

# Leveraging Collaborations With Non-academic Partners

Summary of Findings (Task 1.3)

Una.Resin WP1

31<sup>st</sup> January 2024

## Approach

With eleven strong research universities, Una Europa provides a multitude of existing collaborations with the **non-academic sector** that can be leveraged within a common ecosystem. For example, some members of the ecosystems of Una Europa's partner universities became associated non-academic partners of the first **Una Europa CoFund initiative**. They include research institutes, museums, laboratories, industry partners, government agencies and others ([list of partners](#), contact: *Una Europa Vzw*, [info@una-europa.eu](mailto:info@una-europa.eu)).

One outcome of the Una.Resin **WP1 Research Strategy Workshop (Sep 2021)** was the message that building an ecosystem should be facilitated by identification of promising themes/topics and appropriate levels for networking. Una Europa should also invest in networks with non-academic partners, not only companies, and create novel ways to engage with citizens for example by organizing research retreats which include policy makers or offer training sessions to citizens on specific concepts. During projects, bridges should be built between different projects to widen the community and connect to the business environment and policy makers.

As a first broad mapping attempt, the **Una.Resin benchmarking exercise** conducted in 2021 asked partner institutions (by that time the initial eight partners) to provide examples of strategic collaborations with national institutions such as cities and museums, multisectoral collaborations and those with industry, companies and other non-academic sector partners. While it is assumed that the answers do not fully reflect the entire spectrum of partnerships, noteworthy multi-sectoral partnerships were listed by UNIBO (member of a network of regional and national clusters designed to increase the competitiveness of Italy and its regions) and KU Leuven (Leuven MindGate, a network of 29 knowledge institutions and companies). Those two institutions also entertain strategic partnerships with industries through framework agreements (UNIBO) and strategic R&D centers (KU Leuven).

Una.Resin WP1 consulted with the Cluster for Public, Private and Third Sector Collaboration (PPTSC) on what would constitute a meaningful exercise instead. To this end, WP1 invited to a **cluster workshop at FUB in April 2022** and produced a report on needs and possible further steps to effectively combine our eco-systems of external partners. The cluster experts suggested to collect the interests and needs of the technology transfer offices and, in addition, consult researchers of the Una Europa Focus Areas, in particular One Health on what kind of support they would require at which stage of a project. WP1 consulted with researchers from Una Europa One Health during this workshop as well as during a prior Una Europa One Health meeting at UNIBO in February 2022. Agreeing with the Una.Resin project manager, the cluster deemed the initial aim of mapping past and present collaborations with every partner across eight institutions as neither feasible nor useful.



- How to find suitable partners for consortium calls?
- What are the specific needs of our focus areas?
- How to go about EU public-private partnerships?
- Are there fields for which national funding/university shares are allocated (Una Europa priority areas + others)?
- How could Una Europa support these? How could Una Europa feed into future PPPs?

A mapping of collaborations with the cultural industry has been conducted under the lead of Una Europa vzw during the initial phase of the **EIT Culture & Creativity**, of which Una Europa is a partner. Two workshops, one at KU Leuven and one at UNIBO, have been organized in this context in **spring 2023** to identify actors of diverse Cultural and Creative Sectors and Industries (CCSI) ecosystems to which the Una Europa university partners belong and create a dynamic, fluid and accessible online map. This will be a starting point to investigate the scale of the broad Una Europa community that can be involved in the EIT Culture and Creativity during the next seven years. The workshops allowed academics to explore how to connect the different ecosystems of each university and increase opportunities to collaborate, with special focus will be on diverse, cross-sectoral fields in cultural heritage such as media, gaming, fashion, architecture and design.

To what extent these mapping exercises provide a useful starting point for action remains to be seen, available summaries have been extremely limited in their content.

## Findings: Flexible Approach to Sharing Ecosystems

In the Una Europa Research & Innovation Strategy, we acknowledge that breaking down disciplinary thinking through collaborative research in our Focus Areas is a fundamental to develop comprehensive solutions to societal challenges. Equally important is collaboration with non-academic partners to ensure the transfer of knowledge and the application of research findings in society. This is also recognized by grant agencies which increasingly ask for stakeholder inclusion. Una Europa will hence commit to fostering knowledge exchange and collaboration between university and non-academic actors, including citizens and industry.

Together, the eco-systems of our partner universities offer a unique opportunity for collaborative research teams to establish new relations with non-academic partners. Yet, ecosystems are dynamic and shifting. Nurturing partnerships with non-academic actors demands the dedicated commitment of numerous individuals, with the rewards often materializing over the long haul.

Our TTOs, experts of which also constitute the PPTSC, are deeply involved in a number of ecosystem-building projects outside of Una Europa. While a number of possible joint actions were identified during the workshop (see attached summary), regular meetings or the initiation of joint projects outside of specific Una Europa projects did not transpire in the aftermath.

The workshop summary however remains a useful catalogue for future Una Europa activities as it identifies the interests of the TTOs and opportunities for future collaboration. It can be used as a guidance for Una.Futura projects and starting point to (re)include the PPTSC in the future.

To fully harness the strengths of our diverse ecosystems, our knowledge and technology transfer services is available jointly support Una Europa projects during and after the pre-award phase. As outlined in the Research & Innovation Strategy, it can play a role in consolidating resources to create training programs focused on impactful public engagement. These programs are envisaged to encompass different transfer formats including citizen science, science communication, and policy advocacy, and will be seamlessly integrated into Una Europa educational formats.

# Public, Private & Third Sector Collaboration Cluster

Workshop at Freie Universität Berlin, April 4 – 6, 2022

Summary of Outcomes

Carolin F. Roeder, PhD / Alice Picq

01/07/2022

## Workshop Aim and Format

Una.Resin WP1 invited representatives from the knowledge and technology transfer services of all Una.Resin partners to a 2-day workshop taking place at Freie Universität Berlin. The aim of the workshop was 1) to get to know the participants and their home institutions 2) to provide input to the Una Europa R&I strategy by identifying the added value of Una Europa for transfer and 3) developing co-creation workshops for Una Europa One Health by addressing ways to match Una Europa researchers with non-academic partners for joint projects.

## Agenda

Date	Timing	Item
April 4	19:00	<i>Welcome dinner @ Gasthaus Heuberger</i>
April 5	9:00 – 11:45	<b>Part I:</b> Institutions, services and the minds behind them (presentations)
	12:00 – 13:00	Tour of the Domäne Dahlem and Institute for Animal Nutrition with Jürgen Zentek, SSC OH
	13:15	<i>Lunch @ Café in der Gartenakademie</i>
	14:30 – 18:00	<b>Part II:</b> Una.Resin - mission, goals and strategies (development workshops in working groups, open space)
	19:30	<i>Dinner @ Brewhouse Brlo</i>
April 6	10:00 – 11:00	<b>Part III:</b> Self-Steering Committee One Health: What is One Health? Who are our current and future non-academic partners? (presentation)
	11:00 – 13:00	<b>Part IV:</b> One Health perspectives: good practice, experiences and future strategies (development of pilot ideas, workshop)
	13:00	<i>Open end: lunch, get together and open space talks with guest</i>

## Participants

Only the names of the organizers listed below as the participants were not asked about the publication of the list

Una.Resin Project Managers			
Seth Amanfo	UEDIN	Una.Resin Project Manager	
Carolin Roeder	FUB	Una.Resin Project Manager	
Alice Picq	FUB	Division Research, Intern	

Elina Tonteri	UH	Una.Resin Project Manager	
<b>PPTSC Cluster Members (*) and Transfer Managers</b>			
	FUB	Head of Profund Innovation (service institution for knowledge and technology transfer)	
	FUB	Innovation Manager, Profund Innovation	Present April 6
	UH	Head of Business collaboration, research services	Excused
	UEDIN	Sector Engagement Manager	
	UNIBO	Knowledge Transfer Manager	Present April 5
	UP1	Director of the Management of Innovation Master, Deputy Vice-President of "Entrepreneurship, Business Partnership and Professionalization"	
	JU	Head of Centre for Technology Transfer CITTRU	
	JU	Coordinator AIP JU	
	KU Leuven	General Manager of Leuven Research & Development	Present April 5
<b>SSC One Health Members</b>			
	FUB	Professor of Veterinary Medicine, Director of the Institute of Animal Nutrition	Present April 6
	UEDIN	Chair of Population Medicine and Veterinary Public Health Policy	Virtual participant April 6
	UH	One Health Coordinator	Virtual participant April 6
	KU Leuven	Clinical biologist, University Hospital Leuven	Virtual participant April 6
	KU Leuven	Lab manager National Reference Center	Virtual participant April 6
<b>Workshop Facilitators</b>			
Oliver Schmidt		Moderator, Hultgren Nachhaltigkeitsberatung	

# Results

## Institutions & Services

The heads of the Una.Resin TTOs each presented the infrastructures and transfer services at their home universities. Topics addressed included IP and legal issues, start-up and entrepreneurship, technology and knowledge transfer. The group learnt about the different structures, offers, and major programs available at each institution. Each institution put forth their main area of expertise and strengths in this realm and participants were able to find out about the different mechanisms and strategies for ecosystem building. This was also an opportunity to compare the way each structure collaborated with the funding/research services available at their home institutions.

Link to presentations: <https://sharepoint/Collaboration/WorkshopBerlinApril2022/Presentations>

The following paragraphs are short summaries of the strengths of each TTO that came out from the presentations and discussions. They are not comprehensive and simply aim to highlight areas of interest for other Una.Resin TTOs.

**FUB: Profund Innovation** (<https://www.fu-berlin.de/en/sites/profund/index.html>)

Freie Universität Berlin supports students, scholars, scientists and alumni in several fields: protecting and commercializing intellectual property, support for innovation, support for start-ups, and cooperative research initiatives with companies.

Profund Innovation accompanies the project along the entire process, starting with the idea phase, the development of the business model and prototype development up to exploitation in the form of spin-off/start-ups or cooperation with industry/licensing. In each phase, there are suitable offers such as competitions, workshops, access to infrastructure and mentors or help with applying for relevant funding.

In the area of start-up support, Profund Innovation works in cooperation with strong partners, TU Berlin, HU Berlin and Charité.

Since 2020, the network has been operating under the name Science & Startups. The network offers grants for innovative start-up projects in the fields of Health and Sustainable City, workshops and access to experts. With the joint lighthouse project K.I.E.Z, the focus was expanded to artificial intelligence. Within the framework of KIEZ, scholarships are offered for the early phase. Founded companies can be supported for 6 months within the framework of an accelerator programme with infrastructure and a strong network, access to knowledge and exchange.

The excellent research landscape with BUA (Berlin University Alliance) is a great foundation in Berlin to identify innovative projects and ideas for economic and social application.

**KU Leuven: KU Research & Development – Tech Transfer Office** (<https://lrd.kuleuven.be/en>)

KU Leuven's knowledge and technology transfer office supports researchers, students and scholars. Researchers are supported during the start and growth of spin-off companies. They receive help with the development of a business plan, validation of the market, assembling the team, etc. The office handles all contracts and IPR from researchers and students and also includes an HR service focused on business cooperation and start-ups. It manages a vast portfolio of patented technologies that could be of interest to budding companies. The business developers of the Industrial Research Fund have a full overview of the R&D-expertise at KU Leuven and look for innovative solutions to the challenges of your company.

KU Leuven also has a large network and many contacts with businesses. As a result, the TTO offers customized support throughout the entire collaboration process between companies and researchers and lays down the research collaboration in an agreement.

KU Leuven has a unique system under which researchers who put forth innovations have a "personal account" created for them so that all benefits and costs go to them. This gives the researcher sole decision-making power and is considered a good system, as economic (not legal) ownership is transferred from the office to the academic and encourages responsible and accountable management of resources as well as maximum interaction between KU Innovation and the account holder.

At KU Leuven's Centre for Drug Design and Discovery the main objective is to help interesting discoveries move forward and grow to a size that will start to attract interest from companies or spin them out into new companies. The funding model is innovative and has successfully expanded.

**UH: Innovation and Entrepreneurship Services** (<https://www.helsinki.fi/en/cooperation/businesses>)

Helsinki University aims to make research findings and the expertise of graduates available to society as effectively as possible.

At Helsinki University, the Innovation and Entrepreneurship Services cross two units: *Research Services* and *Communications and Community Relations*. The business collaboration and innovation services have experienced big changes lately and many new specialists have been recruited.

The current key emphasis at UH is on building incubator programs at each campus: The incubators are built in tight collaboration with the City of Helsinki. <https://www.helsinki.fi/en/networks/helsinki-incubators>. Helsinki Innovation Services (HIS) support forward those ideas mature enough to be commercialized by e.g. founding spinout companies as well as commercializing business ideas and novel, proprietary technologies via licensing and sales. HIS will support the researchers by giving insight into available, university-owned intellectual property, novel technologies in the pipeline and late-stage commercialization projects close to spinout creation and building-up investor relations. HIS also deals with sales and licensing negotiations related to university-owned intellectual property and connecting managerial talent with outstanding commercialization opportunities as part of the team-building of spinout companies.

<https://www.helsinki.fi/en/helsinki-innovation-services>.



Legal issues like agreement, IPR and patents are dealt with in collaboration with the specialized lawyers of the UH Research services.

**UniBo: IDEA: Innovation Development Entrepreneurship Alma Mater** (<https://site.unibo.it/idea/en/our-idea/we-inspire-connect-and-develop>)

Bologna University encourages students, teachers and researchers to explore their business potential, to generate social impacts based on innovation and sustainability.

This university specializes in not only the transfer of technologies but also in the "transferring of ideas". It also strongly encourages interdisciplinarity.

UniBo puts emphasis on frequent interaction between companies and the university. As a result, Bologna University encourages match-making between companies and academics.

They have an office for IP-rights and developing IP "co-ownership" between companies and the university. UniBo also invests in order to support the students and researchers starting companies.

They have developed educational programs to support innovative students. They have also created the Alma Entrepreneur Club which involves a series of low-threshold meetings with invited speakers, aimed at individuals who are interested in entrepreneurship.

### **Paris1:**

Paris 1 transfer services organize themselves around four axes:

The Research and Valorization Department (**DIREVAL**) is responsible for implementing and steering the establishment's research policy. DIREVAL intervenes throughout the procedure for preparing and implementing the research component of the contract, particularly with regards to the procedure for evaluating research units, doctoral schools and the policy university scientist.

The Projects and Foresight Department (**D2P**) is responsible for supporting teacher-researchers from PARIS 1 University in their participation in funding programs for higher education and research at national and European level (Horizon Program Europe).

The Corporate Partnerships and Professional Integration Department (**DPEIP**) organizes all relations with Companies in order to highlight the relationship between PARIS 1 University and the socio-economic world.

The **Foundation PARIS 1** is promoting the ambition to catalyze interactions between the academic and socio-economic worlds of the territory. It has thus approached its historical partners (in the fields of training, integration, research, etc.) to create this new tool for its development.

Paris1 is currently building an incubator for early-stage researchers.

This university has no specific business cooperation or innovation services but focuses on SSH sciences. Their "clients" are ministries, etc and as a result, their impact is more on policy influence than commercialization.

Under the **CIFRE** program, Paris1 offers gives the opportunity to companies to recruit doctoral students whose research project, carried out in collaboration with a public laboratory, will lead to the defense of a thesis. This increases interaction between university and businesses.

Additionally, Paris 1's Labcom (joint laboratories where a university and a company join forces to develop innovative products) allows a real short circuit of innovation.

**UEDIN: Edinburgh Innovations** <https://edinburgh-innovations.ed.ac.uk/>

Edinburgh Innovations is the University of Edinburgh's commercialization service. They help researchers, students and industry drive innovation by giving them access to the university's multi-disciplinary expertise, by matching their needs with the latest research, new technologies and world-class facilities.

Edinburgh Innovations engages Industry and business development by facilitating industrial relationships and providing access to translational funding. They give out enterprise support services such as access to bespoke training, upskilling, funding and investment to support Start-ups, incubators, accelerators. IP management and its commercialization: IP support and advice (E-Lucid IP Portal), Company Formation support, Old College Capital.

UEDIN's vision is to look for solutions to problems faced by communities and businesses by using service design and foresight tools. One of Edinburgh's goals is to increase the number of women in start-ups.

UEDIN prides itself in being particularly strong in challenge-based research.

Edinburgh University also created a fund (Creative informatics) from money siphoned off from research funding to support research.

**JU : CITTRU:** Centre for Technology Transfer <https://www.sciencemarket.pl/?lang=en>

The unit responsible for Knowledge and Technology Transfer at the Jagiellonian University is CITTRU. They are tasked with business science collaboration including: commercialization process, dealing with the use of intellectual property belonging to the university by external entities. Contract research to offer and contract research services on behalf of JU. And to join projects, defining the rules of using IP - background and foreground .

CITTRU is also tasked with the protection of intellectual property – it coordinates and manages intellectual property protection issues on behalf of the Jagiellonian University and its authors. There is a strong collaboration with centre for science support (CWN - an entity responsible/supporting the application for project financing) – each application project has its own tutor/advisor from CITTRU.

Jagiellonian University Academic Entrepreneurship Incubator (JU AEI) is a part of Centre for Technology Transfer CITTRU. The incubators' primary responsibility is to support and promote entrepreneurship among students, employees, and alumni of Kraków institutions of higher education. They provide trainings, workshops and upskilling. They believe in organizing meetings with experienced entrepreneurs and exchanging success stories, lessons learned and business cases. They also provide consulting (idea validation, mentoring, fundraising).

PACTT: Polish Association initiated by JU which now counts about 80 involved universities. A successful network where you can request support for services or find business partners.

JU's focus is on finding business partners for researchers. They organize demo days for businesses which creates trust bridges. Incubator market becoming more of a business idea hub.

They focus on direct commercialization rather than spin-offs. Science-business matchmaking with a focus on licensing.

## **Developing Entrepreneurship and Knowledge Transfer within Una Europa: Ideas**

### **Establishing collaboration among Una Europa TTOs**

Participants agreed that all TTOs could benefit from regular meetings, for example on a quarterly basis online and once a year in person. In addition, there was interest in developing opportunities for staff exchange. The current cluster, for now linked to Una.Resin, could be turned into a permanent body and opened up to TTO professionals interested in meeting and exchanging. Staff exchanges could be organized on an informal basis and/or funded via Erasmus+. However, the collaboration should be institutionalized to some extent to ensure continuity, to allow allocation of working time and to create practices for who will invite the meetings and draft agendas.

The focus of the exchanges could be:

- Building of particular expertise through champions (examples: UP1 for policy lobbying, UEDIN for community building, UEDIN and UH for collaborations with cities).
- Addressing shared challenges, such as communicating with humanities and social science scholars.



- Sharing expertise on larger applications and EU-wide calls, developing joint proposals.

Good practices could also be identified through the mutual sharing of checklists, for example on validation and licensing. IPR and support to researchers, was also an issue, where the cluster members found needs for deeper collaboration.

### **Supporting Una Europa Research through Co-Creation & Training.**

The cluster should recognize those subjects, where it would be most impactful and useful to work together. Discussions with representatives of the Una Focus Area One Health led to the insight that researchers should lead on the identification of required partners (such industry, GOs, NGOs etc). In the next step, TTO services could jointly develop a co-creation format. Furthermore, services could offer training for researchers such as science policy training (UP1) and foresight training (UEDIN). UEDIN can also offer expertise with challenge-based competitions in the health sector (Collider format).

Collaboration with 3<sup>rd</sup> sector should be a key element of the multidisciplinary Una Fair.

### **Opening up existing programs**

Among all partners, a considerable number of formats such as demo days, workshops, network meetings, exist that could be opened to Una Europa community members without requiring much resources.

Participants agreed that there is no lack of formats, but regularly a lack of participants, in particular since the pandemic. Opening up formats, with the limitation of language barriers, would thus create an immediate added value for the community as well as create synergies among partners.

### **Creating an Una Europa Entrepreneur Network**

Easy networking measures could include regular invitations of start-up from a partner university to (existing) formats such as weekly stand-ups and demo days.

A regular newsletter or a bulletin board with offers and requests for TTOs, students, researchers, and start-ups searching for international expertise, market access, contacts in politics, administration and business etc. could be created.

Una Europa alumni could be connected via the work of existing alumni associations and/or by integrating alumni work for entrepreneurs into the Una Europa Alumni Strategy. > Potential link to Una Europa alumni strategy.

### **Internship program for students/researchers**

Una Europa students with an interest in entrepreneurship or applied research could be provided with internship opportunities in existing teams across Una Europa. This could be combined with other Una mobility programs to keep it cost-neutral.

### **Creating an Una Europa mentoring program**

Existing programs often require a faculty mentor. TTOs could support teams in identifying mentors across the alliance, thus tremendously expanding the access to expertise for future founders/TT projects. This might entail changing the regulations of existing programs. An Una Europa mentoring program could also be developed as a stand-alone program.

### **Developing joint formats**

Successful formats of partner universities (e.g., Industry on Campus / JU) could be developed into Una Europa formats or replicated by individual partners. Suggestion to develop a joint commercialization workshop.

### **Leveraging existing or future Una Europa Formats for KTT and Entrepreneurship**

The contacts with companies should be enhanced in a facilitated way. This could be done for example by using the UnaFair idea (to be developed by Una.Universitas). Partners could bring key collaborators, like cities and companies relevant to the focus areas to the fair. This element should be included in a Una Europa networking platform.

The strong AI component of partners should be leveraged within the Una Europa focus area AI and Data Science. A collaboration with the Self-Steering Committee AI and Data Science could be an opportunity to link AI elements of the entrepreneurship ecosystems (e.g., FUB: Kiez / UH: Nexus) with Una Europa.

### **Funding opportunities**

There is great potential to share possibilities on local funding possibilities as well as finding partners for international calls, like European funding instruments. The Una Europa online platform, which will be developed in the future, can be used for a joint pool of "Call for fundings".

# Next Steps

### **Survey/request for network members**

This survey provides a starting point for a number of ideas developed at the workshop. As Una.Resin project staff can only marginally support TTOs outside of the Una.Resin project aims an additional lead should be identified. The survey could include the following points:

1. Which events and formats are suitable to be opened to participants from Una Europa partner institutions?
2. What concrete good practices are you interested in sharing or learning about via, e.g., a shared document?
3. Which particular expertise could you share with the TTOs e.g., in the form of a workshop (policy lobbying, community engagement, marketing etc.), potentially at the next meeting in Kraków?
4. Is there a possibility to offer internships either at the TTO or in your start-up teams?

Communication between the TTO – customer (in the whole network) is costly, but necessary to clarify who within the Una Europa structure could support communication.