



(National Associations Advisory Committee)

ASTP NAAC

“Embedding Knowledge Transfer
Offices (KTO’s) in Horizon Europe
Projects”

23rd January 2020

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CONTEXT

For decades the excellence of European research has been well established, leading to a high rate of publications, while other regions have been more efficient in translating scientific advances into marketable innovations. The so-called European paradox has been pointed out by several studies^[1]. Meanwhile the EU has fostered the Open Innovation Model^[2] in the FP6 agenda and in subsequent programmes. Particularly, in the H2020 programme, a proof of concept fund was set up by the EIF, while some ERC grants can be continued with the “*Proof of Concept*” (PoC) ERC grant.

Despite these efforts, it must be noted that most EU projects end without effective actions to extract results and to foster a translation towards the market and exploitation. As soon as a project is finished, the research teams focus on the next project because the meaning and the purpose of a PoC is not necessarily the same in the mind of a scientist as in the mind of a business developer. In addition, the huge challenges that society has to face cannot be solved by the science community without structural support to drive the science to innovation and exploitation.

On the other hand, the concept of Open Science is now also fully supported by the EU in the forthcoming *Horizon Europe* programme. The Open Science concept aims at increasing the availability of the results from public research for the benefit of the society.

As a result, the situation becomes more and more complex for the researchers to find the right attitude and the right behaviour combining all these different expectations, which can even be, or seem, contradictory.

Facing this realisation, some countries have encouraged a more continuous process between research and innovation in order to enable an interweaving between the different pillars of the innovation process. As examples of these policies, some funding is typically dedicated to specific entities which manage knowledge transfer from public research in Belgium^[3], France^[4], Czech Republic^[5] or UK^[6].

In such situations, the role of KTOs is more proactive, maintaining close relationships with the researchers, with the added involvement of market expertise, business approaches, and industry-oriented project management.

The purpose is to identify potential for innovation earlier, and to do active and smart scouting along the research process. To assume this task, highly educated and trained people are needed who can dedicate adequate time to this function and support the researcher during the process.

Most European projects (H2020, FEDER) already include a work package (WP) “*Dissemination and exploitation of results*”, which is mainly focused on communication about the project, and sometimes the outcomes, typically without any involvement from the KTO. This approach provides a picture of the results, with the hope that somebody will pick up the opportunity to proceed with the innovation process.

Why not enlarge the scope of this WP to go further and **start the innovation approach within the frame of the project, with the support of professionals in knowledge transfer?**

PROPOSAL

This document proposes:

1. to award a parallel **additional and dedicated *impact and valorisation* work package** for all Horizon Europe projects to address the impact of the project and to take care of the knowledge transfer including the translation into an innovation phase towards society and the market.
2. to ensure the **involvement of the corresponding Knowledge Transfer Offices** in the project to prepare and lead this WP, developing this task jointly with the research teams, and
3. to assign this WP with an **additional innovation budget, calculated as 5% to be added to the research project budget.**

As a result of such an approach, the relationship between scientists and KT officers will be established on a long term prospective, to co-create innovation from the scientific results within the project, with KT no longer seen as an optional add-on to the project.

This co-construction is not just an addition of means but should have a multiplier effect on the global benefits to society. This approach is also valid in whichever domain is concerned, all sciences as well as humanities.

The purpose of this specific WP should also include a process or an application dialogue to decide the go/no go towards a specific application, and to dedicate some support to opportunities that were not identified in the original submission.

What would be the **tasks** in this proposed WP, with the 5% additional budget?

1. setting up a development plan along the TRL and CRL scales
2. with the scientists, building and managing a PoC phase to reach the adequate deliverable to attract the right partners
3. meeting and having in-depth discussions with the scientists to scout potentialities and discussing before launching scientific publications and other disseminations
4. filling in invention disclosures with the scientists
5. implementing the IP strategy and financing the first steps for protection
6. carrying out flash market studies to get a gross assessment of the market potential
7. looking for adequate partners for developing innovative solutions for society
8. support for the communication and dissemination of information about the innovative opportunity
9. taking part in project meetings on a regular basis
10. looking for adequate funding to accelerate the development

What should be the **deliverables** of this dedicated WP?

1. disseminating open information on the project
2. providing an IP report (policy, invention disclosures, IP protection measures)
3. providing a market report (possible markets, flash studies)
4. organising a technology maturation plan (PoC) (investing in PoC actions and managing the PoC project)
5. providing an exploitation plan to go to the market

These deliverables should be provided 18 months after the end of the initial research work packages.

The specific management of this WP will be defined in the consortium agreement between partners, for example the distribution of tasks, assignment of leaders, conflict resolution, KT officer's involvement in project meetings, deliverables etc.

In such a concept, the KTOs will be fully embedded in the research project and will be in position to focus resources for the project to maximise its impact on society.

According to the experience already acquired over 20 years in several countries, it is expected that on average **these tasks will require about 5 % of the total budget of the research project**, to be dedicated and managed by the concerned KTOs. This budget

could be allowed providing the KT team can propose a clear action plan based on detected potentialities.

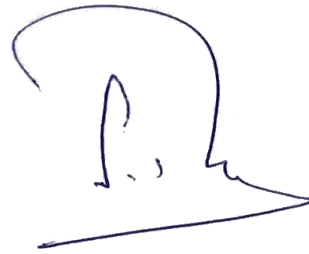
The budget should cover KTO manpower, IP protection costs, market information reports, PoC actions (TRL3-4), and should not necessarily come from research budgets, since it is an innovation development activity.

EVALUATION

An evaluation of this measure can only be made at the end of the programme, considering the number and relevance of transfer operations developed by universities, research centres or companies, and comparing the impact of the programme with the previous periods.



Martin Raditsch
President ASTP



Santiago Romo
President of the NAAC

References

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[2] *Management of intellectual property in publicly-funded research organisations: Towards European Guidelines*. European Research Area, Working Paper EUR-2015 EN.

[3] *Capacity Building in technology Transfer*. Massimiliano Granieri, Andrea Basso. Springer for Innovation, Switzerland, 2019, pp.148-151.

[4] *The network of SATT in France*. <https://www.satt.fr/en/what-are-satt>

[5] *The Gamma Programme of the Technology Agency of the Czech Republic*. <https://www.tacr.cz/en/gama-programmeme/>

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More information

ASTP

ASTP is the pan-European members' association for professionals working in the knowledge transfer industry. Founded in 1990, ASTP currently has over 1,000 members from 46 countries. ASTP is an organisation built on the work and commitment of volunteers. [President, Martin Raditsch](#)

National Associations Advisory Council (NAAC)

The NAAC is composed of over 30 European National Associations (NAs) representing Knowledge/Technology Transfer professionals in their country. The NAAC is an advisory body within ASTP, chaired by the ASTP Vice President NAAC, [Santiago Romo Urroz](#)

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