Guidelines for good practice
Regarding the use of the IMPI toolbox

Although the IMPI toolbox contains in addition to the indicators various documents explaining the use and limits of the toolbox, the project team also wishes to provide a short bullet-point list of guidelines to help users get the most out of using the IMPI toolbox. These guidelines are accompanied by guidelines for good practice in the process of measuring internationalisation in the document on findings of the second testing round of the IMPI project.

Internationalisation:

- **is important but not a goal in itself**
- has become a core component in the overall strategy of HEIs but should not be regarded as a goal in itself but rather as an effective instrument to achieve other goals
- can enhance the quality of education, research, civic engagement, raise visibility and prepare students and staff for intercultural and globally/internationally-oriented environments

The IMPI toolbox:

- **aims to accomplish something different from rankings or alike**
- was developed to help users make sense of various aspects of internationalisation
- was not created to define an ultimate set of key indicators by which all HEIs shall be compared
- allows for tailored-made profiling and self-assessment, and possibly inter-institutional comparison
- aims to include a very broad set of relevant indicators

Some caveats:

- **the IMPI toolbox cannot provide the ultimate definition of an indicator**
- the complexity, diversity and specificities of higher education need careful consideration when selecting indicators
- Indicators are not the first nor the last step
- First you need: strategic goals, embeddedness in an overall strategy or development plan, clarity on processes and outcomes to be achieved
- Finally you need: a critical analysis including contextual facts
- Don't necessarily chose the easy option (the number of partnerships does not say anything and the percentage of international students is only relevant if linked to a quality aspect)
- If you measure in benchmarking groups you need as much homogeneity as necessary and as much heterogeneity as possible.

The user must actively "implement" the toolbox:

- Indicators may include generic terms which need to be specified by each individual user
- Terminology must be clarified and refined by the users themselves (based on their situation & set goals)
- Every word of an indicator needs careful reflection when applied
- Key numbers without benchmarks are not useful for strategic planning and steering
- Benchmarks :
    - should be set on a regular basis according to the period of the internal planning and quality assurance processes
    - a maximum and a minimum standard should be defined
- The toolbox:
    - is only meaningful when combined with other resources
    - will –on its own- not provide definitive answers with regard to "success" or "failure" in terms of internationalisation
    - must be understood as a resource designed to help users organise their thinking about indicators for internationalisation
    - also provides a framework for collecting data about such indicators
    - does not provide users with a finalised "recipe book" with ready-to-go indicators but rather a multitude of optional indicators (which need to be carefully selected and adapted to specific needs)

- A proper evaluation / benchmark process must take into account outcomes and the longer-term impact of internationalisation activities
- The effective use of the toolbox requires reflection, dialogue, and analysis related to both the mission of the institutions (or units) as well as the outcomes HEIs aim to achieve through internationalisation