

# Innovation of Education: The Success Factors of Learning Communities

Balancing local expectations and institutional goals:  
the case of the Innovation Lab HIBO

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Research Report

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## **Abstract**

This report presents research on success factors of learning communities with a case study of the Innovation Lab Hanze International Business Office (further – Innovation Lab HIBO) at Hanze University of Applied Sciences Groningen, the Netherlands. The research project is a part of the broader research programme on innovation of education and the success factors of learning communities carried on by a number of researchers at Hanze University of Applied Sciences Groningen (further – Hanze University AS).

In answering the main research question on success factors of learning communities and, specifically, the Innovation Lab HIBO, two sub-questions were formulated: the first deals with school level expectations about the Innovation Lab HIBO, whereas the second explores what are the institutional expectations and guidelines regarding living labs at Hanze University AS. The research focus is on formalised expectations about the goals and outcomes of living labs, as attaining the established goals and outcomes would testimony a successful activity of a living lab. The factors that facilitate or determine whether the goals and outcomes of living labs are achieved are therefore the success factors.

The analysis of both school level expectations about the Innovation Lab HIBO and the institutional expectations and guidelines regarding living labs reveals a number of success factors, conditions, and preconditions. As these do not coincide, it is argued that finding the right balance between local, school level, expectations and the institutional goals is crucial for the successful performance of living labs. Another important factor for successful performance of the living lab and, specifically the Innovation Lab HIBO, is development of a learning community. This process would require strengthening of an open organisational culture and facilitation of exchange of ideas and learning process.

The research project was carried on in the period from February 1, 2020, till August 30, 2020. From September 2020 the follow up research is planned into operationalization of success factors, definition of performance criteria, performance evaluation, development of suggestions for improvement of performance, and development of a blueprint for the establishment of innovation labs.

**Key words:** learning community, success factors, living lab, innovation lab, institutional expectations

# **1. Introduction**

## **1.1. Research project background**

This research project is a part of the broader research programme on innovation of education and the success factors of learning communities that develop within the learning environment of Hanze University of Applied Sciences Groningen (further - Hanze University AS). The institutional research programme was initiated by the Office for Education and Research of Hanze University AS in fulfilment of interinstitutional agreements on educational quality, specifically, the Agreement on Quality 2.6 [Kwaliteitsafspraken 2.6: “het faciliteren van docenten om te onderzoeken wat de succesfactoren zijn van leergemeenschappen en hun onderwijspraktijk, inclusief het leren van docent-onderzoekers”] and is carried from 2020 till 2024. In the meetings launching the research programme ten sub-themes were identified.<sup>1</sup> This research project contributes to the sub-theme No.7 of the institutional research programme, “Valorisatie van de effecten van IWP’s. Succesfactoren IWP's”, and focuses on identification of success factors for the Innovation Lab Hanze International Business Office (further – the Innovation Lab HIBO), the living lab initiated at the International Business School (further – the IBS) of Hanze University AS.

The research project was carried on in the period from February 1, 2020, till August 30, 2020. From September 2020 the follow up research is planned into operationalization of success factors, definition of performance criteria, performance evaluation, development of suggestions for improvement of performance, and development of a blueprint for the establishment of innovation labs.

## **1.2. Research purpose and value**

The main purpose of this research project was identification of success factors for the Innovation Lab HIBO. To put it simply, the research project had to establish “what is needed” for the Innovation Lab HIBO in order to succeed, where success is understood as achievement of the established targets and goals. By the same the results of this research project would enhance our current understanding of what determines and what enhances the successfulness of living labs as well as provide insights on how successfulness of (specific) living lab is linked to the valorisation of living lab activities.<sup>2</sup> More generally, the research outcome will contribute to innovation of education by providing insights on success of learning communities that are developing within the educational eco-systems of Hanze University AS.

The focus of the research project on success factors for the Innovation Lab HIBO resulted from the school’s need to acquire knowledge and clarity regarding the success factors of learning communities. As it became clear from conversations carried on in December 2019

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<sup>1</sup> See excel sheet “OwOzOverzicht1920 3dec19”.

<sup>2</sup> See the sub-theme No.7 “Valorisatie van de effecten van IWP’s. Succesfactoren IWP's” of the institutional research programme.

with drs. H.F.J.M.S. Jakobs - Van der Stok, the Business Relations Manager of the newly established Innovation Lab HIBO, understanding the success factors is necessary for the successful initiation and development of the Innovation Lab HIBO. At the start of this research project the Innovation Lab HIBO was still in an initiation phase, which was supposed to last till September 2020.

Further, the results of this research project on success factors of learning communities with a case study on the Innovation Lab HIBO provide a basis for the follow up research to be carried on from September 2020 till August 2024. The follow up research will focus on:

- operationalization of success factors for the living lab,
- definition of performance criteria for the living lab,
- evaluation of performance of the living lab,
- development of suggestions for the improvement of performance of the living lab,
- development of a blueprint for other living labs.

**Table 1. Themes for follow up research**

<b>Follow up research</b>	1. Operationalization of success factors for the living lab.
	2. Definition of performance criteria for the living lab.
	3. Evaluation of performance of the living lab.
	4. Development of suggestions for the improvement of performance of the living lab.
	5. Development of a blueprint for other living labs.

### **1.3. Research question**

The leading research question of this research project is following:

*What are the success factors of learning communities with regard to: (a) the local school level expectations about the performance of the Innovation Lab HIBO, and (b) the institutional expectations and guidelines regarding living labs that are developing within the educational eco-system of Hanze University AS.*

**Table 2. Research question**

<i>What are the success factors of learning communities with regard to:</i>	<i>(a) the local school level expectations about the performance of the Innovation Lab HIBO,</i>
	<i>(b) the institutional expectations and guidelines regarding living labs that are developing within the educational eco-system of Hanze University AS.</i>

#### **1.4. Classification of research**

This research project is applied and practice oriented by purpose, as it aims at defining practical recommendations regarding the success factors for learning communities that are developing within the educational eco-system of Hanze University AS and, specifically, the Innovation Lab HIBO. The insights about success factors of living labs are necessary in drafting a valorisation plan for the Innovation Lab HIBO.

At the same time, the insights from this research enhance a general knowledge about innovation of education and the success factors of learning communities. Therefore this research is a general scientific research of an exploratory nature.

As this research focuses on success factors of learning communities, which are indispensable for innovation eco-systems within national educational and research institutions, the acquired insights have a high importance and relevance for the society. There is an increasing interest nationally as well as internationally within academic and practice community in development of different forms innovation eco-systems where education, research, work practice, business, industry, government, and different public organisations meet, cooperate, and co-create in addressing different societal challenges and development of social value.

From a methodological point of view this research project is a qualitative case study, as it focuses on a specific innovation eco-system within Hanze University AS, with an embedded case study on success factors of the Innovation Lab HIBO.

#### **1.5. Research strategy and method**

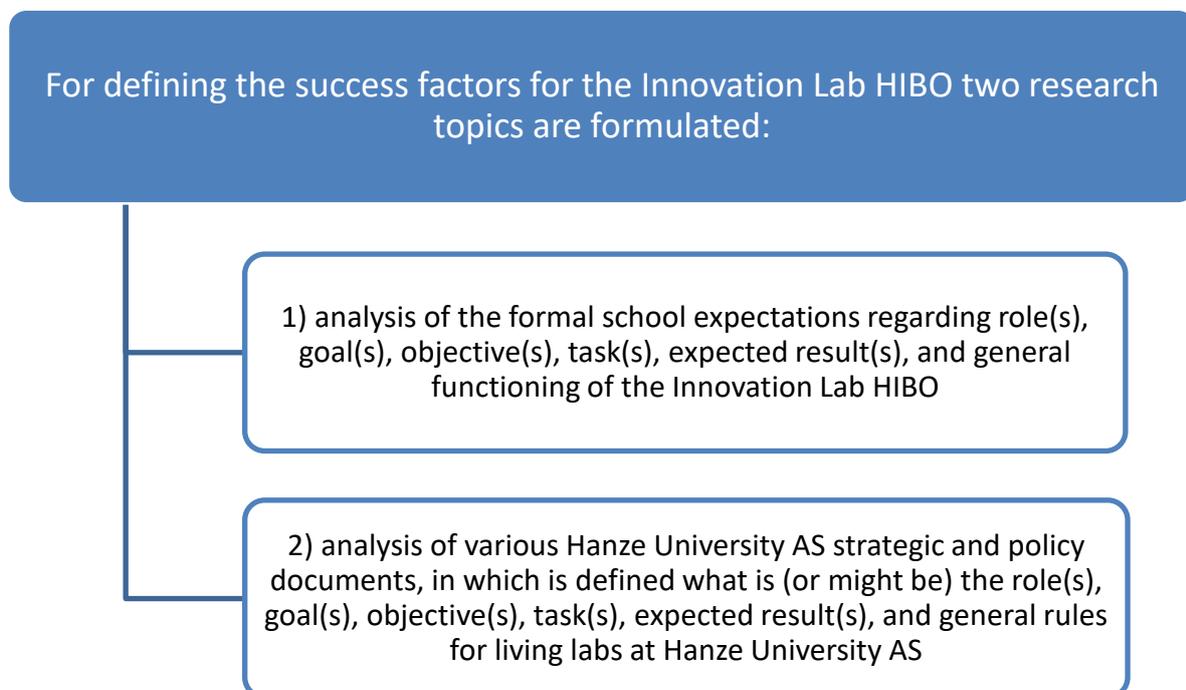
In answering the main research question on success factors of learning community two sub-questions were formulated: what are the local school level expectations about the performance of the Innovation Lab HIBO and what are the institutional expectations, including guidelines

and a regulatory framework, regarding living labs that are developing within the educational eco-system of Hanze University AS.

The exploration of expectations about the Innovation Lab HIBO concerned description and analysis of the formal expectations at the IBS regarding role(s), goal(s), objective(s), task(s), expected result(s), and general functioning of the Innovation Lab HIBO within the IBS, as formulated by the Dean and the Management Team of the IBS, in a consultation with school's professorships, lecturers-researchers, educational advisers, the School Representative Council, the Professional Advisory Council, and etc., and, subsequently, lettered in school's strategic and policy documents, such as the School Year Plan the School's vision on HIBO.

The exploration of the institutional expectations, including guidelines and a regulatory framework, concerned description and analysis of various Hanze University AS strategic and policy documents, in which is defined what is (or might be) the role(s), goal(s), objective(s), task(s), expected result(s), and general rules for living labs that are established and functioning at Hanze University AS, thus, also, the Innovation Lab HIBO.

The research focus is on formalised expectations about the goals and outcomes of living labs, as attaining the established goals and outcomes would testimony a successful activity of a living lab. The factors that facilitate or determine whether the goals and outcomes of living labs are achieved are therefore the success factors. Thus, the analysis of both the school's expectations regarding the Innovation Lab HIBO and the university's institutional regulatory framework for living labs enabled defining the success factors for the Innovation Lab HIBO.



**Figure 1. Research topics**

## **2. A case study: Innovation Lab HIBO**

An explorative qualitative case study was conducted in order to establish what are the school's expectations regarding the Innovation Lab HIBO. This included identification of what role(s), goal(s), objective(s), task(s) are foreseen and assigned to the Innovation Lab HIBO. Also, it included definition of what are the school's expectations and desires about the result(s) and outcomes of the Innovation Lab HIBO activities.

When a design of this research project was being developed, a number of formal interviews, as well as a qualitative survey, were planned. However, the preliminary research revealed that school's expectations have been formalised by the start of the research project and well lettered in the strategic plans and a special policy document. Therefore, the initial research plan was adjusted by choosing analysis of these documents instead of carrying the initially planned survey among the staff of the school. The school's documents studied included school's strategic plan for five years, school's year plan, and school's policy document, describing the vision on the Innovation Lab HIBO, and a project management document on initiations of the Innovation Lab HIBO.

The fact that school's expectations are already formalised determined their definition in this research project: the school's expectations regarding the Innovation Lab HIBO are defined as expectations formulated and written down in the strategic year plan and a special policy document by the Dean, in a consultation with school's professorships, lecturers-researchers, educational advisers, the School's Representative Council, the Professional Advisory Council, and etc. The early versions of both documents, the strategic year plan and a special policy document, were presented to all staff members of the school in April 18, 2019, and, after several changes based on different inputs, approved by the Management Team and the School's Representative Council on August 26, 2019.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, it can be said that the documents present well the school's expectations regarding the Innovation Lab HIBO and were broadly supported at the time of preparation.

### **2.1. The purpose of the Innovation Lab HIBO**

The IBS Strategic Plan 2016-2020, and, specifically, the IBS School Year Plan 2019/2020, entitled "Preparing Business Professional with a Global Mind-set" (further – the School Year Plan), stated that the Innovation Lab HIBO had been initiated in reply to the recognised need to better structure both the IBS existent connections with the business practice as well as the development of new ones. After an expressed observation that, despite various involvements with the professional field, relationships between the IBS and businesses are not yet well-structured, the School Year Plan proposed to establish the Innovation Lab HIBO that has to

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<sup>3</sup> See: IBS (2019) Hanze International Business Office (HIBO): the IBS Interface with Industry.

solve the indicated problem.<sup>4</sup> The IBS School Year Plan 2019/2020 indicates quite clearly that provision of a well-structured industry interface is one of the main tasks of the Innovation Lab HIBO. Thus, a not well structured industry interface and the school's felt need to modernise and bring the industry interface to the next level are both the reason for establishment of the Innovation Lab HIBO and its main purpose.

## **2.2. Roles and goals of the Innovation Lab HIBO**

In addition to formulation of the main purpose (the objective) for the Innovation Lab HIBO, the School Year Plan 2019/2020 specified a number of roles and goals for the Innovation Lab HIBO as these are seen by the school's community. For example, the Innovation Lab HIBO is defined as a place "where all questions from both local and international companies could be answered, on different levels, such as by deploying students in placements (PLM) or graduation reports (GPJs), or lecturers in practice-oriented research, or by professors in bigger and subsidized research projects with SMEs"<sup>5</sup>. It is suggested that the Innovation Lab HIBO "may also be the central place to keep an overview of the current contacts and past projects"<sup>6</sup>. Further, it is proposed that the Innovation Lab HIBO "could be the meeting point for all stakeholders in this field, i.e. students, lecturers, professors, supervisors, and representatives from local industry"<sup>7</sup>. Finally, it is projected that the Innovation Lab HIBO "is also to lead to more practice-oriented research such as consultancy for specific companies, leading to agreements between IBS, FEZ, and Hanze Pro, so as to handle all this well financially"<sup>8</sup>.

It is obvious that the School Year Plan 2019/2020 attempted to include a variety of expressed visions and expectations regarding the Innovation Lab HIBO, making it recognizable, desired, and supported by different participants and stakeholders. At the same time, the inclusion of different visions and expectations regarding the Innovation Lab HIBO, resulted in a quite long list that is presented in the table below (Table 3).

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<sup>4</sup> "There are various colleagues at IBS who have some involvement with trade and industry, the Professional Field, but this is not yet well-structured enough." See: Strategic Plan 2016-2020 of the International Business School. Year Plan 2019/2020. "Preparing Business Professional with a Global Mind-set". Adopted on 12.06.2019. P. 37.

<sup>5</sup> IBS School Year Plan 2019/2020. P. 26.

<sup>6</sup> IBS School Year Plan 2019/2020. P. 26.

<sup>7</sup> IBS School Year Plan 2019/2020. P. 26.

<sup>8</sup> IBS School Year Plan 2019/2020. P. 37.

**Table 3. Purpose, roles, activities, tasks of the Innovation Lab HIBO (based on the School Year Plan 2019/2020)**

<b>The main purpose (objective) the Innovation Lab HIBO:</b> providing a well-structured industry interface
<b>Roles, activities, tasks of the Innovation Lab HIBO and outcomes from its activities:</b>
1. The Innovation Lab HIBO is a place “where all questions from both local and international companies could be answered, on different levels, such us:
1.1. by deploying students in placements (PLM),
1.2. or students in graduation reports (GPJs),
1.3. or lecturers in practice-oriented research,
1.4. or by professors in bigger and subsidized research projects with SMEs” <sup>9</sup> .
2. The Innovation Lab HIBO is “the central place to keep an overview of the current contacts and past projects”.
3. The Innovation Lab HIBO is “the meeting point for all stakeholders in this field”.
4. The Innovation Lab HIBO “is to lead to more practice-oriented research”.
5. The Innovation Lab HIBO is a “consultancy for specific companies, leading to agreements between IBS, FEZ, and Hanze Pro, so as to handle all this well financially”.

### **2.3. The organisational structure of the Innovation Lab HIBO**

As for the possible organisational structure of the Innovation Lab HIBO, the School Year Plan 2019/2020 made only a short notice that a living lab should be manned by the IBS PLM and GPJ supervisors and related support staff<sup>10</sup>. However, the School Year Plan 2019/2020 foresaw that further details regarding the Innovation Lab HIBO should be specified by two other documents, *the Vision Document* and *the Plan of Action*. The preparation of both documents was included into the action plan of the School Year Plan 2019/2020 with the mentioning of a deadline for finalization – the document had to be ready before summer 2019.

<sup>9</sup> IBS School Year Plan 2019/2020. P. 26.

<sup>10</sup> IBS School Year Plan 2019/2020. P. 26

Also, the action plan envisaged appointment of staff [“colleagues”] “to man the HIBO”<sup>11</sup>. Short afterwards, drs. Hanna F.J.M.S. Jakobs - Van der Stok was appointed as a HIBO Business Relationship Manager.

Following the action plan of the School Year Plan 2019/2020, the IBS policy document “HIBO, Interface with the Industry” (further – the Vision Document) was prepared and handed in by Paul Ganzeboom, the Dean of the School, for the approval by the School’s Management Team and the School’s Representative Council. The Vision Document described “both the IBS vision on the interface with the industry and the ways to implement all this, within the framework of time and budget”<sup>12</sup>. Short afterwards, a project management document on initiation of the Innovation Lab HIBO, called HIBO Initiation Project 2019-2020<sup>13</sup>, was prepared and handed in by drs. Hanna F.J.M.S. Jakobs - Van der Stok, the newly appointed HIBO Business Relationship Manager.

The two follow up documents – the Vision Documents and a project management document on initiation of the Innovation Lab HIBO – did not focus on establishment of an organisational structure of the Innovation Lab HIBO. Up till September 2020 the administrative body of the Innovation Lab HIBO consisted from the HIBO Business Relationship Manager and the support officer - both with partial employment.

## **2.4. Further elaboration of the purpose of the Innovation Lab HIBO**

The prepared follow up document to the schools strategic year plan, the earlier mentioned Vision Document, provided a more detailed description of the purpose (objective) of the Innovation Lab HIBO that also included the already earlier mentioned multiple roles of the Innovation Lab HIBO: “under the new name of Hanze International Business Office, IBS is going to combine its time-honoured activities with companies (placements, graduation reports, etc) with new ideas, plans, and activities –on practice-oriented research, consultancy, organizing guest lectures and excursions, and trainings for companies – to further strengthen these links.”<sup>14</sup>

Also, the Vision Document provided more specific formulations of expectations regarding the tasks and final outcomes of activities of the Innovation Lab HIBO, which is now formulated as providing “a more effective and efficient cooperation with companies in the North of the Netherlands (N-NL) and abroad, so as to enable our students and lecturers/researchers to more actively engage in practice-oriented research (academic and professional engagement)”. The attainment of this target is defined as crucial in the school’s ambition to modernise its relationships with external stakeholders: “IBS needs to activate its interface with the industry,

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<sup>11</sup> IBS School Year Plan 2019/2020. P. 41.

<sup>12</sup> IBS (2019) Hanze International Business Office (HIBO): the IBS Interface with Industry.

<sup>13</sup> Jakobs - Van der Stok, H. (2019) HIBO Initiation Project 2019-2020.

<sup>14</sup> IBS (2019) Hanze International Business Office (HIBO): the IBS Interface with Industry. P. 3.

so as to move from the current ad hoc phase on this topic towards a more process/systems based approach”. The formulation also includes the direction of proposed changes, as it states that the future business interface should be more a process and system based approach. The overview of these elaborations is provided in a table below (Table 4).

**Table 4. Detailed objective, target, and expectations regarding the outcome of the Innovation Lab HIBO activities, and motivation for the change and modernisation (based on the Vision Document)**

<p><b>The main purpose (objective) the Innovation Lab HIBO in detail:</b></p> <p>“combine its time-honoured activities with companies (placements, graduation reports, etc) with new ideas, plans, and activities –on practice-oriented research, consultancy, organizing guest lectures and excursions, and trainings for companies- to further strengthen these links”</p>
<p><b>The specified target for the Innovation Lab HIBO:</b></p> <p>“a more effective and efficient cooperation with companies in the North of the Netherlands (N-NL) and abroad”</p>
<p><b>Expectations regarding the final outcome of activities of the Innovation Lab HIBO:</b></p> <p>“to enable our students and lecturers/researchers to more actively engage in practice-oriented research (academic and professional engagement)”.</p>
<p><b>Direction for modernisation of school’s interface with businesses:</b></p> <p>“IBS <i>needs to activate its interface</i> with the industry, so as <i>to move</i> from the current ad hoc phase on this topic towards a more process/systems based approach”.</p>

## 2.5. Additional roles and tasks for the Innovation Lab HIBO

The Vision Document not only details and explains the earlier defined roles of the Innovation Lab HIBO, but also introduces some new roles and tasks. For example, the Vision Document states that the Innovation Lab HIBO is also the IBS’ career centre.<sup>15</sup> Further, it is said that HIBO manages an annual programme on “company visits and guest speakers, for all bachelor and master programmes (excursions and guest lectures)” and [prepares] a brochure with the offer for companies with “basic ideas for companies on placements and graduation reports”.<sup>16</sup>

Also, it is stated that the Innovation Lab HIBO has several data lists, such as a list of companies with formal contacts, a list of IBS staff with company contacts, and a list of

<sup>15</sup> IBS (2019) Hanze International Business Office (HIBO): the IBS Interface with Industry. P. 5.

<sup>16</sup> IBS (2019) Hanze International Business Office (HIBO): the IBS Interface with Industry. P. 5.

services, including “how can companies make use of the services of the HIBO”<sup>17</sup>. Most probably this means that the Innovation Lab HIBO also prepares and maintains these lists, which requires some organisational capacity, including knowledge of information management, e.g., guidelines on how to deal with sensitive and private information, guidelines on who is allowed to access these data, etc.

A number of new roles and tasks for the Innovation Lab HIBO that are introduced in the Vision Document seem to be shared with other bodies of the school. For example, the Vision Document mentions the involvement of the Innovation Lab HIBO in “mentoring of IBS students at companies”. It is, however, a question whether the Innovation Lab HIBO is also responsible for mentoring, and, if it is responsible, whether it also includes organisation and supervision of mentoring. Thus, division of mentoring tasks, responsibilities and accountability between the Innovation Lab HIBO and other IBS bodies, e.g. supervisors and coordinators, will still need to be defined.

Also, the Vision Document mentions the involvement of the Innovation Lab HIBO in living labs at IBS<sup>18</sup>. However, it remains to be defined whether and to which extent the involvement of the Innovation Lab HIBO in living labs at IBS also includes their management, development, facilitation, and supervision. Similarly, it is not established by the Vision Document whether the Innovation Lab HIBO is responsible and also accountable for implementation of these tasks as well as an overall success of all living labs at IBS.<sup>19</sup>

Next, the Vision Document suggests that the Innovation Lab HIBO should involve both the Hanze Languages Centre and the Intercultural Learning Lab, by providing “a programme of trainings for companies (in-company or at Hanze) in foreign languages and intercultural communication or management”<sup>20</sup>. Also, the Innovation Lab HIBO should organize staff traineeships for short periods (1 or 2 weeks) at companies.

Finally, the Vision Document underlines the necessity that a mission of the Innovation Lab HIBO contributes to meeting the AACSB requirements and makes use of the professional network of the International Business Talents programme.

To summarize, the Vision Document adds a number of new roles, tasks, and targets for the Innovation Lab HIBO. The added roles for the Innovation Lab HIBO aim for the better integration of a living lab with school’s activities. In order to ensure effective integration of the Innovation Lab HIBO and, at the same time, avoid possible conflicts between involved and responsible parties, a more precise demarcation of shared and overlapping competences is necessary. Also, the Innovation Lab HIBO should develop a sufficient organisational capacity to assume the defined roles and to accomplish the assigned tasks. The table below summarizes

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<sup>17</sup> IBS (2019) Hanze International Business Office (HIBO): the IBS Interface with Industry. P. 5.

<sup>18</sup> IBS (2019) Hanze International Business Office (HIBO): the IBS Interface with Industry. P. 5.

<sup>19</sup> IBS (2019) Hanze International Business Office (HIBO): the IBS Interface with Industry. P. 5.

<sup>20</sup> IBS (2019) Hanze International Business Office (HIBO): the IBS Interface with Industry. P. 5.

the additional roles and tasks for the Innovation Lab HIBO that were introduced by the Vision Document (Table 5).

**Table 5. Additional roles and tasks for the Innovation Lab HIBO (based on the Vision Document)**

<b>Additional roles and tasks for the Innovation Lab HIBO:</b>
1. The Innovation Lab HIBO is the IBS' career centre.
2. The Innovation Lab HIBO manages an annual programme on “company visits and guest speakers, for all bachelor and master programmes (excursions and guest lectures)”.
3. The Innovation Lab HIBO has several data lists, such as a list of companies with formal contacts, a list of IBS staff with company contacts, and a list of services (how can companies make use of the services of the HIBO).
4. The Innovation Lab HIBO is involved in mentoring of IBS students at companies.
5. The Innovation Lab HIBO is involved in living labs at IBS.
6. The Innovation Lab HIBO involves both the Hanze Languages Centre and the Intercultural Learning Lab, by providing “a programme of trainings for companies (in-company or at Hanze) in foreign languages and intercultural communication or management.
7. The Innovation Lab HIBO organizes staff traineeships for short periods (1 or 2 weeks) at companies.
8. The Innovation Lab HIBO mission contributes to meeting the AACSB requirements.
9. The Innovation Lab HIBO makes use of the professional network of the International Business Talents programme.

## **2.6. The role of the IBS professorships and the IBS Advisory Board**

Further, the Vision Document highlights the prospects for contribution of the two IBS professorships (the Professorship International Business and the Professorship Bio-based Valorisation) to the development and functioning of the Innovation Lab HIBO. The Vision Document provides several examples of such contributions. For instance, it is mentioned that the Professorship International Business could contribute to the growth of practice-oriented research among IBS students and IBS staff and reinforce IBS (and the Innovation Lab HIBO)

role in the Export Clubs of the Northern Netherlands; whereas the Professorship Bio-based Valorisation could develop the international business network in world of Bio-based Valorisation and contribute to establishment of living labs at IBS, etc.

Also, the Vision Document foresees a closer cooperation with the IBS Advisory Board, which could help to develop special cooperation contracts, support the International Business Talents programme, and provide with a professional network.

Thus, the school's expectations are that the two IBS professorships, as well as the IBS Advisory Board, actively participate in a development of the Innovation Lab HIBO and later on. On the other hand, the successful performance of the Innovation Lab HIBO contributes to and strengthens the success of the IBS professorships. Therefore, it can be said that responsibility for a shared success lies on both sides.

## **2.7. A home for four info-desks and an information point**

Further, the Vision Document describes the four info-desks, for which the Innovation Lab HIBO will be a home: the IBS Placement Desk, the International Research Desk, the International Business Desk, and the IBS Trainings Desk. The functioning of each info-desk is described in detail from a day-to-day business perspective and are presented as forming a part of identity of the Innovation Lab HIBO: "So, at the HIBO all questions from both local and international companies could be answered, on different levels, such as by deploying students in placements (PLM) or graduation reports (GPJs), or lecturers in practice-oriented research, or by professors in bigger and subsidized research projects with SMEs."<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, the Innovation Lab HIBO is seen as a window to the world not only for the internal stakeholders, but also for the external ones: "Within the Hanze and externally, HIBO is the place to go to when international business is needed!"<sup>22</sup>

The importance that is given to the role of the Innovation Lab HIBO as a home to the four info-desks of the school and the information point on international business for internal and external stakeholders raise high expectations and set high standards for its performance. The table below lists the four info-desks and the information point that are to be linked to the Innovation Lab HIBO (Table 6).

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<sup>21</sup> IBS (2019) Hanze International Business Office (HIBO): the IBS Interface with Industry. P.8.

<sup>22</sup> IBS (2019) Hanze International Business Office (HIBO): the IBS Interface with Industry. P.7.

**Table 6. The innovation Lab HIBO as a home for four info-desks and the information point on international business (based on the Vision Document)**

<b>The Innovation Lab HIBO is a home to four info-desks</b>
1. The IBS Placement Desk.
2. The International Research Desk.
3. The International Business Desk.
4. The IBS Trainings Desk.
<b>The Innovation Lab HIBO is the information point on international business for internal and external stakeholders</b>

## 2.8. The day-to-day functioning and funding

In the school’s vision the Innovation Lab HIBO is primarily a “meeting point for all stakeholders in this field, i.e. students, lecturers, professors, supervisors, and representatives from local and international industries.”<sup>23</sup> Following this idea the suggestion is made to situate the four info-desks and the information point on international business physically in one office, as it is believed that this would facilitate meetings between different stakeholders:

The HIBO is to be housed in one office at the ground floor of IBS, as an anchor for all stakeholders, a meeting place to discuss the goals and their actual implementation. Thus, it is an anchor, a visible place where all stakeholders can meet:

- Students who need information on PLM or GPJ
- Lecturers who need specific companies to visit and guest speakers to come to their classes
- Co-ordinators for PLM and GPJ and support staff (from the Admin Team) who have office-hours there, to meet with students, colleagues, or guests from the industry
- Professors to discuss company contacts/projects with other colleagues<sup>24</sup>

The Innovation Lab HIBO is a physical place that looks modern and international: “(...)an actual office space where it is all happening. The modern office shows international business flair. It is busy, it is multi-lingual and multi-cultural.”<sup>25</sup>

The school’s vision drafts intermediate and long-term outcomes of the activity of the Innovation Lab HIBO that are achievable with a proper implementation:

<sup>23</sup> IBS (2019) Hanze International Business Office (HIBO): the IBS Interface with Industry. P.8.

<sup>24</sup> IBS (2019) Hanze International Business Office (HIBO): the IBS Interface with Industry. P.7.

<sup>25</sup> IBS (2019) Hanze International Business Office (HIBO): the IBS Interface with Industry. P.7.

If done well, our students find suitable placements, and our researchers and our students can do adequate practice-oriented research, which will benefit IBS and the companies themselves. And this further promotes the Hanze learning environment and the achievement of AACSB targets on academic and professional engagement.<sup>26</sup>

The table below (Table 7) provides an overview of identified expected intermediate and long-term outcomes of the activity of the Innovation Lab HIBO.

**Table 7. Expected intermediate and long term outcomes (based on the Vision Document)**

No.	Outcomes
	students find suitable placements
	the learning environment is promoted
	the AACSB targets on academic and professional engagement are achieved

Also, it is necessary to mention, that these intermediate and long-term outcomes of the activity of the Innovation Lab HIBO provide yet another basis for development of criteria for the assessment of successfulness of the Innovation Lab HIBO.

Further, the Vision document foresees that the Innovation Lab HIBO will be “funded externally by companies, funds from international projects, some Hanze Central funds, etc.”<sup>27</sup>. However, little is said how the third party funds will be acquired and by whom. Therefore, further elaboration is needed on the effective acquisition of these external funds.

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<sup>26</sup> IBS (2019) Hanze International Business Office (HIBO): the IBS Interface with Industry. P.8

<sup>27</sup> IBS (2019) Hanze International Business Office (HIBO): the IBS Interface with Industry. P.7.

### **3. Institutional vision and framework for living labs**

In this part of the research report the institutional vision, including a regulatory framework, for the functioning of living labs is explored. The institutional vision is here understood as officially stated university's expectations regarding the role(s), goal(s), task(s), result(s) and outcome(s) from the activity of living labs at Hanze University AS.

The exploration of the institutional vision included analysis of two strategic policy documents of Hanze University AS: a programme document called "Connecting and Innovating in Education" and a Strategic Plan 2016-2020 "Innovating together". The analysis process was following: first, the general institutional vision on living labs within Hanze University AS is defined; then, the institutional criteria for the ideal living lab are analysed and, based on this analysis, the success attributes are defined; further, the institutional expectations regarding the outcomes of living labs' activities are summarized; then, the institutional vision regarding the role of applied professorships and the prospects for integration of the living labs into the educational curriculum is presented; subsequently, the institutional approach to individualisation and adaptation of living labs to the needs of the school is disclosed; and finally, the proposed principle for evaluation of living labs is introduced.

#### **3.1. Institutional vision on living labs**

##### **3.1.1. Innovation lab as a learning community**

The Innovation Lab, or, as it is referred in the "Connecting and Innovating in Education" programme of Hanze University AS (further – Charter 2016), the Living Lab, is a "physical or virtual entity where research, teaching and professional practice come together"<sup>28</sup>.

The Living Lab is also the entity, where the learning community develops and takes the form. Formally, the learning community is defined as a (virtual) place where students, lecturer-researchers and professionals from the professional field can learn from each other and collaborate to find solutions to social issues.<sup>29</sup>

Hereby needs to be noted that development of the learning community is key to the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2016-2020 of Hanze University AS "Innovating together"<sup>30</sup>. It is believed that Hanze University AS will fulfil its social mandate in providing education and development of future professional, applied knowledge development, and innovation in professional practice by combining teaching, research and professional practice

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<sup>28</sup> In fact, 'knowledge hubs', 'innovation labs', 'learning communities' or 'hybrid learning configurations', are all referred to as 'living labs' within Hanze University AS. See: Hanze University AS (2016) Charter "Connecting and Innovating in Education"; Hanze University AS (2017) "Connecting and Innovating". Available at: <https://www.hanze.nl/eng/organisation/projects-and-programmes/connecting-innovating>

<sup>29</sup> Hanze University AS (2016) Charter. P.3.

<sup>30</sup> Hanze University AS (2016) Strategic Plan 2016-2020 "Innovating together".

within a learning community. Thus, the learning community that “takes the form of living labs”<sup>31</sup> is central for achievement of all strategic goals of Hanze University AS.

The Charter 2016 identifies several pre-conditions that facilitate development of a learning organisation and support the learning process. These are – trust in the professionalism of the employee; willingness to learn with and from each other; recognising mistakes and successes and learning from them.<sup>32</sup> Thus, learning is central in the performance of the living lab. Also the choice of a name ‘living lab’ instead of ‘innovation lab’ discloses the aspiration to develop a learning living organisation. The table below lists the three preconditions for a learning organisation that are identify in the institutional approach (Table 8).

**Table 8. Institutional vision on pre-conditions for a learning organisation (based on Charter 2016)**

No.	Preconditions for a learning organisation
1.	Trust in the professionalism of the employee
2.	Willingness to learn with and from each other
3.	Recognising mistakes and successes and learning from them

As the institutional vision introduces living labs as places where learning communities develop and where a learning process plays a crucial role, experimentation, in combination with educational research, is encouraged. Moreover, it is stated that for conducting research an appropriate space and funding should be given in the daily work.<sup>33</sup>

Another important remark is made regarding the expected results of living labs that are learning communities. According to the institutional vision presented in the Charter 2016, the focus should be not only on results, but also on learning, for which sufficient freedom should be provided. Hereby it is important to note that focus on learning is interpreted as one that includes focusing on development results: “In addition to focusing on results, we provide sufficient freedom to learn. This also means focusing on development results along with sufficient freedom to (be able to) learn.”<sup>34</sup>

### **3.1.2. Institutional characteristics of a living lab**

The Charter 2016 acknowledges different forms of manifestation of living labs and their clustering’s, as long as they “(more or less) meet the following criteria:

- 1 - Complexity: the issues within the LL are complicated.

<sup>31</sup> Hanze University AS (2016) Charter. P.6.

<sup>32</sup> Hanze University AS (2016) Charter. P.4.

<sup>33</sup> Hanze University AS (2016) Charter. P.4.

<sup>34</sup> Hanze University AS (2016) Charter. P.4.

- 2 - Multidisciplinary/inter-professional: multiple specialisations contribute from their own line of approach and/or profession.
- 3 - Learning community/learning and co-creating: The LL focuses on learning and co-creating in a community and on exchange between communities.
- 4 - Diversity of partners: There are three types of partners: from teaching, from research and from professional practice.”<sup>35</sup>

The table below lists the institutional criteria for a living lab as these are defined in the Charter 2016 (Table 9).

**Table 9. The institutional criteria for a living lab (based on Charter 2016)**

No.	Living Lab Criteria
1.	Addresses complex social issues
2.	Is multidisciplinary and inter-professional
3.	Focuses on learning and co-creation
4.	Diversity of partners from education, research, and professional practice

### 3.2. The ideal living lab and preconditions for success

The institutional vision on a successful living lab is defined in the Charter 2016 in a description of a so called “ideal living lab”: “An ideal LL [Living Lab] is a practice (social system) in which partners from knowledge institutes and professional practice collaborate on complex and current issues, the solution to which requires the co-creation of knowledge in a way that transcends the boundaries of traditional structures, sectors, disciplines and/or forms of working and learning.”<sup>36</sup> Although the attainment of the ideal living lab might be difficult and not always possible in a reality, it should become the aspiration for the innovation labs and serve as a guideline.

The definition of the ideal living lab also suggests what would be the preconditions for the successful living lab. Therefore, collaboration of partners as well as co-creation of knowledge are to be considered as preconditions for successful activity. In addition, the Charter underlines that meeting social demands requires collaboration across disciplines.<sup>37</sup> Thus, also cross-disciplinary collaboration can be seen as a precondition for success.

Further, the Charter 2016 emphasizes that living lab ambitions can be achieved only if there is an agreement among participants on how these ambitions can be achieved and if the

<sup>35</sup> Hanze University AS (2016) Charter. P.6.

<sup>36</sup> Hanze University AS (2016) Charter. P 6.

<sup>37</sup> Hanze University AS (2016) Charter. P.4.

responsibility for the results is felt among participants. Thus, these two aspects are the prerequisites for the successful activity of the living lab too.

The table below summarizes the preconditions for successful activity of living labs that are identified in the institutional vision defined in the Charter 2016 (Table 10).

**Table 10. The institutional vision on success preconditions (based on Charter 2016)**

No.	Success preconditions
1	collaboration of partners from knowledge institutes and professional practice
2	co-creation of knowledge in providing solutions for complex present-day issues
3	collaboration across disciplines
4	an agreement on how ambitions can be achieved
5	Felt responsibility for the results

### 3.3. Institutional expectations regarding living labs

Further, the Charter 2016 outlines that the **living lab achieves its objective if:**

- (1) “the participants collaborate on research, design and knowledge issues from professional practice/society which lead to an impact on the professional field”<sup>38</sup>,
- (2) “and if all participants achieve their own (learning) objectives”<sup>39</sup>.

These two aspects describe the desired result of the successful living lab in terms of outcome for both – the professional field in general and the participants of the living lab partnerships. Therefore, the two aspects are also the criteria for the measuring of successfulness of the living lab that tell us how and when do we know that the innovation lab is successful. It should be noted here that the first expected result, an impact on the professional field, needs to be further specified.

### 3.4. Institutional vision on the role of professors

In the institutional vision on living labs an important role in achieving the objectives of the living lab is foreseen for professional professorships. According to the Charter 2016, “a professor is associated with each LL [Living Lab], connecting the knowledge from an LL [Living Lab] or their own knowledge from research themes to the teaching and professional

<sup>38</sup> Hanze University AS (2016) Charter. P 6.

<sup>39</sup> Hanze University AS (2016) Charter. P 6.

field”<sup>40</sup>. In other words, the professor is the one who develops and takes care of knowledge connections necessary for the knowledge co-creation, transfer, and application in education and professional practice. Thus, the successful activity of a professor in connecting the knowledge with education and practice is necessary in order for the living lab to succeed. Therefore, the activity of a professor in connecting the knowledge is a success factor (condition) in development of the successful living lab, the third one next to the two earlier mentioned. Whereas the outcome of this activity of a professor, the established knowledge connections with education and professional practice in terms of knowledge co-creation, transfer, and application, defines the third dimension of the successful living lab that tells us how and when do we know that the innovation lab is successful.

### **3.5. Institutional vision on link with the curriculum**

The Charter 2016 emphasizes that each school includes the possibility to participate in a living lab into the curriculum and defines how this should be done by identifying a necessary requirement for the educational process and clarifying the role and position of the examination boards:

A student can, for instance, attend a work placement or complete a minor, specialisation, final project or study period block in an LL. To do this, being able to test the learning outcomes relating to the aforementioned components independently of learning pathway is a necessity. Examination boards support a multi-disciplinary approach and assessing independently of learning pathway.<sup>41</sup>

Thus, when integrating the living lab into the curriculum first assessment procedures and criteria need to be developed that would allow assess the learning outcomes of different educational components independently of learning pathway. Further, such independent of learning pathway assessment, which would include a multi-disciplinary approach, should be supported by the school’s examination board.

### **3.6. Institutional approach to individualisation of living labs**

The institutional approach to individualisation of living labs allows for some freedom in defining the aims and expected results of the living lab. Specifically, the Charter 2016 establishes that schools have freedom of choice in defining the “focus, ambition, anticipated returns, scale, nature and contribution made by the partners involved”. However, there is a clear request that focus and ambition of the living lab should be described “in terms of the common language and criteria”<sup>42</sup>.

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<sup>40</sup> Hanze University AS (2016) Charter. P 6.

<sup>41</sup> Hanze University AS (2016) Charter. P 6.

<sup>42</sup> Hanze University AS (2016) Charter. P 6.

It should be noted that the Charter 2016 focuses primarily on a content of living lab and does not address specifically the form of a living lab. Therefore, the possible individualisation of an organisational form of a living lab is to be decided by the school. Moreover, as it was mentioned earlier, the institutional vision acknowledges the possibility of different forms of living labs. However, the Charter 2016 underlines that individualisation of an organisational form of a living lab is ‘allowed’ as long as it meets the established institutional characteristics for living labs.

### 3.7. Institutional approach to validation of living labs

The institutional approach to validation of a living lab is based on principle of a horizontal accountability. Specifically, the Charter 2016 establishes that “all LLs [living labs] will be validated by horizontal accountability, i.e. accountability to the partners involved and the environment”<sup>43</sup>. The validation by horizontal accountability should be considered as another evaluation criterion in establishing the successfulness of the living lab performance and, already the fourth, prerequisite for the successfulness of a living lab.

Another two important institutional requirements for the functioning of living labs that are emphasized in the Charter 2016 concern the agreement of stakeholders and the felt responsibility. Namely, it is stated that ambitions set for a living lab can be achieved only if there is an agreement on how these ambitions can be achieved and if the responsibility for the results is felt. Both requirements are in line with the earlier mentioned principle of horizontal accountability. Further, these two requirements are also the prerequisites for the successful activity of the living lab.

To summarize, the institutional approach to the success factors of living labs emphasizes: collaboration of partners, co-creation, cross-disciplinarily, active role of applied professorships, stakeholders’ agreement, and responsibility. The table below presents an overview of centrally defined prerequisites that are necessary for the successful activity of living labs (see Table 11).

**Table 11. Institutional prerequisites and success factors (based on Charter 2016)**

No.	Prerequisite / condition / success factor
1	<b>collaboration of partners</b> from knowledge institutes and professional practice
2	<b>co-creation of knowledge</b> in providing solutions for complex present-day issues

<sup>43</sup> Hanze University AS (2016) Charter. P 7.

3	<b>cross-disciplinary</b> collaboration
4	<b>the successful activity of a professor</b> in connecting the knowledge
5	<b>an agreement</b> on how these ambitions can be achieved
6	<b>the felt responsibility</b> for the results

The institutional approach to evaluation criteria living lab activities consider impact on the professional field, achievement of all objectives for all participants, establishment of knowledge connections (in terms of knowledge co-creation, transfer, and application), and horizontal accountability. The table below presents an overview of centrally defined criteria for the evaluation of living lab activities (see Table 12).

**Table 12. Institutional living lab performance evaluation criteria (based on Charter 2016)**

No.	Evaluation Criterion
1	<b>there is impact on the professional field</b> (further specification is needed)
2	<b>all participants achieved their own (learning) objectives</b>
3	<b>(the professor) established knowledge connections</b> with education and professional practice in terms of knowledge co-creation, transfer, and application
4	<b>the horizontal accountability</b> i.e. accountability to the partners involved and the environment, <b>is valid(ated)</b>

In addition to what was said earlier the following should be mentioned. Talking about successfulness of a living lab one should not forget the importance of functioning of a living lab as a learning community and, possibly, a learning organisation. Although learning effect might be difficult to measure and quantify, it is still possible to observe and trace in analysis of activities and outcomes of the living lab. The importance of learning process is also emphasized in the institutional vision to living labs. For example, the Charter 2016 states that the focus on results of living labs activities includes focusing on development results too, along with existence of sufficient freedom for learning.

## 4. Conclusions

The purpose of this research project was to establish the success factors of learning communities with regard to: (a) the local school level expectations about the performance of the Innovation Lab HIBO, and (b) the institutional expectations and guidelines regarding living labs that are developing within the educational eco-system of Hanze University AS. The explorative analysis of these two research topics allowed to establish a variety of success factors that refer to different aspects of the living lab: from its functioning as a learning community till its role in attainment of pre-set institutional or school goals. Hereafter is a summary of findings regarding the success factors for the Innovation Lab HIBO specifically, based on school's expectations, as well as for the living labs in general, based on institutional goals and expectations regarding learning communities at Hanze University AS. Afterwards several concluding observations are provided regarding the school level and institutional expectations about living labs.

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The success factors for the Innovation Lab HIBO that have been established after an analysis of school's expectations regarding the roles, goals, and outcomes of the living lab activity, refer to ability (competence, skills, knowledge) and organisational capacity (organisation's resources in terms of finances, time, staff) of the school to develop the living lab as able and capable to fulfil the multiple roles and attain the established goals.

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*The success factors for the Innovation Lab HIBO refer to ability (competence, skills, knowledge) and organisational capacity (organisation's resources in terms of finances, time, staff) of the school to develop the living lab as able and capable to fulfil the multiple roles and attain the established goals.*

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Namely, **the school needs to have ability and capacity:**

- 1) to develop and run the Innovation Lab HIBO as able and capable to “answer all questions from both local and international companies”,
- 2) to develop and run the Innovation Lab HIBO as able and capable to deploy placement and graduation students, lecturers-researchers, professors for answering these questions,

- 3) to develop and run the Innovation Lab HIBO as able and capable to “keep an overview of the current contacts and past projects”,
- 4) to develop and run the Innovation Lab HIBO as able and capable to be “the meeting point for all stakeholders in this field”,
- 5) to develop and run the Innovation Lab HIBO as able and capable to lead “more practice-oriented research”,
- 6) to develop and run the Innovation Lab HIBO as able and capable to be “a consultancy for specific companies, leading to agreements between IBS, FEZ, and Hanze Pro, so as to handle all this well financially”,
- 7) to develop and run the Innovation Lab HIBO as able and capable to be the IBS’ career centre,
- 8) to develop and run the Innovation Lab HIBO as able and capable to manage an annual programme on “company visits and guest speakers, for all bachelor and master programmes (excursions and guest lectures)”,
- 9) to develop and run the Innovation Lab HIBO as able and capable to prepare and handle several data lists, such as a list of companies with formal contacts, a list of IBS staff with company contacts, and a list of services (how can companies make use of the services of the HIBO),
- 10) to develop and run the Innovation Lab HIBO as able and capable to get involved in mentoring of IBS students at companies,
- 11) to develop and run the Innovation Lab HIBO as able and capable to get involved in living labs at IBS,
- 12) to develop and run the Innovation Lab HIBO as able and capable to get involved in both the Hanze Languages Centre and the Intercultural Learning Lab, by providing “a programme of trainings for companies (in-company or at Hanze) in foreign languages and intercultural communication or management,
- 13) to develop and run the Innovation Lab HIBO as able and capable to organise staff traineeships for short periods (1 or 2 weeks) at companies,
- 14) to develop and run the Innovation Lab HIBO as able and capable to contribute to meeting the AACSB requirements,
- 15) to develop and run the Innovation Lab HIBO as able and capable of making use of the professional network of the International Business Talents programme,
- 16) to develop and run the Innovation Lab HIBO as able and capable of being a home to four info-desks,
- 17) to develop and run the Innovation Lab HIBO as able and capable of being the information point on international business for internal and external stakeholders.

All these are “building elements” in the view of the school in attaining the main purpose of the Innovation Lab HIBO, which is provision of a well-structured industry interface for the school. The latter, a well-structured industry interface, in school’s definition is “a more effective and efficient cooperation with companies in the North of the Netherlands (N-NL) and abroad”.

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The success factors for living labs that are developing within the educational eco-system of Hanze University AS, thus, also the Innovation Lab HIBO, and that have been established after an analysis of institutional expectations regarding living labs, although are different from the success factors listed above, also refer to ability and organisational capacity of the school to develop the living lab that matches the institutional vision on living labs.

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*The success factors for living labs within the university’s educational eco-system refer to ability and organisational capacity of the school to develop the living lab that matches the institutional vision on living labs as learning communities with an open culture of a learning organisation.*

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Namely, **the school needs to have ability and capacity:**

- 1) to develop and run the living lab as a learning community, which includes establishment of a learning organisation with following features of an organisational culture:
  - a) trust in the professionalism of the employee,
  - b) willingness to learn with and from each other,
  - c) recognising mistakes and successes and learning from them
- 2) to develop and run the living lab that:
  - a) addresses complex social issues,
  - b) is multidisciplinary and inter-professional, where multiple specialisations contribute from their own line of approach and/or profession,
  - c) focuses on learning and co-creating in a community and on exchange between communities,
  - d) includes a diversity of partners (education, research, and professional practice).

In addition to the listed above school's abilities and capacities, following success factors are distinguished from the analysis of an institutional vision on living labs:

- 1) the activity of a professor in connecting the knowledge is successful,
- 2) there is an agreement on how ambitions of the living lab can be achieved,
- 3) there is a felt responsibility for the results of the living lab activities.

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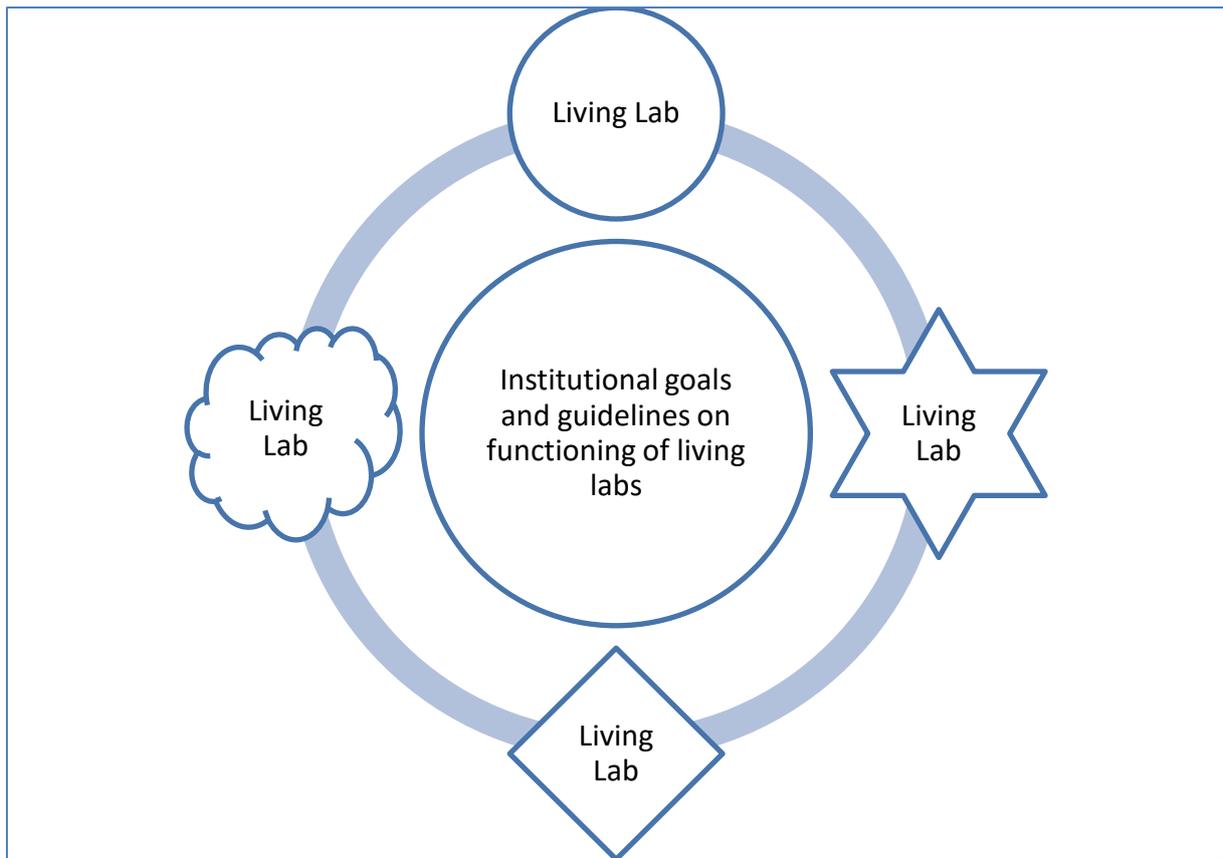
*In addition, there needs to be:*

- 1) successful activity of a professor,*
  - 2) an agreement on how ambitions can be achieved,*
  - 3) a felt responsibility for the results of the living lab*
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A brief comparison of success factors for the living lab that are linked to school's expectations regarding the Innovation Lab HIBO with those related to the institutional vision on living labs reveals some differences. These differences are because of differences in expectations about the living lab. The school's expectations regarding the living lab are based on 'locally' identified real and/or felt social and/or organisational 'needs' as well as 'local' understanding of institutional goals. In other words, individual living labs are being developed around 'locally' defined aims and expectations about results, which are based on 'locally' felt social or organisational needs. Such differences in expectations between central body and other units is common in big organisations.

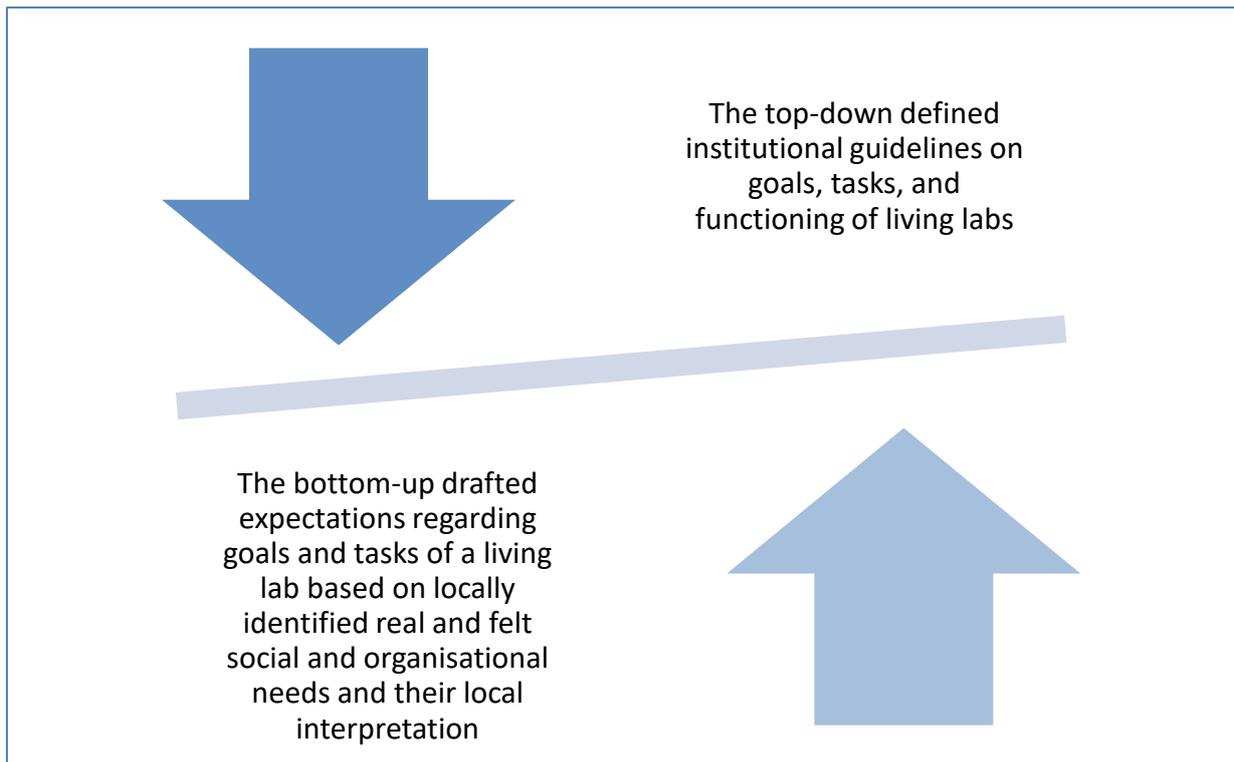
Moreover, in the case of living labs at Hanze University AS, the institutional regulatory framework intentionally leaves some space for individual variation of living labs that are to be established at schools. In fact, the institutional framework provides only general guidelines on functioning of living labs that needs to be complemented and filled-in by a school specific content. In cases when a school has more specific expectations about the living lab, the differences are unavoidable.



**Figure 2. Relationship between institutional guidelines and individual living labs (by author)**

However, do differences in expectations about the living lab hinder performance of the living lab? Do differences in expectations make it more difficult to successfully run the living lab? Well, it does, as there are different targets and it is important to have a clear plan for the development of the living lab that builds on both – local and institutional – visions.

If integrations of two visions – local and institutional – on living labs is not possible, there should be a smart balancing of local expectations and institutional goals. Finding the right balance between the local, e.g., school level, expectations and the institutional goals is crucial for the successful performance of living labs. Especially, because both – the top-down institutional guidelines on functioning of living labs and the bottom-up defined school's vision about the living lab – are formulated in a legitimate way. The legality of both approaches makes balancing of local expectations and institutional goals in the development and management of the living lab especially difficult.



**Figure 3. Balancing top-down and bottom-up expectations (by author)**

These concluding observations raise a number of new questions that were to some extent dealt with in this research, but would require more research:

- 1) first, how big the institutional freedom for localisation and individualisation of the living lab at the institutional body is;
- 2) second, which locally or centrally formulated expectations regarding the role and tasks of the living lab will have to be followed;
- 3) and, finally, what would be the right amount of localisation and individualisation.

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