- Academic integrity - Public responsibility *for* higher education - Public responsibility *of* higher education	*De jure*		
	Protection	Outlook	
	Promotion		
	De facto		
	Fulfilment		
	Threats		
	Positive developments		

Designing different indicators for rights/freedoms vs. duties/obligations

The EHEA monitoring framework proposes a clear distinction: some fundamental values represent rights and freedoms, while others establish duties and obligations. This distinction shapes the entire approach: monitoring rights by watching for potential infringements while tracking obligations by measuring how well they are fulfilled.

- The *de jure* indicators flow directly from the ministerial commitments. These indicators are organized into three categories: ***Protection, Promotion, and Outlook.***

- To complement the legal framework, the proposal is to also monitor the actual situation on the ground through *de facto* indicators. This assessment draws from established sources like the Academic Freedom Index, Autonomy Scorecard, and European Student Union surveys.

- Additionally, fresh data will be gathered directly from higher education stakeholders in each system. This data captures both challenges—such as infringements and threats—and successes in implementing fundamental values.

- The aim is highlighting positive developments in order to create opportunities for peer learning and policy transfer between EHEA systems.

De Jure indicators:

Protection	Description	Assesses the existence and alignment of legislation with jointly adopted common understanding.
	Legislation supporting fundamental values.	

Promotion	Description	Assesses the existence and alignment of guidelines/ policies with joint conceptual references.
	Policies and mechanisms fostering fundamental values.	

Outlook	Description	Reflects planned developments to support or undermine fundamental values. The degree of implementation should be checked in subsequent monitoring cycles.
	Plans for future legislative or policy changes. Monitors the direction of planned and documented developments with regard to protection / promotion of FV (positive, negative, unchanged, or mixed)	

Monitoring Fundamental Values using the Bologna traffic light system

To monitor protection and promotion, the traditional Bologna Process "traffic light" system will be used.

Sample visualization: Protection of Academic Freedom in EHEA
(Note: Map shows hypothetical data for illustration only – colors are randomly generated and do not reflect actual assessments)

The traffic light system uses five colors to indicate compliance levels.

De Facto indicators

1   Initial data collection

Drawing from existing reports (Academic Freedom Index, Autonomy Scorecard, etc.) & stakeholder input

2   Rights/Freedoms values

Focuses on monitoring infringements, threats, and positive developments through narrative assessment
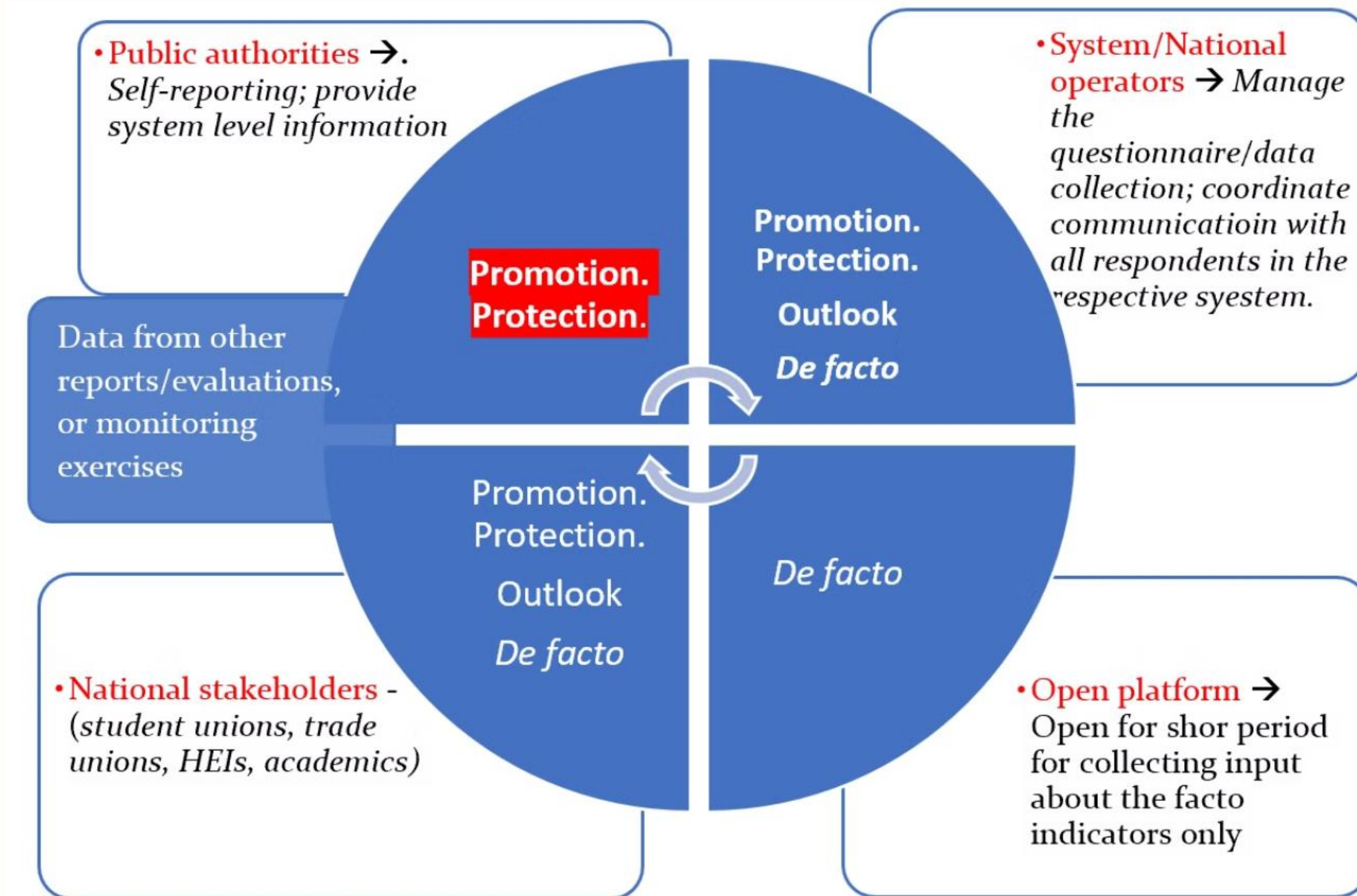
3   Duties/Obligations values

Focuses on monitoring fulfillment, threats, and positive developments through narrative assessment

4   Narrative analysis

The de facto monitoring includes exclusively narrative sections discussing findings across all fundamental values

Monitoring tool overview

- **Public authorities** →.
  Self-reporting; provide system level information

Data from other reports/evaluations, or monitoring exercises

- **National stakeholders** - (*student unions, trade unions, HEIs, academics*)

Promotion. Protection.

Promotion. Protection. Outlook *De facto*

Promotion. Protection. Outlook *De facto*

De facto

- **System/National operators** → *Manage the questionnaire/data collection; coordinate communicatioin with all respondents in the respective syestem.*

- **Open platform** → Open for shor period for collecting input about the facto indicators only

Data collection (respondents)

Public Authorities

Complete the de jure section (protection, promotion and outlook).

Higher Education Stakeholders

Student unions, staff unions, academic staff, leadership: Complete all sections.
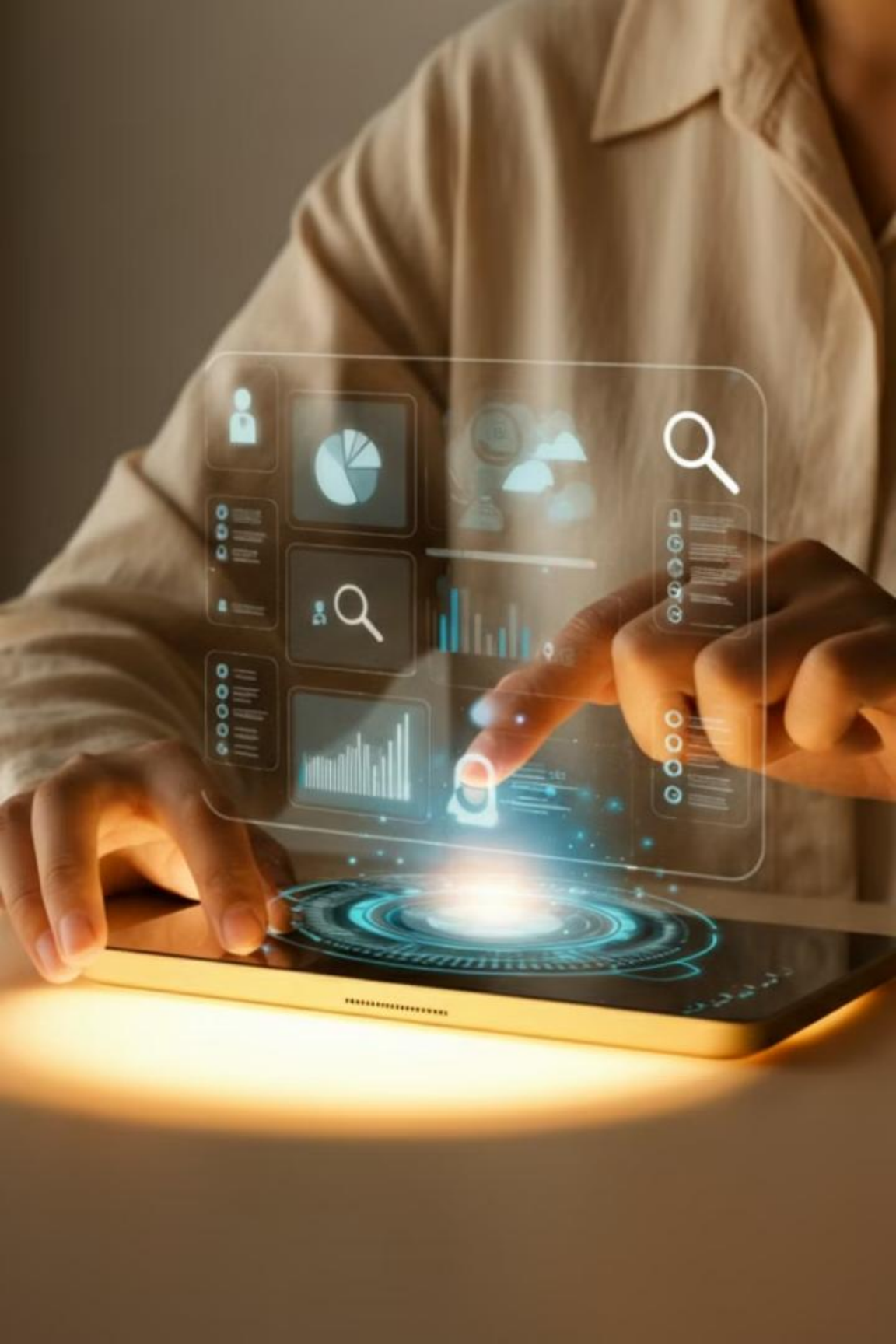
Online section of the tool (open platform)

Volunteer data submission: Any member of the academic community can provide input data for the de facto section.

System operators

1 Selected by the monitoring project team in coordination with BFUG.

2 Responsible for rigorous data collection and cross-checking.

3 They have the task to verify evidence provided by respondents (links to laws, regulations, etc.). Their role will not be to provide information or interpret it but ensure that information is collected rigorously from all respondent categories and crosschecked.

4 Operators receive training from the project team.

The online section of the tool (the open platform)

Open for participation by academic communities.

Ensures transparency and accessibility for future monitoring cycles (starting 2027).

Open for a short period for collecting input about de facto indicators.

Questionnaire details

1   EHEA statements on fundamental values are analyzed to extract dimensions and commitments.

2   Questions are based on EURYDICE model or generated using the same approach.

The process of identifying the subdimensions

for institutional autonomy – organizational autonomy

"Higher education institutions need to be able and willing to define their leadership and governance models. This organisational autonomy also entails the autonomy to set an institution's priorities and strategic direction. It should ensure participatory rights for the different members of the academic community. Bodies representing the interests of staff and students should be able to function freely, contribute to institutional policies, further the interests of their constituents and help protect them against discrimination, harassment or intimidation. Public as well as institutional regulations and policy must ensure campus integrity and prevent the use of force and reprisals against academic staff and students, which would constitute a violation of the fundamental values of the European Higher Education Area."

▼

DIMENSIONS

HEIs are able & willing to define their leadership & governance models.

HEIs are able to set institutional priorities and strategic direction.

Participatory rights for the different members of the academic community

Bodies representing the interests of staff and students should be able to function freely, contribute to institutional policies, further the interests of their constituents and help protect them against discrimination, harassment or intimidation.

Campus integrity

ORGANIZATIONAL

HEIs are able & willing to define their leadership & governance models.

HEIs are able to set institutional priorities and strategic direction.

Participatory rights for the different members of the academic community

Bodies representing the interests of staff and students should be able to function freely, contribute to institutional policies, further the interests of their constituents and help protect them against discrimination, harassment or intimidation.

Campus integrity

Questionnaire development based on the identified dimensions for each fundamental value

3.2.6. Who decides on the responsibilities of HEIs' governing bodies?

	Decision on governing body responsibilities
Responsibilities of HEIs' governing bodies regulated in legislation	
HEI's governing body decides responsibilities for itself	
Other	

If 'Other', please specify

3.2.2. Is there a requirement for higher education institutions' (HEIs') governing bodies to include:

	Required by legislation	Not required by legislation, but usually included in HEIs' governing bodies	Not required by legislation, and usually not included in HEIs' governing bodies
Government / top-level authority representative			
Student representative(s)			
Staff representative(s)			
Employer representative			
Other			

If 'Other', please specify

3.2.4. Does legislation specify that all members of governing bodies have full rights to contribute to all issues?

	Required by legislation	Not required, but usually happens	Not required, and usually does not happen
All members have full rights to contribute to all issues			

If "Not required and usually does not happen", please explain which category(ies) of members may not be able to contribute on some matters

3.2.5. Does legislation specify that all members of governing bodies have full rights to take decisions on all issues?

	Required by legislation	Not required, but usually happens	Not required and usually does not happen
All members have full rights to take decisions on all issues			

If 'Not required and usually does not happen', please explain which members may not be able to take decisions on some matters

3.2.7. Who is responsible for appointing and dismissing higher education institutional leaders (Rector or equivalent) ?

	Appointing HEI leaders	Dismissing HEI leaders
HEI's highest level governing body		
Government / public authority		
Internal HEI steering body (e.g. Senate)		
HEI's staff		
HEI's students		
Other		

If 'Other', please specify

3.2.8. Who is responsible for appointing and dismissing higher education institutional faculty leaders (Dean or equivalent) ?

	Appointing HEI faculty leaders	Dismissing HEI faculty leaders
HEI's highest level governing body		
Government / public authority		
Internal HEI steering body (eg Senate)		
HEI's staff		
HEI's students		
Other		

If 'Other', please specify

Organizational arrangements

Erasmus+ funded project led by the co-chairs of the WG on Fundamental Values, under the supervision of the Fundamental Values Working Group and the BFUG

Project team role

In any version, a small project team will be constituted to manage the monitoring. This team's responsibilities will include the selection, training, and coordination of the national system operators to administer the tool, analyze the collected data, draft the report, collect feedback, and finalize the report.

The role of BFUG members

- provide guidance throughout the monitoring process of FV (as in the other Bologna monitoring efforts).
- The Working Group on Fundamental Values, responsible for leading the monitoring process of the fundamental values in close cooperation with the Monitoring Working Group, will report its findings and progress at each BFUG meeting.
- At the end of the process, the BFUG can validate, acknowledge, or not the final report and report to the 2027 Ministerial Conference.

FV WG
- coordinate the process as the co-chairs of the Working Group are proposed to lead the project
- Each step of the implementation process will be discussed during the FV WG meetings
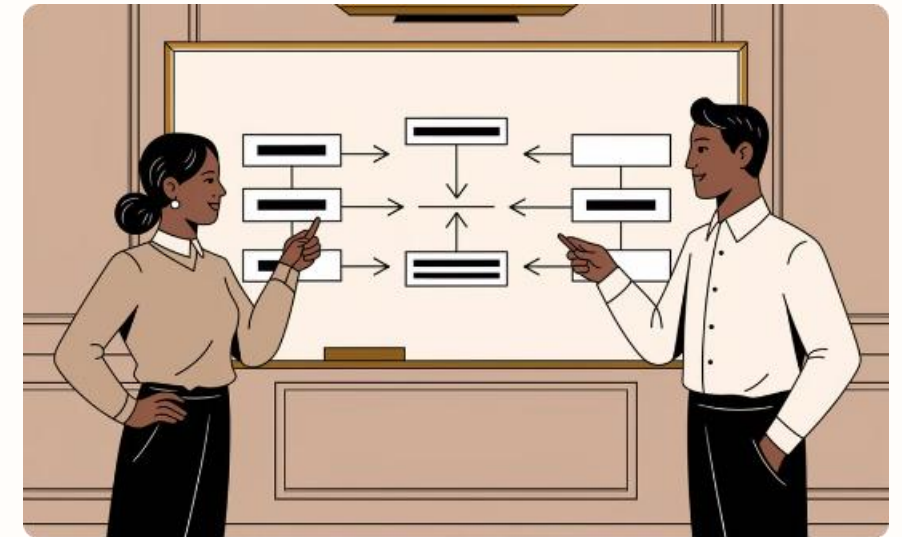
Next steps

Poland BFUG follow-up

Implementation of discussion outcomes from Poland BFUG meeting

Project approval?

Securing formal approval for project implementation

Methodology finalization

Developing comprehensive methodology for first implementation round

Thank you!

Addressing possible questions

The burden on National Authorities

- Monitoring will not be a burden on national authorities.
- Operators will pre-fill the questionnaires, they only need to check.
- Part of the indicators are or will be integrated in the Bologna Process Implementation report. This will be in conjunction with the work within the Monitoring WG.
- There cannot be fewer indicators given the dimensions of the values.
- Fewer indicators would mean partial monitoring, not all values, not all dimensions.
- Piloting has shown that the current approach is doable.

Abstract values are hard to monitor

- Abstract values will not be monitored.
- The framework aims at monitoring **commitments** about these values, which are very concrete and not difficult to monitor;
- The values that are very clearly defined (clear dimensions) and operationalized.
- This is a public policy exercise, not anthropology.
- The evidence is not hard to collect, as in any serious public policy exercise.