SELART INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION & RESEARCH GROUP - SIERG

ORGANIZATIONAL CONCEPT

History, Institutional Continuity, Mission, Global Ecosystem and Development Strategy

Geneva, Switzerland

EXECUTIVE STATEMENT

Selart International Education & Research Group (SIERG) is an ecosystem for international education, research and institutional cooperation, built on more than two decades of experience in cross-border education, professional development, promoting East–West educational and research links, advancing European educational standards and values, research cooperation, international mobility and institutional networking.

SIERG was not formed as an isolated new initiative. Its intellectual and institutional roots extend back more than 25 years. It emerged from an international cooperation model developed through Dr. Artur Baghdasaryan, President of OWZ-Armenia, and Hans Peter Müller, President of OWZ Bayern, which subsequently developed into a broader international education and research framework and was later institutionalized through the creation of the Selart International Research Group and other international structures.

SIERG's long-term objective is to bring together educational institutions, research centers, business schools, colleges, technical schools, lyceums, K–12 organizations, vocational education providers, employers and international partners in an open global ecosystem based on cooperation, institutional independence, knowledge exchange and joint development.

SIERG'S GOAL IS TO CREATE AN INTERNATIONAL ECOSYSTEM WHERE

- Education meets research,
- Research meets innovation,
- Knowledge meets the labor market and professional practice.
- Institutions connect across borders.

1. HISTORICAL ROOTS

OWZ-Armenia and the Beginning of the International Cooperation Model
The roots of the SIERG concept can be traced back to 2001/2002, when the European Regional Academy of Armenia and Bayerisches Zentrum für Ost-West-Managementtraining

gemeinnützige GmbH — OWZ Bayern established cooperation and OWZ-Armenia was founded with the aim of developing international educational cooperation.

The cooperation was based on a shared vision: to promote knowledge, modern management practices, professional development and international cooperation between Germany, Armenia and partner countries.

The main areas of cooperation were:

- International education and training programs
- Professional and continuing education
- Development of management and leadership skills
- International conferences and professional events
- Research cooperation
- Educational and professional mobility
- Cooperation between educational institutions and employers

These areas subsequently became fundamental components of Selart's international education and research model.

2. OWZ BAYERN AND THE INTERNATIONAL NETWORK IN 23 COUNTRIES

OWZ Bayern began developing a broad international network of institutions active in vocational education and professional development. Around 2001–2003, OWZ Bayern reported approximately 160 training programs and around 80 cooperating partners in 23 countries. The network included institutions and partners from Armenia, Albania, Bulgaria, Georgia, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Ukraine, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Moldova, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and other countries. This network was not simply a collection of individual training programs. It was an early model of institutional cooperation intended to connect local educational and professional organizations with German and European experience.

3. THE ROLE OF DR. ARTUR BAGHDASARYAN

Dr. Artur Baghdasaryan, as the head of OWZ-Armenia, played a significant role in developing and strengthening this international cooperation network. The existing historical concept already recognizes his contribution to the development of OWZ Bayern's partner network. In the broader institutional history, his role should be viewed not only as President of OWZ-Armenia, but also as one of the active participants in a broader networking model that connected organizations within the international environment of OWZ Bayern together with international partners and partner institutions.

Through OWZ-Armenia, Dr. Baghdasaryan and his colleagues contributed to:

- Establishing institutional links among participating countries
- Developing international cooperation in education and professional development
- Promoting modern European approaches to management and professional education
- Strengthening cooperation among educational institutions, professional organizations and employers
- Laying the foundations for a broader international education network

This experience subsequently became an important institutional and conceptual foundation for the international initiatives that ultimately developed into the Selart ecosystem.

4. ARMENIAN–GERMAN, ARMENIAN–ITALIAN, ARMENIAN–FRENCH, ARMENIAN–AUSTRIAN DECLARATIONS AND THE IDEA OF THE SELART FOUNDATION

A particularly important milestone in the historical development of the concept was the declaration of intent developed in the context of OWZ-Armenia's cooperation among Hans Peter Müller, President of OWZ-Bayern; Mr. Stuflese, President of the European Academy of Bolzano, Italy; Director Stephan Orthner; Jean Anri, President of the Lyon Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Mikhail Storm, President of BFI Austria; and A. Baghdasaryan, President of the European Regional Academy of Armenia. On the basis of these understandings, the French University in Armenia and the European University in Armenia were established. These two foundations continue to distinguish themselves through international governing boards, with whose support modern technological solutions and innovations are brought to Armenia for the institutional development of these structures. These documents and the structures that emerged from them reflected broader ambitions and objectives. It became clear that international cooperation should not be limited to individual projects or bilateral activities, but should evolve into a permanent international institutional platform for education, research and professional development. Within this framework, the need to establish an international education and research foundation was subsequently viewed as an instrument capable of preserving, expanding and transforming the developed cooperation model. This idea was later linked to the creation of the structure that ultimately became the Selart International Education and Research Foundation.

Therefore, the creation of the Selart Foundation should be viewed in the context of a longer institutional development process: OWZ international cooperation → international networking → Armenian–German, Armenian–French, Armenian–Italian, Armenian–Austrian and ultimately Armenia–EU strategic vision, which was promoted and developed through the EU TASIS program and other instruments and contributed to the institutional development of the European University and the French University through a dedicated

support program → International Education and Research Alliance → Selart institutional platform.

Although the Selart Foundation was created later, the idea, mission and international cooperation model underlying it had been developed considerably earlier.

5. INSTITUTIONAL CONTINUITY AND TRANSFORMATION

The relationship among OWZ-Armenia, the International Education and Research Alliance and Selart is best characterized as institutional and conceptual continuity. This distinction is fundamental. The philosophy of bilateral and multilateral cooperation developed through international cooperation did not disappear; rather, it was institutionally strengthened and developed further. The existing historical development concept records that the idea of continuing the mission of OWZ-Armenia in a broader international format was preserved and subsequently developed within the concept of an international education alliance.

The transformation can be presented as follows:

PHASE I — OWZ Bayern International Network: International management education, professional development and institutional cooperation.

PHASE II — OWZ-Armenia: Active operations in Armenia and the region, development of partnerships, establishment of the French University in Armenia and the European Regional Academy / now European University of Armenia (EUA), and integration into the international networking model.

PHASE III — International education cooperation concept: Preservation and expansion of the original mission.

PHASE IV — Transformation of bilateral and network cooperation within the International Education & Research association into a broader multilateral institutional model.

PHASE V — Selart International Education & Research Group: Development of a permanent global ecosystem for education, research and professional cooperation. Thus, Selart represents the institutional transformation and modernization of an established philosophy of international cooperation.

6. INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION & RESEARCH ALLIANCE (International NGO) AND SELART EDUCATION AND RESEARCH GROUP (Foundation)

In 2019, at a meeting of the Board of Trustees of the European University of Armenia, EUA President Artur Baghdasaryan proposed creating an educational and cooperation mechanism aimed at promoting the development of innovation, education, science and research, thereby creating a unique educational bridge between East and West. The proposal received

unanimous approval from the members of the Board. The idea was further developed in 2020 in Lyon during an international meeting initiated by Sébastien Arcos, Director of EKLYA School of Business of the Lyon Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and in subsequent discussions.

One of the important steps in institutional development took place in 2021 in Bolzano, Italy, during an international meeting organized by Eurac Research, where a decision was made to establish the International Education and Research Alliance.

The founding organizations were:

- EURAC Research Center, Bolzano, Italy
- Chelsea Business School, United Kingdom
- European University of Armenia, Yerevan, Armenia
- EKLYA School of Business of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Lyon, France

Dr. Artur Baghdasaryan was unanimously elected President of the Alliance, and a governing board composed of representatives of the founding organizations was established. The Alliance created a new institutional framework through which the accumulated experience of international educational cooperation could be expanded to a broader European and global platform.

Since the Alliance was an international educational non-governmental organization, there was a need to establish a structure capable of developing international educational cooperation, entering into contracts, implementing specific international education programs and research, facilitating student and academic staff mobility, and expanding such activities across different countries. This could not be fully accomplished within the framework of a non-governmental organization, and specific structures were needed to develop concrete educational and research programs.

Based on this, the next stage took place in April 2022 in Munich during the General Assembly of the International Education and Research Alliance. A declaration of intent was signed with the participation of around 12 organizations, and a decision was made to establish the Selart Education and Research Group.

The participants also supported the establishment of the Selart International Foundation for Education and Research, authorizing Dr. Artur Baghdasaryan and Giani Catanzano to organize the necessary process. Others expressed their willingness to establish offices in Italy, France, Spain, the United Kingdom and elsewhere. Thus, the legal institutionalization of Selart represented a further stage in a substantially longer process of international

cooperation, networking and institutional development. It provided a permanent organizational framework for ideas and relationships that had developed over many years.

7. FROM HISTORICAL NETWORK TO GLOBAL ECOSYSTEM

1989 — Establishment of OWZ Bayern

2001 — Establishment of cooperation with OWZ-Armenia

2001–2003 — Development of a broader international cooperation network across approximately 23 countries

2003–2018 — Years of development of international educational initiatives

As a result of the initiative, with the active involvement of the French and European universities in Armenia, the French College Foundation in Armenia, the European College Foundation in Armenia and various structures in other countries were established. Through close cooperation with the Lyon Chamber of Commerce and Industry and effective activities, cooperation was deepened with EKLYA Business School and the Hyria Institute of Technology in Lyon, the European Academy of Bolzano in Italy, Chelsea Business School in the United Kingdom, Chervel Business School in Oxford and other educational institutions. As a result of such diverse meetings and discussions, the institutionalization of international educational cooperation through the creation of appropriate structures became increasingly evident.

Based on this, in 2019, at a meeting of the Board of Trustees of the European University of Armenia in Yerevan, the proposal of Board President A. Baghdasaryan to create an international platform in the field of education and research was approved.

In 2020, following an international meeting and discussions organized in Lyon at the invitation of Sébastien Arcos, Director of EKLYA Business School, a decision was made regarding the formation of a new structure and its legal-organizational form.

A decision was made to establish an international non-governmental organization in the field of education and research and to coordinate the efforts of various structures that had already been operating effectively for many years. The necessary documents were to be prepared.

In 2021, in Bolzano, the concept of the International Education & Research Alliance was approved and the necessary package of documents was confirmed.

Then, in 2022 in Munich, approximately 12 organizations declared the establishment of the Selart International Education and Research Group.

A period of institutional development of the Selart International Group followed. During Board meetings held in Geneva, Switzerland in 2023; in Bolzano, Italy and Paris, France in 2024; and in Yerevan in 2025, the key issues of the development and institutional consolidation of the Selart Group were outlined.

The Board of the Selart International Group was formed with 21 members, of whom 13 were elected.

The members are:

1. Dr Artur Baghdasaryan – President
2. Dr John Bayramyan – Secretary General, Canada
3. Dr Giani Catanzano – SIERG Director, Switzerland
4. Dr Vahram Soghomonyan – Deputy Secretary General
5. Dr Heghine Bisharyan – EUA
6. Dr Ciril Bavias – France
7. Dr Eman Al Hussain – Greece
8. Prof. Michele Capuani – Italy
9. Dr Stephan Orthner – Italy
10. Dr Patrick Ramiah – United Kingdom
11. Dr Prajith Neir – United Arab Emirates
12. Dr Naresh – Germany
13. Julian Gounsalez – Spain

2026–2030 — Development of the SIERG Global Education & Research Ecosystem

8. SIERG TODAY

Today, Selart International Education & Research Group is understood as a global ecosystem that connects independent institutions through shared international objectives.

Its model includes:

- Universities and higher education
- Business and executive education
- K–12 education
- Vocational and continuing education
- Research and innovation

- International mobility
- Quality assurance and institutional development
- Cooperation with employers and industry
- International conferences and knowledge exchange

Individual institutions operating within the SIERG ecosystem retain their legal status, academic responsibility and governance mechanisms in accordance with applicable national legislation. SIERG's role is to provide a framework for strategic cooperation, not to eliminate institutional independence.

9. MISSION

SIERG's mission is to create an effective international platform for education, research and institutional cooperation through which educational institutions, research organizations, professional bodies, employers and international partners can combine their knowledge, experience and resources.

- SIERG promotes the international circulation of knowledge.
- SIERG promotes high-quality education and professional development.
- SIERG promotes cross-border academic cooperation.
- SIERG promotes research and innovation.
- SIERG promotes international mobility of students and academic staff.
- SIERG promotes institutional capacity development.
- SIERG promotes stronger links between education and employment.
- SIERG promotes long-term cooperation between Europe and partner regions.

10. VISION

SIERG's long-term vision is to build an open, international and multilateral education and research network that can serve as a global platform for European education, science, innovation and cultural exchange.

SIERG seeks to become a bridge between:

- Europe and the world
- Education and employment
- Research and innovation
- Institutions and international opportunities
- Students, academics, professionals and global networks

11. FIVE STRATEGIC PILLARS

PILLAR I — EDUCATION

SIERG supports the development of international education at different levels: K–12 education, higher education, business and management education, executive education, vocational education, continuing education and lifelong learning.

PILLAR II — RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

SIERG promotes international research cooperation, joint research projects, academic publications, applied research, innovative initiatives, university–industry cooperation, conferences and international academic forums.

PILLAR III — PROFESSIONAL AND MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT

Building on the tradition of professional development within the OWZ cooperation model, SIERG promotes programs for leaders, managers, public officials, civil servants, academic leaders, educators and professionals. Professional development remains one of the central areas defined by the SIERG concept.

PILLAR IV — GLOBAL MOBILITY AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

SIERG promotes the international mobility of students, lecturers, researchers, leaders, professionals and education leaders. Mobility is viewed not only as travel, but also as a mechanism for knowledge transfer, professional networking, intercultural understanding and institutional cooperation.

PILLAR V — GLOBAL INSTITUTIONAL NETWORK

SIERG seeks to expand its network of universities, schools, research centers, professional organizations and institutional partners. The ecosystem is designed to use the collective knowledge, experience and resources of participating institutions while remaining open to new educational, research and professional organizations.

12. SIERG'S GLOBAL ECOSYSTEM

• STRATEGIC COORDINATION — Selart International Education & Research Group

• FOUNDATION AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

• EDUCATION — Universities, Business Schools, K–12 Schools, Vocational Education Institutions

• RESEARCH AND INNOVATION — Research Centers, Applied Research, Academic Networks, AI and Digital Education

• QUALITY AND INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT — Quality Assurance, Assessment, Institutional Development, International Standards

• GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT — Mobility, International Partnerships, Conferences, Forums, Professional Networks, Cooperation with Employers

13. KEY INSTITUTIONAL PRINCIPLES

INDEPENDENCE

Member and partner institutions retain their legal and academic identity.

PARTNERSHIP

Cooperation is based on mutual benefit, trust and long-term institutional relationships.

QUALITY

SIERG promotes high standards in education, research and professional development.

INTERNATIONALIZATION

Cross-border cooperation is a fundamental element of the ecosystem.

INNOVATION

Digital education, artificial intelligence and new learning models are part of SIERG's development agenda.

TRANSPARENCY

New educational, research and professional institutions may participate through appropriate forms of cooperation.

SOCIAL IMPACT

Education and research should create measurable benefits for individuals, institutions and societies.

14. DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2026–2030

During 2026–2030, SIERG will focus on the following strategic priorities:

1. GLOBAL NETWORK EXPANSION

Build and strengthen partnerships with educational and research institutions in Europe and other regions.

2. DEVELOPMENT OF REGIONAL HUBS

Develop regional cooperation hubs that can support international programs, research, professional development and mobility.

3. JOINT PROGRAMS

Expand joint programs in education, professional development, executive development and faculty development.

4. INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH NETWORK

Create a structured platform connecting researchers, universities and applied research centers.

5. DIGITAL AND AI EDUCATION

Develop a shared digital environment supporting education, research, international mobility and institutional cooperation.

6. QUALITY AND ASSESSMENT

Promote an international culture of quality, institutional assessment, transparency and continuous improvement.

7. GLOBAL MOBILITY

Develop structured international mobility programs for students, lecturers, researchers and professionals.

8. EDUCATION–RESEARCH–BUSINESS INTEGRATION

Connect education and research more directly with employers, industry, chambers of commerce and innovation ecosystems.

15. SIERG'S VALUE PROPOSITION

SIERG brings together within a single international ecosystem:

- Education
- Research
- Innovation
- Professional development
- International mobility
- Institutional cooperation
- Quality development
- Business and employer engagement

Its purpose is not to create a conglomerate under centralized management.

Its purpose is to create an international community of strong and independent institutions that, through cooperation, can achieve greater results than any institution could achieve on its own.

17. SIERG'S LEGACY

SIERG's institutional identity is based on three interconnected dimensions:

HISTORICAL LEGACY

The culture of cooperation developed through OWZ-Armenia and the broader international network of OWZ.

INSTITUTIONAL TRANSFORMATION

The development of the International Education and Research Alliance and the subsequent creation of Selart structures.

FORWARD-LOOKING GLOBAL STRATEGY

The creation of a modern international ecosystem connecting education, research, professional development, mobility, quality and innovation.

Therefore, SIERG represents both continuity and transformation:

- Continuity of mission, cooperation and international networking;
- Transformation into a modern legal, institutional and global education and research ecosystem.