

ACUTE - Accessibility and Connectivity Knowledge Hub for Urban Transformation in Europe

WP5 – Future of the Knowledge Hub

D5.1 Shortlist of Cooperation possibilities for ACUTE

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Authors: Susanne Wrighton
Alain L'Hostis
Hans Häuslmayer

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Project Partners

Organisation	Country
University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna BOKU	AUSTRIA
Université Gustav Eiffel UEiffel	FRANCE
Centre d'études et d'expertise sur les risques, l'environnement, la mobilité et l'aménagement Cerema	FRANCE
Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies LBTU	LATVIA
University of Latvia LU	LATVIA
Research Institutes of Sweden RISE	SWEDEN
University of Westminster UoW	UNITED KINGDOM
Malmö University MAU	SWEDEN
Grazer Energieagentur GmbH, Graz Energy Agency GEA	AUSTRIA
VTI/Sweden's national centre for research and education on public transport K2	SWEDEN
Power Circle PC	SWEDEN
University of Innsbruck UIBK	AUSTRIA

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1 Introduction

1.1 ACUTE WP5 Aims

Work package 5 (WP5) of the ACUTE project aims to establish functions and structures of a possible Knowledge Hub for ENUAC, DUT and possibly even beyond the European level. We try to answer the question, if and how a Knowledge Hub can successfully be operated. This document and first deliverable of WP5 evaluates possible connections with other existing organisations operating platforms that may have similar objectives and to see whether there are lessons to be learned, mistakes to be avoided or opportunities for collaboration.

Before setting out to identify the variety of existing solutions and organisations we need to define why such a Knowledge Hub is needed and what functions it should have.

1.2 The Need for a Comprehensive Knowledge Hub for European Projects

The European Union (EU) has long been a global leader in funding and supporting research, innovation, and development projects. These projects, spanning various funding programs, have yielded significant advancements across numerous fields. However, experienced researchers and individuals familiar with the subject matter agree that the current landscape urgently lacks a centralized platform to store, share, and build upon the knowledge generated. To address this gap, it is imperative to establish a comprehensive Knowledge Hub that serves as a repository, community center, and possibly also as a marketplace.

Based on our work within the ACUTE project and the collected evidence, we outline the functions and benefits it would bring to the European research and innovation ecosystem and explain how such a Knowledge Hub would prevent the ongoing loss of valuable information, mitigate financial losses, and reduce redundant efforts that have characterised the past decades.

2 Functions of a Knowledge Hub

2.1 Repository Function

Preservation and Accessibility

A primary function of the Knowledge Hub would be to serve as a repository for data, results, and content created within EU-funded projects, as we believe the current Cordis data base to be insufficient. Although Cordis provides basic data on EU-funded research projects, the project summaries are brief, and no results or documents produced in the projects are available. This is particularly disadvantageous because the links to the project websites usually lead nowhere after a few years. The centralized database we suggest would ensure that valuable information is preserved and easily accessible to interested individuals, researchers, and institutions in the future. The current fragmented approach often leads to data being lost, inaccessible, or duplicated, wasting resources and hindering progress.

Facilitating Research and Innovation

A well-maintained repository would facilitate further research and innovation by providing access to a wealth of prior findings. Researchers could build on previous work without duplicating efforts, leading to more efficient and effective advancements. This continuity is crucial for tackling complex challenges that require long-term, incremental progress, like for instance the most pressing current problem climate change.

2.1 Community Function

Regular Updates and Communication

The Knowledge Hub should offer a community function that includes regular updates on various topics relevant to the research and innovation community. This could be achieved through newsletters, blogs, and

social media channels, keeping stakeholders, in particular also other researchers, informed about the latest developments, opportunities for graduate or postgraduate students, and success stories.

Online-Meetings, Seminars, and Trainings

To foster continuous learning and collaboration, the hub could host online meetings, seminars, and training sessions. These events would provide platforms for knowledge exchange, skills development, and discussion of best practices. They would also enable researchers and professionals to stay updated with the latest methodologies and technologies.

Networking and Collaboration

Networking events organized through the hub would connect researchers, entrepreneurs, policymakers, and other stakeholders. These connections are vital for fostering interdisciplinary collaboration, which is often the key to innovative solutions. The hub could also facilitate the formation of consortia for new project proposals, enhancing the quality and impact of future initiatives.

2.2 Marketplace Function

Partner Matching

The marketplace function of the Knowledge Hub would enable different stakeholders to find partners and customers. This matchmaking service would streamline the process of forming collaborations and sourcing necessary resources, thereby accelerating project initiation and execution.

Researcher and Service Provider Directory

A comprehensive directory of researchers and service providers would further enhance the hub's marketplace function. This directory would allow stakeholders to identify and engage with experts and organizations that offer value-added services related to their projects, ensuring that all necessary expertise and resources are easily accessible. The directory may also include announcements for open bachelor, master, PhD and postdoc positions.

Facilitating Knowledge Transfer and Commercialization

The marketplace could also play a critical role in facilitating knowledge transfer and commercialization. By connecting researchers with industry partners, the hub would help translate research findings into market-ready products and services, driving economic growth and societal benefit. This function would be particularly interesting when working on projects with higher Technology Readiness Levels (TRLs).

3 Shortlist of cooperation possibilities for a DUT Knowledge Hub

This chapter describes the organisations and initiatives that were studied in detail in WP5 of the ACUTE project to decide whether and how they could function as blueprints or possible cooperation partners for a Knowledge Hub for ENUAC or DUT. As there are already many projects, initiatives or organisations working in the fields of (urban) mobility, logistics, accessibility and infrastructure, we only focused on the selection described in this chapter as they have thematic similarities that could lead to cooperation opportunities and effects of scale.

Fehler! Verweisquelle konnte nicht gefunden werden. shows the shortlist of different cooperation possibilities for ACUTE or DUT and their attributes and options. The single platforms are then described in more detail below and it is also explained, why some existing solutions are far from being good solutions for a Knowledge Hub for Researchers and Practitioners in the fields mentioned above.

Table 1 Shortlist of cooperation possibilities

	Platform type	Membership	Communication		Contribution	Interaction		Website / Url
			Communicate results	Content visible by non members		Ask and answer questions on the topic of 15mC	Connect academic results with practitioners issues	
POLIS	Network	Private	Yes	No	Edited	No	Yes	https://www.polisnetwork.eu/
UTMC	Community	Private	Yes	No	Free	No	Possible	https://urbantransitionsmission.org/centre/
C40 Hub	Network	Open	Yes	Yes	Edited	No	No	https://www.c40knowledgehub.org
EU Urban Mobility Observatory	Website	Private	No	Yes	Edited	No	No	https://urban-mobility-observatory.transport.ec.europa.eu/index_en?prefLang=de
ALICE Knowledge Platform	Community	Open	Yes	Yes	Edited	No	No	https://knowledgeplatform.etp-logistics.eu/my/
UNIDO Knowledge Hub	Community	Open	Yes	Yes	Edited	No	No	https://hub.unido.org/
CIVITAS	Network	Open	Yes	Yes	Edited	No	No	https://civitas.eu/
Zenodo	Repository	Open	Yes	Yes	Free	No	No	https://zenodo.org/
Project's web sites	Website	Private	Yes	Yes	Edited	No	No	individual
ENUAC BaseCamp	Repository	Private	No	No	Free	No	No	individual
DUT Sharepoint Server	Repository	Private	No	No	Edited	No	No	individual
LinkedIn	Social network	Open	Yes	Yes	Free	No	No	https://www.linkedin.com/
15m Cities Community on Expertises Territoires	Community	Open	Yes	Yes	Free	Yes	Yes	https://www.expertises-territoires.fr/jcms/pl1_392516/en/15-min-cities-bringing-more-proximity-in-cities

3.1 POLIS

POLIS is a professional network centred around topics of urban mobility, bringing together experts and practitioners in Europe. POLIS is an extremely relevant arena where mainly practitioners and academics discuss all topics related to urban mobility. The mix of practitioners and academics makes POLIS a place where the connection between academic results and practitioners' issues can be observed. POLIS is organised in clusters and one of them, "active mobility", fosters a strategic interest in the topic of the 15-minute city. The POLIS working group 'active mobility' has expressed its interest in the ACUTE activities, and as a consequence two seminars were organized in cooperation with them in 2024 (Leuven, Utrecht).

As POLIS is a member-based the activities are at least partially reserved for members. This type of organisation is not compatible with the principle of an open community in which anyone can participate without membership or fees. This said, POLIS could be invited to play a role in the animation or even the management of the Knowledge Hub community if interests of the various stakeholders are aligned and if POLIS sees the community as a place where resources should be invested. For instance, POLIS regularly organises open and free webinars that could be shared with the Knowledge Hub. POLIS is a clear partner of any ambitious European Knowledge Hub initiative on the topic of 15-minute cities.

3.2 UTMC

UTMC is a membership based, thematic network, centred on academic users, focusing on 'urban transitions'. Its closed nature by design does not allow to foster an open community. The same arguments exposed about POLIS network can be also made here. Despite its relevant thematic positioning, this framework does not appear suitable for creating cooperation with an open community Knowledge Hub as we envisage it.

3.3 C40 Hub

The C40 Hub, which brings together the world's most populated cities, is a key player in the knowledge landscape of 15-minute cities as it provides a range of resources specifically on this topic. C40 operates as an open network. Membership to the hub is free and open to experts and academics, even if they don't belong to the cities of the network. However, as the management of the network is at the hands of large cities, it is doubtful that they are able to address the needs and concerns of smaller cities – large, medium and small -- and less populated territories.

The main limitation of the C40 Hub is the fact that all content published on the platform is edited. This means that any content shared on the platform must be reviewed by the platform managers. This constitutes a major limitation when it comes to organising a community that anyone can contribute to without the submitted content being edited. For these reasons it is unlikely that the C40 Hub can fulfil the functions of a 15-minute cities Knowledge Hub that we envision, but it can nevertheless be a source of useful resources that can be shared and discussed in the 15-minute city community.

3.4 EU Urban Mobility Observatory

The EU Urban Mobility Observatory is a website edited by an organisation commissioned by the European Commission. The website contains several useful resources of issues related to urban mobility, and particularly around Sustainable Mobility Plans (SUMP). A large part of the resources relate to the legal framework for the operation of urban mobility. As a static website with edited content, this is not a place where a community can develop. Nevertheless, the EU Urban Mobility Observatory should be seen as a place where many resources can be linked together and discussed within the 15 minute city community, as is the case with some of the previously presented websites and platforms.

3.5 ALICE Knowledge Platform / UNIDO Knowledge Hub / CIVITAS

In the cases of ALICE, UNIDO and CIVITAS we find characteristics similar to what we observed on the POLIS network and can derive the same analysis. Being closed networks or communities, they cannot be considered suitable structures to foster a 15 minute cities community based Knowledge Hub for DUT.

3.6 Zenodo

Zenodo is the most important repository for scientific products in Europe. Zenodo mainly stores scientific articles, book chapters and projects deliverables. In Europe, there are many repositories at university level (e.g. <https://repository.tudelft.nl/>) or at country level (e.g. <https://hal.science/>), but Zenodo is the official European platform for archiving scientific results. Zenodo can be used to create so called ‚collections‘ that summarise items according to a curation policy. Such an approach has been developed by the ACUTE team to ensure the visibility of presentations given during ACUTE seminars (https://zenodo.org/communities/acute_uera_seminars/records?q=&l=list&p=1&s=10)

A few elements of a community management are currently present, but not the full spectrum. The Zenodo project intends to complete the functionalities of the ‚collection‘ in the future to transform it into communities, but this is not yet the case at the time of writing. Zenodo is interesting because it has a European scope. Any academic or practitioner in Europe can post content there. Projects can easily create a page on Zenodo with all their deliverables for archiving.

In addition, one of the major benefits of the repository is its permanence: every resource posted here will be stored for ever; this is a very important aspect, especially in a context where most projects develop websites to house their results and deliverables. While their websites are usually no longer available a few years after the end of the project, permanence is not considered in many cases.

Zenodo can be a place where content can be posted, but at the present stage it cannot practically serve as a community and therefore cannot be considered a suitable solution for a Knowledge Hub. The community can very clearly benefit from contents stored in Zenodo, especially to avoid duplication of work and resources. Therefore, a close connection between the community and Zenodo can be seen as a good digital practice.

3.7 Individual Project websites

Normally, projects set up a website for their communication needs and duties. The main issue posed by this mean of communication of results is the lack of perennity of the solution. Most project websites persist only for a few years after the end of the project itself. This is not a reliable means of archiving project results compared to academic archiving tools (such as Zenodo), which store resources in the long-term, in a similar way to physical libraries.

3.8 ENUAC Base Camp / DUT SharePoint Server

On Base Camp or a SharePoint Server a series of tools are provided to share files among a closed group of users are proposed to support projects and project management. These tools can be very useful to share content among project members. Nevertheless, these tools do not allow a true interaction between members and completely lack the community management functions.

3.9 LinkedIn

LinkedIn is currently the most important player among professional social networks. LinkedIn is an adequate tool for mostly one-way communication to disseminate project, academic or operational results towards a professional audience. In terms of community features, LinkedIn lacks the dedicated tools for community management, such as the Q&A function that is central in any professional digital community. LinkedIn is designed to communicate knowledge and not to generate new knowledge through interaction as in a true

digital community. Nevertheless, LinkedIn can enhance the communication needs of the community by creating synergies. By communicating on LinkedIn about the achievements and debates occurring in the Knowledge Hub community, it is possible to amplify the impact of the community and attract new members.

3.10 15 minute Cities Community on Expertises Territoires

Only the Expertises Territoires platform by the ACUTE and DUT partner CEREMA aligns with all the criteria required and listed in the table above. It is a community with open where it is possible to connect practitioners issues with academic knowledge with a very low entry barrier.

The ACUTE project has initiated the “15-minute Cities” community on the ≈Expertises Territoires platform (https://www.expertises-territoires.fr/jcms/pl1_392505/en/15-min-cities-bringing-more-proximity-in-cities). This community is public, which means that all its content is visible without registration, just like on the internet. To be able to interact on the platform, it is necessary to register as a member free of charge.

The community enables the easy exchange of project findings and deliverables. All project links and deliverables are summarised in the section called “15-minute city projects”. A blog section is also proposed to foster longer content. Knowledge producers, academics or practitioners, will find here an easy means to communicate of their content. Typically, a project deliverable is contextualised in order to reach a practitioner audience. The content is not edited. This makes it possible to encourage interaction and maximise acceptance of the platform by content creators. The platform also contains an agenda with details about the events. Any member can post events.

The central feature of the community is the Q&A section. Here academics can pose their research questions, and practitioners can ask their questions regarding implementation. The member who poses a question has the possibility to select the most appropriate answer. Here, new knowledge is created by the community, by linking a question to an answer. The platform has a directory where all members can present themselves and others can contact them via email. In contrast to project websites, the platform solution offers the possibility of maintaining content over the long term and without time limits. All the infrastructure is designed to foster and maximise interactions and to generate new knowledge through these interactions by linking practitioners’ problems with academic knowledge in both directions. Practitioners can put forward their implementation problems and receive feedback from other practitioners or from experts. And academics and experts can ask their questions and receive answers by other members of the community.

4 Conclusion

Establishing a comprehensive Knowledge Hub for European projects is not just desirable but necessary. It would provide a centralized repository for preserving and accessing valuable data, foster a vibrant community through regular updates and events, and offer a marketplace to connect various stakeholders. Such a hub would enhance the efficiency, impact, and sustainability of EU-funded research and innovation projects, ensuring that the knowledge generated is fully utilized and built upon. The European Union should prioritize the development of this Knowledge Hub to maintain its leadership in global research and innovation, and to ensure that the benefits of its funding programs are maximized for the greater good of society.

As we have shown an existing platform like Expertises Territoires from the French organization CEREMA, which is by chance both partner to the ACUTE project as well as to DUT, fits most of the criteria we hold as relevant, best.

D5.2 and D5.3 of the ACUTE project will work out in detail long term development scenarios and management and organizational structure of a Knowledge Hub (for DUT).