

LIVING LAB XCHANGE

COMMUNITY BUILDING AND COLLABORATION IN THE SUSTAINABLE LIVING LABS

WHY

In a living lab, different organizations work together. From researchers at universities, professionals in companies, policy makers at local, regional or national level to students and researchers in practical experiments. To make a living lab really come to life, it is important that a community develops around it, so that knowledge can be developed and transferred and successful experiments can be scaled up. A well-functioning community will make a living lab future-proof.

Such a community does not develop overnight. The consortium that started the living lab is a good basis. But how to develop it further into an active, growing and effective community with an ecosystem that flourishes, challenges and strengthens other partners to develop successful innovation? The objective is to build a strong community to build a strong long term living lab.

WHAT



- **Start:** Getting to know each other, including what their own objectives of participating and the role everyone plays within the living lab and the projects.
- **Make it work:** Ensuring that there are agreements and instruments for connecting with each other and exchanging knowledge and ideas.
- **Maintain:** Ensuring that everyone contributes to strengthening the community based on his/ her own role and interest.
- **Expand:** Ensuring that more people and organizations become part of the community to strengthen the future activities and impact.



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WHO

Many different roles can be distinguished in a community. In a well-functioning community, people know which role(s) they fulfil.



Roles in community building and collaboration

Perhaps even more important than understanding the roles, is the social component. It must also be 'fun' to be part of a community. People should enjoy participating in the living lab community to be motivated to contribute.

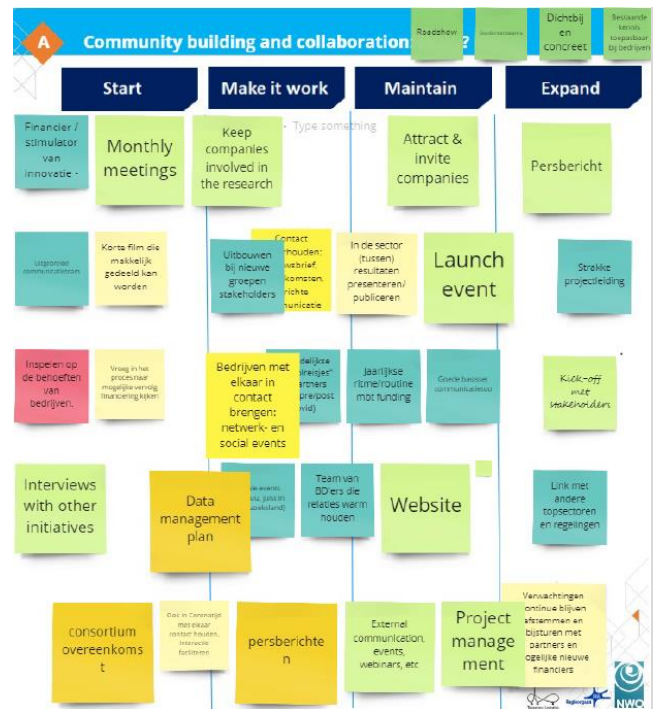
During the Xchange, the following suggestions were made to strengthen the social character of the community:

- Organize 'school trips', for example visiting the sites of participating companies to understand practice.
- Use a start (or completion) of a project to make it a festive event.
- Have participants interview each other, on video.

HOW

During the Xchange, experiences were also exchanged about which 'technical' building blocks a community can be built with, among other things:

- Website: with the purpose of the living lab well explained and clear representation of the projects and including photos of participants
- LinkedIn: a (closed) group with regular publication of relevant articles, enabling discussions.
- Online sessions: with professional support to organize online events, also between living labs.



Solutions to strengthen community building and collaboration in different phases - Miro board Living Lab Xchange

TAKE AWAYS

A community does not develop by itself, you have to invest time and attention. If necessary, you can appoint someone specifically for this task to connect and facilitate interchange. Do not forget the social and fun component. Strengthen each other's living lab communities by doing things together. A 'school trip' is an example of a social and connecting activity.

Conclusion

There is much enthusiasm among the living lab members to work (together) on an active community. A community can improve projects and sustain the duration of a living lab. By taking a good look at the different roles in a community and the use of different building blocks and techniques, a living lab ecosystem can be turned into a successful thriving community.

The research programme Sustainable Living Labs is co-financed by the Dutch Research Council (NWO), the Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management, Taskforce for Applied Research (SIA) and the Top Sector Logistics and the programme is monitored regarding progress and development by TM DIALOG.