



D5.6 Synthesis of Impact report

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Introduction

This document is a **synthesis of the Impact report** (full report available [here](#)) of the Erasmus+ eCHOing project (Recovery of cultural heritage through higher education-driven open innovation).

The report analyses the sustainability potential of collaboration between academia-cultural heritage organisations' (CHOs) for the recovery of the cultural heritage sector through open innovation projects (OIPs). The impact assessment is carried out as a result of the implementation of OIPs by eCHOing academic partners and CHOs, and it is based on three key factors, namely:

- governance,
- financing and
- social engagement.

The report presents and analyses the impact of the OIPs as reflected in the replies of the three target groups of the project, namely: higher education staff, students and cultural heritage staff.

The synthesis has been enriched by an AI-enabled application when it comes to Results and Key Insights. Authors have checked the validity of the displayed text as well as curated its content where needed.

Rationale

By acknowledging the urgent need for collective action in the face of past and ongoing social challenges, from COVID-19 to the climate emergency, eCHOing highlights the value of academia-cultural heritage (CH) collaboration through open innovation as a basis for societal and financial sustainability of the institutions involved and their communities.

In this framework, the project echoes the increased European and global attention to map and better understand how to forge resilient and sustainable pathways for CH. The eCHOing OIPs aimed to enhance collaboration between HEIs and small CHOs in Europe, particularly in the aftermath of social challenges, such as the COVID-19 pandemic; a collaboration that is set to further nurture and contribute to the revival of the CH sector.

About eCHOing

This synthesis is part of the project “Recovery of cultural heritage through higher education-driven open innovation” (eCHOing, <https://www.ntnu.edu/echoing/>). eCHOing investigates the ways in which HEIs support cultural heritage revival after the COVID-19 pandemic through open innovation.

The results contained in this document are based on the eCHOing Impact report available [here](#).

Impact assessment of Open Innovation Projects (OIPs)

The process of data collection and the analyses of the input provided by OIP participants through online surveys was carried out from March to May 2024, allowing a robust concentration of replies that helped create the impact report.

Data collection

The data analysed in the report were collected by five project partners, namely NTNU, SA, SU, TU and OSYGY, who organised and implemented 28 project OIPs. These partners distributed the online surveys to OIP participants (higher education students, staff, CH staff), thus making sure the necessary input is collected to facilitate impact assessment of the OIPs.

The impact analysis of the eCHOInG OIPs was based on responses collected at specific times (pre-, post-, 6 months post-OIP). This way, we made sure particular features and input expressed by the OIP participants was concretely depicted in the report.

Overall, eCHOInG partners gathered 290 replies from participants of the project OIPs during the three collection periods. Specifically, 23% of respondents were higher education staff (68 individuals), 54% were higher education students (157 individuals) and 22% were CH staff (65 individuals).

Results and Key insights

An overview of key insights and recommendations of the impact analysis is presented below:

Financial Viability and Support

1. **Pre-OIP Financial Viability:**
 - 68% of higher education (HE) staff believed that OIPs were financially viable.
 - This initial optimism highlights the perceived potential for integrating OIPs into institutional budgets and strategic planning.
2. **Post-OIP Institutional Support:**
 - 61% of HE staff received financial support from their institutions post-OIP.
 - This drop from 68% to 61% suggests that while initial expectations were high, some institutions faced challenges in maintaining financial support during the OIP implementation phase.
3. **Six Months Post-OIP Funding Applications:**
 - 50% of HE staff applied for funding to organize new OIPs.

- The 50% application rate indicates a continued interest and perceived need for financial resources to sustain and expand OIPs, but also reflects a potential decrease in available or accessible funding over time.

Partnership Formation and Continuity

1. Pre-OIP Partnership Intentions:

- **60%** of HE staff planned to establish partnerships with cultural heritage organizations (CHOs).
- This demonstrates a strong initial intent to collaborate, recognizing the value of partnerships for enhancing educational and cultural projects.

2. Post-OIP Partnership Establishment:

- Nearly all HE staff established partnerships post-OIP, showing a successful translation of intent into action.
- This near-universal partnership formation underscores the efficacy of the OIP framework in facilitating collaboration between HEIs and CHOs.

External Funding Perception

1. Post-OIP External Funding Importance:

- External funding was deemed crucial by most HE staff post-OIP.
- This highlights the recognition of external funding as vital for sustaining OIPs beyond initial institutional support, emphasizing the need for diverse funding sources.

2. Six Months Post-OIP Funding Valuation:

- The majority of HE staff still valued external funding highly.
- This consistent valuation points to the ongoing importance of external funding in the long-term sustainability and scalability of OIPs.

Cultural Heritage Staff Involvement

1. Pre-OIP CHO Partnerships:

- **88.9%** of cultural heritage (CH) staff intended to partner with universities.
- This high percentage indicates a strong initial commitment from CHOs to engage with HEIs for mutual benefits in cultural and educational projects.

2. Post-OIP CHO Partnership Realization:

- **84.2%** of CH staff established partnerships post-OIP, showing a slight decrease from the initial intent.
- The slight drop suggests that while most CHOs succeeded in forming partnerships, some faced obstacles that prevented full realization of initial plans.

3. Six Months Post-OIP CHO Funding Applications:

- **85.7%** of CH staff had not applied for funding from their institution.

- This indicates a significant gap in the follow-through on securing financial resources, potentially due to institutional barriers or a lack of awareness/support for funding opportunities within CHOs.

Key Insights

1. Financial Challenges:

- The reduction in financial support from pre-OIP expectations to post-OIP realities and further to six months post-OIP applications underscores the financial challenges in sustaining OIPs. Continuous and diverse funding mechanisms are necessary to overcome these challenges.

2. Partnership Efficacy:

- The successful establishment of partnerships by nearly all HE staff post-OIP reflects the effectiveness of the OIP framework in fostering collaborations. These partnerships are crucial for the sustainability of cultural heritage projects.

3. External Funding Reliance:

- The consistent importance placed on external funding highlights a reliance on external sources to sustain OIPs. This reliance points to the need for HEIs and CHOs to actively seek and secure diverse funding avenues.

4. Engagement and Follow-Through:

- The high initial engagement from CH staff and the slight drop in actual partnership formation, along with the low percentage of CH staff applying for funding, indicate a need for better support systems and resources to help CHOs navigate funding landscapes and maintain long-term engagements.

For a detailed analysis of the impact of the eCHOing OIPs, please refer to the full version of the Impact report available [here](#), on the project official website.

Acknowledgements

This synthesis was produced as part of PR5 of the EU-funded project “Recovery of cultural heritage through higher education-driven open innovation” (<https://www.ntnu.edu/echoing/>, Project Number: 2021-1-NO01-KA220-HED-000031986). The authors of this synthesis would like to thank all of eCHOing’s partner organisations for their input into the implementation and evaluation of the project OIPs, as well as all academic and CH participants of the OIPs who shared their feedback that is analysed in the impact report and synthesis. We would like to warmly thank Claire Fragkiadaki for contributing to the data analysis that made the PR5 Impact report and synthesis possible.