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Project internal cover page

To be filled in by task leader in collaboration with local coordinator at task leading partner university and WP leader

D 6.3 ENGAGE.EU R&I Platform for Collective Action

Project Acronym:	ENGAGE.EU – R&I
Project full title:	Building Engaged Research and Innovation Ecosystems
Project No:	101035807
Funding Scheme:	Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme
Coordinator:	UMA – University of Mannheim
Project start date:	01.10.2021
Project duration:	36 months
Title of Document:	ENGAGE.EU R&I Platform for Collective Action
Work package name:	ENGAGE.EU R&I Dissemination and Communication
Task name:	Set up the ENGAGE.EU R&I Platform for Collective Action
Task team:	<i>Christian Fernando Iaione, Filippo Bontadini, Salvatore Maria Pisacane, Adriano Contardi.</i>
Executive Summary	<p>This document outlines the features of the release 1.0 of the Co-Science platform (https://commoning.science/) which is the platform set forth in Task 6.2; it's a functioning platform which has various features designed to grant the interaction between different communities, co-design activities, gain knowledge, learning experiences and materials using emerging technologies that allow for decentralization, security, and certainty even if users do not know each other.</p> <p>The Co-Science platform has three areas that address three distinct, albeit overlapping, audiences. The first area, "Virtual Spaces", is geared towards students, providing them with a space to identify and discuss sustainability challenges and further develop these ideas into projects.</p>



	<p>The second area, “Collaborative R&I”, focuses on researchers, providing them with a useful tool to identify funding opportunities and put together collaborative bids or publications.</p> <p>Finally, “Open Urbania”, the third area, expands the platform’s audience going beyond the Universities’ walls setting up a platform where Universities from across the Alliance can engage with organizations and external stakeholders within their local inno-preneurial ecosystems to cooperate on and/or showcase their mission-oriented innovation (MOIN) projects (see also deliverable D3.1 and Task 3.2 of ENGAGE.EU R-I), finding clients and or partners. In this document we present the main features of the new platform, which is now a functioning prototype, focusing on the three areas above. We also discuss how the platform builds on and sets itself apart from previous work carried out within ENGAGE.EU.</p> <p>In the future we are going to release updated versions of the platform, with the implementation of new features.</p>
<p>Implications</p>	<p><i>Implications in the field of:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Innovation studies</i> • <i>Legal/institutional</i>
<p>Communication</p>	<p><i>Please insert any outcome/result/message resulting from the work that could / should be taken up by the communication team for marketing purposes (internal/external)</i></p>
<p>Executive Committee: (Not to be filled in by task team)</p>	<p><i>Comments / Additions:</i></p> <p><i>Read and signed</i></p>



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Cover page to be submitted to EACEA

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Task name:	Set up the ENGAGE.EU R&I Platform for Collective Action
Abstract	This document details the features of the release 1.0 of Co-Science, the digital platform created through Task 6.2 ENGAGE.EU R&I

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ENGAGE.EU R&I Platform for Collective Action

Work Package 6: Dissemination and Communication





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1. Introduction

Task 6.2's objective is to expand existing ENGAGE.EU dissemination activities, mainly ENGAGE.EU website, to integrate new activities in research and innovation (R&I) identified in the ENGAGE.EU R&I Dissemination and Communication Plan by making a digital interactive platform.

This platform is a prime tool for universities across the alliance to engage with external stakeholders, taking innovative and inno-preneurial activities outside of the university walls to achieve impact and outreach to the wider society. Specifically, the platform allows stakeholders – ranging from students, to researchers, companies, and civil society more at large – to interact and gain knowledge from each other through co-design activities.

In line with the task description in the project proposal the platform has been linked to the ENGAGE.EU website. As we outline in this document, the platform is structured to enable students to discuss and develop ideas to tackle societal challenges (Virtual Spaces), make these ideas more scientifically robust and apply for funding opportunities (Collaborative R&I) and, finally, to reach outside the university's walls to test the funded ideas and engage with actors present in Universities' local inno-preneurial ecosystems (Open Urbania).

This document describes the features of the release 1.0 of the Co-Science platform (<https://commoning.science/>) which is the platform set forth in Task 6.2; it is a functioning platform with various features designed to enable three areas addressing three distinct, albeit interrelated, audiences.

The first area is geared towards students, providing them with a space to identify and discuss sustainability challenges and further develop these ideas into projects. The second area focuses on researchers, providing them with a useful tool to identify funding opportunities and put together collaborative bids or publications. Finally, the third area expands the platform's audience going beyond the universities' walls setting up a platform where universities from across the Alliance can engage with organizations and external stakeholders within their local inno-preneurial ecosystems to cooperate on and/or showcase their mission-oriented innovation (MOIN) projects (see also deliverable D3.1 and Task 3.2 of ENGAGE.EU R&I), finding clients and/or partners. Users from across these audiences can easily register on the platform based on their needs and interests.

In this document we present the main features of the new platform, which is now a functioning prototype, focusing on the three areas above. Before delving into this, we discuss how the platform builds on and sets itself apart from previous work carried out within ENGAGE.EU.

The concluding section sets out future developments to be released in updated versions of the platform, with the implementation of new features.



2. State of the art and relationship with other existing platforms

The Co-Science platform builds on and is complementary to other digital platforms developed within ENGAGE.EU. It expands the work carried out under Task 4.5 in ENGAGE.EU Erasmus+ project, that created “Virtual Spaces”, dedicated to education and challenge-based, mission driven innovation. These have been streamlined and have become an area of the new platform developed under Task 6.2 that is aimed at students, mentors, and external stakeholders for the identification of sustainability challenges, discussion, and generation of ideas.

The Co-Science platform is also synergetic with the ENGAGE.EU Research Community platform, and the ENGAGE.EU Publication platform developed under ENGAGE.EU.

To illustrate this, it is important to note that these two platforms are crucial tools focusing on the “supply-side” of research. The Research Community platform provides researchers that have a research idea or project to identify other colleagues across the alliance sharing the same research interest, spurring new collaboration, and enhancing the supply of new scientific activity. The Publication platform is a very useful tool for researchers to investigate the extant literature and the latest scientific activities of colleagues across the Alliance, looking again at what topics have drawn attention in terms of scientific production (or supply, in our metaphor).

The Co-Science platform takes a complementary approach, by looking at the demand for research activity. It does so in a few key ways. First, the streamlined Virtual Spaces allow students to create new projects starting from sustainability and societal challenges, i.e. from a pre-existing need for research and scientific activity. Second, the Collaborative R&I area of the platform acts as a “financial aggregator” using an online web-scraper to search through several funders’ websites to retrieve funding opportunities that researchers will conveniently find in a single place. Compared to the Research Community platform it is worth stressing that in this case researchers do not need to have a sketched-out project in mind. They can easily use the web-scraper based on their broad research field and expertise, identify relevant funding opportunities. Once such funding opportunities have been identified, researchers can find colleagues to write new bids on specific projects through the Research Community platform.

Finally, it is worth highlighting that the Co-Science platform sets itself apart from other platforms developed within the Alliance in terms of its reference audience. In fact, while the Co-Science platform is a useful tool for researchers, especially through the financial aggregator, it is also aimed at students and Universities’ external stakeholders through the Virtual Spaces and Open Urbania, its third area.

As we detail below, Open Urbania looks at sustainability actors beyond the university’s walls in the local inno-preneurial ecosystems, providing them with an opportunity to showcase their activity and find new partners. In doing so, the Co-Science platform represents a significant advancement in the project’s ability to disseminate and communicate research activities within the ENGAGE.EU Alliance, making the Co-Science platform a new and invaluable tool for outreach, dissemination and impact, in line with WP 6’s objectives.



Furthermore, according to “Key Impact Pathways” established by Horizon Europe, our purpose is to implement and put the Co-Science platform as the base of other new projects, in the same way we’re doing at national and local level, and of new possible proposals for Horizon Europe.

3. Presentation of digital platform

As mentioned above, the Co-Science platform streamlines the Virtual Spaces integrating them into a brand-new platform which now through two new areas provides the possibility for a large set of stakeholders (young entrepreneurs, SMEs, local administrations, local NGOs) to access, co-design and co-produce R&I projects. These two additional environments on the Co-Science platform are:

- Collaborative R&I
- Open Urbania



Choose a Tool

The figure displays three tool cards arranged horizontally. Each card has a header image, a title, and a descriptive paragraph. The first card, 'Virtual Spaces', features a Venn diagram with three overlapping circles in blue, purple, and orange. The second card, 'Collaborative R&I', has an orange background with the text 'CO^Y SCIENCE' and '2 + 2 = 5'. The third card, 'Open Urbania', has a dark blue background with a stylized orange and yellow logo.

Tool Name	Description	Funding Source
Virtual Spaces	Education to challenge-based and mission driven innovation. Used by students, mentors, external stakeholders. Powered by Erasmus+ Engage.EU task 4.5	Erasmus+ Engage.EU task 4.5
Collaborative R&I	Open research publishing for cross-sectoral science. Selected journals working on joint issues. Dissemination of projects results and research outputs. Calls for papers pooled among researchers. Powered by H2020 Engage.EU R&I task 6.2.	H2020 Engage.EU R&I task 6.2.
Open Urbania	Open Urbania enables the connection between the Engage.eu alliance and new partners through multi-stakeholder engagement in sustainable innovation, co-governance, and value-sharing. It is a context-specific tool for city science fostering neighborhood-based entrepreneurship. Powered by H2020 Engage.EU R&I task 6.2.	H2020 Engage.EU R&I task 6.2.

Figure n. 1 – Homepage of the Co-Science Platform



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4. Presentation of “Collaborative R&I”

The Collaborative R&I is geared towards researchers, for scientific insights and the financing of research projects.

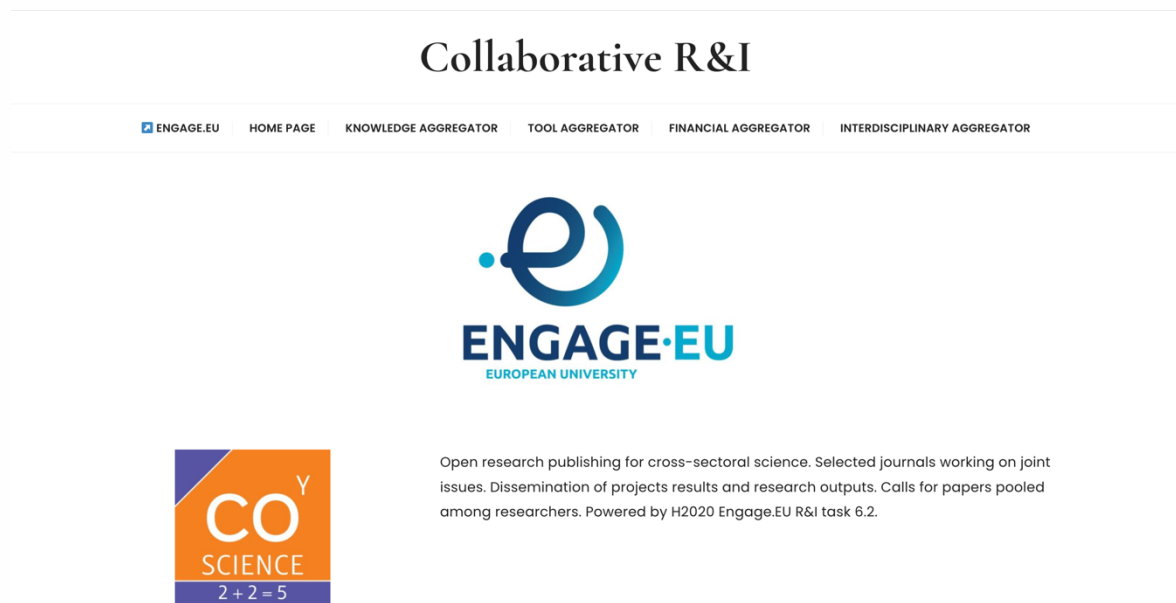


Figure n. 2 – Homepage of “Collaborative R&I”

Collaborative R&I sets out to provide researchers from across the alliance with a useful tool to identify partnerships, funding, and research opportunities. The platform hosts an aggregator software that scrapes websites where funding opportunities are posted by national research councils, foundations, and other organizations. A key aspect for the aggregator to work properly is to have an initial list of websites that the software can scrape to retrieve the relevant information. Requests have already been sent to the Alliance’s universities to provide lists of relevant websites from their countries. This will be the web-scrafer’s core list and will of course be updated should partner universities identify new relevant websites.

In this way, researchers can sift through funding opportunities based on their broad expertise and field of interest. Once these have been identified they can reach out to colleagues from across the ENGAGE·EU Alliance to put together collaborative bids.

Beyond this financial aggregator, there is another functioning tool, the interdisciplinary aggregator, which is very useful to connect and integrate knowledge and researchers from different disciplines also to launch joint calls for papers and publications.

The platform also aims at developing two other areas:

- the knowledge aggregator, to centralize and make easily accessible data, information and research results from open sources and scientific collaborations;
- the research tools aggregator, especially useful for young researchers engaged in in-depth investigations because it should enable the collection, organization and analysis of data from a variety of sources, providing a complete and detailed view of the phenomenon studied.



5. Presentation of “Open Urbania”

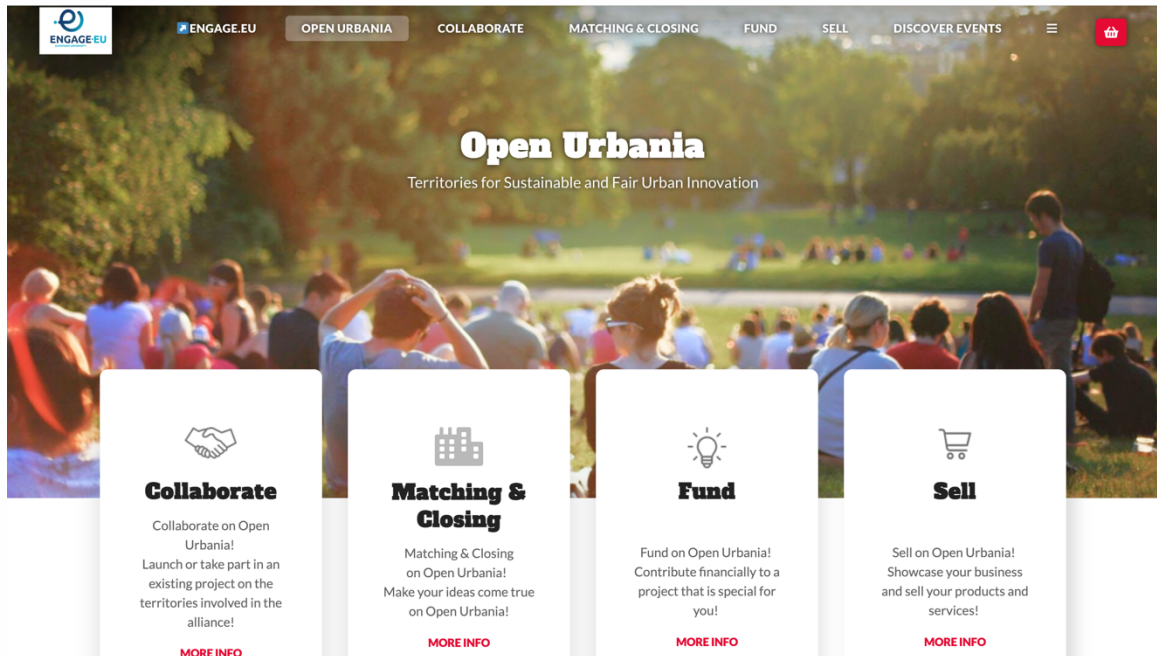


Figure n. 3 – Homepage of “Open Urbania”

Open Urbania (for which we report a screenshot Figure 3) is the third area of the Co-Science Platform. It is a new digital environment connecting the Engage.EU Alliance and new partners of the local inno-preneurial ecosystems through multi-stakeholder engagement in sustainable innovation, co-governance and value-sharing.

Designed by students within the X-Labs, an open & collaborative innovation course hosted in “Virtual Spaces” aimed at developing innovative system-oriented solutions in response to thematic challenges set by the partners, Open Urbania aims at offering an array of opportunities to the broader local inno-preneurial ecosystems communities both within and beyond the university’s walls:

- “Collaborate”, to launch or take part in existing project on the territories involved in the alliance;
- “Matching & Closing”, to facilitate the implementation of start-ups, NGOs, energy communities;
- “Fund”, to contribute financially to initiatives launched by other users, through crowdfunding and other types of fundraising;
- “Sell”, to allow products realised through the previous sections of the platform to be marketed.

The Sell feature is already functioning, allowing businesses and organisations to promote their activity on the platform. It allows users, such as organizations, citizens and external stakeholders within Alliance’s local inno-preneurial ecosystems, to log in to promote and commercialize services related to projects and initiatives, generated in the “Virtual Spaces” area by students and developed through activities of use-inspired basic research and/or research and innovation in “Collaborative R&I” area. It’s a tool thanks to which it could be possible to expand the platform’s audience going beyond the Universities’ walls.



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6. Schedule of Activities

Activities 2023	March 2023	July 2023	August 2023	September 2023	October 2023	November 2023	December 2023
Co-Design Meeting							
Technological implementation "Sell" Area - Open Urbania							
Constant work with Task Members							
Co-Science connection with Engage.EU platform							
Technology Implementation Area "Financial Aggregator" - Collaborative R&I							

Activities 2024	January 2024	February 2024	March 2024	April 2024	May 2024	June 2024	July 2024	August 2024	September 2024
Technology Implementation Area "Financial Aggregator" - Collaborative R&I									
Co-Design to the Alliance Members									
Platform redesign according to the co-design directions									
Platform prototype delivery									
Testing of the new prototype									
Final delivery of the new prototype									



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The task has had its kick-off meeting in January 2023, in March 2023 a co-design meeting took place with members of Task 6.2, which offered a series of valuable pointers to design the digital platform. In particular, from April 2023 to early January 2024, both the “Open Urbania” and “Collaborative R&I” Areas have seen significant improvement in their functioning and content. Thanks to the support of our technological partners, it was possible to set up the financial aggregator, an interdisciplinary aggregator and a “Sell” area.

During the Spring and the Fall 2023 there has been a constant updating with the Task Members of WP6. A formal connection between “Co-Science” and the main ENGAGE.EU platform was established in November 2023.

On January 18th, 2024, there was another co-design meeting, during which additional feedbacks were offered about new platform tools such as the webscraper. These indications have been taken on board to deliver the Platform prototype deliverable by the beginning of February 2024.

In the coming months there will be a phase of testing and further implementation of the platform features before the end of the ENGAGE.EU R&I project. We'll release a 1.5 version of the Co-Science platform.

7. Co-Science and the inno-preneurship pathway

The three areas of the platform Co-Science are closely linked because they perform coordinated functions and replicate in a digital environment the inno-preneurship pathway, described in the Deliverable “Inno-preneurship Methodology for Inno-preneurial Spaces” made within the Tasks 4.5/4.6 of WP 4 “Engaged in society” (ENGAGE.EU project). Therefore, in “Virtual Spaces” area, students and partners develop innovative start-up ideas within ENGAGE Labs held inside universities. On the proofs of concept produced by the Labs, the researchers elaborate and promote research proposals for European and national calls, as well as fundraising activities to transform students' ideas into more concrete and feasible projects (Collaborative R&I). Thanks to this intermediate step, it's possible that the proofs of concept proposed by students find concrete application outside the university walls, directed to the “Inno-preneurship Spaces” (physical and digital layers which promote a collaborative and open processes facilitating the collaboration of a variety of stakeholders in the developing of innovative entrepreneurial ideas, which have a valuable impact on society) or to the market-oriented pathways (Open Urbania). It's important to underline that these proofs of concept to enter the Spaces need to tackle heads on societal challenges created by the ecological and/or technological transition and therefore they need to show some degree of inclination towards creating a more equal, sustainable, and inclusive as well as prosperous society. In this regard, in the Task 4.5 a Mission-Oriented Innovation Assesment Grid (“MOIN” grid) has created to assess whether solutions created in Labs implement or advance about social impact.

The Co-Science platform contributes to the achievement of the ENGAGE.EU “Inno-preneurship Cycle”: it ensures to reach a wider audience and enables all the stakeholders to work together. In addition, Co-Science provides digital tools which enable the co-design of the activities and their collaborative development and, at the same time, reveal new opportunities within the other tasks.



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8. Update current state of the platform

The planned architecture that backs the shared platform proposed before is powered by the co-design activity promoted within the alliance and among the members of the Work Package 6.

Below there's the example of a tool being implemented on the platform Co-science based on the co-design activity:

- “Financial aggregator” (within Collaborative R&I area)

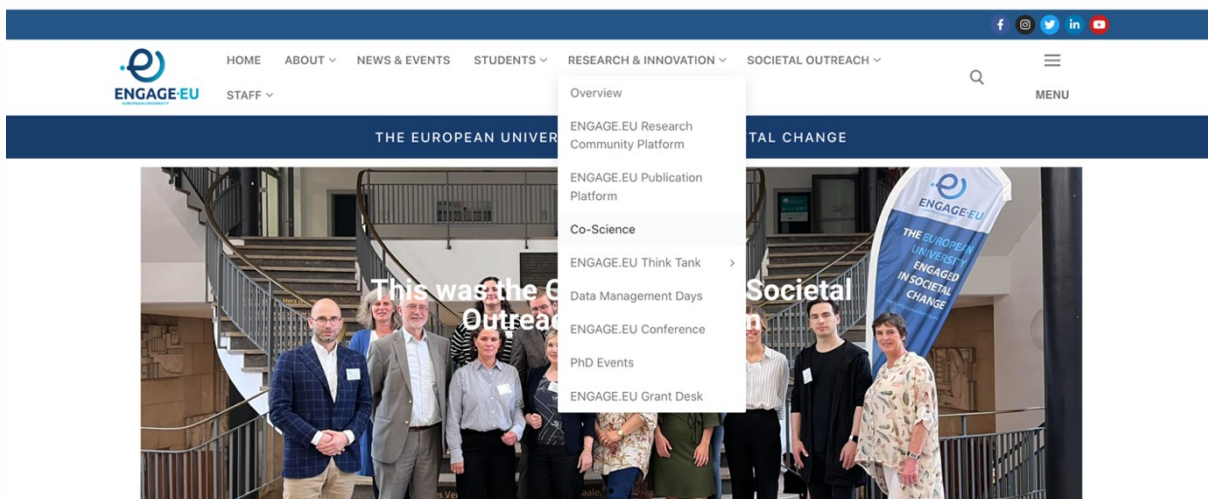
Figure n. 4 – “Financial aggregator”



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In the Figure 4 we can see the financial aggregator (“web-scraper aggregator”), which is part of the “Collaborative R&I” section. It’s a software through which users are enabled to identify funding opportunities for research activities of various types.

Specifically, the system in question can identify and aggregate for the user all calls for proposals, research projects, grants, and other types of funding that are intended, precisely, for study and research activities by companies, institutions, public bodies, associations, foundations, research centers and the like.



Welcome to ENGAGE.EU, the European University Engaged in Societal Change

<https://commonina.science>

Figure n. 5 – Co-Science on ENGAGE.EU

In order to maximize synergies with ENGAGE.EU Research community platform for collective action proposed in the ENGAGE.EU R&I is embedded in the “Research & Innovation” platform developed under the ENGAGE.EU project.

The Co-Science platform certainly has a synergy with the ENGAGE.EU’s Grant Desk’s main tasks. In particular, the financial aggregator tool allows to find and, possibly, take advantage of the ongoing financing opportunities, sharing them within the Alliance.



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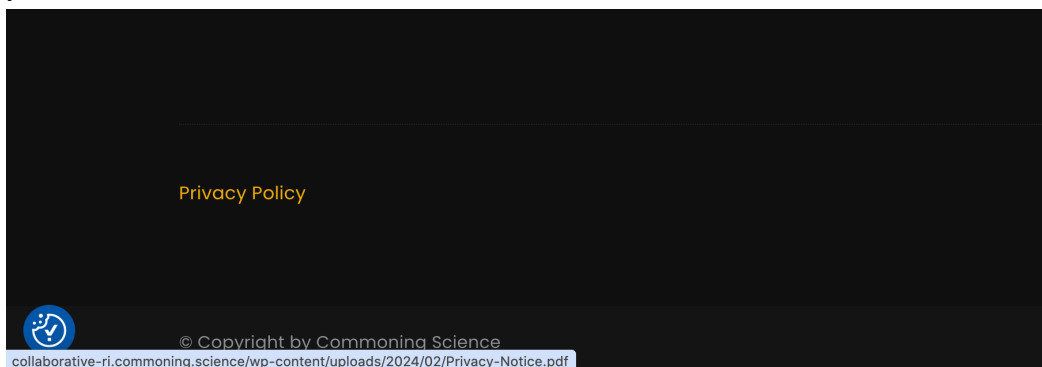


Figure n. 6 – Privacy Policy of the platform

Pursuant the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the platform has been equipped with a “Privacy Policy”, according to which any data subjects wishing to exercise their statutory rights may send an e-mail to privacy@luiss.it or write to the Controller Luiss Guido Carli at Viale Pola 12, 00198 Rome, Italy, setting out their request and furnishing the information necessary to identify them.

9. The future of the platform.

In the future, the Operations & Maintenance services for the platform will be granted by the support of a technical partner “Shades of Blue”, which is involved in a co-development work of research.

The sustainability of the platform should derive from using platform in our project proposals. For instance, the use of the platform was included in the project proposal DISTINCT, prepared in collaboration with Tilburg University, among other partners, and submitted in February 2024 within the Horizon Europe-Pillar II funding scheme.

The auspice is that the platform Co-Science can be included, like happened for other platforms, in the ENGAGE.EU 2.0.

The site has been equipped by the technological partner “Shades of Blue” with an adequate level of security for the current use of the platform: it has the SSL Certificate (Secure Sockets Layer) on domains and does not present specific security issues. In the future, it may raise the security standard by adopting a protocol such as DNSSC (Domain Name System Security Extensions), but domains will need to be migrated to other specific providers.

There would also be the intention, in the coming months, to create new tools for the areas “Collaborative R&I” (such as a knowledge aggregator and/or a research tool aggregator) and “Open Urbania” (such as “Collaborate” and/or “Matching and Closing tool”), as well as implement financial aggregator, integrating websites indicated by the university partners, from which to scrape funding opportunities for research activities. It will also be important to focus future work on improving the user experience.



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In addition, closely related to the future developments of the platform for which new European project applications are pending, there is the intention to implement an “Impact measurement tool”, currently present as placeholder, to quantify the impacts produced by the implementation of Open Urbania’s projects using a precise methodology, which could be the measurement methodology being developed by the research activities conducted within the Horizon Europe Euarenas project. This tool could be closely linked to WP 7.2 of ENGAGE.EU 2.0 project, which provides for the measurement of the outreach activities’ social impact.



Figure n. 7 – Placeholder of “Impact measurement tool”