

Executive summary

Living Labs (LL) is a methodology that connects the business and technical developers to the end user during all phases of a research project. Incorporating end user feedback through co-creation is an integral part of the SYNERGY project, thus, the activities conducted through LLs are essential to successful exploitation of the SYNERGY solutions.

Following the initial work done through the LLs by GECO (reported in the first version of the LL evaluation report, D9.1) several activities were planned for the first year of the project. These plans covered almost all work packages (WP), with the most immediate of those occurring in WP2, WP4 and WP10. WP2 activities were concerned with gathering feedback on the SYNERGY use cases, user and business requirements, as well as the barriers (regulatory, socioeconomic, and organisational) that could hinder the realization of the SYNERGY concept in the demo countries of the project. WP4 activities focussed on requirements extraction and validation for big data analytics, data sharing and data discovery. For WP10, LL activities focused on validating the preliminary business models (data-driven) defined by the project.

LL activities were conducted with internal and external stakeholders in WP2 and WP4 with the goal of consolidating the use cases and requirements in SYNERGY. For the internal stakeholder interactions, requirements and use cases were discussed and refined by project partners using the Volere and Trello online tools, respectively. In addition, discussions and exchanging of ideas took place between internal partners via the technical meeting held in May 2020 and the plenary meeting in October 2020. To assess the barriers to innovation in WP2, data was collected and analysed through questionnaires and interviews with internal partners. With regards to the activities with the external stakeholders, interviews were conducted between August and October 2020 to gather feedback on exiting use cases and requirements. With regards to WP10, a dedicated workshop was held by the work package leader (WPL) at the plenary meeting. The goal of this workshop was to gather feedback on the initial business models devised in SYNERGY in terms of relevance, importance, and interest from demo partners.

Following the summary of the activities in M1-M12, a comparison between the planned and completed engagements formed the basis of an evaluation of the LL process. This evaluation revealed that not all targets were hit, particularly with regards to the engagement of external stakeholders. This was primarily caused by two main issues, over focussing on a bottom-up approach for planning the engagements and a lack of availability of suitable external stakeholder contacts. Dependence on a bottom-up approach for planning engagement



activities meant that multiple plans and goals were established by WPLs without a holistic overview of the project goals. This created an issue with regards to aligning engagements between work packages. The second issue of a lack of external contacts meant that the target quantity of stakeholders to gather feedback from for the various elements in the design phase of the SYNERGY project was not fully met.

To rectify this, the LL approach will adjust its methodology to one that is characterised by an amalgamation of a bottom-up and top-down approach. LL leaders will continue to connect with WPLs to plan and organise activities from their perspective (bottom-up). In addition, a committee which consists of the project coordinator, technical coordinator and LL leader will be formed to generate a high-level overview (top-down). This integration of top-down and bottom-up approaches will allow for alignment between WPL perspectives with overall project goals. To address the issue of a lack of external stakeholders, a SYNERGY stakeholder community will be formed. This is essentially a database of contacts that will cover all key and supporting stakeholders that are relevant to developing the SYNERGY solutions.

The plan for the next 12 months is to continue to implement the five-stage process explained in D9.1 for conducting the LL activities. With regards to the new hybrid approach, a timeline has been created from the top-down perspective that is used as a framework for planning engagements within WPs and eventually demo site leaders when the piloting phase begins. To increase the collaborative effort from all project partners, a LL forum will begin in 2021. This is a monthly meeting where all partners involved in the LL process can discuss ideas, plans, and share concerns associated with stakeholder engagement. With regards to developing the SYNERGY stakeholder community, multiple strategies will be undertaken in 2021, including reaching out to current partners to provide contacts from their existing networks, increased visibility of the project on social media, identifying other similar EU projects to combine networking efforts and reaching out to external stakeholders that are engaged through the LL activities to create a snowball effect.

