EU CONEXUS
European University for Smart Urban Coastal Sustainability

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# Roadmap of the CONTI

D11.2

WP11: Transfer of Knowledge and Technologies

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# Introduction

Clearly addressing the need to support the establishment and scaling-up of start-ups and SMEs in Europe, WP 11 will develop a Contact Point for knowledge/technological transfer that will help raising awareness and support for how to bring research results into the market developing entrepreneurship skills of students and staff.

Within the framework of WP11, the transfer of knowledge and technology within Higher Education Institutions, but also between the Alliance and the economy with positive effects for society is a key aspect of the task. CONTI (Contact Point for Technology Transfer and Innovation) will function as a centralized construction. Eventually, it should be known as the “go-to” place when thinking about SmUCS related innovations within the regions of the Alliance.

Besides the annual Innovation Contest as part of the CONTI, it is important to identify already existing knowledge/technology transfer (KTT) activities from the EU-CONEXUS Alliance into the economy and public/private sectors. By doing so, there will be several activities that will be built upon each other and implement structures for institutions which will be elaborated in this paper. Some of them can enlarge their existing KTT and foster the exchange between the different sectors and others will be able to use the knowledge to implement or further develop new structures. CONTI will serve on three levels – for the Higher Education Institution, for the researchers/staff community and for the students and for society. One of the main objectives will be the bundling of suitable knowledge/technology transfer (KTT) measures and ideas. Further objectives will be depicted and matched with suitable actions throughout the paper. Most importantly, to reach the objectives, all actions will be planned and performed to reach the highest integration of all three groups to reach the most output. In sum of all the activities of CONTI, the Innovation Contest is embedded profiting from the knowledge transfer, tools and services offered.

Overall, all the activities within CONTI not only aim to reinforce the innovative strength of the EU-CONEXUS community, but also support the establishment and up-scaling of start-ups and SMEs in Europe.

The partners of the Alliance are La Rochelle Université, Agricultural University of Athens, Catholic University of Valencia, Klaipeda University, University of Zadar, Technical University of Civil Engineering Bucharest, South East Technological University, University of Rostock and Frederick University.

# CONTI – Contact point for Technology Transfer and Innovation

Definition:

CONTI will be an active support system for the partner universities of the Alliance, for researchers and students alike. Besides increasing the knowledge and technology transfer within the institutions, the main goal is to create and intensify the KTT towards the public and the private sector, especially to support start-ups and SMEs.

The overall aim is to create and establish CONTI as the “go-to” place to get informed about new technologies and innovation in the field of Smart Urban Coastal Sustainability, possibly to find new collaborations and extend own ideas beyond borders.

Following different activities for the various groups of the partner universities, researcher and students, the aim is to constantly build up and strengthen ties between the universities and the (local) start-up community. Within the actions of CONTI, knowledge and technology transfer will work two-way. By supporting and in cooperation with start-ups, innovative ideas will be transferred back into the universities. With this cycle and the network of the EU-CONEXUS Alliance, not only technology transfer will be fostered but also the exchange between science and practical experience.

Since one of the main aims of CONTI will be the support of KTT activities and identifying structures and offices of the partner universities, RFS-WP5 and its Innovation Management Strategy (including the Innovation Hub) will be a great source of already existing innovative projects and products, possible collaborations and contacts.

# Objectives

CONTI understands itself as a service provider and connector. Actions and activities will be distributed to the entire EU-CONEXUS community and beyond. This includes students, researchers and staff, the partner universities in general. But first and foremost, there is the focus on businesses in the public and the private sector and

external partners. When thinking of technology and innovation in a SmUCS related field, they should think of CONTI as the “go-to” place.

**Objectives**:

- Bundle suitable KTT measures and ideas
- Expanding KTT measures beyond the EU-CONEXUS Alliance
- Offering innovation opportunities to the EU-CONEXUS Alliance

In order to make KTT structures visible and approachable for external partners and entities, internal KTT structures have to be clear. Depending on the structural development in the field of knowledge/technology transfer, innovation and entrepreneurship of each partner university, each institution can decide in which structural support they engage. All actions are open to each group or institution with the aim to extend transfer measures beyond the institution. The aim is, by displaying existing structures, offering support and possible cooperation, providing various workshop and coaching options and finding ways for start-ups to use the network of this European Alliance to foster interconnections between the different units within each institution and between the partner universities including their various units and members. There will also be a focus on start-ups, since quite a number are founded with strong ties to universities; often their founders are still enrolled as students or are accompanies by professors or researchers.

**Actions:**

- Identify KTT structures and existing services within the EU-CONXEUS Alliance
    - Identifying missing structures
    - Identify policies of KTT
    - Availability of contact information of respective offices / responsible people
- Bundle existing services of KTT offices and support exchange of KTT offices
- Foster the access of KTT offices / activities and the economic and public/private sector beyond the regional area
- Offering a wide range of workshops and coaching for students and researchers in the various field of entrepreneurship
- Intensifying the support when founding a start-up
- Open possibilities for start-ups to extend their ideas within the EU-CONEXUS Alliance
- Annual innovation contest
    - Promoting winners of the innovation contest within the EU-CONEXUS network

- Strengthening ties between academic institutions and start-up community through the innovation contest

## Implementation of CONTI

The development of the roadmap to establish CONTI requires to deal with various aspects and groups within and outside the Alliance. Therefore, it is important to balance different goals and actions to reach the overall aim of a more connected and supportive environment for all participating reference groups.

These various groups communicate diverse requirements, ranging from a basic introduction workshop of entrepreneurship to an environment to promote exchange of concepts and foster collaborations to transfer these ideas into start-ups and businesses. So, to accomplish the set goals, there is an order of activities which not necessarily needs to be followed by any person or institutions. It depends on the state of development and needs of each participant. Nevertheless, in the following the various actions and activities will be specified. Subsequently, a timeline will depict the course of action. With reference to the innovation contest, there will be an additional timeline.

1. **Identify KTT structures and existing services within the EU-CONXEUS Alliance**
   In order to be able to support the partner universities and their respective members, it is indispensable to understand which structures or offices of KTT exist. Therefore, in the beginning, there will be a request sent to the partner universities to communicate their existing structures. Here, WP11 will also get into contact with RFS-WP5 to use already existing contacts and the Innovation Hub. The information will be edited and listed, so that the partners get an overview which possible contacts and offices exist. This will make it easier and more convenient to contact respective people, understand the work basis and use the given information to either further develop, improve or create own structures. By identifying which structures and services exist, it should be detected which constructs are missing. Additionally, it is important to find out which policies referring to KTT are carried out by various partner institutions. Before extending the already existing knowledge/technology transfer, contacts and existing structures will be made available within the Alliance. It is important to foster the exchange, but also to raise awareness how essential KTT is.

2. **Bundle existing services of KTT offices and support exchange of KTT offices**

   After identifying KTT structures, procedures should be bundled in order to strengthen the knowledge/technology transfer outcome for the EU-CONEXUS Alliance. CONTI, here, could be seen as a transnational “office”. But also, to be able to bundle services and procedures, it is important to foster the exchange within the KTT offices/structures within the Alliance.

   Therefore, in the future, one could think of various offerings. Virtual meetings can be initiated, beginning with general exchange of information and continuing to have virtual meetings with specific questions or a focus on different fields. This can either help to understand which projects etc. are of interest for the EU-CONEXUS Alliance (general exchange of information) and/or it will increase the development of knowledge/technology transfer (in specific fields) of various partners. Since all universities engage in knowledge/technology transfer to some extent, it is important to figure out in which areas support is needed and to set up contacts. Information can be made available which may help to speed up a process, explain in which structures to engage and what to avoid. This speaks also to the responsible people in the KTT offices or the contact persons and not only to the members of the work package. These meetings can be held on a regular basis or on demand. In order to establish contacts, in the beginning, more frequent meetings like once a month are possible. After a certain period of time, meeting every 2-3 months might be more suitable.

   By communicating projects, (here, it will also be of interest to be in constant exchange with the Innovation Hub and its listed projects) either in virtual meetings or on a possible listing on the website, contacts can be generated. By listing projects on the website, a short description and which competences may be needed to push the project further should be made available. Herewith, some kind of information and matching platform (explained in bullet point 3) can be created, rather than a showcase webpage as for the Innovation Hub. The goal is also for people (students/researchers) within the EU-CONEXUS Alliance to understand CONTI as a “go-to” tool when it comes to innovation.

3. **Intensifying the knowledge/technology transfer into economy and society and establishing CONTI as the “go-to” place**

   Researchers in the EU-CONEXUS Alliance network and the respective fields will have the possibility to get an overview which projects deal with SmUCS related topics. Depending on the project phase and the needs, CONTI can work 2-ways. CONTI linked to coordinating persons can help to enable contacts to colleagues by either functioning as facilitator. CONTI seen as

virtual tool (webpage, matching platform) is the supporter of the actions that involve personal contact and exchange. Besides functioning as an information point referring to innovations within the network of the Alliance and its partners, a matching platform is conceivable. Projects, innovations and products could be listed with references which competences etc. are needed to push the project further. It is not just a showcase of results but a working platform bringing together ideas, skills and competences.
Here again, the communication between responsible people within the institutions and the coordinator of CONTI is essential; also, to locate possible co-working space for analog meetings, but also to initiate virtual meetings, if the support is needed.
With the information about theses spaces close to the partner institutions, contacts within and between the universities can get together in a different environment and use these facilities to create new innovative ideas and get into contact with start-ups and their innovative ideas.
Since the exchange of innovations and the collaboration on prospective projects is not limited to the partner universities, it is an urgent matter to involve partner outside the Higher Education Institutions and promote a close contact to the economy and business (partners). Since most of the partners in the EU-CONEXUS Alliance hold close connections to regional partners in the economic and public/private sector, the idea is to intensify these connections by stronger focus on the EU-CONEXUS relevant topics and purposely search for partners in this field. CONTI, again, would function as facilitator. On the one hand, the list of contacts to KTT offices and responsible people will be available on the website. By promoting the establishment or further development of structures supporting start-ups and entrepreneurship, the mutual transfer of knowledge/technology transfer will immediately set in. One tool to create ties to these sectors could be the annual innovation contest which will be explained in detail later on. Nevertheless, this contest of ideas can be seen as a starting point to work with prospective start-ups and start collaborations if there are no or limited structures in particular institutions, yet.
Support to build up contact and assist future start-ups/businesses, CONTI and the University of Rostock with its Center of Entrepreneurship will be of help in those matters. It will not only be important to assist future start-ups in the very beginning (from creating an idea to eventually found a business), but also to foster ideas in SmUCS related fields. With various actions and activities, the exchange of experience of businesses in these fields and to allow insights will create a better understanding of the needs on both sides – the start-up and the problem it is trying to solve with its idea/product. Also, for partner universities with respective structures, the further development should be sharing of results and outcome within the Alliance. This leads to the

following objective which includes a deeper dialogue how to support start-ups on the one hand and use the innovation beyond regional borders on the other hand.

4. **Intensifying start-up founding support and possibilities to extend start-up innovations within the EU-CONEXUS Alliance**

   In order to be able to make use of the innovations start-ups create, it is necessary to know which start-up or respective spin-offs are founded. Having an established structure within the institution would give a better insight. But even if there are limitations, the EU-CONEXUS Alliance can fill the gap to a certain extent. Since several partners can rely on structures and offices supporting start-ups, CONTI will make this knowledge available, as mentioned before. The advantage for start-ups in the different regions will be diverse. In the following bullet point, possible offering will be explained. The idea is to offer start-ups/spin-offs and businesses a general guideline on "how to found a start-up". This guide should work beyond regional borders. For specific topics, e.g., legal and tax issues as well as finances, CONTI, and respectively in close communication with the Center of Entrepreneurship (UROS) and other KTT offices, will make that information available for the respective countries – to at least give an overview or to communicate contacts. So, in order to function as the "go-to" place, CONTI needs to do some work at the basis – transfer knowledge into future start-ups and businesses, to receive that input back for the established start-ups. Then, CONTI can function as the place to get all relevant information about innovations that happen in the regions of the Alliance.

   Another goal CONTI aims for is the extension of the start-ups beyond the regional borders. Not every idea will meet global standards and can be transferred to another country. But especially with the innovation contest, the goal is to identify projects that could be established in the regions of the partner universities and might meet the challenges of the partners in the economic or public/private sector as well.

5. **Offering a wide range of workshops and coaching for students and researchers in the various field of entrepreneurship**

   Although the overall aim is to establish CONTI as "go-to" place to get informed about the latest innovations, understand knowledge/technology transfer structures and benefit from contacts and possible collaboration – you need to enable people to create ideas and knowledge to eventually transfer that.

   Therefore, how do you know what ideas students and researcher have that could possibly lead to a project and eventually to the founding of a start-up or business? As mentioned before, having the structure of a support system

and/or an office dealing with entrepreneurship will be an advantage. With the help of CONTI such a support system should be established. Not only developed structures or offices will practically help people. In order to get insight in what ideas and projects are created and developed, low-threshold work is needed. Therefore, CONTI, in cooperation with all partner institutions, will generate a list of various workshops and coachings, students and researchers/professors alike can take part in. The offer will range from “how to write a business plan” to “how to pitch my idea”. The following list is exemplary and not complete. The list will be published on the webpage. Depending on the offer, some of the courses will take part during the semester and will be opened (by respective partner institutions) to interested participants. Other workshops will be held on specific dates as indicated.
Possible topics for the workshops:

- Business model canvas
- The Persona
- Social Entrepreneurship
- Prototypes
- How to pitch your idea
- How to write a business plan

All further information will be available on the website.
Eventually, by offering these workshops, the EU-CONEXUS Alliance has the possibilities to see at an early stage which ideas are in the making. Therefore, it is expected by the partner universities to promote these offers in their newsletters, on their webpage and through social media. The workshops and coachings are supposed to be free of charge for the participants. This also means, that in some case the offer is limited in capacity and only available at specific times when connected to curricular offers.

## 6. Annual innovation contest

One of the central tasks of CONTI is the annual innovation contest “Contest of Ideas”.
The innovation contest will be held once a year and is open to students (Master and PhD students) and researchers (professors, researchers, staff) of the partner universities of the EU-CONEXUS Alliance. The innovation contest is described in detail in the “Call for Innovations”.

Most of the activities have a starting point, but not a definite end point. By establishing the structures and distributing information, one cannot finalize dates. Most of the actions described rely on a constant support and assistance. Consequently, there are hardly any fixed dates after the January/February 2024. Besides for the application process of the innovation contest, dates for the proposed virtual meeting or additional information sessions will be published on the webpage. Additionally, it is expected that these dates will be communicated by the partner universities.

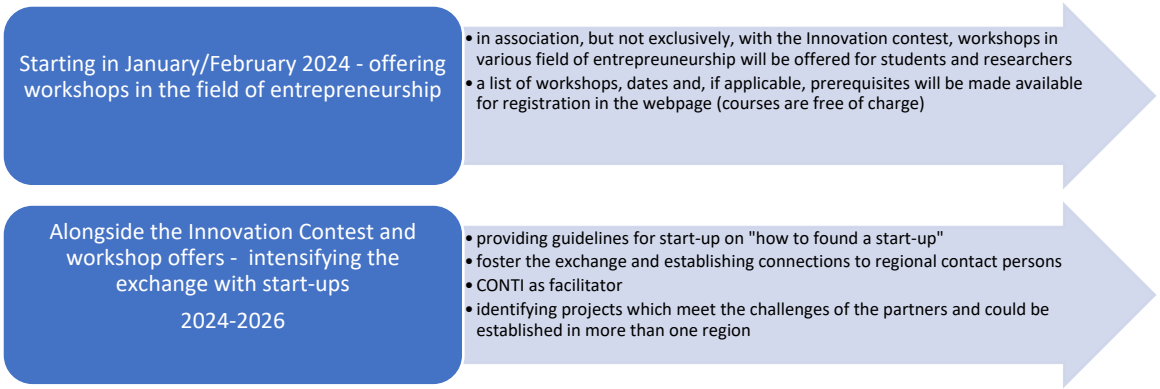
Since CONTI should be seen as a facilitator, much of its work lies in identifying structures, bundle measures and activities, in the support, networking, establishing contacts and creating an environment in which the different reference groups can meet. Therefore, various methods were introduced. Depending on the development, certain activities might be adapted and more suitable for the demands of the target groups. Especially, the support of start-ups in the founding phase, but also in the beginning of establishing the business to eventually receive knowledge transfer, cannot be provided by all partners. Here, CONTI will try to fill the gap by functioning as a contact as well as helping to implement or improve structures if wanted by the respective partners. Helpful to understand how established structures/offices in that field work, staff exchange would be a recommended instrument. Since WP11 does not have any budget to finance these exchanges, ERASMUS+ might be an option.

By making structures visible and easier to grasp beyond the own institution, the overall aim – to enable people from outside the university structures to recognize CONTI as the “place to go” when talking about innovations – will be reached. To get there, CONTI cannot simply display and showcase products and outcomes of projects. It has to work on different levels, from researching to empowering start-up to reach its various goals.

CONTI will not be an instrument to press structures or tools onto the partners in order to promote transfer. It understands itself as supporter.

# Schedule of general activities

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| Until February 2024<br>identifying structures/offices/responsible people | • identifying structures/offices/responsible people of knowledge/technology transfer and innovation and availability to the EU-Conexus alliance |
| March 2024<br>edit contact information<br>bundle measures & services | • edit contact information and make it available to the partner insitutions<br>• constantly (also beyond March 2024) check Innovation Hub to find suitable exchange possibilities |
| March/April 2024<br>if possible: creating a "matching platform - search/offer" | • creating a "matching platform - search/offer" to make it easier to get information about interesting projects<br>• to place search or offer requests |
| in the future<br>- foster exchange and stimulate cooperation | • to foster exchange and stimulate cooperation - promoting the "matching platform"<br>• starting to offer virtual meetings on specific topics, varying from exchange of general information, e.g. structures of offices, to more specific questions or focus on different fields |
| Promoting 1st annual innovation contest 2023/2024 | • start promoting 1st annual innovation contest 2023/2024 in September- December 2023<br>• more detailed outline of innovation contest in a seperate roadmap |
| Annual innovation contest-<br>yearly adaption of the application process | • follow up innovation contest for the following years are planned to be held in November of each year<br>• the (application) process will be adapted accordingly to the new dates |
| Starting in January 2024 - foster transfer between HEI & economy/society | • one tool will be the Innovation Contest<br>• furthermore, the promotion of established structures within CONTI are meant to help the exchange |




## Schedule of the Innovation Contest




This timeline shows exemplary the (application) process of the innovation contest. Adaptions to the application process, if needed, will be made and published on the webpage. The partners will communicate, distribute the information and promote the innovation contest respectively of their communication channels.
In the following, three more Innovation Contests were executed. Adaptions had to be made for the second contest, since the requirement “2 team members have to be from two different partner universities” turned out to be a reason for people / teams

not to apply, even with the offer to match team members within the partner universities. After this requirement was dropped, many teams applied within a short period of time. It also has to be said, that most teams were international and, in some cases, also had team members from different EU-Conexus partner universities. The third Innovation Contest focused on Bachelor Students only. Since the other three Innovation Contests focused on Master Students (category students) and academic and non-academic staff (category researchers), there was a need to offer a contest soley for Bachelor students. The final (4th) Innovation Contest included both categories (students / researchers) again.

Revised time schedule of activities February 2025 until the end of the project October 2026.

| Details | Feb.25 | March 25 | April 25 | May 25 | June 25 | July 25 | Augus t 25 | Sept 25 | Oct 25 | Nov 25 | Dec 25 | Jan 26 | Feb 26 | March 26 | April 26 | May26 | June 26 | July 26 | Augus t26 | Sept2 6 | Oct 26 |
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| **Task 11.1 Contact Point for Technology Transfer and Innovation** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Promoting job shadowing | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Online exchange session for specific topics | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Workshop offers related to IC | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Transfer Strategy | | draft | | Draft dis-cussion with WP11 | Draft revision | Draft revision | | launch | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Support for Start-ups | | Develo ping ideas | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Deepen collaboration and foster exchange with KTT offices | | | Strate gic ideas | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Dissemination of various blueprints, e.g. « How to write a business plan » | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Task 11.2 Organisation of the annual innovation contests** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Launch, dissemination and promotion of Innovation Contest | IC 2025 | IC 2025 | | | | | | | | | | IC 2026 | IC 2026 | | | | | | | | |
| Matching and registration phase (no restrictive deadline) | | IC 2025 | IC 2025 | | | | | | | | | | IC 2026 | IC 2026 | | | | | | | |
| Workshops (not mandatory) | | | | | IC 2025 | IC 2025 | | | IC 2025 | IC 2025 | | | | | | IC 2026 | IC 2026 | | | IC 2026 | IC 2026 |
| Application deadline and final pitch event | | | | | | | | | IC 2025 | IC 2025 | | | | | | | | | | IC 2026 | IC 2026 |

Specific documents are created which include the expertise of various partner universities on the one hand and may function as a blueprint for other partner universities.
With regards to online sessions / workshops; the workshops offered to the participants for the Innovation Contest are / were open to all members of the partner universities. Additionally, specific thematic workshops were held open to academic and non-academic staff. CONTI workshops were also held in other formats within EU-Conexus - the ENABLES and IAMSTUDENZ programmes.

## Limitations

As mentioned before, CONTI understands itself as a facilitator and a supporter and should eventually be known as the “go-to” place when thinking of innovations.

Knowing that some partners have good structures to support knowledge and technology transfer, also with reference to start-ups. Some of the partners might want to improve these structures, esp. in the field of entrepreneurship. Among the partners, there is a potential of knowledge that could be shared and exchanged to eventually transfer this into society to reach a better outcome, being more visible and transfer back which challenges need to be tackled to start the cycle all over again.

The challenge will be to make the exchange as easy and simple as possible. None of the partners have an extra budget to engage in this exchange. CONTI relies on the partners to spread information and their wish to improve or implement new structures. Therefore, all measures and actions must be created in a way which causes the partners the least effort to engage and getting the most out of this. This refers also to the students and researchers. Certain workshop offers need to be low-threshold to attract and to make people aware that certain offers are available. Generally, it takes time until such propositions catch the interest of the specific target groups. Good promotion will be a key factor. Nonetheless, it is difficult to anticipate how the reactions will be. If structures in promoting entrepreneurship are already implemented, will those partners be eager to support or promote a more global / European perspective? For those partners lacking these structures, is there enough manpower to actively engage in the exchange? Although one can rely on a certain commitment of the partners, still, those questions cannot be answered in the beginning of the work phase.

Additionally, besides the different reference groups, rules and policies referring to KTT within the institutions of the Alliance need to be considered as well.

For students and researchers planning on founding a start-up, will they be aware of the workshop offers and the innovation contest or will the requirements and conditions hinder them from taking part?

WP11 and CONTI will support in any possible way, but also implementing new structures take some time. Also, this applies to create stronger ties between the partner universities and the economic and public/private sectors in their respective regions. Although there are examples of partner intuitions, one cannot simply impose those on others.

There are a few challenges and obstacles in the tasks 11.1 and 11.2. Still, creating an environment to exchange information and ideas and support this with different actions will be the key idea of CONTI.

Additional remarks referring to the revision from February 2026 – exchange is important but not always measurable and immediately visible. The idea, CONTI functions as supporter and facilitator worked and will work on a personal level; e.g. connect people from different partner universities working in the same field / on the same challenges. On this level, CONTI also connected winners and participants of the various Innovation Contests with contacts within the partner universities respective to their needs.

## Contact

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