

The Wine Lab

Generating innovation between practice and research

575782-EPP-1-2016-1-IT-EPPKA2-KA

Work Package 1 - Hubs set up

“Hubs Guidelines”

Document information	
Due date of Intellectual Output	M8
Actual submission date	M12
Revision	Version 1.2
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DELIVERABLE REVIEW HISTORY

Version	Name/Partner	Status *	Date	Summary of changes
1.0	Cristina Santini	A	02/10/17	First draft
1.1	Gigliola Paviotti, UNIMC	C	02/02/17	Formatting/editing
1.2	Alessio Cavicchi, UNIMC	REV	10/02/17	Review/quality control

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INTRODUCTION

Hubs are usually diffused in the field of social innovation and technology; during the last years there has been a proliferation of hubs due to their efficacy in fostering community empowerment or in developing social innovation; furthermore, hubs represent an effective tool for answering to local needs, such as a lack of services for the community.

As suggested by the British Council (2016): “The ‘hub’, as a way of organizing work, has sprung up in different sectors and various organizations in the last 10 years. The hub has become a ubiquitous idea connoting a dynamic bringing together of diverse talents, disciplines and skills to intensify innovation”.

Given this, the interest of policy makers towards hubs grew over years: firstly, because they understand that over the years the process of innovation birth has changed and new forms of innovation were born. Secondly, because hubs can represent a valid answer to the emerging needs of a local community. Hubs can be virtual or physical; hubs are defined by needs of the community (local, urban or stakeholder community) they refer to.

In general, people think about hubs as a place, where the members of a community can meet, discuss and plan actions.

Hubs can effectively improve co-creating solutions and as outlined by Gathege and Moraa (2013) through the development of an experience participatory culture, they can also build technological skills and literacy. Research has outlined how Hubs can foster a process of community empowerment and social innovation (Jimenez Cisneros and Zheng, 2016).

With these guidelines, we want to provide insights and tools for organizing hubs in order to maintain their features and distinctive traits.

1. HOW HUBS ARE CREATED AND WHY?

There are basic steps that can be followed when organizing a hub. Here it follows a brief list.

1.1. The mission

What is the aim of your hub? Why do you want to create a hub?

Defining a mission is the very first step. If the hub is a tool that it is included in a project, be sure that all your activities are coherent with the vision and the scopes that inspire the project.

Examples:

- The **Entrepreneurs Hub** (<https://theentrepreneurshub.com>) make a clear statement of its mission: “To accompany entrepreneurs, startups and SMEs in their complete journey to become an economically sustainable business” (from the website).
- The **Diamond Creative Vision Hub** defines its mission and its aims as follows: “Diamond Creative Vision Hub can be defined as a business resource centre or a space that encourages creative thinking, which is a combination of creativity, curiosity and communication where entrepreneurs and youth leaders meet each other in a conclusive business support environment to bring creative influences and creative acts to have a greater socio-economic impact and economic impact on our communities” (<https://dcvh.weebly.com>).
- The **MateraHUB** underlines its objectives and its mission: “Materahub is an aggregator of people and business, a “space” where they meet, encourage the creation of new job opportunities and the promotion of sustainable development” (<http://www.materahub.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Report-of-activities-Materahub.pdf>)

Following what emerges from the analysis of some hubs (Ontario Community Hub, [Co-Creation Living Lab in Nigeria](#), etc..) we can depict the general aims of hubs:

- 1) to improve learning opportunities for students;
- 2) to respond to specific needs;
- 3) to provide access to knowledge and information;
- 4) Facilitate creative thinking and collaborative problem solving
- 5) Encourage technology innovation in Nigeria
- 6) Encourage shared accountability between technologists & innovators
- 7) Serve as a living lab for prototyping and testing
- 8) Knowledge platform where members share, build new skills and competencies
- 9) Connect, share, create and find expertise
- 10)

1.2. The Type of Hub

There are several variants of hubs; we will refer to the taxonomy provided by the British Council (2016).

- Studio: a Small collective of individuals and/or small businesses in a co-working space.
- Centre: a Large-scale building which may have other assets such as a cafe, bar, cinema, maker space, shop, exhibition space.
- Network: a Dispersed group of individuals or businesses – tends to be sector or place specific.
- Cluster: Co-located creative individuals and businesses in a geographic area.
- Online Platform: Uses only online methods – website/social media to engage with a dispersed audience.
- Alternative: Focused on experimentation with new communities, sectors and financial models.

As organizers, you should decide which type of hub you want to create.

1.3. The Participants

Once the type of hub is chosen, organizers should individuate who is going to take part in the hub.

Therefore, it is necessary to identify which are the beneficiaries of the network. Participants can be individuals, networks of communities comprising residents, fellows, trainees, interns, companies, policymakers, or volunteers. It is recommendable to consider the hub as a paradigmatic example of a Quadruple Helix approach to innovation and co-creation (Carayannis and Campbell, 2009).

In order to create a clear picture of hubs' participants or beneficiaries some tools can be employed, as in example:

- A stakeholder analysis matrix, to identify who are potential participants to the hub and how to engage them;
- A checklist to assess motivation of participants to the hubs (see Annex 1);
- An interview protocol (Annex 2) to integrate the checklist, with specific questions for participants to explore their motivations and commitment

1.4. Information flow, communication and monitoring

A system of information flow should be defined and promotional activities should be pursued in order to foster dissemination and involvement among perspective hub participants and local communities.

A monitoring activity should be followed and tools for reporting and planning activities such as <https://www.teamup.com/>, <https://asana.com/> or <https://trello.com/> can be employed by organizers.

It is extremely important to give space to communication for informing stakeholders and other parties of the activities pursued by the hub. Therefore, many tools can be employed according to organisers' aims and resource:

- Blogs: the blog can contain information about the activities, stories or “lessons learned”;
- Social media: socials can be particularly effective in promoting a circulation of information and news;
- Media: a media strategy can be developed and it can include Local TV, radio, newspapers.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE HUB.

The second step is to ensure that hubs have their main features. In the next paragraph, we will explore which are the main characteristics of each hub.

As it has been previously mentioned, hubs differ according to their aims and to the context. Background research (in particular see the work published by the [Stanford Social Innovation Review](#)) has outlined some features that in general characterise hubs.

1.5. Hubs facilitate the creation of collaborative communities

Collaboration is ensured by a perceived sense of community.

A key issue is that the organization of relationships among participants should be egalitarian.

The concept of [egalitarianism](#) is extremely complex; in our view, in order to manage complexity and to reduce the risk of arising problems due to subjectivism, we will adopt Rawls's perspective (1999; 2001); more specifically we will refer to the principle of [Fair Equality of Opportunity](#): being part of a hub should ensure to all participants the same benefits and advantages.

In order to ensure a sense of community, the following issues must be observed:

- Be sure that participants have commonalities
- Be sure that the organization of relationship is egalitarian

Following the suggestions provided by UNICEF (2012) in its guide to innovation labs, we recommend filling the space of hubs with instruments that can promote creativity, such as whiteboards, couches, or open carpeted space. Even if the Hub is virtual, some tools, like virtual whiteboards can be adopted.

1.6. Hubs stimulate entrepreneurial behaviours

Hubs can foster entrepreneurial behaviours. In particular, the relationship with other stakeholders can facilitate the diffusion of innovative ideas and the implementation of innovative solutions. Research has underlined the role that hubs have in the diffusion of innovation in mature industries (Leifer et al., 2001).

Hubs must foster a culture of entrepreneurship and more specifically as OECD suggests for Entrepreneurial Universities (OECD, 2012), a widespread awareness among participants of the relevance of entrepreneurial behaviours must be pursued.

Therefore, it is useful for hubs to stimulate the circulation of news or information about entrepreneurship.

Besides the creation of an environment capable to stimulate entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial orientation – hubs should be “cosy” places, virtual or physical, where participants feel comfortable – when organizing a hub it is extremely important to ensure access to information. Therefore, the flow of information both on the informal and formal level should be guaranteed. Information is a key resource for the development of entrepreneurial behaviours (Nonaka, 1988). Hubs can choose among several web-based tools for the diffusion of information. When organizing a hub you can follow the emerging insights from the following two examples.

- Example 1: [Nehub](#) is a hub in Nepal, whose motto is “promoting Agribusiness &

Entrepreneurship in Nepal”. In their website, they give emphasis to information and news. Under the label news, the reader can get info about successful stories or useful information about running a business or financing innovative practices or ideas, etc... Nehub has also developed a blog with pictures and descriptions of the activity of hubs participants.

- Example 2: [Innovation HUB](#) publishes videos, podcasts and stories about innovation and entrepreneurship on the blog. It has been created as a virtual hub of WGBH.

Those two short examples tell us about tools that can be employed for creating an awareness among perspective participants of the hub.

1.7. Hubs attract diverse members with heterogeneous knowledge

Diversity is a key in hubs; diversity must be ensured with regards to gender or class and ideas spread among community members. Heterogeneous knowledge is a plus in entrepreneurial development process; having members with a different set of knowledge resources could be a key leverage for the development of innovative solutions.

Therefore an analysis of partners as a resource should be carried out.

1.8. Hubs facilitate creativity and collaboration in physical and digital space.

Creating a collaborative environment is the first step for facilitating the activity of the hub.

Therefore in order to facilitate creativity and collaboration, organizers must adopt tools that allow interactions among members. We have already underlined the importance of the work environment and the relevance of information for the development of an entrepreneurial orientation among participants. With regards to creativity, it is under everybody's eyes the impact that hubs could have in the promotion of creativity in some sectors: the report of the British council (2016) on creative hubs clearly underlines the potentialities that hubs have in creative industries.

Most of academic literature and research has conceived the issue of creativity as an ability that is linked to creative industries. Yet, we are convinced that creativity is a trait of personality that it is common to entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial activity. The work by Amabile (1997) underlines that entrepreneurial creativity is originated by a mix of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations where personal involvement plays a key role. By adopting this perspective, it is extremely important the role that hubs can have in stimulating creativity and collaboration. Therefore when organizing a hub, it is relevant to create a space that fosters collaboration and promotes creativity.

Following Amabile's insights (1997) we can say that motivations are the first leverage for creativity and collaboration. Therefore, it is extremely important that hub participants are clearly motivated and share the mission of the hub.

Co-creation tools and technologies enable the creative process: when projecting a hub be sure to create the space for a dialogue. Forums, chats, events, hub meetings and other tools are extremely effective for spreading a sense of collaboration and fostering creativity.

1.9. Hubs localize global entrepreneurial culture.

Hubs are a mean for transforming global into local. Some globalised traits of entrepreneurial culture can be localized by hubs. This would help local entrepreneurs to interact globally without perceiving the local-global distance.

According to [Financial Times](#): “Global entrepreneurs are professionals who use their global understanding and connections to identify transnational and cross-cultural opportunities and turn them into a new value-creating initiative. While entrepreneurship usually means the creation of a new business, the scope of many global leaders' efforts goes beyond business creation”. As it has been clearly described by Isenberg (2008) entrepreneurs feel the need to get global, in order to remain competitive. Therefore, being global means not only facing physical distances, but also cultural distances: small is often felt in contraposition to global. Therefore hubs, providing a sense of support and community can help to “localise” the globalisation of entrepreneurs:

- ✓ hubs can provide solutions to solve problems related to physical distance;
- ✓ hubs help to reinforce the ability to create network and alliances (that is one of the distinguishing traits of global entrepreneurs);
- ✓ hubs can build networks with other hubs in different countries, and this fosters the sense of globalisation of entrepreneurs;
- ✓ Entrepreneurs that take part in hubs can have a strong social commitment; therefore, some inspiring issues of social entrepreneurship can be easily shared at a global level, as it emerges from Isenberg (2008).

1.10. Hubs must be sustainable

Hubs must be sustainable in the long run. Therefore a wise management of running costs must be adopted. The involvement of multiple stakeholders including governments can be particularly helpful.

WHAT IS A HUB IN THE WINE LAB PROJECT? THE WINE HUBS

A wine hub is described in the project as **active groups of interest composed by stakeholders concerned by wine sector** – including then producers, researchers, policy makers, other private and public organisations (e.g. tourist organisation, cultural heritage bodies, etc.). A wine hub is mainly a learning community at territorial level in which sharing and cooperation is aimed at pursuing new ideas for joint territorial development.

The project idea was built considering that business wineries are linked to the local context because of the fact that wine is an agricultural product, but at the same time, the globalization occurring in the wine industry is reshaping competitions and the set of resources that are needed for pursuing a competitive advantage. Thus, progressively, wineries should focus the attention not only to physical inputs, but also to other resources, such as competences, knowledge and skills. It becomes of primary importance undertaking those paths that could help knowledge to grow. Knowledge creation and dissemination requires a context that enables interaction and socialisation through the establishment of business networks.

The existing gap between academicians and practitioners has to be fulfilled through innovative methods that could create the base for a mutual dialogue between “thinkers” and “doers”.

1.11. Which are the features of a Wine Hub?

With reference to the above guidelines, we can state that the Wine Hubs:

- Have, as **mission**, the co-creation of new knowledge for joint innovation in the wine sector at territorial level;
- Have the form of a **cluster**, as composed by individuals and businesses in a geographic area, but can have some features of the **networks**, as geographic areas communicate among them, and there can be a ‘vertical’ networking with the national level;
- Have, as **participants**, wine makers, universities, policy makers, business representatives of other sectors related to wine (e.g. tourism, retailing, distribution, etc.) and civil society representatives.

1.12. How to create a Wine Hub?

1.12.1. Identify stakeholders

As for other kind of hubs, as explained in previous chapters, there is not a unique way to create, manage, and make sustainable a hub, that should be shaped according to the needs expressed by participants themselves.

However, some initial advice can be given for practical steps.

Having already in mind your mission, you should identify your participants. To have a tool that supports you in identifying your first audience, from which to start to build your hub, you can use a stakeholder analysis matrix.

There are many available models for the matrix, in example

- The [Tool4dev stakeholder analysis matrix](#), which is delivered in open licence;
- Other tools, that are freely downloadable from [Smartsheet](#).

A stakeholder analysis matrix is composed by several sections, that you can use according to your needs, when (adapted from Tools4dev):

- You want to identify the stakeholders;
- You want to group stakeholders by their level of influence, what is important to them, and/or what they could contribute;
- You want to describe how you will engage stakeholders.

Here a useful example:

Stakeholder Analysis Matrix

Stakeholder Name	Contact Person <i>Phone, Email, Website, Address</i>	Impact <i>How much does the project impact them? (Low, Medium, High)</i>	Influence <i>How much influence do they have over the project? (Low, Medium, High)</i>	What is important to the stakeholder?	How could the stakeholder contribute to the project?	How could the stakeholder block the project?	Strategy for engaging the stakeholder
EXAMPLE <i>Nurses & Midwives Union</i>	<i>Carlos Davida cdavida@nu.org 0998 765 287</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Maintaining working conditions for nurses</i>	<i>Agree for union members to implement the new reforms</i>	<i>Going on strike</i>	<i>Monthly round-table discussions</i>
<i>Patient Advocacy Group</i>	<i>Viki Chan vchan@pag.org 888 587 101</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Maximising quality of care for patients</i>	<i>Communicate with other stakeholders to express their support for reforms</i>	<i>Making complaints about quality of service after the reports</i>	<i>Information and feedback meetings every 6 months</i>
<i>Sunday Times Newspaper</i>	<i>Jane Smith jsmith@stn.com 888 587 101</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Getting a good story</i>	<i>Print stories that support the new reforms</i>	<i>Printing stories that oppose the new reforms</i>	<i>Quarterly press meetings</i>

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1.12.2. Organise meetings and events to share opportunities and favour exchange

Once you have identified stakeholders that should be involved, and you have mapped the potential interest and role of each of them, the next step is to organise meetings with them and start with the network building.

Even if preceded by bilateral meetings, the first meeting “of the Wine Hub” should be ideally public, and promote participation of all interested audience.

The event can have the form of a forum, or a participative session, and addressed to a specific topic related to Wine Hub itself, in order to clarify since the beginning the scope of the action overall. Whatever form is chosen, and if stand-alone event or in the frame of a bigger event or conference/fair, this first meeting, or launching meeting, should provide at least:

- The reason for the meeting;
- The idea behind the project of hubs building;
- The addressed topic and its implications for local development;
- The openness of the hub to any audience concerned;
- A facilitated participative session where the participants share their proposals on how to proceed with the hub development;
- A closing session that summarises the work of the day and plans forward to the second meeting, which should be organised on the basis of the outcomes of the first event.

Very important: remember to collect contact details of participants, in order to be able to keep them informed afterwards.

1.12.3. Engage stakeholders

The strategy for engagement is particularly important: the Wine Hubs should work as living labs, therefore should be based on principles like (ISCAPE Project, 2017):

- Active user involvement throughout the process;
- Real life setting;
- Multi-stakeholder participation;
- Multi-method approach;
- Co-creation between different stakeholders.

The first meeting (or the first meetings) is only a kick off for the creation of the hub: promoting active cooperation will require at least an engagement strategy, that has to be carefully planned, and needs to be at the same time flexible enough to follow the wishes of the hubs themselves.

To promote involvement and engagement, first you have to understand the motivation that can convince contacted stakeholders to act proactively in the hub. For instance, according to the European commission, in order to motivate SMEs to engage in social development programmes, the following factors should be considered: Business benefits, that is Wishing to gain benefits – tangible and/ or intangible; Personal values, that is Wishing to live out individual values; Institutional Factors, that is Wishing to comply with industry, social, legislative expectations; Stakeholder driven factors to fulfil stakeholders' expectations.

1.12.4. Inform stakeholders

At any point of the hubs development, information flow must be ensured.

There is a public communication on the results of the hubs, which fosters visibility and further expressions of interest for those stakeholders that did not previously participate, and an internal communication among the members of the hubs, either formal or informally built.

The easiest way to ensure that at least basic information reach all participants is to set up a mailing list: for this, you should remember to collect the e-mail addresses of the participants to the meetings, and ensure that your list is always updated. Another popular channel for information could be social media – however, it could be that not all members actively use social media, or they use different online tools.

In general, there is no ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ way of communication: the best channel is the one that better fits the need of the specific hub, and takes therefore into account the needs and the habits of those specific participants.

1.12.5. Monitoring and evaluation

As all processes, also the Wine Hubs will require monitoring and evaluation procedures to understand if there is anything that can be improved, if it is consistent with the expectations of the members or of the overall objectives, and if it is progressing or not.

Until the Hub has an informal structure, it means does not have a managing body but it is promoted by the first initiator, the easiest way to collect information includes:

- Short follow up questionnaires after the meetings/events;
- Short online surveys to collect future plans/desired activities or follow ups on already carried out activities;
- Reporting and assessment on six-monthly basis of the hubs activities (e.g. are these increased or decreased?); achievements (e.g. is there consistency from the expressed needs and wishes of the participants to the first meetings, to the activities planned and carried out?); enlargement (is the hub grown?); participation (are all members active?); etc.

CONCLUSIONS

These guidelines are drawn from international experiences and best practices, as well as from the tasks carried out during the first months of The Wine Lab project. Nevertheless, this document does not provide a “one size fits all” solution.

Thus, place-based initiatives aimed at setting up new Wine Hubs, can consider the multiple factors, tools and activities mentioned in this work and adopt them with a certain range of flexibility and creativity according to local stakeholders’ needs.

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ANNEX 1 – ORGANISERS’ CHECKLIST

#	Issue	Notes	1-5 scale
1	<p>Why participants take part to the hub?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Are the motivations coherent with the aims of the wine Hub? – What about the diffusion of motivations? 	<p>This issue explores the motivations that participants have for joining the hub. The organizers will take note from information collected through informal dialogues or information exchange. Organizers can also gain information through interviews or a short open question survey.</p>	
2	<p>Is the organization of relationship egalitarian?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Do we ensure access to relationships to minorities? – What about gender? – Do all the participants have the same right to expose their opinions and to propose ideas? 	<p>The organization of relationship should be egalitarian, with respects to gender or minorities. All the participants should have a democratic possibility to expose their opinions, suggestions and ideas.</p>	
3	<p>Is information flow guaranteed?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Does the hub stimulates the flow of information both on a formal and informal level? – Do you think that the tools that are designed for spreading information among participants are adequate? – Do you think that the hub pursues an effective dissemination activity about what it is doing? 	<p>The information flow plays a key role in fostering an entrepreneurial orientation among hub members.</p>	
4	<p>Is diversity ensured?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – With regards to minority – with regards to ideas – do people that belong to the hub have a different set of knowledge? – Is the hub capable to attract people with a different set of knowledge and expertise? 	<p>Heterogeneity of knowledge should be ensured in a hub. People with different resources (knowledge and skills) have a positive influence in entrepreneurial development and usually foster the creation of innovative solutions.</p>	

ANNEX 2. INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Motivations	
Why did you decide to take part to this hub?	
What is your opinion about hubs?	
Do you feel being involved in the Hub?	
What benefits are you expecting from the hub?	
Do you think that you have been treated equally? (the interviewer should explain what equalitarian stands for; please refer to the guidelines)	
Key resources, Knowledge and competences:	
What are your main expertise?	
What is your background?	
What are your key competences?	