

# **Local PhD Hub strategy**

**How to build a relevant strategy: a practical guide**

**European PhD Hub**

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## 1. Executive summary

The document aims at offering practical guidelines to all Universities, as new local Hub members of the [European PhD Hub](#), who wish to put in place a structured PhD Hub strategy and ensure a win-win situation for collaboration in doctoral education with the industry<sup>1</sup> and other local actors. It presents a set of guiding questions which are the foundations of the reflections of a well-oiled local Hub<sup>2</sup>.

## 2. Defining the local Hub's objectives

First and foremost, the local Hub is a structure composed of different local, regional and national actors who strive for improved collaboration in doctoral education. The direct beneficiaries of the local Hub are the PhD candidates and they should, therefore, be at the centre of the strategic line of actions that will be deployed within the local Hub.

The overall objectives, both short and long terms, should be defined in accordance with i) the resources available in the given environment, ii) the global strategy set in the University (both general and doctoral-specific), iii) partnerships already established with the different local actors, iv) the identified industry needs within the region and more globally at a national and European level, as well as, v) the inherent peculiarities of the local environment.

The local Hub's objectives should be designed to answer the specific needs related to doctoral education in the local environment and should be aligned with the general objectives of the European PhD Hub:

- Establishing a quality policy framework for University-business cooperation (UBC)
- Increasing research opportunities and their transferability
- Facilitating innovation and entrepreneurship within academia and business
- Identifying complementary and alternative funding sources
- Increasing research opportunities
- Strengthening the knowledge triangle
- Expert supervision within and across their dynamic mix of university partners
- Networking and collaboration on both national and international levels
- Mobilising PhD students and/or candidates

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<sup>1</sup> In the following document, we use the word “industry” to refer to businesses and civil society organisations.

<sup>2</sup> A Local Hub is defined as an association of at least one university and business partners who share strategic goals and maintain close cooperation in the frame of doctoral education in a given local environment.

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### 3. Identifying the local actors

It is of utmost importance to clearly identify the different local actors who could potentially play a critical role in developing a quality local Hub framework. In most cases, contacting the local and regional stakeholders to tighten or create partnerships around the local Hub is the starting point, which can afterwards be extended to national and European actors. The benchmark and the mapping of the following key actors in your local environment would enable significant progress in the development of the PhD Hub strategy:

- Enterprises, in particular, SMEs
- Research institutions
- Young researchers (postdocs) within the University
- Alumni networks/associations of PhD candidates
- PhD supervisors
- PhD candidates
- Regional and local authorities

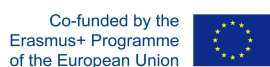
During and after the implementation of the strategy, the active actors of the local Hub can be consulted for further improvement of the PhD Hub strategy.

### 4. Strategic line 1: University-Business cooperation

The local Hub should enable structured cooperation between universities and businesses, therefore, reflections on the state of play of UBC in the local environment will allow for need-specific measures that should be taken. The following questions have been designed to ensure that the most crucial points of discussions are not left apart:

- What is, in your opinion, the present state of cooperation between university and business in your local environment?
- What forms of UBC are most frequently carried out by the actors of your local environment?
- What forms are, in your opinion, the most efficient?
- What are the biggest barriers to effective and efficient cooperation between science and business in your local environment?
- How could existing barriers in this field be reduced?
- What are the key tasks for business and Academia to stimulate their cooperation?

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- What should be done by the local authorities and other stakeholders to help entrepreneurs and scientists with cooperation?
- What is the awareness of entrepreneurs and scientists about business and Academia cooperation?
- What are the main research fields that shall be prioritised to start with the launch of the local PhD Hub?
- How and when are the activities enlarged to whole disciplines?

Further information and examples (including templates) on the topics of UBC and international cooperation in doctoral education are available in the [resources section](#) of phdhub.eu.

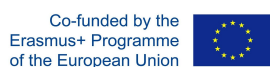
## 5. Strategic line 2: Use of PhD results in Industry

The transferability and the applicability of the PhD results in the industry should be facilitated by the local Hub. This depends primarily on the University's vision and the already existing frameworks of cooperation with the industry as well as the identification and development of a clear policy cooperation framework that focuses on different key aspects such as funding and legal regulations.

- What is, in your opinion, the present use of PhD results in industry sector?
- To what extent existing national legal regulations (legal acts, regulations, etc) facilitate the use of PhD results in industry sector?
- To what extent existing national legal regulations (legal acts, regulations, etc) impede the use of PhD results in industry sector?
- To what extent do existing financing systems of the R&D sector facilitate the use of PhD results in industry sector?
- To what extent do existing financing systems of the R&D sector impede the use of PhD results in industry sector? What changes in this system are necessary to introduce?
- What is the level of awareness of regional policy-makers about the role of PhD results in the development of industry sector?
- What are the benefits for students, companies and other stakeholders to join the local PhD hub?

Examples of local PhD Hub strategies (Alcalá, Birmingham, Lodz, Thessaloniki Hubs) can be found in the [resources section](#) of phdhub.eu.

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## 6. Unrolling the PhD Hub strategy

The previous definition of the local Hub's objectives, actors, the identification of their needs and the inherent opportunities and peculiarities of the local environment will inform the unrolling of the local Hub strategy into concrete actions.

Those actions can take various forms but should always be accompanied by a clear definition of i) the impact objectives, ii) target groups, iii) resources provision, as well as, iv) quantitative and qualitative indicators which will support the evaluation of the strategy and its adjustment over time.

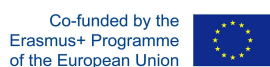
The implementation of the strategy should follow coherent planning of actions and can potentially be adjusted with the local environment needs. The different actors' roles should be defined and assigned by the University to allow for maximum impact. We recommend that the University nominate an academic coordinator<sup>3</sup> and a technical contact person to best implement and develop the local PhD Hub.

In addition, local Hub members should work together to define a dissemination plan which will ensure that the local Hub is sustainable and attract new business partners and potential PhD talents in their community.

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<sup>3</sup> A local academic coordinator is a nominated person at a given University who is in charge of coordinating the activities of the local PhD Hub. They are the responsible and main contact person for partner businesses and fellow academics who are part of their local Hub.

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