Report on the Innovation Platform

Version 1

Milestone M7.1 Innovation Platforms: Organisation and Workflows

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1. Executive Summary

This document includes the milestone for task 7.2 “Innovation Platforms: organisation and workflows”. YUFE Innovation Platform is a dynamic platform designed to unite all stakeholders within an innovative ecosystem. In the context of YUFE, the ambition is to connect the stakeholders of the ten regional innovation ecosystems where the university members perform/cooperate/belong.

The platform targets entrepreneurs, investors, researchers, corporates, students, municipalities, NGOs, offering/developing a centralized hub for collaboration, knowledge sharing, and the acceleration of groundbreaking ideas. It goes beyond the intrinsic value to actually create new networking events.

Under this initiative, many obstacles have been overcome with consequent delays. Nevertheless, the planning has been developed, iterated, and adjusted since the beginning of this project in May 2023 to present a use case in the first semester of 2025. Eventually, the scope and perspective of this milestone have changed slightly according to the best approach for the use case in compliance with the nature of the platform. Final governance and workflow will depend on the use case learnings.

2. Methodology

2.1 Background

The first approach to the implementation of this ambitious project was to identify existing platforms on which to work or to identify those strengths that could be extrapolated to the one created by the alliance. For this purpose, in May 2023, a survey was sent to the participants of WP7 with the aim of asking and mapping which platforms were known by these experts that would meet the expectations placed on the basis that would be used to develop the YUFE Innovation Platform.

For this benchmarking goal, three criteria were analyzed: fostering entrepreneurship, the university-industry relationship, as well as the dynamization of the ecosystem in which it is embedded. Results shown in Table 1 extracted from the document: "YIP Mapping and benchmarking 05052023".

Table 1. . Different existing platforms benchmarking

N.	Entrepreneurship	University Business Collaboration	Innovation Ecosystem
1	RIMAP Regional Innovation Matchmaking Platform https://rimap.uniri.hr/ Platform https://rimap.unirihr/	RIMAP Regional Innovation Matchmaking Platform	RIMAP Regional Innovation Matchmaking Platform
2	https://www.simplydo.co.uk/	Slack for comms: slack.com	SME Book https://smebook.eu/
3	https://pactt.pl/katalog-innowacii	https://crowdhelix.com/	https://ucyalumni.com/
4	https://aulapolska.pl	European Enterprise Network hhttps://een.ec.europa.eu	
5	https://ucyalumni.com/	Microsoft Dynamics (CRM)	MY IP: internal Project management of valorisation projects
6	LinkIN+MS+Blackboard		LinkIN+MS+Blackboard
7	Xplorer (private): https//explorerbyx.org/		https://in-part.com/
8	https://www.adventurees-alliance.com/		https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/research-area/industrial-research-and-innovation/
9	https://www.justsocial/		
10	https://startforfuture.eu/	https://startforfuture.eu/	https://startforfuture.eu/

Based on the results obtained, the decision was made to proceed with RIMAP, the platform developed by the University of Rijeka. A thorough analysis of its functionalities was then conducted, focusing on user experience, the platform's registration protocols for various stakeholders, and the administrator's perspective, as illustrated in Figure 1 (sourced from the "RIMAP Report for Customization".

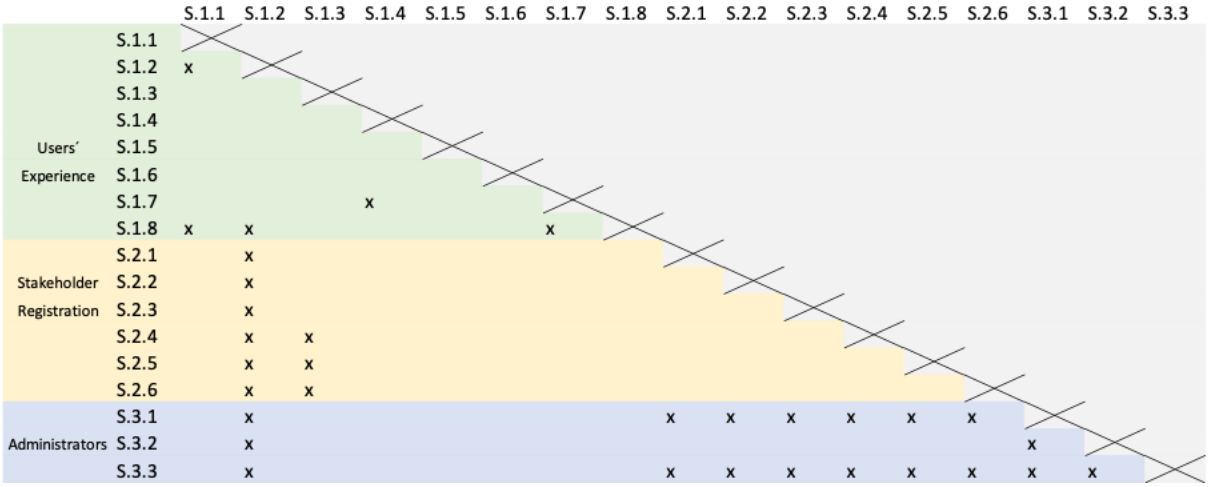

Figure 1 Summary from the analysis of the functionalities from each user's perspective

To implement the technical changes that were necessary to improve these three dimensions experience, a total of 32,670 euros was requested, as a necessary condition for the pairing and collaborative interactions of the YUFE Research and Innovation Ecosystem. The rollout of the YUFE Innovation platform was divided into two phases:

The first phase corresponds to the reception of an empty platform where all the work will be done manually (mid-September 2024). This will be used to create the first pilot on which all the corresponding tests will be carried out by introducing the data manually. The field selected for this task was health, so the first step was to identify some research groups working on it and ask them if they would consider to join the platform whenever it was ready.

The next phase involves opening the platform for free registration, allowing anyone interested to join and begin establishing connections. By the beginning of 2025, the introduction of AI is envisaged, which would be the third phase as well specified in the budget. With that engine running, the platform should begin to be autonomous except for routine maintenance and supervision.

By June (2024), according to the plan proposed, around ten different researcher groups (fields: health and AI) from each of the YUFE universities were selected to be asked to join the platform. Therefore, those finally reached and willing to participate, will join 5 different networking events from October (2024) to December (2024).

2.2 Technical development of the platform

Given the 2024 deadline, focus was on deploying a version of UNIRI RiMAP that caters to YUFE's foundational needs. YUFE envisions a branded instance on a specific subdomain, ensuring a seamless user experience reflective of the institution's identity. Platform initial rollout is harnessing the capabilities of UNIRI RiMAP 2.0, contingent upon the administrative functionalities it offers and its compatibility with YUFE deployment timeline. Main milestones as follows:

- Development instance created on July 4th, 2024.
- Customisations stared on August 20th, 2024.
- YUFE Innovation Platform became operational on September 16, 2024 from the Technical point of view, from administrator perspective there are still some changes that must be implemented.

Connection parameters

- Platform is deployed on UNIRI VM: 4 CPU, 8G RAM, 100 GB HDD
- Platform is accessible on: http://yufe-rimap.uniri.hr/

To “activate” innovate.yufe.eu YUFE DNS record has to be configured as follows:

- DNS record type: A to IP 31.147.204.11
- DNS record type: CNAME to yufe-rimap.uniri.hr

Platform modifications as requested by YUFE team:

1. Style: Adjusting look and feel to YUFE style guide
2. Target group: Adding two new target groups in platform: 1) Students and 2) Citizens.
3. Target group: Merging Companies and non-profit entities into “Organisations”
4. Search: Search improvement: Also include categories in search
5. Registration: Explain the fields during registration process
6. Registration: Display asterisk when field is mandatory *
7. Emails: Transactional email translation in English and according to style guide YUFE
8. Registration: Adjusting the registration process by adding new fields for specific target groups
9. Registration: Adding Keep me updated (newsletter) during registration process for all target groups.

Apart from these, there are some functionalities demanded by the administrators such as alerts whenever any stakeholder gets registered into the platform as well as a standard categorization of the expertise fields that would make the manual matchmaking easier.

2.3 Planification of its implementation

Objective: **Connect researcher to/with community and stakeholders**

By June (2024), according to the plan proposed, around ten different research groups (fields: health and AI) from each of the YUFE universities were selected to be asked to join the platform. Therefore, those finally reached and willing to participate, will join 5 different networking events from October (2024) to December (2024).

Operative plan:

- Time line: 6 months.
- Users will be engaged and addressed by WP5 and WP7 taskforce.
- Users will be mainly researchers and startups of the YUFE Incubation and Acceleration program or the universities ecosystems.
- At this stage, the platform will be: empty and manual.
- Task owners (UC3M) will take the workload to upload the volunteer-participants in this use case

- 15-20 researchers per university + 3-5 companies from the Acceleration and Incubation programs participant. If any other external stakeholder is willing to help by participating in the use case he/she will be very welcome.
- Agreed fields for this use case: Health and AI, as they are common and broad disciplines across the YUFE members.
- 3 to 4 online meetings on a specific opportunity. The selection of participants would be a simulation of the automatized platform.

2.4 Risk and Challenges

Financial risk: Low-Risk level

The budget for full development of the YUFE Innovation Platform might be short. We believe the mentioned plan is a good and balanced approach to providing value, and at a reasonable cost (monetary and human resources).

User risk: Low-Risk level

The users do not appreciate the value of the tool. The challenge is to synchronise users´ expectations and effort level. We believe the mentioned plan allows to test the platform without any users loading effort.

Administrative risk: Medium-Risk Level

Burden knowledge transfer practitioners with extra work. This risk is narrowed down by limiting the number of users at the pilot phases and good scheduling of the features and services of the platform.

3. Workflow and governance

As a consequence of the described in epigraph 2, how the YUFE Innovation Platform has evolved, the features of the chosen one, and the best path agreed allocated resources to implement the innovation platform starts with a use case approach. Once the use case learnings are gathered final governance and workflow, the foreseen expectations stand upon a highly liquid organization with distributed workflow to avoid extra-burden for KTO technicians or stall.

Thus, until the outcome of this use case can be evaluated, it is not possible to speak of governance in precise terms or to indicate specifically the nodes network among the universities or the personnel within each university will be in charge of each issue. However, as far as the current state of the platform is concerned to simulate the future performed of the system, a centralized workflow has been chosen for this test in which the administrator group consists mainly of the work package leaders and the UNIRI university technical team. This model, with the implementation of artificial intelligence, will be replaced by a distributed workflow model, whose proposal includes the transfer offices of the institutions as the main supervisors of the matchmaking that can be controlled by the user himself with some sort of notification system.

This was studied attending the possible user scenarios to entering the platform, which might be driven for either random exploratory reasons or precise applications (application to an offer, post a demand, a notification push) as it is shown in Figure 2 (sourced from the "RIMAP Report for Customization").

Figure 2 The user drivers to use the platform

Surfing might be interesting once or twice, normally further entries would have a very specific motive.

It still must to be discussed how the application/submission of an offer/demand will be linked to a notification in order to make this distributed workflow model possible.

4. Discussion

This first use case is intended to demonstrate to the executive committee that the expense of implementing artificial intelligence is necessary and worthwhile for the added value of having a platform of this caliber that is automatic and automated. If this is not achieved, manual monitoring is completely unsustainable over time. This is the reason why pilot failure must be avoided. To this end, we are working closely with the platform's technical team to fine-tune the YUFE Innovation platform so that when it is opened to the public, there is real value that will encourage the user to want to make use of it. However, to successfully achieve this goal, the use case timeline has been extended by four months, until April 2025, due to delays in receiving the platform with all the requested functionalities.

5. Conclusion

The identification of the research groups has been successful, and the empty platform was received for the implementation of the use case in the same way. The presentation took place on 24/09 followed by a testing phase that led to build up a new document with every change that from administrator perspective need to be implemented in order to get the manual matchmaking to work. Next step will be to introduce the research groups and companies.

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