

Two graduation/internship/thesis opportunities with Future Proof Labs.

Sustainability development, innovation and transdisciplinary approach are considered to be essential elements for addressing wicked problems. Since 2006, the European Commission has been promoting living labs because of their user-centered approach and their work towards broad sustainability transition. Quadruple Helix is at the core of any mature living lab, involving various stakeholders, public agencies, universities, businesses and citizens when co-creating, prototyping, validating and testing new technologies, products, services, and systems.

Nowadays, various types of labs exist, and it might be hard to distinguish between a university lab, city lab, field lab, and a living lab. European Network of Living Labs (ENoLL) introduces living labs as user-centred, demand-driven, open-innovation ecosystems which co-create solutions with multiple stakeholders applying a multi-method approach in a real-life setting¹. However, for a living lab to join the ENoLL, its maturity should be assessed according to ENoLL's 20 indicators that fall under the six contribute areas (see figure 1). Nevertheless, many living labs in the Netherlands are being criticized for not continuing with regular evaluation and not sharing the gained knowledge with other living labs or the regional context.

Our Future Proof Labs research project uses the existing knowledge gained during the Future Proof Retail project <https://tinyurl.com/56cyhc6b> while supporting the transition in the Netherlands to a circular and energy-neutral society. The hypothesis that local living lab activities are an important part of a multi-level system change process - from sectoral/regional to local and back - and that creative professionals can facilitate this process, is being explored in this project (see also the developed "Innovating Systems with Labs" model, figure 2). The project's aim for 2021 is to map out differences and similarities between the labs, describe impact indicators of the labs on a local and/or regional level, and draw first conclusions for the design needs of evaluation tools for scalable "future-proof" living labs. In 2022, the goal is to use the new insights to (re)design, make and test services – reinforced by additional partners – for "future-proof" labs. In 2023, the focus will be to describe and create the necessary roles, skills and tools for creative professionals who want to support "future-proof" living labs.

The overall research question is: which factors are decisive and which methods impact a living lab and its environment that wants to generate new routes and directions, involve actors, evaluate results, make them accessible, and guarantee system change?

Five researchers are currently exploring four unique labs, namely Groene Mient, Energy Transition Lab Mariahoeve, Broekpolder 2040 and Green Village. While those labs could be distinguished based on their maturity levels and the leading stakeholders/ "actor group", they all work in triple or quadruple helix models. As of now, the researchers are deeply involved in the project, analysing "leading" stakeholders' interviews and observations made. Future Proof Labs is partnering with regional governments and two companies from the creative industry, Live/Work and Van Waarde in this project. The graduate will join this research group (working on her/his own research question) during the time of her internship.

The research contributes directly to the emerging field of 'systemic co-design'. A project has been formulated and granted around this topic, starting 2022. Your internship activities will be partly practiced in this network and subject. Proposals in the adjacent fields of transition design / systemic design, service design or co-design are most welcome.

1

ENoLL. (2016). *Introducing ENoLL and its Living Lab community*. Brussels: ENoLL.



Figure 1: The six common attribute areas and 20 indicators of mature living labs (ENoLL, 2019, p. 5) (author's illustration)

Impacting systems with labs

De Lille, C. & Overdiek, A. 2021 ©

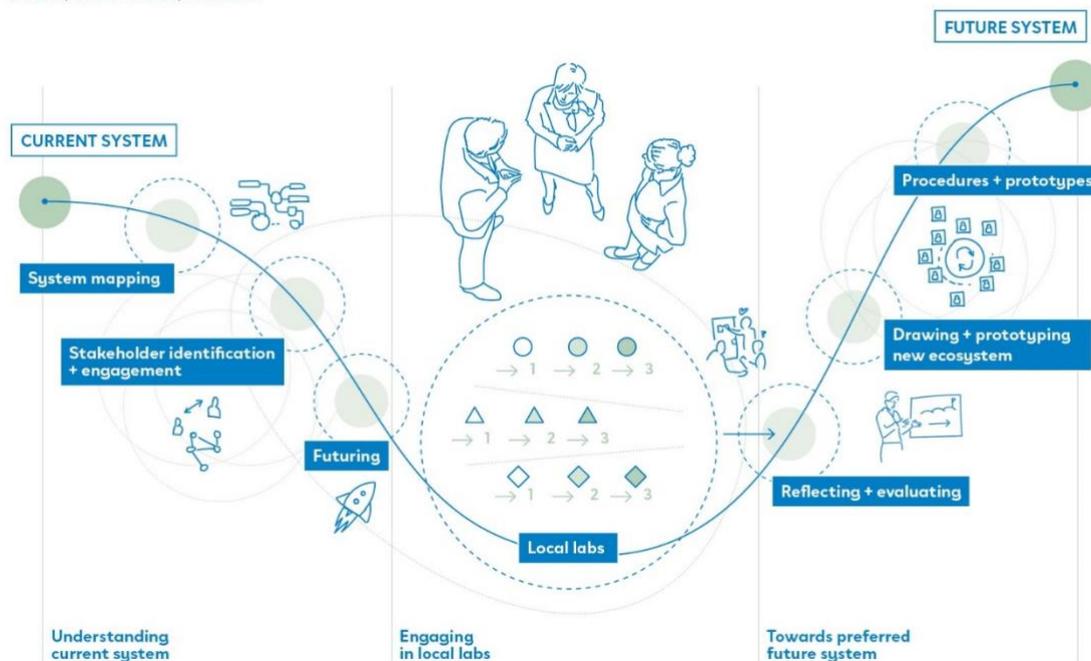


Figure 2: Impacting Systems with Labs (De Lille & Overdiek 2021)

If you are interested:

Please provide a 1–2-page research proposal related to the above that includes a research question, rationale, favored methodology, and envisioned results. Creative research methods are welcome. To get an overview of creative research please check [this](#).

Please note that the above is indicative and likely must be adapted to fit the scope and requirements of your educational program.

We're looking for people who

- recognize the cross-section between the field of transition science and design;
- embrace complexity;
- are interested in multi-stakeholder approaches;
- apply a creative and human-centered approach in research and
- enjoy communicating about research using different media.

What we offer:

You will join the Mission Zero Student Lab (MZSL) with about thirty or so student-researchers working on sustainability transition questions ranging from anything from the energy transition to the circular economy. In addition, you will be invited to the MZSL student activities and workshops throughout your time with us. These positions are location independent, and you will be supervised by at least two researchers from the Future Proof Labs research team. This supervision will be in the form of bi-weekly meetings with all researchers involved in the project and bi-weekly meetings with the direct supervisors. Depending on the quality of the work we will also help you disseminate the findings. These positions are open for master students from any background, we prefer to work in the February-July period but are open to an earlier start in exceptional cases. Finally, you will receive compensation of 450 euro per month for the period of the internship/thesis/graduation.

How to apply:

Please submit a CV, motivation and 1–2-page research proposal to a.overdijk@hhs.nl and j.m.sluijs@hhs.nl before the 16th of December, 2021. We will reach out with an invite for a discussion in the week before Christmas and let you know if you have secured a position before the start of 2022.