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KNOWLEDGE VALORISATION: CONCEPT, FUNCTION, AND ROLE OF VALORIZATION CENTERS

Abstract

The term *knowledge valorisation* refers to the process of transforming knowledge generated through scientific research or education into social and/or economic impact. This includes its use in applications, innovations, technologies, policies, and products. Through this process, scientific findings are turned into concrete results that contribute to the development of society and the economy. Institutions known as knowledge-valorisation centres play a key role in enabling this transfer of knowledge. These centres may include university-based units, technology transfer offices, or innovation centres, whose main function is to connect the academic community, researchers, industry, and society. In addition, knowledge valorisation mobilises intellectual and human capital, ensuring that knowledge does not remain “locked” within academic institutions but becomes a resource that drives innovation. Ultimately, knowledge valorisation helps bridge the gap between academia and industry, facilitates knowledge transfer, and stimulates growth.

Key terms: knowledge valorisation, innovation, sustainability

Introduction

Valorisation of knowledge is one of the key concepts in the modern system of higher education, innovation policy, and the research ecosystem. In its broadest sense, it refers to the process through which academic, scientific, or professional knowledge is transformed into practical, socially useful, and economically sustainable outcomes. While the traditional role of universities focused mainly on creating and disseminating knowledge, contemporary development requires a “third mission” – active contribution to society through innovation, technological advancement, partnerships with industry, and support for public policies.

Knowledge-valorisation centres play a multifaceted and complex role in this process. They help identify valuable ideas, assess their market potential, support the protection of intellectual property, connect researchers with industry partners, and manage commercialisation projects. In addition, these centres act as intermediaries between three key spheres – academia, industry, and society – enabling knowledge to circulate in both directions. This function is especially important in educational and research systems where new generations of students expect more dynamic, flexible, and modern learning approaches, which places additional demands on existing knowledge-transfer structures (Čekrlija, 2024).

The aim of this paper is to analyse the concept of knowledge valorisation, define its essential elements, and explain the role of knowledge-valorisation centres by using relevant European practices and contemporary scientific literature. The research focuses on understanding the role of these centres in the knowledge-transfer process, their contribution to innovation, and the key barriers and challenges faced in the implementation of valorisation systems in developing countries. Universities in developing contexts conduct valorisation of their research results, which broadens the perspective not only toward the ideal function of valorisation but also toward its practical realities (Leon-Roa & Zúñiga-Collazos, 2024).

Methodology

The methodology of this study is based on the analysis of secondary data and documented experiences related to the functioning of knowledge-valorisation centres within the contemporary European academic and innovation environment (European Commission, 2020; ASTP, 2025). A review of relevant literature, strategic guidelines of the European Commission, institutional documents, and reporting practices was conducted to systematically understand the mechanisms, functions, and roles of these centres in the knowledge-transfer process (European Commission, 2020). The analysis also incorporates experiences from centres operating in different European contexts, allowing for a broader understanding of the opportunities and challenges associated with implementing knowledge-valorisation systems (European Commission, 2020).

Results

The European Commission acts as a key driver in promoting knowledge valorisation across Europe, supporting research institutions, universities, and technology-transfer centres through a range of initiatives and institutional frameworks (European Commission, 2020). One of the central instruments in this domain is the *Competence Centre on Technology Transfer (CC TT)*, established in 2018, which provides technical and operational support for technology-transfer capacities, the financing of commercialisation, and the design of innovation ecosystems (European Commission, 2020). Through its activities, the CC TT enables member states, research organisations, and universities to systematically establish and strengthen functional structures for knowledge valorisation (European Commission, 2020). The Commission recommends that knowledge-valorisation units should not function merely as administrative structures, but as integral components of the innovation ecosystem—supported by expert teams for intellectual-property management, clear procedures for transfer and commercialisation, flexible financial models, and open channels of cooperation with industry and the public sector (European Commission, 2020). Centres are expected to engage in networking, support start-ups, disseminate knowledge, and assist researchers through a wide range of services—from advisory support and intellectual-property protection to implementation and commercialisation (European Commission, 2020). This framework demonstrates that coordinated policies, financing mechanisms, and institutional professionalisation can effectively bridge the gap between academic research and industrial or practical application—and that knowledge-valorisation centres play a central role in this process (European Commission, 2020). For developing countries, adopting such a European model may serve as a catalyst for strengthening innovation capacities, improving science–industry cooperation, and enabling the creation of sustainable start-ups and technologies (ASTP, 2025). According to a catalogue compiled by the European Commission, more than 1,500 institutions and organisations involved in technology transfer and knowledge valorisation operate across Europe, covering both EU member states and candidate countries (European Commission, 2020).

A strong example of effective knowledge valorisation can be found in Poland, through the Wrocław Centre for Technology Transfer (WCTT) at the Wrocław University of Science and Technology—an independent unit founded in 1995 with the mission of commercialising scientific research, supporting innovation, and facilitating cooperation between researchers and industry (European Commission, 2020). Another illustrative case is the Portuguese centre ISCTE Conhecimento e Inovação (ISCTE C&I) at ISCTE – Instituto Universitário de Lisboa, which highlights the interdisciplinary nature of knowledge valorisation by integrating social sciences and digital technologies (European Commission, 2020). This centre aims to translate research findings in areas such as communication, management, and technology into innovative products, services, and processes that benefit society.

Discussion and Recommendations

An analysis of the European Commission's activities and the experiences of centres such as the Wrocław Centre for Technology Transfer (Poland) and ISCTE Conhecimento e Inovação (Portugal) shows that knowledge-valorisation centres share a universal and essential role: they act as catalysts that transform academic research into concrete social and economic outcomes. They support intellectual-property protection, innovation commercialisation, industry partnerships, and the development of start-ups and spin-offs, thereby connecting universities, industry, and society.

Their effectiveness depends on institutional capacity, organisational structure, available financial and human resources, and the efficiency of knowledge-transfer processes. Experience shows that an interdisciplinary approach—linking technical, natural, and social sciences—and strong connections to local and international innovation ecosystems significantly enhance their impact and sustainability.

Applying successful models requires a strategic approach: strengthening institutional capacities, professionalising management, systematically supporting researchers and students, and improving collaboration between academia, industry, and the public sector. With these elements, knowledge-valorisation centres can become drivers of innovation, stimulate economic growth, and ensure the long-term sustainability of research outcomes.

Based on examples from Poland and Portugal and the European Commission's guidelines, key recommendations include establishing clear organisational structures, employing professional teams with expertise in IP management, commercialisation, and project administration, and integrating interdisciplinarity into all activities. Centres should offer education, access to resources and infrastructure, and advisory and technology-transfer services. Adopting established good practices helps standardise procedures and improve the overall quality of knowledge-transfer processes.

Conclusion

Knowledge-valorisation centres play a vital role in connecting academic research with industry and society. They support the transformation of scientific results into innovations, products, and services, and contribute to the development of start-ups and spin-off companies. The analysis shows that the success of these centres depends on institutional capacity, professional management, an interdisciplinary approach, systematic cooperation with industry and the public sector, and the availability of resources for researchers and students. Implementing well-established European practices can significantly enhance knowledge-valorisation capacities and contribute to economic development, innovation, and societal benefit. As key elements of modern innovation ecosystems, knowledge-valorisation centres are essential for ensuring that academic knowledge is transformed into real and applicable outcomes.

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