



CIVIS Alliance – Open Lab Project

Impact Assessment Report

01 – PROJECT DESCRIPTION

- Title of the project** Y.O.D.A. — Youth for Open Digital Acquisitions
- Project coordinator** Sébastien Clerbois (ULB, Faculty of Philosophy and Social Sciences), scientific coordinator; operational coordination carried by the PANORAMA interfaculty platform (ULB).
- Universities involved** ULB — PANORAMA (*proponent / lead institution*) ; UNIL — NUCLEUS centre ; AMU — LAMPEA.
- Hub theme** Society, culture, heritage; Health & Digital and Technological transformation
- Duration of activities** March–June 2026
- Place of the activities** Lausanne, Brussels, Marseille. Activities outside of the EU were covered with other funding

02 – PARTNERS/TARGET AUDIENCE

Number of internal and external stakeholders involved in and impacted by the project

INTERNAL (All CIVIS universities)				EXTERNAL (All CIVIS cities/regions)	
Academics	Researchers	Students	Admin personnel	Citizens	Other - please specify
6	5	1	1		5

Non-university associations and organisations that have been involved in the project

ASSOCIATIONS/ORGANISATIONS		
Name	Country	Description
CIPA Heritage Documentation	International	NGO
Direction du Patrimoine numérique (DPN) – Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles	Belgium	Administration
Musée de Préhistoire des Gorges du Verdon (MPGV)	France	Museum

03 – PROJECT IMPACT

Social dimension

YODA's primary social impact lies in the collaborations it established across sectors that rarely work together on the same object. The project brought three CIVIS universities (ULB, UNIL, AMU) into sustained co-operation with two structuring professional partners — CIPA Heritage Documentation, an international network linked to ICOMOS and ISPRS, and the Direction du Patrimoine numérique, a Wallonia-Brussels public authority — as well as a heritage institution, the Musée de Préhistoire des Gorges du Verdon, which tested the project's output. These interactions were genuinely co-creative rather than top-down: across three workshops, academics, technical platform staff, an international professional body and a public administration jointly defined the problem and progressively built the toolkit through iterative dialogue, each partner contributing situated knowledge (scientific, technical, institutional, procurement-related).

The project's contribution to knowledge lies in surfacing and beginning to bridge a "common language" gap between commissioners, providers, researchers and data managers, and in identifying an emerging intermediation function between these actors. Its inclusion dimension is embedded in the toolkit's purpose itself: it is designed to make 3D heritage decision-making accessible to non-specialists — curators, small institutions, decision-makers without in-house 3D expertise — thereby reducing the knowledge asymmetry that currently disadvantages less-resourced actors. The DPN confirmed that even the smallest structures can be supported on this basis.

Cultural dimension

YODA's cultural impact rests on its capacity to link knowledge across sectors and to make specialised competences more accessible. The project produced a cross-institutional inventory of existing 3D heritage training across the three universities, rendering visible how competences are distributed between disciplines (archaeology, architecture, anthropology, digital humanities, conservation) and formats (semester courses, continuing education, master's seminars, individual mentoring, VR project support). This mapping is itself a cultural contribution: it connects previously fragmented pedagogical offers and establishes a shared reference base for the field.

The project's central output — the YODA toolkit — is a methodological mediation tool rather than a technical manual. Its cultural value lies in fostering a new way of approaching heritage digitisation projects: it helps commissioners clarify uses, describe objects and sites, anticipate constraints and prepare dialogue with providers before any acquisition. It embeds a shared vocabulary (lexicon in annex) intended to reduce the terminological instability that undermines cross-professional exchange. The toolkit was tested in a real use case (the La Fare burial, MPG), and this beta test directly shaped its editorial orientation toward self-questioning rather than form-filling.

Economic dimension

The most tangible economic outcome is leverage: the project directly generated a follow-up proposal, YODA2, prepared during the AMU workshop and aimed at extending the consortium (notably to the Universities of Sfax and Hassan II of Casablanca) — evidence that the initial funding seeded further project development rather than a one-off deliverable.

The toolkit also carries an indirect economic rationale centred on the removal of economic barriers. By helping commissioners clarify uses and specifications before commissioning, it aims to reduce the wasted expenditure that arises from ill-defined 3D projects — a concern confirmed by the DPN, whose accumulated experience is precisely what allows institutions to avoid losing time and money (over 90% of accompanied projects reaching exploitable results). Because the toolkit is designed for open-access, free distribution, it lowers the entry cost to sound project design for less-resourced institutions.

Added value for the beneficiaries

YODA's added value is concentrated in what it gives its beneficiaries the capacity to do. **For heritage institutions and commissioners** — particularly those without in-house 3D expertise — the toolkit provides

a means to move from a vague intention ("we want 3D") to a structured, discussable and contractible request: clarifying uses, describing the object and its constraints, preparing the dialogue with providers, and anticipating deliverables, data, rights and long-term preservation. This addresses a documented inequality of competence: the report shows that commissioners and providers often lack a shared reference base, leaving less-resourced institutions at a disadvantage when specifying and receiving work.

The value is created through a learning approach rather than prescription. The toolkit is built to prompt self-questioning, helping users identify what they already know, what they must clarify, and where specialist (technical, legal, administrative) input is needed — a posture confirmed and refined through the MPGV beta test. Beneficiaries extend beyond commissioners: providers gain clearer, more comparable briefs; intermediate profiles (support cells, university platforms, facilitators) gain a working support; and the wider field benefits from the project's identification of an emerging intermediation function, which points toward more accessible, better-governed and more sustainable 3D heritage projects.

Relevance to the context

At the international and transnational level, YODA's relevance stems directly from its CIVIS framing: it addresses a problem — the fragmentation of 3D heritage practices — that CIPA Heritage Documentation confirmed is not specific to Belgium, Switzerland or France but recurs across professional networks internationally (data quality, format sustainability, interoperability, the scarcity of intermediate profiles). The project's planned continuation, YODA2, extends this relevance further by proposing to integrate African CIVIS Associate Members (University of Sfax, Hassan II University of Casablanca), which would test the toolkit's transferability across markedly different institutional, economic and patrimonial contexts.

At the national and local level, the project responds directly to a documented need: the Direction du Patrimoine numérique confirmed that most Belgian heritage institutions initiate 3D projects without in-house expertise and rely on external accompaniment, often at a real risk of disproportionate or unrealistic expectations relative to available means. YODA's toolkit is designed precisely to close that gap for local museums, heritage services and public administrations.

Internally, the project reflects a deliberate institutional strategy of engaging with community-facing needs rather than academic questions alone: none of the three universities treated 3D heritage training as sufficient in itself, and each reoriented its contribution mid-project — from a training-gap diagnosis toward a methodological mediation tool — once dialogue with CIPA and the Direction du Patrimoine Numérique revealed that the unmet need lay in commissioning practice, not technical instruction. This shift is itself evidence of the universities' capacity to adapt their research and engagement agenda to a real, externally-voiced community need.

Explain how the project has fulfilled the goals and objectives of the European project CIVIS2 (Erasmus+, 2022 - 2026)

YODA has fulfilled the Stream 1 objectives primarily through WP4's ambition to establish knowledge co-creating teams involving universities and local/global partners, and to boost civic engagement through Open Labs projects. The project built a genuine tripartite co-creation team — three CIVIS universities (ULB, UNIL, AMU) working alongside CIPA Heritage Documentation (international professional network) and the Direction du Patrimoine numérique (Walloon-Brussels public authority) — that jointly defined the problem and iteratively shaped the output across three workshops, rather than each partner contributing separately to a predefined plan. This also answers WP2's objective of building bridges between academia and local social/institutional stakeholders: the DPN's operational experience with under-resourced heritage institutions directly reoriented the project's deliverable.

Consistent with WP2's objective to set up and share tools addressing societal challenges, the project's central output shifted, in response to partner dialogue, from a training-gap diagnosis toward the YODA toolkit — a concrete, shareable methodological tool designed for open-access reuse by commissioners and institutions beyond the original consortium. The beta test with the Musée de Préhistoire des Gorges du Verdon demonstrates the tool's transferability to real institutional practice, fulfilling the "facilitate participation of associated partners" objective at a practical level.

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Member universities :

amU Aix
Marseille
Université

HELLENIC REPUBLIC
National and Kapodistrian
University of Athens

ULB UNIVERSITÉ
LIBRE
DE BRUXELLES

UNIVERSITY OF
BUCHAREST

University
of Glasgow

Unil.

UAM Universidad Autónoma
de Madrid

SAPIENZA
UNIVERSITÀ DI ROMA

PARIS
LODRON
UNIVERSITÄT
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