NECESSARY FOUNDATIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS THAT ENABLE EFFECTIVE DIGITAL EDUCATION SOLUTIONS

BACKGROUND

The issue of how best the public and private sectors can work together specifically to support the education ecosystem is being discussed throughout the EU. To ensure trust within the ecosystem and support the implementation of Digital Education Solutions, it is imperative to not only agree on a series of core shared beliefs and goals, but also to understand the core elements, which should be part of all the discussions framing local instances of public-private partnership opportunities.

For the purpose of defining common goals and mechanisms for working together across sectors and the public-private divide, the European Edtech Alliance views EdTech as encompassing all forms of digital education solutions supporting the broader education market and consisting of not only technical systems for the delivery of content and education, but also digital resources, content and curricula tools, administration and organisation solutions, and integrated, holistic, digital tools.

The edtech market is comprised of multiple sectors, each with their own strengths, experiences, and knowledge bases. It is important that all stakeholders are involved in the development of frameworks and guidelines for Public-Private partnerships to guarantee the efficacy and practical implementation of this work.

The European EdTech Alliance is a not-for-profit consortium of edtech trade associations, clusters and organisations that represents more than 2500 Edtech start-ups and established companies across 20 countries in Europe. The mission of the European Edtech Alliance is to support sustainable innovation and growth of the European Edtech sector, and to connect and strengthen the pan-European Edtech ecosystem. Through enabling cross-border cooperation and investigating policy needs within Europe, our goal is to achieve a higher quality, equitable and accessible education for all.

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1. To accommodate the changing nature of education and societal uncertainties (migration, war, pandemics, teacher shortages etc.), Digital Education Solutions will be **essential**.

2. Digital Education Solutions must function within a designated and determined, **publicly defined framework** to ensure safety and accountability whilst sustaining innovation and freedom of choice.

3. Digital Education Solutions are evolving into an ecosystem of mutually compatible **Content, Tools, and Services**, which rely on the relevant skills and professional values of multiple sectors within the ecosystem.

4. The digital education ecosystem must support interoperability and the development of European standards to ensure **European needs** are addressed.

5. **Public policy** must reflect the practicalities of implementation and the agility of digital creation, aligned with the realities of curriculum delivery, pedagogical processes, and support for teachers.

6. It is vitally important to invest in **European-based and European-developed initiatives.**

7. Education solutions should build on **evidence-informed**, pedagogy-driven approaches and, where applicable, demonstrate tangible learning outcomes.

8. Digital and analog solutions **should not be seen as mutually exclusive or as substitutes**. Each has their own merits and should be evaluated according to their benefits, needs and capabilities. Financing mechanisms should allow for hybrid products and the choice of the best product for the individual learning and teaching situation to ensure pedagogical quality and innovation.

9. Education solutions must enable equitable access for all learners and must empower educators and learners to develop their skills.

10. **Support for educators is critical**. Educators need support, incentives, training, and guidelines to explore and employ better digital solutions.

Furthermore, we believe that:

11. Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) can make research and innovation policy more responsive to the changing nature of innovation and to social and global challenges.

12. PPP can deliver effective Digital Education Solutions, develop new growth markets, and generate added value through co-operation and co-production.

THE NECCESSARY FOUNDATIONS TO ENSURE SUCCESSFUL OUTCOMES OF PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

- Clearly defined **framework architectures** determining the scope and boundaries for co- operations at all levels of the digital education ecosystem (e.g., schools, publishers, edtech, municipalities) detailing organizational, legal, and accountability structures. Trust must be extended to all stakeholders within the digital education ecosystem and, where applicable, specified in mutual agreements or codes of conduct.

- **A balance** must be ensured between mature, off-the-shelf products (established industry) and innovative and agile approaches (startups and scale-up), so not to favour incumbents only.

- The **mutual strengths of each stakeholder group** should be recognised, respected, and supported to optimize potential within the entire digital education ecosystem (e.g., solutions should be developed by technology providers, not by policy makers.)

- **Certification processes** must be implemented across Europe in a consistent manner, and the sustainability of access to education must be considered in certification.

- **European Values** must be upheld in the creation of digital education solutions: inclusion, multiculturalism and multilingualism, privacy, individualism, accessibility, and high quality.

- The evaluation and approval processes for digital education solutions must reflect natively digital and agile or iterative development.

- **Client/procurement competencies** must be sensitive to and support the needs of educators in their classrooms or learning environments.

- The **adoption processes** of digital education solutions and products must be made easier for educators and institutions and practically reflect the reality of their needs and time constraints.

- Public policy should be developed through consultation, considering representations from all levels of the education ecosystem to ensure that implementation is in line with curriculum needs, practical pedagogy, ensures safety, and enables innovation.

- Edtech providers must provide **transparency** regarding fundamental structures, processes, data usage and data flows within their systems.

- Edtech solutions must ensure adequate protection of digital educational content against copyright violations and piracy.

- Implementers must provide transparency in terms of procurement processes.

- Collaborations should enable **publicly funded spaces** for newer solutions to be trialled, educators to gain experience, and providers to gather evidence and create possibilities for product iteration based on outcomes and experience.