University of Pécs
Faculty of Business
and Economics

SOCIETAL IMPACT STRATEGY

2026-2030

Document history:

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This document sets out the main elements of the societal impact strategy of the University of Pécs, Faculty of Business and Economics (hereinafter: UPFBE or the School), as well as the related objectives and performance indicators for the period 2026 – 2030, in alignment with the provisions of the School's Strategy for the same period.

THE PAST

Over the past decade, the Faculty of Business and Economics (hereinafter: the School) has steadily evolved from isolated outreach initiatives toward a structured, mission-driven approach to societal impact. The process has been shaped by the growing international emphasis on sustainability, entrepreneurship, and responsible management education, and by the School's own aspiration to serve as a catalyst for regional development in Southern Transdanubia.

Early Development – Experiential Learning and Outreach Foundations

In the early 2010s, societal impact primarily took the form of student projects, consultancy assignments, and regional collaborations. These activities, often informal and decentralized, reflected the School's long-standing commitment to applied learning. The launch of the Centre for Applied Learning (CAL) marked a turning point: it introduced a systematic framework for connecting students, School, and external organizations through experiential education, live business projects, and hackathons.

Building on this foundation, the CAL has become the School's institutional hub for integrating knowledge creation (research), knowledge transfer (education), and knowledge application (practice). Its mission is to bridge academia and practice by fostering partnerships with companies, public institutions, and civil organizations, thereby generating measurable societal impact. Through its structured approach, CAL transforms individual student projects into coordinated, long-term collaborations that address real economic and social challenges in the region.

The Centre also acts as a catalyst for pedagogical and research innovation, promoting project-based and problem-based learning methods across departments, and supporting the alignment of teaching, research, and innovation. In doing so, CAL contributes directly to the School's strategic objectives—enhancing regional engagement, strengthening student employability, and ensuring that the University's societal mission is reflected in tangible, real-world outcomes.

By embedding experiential learning into the curriculum and connecting it with regional development and organizational partnerships, CAL reinforces the School's role as a key actor in fostering economic, social, and environmental progress within and beyond the South Transdanubian region.

Institutionalization – Building Structured Impact Channels

Between 2020 and 2024, the School transitioned from sporadic and project-based societal initiatives to a more institutionalized and strategically guided model of engagement. The introduction of the Business School Impact System (BSIS) by EFMD provided a robust external validation framework that helped articulate seven dimensions of impact relevant to the School's mission, including business development, regional engagement, and societal contribution.

Within this framework, the Centre for Applied Learning (CAL) evolved into the School's primary engine for translating academic excellence into tangible societal outcomes. Building on its mandate to connect education, research, and practice, CAL expanded its scope by developing and coordinating a portfolio of flagship initiatives structured around three strategic pillars: **entrepreneurship and innovation**, **regional development and partnerships**, and **sustainability and social responsibility**.

- **Entrepreneurship and Innovation:** Through excellence centers such as the **Simonyi Business and Economic Development Center (BEDC)**, the **CoRe Lab**, and the **Sustainability Center**, CAL supports entrepreneurial education, startup incubation, and practice-oriented research. Annual initiatives like the **Simonyi Hackathon** and **iExpo** provide experiential learning platforms where students collaborate with business partners to generate innovative solutions to real-world challenges.
- **Regional Development and Partnerships:** The **SME Development Hub** strengthens collaboration between academia and the business community, contributing to regional competitiveness and innovation. The School- and Department-level **Advisory Boards** ensure continuous dialogue with external stakeholders, facilitating alignment between the School's academic priorities and the evolving needs of the economy and society.
- **Sustainability and Social Responsibility:** CAL promotes the integration of sustainability, ethics, and social responsibility across curricula, research, and professional development. The **Senior and Junior Alumni Programs**, closely connected to the **World of Practice** initiative, foster lifelong engagement and knowledge exchange between generations of graduates and current students, reinforcing the School's community impact.

Together, these developments demonstrate the School's commitment to embedding societal impact as a cross-cutting dimension of its operations. They align with the **AACSB 2020 standards** emphasizing the role of business schools in advancing responsible management education and in generating positive societal outcomes through teaching, research, and engagement.

Expansion and Recognition – A School-Wide Impact Culture

By 2024, societal impact had become a core part of the School's identity. Annual reports of the Centre for Applied Learning showcased measurable growth: hundreds of students engaged in applied projects, dozens of SME partnerships established, and increasing collaboration with municipalities and civil organizations.

Beyond student engagement, the School's regional visibility and stakeholder reputation significantly strengthened, positioning it as a trusted partner in addressing economic, social, and environmental challenges.

These outcomes provided concrete evidence of impact in several BSIS dimensions—educational, business development, regional ecosystem, and societal impact—demonstrating that the School's activities generate both academic and real-world value.

The Necessity of Further Development

Despite the progress, the School's past experience highlights areas for continued development. Impact activities, while substantial, were often project-based rather than strategically coordinated across departments. Monitoring systems and data collection remained fragmented, limiting the ability to communicate results consistently. The growing number of initiatives also underscored the need for a School-wide governance structure and a systematic KPI framework to capture cumulative outcomes.

These experiences directly inform the next strategic period (2026–2030), during which societal impact will transition from a collection of successful programs into a comprehensive, evidence-based system integrated with research, education, and external engagement. The goal is to ensure that every activity – academic or applied – contributes demonstrably to the betterment of society and to the sustainable development of the region and beyond.

THE CONTEXT

This impact strategy reflects international accreditation expectations and defines how the School will strengthen its educational, research, and engagement activities to achieve measurable, positive change in society. **It integrates the principles of both EFMD (BSIS) and AACSB**, which together form the conceptual foundation of the School's societal impact management system. The Business School Impact System (BSIS) developed by EFMD defines impact as *the measurable and observable effects a business school has on its stakeholders and the wider society*. BSIS provides a structured assessment framework across seven dimensions — financial, educational, business development, intellectual, regional ecosystem, societal, and image impact — enabling institutions to demonstrate and document their contribution to the local and regional context. According to AACSB's definition, *societal impact refers to how a school makes a positive impact on the betterment of society, as identified in the school's mission and strategic plan*. It is also emphasized that *societal impact can be at a local, regional, national, or international level*.

Together, these frameworks allow UPFBE to combine *global accreditation logic* with *regional impact evidence*. The School's societal impact framework thus connects international quality assurance standards with its mission to advance the sustainable economic and social development of Southern Transdanubia.

INTEGRATED SCHOOL-LEVEL KPI-S FOR 2026–2030 AND THEIR DECOMPOSITION

To assess the School's overall societal impact performance, three **global KPIs** (KPI 10, 11 and 12) have been defined in the School's main Strategy 2026-2030 document. These indicators consolidate process-level measures from each societal impact dimension into outcome-oriented metrics that capture the School's total contribution to education, research, and engagement. Together, they provide a comprehensive and evidence-based view of how the School generates societal value in line with its mission and international accreditation frameworks. The three global KPIs are presented in the following table.

Global KPI	Definition & Rationale
KPI 10: Societal Engagement and Reach Index (SERI) → min. 100% (baseline: 50.0%)	Measures the *breadth and depth of the School's engagement with external stakeholders* – businesses, communities, and policymakers – reflecting collective outreach, partnerships, and influence.
KPI 11: Research and Knowledge Transfer Index (RKTI) → min. 100% (baseline: 39.6%)	Assesses the *extent to which research and academic activities produce societal, economic, or policy outcomes beyond academia*, including applied collaborations, industry projects, and SDG-aligned research.
KPI 12: Responsible and Sustainable Development Contribution Index (RSDCI) → min. 100% (baseline: 40.0%)	Evaluates the *School's overall contribution to environmental and sustainability issues related to regional and global development.*

Each of these KPIs will be calculated annually using a **composite scoring methodology** that integrates data from the *curriculum database*, the *records of the Centre of Applied Learning (CAL)*, the *quarterly & annual research reports published by the School*, the *contracts database*, *university-level operations and facilities data* and *media monitoring*.
As the strategic period embraces the Dean's term between 1 July 2026 and 30 June 2030, the baseline for each KPI is determined as of the end of 2025 (last full year before the beginning of the strategic period), while target values are expected to be reached by the end of 2029 (last full year before the end of the strategic period).

The calculation of the indicators follows the same methodology in all cases: for each sub-indicator serving as a component of the main KPI – the so-called "process KPI" – the level of achievement is determined using the formula *measured value / target value*, after which a *weight* is assigned, and finally the value of the main KPI is calculated as the sum of the weighted values of the process KPIs. An exception is the "12.1. School-level carbon footprint" process KPI, where the *(baseline value – measured value) / (baseline value – target value) * weight* formula is used.

Global KPI 10: Achieving at least 100% for the Societal Engagement and Reach Index (SERI)

Purpose

To capture the School's capacity to co-create societal value with external partners, enhance its visibility and legitimacy, and strengthen its regional and national impact.

Composite Indicator Structure

This index integrates process KPIs from three societal impact dimensions:

- Educational Impact
- Ecosystem and Community Engagement
- Business and Economic Impact

Component Process KPIs

Dimension	#	Process KPI	2025 Base-line	2029 Target	Data Source	Responsible Person	Weight
Educational Impact	10.1.	% of programs with ERS (ethics, responsibility and sustainability) modules	65%	100%	Curriculum database	Vice Dean for Education	10%
	10.2.	Number of experiential learning projects with external partners	20	50	CAL records	Vice Dean for Societal Impact	15%
Business & Economic Impact	10.3.	Number of SME partners served annually	25	50	CAL records	Vice Dean for Societal Impact	15%
	10.4.	Number of student consultancy projects with companies	80	160	CAL records	Vice Dean for Societal Impact	10%
	10.5.	Number of joint innovation projects with industry	2	4	CAL records	Vice Dean for Societal Impact	10%
Ecosystem & Community Engagement	10.6.	Number of community or NGO partnerships	3	6	CAL records	Vice Dean for Societal Impact	10%
	10.7.	Number of public/ community programs organized annually	1	2	CAL records	Vice Dean for Societal Impact	15%
	10.8.	Number of high school or youth engagement participants	20	40	CAL records	Vice Dean for Societal Impact	15%
TOTAL							**100%**

Global KPI 11: Achieving at least 100% for the Research and Knowledge Transfer Index (RKTI)

Purpose

To measure how effectively the School's research and intellectual outputs are transferred to, and utilized by, external stakeholders such as businesses, policymakers, and communities. This KPI bridges academic excellence and practical relevance.

Composite Indicator Structure

The RKTI integrates indicators from three key societal impact dimensions:

- Research & Intellectual Impact
- Business & Economic Impact
- Environmental & Sustainability Impact

Component Process KPIs

Dimension	#	Process KPI	2025 Base-line	2029 Target	Data Source	Responsible Person	Weight
Research & Intellectual Impact	11.1.	% of academic research outputs related to SDGs	37%	50%	Research Reports	Vice Dean for Research	20%
	11.2.	Number of applied research contracts with industry	5	10	Contracts database	Vice Dean for Societal Impact	15%
	11.3.	Number of practitioner-oriented outputs (policy briefs, white papers, reports)	0	2	CAL records	Vice Dean for Societal Impact	10%
Business & Economic Impact	11.4.	Number of joint innovation projects with industry	0	2	CAL records	Vice Dean for Societal Impact	15%
	11.5.	Number of consultancy or expert services delivered	2	5	Contracts database	Vice Dean for Societal Impact	10%
Environmental & Sustainability Impact	11.6.	% of consultancy projects with industry addressing SDGs	20%	30%	Research database	Vice Dean for Societal Impact	10%
	11.7.	% of externally funded projects with societal/ environmental focus	6	9	CAL records	Vice Dean for Societal Impact	10%
	11.8.	Number of citations or references in policy documents, media, or NGO reports	0	5	Media monitoring	Marketing Director	10%
TOTAL							**100%**

Global KPI 12: Achieving at least 100% for the Responsible and Sustainable Development Contribution Index (RSDCI)

Purpose

To measure the School's tangible and intangible contributions to environmental and sustainability issues, capturing how these are practiced and demonstrated, not only taught and researched.

Composite Indicator Structure

The RSDCI draws on process KPIs from Environmental & Sustainability Impact dimension.

Component Process KPIs

Dimension	#	Process KPI	2025 Base-line	2030 Target	Data Source	Responsible Person	Weight
Environmental & Sustainability Impact	12.1.	School-level carbon footprint	270	243	PANDA Database	Director of Sustainability Centre	20%
	12.2.	Number of staff and student-led green initiatives	2	4	CAL records	Vice Dean for Societal Impact	40%
	12.3.	Number of environmental or sustainability-related public or outreach events	2	4	CAL records	Vice Dean for Societal Impact	40%
TOTAL							**100%**

GOVERNANCE AND MONITORING

Effective governance is essential to ensure that societal impact remains a strategic, measurable, and continuously improving dimension of the School's operations. Implementation of the sub-strategy will be overseen by the **Societal Impact Committee**, chaired by the Vice Dean for Societal Impact and comprising representatives of the School, students, and external stakeholders. The Committee will provide strategic direction, coordinate initiatives across departments and centers, and review progress toward the School's 2030 societal impact goals.

Annual monitoring and reporting will ensure transparency and accountability through the following mechanisms:

- **Annual Societal Impact Report** – summarizing activities, outputs, and long-term outcomes, aligned with AACSB and EFMD (BSIS) impact dimensions.
- **Research Reports** – detailed quarterly and annual reports summarizing research outputs of the School.
- **Advisory Board Consultations** – School-level regular dialogues with external partners to ensure that initiatives remain relevant, responsive, and aligned with stakeholder expectations.

This governance model establishes a feedback loop between planning, implementation, and evaluation, ensuring that societal impact becomes a living, adaptive process embedded in the School's strategic management and quality assurance systems.