ebn
innovation network

TECHNICAL **NOTE** **#03**

# LIVING **LABS**

## A SMART PRACTICE FOR CUSTOMER-DRIVEN BUSINESS SUPPORT

PROMOTECH CEI
CENTRE EUROPÉEN D'ENTREPRISE ET D'INNOVATION

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**JUNE** 2014

# TECHNICAL **NOTE** #03

**JUNE** 2014

The EBN Technical Note is a publication designed to inform Business Innovation Centres (EU | BICS) around Europe about the trends shaping their markets.

The publication is also intended to create awareness among policy-makers at European and national level on the value of EU | BICS in creating a dynamic and entrepreneurial spirit in Europe.



Environmental production. This publication is printed according to high environmental standards.

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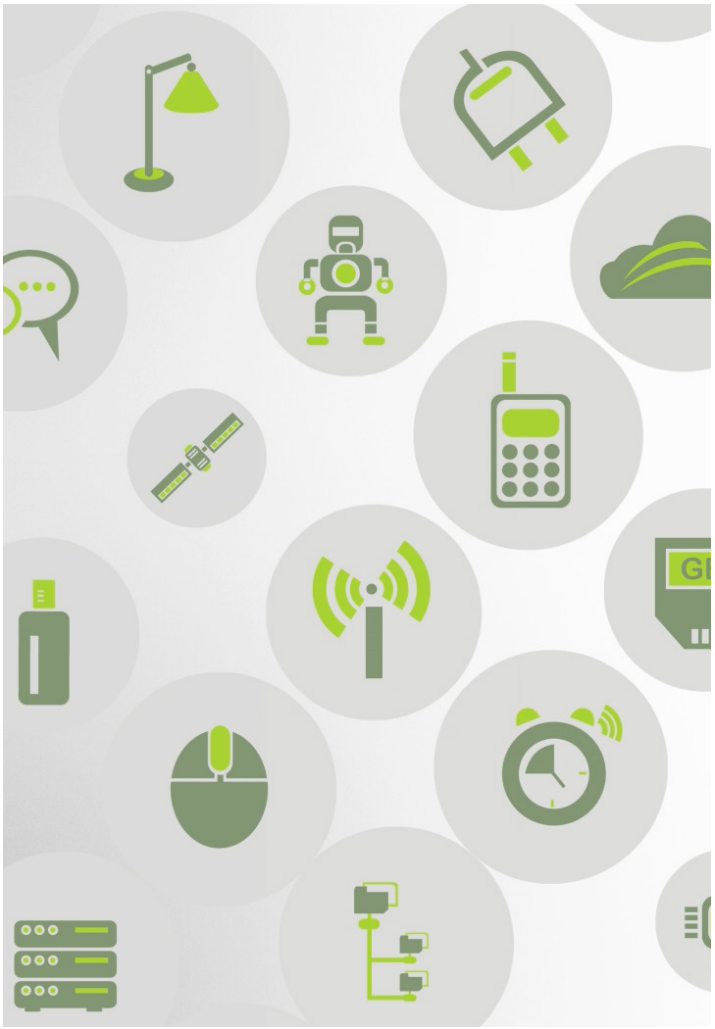
# 1 INTRODUCTION

When Jacky Chef, the director of one of the oldest EU | BICS, Promotech, in Nancy, France, heard of the Living Lab concept during a conference in 2009, he saw an opportunity: the opportunity to introduce that layer of innovation in the EU|BIC's processes that would take the organisation to the next level. Indeed, at the time, Promotech's problem was that it was showing an increasingly worrying decrease of innovative entrepreneurial projects. Promotech, created in 1977 and located in one of the first three Science and Technology Parks in Europe, was building a reputation for being an 'ageing EU|BIC', that was losing ground as far as innovation was concerned.



Building on the Living Labs approach, Promotech found a new way of supporting innovative entrepreneurs, connecting them with their market from the start, even before the prototyping phase, instead of continuously postponing this connection, waiting for the perfect product, which sometimes just brings an endless and pointless search of perfection.

Promotech's approach is now to provide entrepreneurs and start-ups with their own Lab as early as possible. It has introduced this method in its support process of each innovative entrepreneurial project. The principle of Living Labs applied today at Promotech has the aim of associating a group of users in the broadest sense with each enterprise project. This group of users is generally composed of people who represent the overall value chain of the product or service being conceived, and is directly involved in supporting the incubation phase and the launch of the activity.

Pieter Ballon was the initiator of the research that culminated in the formation of the Living Lab currently operating within iMinds, the independent research institute founded by the Flemish government to stimulate ICT innovation. iMinds, another EU|BIC providing incubation and venture funding to innovative entrepreneurs in Ghent, made the decision not to use the Living Lab approach on each and every case, but to keep it as an optional service, to be used mainly where effective and quick market research needed to be undertaken. Therefore, the Living Lab methodology

adds to its incubation and acceleration programmes, and has not completely substituted its operational processes. It has added a layer of support that is currently being used by approximately 10% of the supported entrepreneurs.

Jarmo Eskelinen, CEO of Forum Virium, an accelerator providing growth services in Helsinki, Finland, has adopted the Living Lab method to support SMEs by bringing the companies in as partners in larger-scale projects, and also by providing SMEs with expertise in user-driven innovation as part of the Forum Virium Growth Coaching portfolio. He believes strongly that in the near future there will be an increasing number of connections between the Internet and the physical world and that all businesses will be "digital businesses". This will generate different business models, where the customers will play an active role, providing services and information.

The winning companies will be the ones who have the best understanding of the needs, motivations and power of user communities, and turn those into business.

At present Living Labs are a widespread phenomenon. The European Network of Living Labs (ENOLL) counts over 300 Living Labs operating worldwide, from Australia, to the United States of America, from Latin America to Africa, passing, of course through Europe. It is a growing trend that can positively affect the way EU | BICS operate and the way innovative entrepreneurs are supported, as in the case of Promotech and iMinds, a method that can strongly increase the chances of success of innovative companies through the acquisition of precious intelligence about real needs and usability.

FORUM VIRIUM HELSINKI

*"There is an increasing amount of collaboration between SMEs and Living Labs. This development is driven by the fact that nowadays most businesses are service businesses, and successful service development is always driven by understanding the users. Living Labs give SMEs a way to test their ideas fast with real users in real situations. EU | BICS would greatly benefit from adding Living Lab tools to their services, or from building hands-on cooperation with existing labs in the same business sectors. SMEs normally cannot establish extensive Living Lab competence in-house, even though it is needed in all phases of business development. Technology start-ups, in particular, need help in taking their business beyond the "technology push" model".*

**Jarmo Eskelinen, CEO of Forum Virium**

[1] http://www.openlivinglabs.eu

# 2 WHY A LAB?

**For the enterprise:** to be guided on an on-going basis by the community of users who validate, co-develop and initiate current and future products of the enterprise and to strengthen their growth potential and accelerate their development. The Lab is a means of anchoring reflections in relation to usage, in relation to the reality of the environment and to challenge the innovative concepts in terms of added value for the user.

**For a young innovative company**, it is a way of safeguarding its creation and its launch and of giving it the best chance for success and growth. A Lab is a way of reducing risk factors and this should also be presented to investors to help in their decision-making. A Lab is a relevant way of associating to its own users and of giving the company an image and value of a higher level. The company Lab is a permanent feature destined to be around for as long as the company is. It provides three important functions: the Lab validates the company's projects; participates in the co-design of its products and services; and is at the origin of products that the company will develop in the future.

**For an EU|BIC:** to develop the initial model, created in 1984. Indeed EU | BICS have greatly evolved since then and transformations have accelerated in recent years. For instance, there has been a general shift of focus from business planning to business modelling support, aimed at understanding better how to set up business in start-ups and SMEs to make them profitable. EU | BICS have innovated already many elements of their support services, with new processes and tools, inserting coworking spaces, acceleration programmes, new innovation management techniques. The Living Labs could become the next innovation in the service value chain, where a company lab becomes an integral part of its future management, in the same way as its technical, administrative and commercial services, a lean structured internal process that aims at building sound and informed relationships with its users.

**For the users:** to be involved in their products and services, to have their say about products, and even about the company. The Living Lab approach aims to contribute to bridging the gap that exists between the consumers and the business world. Potential users already have powers to reject or accept a product or a service. Indeed, they hold the power of direct action by making the choice of buying or not buying, a power affecting directly the success levels of any company, whatever the product or service may be. However, users have also other means to intervene in the success of

a company. For instance, the internet has increased consumer interaction as it provides an easier means to rate and express opinions. Consumers have gone all the way to boycott products that are produced with contempt for social laws, or are not environment–friendly. There is a strong will on the part of consumers to be part of the production process. The Living Lab approach offers a very strong answer by involving them directly in the development phase and by giving them a lead position in the definition of not only the product/service but also of the company itself.

**For community groups:** to generate concrete high-growth potential innovative start-ups. Getting start-ups off the ground involves close support by many local partners. EU | BICS, entrepreneurial associations, incubators, local funding organisations, local community groups, banks, among others, are called upon to play their part. Repeatedly, we come to a point where difficult decisions are being made based on relevant issues, such as on the personality of the entrepreneurs or on a specific sector priority, but with a general uncertainty with regard to market responses and of the real usefulness of the innovation to the local and global communities. The setting up of a Living Lab provides a strong response to the decision-making problems of on innovative projects and reassures the community that the company is focused on its users.

neoshop Laval

*"NEOSHOP, the innovation shop, was set up to complement the start-up Labs in Laval in September 2013. NEOSHOP is a tool used to market, enhance and encourage innovations and it is aimed at:*

- *Marketing the innovation allowing each start-up or innovative SME access to the shop as well as to an international sales network.*
- *Adding value to the innovation by providing a showcase so that consumers may see the innovations at all development stages.*
- *Encouraging innovation by taking the consumer into consideration through a Living Lab and a co-creation platform.*

*The support for enterprises led by their users thanks to the installation of Living Labs is an approach that was approved and adopted by Laval-Mayene Technopole. NEOSHOP complements this mechanism and has become an integrated part of our EU|BIC services».*

**Christian Travier, Director**
**and Valérie Moreau in charge of the network mission of the Laval-Mayenne Technopole**

# 3 DEFINITION AND PROCESS OF A LIVING LAB

## What is a Living Lab?

A Living Lab is an open innovation laboratory. A Living Lab puts the user at the core of the development process facilitating the design and the building of innovative products and/or services to meet their needs and the expectations of society. The service or product created acquires greater relevance when needs have been clearly defined thanks to the participation of the user, and when the latter has been involved in its design and in the test phases. The Living Labs therefore contribute to the emergence of a new innovation system whereby the users/citizens are no longer just consumers but become players and contributors.

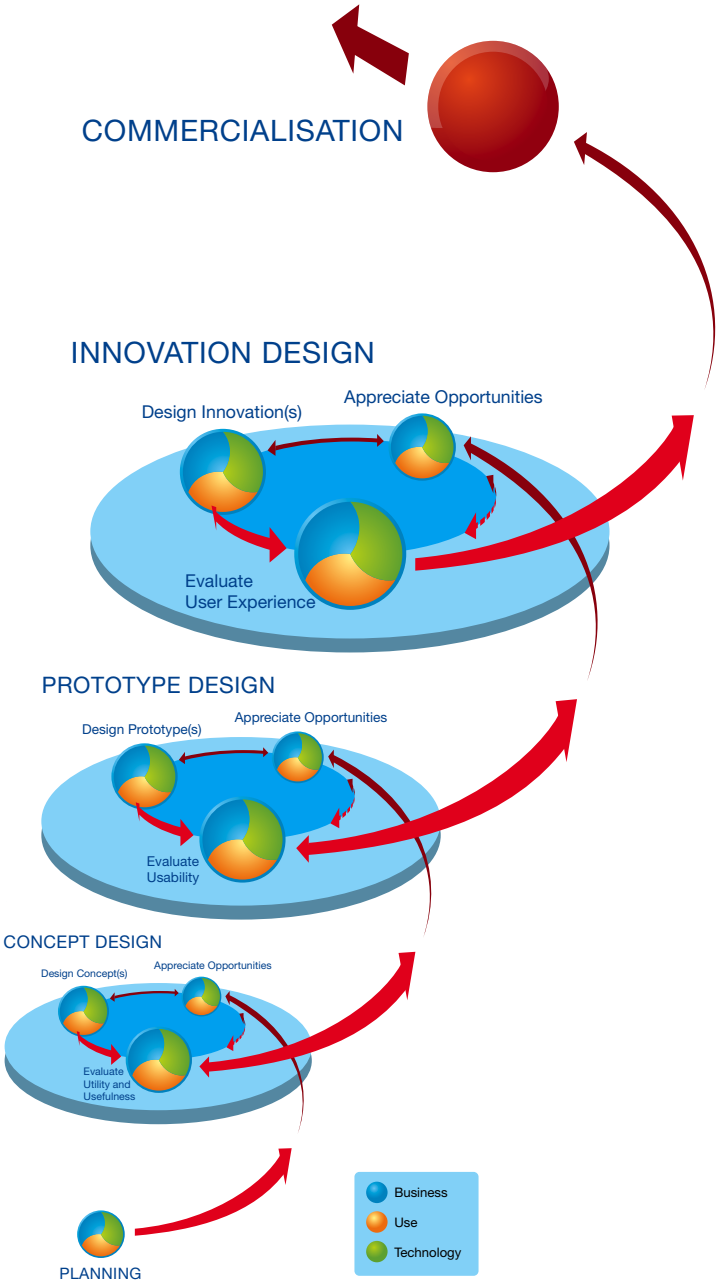
CDT
CENTRE FOR DISTANCE-SPANNING TECHNOLOGY

*"In today's dynamic world, there are many variables that contribute to the success of a viable company. In that sense Living Labs can serve as the intermediary between different stakeholders including the end-users to boost innovation and business growth. By acting as multifaceted environments for the creation of better products and services, as well as being a network hub for investigating and developing business-partnerships and value-networks, they function as innovation boosters. Living Labs are this decade's search engines for meaningful knowledge, fuelled by cross-disciplinary skills and partnerships including the creativity of today´s and tomorrow's users and customers."*

**Annika Sällström, Project Manager at CDT Luléa, Centre for Distance-spanning Technology**

## For all projects?

A Living Lab is a device conceived specifically for young innovative companies with high growth potential, whose product or service may eventually affect ecosystems on a large scale (eg car pool, mobile payments, specialised social network, etc.)



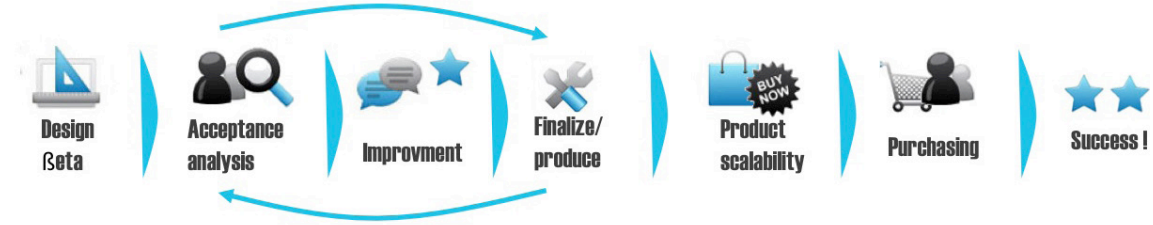

## Living Labs support internationalisation

Living Labs can be a means through which EU | BICS can accompany internationalisation processes. This was tested through an international Living Lab set up through the EU-funded project LILA. Indeed, one of the biggest challenges for EU | BICS is to get start-ups committed to internationalisation. The mutual support system initialised by EBN through its international hub, has supported the network members to identify opportunities. However, before opening offices or entering into contracts with suppliers, the validation and adaptation of the project in the target country is essential. The Living Lab approach serves as a complement to this type of measure by offering a concrete service and a network: the service of validating a product or service by users in the target region.

*The CDT Lulea*

## Classical business development


## For Innovative product with Living labs

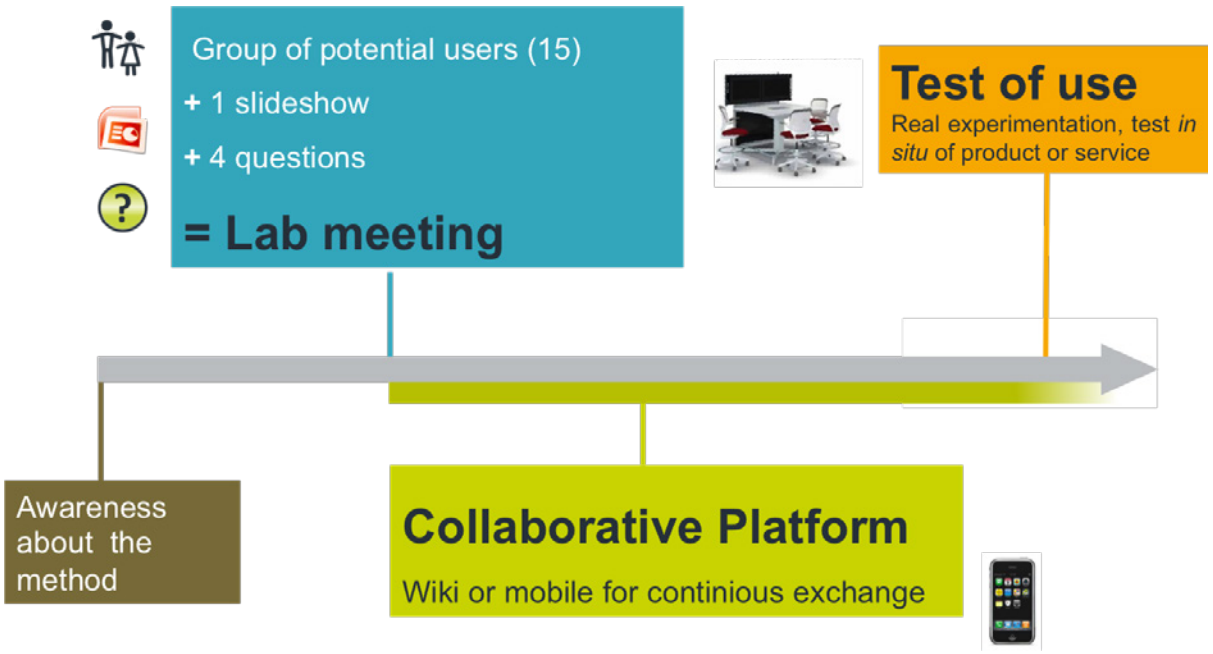


# 4 THE MAIN STAGES OF THE LAB PROCESS

## Start

Setting up the Lab for a specific innovative business idea, begins with an initial informative session where the EU|BIC provides information about the support methodology. The entrepreneurs will then need to accept and validate the proposed approach.

It is fundamental at this stage, to be as clear as possible with the entrepreneur that the implementation of the Living Lab approach focuses on the use of products and services by inviting a group of users to participate in the validation and design processes. These users are meant to subsequently become originators of future developments of the product and of the company itself. Young entrepreneurs are usually very keen to adopt this type of approach, particularly those involved in digital economy. However, there are still some recurring issues to be dealt with, such as confidentiality and intellectual property.




## Finding users

The first task is to identify the various typologies of users. These are composed by all the parties that could have a vested interest in the product or service planned. The group of users is usually broader than just the identified direct clients. COVIVO is a company supported by Promotech Nancy through the Living Labs method, proposing an innovative way to car-pool. Obviously, the primary users are the people who need to be transported and the people who can transport them, but who else will be affected? Taxi companies for instance, or public and private transport companies, local

authorities, insurance companies, security forces, banks, even mechanics and vehicle rental services. The total number of categories of interested parties easily reaches 10 to 15 and identifying them is a fundamental exercise. Once the categories have been determined, it is necessary to identify the corresponding persons by name before they are invited. The entrepreneur generally knows at least 50% of the persons sought, the EU|BIC's advantage lies in its ability to mobilise the other half: academics, specialists, entrepreneurs and public representatives.

Then the invitations to participate to the Lab must be sent. You will need to set a deadline and then send reminders with the aim of assembling 15 to 20 people in order to start the Lab.

## Preparation of the Lab

To prepare a Lab properly, there are three important elements that need to be taken into consideration:

- **The Presentation:** The entrepreneur must prepare a high-quality presentation, focusing on the products/services offered; this is by no means a presentation along the lines of a business plan. This will need to be a live presentation lasting about 10 to 15 minutes.

- **The first questions:** The first questions represent an unguided response in order to gauge at which point the users react. It is important to prepare 2 or 3 questions with the entrepreneur which will be raised after the general presentation and the first round-table discussion. These questions may relate to the design, the additional features, distribution, rates and the means of payment or even the name or the logo.
- **The collaborative platform:** the elements presented as well as the comments and suggestions received in meetings will be placed on a collaborative platform, which will be accessible to all the participants in order to initiate the cooperation process over time. This platform must have easy access and be user-friendly, the slightest access problem or excessive creativity will soon cause all or some of the participants to disappear; they must be able to understand the information quickly and comment on it.

## Setting up the Lab

This involves activating all that has been initiated in order to gather as many validation elements as possible for the products or services presented, to create the first community of users of the business Lab and to inspire both the entrepreneur and the community to continue the process. Therefore, this stage is critical.

## Organising the meeting

The invitations are sent several weeks in advance in order to best ensure the presence of 15 to 20 users. Since the projects develop through various stages, it is preferable to be present at the opening and at the communication stage of the project. The quality of the material used to explain the services offered is very important. This must also be a convivial experience, the users have come along freely and they must feel comfortable; pleasant surroundings must be provided for the session.

## Holding the meeting

By way of introduction it is both useful and important to explain the context of the open innovation and the long-term role expected of the users present, who will be involved in managing the business welcoming them. It is the EU|BIC's responsibility to explain this methodological

approach. The EU|BIC co-ordinator may conduct the meeting (we recommend this: he is, therefore, the stage director of the process). The tone of this meeting must remain friendly, allowing for successive expressions from each participant providing for the same amount of time for each one. Therefore, this is not a discussion or a question and answer session (easy to explain at the outset of the session, but the first round is to be managed strictly while the subsequent rounds will be managed in a more flexible manner).

## The proceedings of a typical meeting can be summarised as follows (approximately 2h)

- Presentation of the Lab principle ( 3 minutes),
- Round table discussion involving participants (15 minutes),
- Presentation by the entrepreneur (15 minutes),
- First round of responses and suggestions ( 40 minutes)
- Presentation of the first line of questioning (5 minutes)
- Second round of responses and suggestions (20 minutes);
- Second line of questioning and the subsequent round table (20 minutes).
- The meeting has already taken up 2 hours:
- 5 minutes of feedback for the enterprise and 5 for the EU|BIC to provide details of what will happen next.
- Stop! Let us move on to the fun part: the company has arranged for the cocktail of its choice in order to enable all of the desired exchanges. Do not forget the attendance sheet signed with the details for each person, together with the confidentiality agreement to be observed by everyone.

## Managing the Lab

Running the Lab Online: It is at the conclusion of the first meeting that the Lab is structured by posting the presentation online and organising the input into topics. Most of the first meetings are fruitful and see the businesses and users convinced of the value of the exercise. The danger is to stop here; there is a risk that the entrepreneur feels that the information he has gathered is enough. The success of the business Lab is achieved by encouraging the community, in other words by offering comments, expertise and information on progress; information which the entrepreneur must put on his platform on an on-going basis, while continuing to request contributions from the users.

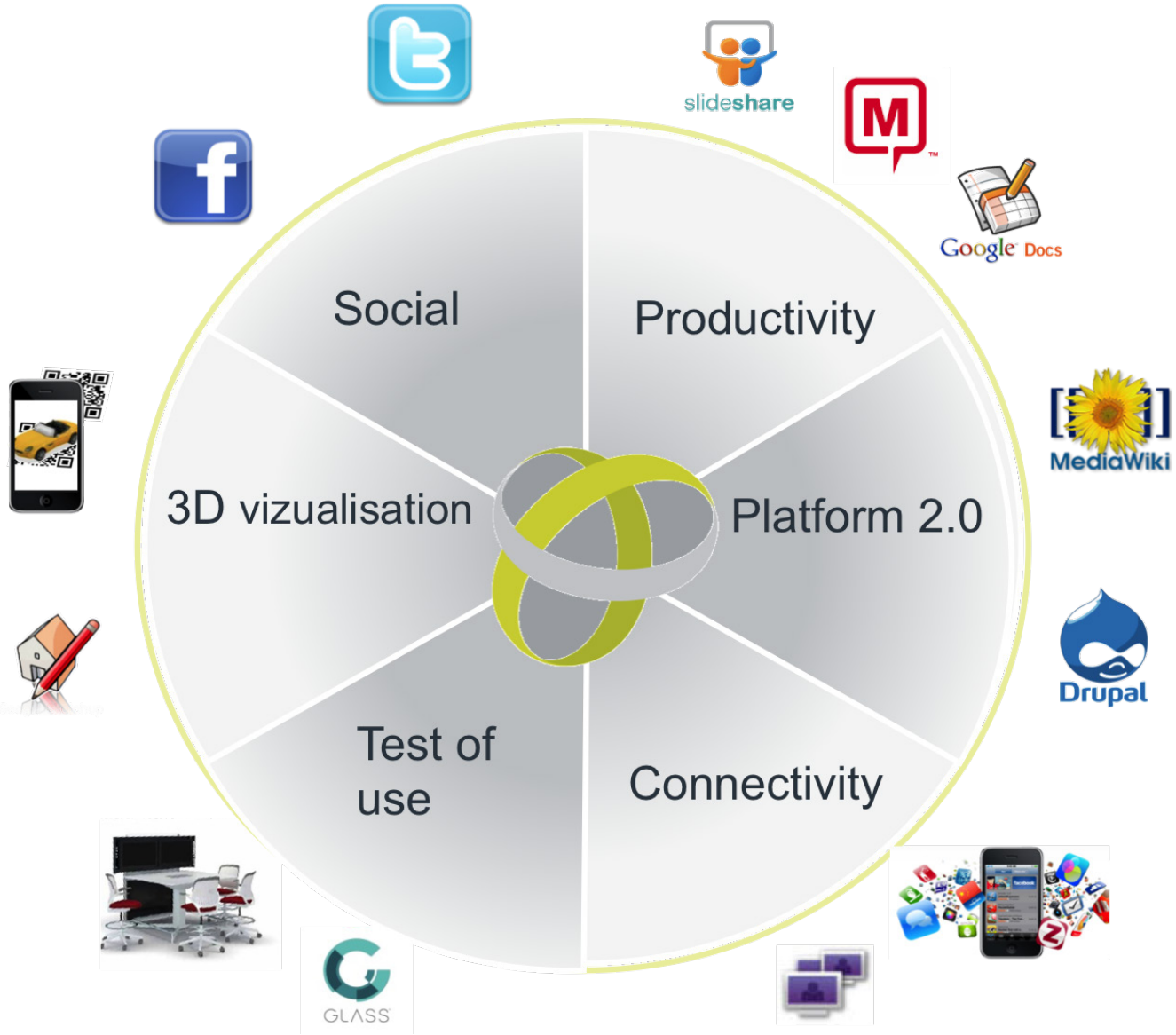
## Running of the Lab Online in the long term

Over the course of time the community of project users must be broadened, particularly the non-mobilised typologies at the outset. The Lab must also renew its members regularly. Here the EU|BIC plays a crucial role through on-going awareness-raising actions, targeting its contacts to continuously prompt people to join the global community of users involved in the projects. Face-to-face meetings can be organised periodically in order to keep in touch physically as well as for tests of use, for example. The Lab may also increase the geographic dimension of its users and progress to a transnational level.

## Tests of use

The first two stages of the Lab (launch meeting and the on-line sessions) enable the entrepreneur to receive a first level of user feedback. These contributions allow for the production of a prototype of the service or product. It is at this point that a test of use is carried out by means of a simulated experiment or directly in a real-life situation. This will be done using available simulation or visualisation

tools or an experimental protocol to record the actual behaviour of use with regard to the product or service in both a quantitative and a qualitative manner. This stage generates a very operational level of feedback to refine the product or service. It prefigures and improves the guarantee of better product adoption by the future users.




## Ensuring consistency in the EU|BIC Lab approach

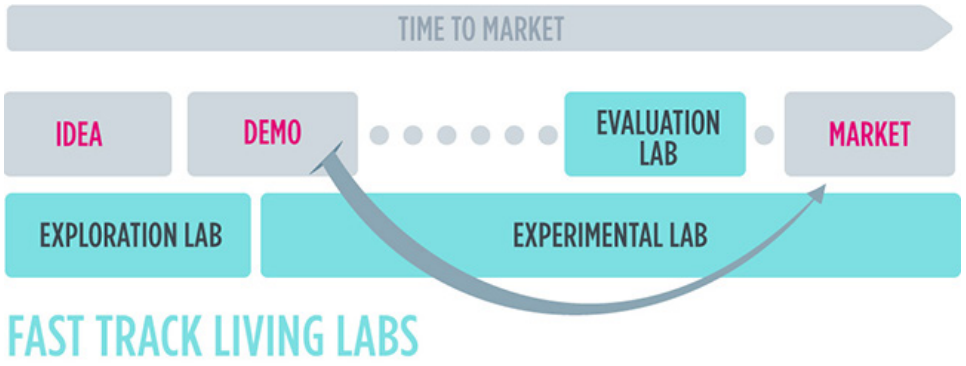
Leading the project is not limited to the individual Lab, as the company often does this with the assistance of the EU|BIC. Each EU|BIC will need to gradually follow several projects equipped with a Lab. Soon it will be a matter of animating the local network of Labs as well as the global community of users, which will quickly reach several hundred people.

## The iMinds experience with Living Labs, Ghent, Belgium

# iMinds

*How do you pitch a business model to a VC if you don't have any customers yet? How do you get to the product launch if your product just needs some last investment to go from prototype to service, but you're strapped for cash? You really need to make the right decisions to take the next step and grow your idea into a sustainable business. That is where Living Labs can guide an entrepreneurs, by putting him/her in touch with future customers and leveraging the ecosystem of stakeholders.*

At iMinds, we have worked very hard the last few years helping start-ups and SMEs get through this process using the Living Lab methodology. Since 2012, iMinds has been offering 'Fast Track Living Labs' for start-ups and SMEs. These Fast Tracks are based on the experience we gained in large European research and implementation projects involving large consortia and thousands of end-users. However, in order for them to be relevant for smaller companies with fewer resources and a shorter launch runway, we developed a more agile version of the Living Lab Methodology giving quick and relevant access to end users.




Using a large tool set of multi-method user research, we help define key research questions that need to be answered before moving on to the next step in building the business. Through the process, we start from a large on-line panel for the contextualisation of the innovation, and subsequently drill down to a relevant panel of lead users to co-create it. At the end of the fast track, businesses can use the input to prioritise their feature roadmap or build a sustainable business model.

These intensive tracks of co-creating with end-users usually take about 3 to 6 months, but will guide the entrepreneur through a number of steps embedded in the Living Lab environment which is being maintained and developed by iMinds-iLab.o.

Through a process of agile research, results from the previous research are being used as input for the next step. Programmed research steps are often revised and adapted to find the right path to the desired results as quickly as possible.
Since launching this form of applied and agile research methodology, iMinds-iLab.o has completed over 30 of these projects for local SMEs, start-ups or non-profit organisations. Many of them have followed up on the results and went on to apply for seed funding, capital investments or follow-up RDI projects based on the results of their close interactions with their end users.

# 5 EXPERIENCES

## Promotech's experience with Living Labs, Nancy, France

PROMOTECH CEI
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ET D'INNOVATION

Promotech Nancy has adopted a methodology where the support for the creation of innovative enterprises led by their users involves providing each innovative enterprise with its own Lab. In concrete terms, it means putting the company Lab in place, starting it up for and with the entrepreneur, and then handing it over to the enterprise as its own Lab. An autonomous Lab, such as this, is an active Lab that organises meetings of users and comes alive through a simple and attractive collaborative platform.

Promotech is one of the EU | BICS, co-founders of EBN. Since 1983 its representatives have been members of the European Commission working groups which established the concept of the EU|BIC. Promotech was created in the National Polytechnic Institute in Lorraine with the aim of contributing to the transfer of research technologies towards SMEs. Its model was soon directed towards the creation of businesses based on research findings and then based on the idea of establishing a business after finishing school or research. Promotech joined the technology park in Nancy in 1988 to become its EU|BIC. Providing support to close to 1,000 new activities, in 2012, Promotech has been hailed by its peers for the ambition of these projects, their growth and their ability to expand internationally. Promotech made its most recent evolution in 2009 and 2010 with the implementation of the contemporary economic models, adapting the Living Labs model to the daily activities of the EU|BIC. More than twenty Labs were set up with supported start-ups before defining the generic principle 'of supporting the business led by its users'.

*Nowadays, everyone agrees that the new trends in thinking and acting must be developed to tie up innovations more rapidly and to reduce the risk of failure of new activities. In order to understand these new methodologies, we think that the EU | BICS must be supported by way of a specific remit and perhaps a reappraised partnership method with the region.*

*The appropriation of the Living Lab concept in the context of this strategy may help to operate a methodological and operational transition in order to simultaneously test and evaluate the idea and the entrepreneurial spirit of the entrepreneur-candidate.*

*Thus, support for the creation of new activities by a structure that places use at the centre of the approach and integrates the users from the start, may be analysed as a process that is based on a keen understanding of the users and their needs. This understanding supports an entrepreneurial ambition and the idea of successful integration in one or more markets.*

*So, the interest for the EU|BIC that takes on the Living Lab concept lies in the fact that it will be in a position to test by use:*

1. *its own strategy: to reappraise the support process for the creation of new activities by drawing inspiration from the Living Lab concept;*

2. *the intuition (idea) of the entrepreneur-candidate: through a reappraised support process, the concept (product or service) proposed is put before a group of users;*

3. *tools conducive to collaborative work: Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) available for the use of entrepreneurs and its group of users.*

**Laure Morel and Laurent Dupont, ERPI Lorraine SCLL**

## City Lab Coventry

Coventry University, in partnership with its local authority Coventry City Council applied to and were successful in becoming a member of the 5th wave of Living Labs in July 2010. The result of which was City Lab Coventry (CLC).

Catherine Louch, Business Development Officer Strategic Relationships at Coventry University, explains that "the 2020 strategy for CLC is to develop innovative solutions in six key areas: Digital Media, Low Carbon Vehicles, Integrated Transport and Logistics, Ageing Community, Low Impact Buildings and Sustainable Agriculture and Food".

CLC provides many opportunities as it includes:

- Access to citizens, vehicles, buildings, roads and IT infrastructure within the city;
- A serious games studio/app lab, staffed by 30 developers providing specialist support in the creation of 3D immersive simulations and serious games, from prototype development through to full commercialisation;
- Business support, working with SMEs, start-up businesses and corporate organisations;
- Large scale low carbon vehicle trials and low impact building demonstration opportunities through its on-going funded projects

*"Since its inception – says Catherine – CLC has developed as a strong brand and conduit for project partnering in European projects in the area of Transport and Buildings. Although this has naturally become its focus, it does not exclude projects and opportunities in the wider discipline areas. As such, CLC is expanding rapidly to support social mobility and working with neighbourhoods in Coventry to support education development for underrepresented groups of citizens".*

The reason to set up CLC as a joint venture between Coventry University and Coventry City Council, was to address the Grand Challenges within the Smart City context. "Coventry's decision to become a Living Lab and a member of the European Network of Living Labs was driven by its ambition to be active in the Smart Cities arena and to strengthen its relationship with the local authority in this area. There was also an aspiration to build and strengthen links in Europe with a view to partnering in European Funding proposals".

The CLC has allowed multiple relationships to be developed through a seat on the ENoLL Council and access to its wide membership base. For example:

- The brand has helped Coventry to a achieve success in a number of European funded proposals;
- Has created opportunity for Coventry University to engage with the World Bank and to be involved in the development of the World Bank book on Citizen Engagement in ICT for Smart Agile Service Delivery;
- The opportunity to network with likeminded organisations;
- Significant profile raising in Europe through articles in Le Monde newspaper; Le Prise radio station and Étages magazines.

## Technoport, Luxembourg

technoport®
business incubator | coworking | fab lab

The Technoport fulfils its mission as the Luxembourg national technology business incubator by providing end-to-end development support programmes for start-ups.

The support programmes are composed of integrated services such as co-working, Fablab (Fabrication Laboratory) and Living Lab methods and tools applicable to the design front ends of the start-ups' innovation ventures. These services are intended to support the critical development phase of hi-tech product/service projects by providing a collaborative environment in the co-working space and events, by providing rapid prototyping facilities with the Fablab and also by operating Living Lab activities engaging user communities in concept co-design and/or testing.

The Living Lab services are operated under the TLLL (Technoport Living Lab Luxembourg) service line. TLLL has recently obtained the ENoLL (European Network Of Living Labs) label. The Living Lab as business incubation support service is operated to facilitate entrepreneurs' decision-making in the product/service design life cycle for value proposals validation. The Living Lab is a reliable way of rapidly evaluating the scalability of a given value proposal in chosen cross-border and international markets. Scaling or developing start-up activities internationally requires mastering the degree of customisation or standardisation that should be applied to the proposed products and services in different markets. This is the specific area where input from user communities under Living Lab practices is crucial. Living Labs are operated in TLLL to reduce entrepreneurs technical and market risks by integrating user participation in the critical entrepreneurial decision process.

The Technoport tests the efficiency of incubation support services such as user-centric methods and tools through its participation in EU projects. The Technoport is currently participating in LILA (Living Labs Application for internationalisation of start-up companies), a 2013-2015 Interreg IVB project in collaboration with EU Living Labs such as Lorraine Smart Cities Living Lab. Through such initiatives the Technoport is scaling its national Living Lab service offer and is, in parallel, contributing to the consolidation of transnational citizen user groups and more specifically organising groups of users from the EU NWE regions.

# 6 A LIVING LAB FOR THE INTERNATIONALISATION OF START-UPS

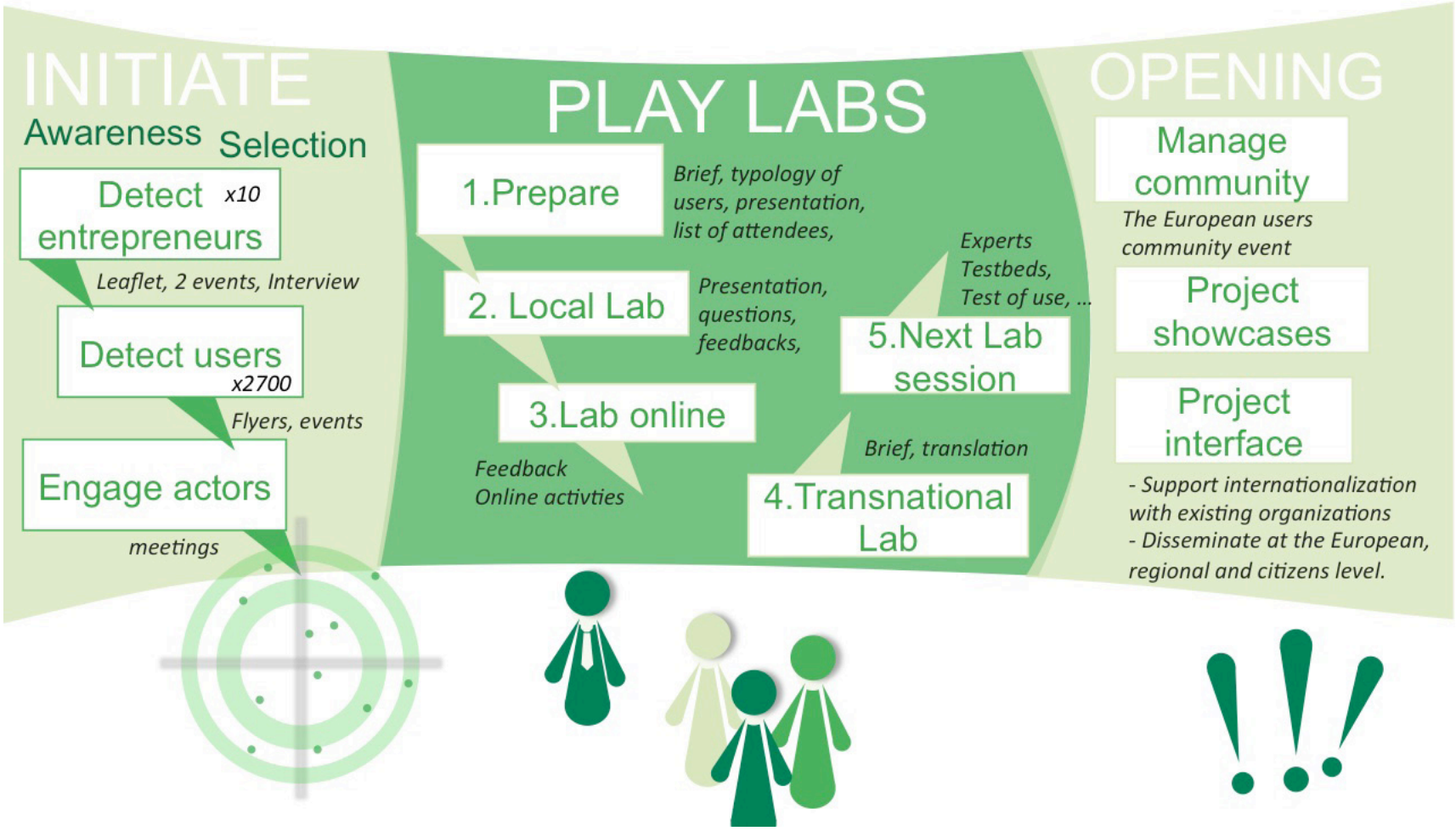
This evolution of a typical Living Lab is being tested within the context of the Interreg IVB NWE project LILA. The LILA project, coordinated by Promotech, also involves Technoport (a Luxembourg-based EU|BIC), INI Innovation (an associate member of EBN from Darmstadt), the University of Birmingham and EBN.

LILA aims to involve the users of a target region for validation and consideration of local behaviour prior to the export of products or services. The project partners support the start-ups in setting up their local Lab and then the group of 'foreign users' needs to be set up on a transnational level. Despite globalisation of the economy, it is understood that adaptation is required in each local context, which is what LILA offers.


*"According to INI-Novation's international experience, with the changing nature of innovation, the SME support services we provide have to respond to the changing needs and demands: they have to be oriented to the needs of the users and they have to be offered in the light of global thinking. Therefore, our LILA Living Labs support services are essential in more and more complex linked value chains. Their implementation will lead to a strong local presence and extensive international exchange."*

**Wolfgang Kniejski, INI Innovation gmbh, Germany**

# THE PROJECT PROCESS



# 7 INTERVIEW

## Álvaro Oliveira,
(Past Chairman of the European Network of Living Labs)

**EBN signed a "Memorandum of Understanding" in April 2012 with ENOLL (European Network of Living Labs) and some EU | BICS were or became Living Labs. In your opinion, is this the logical way to go?**

*Yes, Living Labs start as ecosystems but can take various forms; the Science Parks and EBN are part of it. Living Labs try to foster innovation and entrepreneurship; they could be promoted to be more effective. The EBN network, of course, intends to promote the concept to their members, to raise awareness and to instigate some actions that can help this to happen. This methodology to engage people, to involve the users, the citizens, the customers, anyone at all, which may not only include the final users in terms of people, but can also be suppliers or larger companies such as SMEs, micro companies, which can in no way be considered as the end users in this environment. The question is, how to involve these stakeholder bringing people together from the initial phase of a new idea, a new technology and, why not, a new policy. The methodology of having people co-create can bring value to both sides .*

**Living Labs are applied in many fields, but the entrepreneurship idea is cross-disciplinary. Is the Living Lab methodology driven by sectorial specificities?**

*Yes, because some elements make this environment different from the other one. If you are dealing with entrepreneurs, what the entrepreneurs need, of course, are new ideas and the approach to set those ideas into a market place and to make a profit. From that point of view, the living labs are part of the methodology that bring together all the stakeholders, and those stakeholders are other companies, funding organisations, venture capital, etc. I think this can be a very good environment to support the entrepreneur. On the other hand,*

*the second part is the involvement of the end users, or consumer, in idea generation of the new technology or product. This is also very good for entrepreneurs who have the opportunity to get initial feedback. They can test their own business idea even before embarking on the long and hard road to go to the market. I think the opportunity for the entrepreneurs to test and to refine their ideas are two aspects of Living Labs.*

**Would you advise EU | BICS to join a lab or implement their own?**

*If there is a local Living Lab that was created with the aim of implementing regional development policies, or local innovation, of course, my recommendation is join that. It's already there, it's a good ecosystem, and you can strengthen this ecosystem while gaining from being part of it.*

**What is the added value for an EU|BIC in a Living Lab?**

*80% of people will live in the city, the city has been transformed completely and not only the city, but also the citizen. As innovation is driven also by entrepreneurs, EBN can have a really strong role in this process. Adopting the Living Lab methodology - not necessarily creating one - is involving the entrepreneur in user design thinking.*

**Do you think start-up enterprises will be led by users?**

*I hope so. What we are talking about here is a possible way of making entrepreneurship more effective and better supported than it is today. The creation of a new creativity process will be there but could be stronger and more effective.*

# 8 CREDITS

## Authors

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He might very well be the strongest believer of the Living Lab concept around!

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# NOTES

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