YUFERING Project

YUFE TRANSFORMING R&I THROUGH EUROPE-WIDE KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

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List of Abbreviations and Definitions

EC	European Commission
ERA	European Research Area
EU	European Union
FKT	Flipped knowledge transfer
GA	Grant Agreement
KPI	Key performance indicator
KT	Knowledge transfer
KTO	Knowledge transfer office
R&I	Research and Innovation
RPO	Research Performing Organisation
SBAs	Societal & Business Actors
SwafS	Science with and for Society
TT	Technology transfer
TTO	Technology transfer office
WP	Work Package
YUFE	Young Universities for the Future of Europe

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YUFE Knowledge Transfer Expert Network

1. Introduction: background, relevance and report structure

The YUFERING project aims to mobilise the Young Universities for the Future of Europe (YUFE) alliance and act as a catalyst for flipped knowledge transfer and deployment in society. Knowledge transfer (KT) is defined as a comprehensive process aimed to maximise the two–way flow of technology, intellectual property and ideas. It is often used interchangeably with the term technology transfer (TT), which refers to research commercialisation and can be considered a subset of KT (Campbell et al., 2020). Flipped knowledge transfer (FKT) is a demand-driven approach of knowledge and technology transfer activities at Research Performing Organisations (RPOs), where the main driver to adopt new knowledge comes from start-ups that are external to the RPOs and actively seek for academic knowledge that can be adopted to reinforce their products or applications (De Cleyn et al., 2014).

In the frame of the project activities, the YUFERING consortium has deployed a broader approach to FKT, where the focus is put on the relational process, which is demand-driven and solution-oriented, and where the main driver to adopt the new knowledge comes from outside the academia (Concept note on the YUFE Flipped Knowledge Transfer Approach, 2021). In that way, the YUFE alliance is making its contribution to tackling major societal challenges related to sustainability, health, digitilisation and citizens well-being by innovative solutions that are being co-created by YUFE partner institutions and societal and business external actors (SBAs) actively seeking academic knowledge. By engaging the Quadruple/Quintuple Helix actors - science, policy, industry, society and the environment (Carayannis & Rakhmatullin, 2014) in the process, the FKT approach strengthens the innovation ecosystems of which the YUFE institutions are part and produces tangible impact for the benefit of society.

With the view to embrace the challenges of the European Research Area (ERA) in transforming research & innovation (R&I), YUFERING aims to design and implement a systematic FKT approach for cooperation with local communities, governments, investors and private companies of the YUFE alliance. This open innovation model, which continuously considers the innovation needs of SBAs, will also strengthen and consolidate KT at each of the partner universities. One of the specific project objectives towards the achievement of this aim is to build a network of YUFE Knowledge Transfer Experts. This deliverable report describes how YUFERING created this professional network, its purpose, profile and main activities planned over the course of the project. The report is a deliverable in YUFERING Work Package 3 (WP3).

The report is structured as follows:

Section 2 provides information on the methodology used to collect the data necessary to build the YUFE Knowledge Transfer Expert Network.

Section 3 presents and discusses the main findings from data collection, including the profile of Experts, existing knowledge transfer support at YUFE partner institutions, the Experts' needs and key resources.

Section 4 outlines the Network's purpose, planned activities and implications for the YUFE alliance and its innovation ecosystem.

Appendix A provides the full list of questions comprised in the survey of KT experts.

Appendix B is a raw (Excel) file with survey results (report section restricted to the consortium members)

Appendix C is a database (Excel) file containing contact information of experts (report section restricted to the consortium members).

Appendix D contains the first version of the plan and programme of the YUFE Knowledge Transfer Expert Network meetings.

2. Methodology: approach to build the Network

To identify and build the YUFE KT Expert Network, a survey approach was deployed. The YUFERING task force prepared a questionnaire using Microsoft Office Forms and disseminated it via e-mail to the main contact persons for YUFERING WP3 at each of the 10 YUFE partner institutions to collect the necessary information. Each partner institution was required to complete the questionnaire only once. The data collection process was completed in September 2021, with received responses from all 10 partner institutions.

The questionnaire comprised the following thematic sections:

1. Contact information and current positions of **KT professionals** interested to join the YUFE KT Expert Network, including the main contact persons, additional KT professionals (internal or affiliated to YUFE partner institutions) and professionals responsible for developing and maintaining relationships with the innovation ecosystem.
2. Information about **knowledge transfer support** at each partner institution (KT office age, size, effort planned to be devoted to the Network, affiliated incubators and/or accelerators where spin-outs/start-ups from the university can develop).
3. Information about required **expertise and background** of KT experts, with the focus on FKT. The related question was a ranking question developed using the framework of RTTP (Registered Technology Transfer Professional), the international professional standard for knowledge transfer and commercialisation practitioners working in universities, industry and government laboratories (PraxisAuril & ATTP).

4. **Key performance indicators** (KPIs) to be used by the KT expert network to measure the output and impact of FKT activities. This multiple-choice question was developed using the framework of the Knowledge Transfer Metrics Report (Campbell et al., 2020) published by the Joint Research Centre (JRC), the European Commission's science and knowledge service. The respondents were asked to select three KPIs they considered most important.
5. Identification of **resources, tools and activities** necessary to facilitate the experts' work and performance in KT. The respondents were able to select one or more suggested responses.

The full version of the questionnaire is enclosed in Appendix A.

3. Results: summary of survey findings

A raw (Excel) file with survey responses is provided in Appendix B (report section restricted to the consortium members).

3.1 Network composition

The analysis of survey responses resulted in the identification of 29 KT experts interested to join the Network from 10 partner institutions (refer to Table 1 for the breakdown per institution). The Network is expected to grow as the project activities progress as well as beyond the project duration.

Table 1 Number of identified KT experts per partner institution

YUFE Partner institution (and short name in brackets)	**Number of KT experts joining the Network**
University of Antwerp (UANTWERPEN)	7
University of Bremen (UBREMEN)	3
University Carlos III of Madrid (UC3M)	3
University of Cyprus (UCY)	1
University of Eastern Finland (UEF)	2
University of Essex (UESSEX)	2
Maastricht University (UM)	1
Nicolaus Copernicus University (UMK)	2
University of Rijeka (UNIRI)	4
Tor Vergata University of Rome (UNITOV)	4
TOTAL	**29**

The experts have diverse and complementary profiles, corresponding to their positions and roles at YUFE partner institutions, including research, innovation, entrepreneurship and/or KT office heads and directors; KT coordinators; innovation and start-up support experts, policy advisors and researchers. Out of these 29 experts, in total 10 professionals from six partner institutions have been responsible for developing and maintaining relationships with the innovation ecosystem and identification of the community needs that could be addressed by university researchers. By bringing heterogeneous expertise to the Network, the Experts will make a valuable contribution to its activities oriented towards introducing a FKT approach across the YUFE alliance.

Appendix C provides a database (Excel) file containing contact information of experts (report section restricted to the consortium members). It is a working document and it will be continuously updated.

With the purpose of enhancing the Network composition in relation to its focus on FKT, the respondents suggested additional profiles of experts to be subsequently recruited to the Network, including technology integrators; research management and business development experts and experts linked to particular project activities on a case-by-case basis. These experts do not necessarily need to be employed by YUFE partner institutions; they can be affiliated to any of the institutions in their innovation ecosystems.

3.2 Knowledge transfer support

The respondents provided the following information about the existing knowledge transfer support at YUFE partner institutions:

- Average technology/knowledge transfer office (TTO/KTO) age: 15.9 years (min 0, max 36)
- Average TTO/KTO size: 8.55 FTE (min 1.5, max 20)
- Average full-time effort (FTE) planned to be devoted to the Network: 1.2 (min 0, max 3.5)
- 9 partners have established links to an internal or regional incubator and/or accelerator, as shown in Table 2

Table 2 Internal or affiliated incubators or accelerators at partner institutions

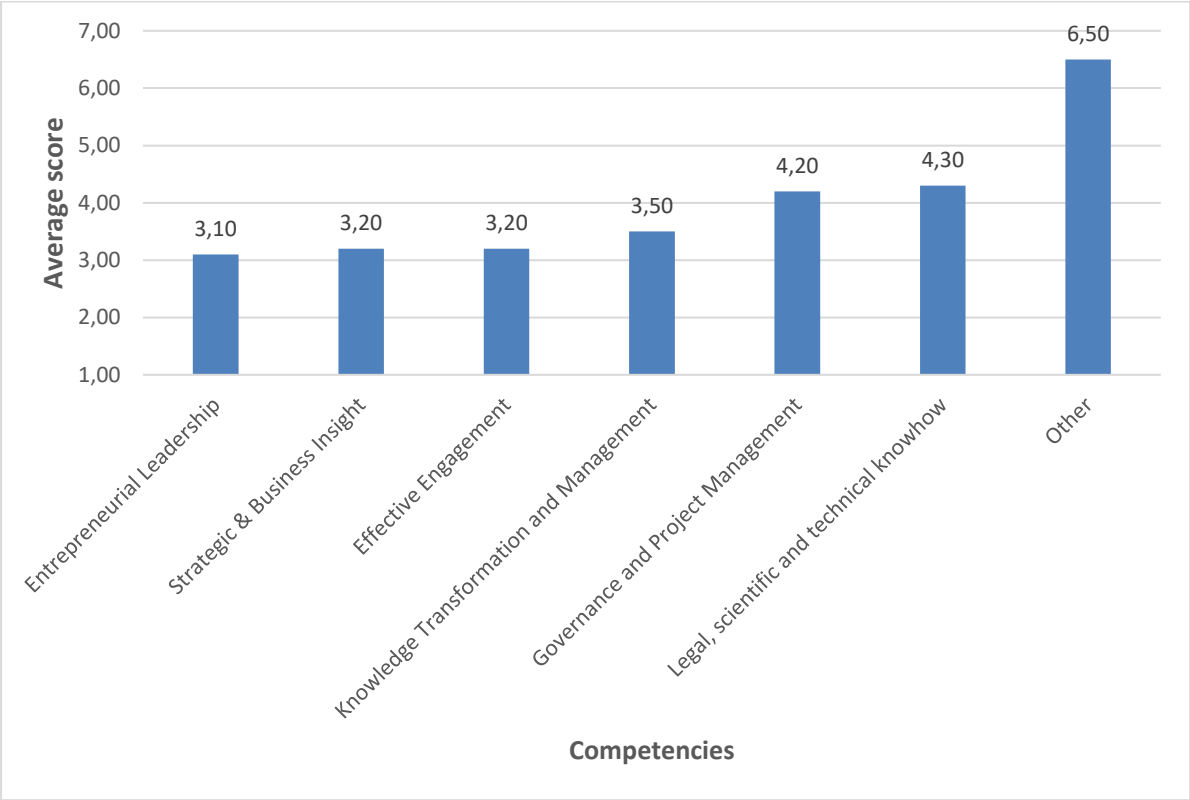
YUFE Partner institution	Internal or affiliated incubator/accelerator
University of Antwerp	Science Park Niel, Bluechem + links to pre-incubators Blue App, The Beacon
University of Bremen	Digital Hub Industry (DHI), Bremen Innovation and Technology Centre (BITZ)
University Carlos III of Madrid	UC3M Science Park
University of Cyprus	Links to various incubators/accelerators in Cyprus on a case-by-case basis
University of Eastern Finland	Business Center North Savo, Business Joensuu
University of Essex	Studio X Innovation Centre Research and Enterprise Office Colchester Essex
Maastricht University	MileStones / Brightlands
University of Rijeka	STEP RI Science and Technology Park of the University of Rijeka
Tor Vergata University of Rome	START CUP LAZIO (Premio Nazionale per l'Innovazione) Network

3.3 Required expertise and background of KT experts

Considering the focus of the YUFE KT Expert Network on the FKT approach, the respondents ranked different suggested competencies of KT professionals in the order of importance, with 1 being most important and 7 the least important competency.

As shown in Figure 1, the competencies referring to Entrepreneurial Leadership (leadership in building collaboration and partnerships and changing organisations through innovation), Strategic & Business Insight (strategic thinking; market-led, business acumen, and commercial skills) and Effective Engagement (marketing, promotion, brokering, communication, persuasion and influencing required to bring partners together) were given higher importance compared to the competencies traditionally expected from TT managers, such as Legal, scientific and technical knowhow and Governance and Project Management.

Figure 1 Ideal expertise & background of KT experts



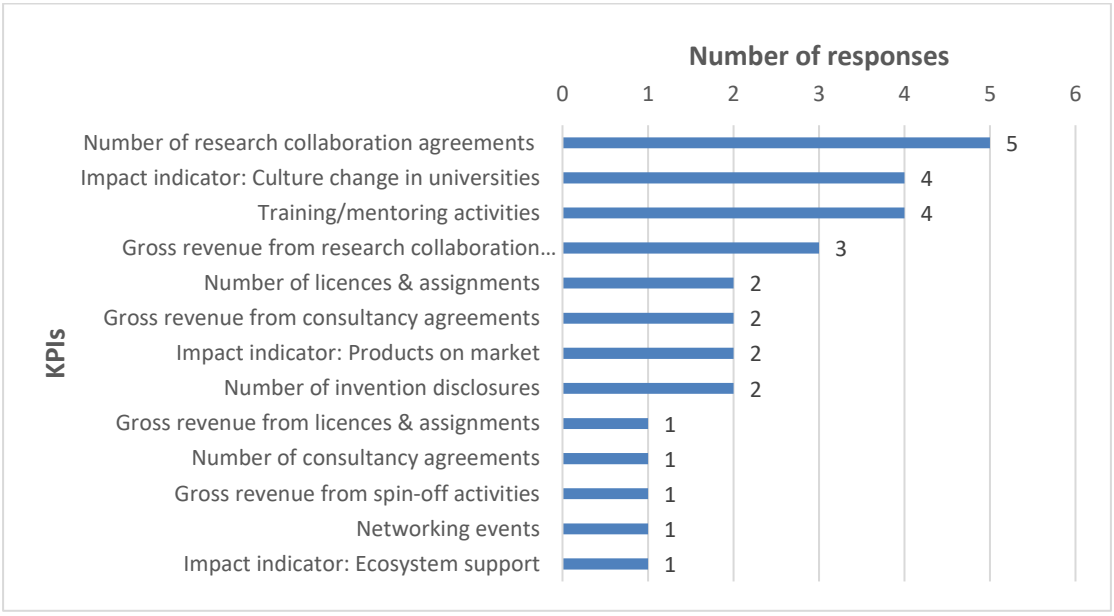
3.4 KT Expert Network and KPIs

KPIs identified by the respondents as most important for use by the KT Expert Network to measure the output and impact of FKT activities are:

- Number of research collaboration agreements & research contracts with non-academic partners (with five responses),
- Impact indicator: Culture change in universities (e.g., % of researchers engaged in KT, % change in university funding for KT; 4 responses) and
- Training/mentoring activities (4 responses),

whereas others were hardly pointed out (e.g., Number of consultancy agreements, Networking events). For each suggested KPI in the questionnaire, Figure 2 shows the number of respondents that selected it as highly important.

Figure 2 Most important KPIs to be used by the Expert Network



3.5 Resources required by the Network

Figure 3 provides information on the number of respondents that selected particular resources, tools and activities as essential to facilitate the Experts' work and performance in KT. The respondents identified a dedicated budget to support KTO activities and an expert team with heterogenous knowledge, skills and networks as the most important resources. In addition, a high importance was given to workshops; surveillance and strategic intelligence platforms (i.e., digital tools that help collect and analyse information on business environment, technology demand and offer, industry and wider community actors, competitors, etc.) and specific methodologies to promote co-creation (for example, Design thinking). Additional suggested resources include collaboration with peers for exchange of good practices, problem solving and sharing experience in solving difficult cases.

Figure 3 Resources to facilitate the Experts' work and performance

4. Conclusions: Network purpose, activities and implications

The aim of this report was to describe how YUFERING built the YUFE Knowledge Transfer Expert Network. In accordance with the YUFERING project proposal, the purpose of the Network is to strengthen and consolidate knowledge transfer among all YUFE universities, mainly through organising different trainings, mutual learning and sharing best practices of SBAs.

The project will virtually bring together the YUFE knowledge transfer professionals on a regular basis and during YUFE flipped knowledge transfer events. It is planned to organise in total 21 meetings of the Network over the course of the project – 18 online meetings and three larger events, virtually or physically, if possible. Appendix D contains the first version of the plan and programme of the YUFE Knowledge Transfer Expert Network meetings.

During the first project year, the Experts will focus on mutual learning in terms of innovation funding opportunities in which SBAs are involved throughout the knowledge creation process. During the second year, the Network will be involved in the transition process to a FKT approach. In the third year of the project, the Network will also engage in peer assessment of the FKT pilots at YUFE universities. Special attention will be given to ensuring the sustainability of the Network beyond the project duration. The YUFE consortium has already obtained funding (EIT-funded project Inno4YUFE) for synergistic activities to support the further development of the Network and its

structural embedding as a YUFE Flipped Knowledge Transfer Office (FKTO), with the general aim of strengthening the entrepreneurial and innovation capacities of their students and staff. This YUFERING Knowledge Transfer Expert Network and the results of the survey form a sound basis for further development of such a YUFE FKTO for the whole YUFE alliance in the future.

Moreover, the Experts will contribute to the project task of developing a common YUFE profile and career development path for knowledge transfer professionals, which involves a dedicated approach to interaction with citizens, governments, investors and companies. The Experts will form a two-way bridge between the YUFE research community on the one hand and society and business actors on the other, while bringing these communities closer to each other, thus strengthening the human capital in R&I in all the involved communities.

5. References

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6. The core competencies assessed by RTTP, ATTP; PraxisAuril, retrieved 31st May 2021 from https://www.praxisauril.org.uk/core-competencies

APPENDICES

Appendix A: A full list of questions comprised in the survey of KT experts

YUFE Knowledge Transfer Expert Network

YUFERING will virtually bring together the YUFE knowledge transfer professionals on a regular basis and during YUFE flipped knowledge transfer events, creating the YUFE Knowledge Transfer Expert Network. These experts will be involved in YUFERING WP3 activities and participate in the network meetings. Four main goals support the creation of the Knowledge Transfer Expert Network community: mutual learning, training support, exploration of innovation funding opportunities, and peer assessment of the flipped knowledge transfer pilots. In this questionnaire, the term Knowledge Transfer is used as a comprehensive process aimed to maximise the two–way flow of technology, intellectual property and ideas. It is thereby considered that Knowledge Transfer (KT) encompasses consultancy, contractual research and technology transfer (TT) activities.

1.YUFE partner:

- Maastricht University
- Nicolaus Copernicus University
- Universidad Carlos III De Madrid
- University of Antwerp
- University of Bremen
- University of Cyprus
- University of Eastern Finland
- University of Essex
- University of Rijeka
- Tor Vergata University of Rome

2. Main contact person for YUFERING WP3 "YUFE as a catalyst for flipped knowledge transfer and deployment in society" (first and last name)

3. E-mail address of the main contact person

4. Role at the University

5. Can you nominate another knowledge transfer professional (internal or affiliated to your institution) that will be dedicated to the YUFE Knowledge Transfer Expert Network?

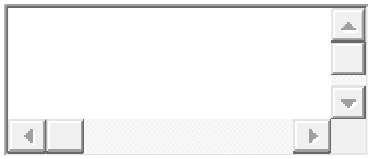
- Yes
- No

6. First and last name of the proposed additional member of the YUFE Knowledge Transfer Expert Network from or affiliated to your institution:

7. E-mail address:

8.Professional role:

9. In what year was your university TTO/KTO or their equivalents established?



10. How many FTE people are working in your TTO/KTO?

11. What is the FTE they can devote to the KT Network?

12. Is there a professional(s) at your institution responsible for developing and maintaining relationships with the innovation ecosystem and identification of the community needs that could be addressed by university researchers? If so, please provide their name(s) and contact information (e-mail address).

13. Do you have a link to an incubator and or/or accelerator where spin-outs/start-ups from the university can develop?

- Yes
- No

14. Please provide their name(s).

15. Are there additional experts that should in your view be involved in the YUFE Knowledge Transfer Expert Network? If so, please provide your view on their number and profile.

16. What kind of expertise and background should KT experts ideally have? Please rank the listed core competencies in the order of importance, where 1 is the most important and 7 the least important competency.

Legal, scientific and technical knowhow – understanding and managing the legal, contractual, and domain issues required to effectively exchange and transfer knowledge

Effective Engagement – marketing, promotion, brokering, communication, persuasion and influencing required to bring partners together

Entrepreneurial Leadership – leadership in building collaboration and partnerships and changing organisations through innovation

Strategic & Business Insight – strategic thinking; market-led, business acumen, and commercial skills

Knowledge Transformation and Management – administration of systems and processes to support the effective transfer or exchange of knowledge

Governance and Project Management – managing complex projects to transfer/ exchange knowledge and ensuring effective governance and compliance

Other

17. If you selected Other, please specify:

18. Which are the 3 most important KPIs that the KT expert network could use to measure the output of flipped KT (cf. https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC120716)?

- [ ] Number of invention disclosures
- [ ] Number of licences & assignments (referring to all types of intellectual property, e.g., patent filings, copyright and trademark registration)
- [ ] Gross revenue from licences & assignments
- [ ] Number of spin-offs
- [ ] Gross revenue from spin-off activities (sales products/service or equity sale)
- [ ] Number of research collaboration agreements & research contracts with non-academic partners
- [ ] Gross revenue from research collaboration agreements & research contracts with non-academic partners
- [ ] Number of consultancy agreements with non-academic partners
- [ ] Gross revenue from consultancy agreements with non-academic partners
- [ ] Training/mentoring activities
- [ ] Networking events
- [ ] Impact indicator: Products on market
- [ ] Impact indicator: Ecosystem support
- [ ] Impact indicator: Culture change in universities (e.g., % of researchers engaged in KT, % change in university funding for KT)
- [ ] Other

19. If you selected Other, please specify:

20. Which resources, tools and activities are necessary to facilitate the experts' work and performance in KT? (please select one or more)

- [ ] Workshops
- [ ] Surveillance and strategic intelligence platforms (i.e., digital tools that help collect and analyse information on business environment, technology demand and offer, industry and wider community actors, competitors, etc.))

- [ ] Specific methodologies to promote co-creation (for example, Design thinking)
- [ ] Dedicated budget to support KTO activities
- [ ] Expert team with heterogenous knowledge, skills and networks
- [ ] Other

21. If you selected Other, please specify:

Appendix B: Raw (Excel) file with survey responses (report section restricted to the consortium members)

Appendix C: A database (Excel) file containing contact information of experts (report section restricted to the consortium members)

Appendix D: the first version of the plan and programme of the YUFE Knowledge Transfer Expert Network meetings

Meeting no.	Time	Title	Topic(s)
PROJECT YEAR 1			
1	22 November 2021	YUFE Knowledge Transfer Expert Network launch & Deliverable review (online)	Presentation and review of the deliverable D3.2 of the Work Package: The YUFE Knowledge Transfer Expert Network. Presenter: Ani Gerbin, UNIRI Discussants: all experts will provide their feedback
2	**29 November 2021**	**1st annual conference (hybrid - virtual & Carlos III University of Madrid)**	**Site visit to Carlos III University of Madrid** **Welcome and introduction** **Session 1: Presentation of the Network** Presentations by the contact persons (KT Experts) at each partner institution on existing knowledge & technology transfer support systems, services & programmes, KTOs' business models and achievements (selected success stories); needs and expectations from the Network. **Template provided.** **Session 2: Innovation & knowledge transfer funding opportunities** Presentation of open and planned EU calls in which societal-business actors are involved throughout the knowledge co-creation process, as a support to the Network's work and activities. Presenters: Jolien Van den Dries, Innovation Funding Expert, EU and International, University of Antwerp; Ani Gerbin, UNIRI: Horizon Europe, Interreg Europe and other.

Meeting no.	Time	Title	Topic(s)
			Discussion & workshop about potential joint applications of the Network and next steps (detection of specific calls, project ideas based on needs assessment, necessary resources, task allocation, timelines, call for interest). Moderators: Saša Zelenika, Ani Gerbin, UNIRI, Barbara Tan, University of Antwerp
3	24 January 2022	Innovation & knowledge transfer funding opportunities (part 2)	Follow-up discussion & workshop about specific joint grant applications of the Network and next steps (refinement of project ideas based on needs assessment, work on concepts, necessary resources, task allocation, timelines). Exchange of best practices about other programmes and funding opportunities for flipped knowledge transfer at partner institutions (not necessarily international).
4	21 February 2022	Innovation & knowledge transfer funding opportunities (part 3)	Follow-up and meeting with a dedicated group on a joint grant application of the Network and next steps. Mutual learning and exchange of best practices and expertise on the main challenges with knowledge transfer activities. Exploration of opportunities for funding innovation & flipped knowledge transfer & ideas for new support programmes at partner institutions.
PROJECT YEAR 2 (TENTATIVE)			
5	March 2022	Towards the YUFE Flipped Knowledge Transfer Office	Brainstorming session on the purpose and the approach of the YUFE virtual Flipped Knowledge Transfer Office (FKTO) and reflection on the guiding principles for a *lean startup* of the FKTO (synergies with the Inno4YUFE project WP2 activities).
6	April 2022	Innovation & knowledge transfer funding opportunities (part 4) or Legal and regulatory aspects of flipped knowledge transfer – University of Rijeka (TBC)	Meeting with a dedicated group on a joint grant application of the Network. or Training for KT Experts on legal and regulatory barriers and enablers in introducing flipped knowledge transfer at partner institutions (e.g., establishment of university-industry joint research centres; students and knowledge transfer; licencing policies; start-ups and spin-offs; accelerators); discussion.

Meeting no.	Time	Title	Topic(s)
7	11 May 2022	Introducing the YUFE flipped knowledge transfer approach, potentially at YUFERING Annual progress meeting in Cyprus	Presentation to the Network of insights from gap analysis for YUFE universities that aim to achieve a transition to a flipped knowledge transfer approach (inclusion of societal-business actors) and resulting transformation strategy to implement the YUFE flipped knowledge transfer vision (Task 3.2 Sub WG) Discussion of Experts about the enablers and inhibitors of the transition process to a systematic flipped knowledge transfer approach at YUFE partner institutions; relationship with "traditional" technology transfer activities; social innovation and flipped knowledge transfer.
8	Mid June 2022	Towards the YUFE Flipped Knowledge Transfer Office	Discussion about how the Flipped KT network can be transformed into a structured YUFE Flipped KT Office – concept and strategy (synergies with Inno4YUFE WP2)
9	19-20 September 2022	**2nd annual conference & 2nd site visit**	**Site visit to the flipped knowledge transfer pilot case: University of Antwerp (BlueApp, the Beacon, Vaccinopolis).** Lecture by a local renowned expert on (flipped) knowledge transfer. Panel: Building a common YUFE profile and career development path of flipped knowledge transfer professionals (including ASTP and EARMA representatives).
10	October 2022	Common profile and career development path for knowledge transfer professionals	Workshop and discussion about a common interdisciplinary profile (skills, knowledge and experience requirements) and career development path for (flipped) knowledge transfer professionals, creating a thorough professional and powerful approach to interaction with citizens, governments, investors and companies. The skill set focuses on outside-in activities that will lead to team-based co-creation of knowledge to be put to use by citizens, policy makers and entrepreneurs. The KT Experts should form a two-way bridge between the YUFE research community on the one hand and society and business actors on the other, thus strengthening the human capital in R&I in all the involved communities. Discussion will also focus on investigating motivational mechanisms of particular stakeholders' groups to engage in knowledge transfer.

Meeting no.	Time	Title	Topic(s)
11	November 2022	Developing the flipped knowledge transfer skill set	Training for flipped KT Experts aimed to acquire specific (soft and other) skills identified as most important in their profession (e.g., leadership, strategic insight, influencing, screening/scouting, bridging/brokerage, building relationships with alumni and other stakeholders, negotiating, marketing).
12	February 2023	Using strategic intelligence tools & data management	Training for flipped KT Experts on using the strategic intelligence tools to screen, analyse and match the (external stakeholders') early demand for innovations with resources available at YUFE universities; training on associated data management.
PROJECT YEAR 3 (TENTATIVE)			
13	March 2023	Deliverable review	Reviewing the deliverable D3.3 of the Work Package: Profile of Knowledge Transfer Managers; discussion.
14	May 2023	Experts' training on flipped knowledge transfer	Workshop and discussion among KT Experts aimed to develop the online training programme for professionals on flipped knowledge transfer. The training will be focused on soft skills and co-creation fundamentals as well as on identifying societal-business interests that match R&I expertise in the innovation ecosystem of the university.
15	June 2023	Knowledge transfer impact assessment	Discussion about knowledge transfer metrics that should be used to assess the (flipped) knowledge transfer performance and impact of partner universities: from revenues to culture change.
16	July 2023	Deliverable review	Reviewing the deliverable D3.4 of the Work Package: Online training programme and methodology for soft skills and co-creation fundamentals.
17	**September 2023**	**3rd annual conference & site visit**	**Site visit to the flipped knowledge transfer pilot case: University of Essex.** Panel & workshop: How does YUFE act as a catalyst for flipped knowledge transfer and deployment in society? Lecture by a renowned expert on (flipped) knowledge transfer and social innovation & entrepreneurship; lecture on interdisciplinary approach to knowledge transfer, including social sciences and humanities.
18	October 2023	Peer assessment	Peer assessment of the flipped knowledge transfer pilots (1).
19	November 2023	Peer assessment	Peer assessment of the flipped knowledge transfer pilots (2).

Meeting no.	Time	Title	Topic(s)
20	January 2024	Peer assessment	Peer assessment of the flipped knowledge transfer pilots (3). Reviewing the deliverable D3.1 of the Work Package: YUFE vision and transformation strategy on flipped knowledge transfer.
21	February 2024	Final Network meeting within the YUFERING project	Wrap-up of Network activities and achievements, discussion about the Network (YUFE FKTO) sustainability plan.