



# D1.7 – Think NEXUS Think Tank final report and sustainability plan



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<p><b>Abstract</b></p> <p>This deliverable summarises the main outcomes of the Think Tank that was created during the Think NEXUS project. The document is organised into two main categories: firstly, the final reporting, the basic principles and the composition of Think Tank and secondly the sustainable activities towards achieving long term goals and operations of the Think Tank after the project's end. The conclusions of this document are based on targeted discussions with Think Tank experts and strategic stakeholders from within the NGI community. Key members of the Think NEXUS consortium and strategic members of the Think Tank (experts) are willing to provide support for the continuation of EU-US collaboration towards strategic directions. addressed at policy stakeholders, research and industry representatives and the experts are committed to sharing in this animation work and actively participate in Think Tank meetings.</p>
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<b>Contributing partners</b>	GAC, SPI, AUS
<b>Reviewer(s)</b>	Marc Pattinson (GAC)

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## Acronyms and definitions

<b>Acronym</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
<b>AI</b>	Artificial Intelligence
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>GDPR</b>	General Data Protection Regulation
<b>US</b>	United States
<b>IoT</b>	Internet of Things
<b>NGI</b>	Next Generation Internet
<b>D</b>	Deliverable
<b>R&amp;I</b>	Research and Innovation
<b>SMEs</b>	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
<b>WP</b>	Work Package
<b>S&amp;T</b>	Science and Technology

# Think NEXUS project

The Internet of the future should be more open, provide better services, more intelligence, greater involvement and participation. It needs to reflect the European values". EU's Next Generation Internet initiative is a key opportunity to rethink the way the Internet works today and develop a vision involving voices from across Europe, the US, and beyond, an Internet that embodies the values Europe holds dear, such as openness, inclusivity, transparency, privacy and cooperation.

Thinking globally, the NGI will be successful only if a worldwide consensus is found, enabling the internet a Human-centric process. To that end, collaboration between the EU and the US is essential, both areas being strongly committed to develop the future of Internet, to shape a sustainable landscape for NGI developments. Indeed, the NGI initiative should design specific actions for policy collaboration, shared technology development and interaction between user-communities, with other initiatives in the world where parts of the NGI infrastructure are designed and deployed; and the US are one of the main places where such activities are held.

Think NEXUS aims to facilitate and reinforce EU-US collaboration, through its dedicated think tank, involving major stakeholders (researchers, entrepreneurs, policy makers) from both sides of the Atlantic on NGI-related thematic in three Focus Areas: Science and Technology, Innovation and Entrepreneurship and Policy. Its mission is to become an important and lasting entity, involving stakeholders and disseminating NGI visions in a collaborative approach for tackling NGI challenges, and benefit society at large. More specifically, Think NEXUS is expected to boost the strategic research, industrial partnerships and policy compliances among the respective communities of the NGI areas and thus, result in substantial socio-economic benefits in both the EU and US regions.

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## Executive summary

This report “D1.7 Think NEXUS Think Tank final report and sustainability plan” provides structured information about the strategic outline of the Think Tank with the goal to link EU-US research, innovation and policy, as it has been reported during the project’s lifetime. In order to pave the way towards the proper exploitation and sustainability of the Think NEXUS Think Tank offering beyond its lifespan, several actions have been planned for the future, guided by a dedicated Sustainability Plan. The first part of this document summarises the basic principles, operations and responsibilities of the Think Tank, while the second one contains detailed information about the roadmap towards achieving long term goals and operations after the project’s end. Moreover, this document provides a description of strategies necessary to ensure an efficient and effective operation of the Think Nexus’ Think Tank for achieving the goals and objectives beyond the projects’ duration, through a sustainability plan. Finally, this report also provides the terms of reference for the group’s long-term operations, tentative action plan and it also outlines the framework for the establishment of Think NEXUS as an EU-US NGI Cluster in the future. The contents and recommendations included in this report have been developed in close consultation with key members of the Think Tank Experts (US and EU representatives) and discussions with the NGI project community.

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Scope of the document

This document includes information about the completed strategic outline of the THINK NEXUS Think Tank as well as the roadmap for achieving long-term goals and strategies to continue the proposed activities and partnerships. The current deliverable is a public document and it is directly related to the work implemented throughout the whole project and more specifically to the outcomes of WP1. The Sustainability Plan is an important programme component to address the upcoming planning and the different implementation stages. The Think NEXUS Think Tank assets created and obtained during the three years of project implementation, enabling the deployment of many EU – US collaboration activities. Any ongoing or future planned initiative targeting cooperation between the two regions among the NGI related technologies, could thus exploit the assets beyond the project's duration.

The structure of the current document is described in this paragraph. The previous part includes the "Introduction" and explains the purpose and intent of this document, while the description of the "Scope" and the "Structure" of the document, in the following paragraphs, we provide more detailed information about the document. One chapter is dedicated to the work done during the project's implementation and connects the different deliverables that have been developed with respect to the Think Tank operation and strategic outlines. After that, the three pillars of the Think Tank concepts are analysed in order to facilitate the organization and the description of the detailed sustainability plan, which is the main purpose of this document - "Think Tank sustainability plan". Finally, the conclusions of the document are described in the last section. Some of the main elements to be found in this document include:

Introduction

Scope & Structure

Think Tank operation and strategic outlines

Think Tank sustainability plan

Conclusions

## 1.2. Relationship to other outcomes and deliverables

Taking into account that in the scope of the overall project the Think Tank is one of the main pillars of Think NEXUS project, it can be concluded that the definition of its concept and strategy had a huge influence on the whole ambition. This document is the final report and aims to gather and connect the work done previously, as it was described in the project's deliverables. More specifically, the work that refers to the operation of the Think Tank (in WP1), has been previously and partially described in relevant deliverables that are worth recalling here. Deliverable D1.1 "Think NEXUS Think Tank operational guidelines" was directly related with all the work to be implemented not only for the Think Tank operations, but also,



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throughout the whole project. The guidelines produced there, represented the basis of the Think Tank and the Expert Groups, as they provided guidance for members and Expert Group Chairs to perform their functions and to describe the instruments of the Think NEXUS project. It set out the basis regarding the way that the instruments should operate so as to perform correctly and efficiently their functions and activities, in order to ensure “safe spaces” for policy deliberation and debate. The second part of D1.1 included a detailed section about the composition and basic operational principles and procedures related to the operation of the groups. The description and definition of roles, procedures, responsibilities and communication tools from the early stages of the project provided a clear vision of the structures aiming to assist all members and Chairs of these instruments throughout the lifespan of the project. The pre-mentioned document, also, brought together the approved standard procedures for performing activities and operations effectively and efficiently. The document was created to be used by:

### Think Tank Board

- Expert Group Chairs, and
- Think NEXUS consortium members

The aforementioned document was complementary to D1.2 “Think tank strategic outline”, as the combination of both documents provided a holistic approach of the Think NEXUS Think Tank as well as its Expert Groups, released in January 2019. Deliverable 1.2 (D1.2) is a confidential document and it was the first version of a set of 3 deliverables that aimed to sketch out the strategic point of work for the Think NEXUS’ Think Tank throughout the project lifetime. This, first version, focused on the definition of the rationale as well as on the key elements related to the Think Tank, elaborating the target concept behind the framework and outlining the core strategy and priorities. The main chapters include the Operational content and the Think Tank Concept and Strategy. After that, D1.3 – Think Tank strategic outline v2 was the second iteration of the deliverable, released on August 2019. This deliverable represents the update of the previous one, as it took into consideration the feedback and experience gathered in the first year of the initiative, with special focus on the first Workshop on July 2019 (Documented in D2.4 - Thematic Workshop #1 report). The challenge described for 2020 was the ability to create narratives where the vision of the Next Generation Internet Initiative is relevant to the culture of Europe as well as the United States. The 3rd version of the Think Nexus strategic outline, was released through D1.4 - Think tank strategic outline v3, on July 2020. The document oversees the period ranging from the second half of 2020 and the first quarter of 2021, date in which the H2020 project supporting the activities would have been completed. In this context, the synergies and joint preferences between the European digital roadmap were examined. Also, the study conducted under D1.4 was complemented by the assessment of significant policy agendas and working groups from the United States that were expected to provide a strong influence in Transatlantic collaboration over the baseline under consideration.

## 2. Think Tank: Final Concept & Strategy

Think tanks are frequently defined as exchange and discussion platforms that bring together experts and key stakeholders that aim to review, create and implement solutions for today's and tomorrow's social, economic, political and health problems, among others as well as to influence policy development, legislation and public opinion regarding advances in research. The Think NEXUS' Think Tank seeks to creating a framework that aims to become an international node for transatlantic cooperation, in order for the vision of Next Generation Internet to be shaped. Key stakeholders with different backgrounds including technological, business and policy have been 1) bridging the gaps in collaboration in both regions, 2) facilitating the identification of critical priorities and 3) providing actionable recommendations to the European Commission and the NGI community in general. The rationale and key elements related to the Think Tank have been defined from the beginning of the project (D1.2), with a goal to define the operational context under which Think NEXUS is placed and elaborate on the target concepts, strategies and priorities. Taking into consideration the general scope of the overall project, the Think Tank is among its most important activities and has had a strong influence in the governance and sustainability actions in Task 1.2, the recommendations and priorities concerning the Next Generation Internet in Task 1.3, the operation of the Think Tank in WP2 and in many more activities, Tasks and Work packages. The concept of Think Tank is to trigger active dialogues and exchanges of opinions amongst experts and stakeholders, in order to channel discussions towards a more inclusive, trustworthy and sustainable digital future. For this reason, Think NEXUS focused on the formation of three expert groups with multiple stakeholders participation ensuring sufficient engagement from both EU and US regions.

The three expert groups have specific focus areas, where insights from multiple domains are identified and assessed properly, leveraging the knowledge from experts, conversations and dialogues in different groups. The project's Think Tank aims to stimulate dialogue amongst experts and stakeholders, taking into account the innovativeness of the NGI initiative, encompassing technological, innovation and policy considerations. Think NEXUS requires assessing and strengthening such vision from different but complementary standpoints, understanding the diverse nuances of the EU-US joint cooperation and all its potential impacts. In such a context, a multi-thematic Think Tank has been established covering three -complementary but interdependent - focus areas for an effective dialogue: 1) Science + Technology, 2) Innovation + Entrepreneurship and 3) Policy. The subsequent sections are presented according to the activities of the individual expert groups.

### 2.1. Science & Technology Expert Group

In any discussion regarding the Next Generation Internet, scientific and technological issues are of major importance. This group of experts has been leading the science and technology trends and topics of interest, has been providing innovative research and analyses within the NGI community, with respect to both regions. The Think NEXUS Science & Technology Expert Group started its actions during the first Think NEXUS Think Tank Workshop, in the Walter E. Washington Convention Center, Washington D.C. on 10th July 2019. The

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productive discussions that were conducted during and after this Expert Group meeting concluded with the drafting of a set of recommendations (more details in D1.5) for fostering collaboration between the EU and the US. The main set of recommendations can be summarized as:

- Synchronize Science and Technology Policies with recent Technology Developments
- Upgrade the network infrastructure to support NGI experiments
- Engage Active Users and Communities in the Experimentation Process
- Establish a permanent and formal collaboration mechanism between EU and US on NGI
- Focus on non-competitive technologies and application domains
- Establish a transatlantic funding scheme supporting S&T for the NGI

For the next project period, a plan of future workshops and webinars was proposed to further progress the ideas and discussions. This group focused on pure technical aspects of common priorities for both regions as well. Some of the topics of interest are summarised in the table below:

Table 1 - Topics of interest Science & Technology Expert Group

<b>Main topics of interest for ‘Science &amp; Technology’ Expert Group</b>
<i>Internet of Things (IoT)</i>
<i>Quantum technologies and applications</i>
<i>Machine learning at the Edge (with Privacy and Security)</i>
<i>5G technologies</i>
<i>Edge Computing / Cloud Computing</i>
<i>Homomorphic encryption for privacy</i>
<i>Data sovereignty</i>
<i>Blockchains &amp; Distributed Ledgers</i>
<i>Cyberphysical systems / IoT</i>
<i>Future Interactive Technologies</i>
<i>Human in the Loop Control</i>
<i>Big Data / Open Data</i>
<i>Human-centric Internet</i>
<i>Cybersecurity technologies and applications</i>
<i>Anonymity and privacy</i>
<i>Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Autonomous Machines</i>

## 2.2. Innovation & Entrepreneurship Expert Group

This area covers the Go-To-Market approach of NGI, identifying trends and means to foster and speed up the exploitation of the technology. The exploitation of the science and technology results is a key parameter to establish their impact in society. Topics capable to facilitate the creation of added value between regions are

of major importance and have been reported in this group. The Next Generation Internet should pay attention to supporting a human-centric ecosystem, capable to foster industrial competitiveness and encouraging the respect of the rights and values of citizens, rights and interests of producing and using data. The main set of recommendations can be summarized as:

- European Innovation Sovereignty
- Empowering small businesses
- Avoid Overregulation

More specifically, topics that were included in discussions are summarised below :

Table 2 - Think NEXUS Innovation & Entrepreneurship Expert Group

<b>Main topics of interest for ‘Innovation &amp; Entrepreneurship’ Expert Group</b>
<b><i>Competitiveness</i></b>
<b><i>Digital Transformation</i></b>
<b><i>Innovation Ecosystems</i></b>
<b><i>Startup Acceleration</i></b>
<b><i>Internationalisation</i></b>
<b><i>Mobility Schemes</i></b>

### 2.3. Policy Expert Group

Think tanks and academic institutions should be centres of excellence in research, with a special focus on policy research. This area pinpoints crucial policy cooperation between regions, including funding approaches, Internet governance, cyber security, standards and interoperability, data privacy, and ethics. This group analysed topics of common interest, develops actionable insights and proposals that policymakers can trust to foster innovation, growth, and progress. The recommendations and the outcomes of various discussions among participants within the Think NEXUS policy working group, that were discussed during the first Think NEXUS workshop and the following webinars, included the following recommendations (more information in D1.5):

- NGI cooperation support schemes: joint or coordinated funding schemes are needed to enable EU-US collaboration.
- Developing a common language on Artificial Intelligence: EU-US cooperation on AI taxonomy could allow to better tie EU and US developments and mutual understanding, thus fostering this technologies’ growth.
- Building cooperation upon shared values: such as, NGI will affect a wide range of parameters linked to citizens’ rights which are important for both the EU and the US democracies, they could build transatlantic collaboration to face these similar and growing challenges.

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- US and EU standardization bodies' collaboration across NGI technologies: EU and US standardization bodies should set cooperation mechanisms.

Both transatlantic regions are still defining their approaches to the digital economy and regarding the specific regulatory concerns the following issues have been identified as the most prominent.

Table 3 - Think NEXUS Policy Expert Group

<b>Main topics of interest for 'Policy' Expert Group</b>
<i>Competition Policy</i>
<i>Inclusive, Trustworthy and Sustainable Internet</i>
<i>Data Security and Privacy</i>
<i>E-commerce</i>
<i>Taxation of Digital Enterprises</i>
<i>Alternative models for the Internet</i>
<i>Digital Education</i>
<i>Inequality</i>
<i>Reducing Terrorist and Criminal Exploitation of the Internet</i>
<i>Digitalisation of government operations</i>

### 3. Think Tank Sustainability plan

#### 3.1. Overview of Sustainability Activities

The basis for a potential long-standing collaboration between the EU and the US lies in the sharing of common principals, values and perceptions relevant to Next Generation Internet such as openness, accessibility, and interoperability. In this respect, Think NEXUS’ sustainability strategy aims to maximise the projects impact after its completion, by providing to targeted audiences’ relevant information about Think Tank outcomes and progress. More specifically, the sustainability plan about the Think NEXUS Think Tank takes into account the precise planning and implementation of activities from all partners. This section refers to actions on how to create added value of Think Tank’s activities Therefore, the potential target audiences, the short, medium and long-term actions under a well-defined sustainability framework. Since the beginning of the project all partners have carefully designed and implemented a wide range of activities regarding the Think Tank aiming to:

- Ensure the continuation of its activities
- Design a plan for keeping the knowledge accumulated by the Think NEXUS Think Tank
- Update and extend Think Tank impact on the targeted external stakeholders

The Think NEXUS sustainable outcomes raised through the project implementation, enhance the potential of a plethora of EU–US collaboration activities. The promotion of Think NEXUS assets beyond the project’s duration could exploit any targeted collaboration between the EU – US region in the field of NGI and this fact is an additional reason for planning of future activities. The main sustainable outcomes of the Think NEXUS’ Think Tank are summarised in the following table.

Table 4 - Think NEXUS – Think Tank proposed sustainability activities

No.	Activities for the Think Tank operation	Main external stakeholders that may benefit	Partner(s) involved	Comments
1	Join ENRICH GLOBAL as thematic working group	All the identified and potential EU and US experts related with the project (members of the Think Tank)	All partners interested in this action	Kindly see below and D4.5 for detailed information about this action
2	Set up a MoU to keep the Think Tank expert network alive	All the identified and potential EU and US experts related with the project (members of the Think Tank)	All partners interested in this action	Kindly see D4.5 for detailed information about this action
3	Keep involved in NGI community and activities	Project partners will remain active with NGI projects through their involvement in various initiatives	All partners	Several partners are members of NGI community in the form of projects, advisory boards and related events

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No.	Activities for the Think Tank operation	Main external stakeholders that may benefit	Partner(s) involved	Comments
4	Share and reinforce synergies with NGI EU-US projects	Running EU projects under H2020 and future NGI projects under Horizon Europe	GAC AUSTRALO	Think NEXUS, NGI Atlantic, NGI Explorer are cooperating over common events and shall share Experts contacts over time
5	Capitalise upon Working Groups' outcomes	Working Groups worked on multiples technologies, domains and applications, translated into position and white papers, these should be further reused and disseminated beyond the project lifetime	All partners	Papers issued by Think NEXUS working groups are / will be made available and referenced to in relevant documents, articles, and inputs to relevant opportunities
6	Capitalise upon EU-US networks and strategic partnerships	Beyond Experts identified, project partners also interacted with many US stakeholders / networks focusing on internet developments, standards, etc.	All partners	The network created will be mobilised for future opportunities for collaboration  For example, it is envisaged that through Think NEXUS, ATC will cooperate with a large number of EU and US initiatives and organisations in order to build strategic partnerships. As ATC is the leader of the Science & Technology Expert Group, it is foreseen to establish and create links with organisations in order to define topics for potential research.
7	Sustain any possible synergies rising from engagement to activities of the Expert Groups	Experts - Members of the Think Tank	ATC, all partners	Interconnection of groups could set the basis for collaboration opportunities between EU and US organisations and companies.
8	Edition of book chapters on NGI with an EU-US perspective	General audience	All partners	An edited book is a way of disseminating project findings and sustaining the network after the end of the project
9	Project's website and social media	All stakeholders	All	Promoting Think Tank activities through the project's website and social media accounts

### 3.1.1. ENRICH GLOBAL

ENRICH GLOBAL, is a non-for-profit member-driven association, focusing on the internationalisation of innovations. It aims to contribute to the development of European scientific, technological and innovation

excellence, reinforce innovation competitiveness and internationalisation and take European innovation global (and vice versa). ENRICH GLOBAL aims at building a future for innovation-related international collaboration by connecting organisations and existing initiatives and providing support to building sustainable collaborative programmes or supporting their sustainability. ENRICH GLOBAL also provides other services, networks, and tools to its members interested to develop and reinforce their innovation-related international collaboration, learning from and sharing with others. ENRICH GLOBAL focuses ‘in breadth’ on international collaboration with thematic groups dedicated to specific sectors or topics. Thus, it is complementary to other associations entirely focusing on specific topics or thematics ‘in depth’ and helps them to spread their specific knowledge and connect expertise across the world.

ENRICH GLOBAL association was created by public national agencies and foundations, networks and associations and leading private firms established across the world, including in many countries associated with EU Research and Innovation Framework programme (Ukraine, Moldova, Serbia, North Macedonia, etc.) and beyond (USA, Brazil, China, several Latin America countries, Singapore, etc.). Founding members include the following organisation: ANPEI - National Association of Research and Development of Innovative Companies, Brazil; APRE - Agency for Promotion of European Research, Italy; DLR - German Aerospace Center / International Bureau of German Federal Ministry of Research, Germany; FORTH – Foundation for Research and Technology, Greece; CIVITTA, Estonia; EAEC - European-American Enterprise Council, USA; EBN - European Business and Innovation Centres Network, Belgium; ENRICH in LAC - European Network of Research and Innovation Centres and Hubs Latin America & The Caribbean, Brazil; EURelations, Switzerland; G.A.C. Group, France; RCISD - Regional Centre for Information and Scientific Development, Hungary and SPI - Sociedade Portuguesa de Inovação, Portugal.

Through its founding members, the association benefits from access to a pool of high-level expertise related to scaling up innovations and related knowledge and approaches from a European to global scale, and more broadly on internationalisation, funding schemes, business modelling, related education etc. Founding members have diverse backgrounds and geographical locations, with both private and public sector experiences, as well as a deep knowledge of internationalisation activities. ENRICH GLOBAL’s value stands within the diversity of its founding members and their expertise with focus on international collaboration: both cross-sectoral (innovation, internationalisation, clusters development, networks building education, business modelling, start-ups, international business, and technology transfer ...) and verticals (environment, circular economy, health, ICT, and others).

ENRICH GLOBAL development is co-creation with and by its members, who get direct access to many countries and regions for building and expanding a valuable worldwide network in science, technology, innovation and businesses. Members also enjoy the opportunity to benefit from various services – again, in co-creation - in order to further develop their activities and network such as a funding opportunity watch or coaching.



ENRICH GLOBAL's Thematic Groups are proposed by its members and moderated by members. The Groups bring together experts and world-class actors who share the vision to provide a unique collaborative platform based on good internationalisation practices. These groups enable ENRICH GLOBAL members to benefit from the expertise of our members and share best practices. Currently, there are already a number of thematic Groups related to various topics such as internationalisation, higher education, foresight and technology planning, science diplomacy, international innovation matchmaking and EU projects sustainability. At present no “vertical” or sectoral groups on digital health, ICT and environment have been proposed. This represents an opportunity for Think Nexus partners to deploy the NGI approach within the framework of ENRICH Global.

ENRICH GLOBAL ([www.enrich-global.eu/](http://www.enrich-global.eu/)) represents a highly relevant initiative for the sustainability of the Think NEXUS Think Tank as the project Think Tank could continue its activities as a thematic working group under ENRICH GLOBAL.

**In its initial phase the idea would be to maintain the thematic/internationalisation focus on the NGI-EU-US dimension with the addition of Canada (aligned with next phases of NGI projects in Horizon Europe). This does not mean that the results could not be disseminated more widely at the international level thanks to the ENRICH GLOBAL connections.**

Further information about this sustainability activity is presented in Deliverable 4.6 “Exploitation and sustainability plan – final” of Work Package 4.

### 3.1.2. Setting up Memorandum of Understanding

With a view to investigate whether the NGI EU-US Think Tank activities and specifically experts could be sustained in the future, project partners have engaged in consultations with strategic members of the Think Tank. As a result of these consultations, project partners have in principle secured the support for continuing the actions of the NGI EU-US Think Tank. These discussions are in addition to the discussions that have taken place during the work of the Think Tank. They have included recent exchanges with the following NGI experts:

- Latif Ladid, Professor at Luxembourg University, Founder of the IPv6 Forum, and Chair of the Think Nexus NGI Think Tank Expert Group on policy issues
- Glenn Ricart, USIgnite
- Ray Walshe, ADAPT Research Centre Dublin City University
- Dan Caprio, The Providence Group (USA)
- Iulia Mihail, Romanian Ministry of Education and Research, Romanian Office for Science and Technology to the UE
- Lea Shanley, International Computer Science Institute in Berkeley, California
- Monique Calisti, Martel Innovation and coordinator of the NGI4ALL project.

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The objective of these consultations was to gather experts' feedback on the work and outcomes produced by the Think Tank, assess the extent to which experts' expectations were met during the project and gauge their interest for continuing their involvement in NGI EU-US Think Tank beyond the end of the Think Nexus project.

The takeaways from these discussions indicated a strong interest in continuing their involvement in the activities of the Think Tank. All experts confirmed their willingness and availability to pursue their collaboration and work on the focus areas of the Think Tank.

Importantly, experts consulted mentioned that policy challenges are probably the main bottlenecks to transatlantic collaboration. They indicated a need to advise and contribute to the definition of policy priorities of the EU-US Digital agenda and in particular, the importance of enhancing and aligning EU-US policy agenda and focus areas, and have a common timeframe for issuing funding calls, so that experts of both regions can have greater chances to receive funding and thus to engage in new collaboration opportunities. Many of these experts have previous experience working together and a sound understanding of how policy agencies in both regions work. Together, they could represent a powerful transatlantic network via the TN Think Tank that they can easily expand to other experts in the field they work with in and act to facilitate and influence the policy dialogue between the two regions on digital priorities and key levers to activate.

Discussions also served to gather information about past and ongoing projects, such as the GAIA-x project on building common requirements for European data infrastructure or the TraX project, experts are involved in, and thereby collect their respective experience and knowledge on the challenges faced as well as insights into what could be done in the future to enhance the EU-US collaboration. Some of them have already managed to achieve successful collaborations with other regions such as China, which could represent inspiring experiences and success stories to learn from as well as good practices that could be replicated and shared through the Think Tank.

The close connections of these experts with key contacts within policy and funding agencies (e.g., European Commission, National Science Foundation, Federal Trade Commission, etc.) in both regions could be leveraged on in the future as part of a continued Think Tank collaboration. They can also act as great multipliers.

Experts expressed their willingness to continue participating in TN Think Tank workshops and offering their active participation and moderation services. They indicated that up to 4 workshops per year would be a reasonable number of occasions to engage and exchange, on top of regular remote interactions and exchanges through emails and conf calls facilitated by the TN Think Tank moderation team.

A possible way to keep the network of experts alive could be by setting up a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the experts interested in continuing the Think Tank activities. The project partners could also sign the MoU to continue animating the Think Tank activities after the project lifetime as part of the relationship with ENRICH GLOBAL.

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Detailed information about this activity is provided on Deliverable 4.5 “Exploitation and sustainability plan – update” of Work Package 4.

### 3.1.3. NGI community and activities

Think NEXUS is embedded within the framework of the [Next Generation Internet Initiative](#). This means that the influence of the project is not standalone, keeping significant links and synergies with the rest of the projects funded by the European Commission, as well as the community beneath. A remarkable example of it is the annual NGI Forum<sup>1</sup>.



Figure 1 - Next Generation Internet Initiative Projects (Source: <https://www.ngi.eu/>)

<sup>1</sup> NGI Forum 2021. <https://2021.ngiforum.eu/>

Think NEXUS has the potential to maintain a solid and consistent collaboration with the community through two main streams:

- Leverage the participation from Think NEXUS consortium partners and experts in the running H2020-funded projects of the NGI (**Erreur ! Source du renvoi introuvable.**). Most of these activities will continue throughout 2021, with some of them going up to mid of 2023.
- Including a repository function within the NG4ALL initiative to maintain its visibility and link towards the ENRICH GLOBAL Think Tank hosting and animation actions.
- Represent Think NEXUS in the longer run, through the participation in future NGI projects embedded in Horizon Europe programme, under Cluster 4 – Digital, Industry and Space. It is expected that Destination “A HUMAN-CENTRED AND ETHICAL DEVELOPMENT OF DIGITAL AND INDUSTRIAL TECHNOLOGIES” will continue the efforts to build a human-centred and ethical development of digital and industrial technologies, developing of technologies, empowering end-users and workers, and supporting social innovation. Some topics will cover critical aspects of the Strategic Plan, such as trustworthy AI; gender, race and other biases in AI; disinformation fight; trust & data sovereignty on the Internet; trustworthy open search and discovery; as well as the follow-up of the NGI Outreach Office.

### 3.1.4. Synergies with NGI EU-US projects

Among the relationships with the different NGI initiatives, those projects with a co-shared mission on EU-USA cooperation are particularly relevant. Throughout the project lifetime, Think NEXUS has actively encouraged and achieved a nurturing partnership with both [NGI Explorers](#) and [NGIAtlantic.eu](#), and this shall remain via the other activities listed in the sustainability plan.

Having said that, it is expected that two activities within the upcoming Horizon Europe’s Cluster 4<sup>2</sup> will highly benefit from –and potentially continue– the scope of Think NEXUS. These grants may be considered as another means for sustainability of the workplan. There are initial discussions to replicate some National Science Foundation (NSF) efforts on the American side, as introduced during the joint workshop hosted by the three running projects at the NGI Forum 2021 and this topic was on the agenda of the final TN NGI Think Tank expert group meeting (1 July 2021).

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<sup>2</sup> DISCLAIMER: This information is not officially adopted or endorsed by the European Commission when writing this document. The content is only a part of the public drafts of the Work Programme 2021-2022, expressing preliminary views of the Commission services and may not in any circumstances be regarded as stating an official position of the Commission.



Figure 2 – NGI EU-US Workshop Banner for NGI Forum 2021

- **NGI International Collaboration - Transatlantic fellowship programme** (planned for 2021). A programme providing support to European Internet innovators to travel to the US to work and collaborate with counterparts, with a view to promoting knowledge-sharing and establishing long-term collaborations on NGI technologies, services and standards. This action will support the internet policy objectives by sharing the EU vision and values with US counterparts and forging bonds through concrete collaborations.
- **NGI International Collaboration - USA** (planned for 2022). An action to support joint projects involving EU teams together with USA teams on emerging topics for the EU Next Generation Internet and corresponding US and Canadian programmes, including technology development, joint demonstrators and joint contributions to standards. The initiative shall leverage a Transatlantic network of top researchers, hi-tech start-ups / SMEs and Internet-related communities collaborating on the evolution of the Internet according to a human-centric approach.

### 3.1.5. Capitalising upon Working Groups' outcomes

The Working Groups worked on multiples technologies, domains and applications and different (3) broad thematics. These were translated into position and white papers, these will be further reused and disseminated beyond the project lifetime, for example via the NGI Forum and NGI4ALL community web platform. They will also be part of the inputs into the actions pursued within ENRICH GLOBAL, especially for developing a common understanding of NGI with other international partners.

Papers issued by Think NEXUS working groups are / will be made available and referenced to in relevant documents, articles, and provide inputs to relevant opportunities exploited by the partners individually and collectively in future projects and actions of the Thin Tank.

Experts, members of the NGI Think Tank will also be encouraged to participate in these capitalisation actions through their networks and speaking engagements.

### 3.1.6. Capitalising upon EU-US networks and partnerships

Think NEXUS Think Tank can put forward for consideration evidence, can shape numerous public events and debates and promote a vision where policymaking can support societal flourishing. In order to reinforce cooperation and strategic partnerships in the area of Next Generation Internet and having the right competencies and living networks, evidence-based support is necessary to build sustainable and well-connected policy research systems between EU and the US. This vision will be promoted after the project's end as well, as it may come in the form of open and independent sources of knowledge and strategic partnerships. In terms of Think NEXUS Think Tank sustainability plan, the notion of strategic partnership is considered as a relationship between two or more organizations. This partnership is intended to create value for the organizations by generating new ideas and innovations, while the risks and rewards of the joint venture are shared in a pre-defined manner.

As the mission of the Think Tank is to become a long standing and lasting entity, involving stakeholders and disseminating NGI visions, new partnerships that derive from the Think Tank operation can become the driving force after the project's end. Among the communities of the NGI, strategic research, industrial partnerships and policy compliances can result in substantial socio-economic benefits in both the EU and US region.

It is foreseen that through Think NEXUS, ATC and all partners will cooperate with a large number of EU and US initiative and organisations in order to build strategic partnerships. As ATC is the leader of the Science & Technology Expert Group, it is foreseen to establish and create links with organisations in order to define topics for potential research. Finally, the expansion of the NGI ecosystem in the US, leveraging consortium's expertise and networks, will build up and sustain new partnerships around the Next Generation Internet.

Furthermore, GAC as co-chair of the Working Group on Policy issues and a founding member of GLOBAL ENRICH will be able to play a key role in maintaining these discussions. The Technical co-Chair of this Working Group, Professor Latif Ladid, a leading actor in many international networks and associations, has also expressed his willingness to continue his support of the NGI Think Tank actions.

### 3.1.7. Interconnection of Expert Groups

As mentioned before, the multi-thematic Think Tank that has been established, is covering three complementary but interdependent focus areas for an effective dialogue: 1) Science + Technology, 2) Innovation + Entrepreneurship and 3) Policy. ATC leads the group of the Science & Technology and will try to sustain any possible synergies rising from engagement to activities of the other two Expert Groups (Innovation & Entrepreneurship Policy Expert Groups). The interconnection of the three groups could set the basis for collaboration opportunities between EU and US organisations and companies, in the field of the NGI. Given the fact that each group has conclave of interest to the other two groups, efforts will be made to keep the networks alive and interconnected and to disseminate information for the discussions and outcomes as well as the registration and attendance of the already organized workshops and events. This can be actioned

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through the proposed signing of the MOU (see section 3.1.2 above) and through the participation in events/discussions hosted / organised via GLOBAL ENRICH.

### 3.1.8. Book chapters on NGI

The Think Nexus project has already succeeded in contributing to high quality publications with the co-authorship of book chapters on NGI with an EU-US perspective. An edited book is a way of disseminating project findings and sustaining the network after the end of the project and other publication opportunities will be actively identified.

Below is a summary of the main elements concerning the previous publication and provides a good indication of the impact of such activities on the sustainability of the NGI Think Tank.

The book “ICT Policy, Research, and Innovation: Perspectives and Prospects for EU - US Collaboration” was released in November 2020 . The book provides an overview of selected ICT and policy topics. It compares and contrasts the policy approaches taken by the EU and the US in a variety of areas.



Figure 3. Book “ICT Policy, Research, and Innovation: Perspectives and Prospects for EU - US Collaboration”

The book “ICT Policy, Research, and Innovation: Perspectives and Prospects for EU - US Collaboration”, was edited by a Director of GAC (Think Nexus project coordinator) and includes a chapter on “The Next Generation Internet Initiative”, which was developed by Think NEXUS partners, namely:

- Fabrice Clari – G.A.C. Group
- Glenn Ricart – USIgnite
- Hubert Santer – G.A.C. Group
- José Gonzalez – AUSTRALO
- Nikos Sarris – ATC
- Peter Van Daele – IMEC

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- Vasilis Papanikolaou – ATC
- Wouter Tavenier – IMEC

The book is part of a Wiley / IEEE Press series on “Technology Management, Innovation, and Leadership”, edited by another Think NEXUS partner, Tariq Samad of the University of Minnesota.

This chapter focuses on topics relevant to foster EU-US cooperation on NGI related topics. Moreover, this chapter includes the outcomes from the Think NEXUS US Workshop 2019, which was held in July 2019 in Washington DC, US. The Figure 4 presents the index of the “The Next Generation Internet Initiative”.

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**Figure 4. Index of the chapter “The Next Generation Internet Initiative” of the Book “ICT Policy, Research, and Innovation: Perspectives and Prospects for EU - US Collaboration”**

Considering the importance of the information presented to the majority of the project target audiences, this chapter is expected to have an important impact in paving the way for future EU-US cooperation on NGI topics. **Therefore, this chapter is also a very important exploitable result of Think NEXUS’ and future Think Tank activities.**

### 3.1.9. Project’s website and social media

The project website (<https://thinknexus.ngi.eu/>) is an important repository of information since it includes:

- News about the project activities;



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- Project deliverables;
- Promotional materials;
- Newsletters;
- Policy Briefs;
- White Papers; and
- Project videos.

In this context, the documents/resources made available in Think NEXUS' website are relevant for all the project target audiences. Thus, the project website has been and will continue to be a valuable resource after Think NEXUS' lifetime. The website will be kept live for at least 3 years after the end of the project lifetime ensuring links to the proposed successor platform are available.

The aim of the Project Partners is to transfer web site information and associated social media accounts to the ENRICH GLOBAL platform. This should not pose a problem as both SPI (WP leader on comms) and GAC are both founding members of ENRICH GLOBAL.

This transfer can be implemented before the end of 2021 and a major information and communication awareness raising action would be implemented at this time to ensure members of the TN NGI Think Tank are kept informed.

In addition links will also be facilitated through the NGI4ALL platform and regularly shared through other networks.

These proposed actions will thus ensure the TN NGI Think Tank maintains web and social media presence.

## 4. Potential Benefits for the Stakeholders

The external stakeholders, who could potentially benefit from the Think Tank outcomes, as well as the benefits that could arise for them, are briefly presented below.

### 1. **EU Technology Experts - Universities, Research Centres, Industry, SMEs, Innovation Hubs**

#### Main Benefits

- Identify and learn about European funding and policy instruments supporting Transatlantic research collaboration activities
- Gain understanding about the framework, conditions and initiatives of NSF-supported grants and other potential funding and policy agencies such as the Federal Trade Commission
- Raise awareness about priorities and recommendations on the EU-US strategic digital agenda to be considered by policy-makers and funding agencies in forthcoming stages
- Expand know-how and networks among colleagues in both regions through participation in activities such as workshops, webinars and reports
- Promote their research lines of work, contrasting state-of-the-art with the US benchmark
- Become participant in the road mapping of emerging NGI technologies: Big Data, Cybersecurity, Cloud computing, Cyberphysical systems / IoT, AI related technologies
- Become part of a recognised group of NGI Experts with the additional benefits of membership of an international and growing Think Tank organisation
- Enhanced visibility through the signing of an MOU
- Strengthen EU-US partnership building for future funding applications and joint project implementation

### 2. **USA Technology Experts - Universities, Research Centres, Industry, SMEs, Innovation Hubs**

#### Main Benefits

- Identify EU initiatives, institutions and colleagues working in similar priorities (e.g., data innovation task forces with mission in Covid-19 challenges) to foster more active collaboration
- Gain understanding about the European roadmap and values in emerging technology (Big Data, Cybersecurity, Cloud computing, Cyberphysical systems / IoT, AI related technologies), and the funding mechanisms that enable Transatlantic collaboration (e.g. Horizon Europe) around the NGI vision
- Promote their activities and lines of work among EU stakeholders and other US colleagues
- Connect with organisations and experts with similar activities and start joint initiatives such as implementation of new projects or products
- Become part of a recognised group of NGI Experts with the additional benefits of membership of an international and growing Think Tank organisation.

- Enhanced visibility through the signing of an MOU.
- Strengthen EU-US partnership building for future funding applications and joint project implementation

**3. Individuals (Policy Makers, existing Networks, Associations/Clusters, Researchers, other Stakeholders) from the EU and US regions**

Main Benefits

- Identify, plan and implement channels for enhancing EU-US NGI research collaboration by exploiting the Think Tank outcomes as consultation documents.
- Identify strategic requirements of the experts groups aligned with EU requirements to further cooperate in the NGI technologies
- Expand international cooperation policy actions
- Design of better cooperative RDI initiatives
- Utilise Think Tank working group meetings to test and discuss policy initiatives, get feedback etc

**4. Citizens from the EU and US regions**

Main Benefits

- Become familiar with joint EU and US NGI initiatives
- Gain knowledge about NGI technologies (developers, start-ups)
- Establish a transatlantic funding scheme supporting Science and Technology for the NGI

## 5. Conclusions

This report presents the main sustainable outcomes of the Think Tank that was created during the Think NEXUS project as well as concrete suggestions for the sustainability of the Think Tank offering beyond its current project lifespan. This document is organised in two main blocks – (1) the final reporting of Think Tank and (2) sustainable activities for the Think Tank. The first part of this document summarizes the basic principles and the composition of the Think Tank, while the second one contains detailed information about the sustainability activities towards achieving long term goals and operations of the Think Tank after the project's end. The main activities that ensure long-term the sustainability of the TN Think Tank, after the end of the project are described within this document.

The key partners of the Think NEXUS consortium are willing to provide support to the continuation of EU-US collaboration, via the described actions, towards strategic directions addressed at policy stakeholders, research and industry representatives notably through the work and facilitation of the ENRICH GLOBAL association.

Equally important is the strong and positive message from key experts of the TN NGI Think Tank, both EU and US representatives, regarding their desire to continue investing time and effort in actively participating in future Think Tank cooperation and exchange action. This is a very positive conclusion and is both indicative of the quality of the work and exchanges that have taken place during the project and Think Tank actions but also the positive messages and encouragement from the EC and US partners such as NSF who are committed to the further development of EU-US NGI cooperation.