



3. Living labs

The Living Lab (LL) concept was developed in the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, USA (2003). It connected with William J. Mitchell, Kent Larson, and Alex Pentland, who created the Living Lab concept as a user-centred methodology for prototyping, validating and refining complex solutions in multiple and evolving real life contexts.

Living Labs are defined as user-centred, open innovation ecosystems based on a systematic user co-creation approach integrating research and innovation processes in real life communities and settings. In practice, Living Labs place the citizen at the centre of innovation, and have thus shown the ability to better mould the opportunities offered by new ICT concepts and solutions to the specific needs and aspirations of local contexts, cultures, and creativity potentials. The above-mentioned involvement of citizens does not mean only consultations or validations, but real co-creation of final product, including exploration, experimentation and evaluation. The reason for success of Living Labs is a stress on public-private-people partnership and real-life situation. The LL methodology represents an interconnection of research (universities, research institutes...) and subjects related to innovations (usually private companies).

The main idea as well as the reason for success of Living Lab is a stress on public-private-people partnership and real-life situation. The LL methodology represents an interconnection of research (universities, research institutes...) and subjects related to innovations (usually private companies). It moves developed innovations (products or services) more close to real markets and customers, because innovations reflect real needs and requirements because of above-mentioned properties of LL methodology.

The **main target group** of the tool can be SMEs, academy and research domain, state and regional administration and public too. Living Lab methodology requires a balanced cooperation among particular involved groups, including academic and business sector. The necessary knowledge for using the tool can be acquired via studying publications concerning the tool, the web pages of existing Living Labs or the web page of ENoLL (European Network of Living Labs), and via participating on the OpenLivingLab Days.

On the one hand the **main strength** among others can be the integration of the users into the development process for ensuring highly reliable market evaluation. Furthermore the reduction of technology and business risks also can be mentioned as an advantage. Living Labs are beneficial to SMEs, micro-organizations, and start-ups, since they can share



resources without so much venture capital and large subjects have access to a broader base of ideas. On the other hand the main weakness of the method is that Living Lab is a bit vague methodology, not to mention that LL requires real intensive cooperation of all participants.

The **greatest challenge** concerning the tool can be the interconnection of all subjects dealing with a product (developers, researchers, users, citizens, subjects provided financing...) during the whole production phase (from initial idea to real market).

The Living Lab method has been applied successfully in many countries, such as (ENoLL web): Belgium, Finland, Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, Turkey and UK.

Some publications and reference about the tool:

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