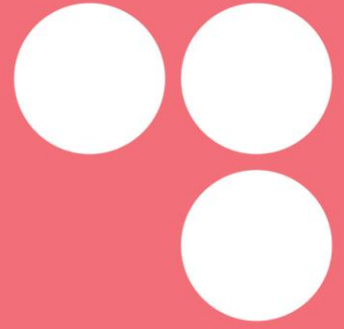


TWIN2EXPAND



Working Group Studio – A1

WORKING GROUP STUDIO A1

02.02.2023 - 04.02.2023 & 10.02.2023

NICOSIA, CYPRUS & ONLINE

twinning towards
research excellence
in evidence-based planning
and urban design



Document Description: This document provides a summary of discussions and panels that took place over the course of the Working Group Studio A1 (WGSA1) in February 2023, online and onsite at the SURF lab, in the Department of Architecture of the University of Cyprus in Nicosia.

February 2023

General Contact:

TWIN2EXPAND Project, Dr. Nadia Charalambous, Department of Architecture, University of Cyprus, Nicosia, Cyprus

For more information: charalambous.nadia@ucy.ac.cy

Please refer to this publication as follows:

University of Cyprus, Department of Architecture (2023). Working Group Studio A1 Report. Nicosia. TWIN2EXPAND project: 101078890 (Horizon Europe), 10052856 & 10050784 (UKRI).

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon Europe Research and Innovation Programme under Grant Agreement No. 101078890.

This project has received funding from the UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) under the UK government's Horizon Europe funding guarantee under grant numbers 10052856 and 10050784.

Views and opinions expressed are those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Research Executive Agency (REA). Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

Version Control Sheet

Report Name	Working Group Studio A1 Report.
WP / WP number	WP2
Type	Report
Dissemination level	Internal
Lead beneficiary	UCY
Contributors	Ilaria Geddes
Reviewer(s)	Nadia Charalambous
Changes with respect to the Grant Agreement	None
Dissemination and uptake	N/A

Revision history

Version	Date	Summary of changes	Initials	Changes marked
1	28/02/2023	First draft	IGe	
2	06/03/2023	Final		

Working Group Studio A1 - introduction

The first TWIN2EXPAND Working Group Studio A focused on understanding the status quo of research management and research capacity at UCY and the Society and Urban Form Lab (SURF), and the supporting administrative mechanisms from the Department of Architecture and UCY Research Support services. Furthermore, the WGSA1 explored avenues for collaboration with other twinning projects at UCY and abroad, local and international projects and partners, as well as for development of future funding proposals. A day was dedicated to exploiting the research components of TWIN2EXPAND to build research capacity and achieve impact.

1. Working Group Studio A1 - Day 1: Capacity Building in Research Management

1.1. Session A1 – UCY Research Capacity

The first morning session started with a presentation about UCY's research output by Marios Demetriades, Head of Research Support Services, followed by presentation about the structure, systems and resources of UCY Research and Innovation Office by Christina Delaporta, the Department of Architecture's Research Support Officer (figure 1).



Figure 1 Presentation of UCY's Research Support Services.

The presentations highlighted that UCY, as a widening country organisation, has been extremely successful in securing research funding. This success is partially attributed to the fact that UCY implements a 'research freedom' approach to funding proposal development, meaning that no prior approval is required for researchers to submit and participate in funding proposals. A significant amount of funding is secured through the WIDERA Horizon programme; this includes 7 Teaming projects. However, it is predicted that the programme will be terminated in 2027 and therefore, research units should plan accordingly and get informed about any programmes which might substitute the WIDERA.

Researchers are mostly funded through projects, which do not always cover 100% of Full-Time Equivalent: around 30% are funded by secured projects above core ones, up to 20% perform consulting work and up to 10% teach in other institutions.

A number of challenging issues were highlighted:

1. There is a 'gap' between the university and policy-makers: UCY, as a public institution is core funded by the Government. Funding for research is not currently provided despite the university presenting the argument and evidence that UCY is a research-intensive university and funding should be assigned for this purpose and not solely for educational activities.
2. There is a key structural problem of human resources to support research activities: there are only 2 research support officers for the whole university. Currently, there are no avenues in view to fund further support. Overheads from projects are not redirected into research management, administration of finance support. Moving to a system by which the whole project cycle is managed within each faculty rather than centrally may be more effective.
3. Innovation activities are practically non-existent within faculties and no university spin-offs have so far been established. This means that no funding is drawn from commercialisation.

1.2. Session A2 - UCY Twinning Projects

Project coordinators and team member of UCY's other twinning projects funded in the same call as TWIN2EXPAND presented their projects and plans of activities to discuss synergies between the projects, scope opportunities for joint activities and avoidance of duplication, especially with regards to research management trainings and capacity building. The following projects were presented:

1. TWIN4MERIT: Twinning for Excellence in Management and Economics of Research and Innovation.
2. BRAINN: Brain Research and Integrative Neuroscience Network for COVID-19.
3. GrECI: Greek Heritage in European Culture and Identity.
4. TESTARE: Testing New Generation PV: Long-term Stability and Field Reliability.

Through the presentations and discussion, it was identified that many projects were planning similar and/or complementary research management trainings. A joint plan for trainings open to team members from other project was discussed and will be drafted following the meeting. Additionally, the TWIN4MERIT project, led by UCY's Research and Innovation Office, has programmed a mapping of UCY's research support systems across projects' lifecycles, along with a mapping of best practices of the T4M project partners. The resulting matrix will be distributed for information and review to UCY's twinning projects teams. Finally,

participants pointed out the need for more effective communication of administration and finance processes, as well as a feedback system to the research support office.

1.3. Session A3 - SURF Research Lab Development

The Project Coordinator presented the project and the SURF Lab to external advisors from established Centres of Excellence at UCY: the KIOS Research and Innovation Centre of Excellence, and the FOSS Research Centre for Sustainable Energy. The presentation was followed by a discussion between the consortium and the advisors regarding how to develop the lab.

The external advisors pointed out that establishing a research centre or applying for Teaming funding would require more faculty members within the lab (currently only the Lab's director is a faculty member). Joining resources with other labs/faculty members would help developing the lab and setting a basis to establish a centre: one of the motivations behind KIOS was to share resources among faculty staff. Applying for Teaming would require many people as well as industrial partners: the lab needs to grow internally first: moving from a research lab to a research unit could be an intermediate step; establishing a centre requires at least 4-5 faculty members involved. Some issue to consider when making a decision about how to move forward are: 1) Collaborating with other faculty members requires chemistry between them, therefore it is only possible if suitable collaborators exist, however, it is also good to share and discuss ideas with colleagues who tend to think or work differently. 2) if a centre is established UCY will provide some economic incentives, but it may still be necessary to scope additional structural funding. 3) As the lab grows and becomes more multidisciplinary, different disciplines need to be integrated coherently into the scope of the lab while considering that in urban design and planning, research has to be adaptive. A way to integrate disciplines could be through the concept of space as a central theme of the lab.

1.4. Session A4 - Research Management Training

Valentina Romano from POLITO presented the structure of POLITO's research support services and existing competence frameworks for research management with a particular focus on EARMA European Certificate in Research Management which is certified in the UK. While there are a number of competence frameworks in different countries, currently research

management is not a certified profession, and no international qualification schemes exist (figure 2).



Existing training for RMAs: some examples

Fragmentation at national/international level
 No competence framework at EU level
 Difficult accreditation/recognition



MS in Research Administration

ADVANCED ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

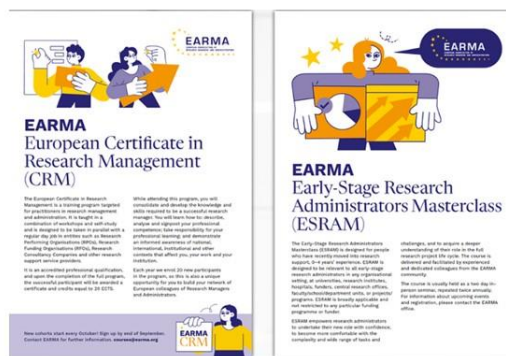


Figure 2 Presentation slide of EARMA's research management certification and lack of recognised international competence frameworks.

The consortium then discussed options and opportunities for research management training by POLITO targeting SURF Lab and UCY staff in the scope of the TWIN2EXPAND project. The first step required identifying the aim of the training in relation to the specific needs of the SURF Lab, future business model and resources to train. Secondly, we discussed how to deliver the training according to different target groups, considering that some training topics may be covered and shared by other twinning projects, especially those targeting research support staff in central services. Initial plan to be developed following the WGS covered:

The in-person training at POLITO, which will be for 2 UCY staff for 3-4 days in M10 and M22. For the first training in M10, the topics of interest were:

- Workshop on impact canvas, inc. monitoring and measuring KPIs.
- Open science, inc. writing DMPs, options for pre-registration platforms, selecting a repository, best practices in data management.
- Networking – through meetings with relevant POLITO staff.

Target group: SURF Lab staff and T2E staff if it's possible to have the sessions in hybrid format.

Exchange of best practices, which should be organized in conjunction with UCY RSO and other UCY twinning projects. We are proposing that an online session should be organized including leading partners from twinning projects to cover:

- Leading partners' best practices across the lifecycle of the project
- Proposal writing support (Presentation of POLITO's Horizon Toolkit)
- Networking and partner searching (e.g. brokerage events in Brussels; portfolios of partners; tool to understand competencies of researchers; archive of previous proposals)

Target group: UCY RSO, twinning project coordinators and senior researchers

Short online trainings, which could be 2-3 sessions between the in-person training, comprising:

- Grant writing, focusing on impact.
- Managing the proposal submission process, inc. getting information/input from partners.
- Estimating resources needed and budgeting.

Target group: SURF Lab staff – senior and junior researchers

2. Working Group Studio A1 - Day 2: Capacity Building in Research – Engagement, Dissemination and Communication

2.1. Session B1 – SURF Lab and Partners' Projects

The second day of the WGS was dedicated to exploring and developing collaborations with existing and new potential partners. The first session was dedicated to projects in which the SURF Lab is involved as a partner. Specially, three projects were presented:

1. InPlanEd by National Technical University of Athens. This is an Erasmus+ Project developing a pilot course on Integrated Urban Planning; one of the pilot course themes is evidence-based planning. The consortium discussed how the TWIN2EXPAND tools and methods may be included in the pilot course, as well as how the pedagogic aspect fits within the SURF Lab's future strategy.
2. U-CARE by Building Health Lab, Berlin. This is an Erasmus+ proposal assessing the urban health quality of 4 case studies in European cities from different climatic zones to develop an urban viewer platform supporting decision-making by local authorities and other stakeholders, as well as pilot courses on urban health. The consortium discussed how the project might be able to layer and visualise the data

it will collect, so that it can be used for purposeful analysis towards evidence-based design.

3. STAM by ALA Planning Partnership, Nicosia. This is a toolkit developed through an Innovation Voucher funded by Cyprus Research and Innovation Foundation. Unlike other available toolkits to assess sustainability of development projects and/or buildings, STAMP focuses specifically on masterplan projects and is meant to be a simple, self-assessment tool which requires minimal input to inform design decisions. The consortium discussed how the toolkit can be used to discuss designs in a more sophisticated manner among people with different backgrounds and objectives, as well as how spatial analysis may be embedded in future versions of the toolkit.

2.2. Session B2 – External Projects: Synergies and Potential Collaborations

The second session consisted of presentations by external researchers and twinning project coordinators to explore synergies and potential future collaborations. Specifically the following projects were presented:

1. iNicosia Digital Twin by the CYENS Centre of Excellence. The Nicosia digital twin under development comprises a massive scale interactive 3D model, integration with the Nicosia Smart City Platform, and Open Data Platform and API, Apps and Visualisation. The consortium discussed with the researchers how the Digital Twin responds to local authorities' needs for fast responses and data supply, as well as the analytical powers of the platform beyond data collection and generation.
2. DeepNic by the CYENS Centre of Excellence, which maps the development of Nicosia's urban centre between 1960 and 2000 through demographics, business activity and cultural activity to highlight multi-temporal perspectives of the city that would encourage the discussion of marginalized and conflicting historical narratives. The consortium discussed how it may be possible to use the platform for in-depth spatial analysis of historical demographics, as well as assessing architectural and urban identity through the project's crowdsourcing call of photographs of the city through the years.
3. Connecting Nature by the Nicosia Development Agency. This was a Horizon2020 project supported climate resilience in cities through the development of nature-based solutions and specifically through connecting existing green infrastructure. The consortium discussed how the proposals developed by the project may be implemented and sustained in the future through engagement with stakeholders in the context of the restructuring of municipalities within the Nicosia metropolitan area.
4. PADST, twinning project coordinated by Veiko Lember from Tallin University of Technology / KU Leuven. This project focuses on 'green' public administration

capabilities and how the digital can support the green transition. It has in common with T2E the aim of actively engaging with policy and decision-makers with a city-level focus.

5. SmartWins, coordinated by Paris Fokaides from Kaunas University of Technology. This project conducts research on the next generation of digital twins focusing on buildings' energy assessment and sustainability.

2.3. Session B3 – Brainstorming on SURF Lab's Strategy Development

The day concluded with a brainstorming session about the SURF Lab's strategy for development revolving around the general question 'where do we want to be in 10 years' time?' and particularly focusing on what would be the innovation and the public purpose of the lab.

It may be beneficial for the lab to think of itself as either a hub or an incubator considering different working and development pathways: doing research – supporting research – gaining from others' research. There needs to be a discussion on whether the lab wants to develop expertise in leading research or in carrying out research, which tend to require different skills sets, but it is very important at the start to differentiate the lab well enough from many other initiatives that are happening and to start from the focus on the local region, as well as the 'origins' of the lead researchers grounded in space and spatial analysis.

The lab needs to develop a critical mass through impact by reaching a number of projects, thus drawing in more overheads. At the same time, it needs to focus on exploiting one or two strong projects / publications / events to use as 'flagship' outputs (i.e. a key exploitable result to advertise). Any long-term scientific or organizational strategy should be based on mapping other institutions' work and possible collaborations – a communication strategy is also needed. The TWIN2EXPAND project in relation to the SURF lab needs to develop its own definition of EBDP to build a project identity and a lab identity (i.e. always start our presentations with the definition). Identifying where there are gaps in evidence should direct the scientific strategy to be followed up with rigorous testing to develop a body of evidence, which would also support arguments to the EU, national and local authorities regarding the need for and access to spatial data.

3. Working Group Studio A1 - Day 3: Capacity Building in Research: WP4 Research Project

The third day focused on the project's research component, the work package 4. The WP Lead, Meta Berghauer Pont started the session with a presentation on the key literature around evidence-based design, focusing on the meaning on evidence-based in other disciplines and the difference between evidence-based design and research-informed design.



Figure 3 Presentation of evidence-based design and research-informed design.

The consortium discussed how it may be possible to disentangle participatory processes and evidence-based design in light of the SURF's lab key research strands around EBDP and participatory design: EBDP can support transparency in the decision-making process and it is non-judgemental with regard to an objective, it is always performative.

Relating to the TWIN2EXPAND research project, the consortium discussed what the different research teams in each institution should focus on, the preparatory steps until the start of WP4 in M7 and the priority actions as soon as WP4 starts:

- Preparatory work reviewing the state of the art of EBDP, as well as research-informed design and data driven design has already started and is being led by UCL with the support of UCY.
- UCY should focus on the analysis of city performance with a thematic focus. Since the Lab does not currently have programming skills, analysis can be supported by the work of UCL in automating workflows to create and analyse spatial models. Chalmers may work on the aspect more related to the SDGs by focusing on a socio-ecological approach to spatial analysis.
- A shared library to store and annotate the literature review should be created in Zotero.
- A data audit should be performed for Cyprus to understand data availability and granularity.
- Postdoctoral researchers recruitment should be completed by M6.

- Case studies for analysis in Cyprus should be shortlisted, ideally with the participation of stakeholders.

Finally, one hour was dedicated to reviewing practical arrangements and deadlines for the next few months and reflecting on the outcomes of the past few days. Dates for WGSb and WGSc were agreed for 05-09/06 and 26-30/06 respectively, and for the first stakeholders' meeting, the week of 11/09; data for staff exchanges, student placements and research management training should be agreed at the next project meeting. A plan for stakeholders interactions should be developed at the WGSc. Important upcoming deadlines are the Evaluation Plan due in M4 and the Data Management Plan due in M6.

Reflection mostly revolved around specific projects presented in the previous days that are most relevant for TWIN2EXPAND:

- iNicosia Digital Twin: what could we get from a Digital Twin that is useful for us and how may we feedback data into it? How the resolution and scale of data in a DT be adjusted and what kind of simulation could be performed? What is the value of DT and EBDP platform? That depends on the data structure and analytical approach.
- STAMP: how could it become spatial and adapted for project consultation? Are there already questions which are spatial, and what spatial questions could be added to the toolkit?

4. Working Group Studio A1 - Day 4: Capacity Building in Research: Funding Proposals

The final day of WGSA1 took place online and focused on SURF Lab's past, current and future research proposals. Ilaria Geddes started the session by presenting a matrix of the Lab's proposals from 2016 until present plus ideas for future proposals in expected or recurrent calls. Proposals currently under development were presented: the *Comparative Research School on the Urban Form of Mediterranean Port Cities (CORSUM)* led by POLITO in collaboration with UCY and presented by Marco Triscioglio (fig. 4), and *Education in Living Labs: Participatory Skills for Sustainable Urban Governance (PS-U-GO)*, led by UCY and presented by Christina Panayi.

Comparative Research School on the Urban Form of Mediterranean Port Cities [CORSUM]

Start date: 01.12.2023

End date: 30.11.2026

Duration: 36 months

Lump sum: 400,000.00€

Horizontal Priority: Digital Transformation

Specific Priority: Promoting Inter-connected higher education systems

Specific Priority: Stimulating innovative learning and teaching practices

Consortium:

1. Polytechnic University of Turin (IT) - **HEI**
2. Society and Urban Form Lab, Department of Architecture, University of Cyprus (CY) – **HEI**
3. University of Porto (PT) – **HEI**
4. ISUF Italy – **NGO**
5. Technical University of Istanbul - **HEI**
6. University of Zaragoza - **HEI**



This project has received funding from the UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) under the UK government's Horizon Europe funding guarantee under grant numbers 10052856 and 10050784.



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon Europe Research and Innovation Programme under Grant Agreement No. 101078890.

Figure 4 Presentation slide of CORSUM funding proposal currently being developed by POLITO in collaboration with UCY.

The feedback to CORSUM was that the pedagogic aspect, being an Erasmus+ project (also for PS-U-GO), influences the direction of the lab toward an educational focus. The team of CORSUM seems to be a very specialized team of urban morphologists, so we need to look at the research questions of the project in relation to the experts in the network (perhaps socio-economic issues should be left aside and the focus should be on expanding the definition of urban morphology) and express very clearly in the proposal why they are the best partners. As for PS-U-GO, the methodology should be clarified in terms of how governance links with other aspects of planning and design.

Funding Calls that the Lab is interested in submitting to were also presented: a Horizon Europe Cluster 6 call on nature-based solutions and the New European Bauhaus, the Driving Urban Transitions call by JPI Europe, as well as the WIDERA calls for the Green Deal Twinning, Excellence Hubs and Hop-On. The discussion focused on the Hop-On and Excellence Hubs calls.

With regards to the Hop-On, the LAB has identified a couple of Horizon projects which might be suitable, but there is generally a difficulty in securing a Hop-On because of the specificity of the timing to start working on a project and the willingness of other coordinators and consortia to include a new partner and activities within a project. What a project would get

out of the Lab's participation needs to be discussed and well-thought before approaching project coordinators.

With regards to the Excellence Hubs, which requires the establishment of place-based innovation ecosystems aligned with the EU policy priorities or the Regional Smart Specialisation Strategies, there first needs to be a decision about what field the Lab wants to become a leading expert in: a) migration, inclusion and segregation; or b) green, sustainability, transition. We need a 'this is our approach' statement.

Overall, when considering calls and ideas, it is always good to ensure that the Lab always takes care of its agenda (i.e. clarity of idea / mission), embeds the spatial aspect within proposed topics and identifies a network of partners that it wants to collaborate with. Specific to D2.3, the Interim Funding Proposals Portfolio to be developed by M18, the consortium should start giving thought to the format of the portfolio, the models of working on it and the overall mission of the Lab for future research development.

Concept ideas presented for future proposals included:

- **Spatial Place-Making: combining evidence-based planning with experimental place-making through Moving Living Labs [SPlace].** A project which would combine evidence-based planning techniques with experimental place-making methods to identify a network of open spaces within 15-minutes network distance of each other and interconnect them through place-making techniques focusing on nature-based and age-friendly interventions. This may be suitable for submission to the DUT call. In relation to this idea, the consortium underlined that a proposal should be about the outcomes and impact, not just about the concept; we need to understand what would be the contribution of this project to the expected impacts of the call and how we could implement it. We might focus on placemaking, biotope and system-thinking; integrating green/blue infrastructure with how people move is also an important, underexplored topic, so maybe we should contribute in this direction.
- **Inclusive Schools**, based on the PhD by Chrystala Psathiti. This is a project looking to develop government guidelines for the design of schools' open spaces to support social interaction among students from different backgrounds. It may cover analysing students' education attainment in relation to the schools' layout, how school relate to the neighbourhood, the typology and performance of school buildings in relation to their design background and the relationship with climate and culture. This may be suitable for a submission to the Erasmus+ Alliances for Innovation call. The consortium considered that this project's EBD approach is well aligned with the Lab's current focus and strategy; it might need find a more specific focus on the planning side as currently, it is quite broad and could cover diverse topics.