

Building the CoHub - COLOURS community platform

Our experience and what we learned (COLOURS × Outfox)

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WP2-7 Lead Collaboration without barriers

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COLOURS Alliance

**Thanks to Marcel (Outfox) and
Amparo (University of Málaga).**

Who are we ?

A bit of context



European University Alliance

COLOURS

COLlaborative innOvative
sUstainable Regional
univerSities



Universidad de
Castilla-La Mancha



Le Mans
Université



Università
degli Studi
di Ferrara



PADERBORN
UNIVERSITY



Jan Dlugosz
University
in Czestochowa



Kristianstad
University
Sweden



VENTSPILS AUGSTSKOLA



European University Alliance

COLOURS

COLlaborative innOvative
sUstainable Regional
univerSities



9

Partners



126.000

Students



12.300

Staff

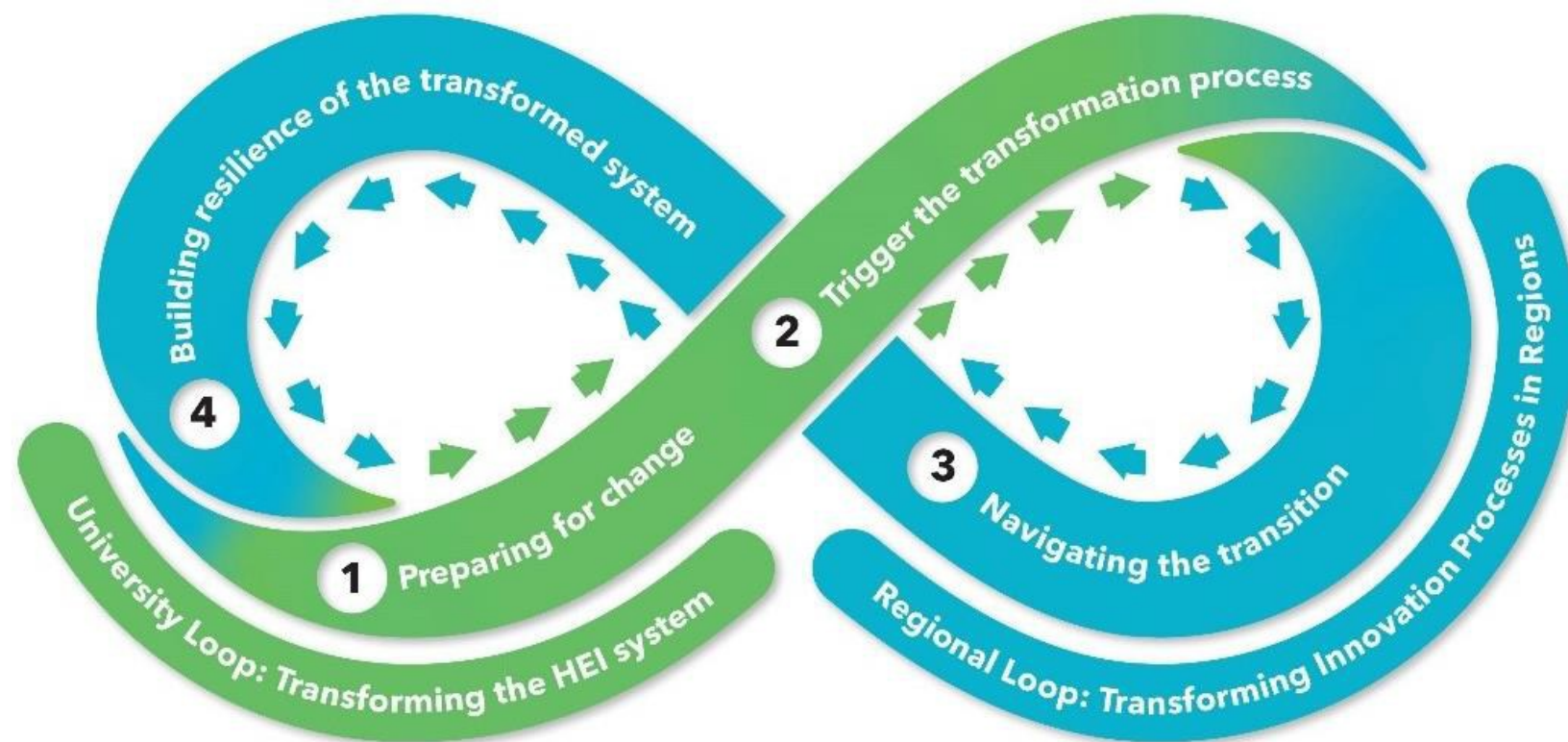


54

**Associated
partners**



Co-funded by
the European Union



1 Preparing for change:
Mapping of existing collaborations, analysis of partnership and innovation potentials, (re)defining shared visions and common challenges

2 Trigger:
Defining topics, partners and structures for co-creation

3 Navigating the transition:
Testing new methodologies, prototyping co-creation, reflecting impacts

4 Building resilience of the transformed system:
Integrating new models in regions and in universities

Strong regional focus

Regional Innovation Initiatives, Research Projects
and Participatory and Open Innovation Processes
and strong student Engagement

CoLabs ↔ CoSpaces ↔ **CoHub**



Sebastien IKSAL

VP for digital affairs



Miloš BOROZAN

WP2 Lead



**Carlos HORTUA
CALERDON**

Back-end developer



Axel PITROU
Head of Digital
transition



**Otmane
Boushaba**
Data Architect



**Emma VAN
HOORDE**
Front-end developer



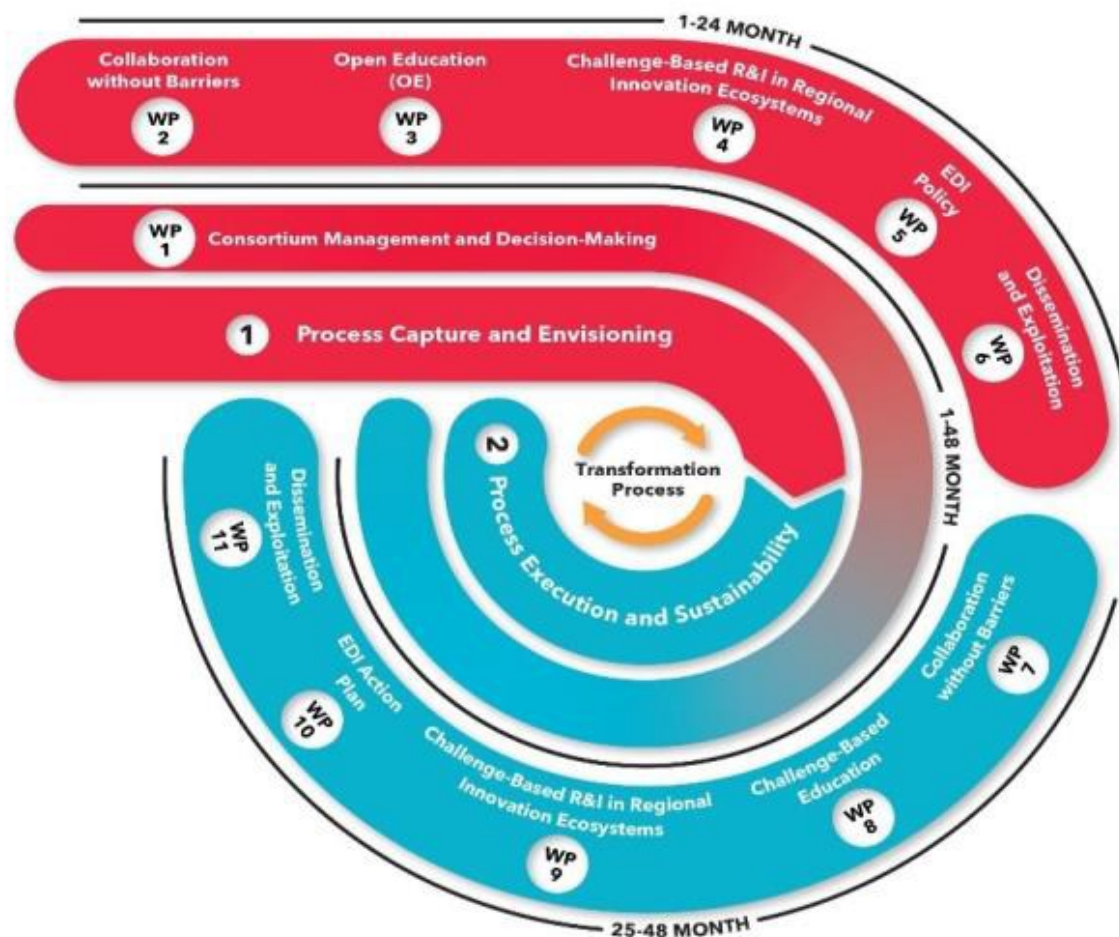
Co-funded by
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**Le Mans
Université**

WP2-7 Collaboration without Barriers

The objectives and tasks



1

Process Capture and Envisioning

Discovery and analysis of current state processes and their performance.

Identification of opportunity areas and creation of future state design

Review

2

Process Execution and Sustainability

Implementation of process transformation going beyond the state-of-the-art.

Continuous reflection and improvement with monitoring and ongoing quality assurance



Intranet | CoHub | LMS | LRS | Website

What is the CoHub?

The center of the COLOURS digital ecosystem

What CoHub Was Meant to Be

- Central collaborative environment
- A platform for stakeholder collaborations, calls, co-creation, and community interaction
- For students, teachers, researchers, external partners
- Not a duplicate of LMS, but a connector

Importance of non-academic partnerships

In COLOURS we focus on sharing knowledge in our regions

Ambitious targets

Technical set up of the CoHub infrastructure to allow the deposit of resources and networking



Months 2-6

How was it developed ?

A bit of history

Phase 1 (M1 – M6)

Early groundwork

WP2 - mapping partner infrastructures, consulting accessibility and inclusion experts, selecting candidate technologies, and standing up a first CoHub infrastructure capable of depositing resources and basic networking

WP3 and WP4 conceptualizing CoHub use-cases and templates for stakeholder interaction

Proposition A – Discovery-centric CoHub

Discoverability of static and semi-static content (stakeholder profiles, calls, resources), translation workflows (automatic + human review)

It was attractive for speed, governance simplicity and editorial control; training could be provided for non-technical staff.

Proposition B – Communication-centric CoHub

Privileged conversation and networking over static content: topic channels, group DMs, file sharing, events, and bridges to external systems.

It aligned with the grant's open-source posture and the desire to reduce email friction, with the added benefit of modern chat stacks.

Phase 2 (M6 - M10)

A first coherent specification

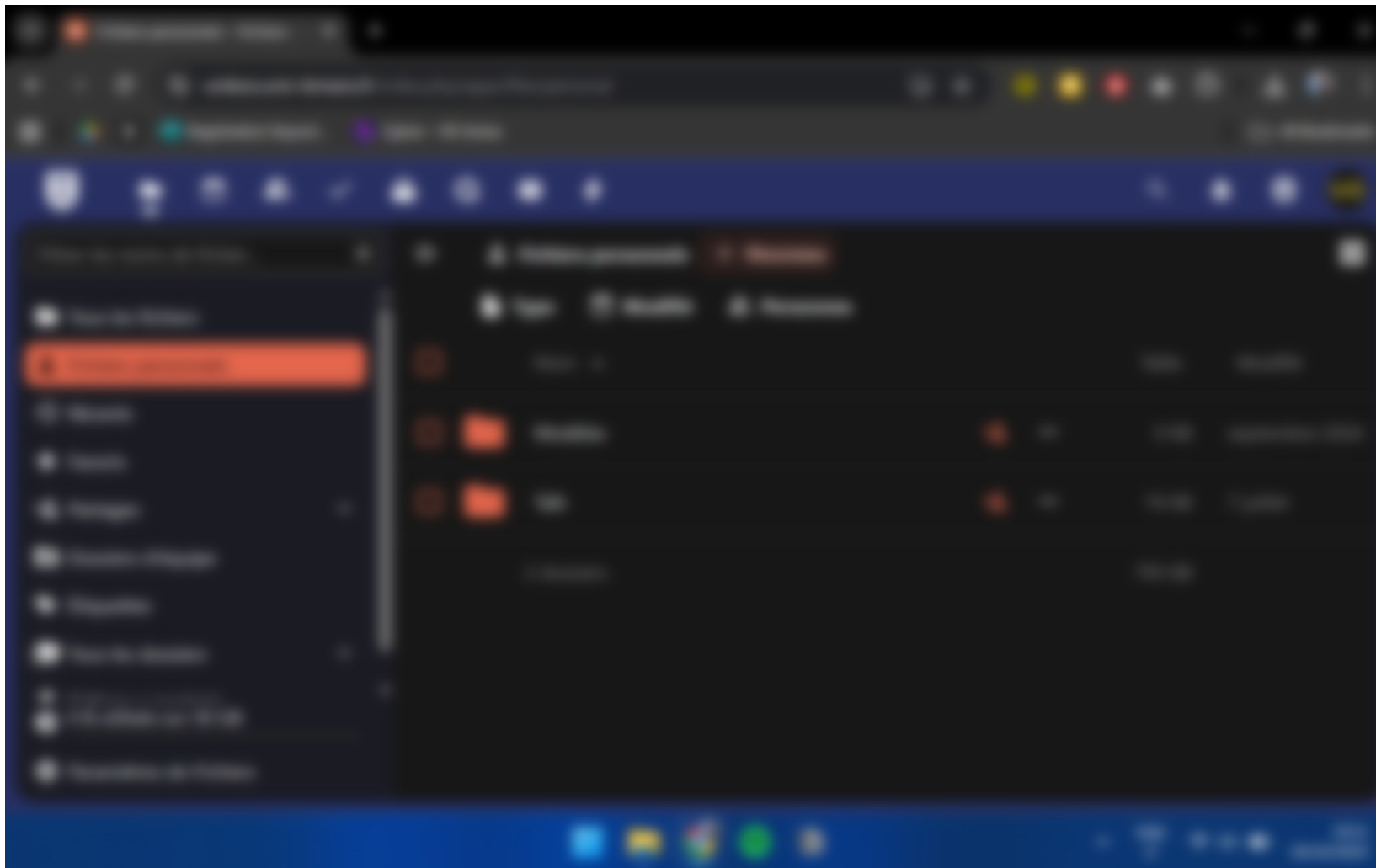
Collaboration focused solution

To be developed on the NextCloud

Core mature apps

- Talk for messaging and calls
- OnlyOffice/Collabora for real-time co-editing
- Deck for kanban-style tasks
- Calendar for shared scheduling
- Versioning for roll-backs
- Full-Text Search framework for discovery

March 2025 LMU prototype ... not accepted



The Steering Committee verdict was clear

The MVP was solid but insufficient for the long-term goals

We needed richer community features (interest-driven spaces, opportunity board, stakeholder profiles, federation/governance tooling for thousands of users, unified design system).

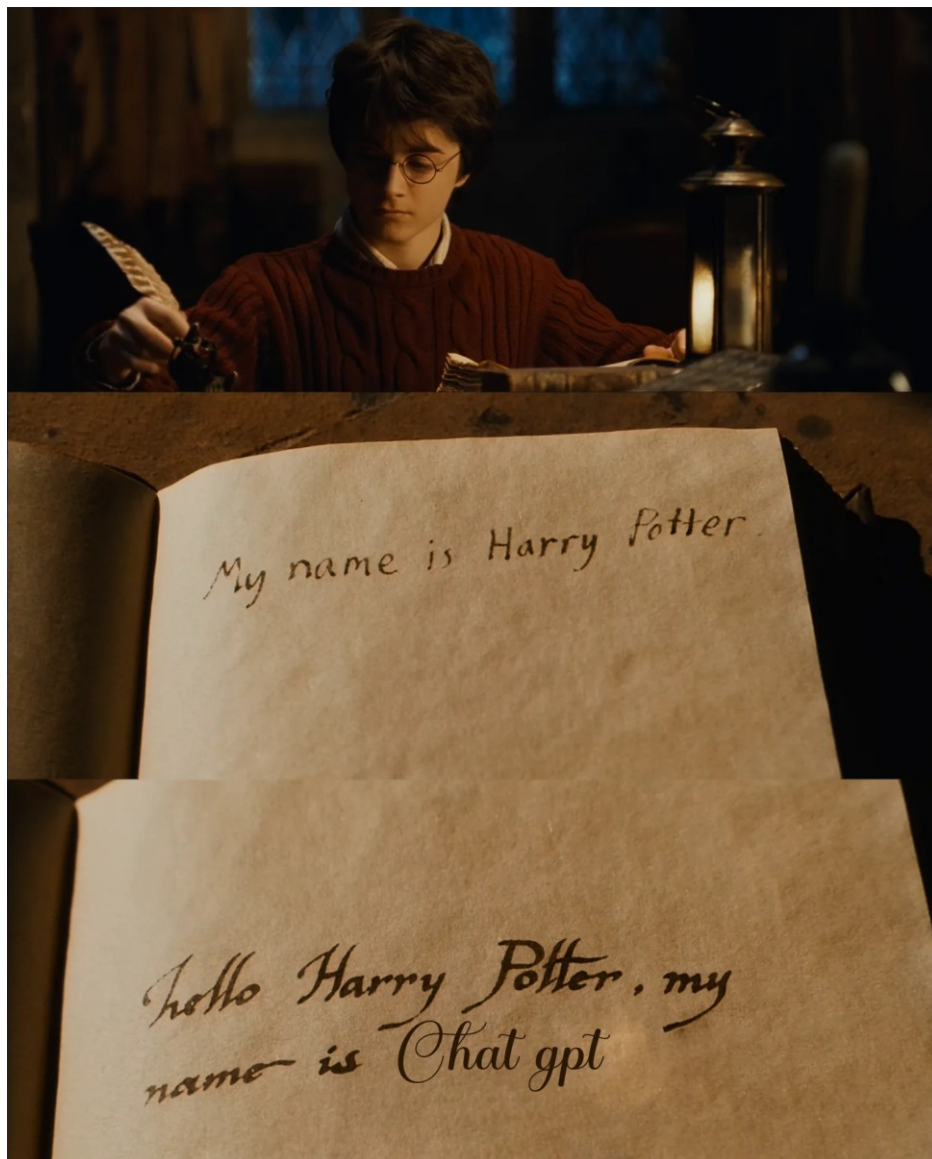


Why the prototype was not enough?

From a workspace to a community layer

- Communication issues
- Misaligned responsibilities and competences
- Task complexity underestimated
- Management issues

... the problems were not technical !



The AI didn't help !

The Turning Point

Process re-engineering and the AGILE model of development, CoHub Committee

„ **Costruire ... è sapere, è
potere rinunciare alla
perfezione.**

Niccolò Fabi, Costruire (2006)

Strategic uncertainty

A friend and a foe

Flexibility gives freedom, but freedom needs structure

Freedom

Adaptability, Tech
Evolution

Ambiguity

Different visions,
Expectations gap

Communities | Collaboration | Events | Opportunities | Networking

Methodological foundations

- Decision-making transparency
- Technical transparency
- Inclusiveness
- Institutional sustainability
- Environmental sustainability
- Responsibility and accountability
- Focus on the users

The CoHub Committee

Created April 2025 – shared ownership, cross-WP
decision-making

WP2 | WP3 | WP4 | WP5 | WP6 | CSO

Evaluating Options

Exploring Alternatives

- AGORA (UNITE!)
- BuddyBoss
- Wordpress and many more...

Security issues, lack of customisability... and opportunity costs !

How can we help you?

In this platform you can find and create new opportunities for research collaboration. Are you looking for ways to make your research project more interdisciplinary, international and/or societally relevant? The ENGAGE.EU community is there to take your research project to the next level!

You can search for:

- collaboration opportunities >
- colleagues with similar interests >
- job opportunities >
- grant applications >
- events >
- inspiration and reports >

You can create:

- a call for support >
- a collaboration group >
- your own event >
- an inspiring article >
- your profile page >

Feedback

Choosing Outfox

The timeline

Apr-May Initial talks

May 12-13 IT expert meeting

June 13 CoHub Committee approval

10 July: Steering Committee unanimous approval

24 July: PO meeting → subcontracting clarification

Contract & Timeline

- Contract signed on the **15/09/2025** (LMU – Outfox)
- Development started **01/10/2025**

Delivery deadline was on 01/12/2025

Final revision: January 2026

The decision method

Two-step evaluation

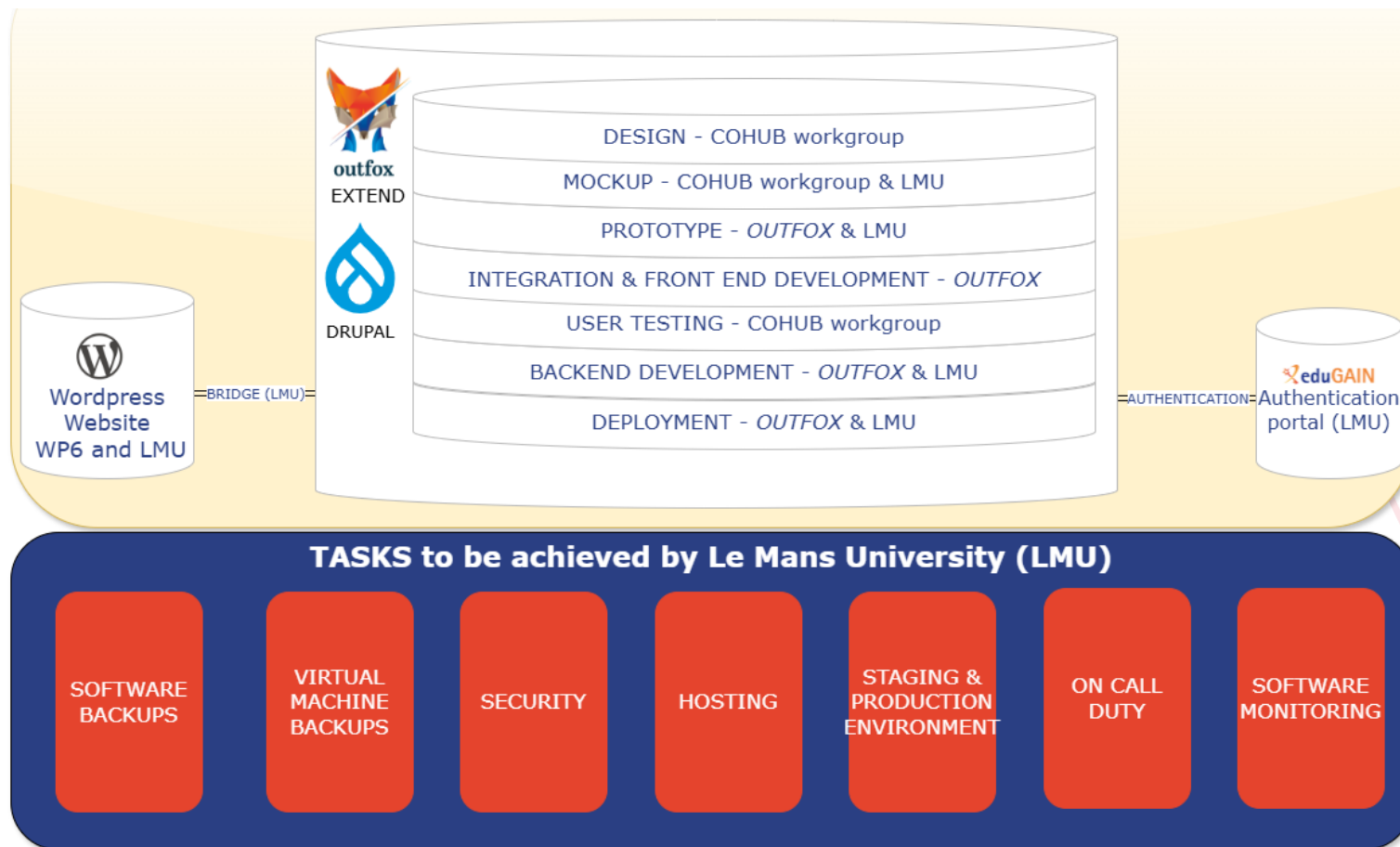
**Technical
validation by IT
expert group**



**Functional/strategic/financial
assessment by the CoHub
Committee**

Architecture and implementation model

SaaS co-development



Important factors

The inclusive process created legitimacy and enabled smoother adoption

and (maybe even more importantly)

Understanding that the innovation is not only technological / technical !

Contract with Outfox signed on 15 Sept 2025 !

Important milestone, but only a step towards full delivery


The Contracts


Build and Maintain

- Development contract – 7 sprints, ended December 1st
- License & maintenance – until Dec 2027, tiered usage model
- Hosted on LMU servers, Outfox maintains software

Development Sprints

- Sprint 1 (**10 Oct**) | Clickable prototype
- Sprint 2 (**22 Oct**) | Front-end
- Sprint 3 (**23 Oct**) | Focus group & feedback
- Sprint 4 (**31 Oct**) | Architecture & infrastructure
- Sprint 5 (**14 Nov**) | Back-end integration
- Sprint 6 (**21 Nov**) | Testing & production
- Sprint 7 (**30 Jan**) | Pilot revision


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EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY ALLIANCE


WELCOME TO THE COLOURS COHUB!

CoHub is a digital platform for stakeholder collaborations designed to significantly enhance the scope of education and learning within our Alliance and beyond. It is a transformative tool that aims to revolutionise educational practices by expanding access and opportunities for students, educators, and stakeholders alike.




CONNECT WITH MEMBERS

Find and connect with peers based on shared interests and expertise.




JOIN GROUPS

Collaborate in focused communities around common goals and projects.



NEWS


Share insights, updates, and opportunities with the community.



ATTEND EVENTS

Take part in workshops, webinars, and conferences across the network.

Highlighted Updates [View all](#)




"Beyond Words" CoLab and Conference in Ventspils Highlights the Evolving Role of Language and Communication in Modern Society

October 15, 2025

Community Regional Development

Education & Skills Development



Join the COLOURS European Student Assembly 2026!


October 14, 2025

Education Partnership Community

Open Innovation & Entrepreneurship

Regional Development

Education & Skills Development



UCLM and UNIFE students respond with innovation and entrepreneurship to the social challenge of active and healthy ageing

September 29, 2025

Education Partnership Innovation

Social Innovation

Open Innovation & Entrepreneurship

Regional Development

BUILT WITH EVERYONE AND DESIGNED FOR EVERYONE

<https://cohub.colours-alliance.eu/>



Main lessons learned

- Clear definition of responsibilities
- Empathy and speaking the same language
- Importance of cohesion and optimism
- Realistic deadlines
- Meet in person (!)
- DEFINE SUCCESS

Thank you for your attention.