Mobility Innovation Hubs - Platform

Bridging the data-analysis capacity for agile decision-making

We propose the creation of mobility-oriented digital platforms to provide a direct, hassle-free link between policy makers and transdisciplinary researchers. We think that early identification of key research questions (and data needs) can provide future-proof solutions for the arising challenges.

Team: Transporama

Team members

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Solution Details

Solution description

We focused on identifying some key drawbacks of dealing with the introduction of new mobility solutions and its business models. Especially, we concentrated in the main obstacles to overcome in order to speed up the decision-making process to define regulatory frameworks in a fast-paced way.

The proposed platform works as a two-way solution to dynamically develop a proactive policy agenda: first, by enabling researchers and policy-makers to work and share expertise in a seamless, systematic and approachable way. It could allow the prompt identification of key research questions revolving urban mobility, and how it expands to other policy areas. Second, by providing a proxy for research institutions to have a better grip of data from private actors in the mobility sectors. What is pretended with this is to identify, as early as possible, not only current, but future policy gaps, as well as defining the data needed to fill them, and the analysis capabilities that the public sector many times struggles to fulfil to exploit these data (across different knowledge domains).

Solution context

The quick and almost ubiquitous appearance of new mobility services that fit less and less within the existing regulatory frameworks are creating an increasing need for fast paced, research-based policy.

To provide suitable insights that respond to these needs it is necessary to have in hand data that many times is either not yet available to the local authorities, or even when it becomes available to them (through contracts, licenses or other means of cooperation with the Private Sector) it surpasses their capabilities to extract information from it.

On the other hand, companies have almost an unbounded ability to increase their technical capacity (human resources, systems, etc.) to take advantage of the ever-growing databases in virtually no time. However, this is not the case for the Public Sector, which continues to rely on research performed by Universities to help them balance their lack of capacity.

We argue that researchers struggle to get access to the data they need for their work (think about impacts of New Mobility Services). Local Authorities are in the position to get this data through different mechanisms, but their capacity to analyse it is limited. Furthermore, when they recur to Universities to find out how can researchers aid the process of policy-making, the data they have in hand is not sufficient to provide the right level of insight. This makes the entire process slow, tedious and ineffective.

If we reverse the process, if researchers are enabled to make open enquiries to policy-makers in a more approachable, "always-on" and, systematic way, there are better chances that key questions, along with the data requirements and analysis capacity to try to answer those questions, are available since the initial phases of the public-private collaboration process.

The challenge we are trying to solve is how to make this naturally symbiotic process more agile and effective.

Solution target group

The result of having more effective and pro-active policy-making represents a benefit for all the society, however those directly involved in the process are Public Authorities, the Private Sector and Universities.

- Public Authorities can make better informed and more effective policy-making aided by research capacity
- Private Sector can reach market-readiness faster and through less troublesome processes
- Universities can have take a more active role in society whilst improve their research outputs

Solution impact

At a macro level, the possible impacts of more effective and pro-active policy-making are difficult to quantify and would certainly extend to different levels of the society. It may range from direct, "easily" quantifiable economic impacts of enabling businesses to enter the market faster, to indirect economic and social costs derived of decisions affecting the long-term health of the population. What seems clear to us, is that saving time to all parties involved, would be reflected over a very wide spectrum of benefits.

Solution tweet text

More agile policy-making by unlocking the role of Universities with digital collaborative platforms! Ask insightful questions, early in the process, get access to good quality data.

Solution innovativeness

There are multiple examples of deep collaboration between Local Authorities and Universities, however, we have yet to find an example of a digital platform to enable this in a more systematic and approachable way.

The difference with the current approach is that a digital platform is always available, and is not linked to a physical conversation, consultations or working groups, providing a more flexible way of interaction and discussion.The idea of having a platform to enable researchers beyond the local level, and from diverse knowledge areas to ask open questions to Policy-Makers and vice-versa is something that to our knowledge, remains unexploited.

Solution transferability

This idea can be transferred to many areas that require taking decisions that would benefit from having a wider and pro-active group of experts to assist in from very early stages of a given design process. Be it policies or products.

Solution sustainability

We see this kind of digital collaboration platforms as an easy way to enable a collaborative way of solving challenges, that are either unseen by many, or that are so intricate that can only be unlocked by combining different disciplines and interests. As there are always challenges to solve in our cities, we consider this as viable, approachable way for all active community members to pitch in insightful points that can aid the many policy-making processes that the Local Authorities undergo on a rolling basis.

Furthermore, the relationships between Universities and Local Authorities are becoming more and more necessary to fill the already increasing disparity gap in data-processing capabilities between the Public and Private Sectors. Hence, having these platforms may become a way to overcome this issue by tackling the true data-needs for good quality research that can underpin better informed, and more agile policy-making.

Solution team work

It was very cool, we did not know each other before this event. We focused on finding a common ground of interest, and departed from there. This made the process more effective, as we both went on a quest for topics that aligned well to provide a solution to the challenge.

Sure, it would be very nice to have the chance to work together in the future.