ClouT's lessons learned

There is increased attention towards the identification of ways to make the research project results sustainable after the end of the project. The challenges project teams have to face in reaching such objective must not be underestimated. Here we would like to share the experience had within the ClouT project mainly related to addressing two important issues that arise when we need to deal with exploitation, value proposition, customers, business models etc. within research projects: 1) the different way of approaching these activities and the difficulty in establishing a common ground among the Consortium partners that work in different contexts (e.g. universities, research centres, SMEs, large enterprises) 2) the translation of the innovative technological results of the project, into something that can be easily understood and the value proposition of which can be perceived by the outside world.

One of the first steps ClouT team performed, at the early stages of the project lifetime, was to find a common language inside the Consortium when discussing activities regarding business modeling related topics. This task must not be undervalued.

The difference in experience and background of the members of the Consortium is surely a point in favour of interesting, fruitful and multi view discussions but in other cases it may hinder communication between the outreach team and the technical team. Marketing oriented partners and more technical oriented partners need to tightly cooperate in order to better understand what are the project results, what are the main features, what needs do they satisfy, why should users choose the project result and not another solution and many other questions. Furthermore, these questions cannot be left unanswered until the later stages of the project. In fact, in ClouT we established an iterative process during which the first ideas and assumptions were then re-discussed and this often brought to new assumptions or a refinement of previous ones.

The initial ideas on what the value proposition of an R&D project result is, are usually too focused on technical features which are surely interesting and can satisfy one or more users needs but when it comes to getting the results out of the research lab we need to strongly re-work the first ideas, translate the "technical solution" into the "solution that addresses customer/user's needs".

More techie oriented people know exactly what the technology is doing and are eager to let everyone know how smart, innovative it is but they need to translate technological features into *pain relievers* and *gain creators* so that customers can understand their value. Customers are not really interested in what and how the technology 'does it' as long as it addresses their needs. Of course, we must not forget the important role pilot partners play in this activity as they represent the easiest way to have an insight on potential customers needs and they can be the first testers of the assumptions made.

There are some tools and methodologies available online that can support the project team in performing the above activities. For ClouT we decided to use the tools and methodology proposed by Osterwalder and Co. that can be found on the Strategyzer website: https://strategyzer.com/.

The tools supported ClouT in different ways: in using the same terminology, in identifying the value proposition, in analysing potential business models but also in representing all the information collected in a simplified and visual way making it easier to involve all partners in thinking, sharing and discussing exploitation and business model related topics.