

## FRANCE

# The LAB (Le LAB)

Publication date: January 2019

Le LAB provides a dedicated, physical space for French PES employees and stakeholders to come together and think through problems and solutions related to employment services in a creative and innovative way. To date, 8 physical labs exist across France. The LAB in Paris (the first one created is called the national Le LAB) opened in 2014, as part of the wider French PES' innovation strategy. The concept is transferred to other French regions, creating smaller regional LABs. However, regions are not obliged to establish a LAB. A mobile version of Le LAB is available in some areas and is used when required.

Le LAB has four main elements including methods that promote creativity; an open space; an innovative approach; internal and external stakeholders. Le LAB offers two main types of services including the following:

- 'flash co-design': a collaborative and creative approach, based on sessions with internal and external stakeholders, at key points in the progress of a project (1-4 days session);
- project acceleration: a team support to a project over a period of time in order to secure and accelerate a project through collaborative sessions (duration: 8-10 weeks).

Several spaces are available for this co-innovation process:

- A plenary area: workshops, launching and closing of projects;
- A showroom that shows the innovations made by the French PES (videos, demonstrations);
- A boarding area that allows participants to visualise the progress of the work.

The innovative approach and techniques, in combination with the trained Le LAB team, are considered the most important success factors.

Name of the PES	French PES (Pôle emploi)
Scope of measure	National
When was the practice implemented?	Since 2014
What was the driver for introducing the practice? Was it internal or external?	The idea for Le LAB was born internally: the project was first presented in 2013 by Loic Remaud, an employee of the Innovation Department of the French PES, to the Committee of the Directorate General. However, the decision to implement the project and set up the national Le LAB was taken in 2014, when the Ministry of Labour called for the establishment of a platform that brought together all services linked to employment. On 24 September 2014 Le LAB was created.
Which organisation was involved in its implementation?	The French PES
Which groups were targeted by the practice?	French PES employees and stakeholders, including jobseekers, students, companies, start-ups, recruiters, partners, experts, researchers and academics.
What were the practice's main objectives?	Le LAB aims to accelerate projects and develop new innovative services for users (e.g. jobseekers, employers) by co-constructing new solutions with them. These services are solutions to existing problems in PES services that the French PES encounters. The practice's main objectives are to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>► Involve both internal and external stakeholders;</li> <li>► Avoid silo work and foster collaborative work;</li> <li>► Be more agile by offering innovative new services with fast and concrete results for future users.</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Collective intelligence is shared or group intelligence that emerges from the collaboration, collective efforts and accelerates the problem-solving process <http://lexicon.ft.com/Term?term=collective-intelligence>

## What activities were carried out?

- ▶ When a project is selected to receive support from Le LAB, the Le LAB team invite participants for that particular project to a creative Le LAB session (a 'flash co-design') at one of the Le LAB spaces in France. The length and duration of the creative session per project depends on the individual project and its needs. The session's duration can be from 1 to 4 days: on average the session for each project last 2 days and around 45 internal and external actors participate in the session. There is no limit to the length of time the support lasts or to the number of participants invited to these sessions – it is project dependent.
- ▶ When Le LAB supports the acceleration of a project, more collaborative sessions are held usually within a period of 8 to 10 weeks. However, depending on the project these sessions may have a longer duration.
- ▶ A maximum of 60 internal and external people can participate in each project's creative session. Regarding internal participants, an invitation is sent to all regional French PES offices. With the help of an external organisation, Le LAB invites jobseekers to participate as well.<sup>2</sup> Through internal networks, employers are also invited to the sessions.<sup>3</sup>
- ▶ Creative workshops take place in a creative session for a project; each participant brings his/her ideas, expertise and experience in the field to the table. The Le LAB workshops accelerate idea conception as well as reducing working in silos as all stakeholders are involved and immediate feedback can be captured. Workshops use different tools such as black boards, white boards, post it notes and different seated areas. Participants' job titles are not revealed so that possible hierarchies are minimised, and all participants contribute their ideas. Workshops' duration depends on the topic and scope.
- ▶ For each project, the creative session and feedback meetings and facilitation are tailor-made by the Le LAB's team based on the ASE<sup>4</sup> method. This uses the creative technique 'Scan, Focus, Act': first, knowledge about a specific topic is communicated (Scan), then it is developed in an iterative manner (Focus), and finally decisions are taken for solutions and their implementation. Participants work in small groups (maximum 8 people) and then an exchange of ideas and possible solutions are shared between the groups. Sessions can cover the following topics:
  - ▶ Platform organisation
  - ▶ Creating scenarios for the user experience
  - ▶ Promoting and prioritising applications
  - ▶ Application Programming Interface (API) Instructions
  - ▶ User requirements in terms of data and applications
  - ▶ Business model
  - ▶ Legal framework
  - ▶ Management
  - ▶ User relationship management
  - ▶ Technical solutions
  - ▶ Community animation
  - ▶ Data instructions
- ▶ After each day, there is feedback from the sponsors in order to understand whether any session modification is needed.
- ▶ Approximately, 6 to 8 weeks after the creative session (flash codesign or project acceleration) has taken place, another meeting named 'cold feedback' is held in order to know if the results of the creative session were useful in practice for the sponsors.
- ▶ The French PES oversees the workshop's facilitation during the creative session. PES personnel have received training on facilitation: when Le LAB was created external experts were brought in to help the French PES to develop facilitation skills. Now, trained members of French PES staff are in charge of training other members.
- ▶ Apart from the facilitator, members of the Le LAB team undertake various roles depending on the project: process supervisor, communication manager (social networks), logistics, timekeeper, photographer, environmental manager etc.
- ▶ French PES staff are also trained on collective intelligence provided by members of Le LAB team;

<sup>2</sup> Le LAB pays an external organisation to "hire" jobseekers in order to participate in Le LAB sessions.

<sup>3</sup> Depending on the project, different types of stakeholders may be invited to participate including, for example, students, academics, researchers and other external stakeholders.

<sup>4</sup> The abbreviation ASE describes a creative working space in which teams undergo an intensive working process and cooperate to provide solutions to complex issues. See <https://www.capgemini.com/consulting-de/wp-content/uploads/sites/32/2017/08/ase-broschure-en-web.pdf> for more information.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>► Communication materials have been developed: Le LAB has a website<sup>5</sup> which allows it to offer its services, promote projects involved with Le LAB, allow pre-registration for workshops and for it to act as an external network of skills. Moreover, it is present on social media such as Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram and YouTube. In addition, Le LAB is promoted within the French PES via the company network space and open days are organised on a regular basis.</li> <li>► Le LAB staff offer training to other Le LABs established in other regions. Any member of Le LAB staff that has received training can offer training to other regional LABs. Teams from the Paris Le LAB visit other new Le LABs. Two to three times per year, Le LAB teams from other regions go to the National LAB for a short training session (for one to two days).</li> </ul>
What resources and other relevant organisational aspects were involved?	<p>Apart from internal actors, external actors, namely jobseekers and employers, participate in the creative sessions. Depending on the nature of the project and the problem-solving process the balance between internal and external participants can differ. For example, if the project is related exclusively to an internal problem (PES-related), it might be the case that most of the participants are French PES employees. However, by and large, a balance between internal and external participants is sought. During the sessions, other external actors (e.g. academics) can participate, make a presentation or a speech.</p> <p>In most of the cases, external specialists in video and graphic design are also involved. Requests for support are made to the Le LAB from French PES staff within general management and the regional divisions. Every month, Le LAB selects and supports two to three projects. The person that proposes the project is called the 'sponsor'. Le LAB is part of the French PES but has its own dedicated personnel/team.</p>
What were the source(s) of funding?	French PES budget
What were the outputs of the practice: people reached and products?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>► 8 physical Le LABs have been established<sup>6</sup>;</li> <li>► A further 10 mobile pop-up Le LABs are available.<sup>7</sup> Trained teams of French PES personnel can provide Le LAB services if requested to do so either in PES premises or in any other location (e.g. they can rent a place to host the session and its workshops);</li> <li>► Seven new regions will be supported<sup>8</sup>. Some regions will develop their LABs in cooperation with another organisation, for example, with a regional administrative centre or other LABs already established in the region.</li> </ul> <p>In four years of operation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>► 103 sessions took place with more than 4 750 participants;</li> <li>► 126 visits and events, including 11 Open Days with 460 participants were organised;</li> <li>► 1 800 subscribers on the French PES (internal social media – LAB community);</li> <li>► More than 300 expert speakers &amp; employment actors have engaged in Le LAB activities.</li> </ul> <p>Le LAB managed to reach all target groups: at external level, many participants come from different private and public organisations, jobseekers, employers etc. whilst at internal level, staff from all the departments of the French PES have been involved including strategy, administration, finance, management, human resources, social relations, risk management and so on.</p> <p>To date, Le LAB has not received any negative feedback from the sponsor with regards to their satisfaction with the results of LAB sessions.</p> <p>Using Le LAB's innovative and creative approach projects can be created in a short period of time: for example, the 'Emploi Store' was designed in nine weeks through 32 collaborative sessions with more than 100 participants. Without Le LAB's role as an accelerator, a similar project would have taken six to eight months to created using standard operating methods.</p>

<sup>5</sup> [www.lelab.pole-emploi.fr/](http://www.lelab.pole-emploi.fr/)

<sup>6</sup> These include the following: the national LAB, Île-de-France, PACA, Paz-DSI, Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, Grand Est, Brittany and Pays de la Loire.

<sup>7</sup> Mobile LABs include Hauts de France, Normandy, Centre Val de Loire, New Aquitaine, Île-de-France, PACA, Brittany, Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, Grand Est and Burgundy.

<sup>8</sup> These include Pays de la Loire, Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, Burgundy, Grand Est, Guadeloupe, Martinique and Occitania.

What outcomes have been identified?

- ▶ Le LAB's participants are often inspired by the practice and they transfer new ideas to their workplace. In addition, when PES managers visit Le LAB they often change the management style in local offices and adapt communication styles internally and externally.
- ▶ With four years of experience, Le LAB has gradually become a benchmark within the public innovation network. As an active member of the 'Future Public' network, it has inspired and driven many public innovation projects, most notably those of the National Office for Family Benefits (CNAF) and the Directorate General for Public Finances (DGFIP). French ministries and the Military has also expressed an interest in duplicating Le LAB practice in their organisational structure.
- ▶ The LAB team has co-constructed the public innovation LAB support programme with the Interdepartmental Directorate for Public Transformation (DITP), formerly known as the Secretariat General for the Modernisation of Public Action (SGMAP).
- ▶ The practice has reached the private sector: the Le LAB has become a step on several learning journeys by Axa, Airbus, Air Liquide, Technip, La Française des Jeux, Total, Natixis and Eurocopter.
- ▶ Different organisations have visited Le LAB including the following:
  - ▶ Public organisations: public authorities, PES from other countries (BE-Le Forem, BE-VDAB, BU, NO and SE), World Association of Public Employment Services (WAPES), OECD.
  - ▶ Private entities: Renault/Nissan Group, Keolis, the SNCF group, Crédit Mutuel and LCL bank. It has also given a presentation to the BNP PARIBAS executive committee for its international activities.
- ▶ Researchers and universities are also interested in Le LAB, such as the Masters 2 in 'Humanities and Management' (Paris Nanterre University) and the Paris Political Science Institute class on Management of public policies.

What are the lessons learnt and success factors?

The most important lesson from Le LAB is that it is easier to find a solution to a problem when internal and external stakeholders are participating in the problem-solving process.

Through collaborative intelligence, individuals brainstorm results to find solutions to a problem and accelerate the progress of a project.

Within creative sessions, when there is no 'label' to indicate the job position or reveal hierarchy of participants, people tend to be more creative and express their ideas more freely.

The methods and techniques employed, as well as the trained Le LAB teams, are the main success factors of Le LAB. The involvement of French PES employees regardless the department from which they are coming from is also an important factor for the success of Le LAB.



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