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HOW TO SUCCESSFULLY MANAGE CORPORATE INNOVATION INITIATIVES? BEST PRACTICES AND CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS FOR IMPLEMENTING INNOVATION LABS IN LARGE ORGANIZATIONS.

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ABSTRACT & KEYWORDS

Corporate innovation initiatives are increasingly pivotal for sustaining competitive advantage in today's dynamic market environment. This study investigates best practices and critical success factors for implementing innovation labs in large organizations. Drawing on qualitative data from six in-depth, semi-structured interviews with senior executives across diverse sectors - including chemical industry (Bondalti), financial industry (Banco de Portugal and SIBS), healthcare (Hospital da Luz), public sector (Imprensa Nacional Casa da Moeda - INCM), and retail (Sonae MC) - this work project explores how innovation labs are managed and integrated with the overall corporate strategy. The findings indicate that strategic alignment with organizational goals, robust leadership engagement, and effective cross-functional collaboration are essential. Rapid prototyping and short-cycle experimentation facilitate risk mitigation and accelerate the validation of innovative ideas, while performance measurement ensure continuous improvement and accountability. Furthermore, resource allocation, both in terms of financial investment and infrastructural support, is critical for creating environments conducive to innovation. Despite limitations related to sample size and the inherent subjectivity of qualitative research, the study provides relevant insights for managing corporate innovation initiatives. These insights offer actionable recommendations for practitioners and contribute to the broader academic discourse on corporate innovation management.

KEYWORDS

Corporate Innovation, Innovation Labs, Living Labs, Best Practices, Critical Success Factors, Performance Evaluation

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INTRODUCTION

Why organizations innovate?

In the fast-paced and highly competitive business environment we all live in, innovation is no longer optional—it is essential for survival and long-term growth. We often hear this. But why is that? Why organizations "have to" innovate?

Innovation drives economic and organizational evolution. As Joseph Schumpeter argued, innovation is the engine of economic development, creating new markets and disrupting existing ones (Schumpeter 1934). Organizations innovate to:

- Gain Competitive Advantage: In a dynamic market, continuous innovation enables organizations to differentiate themselves from competitors. By developing unique products or services, companies can secure a competitive edge and capture new market segments (J. Tidd and Bessant 2014).
- Respond to Disruption: The concept of disruptive innovation, popularized by (C. Christensen 1997), shows that companies that fail to innovate risk being overtaken by new entrants. Innovation allows organizations to anticipate and adapt to disruptive market changes before they become a threat.
- Foster Organizational Learning and Agility: A culture of innovation encourages experimentation and learning. By challenging the status quo, organizations become more agile and better equipped to handle uncertainties and rapid changes in the market environment.
- Enhance Efficiency and Create Value: Innovation is not solely about new products—it also involves rethinking processes and business models. Through continuous improvement and the adoption of new technologies, organizations can increase operational efficiency, reduce costs, and generate value for stakeholders (Teece 2007).

What is Innovation?

Are we clear on what is innovation? Before going deeper probably makes sense to revisit the concept. Chesbrough argued that innovation is not limited to internal R&D. Instead, it is a process that involves leveraging both internal and external ideas and pathways to market in order to commercialize new technologies—thereby creating economic value (Chesbrough 2003). Tidd and Bessant describe innovation as a dynamic process that involves the transformation of ideas into products, services, or processes that deliver value to customers and stakeholders (J. Tidd and Bessant 2014). Osterwalder and Pigneur discuss innovation in the context of rethinking and redesigning a company's business model. They suggest that innovation is about creating, delivering, and capturing value by developing new ways to serve customers and generate revenue (Osterwalder and Pigneur 2013). The OECD and Eurostat in the Oslo Manual define innovation as "the implementation of a new or significantly improved product (good or service), process, marketing method, or organizational method in business practices, workplace organization, or external relations" (Publishing and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development 2005)

How do organizations innovate?

Innovation is generated through multiple channels within organizations—from traditional R&D to modern, agile, and collaborative approaches. While traditional methods have relied on internal research and development efforts, the increasing pace of technological change and market complexity has driven organizations to adopt more flexible and inclusive models, such as open innovation and dedicated labs or structures (innovation labs, living labs, impact labs and others).

This work project

Organizations are increasingly leveraging dedicated environments to not only foster internal ideation but also engage with external stakeholders, validate new technologies, and generate measurable social and environmental impacts. A systematization and characterisation of such environments, reflecting different innovation structures adopted by companies, is given in the table below.

Aspect	**Innovation Labs**	**Living Labs**	**Test Beds**	**Impact Labs**	**Innovation Hubs**
Purpose/ Objectives	Focus on ideation, rapid prototyping, and internal innovation to overcome organizational inertia.	Emphasize co-creation and contextual validation of solutions in real-life settings.	Aim at systematic validation, risk mitigation, and performance testing of new technologies before scaling.	Drive innovation with measurable social and environmental impact while aligning with corporate objectives.	Foster ecosystem development, networking, and knowledge exchange to stimulate broad-based innovation.
Environment	Controlled, often in-house settings dedicated to experimentation and prototyping.	Real-life, open environments such as communities, cities, or public spaces that mirror actual usage contexts.	Controlled yet realistic environments that bridge the gap between laboratory conditions and field realities.	Hybrid settings that combine lab-based experimentation with field trials in authentic, real-world contexts.	Collaborative spaces or networks that integrate diverse players across industries and sectors.
Key Stakeholders	Internal R&D teams, specialized experts, and corporate innovation leaders.	End-users, citizens, customers, and community organizations actively engaged in the innovation process.	Technology developers, engineers, and regulatory bodies focused on technical validation and compliance.	Corporate sustainability teams, social enterprises, NGOs, and community stakeholders dedicated to social and environmental outcomes.	Startups, academic institutions, industry partners, government agencies, and investors contributing varied expertise.
Approach/ Methodologies	Employ design thinking, agile methodologies, and rapid prototyping processes to generate and test ideas quickly.	Use participatory co-creation, user-centric design, and iterative field testing to refine solutions with real-world feedback.	Combine simulations with controlled field tests and performance evaluations to ensure technology readiness.	Integrate impact measurement frameworks, social innovation practices, and participatory design to ensure innovations deliver tangible	Leverage networking events, accelerator programs, collaborative projects, and cross-sector partnerships to

Aspect	Innovation Labs	Living Labs	Test Beds	Impact Labs	Innovation Hubs
				societal benefits.	spark innovation.
Type of Users and Involvement	Primarily driven by internal teams and experts who steer innovation within the organization.	Involves high engagement from end-users and local communities that participate actively in the innovation cycle.	Limited direct user involvement: focus is predominantly on technical testing conducted by experts.	Engages a broad spectrum of users—including social stakeholders—with active participation to address societal challenges.	Engages a diverse user base including corporate teams, startups, academic researchers, and policy makers in collaborative activities.

Regarding innovation labs, Viki states that "innovation labs have become popular as a way for established corporates to manage innovation." (Viki 2018). Moreover, Ahuja argues that "innovation labs are a safe place for organizations to run experiments and iterate on projects, and they're an important investment for firms that have rigid approaches or that work in highly regulated industries" (Ahuja 2019).

This work project focuses on innovation labs for several reasons. First, this area has been the author's primary responsibility since joining Claranet Portugal in January 2022. Claranet Portugal's aim is to elevate Claranet Labs by adding knowledge, structure and expertise, thereby avoiding the pitfalls of reinventing the wheel. Moreover, literature seems to confirm that an innovation lab can be an effective starting point for organizations embarking on their innovation journey, both internally and with external stakeholders. In contrast, living labs seem to demand a deeper commitment, higher investment, and a broader range of stakeholders. Similarly, test beds are seen as a service-oriented approach—providing a testing ground for external organizations based on our core strengths—an initiative that can naturally follow once the innovation lab is well established.

The purpose of this work project is to explore how large organizations can successfully implement innovation labs to achieve their strategic objectives and enhance their innovation capabilities and results.

This research addresses two key questions:

- Which are the best practices and critical success factors for implementing innovation labs?
- How can organizations measure the impact and effectiveness of their innovation labs?

Through researching these questions, I aim to contribute to a more systematic approach to the establishment of innovation labs in our country (starting by Claranet Portugal itself), as well as to help to inform, and hopefully allow for the enhancement, of the ones that are already in operation. At a different level, by acquiring a deeper knowledge on this topic I wish I may somehow also contribute to strengthening the collaboration between academia and industry, to enhancing strategic decision-making in organizations in this aspect and advancing the understanding of corporate innovation practices in general. During the project, I also felt it would be beneficial to foster an informal community of innovation labs' practitioners.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Innovation Management in Companies and Organizations

Innovation management has emerged as a critical field for organizational success in uncertain environments (Dodgson 2017). Corporate strategy and organizational structure significantly influence innovation management, with different approaches observed (J. F. Christensen 2002). Large organizations face central dilemmas in managing innovation, necessitating a holistic approach that addresses strategic envelopes, pacing, and partnerships (Sharma 1999) .

Over time, innovation management has evolved towards a contextual approach, tailoring strategies to specific organizational needs (Ortt and Van Der Duin 2008). Large companies can benefit from collaborating with start-ups, though this requires careful management from both sides (Usman and Vanhaverbeke 2017). These strategies can help organizations overcome barriers to sustained innovation and maintain competitiveness in dynamic markets.

Successful management of corporate innovation initiatives

According to Holford, the resource-based theory of the firm (Penrose 1959) provides a framework for understanding innovation in companies. It emphasizes the importance of internal resources and capabilities in achieving competitive advantage (Holdford 2018).

Muffato argues that successful innovation requires aligning corporate and individual competences with the innovation process (Muffatto 1998). Firms can foster innovation through dynamic capabilities, which enable them to recombine existing resources and create new competencies (Kodama 2017). A dynamic capability view emphasizes the importance of balancing incremental and radical innovation for sustainable growth (Kodama 2017). Successful innovation management requires adapting to both incremental and revolutionary changes, creating "ambidextrous organizations" (Tushman and O'Reilly 1996).

Strategic planning and organizational structure play crucial roles in innovation, with their effects varying between small and large firms (Davis and Bendickson 2021).

Successfully managing corporate innovation initiatives requires a multifaceted approach. Key factors include creating diverse innovation communities (Roth et al. 2017), adapting project management methods to innovation characteristics (Ciric et al., 2018), and fostering corporate entrepreneurship (Escobar-Sierra, Lara-Valencia, and Valencia-DeLara 2017).

Structures companies create to manage innovation

According to Cintra, in order to succeed in their innovation practices, organizations should establish dedicated structures like Innovation Management Offices (Cintra 2020). Companies can implement various initiatives such as intrapreneurship, internal ventures, spin-offs, and crowdsourcing (Sharma 1999). (Edison 2017) and create various structures to manage innovation, addressing the tension between administrative and entrepreneurial management (Kanter 1985). These separate structures or units avoid conflict with existing operations (Kanter 1985).

The advent of open innovation has also led to the emergence of various organizational structures to facilitate innovation processes. According to Schuurman, living labs foster exploration and exploitation of knowledge through user-driven innovation (Schuurman 2015) whereas for Schiuma and Santarsiero innovation labs serve as catalysts for developing organizational innovation capacity (Schiuma and Santarsiero 2023).

These structures vary across industries, with some firms establishing dedicated units for open innovation, while others adopt informal approaches embedded in existing R&D departments (Buganza, Chiaroni, and Colombo 2011).

The integration of innovation labs and living labs can enhance innovation initiation and execution (Schuurman and Tônurist 2017). Usman and Vanharbeke also discuss that large firms engage in open innovation with start-ups, benefiting both parties (Usman and Vanhaverbeke 2017).

Innovation Labs

According to Schiuma and Santarsiero an innovation lab is “an organisational initiative and management model based on the creation of an innovative environment - which can take the form of a physical, virtual or hybrid space, balancing space & infrastructure and management

& functioning dimensions – fostering creative and innovative thinking, promoting and supporting user-driven and open innovation approaches, to facilitate stakeholders engagement in innovation processes, to better understand users' needs, to drive technology transformation, to imagine and to define innovation opportunities, and to develop new business solutions capturing and delivering value" (Schiuma and Santarsiero 2023) .

According with Stoll and Andermatt and to Timeus and Gascó innovation labs are increasingly adopted in the public sector to address complex societal challenges and enhance innovation in public services but they seem to be also adopted in the private sector ((Stoll and Andermatt 2024); (Timeus and Gascó 2018)). These labs contribute to idea generation, knowledge management, and human resource strategies focused on innovation (Timeus and Gascó 2018). They can be conceptualized based on their values, purpose, and desired impacts (Cole and Royal 2021) and vary in their spatial configurations and organizational structures (Schmidt, Brinks, and Brinkhoff 2014).

Innovation labs play a crucial role in facilitating digital transformation (Santarsiero et al. 2023). While they share similarities with living labs, innovation labs are generally seen as initiators of innovation rather than executors (Schuurman and Tônurist 2017). Despite cultural and institutional differences, innovation labs can also support urban innovation capacity, though their effectiveness may vary depending on organizational arrangements and methodological approaches (Vrabie and Ianole-Călin 2020). Researchers have proposed frameworks and typologies to better conceptualize and compare innovation labs, considering factors such as value, governance, and network dimensions (Stoll and Andermatt 2024); (Cole and Royal 2021); (Criado et al. 2021).

Critical Success Factors to consider while implementing Innovation Labs

Critical success factors for implementing innovation labs include strong leadership support, a positive innovation climate, and adequate financial resources (Klein and Knight 2005). Kupp, Marval and Borchers also identify leadership support and commitment as crucial in addition to effective governance, aligned goals, and an independent team of startup advocates given freedom to innovate (Kupp, Marval, and Borchers 2017). Johnson discusses that successful implementation requires proper framing of innovations, a supportive internal environment, and consideration of stakeholders' expectations (Johnson 2001). Subtil de Oliveira, Echevest and Cortimiglia emphasise that a clear innovation strategy aligned with business outcomes is necessary and that establishing appropriate organizational structures and processes, including governance mechanisms, is important (Subtil de Oliveira, Echeveste, and Cortimiglia 2018) which is also subscribed by José and Rodrigues (José and Rodrigues 2024). Santarsiero et al further state that proper technology management and digital transformation support are vital, especially in healthcare settings (Santarsiero et al. 2023). Finally, focusing on long-term objectives and having patience is necessary for success (Kupp, Marval, and Borchers 2017).

Measuring innovation performance

Measuring innovation performance in large organizations is complex and multifaceted. Effective measurement requires understanding the organization's specific needs and designing an appropriate framework (Richtner, Brattström, and Frishammar 2017) ; (Brattström et al. 2018). Kristiansen and Ritala also acknowledge the challenge and complexity of innovation measurement in large organizations further putting in evidence that traditional metrics often prove inadequate for radical innovation projects (Kristiansen and Ritala 2018).

Innovation measurement is contingent on environmental factors like uncertainty and complexity (Joe Tidd 2001). A comprehensive approach to organizational performance should

consider multiple dimensions, including stakeholder perspectives and market conditions (Richard et al. 2009). Innovation culture can be measured using factors such as innovation propensity and organizational learning (Dobni 2008). While innovation generally positively impacts firm performance, the relationship is moderated by factors like firm size and integration of product and process innovation (Rousseau et al. 2016). In fact, according with Rousseau et al. "aggregation of the evidence shows the integration of product and process innovation yields stronger performance gains than product innovation alone". Interestingly, Yamin, Gunasekaran and Mayondo note that high innovation does not always correlate with superior performance (Yamin, Gunasekaran, and Mavondo 1999).

Key performance indicators should focus on the innovation process rather than outcomes for radical projects (Kristiansen and Ritala 2018). A comprehensive approach considers inputs (e.g., R&D investments), capabilities (e.g., culture, leadership), and outputs (e.g., number of innovations) (De Carvalho et al. 2017).

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative research methodology to investigate the management of corporate innovation initiatives within large organizations. The primary data collection method involved conducting six semi-structured interviews with senior executives who are responsible for innovation within diverse industries: chemical industry (Bondalti), financial industry (Banco de Portugal and SIBS), healthcare (Hospital da Luz), public sector (Imprensa Nacional Casa da Moeda - INCM), and retail (Sonae MC).

The selection of participants was purposive and started by listing large companies (with more than 250 employees and a revenue above 50M€) from different sectors, to ensure diversity, that publicly communicate having innovation labs and/or living labs and/or test beds.

Executives responsible for the identified organisations were contacted, ensuring that each executive had direct involvement in managing the innovation structures. This approach allowed for the exploration of nuanced perspectives and operational practices.

Each interview was guided by a predefined set of open-ended questions (please find the interview guide in the appendices section, annex 1), designed to capture a broad range of topics such as context and background, maturity level and performance evaluation, space and infra-structure, stakeholder engagement and collaboration. The semi-structured format enabled flexibility, allowing the interviewer to probe further into emerging themes while maintaining consistency across the interview sessions. All interviews were recorded with Microsoft Copilot, streamlining the transcript production.

Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis. Transcripts were analysed with particular attention given to best practices, critical success factors, and the metrics used to evaluate innovation outcomes. This iterative process involved comparing and contrasting responses across the different organizations, while looking for patterns.

Overall, this qualitative, interview-based approach provides contextual insights into how these organizations manage and measure their innovation efforts, offering some practical contributions to the field of corporate innovation management.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Overview

This research, based on interviews with six executives leading innovation initiatives across different industries, shows that each organization adopts a distinct strategy in terms of dedicated human resources and engagement in innovation initiatives, with significant

variations in the size of the team exclusively dedicated to innovation structures and in the search of partnerships and external collaborators (additional information is provided in the annexes 2 to 8).

Organization	Lab Structures
Banco de Portugal	Innovation Lab
Bondalti	Impact Lab
Hospital da Luz	Innovation Lab + Test Bed
INCM	Innovation Lab
SIBS	Test Beds
Sonae MC	Innovation Lab + Test Beds

Organizations such as Banco de Portugal and SIBS maintain small, dedicated teams (ranging from 2 to 4 individuals) to manage Innovation Structures, relying on expansive networks to drive innovation. In contrast, Sonae MC employs a significantly larger internal team of 18 dedicated professionals, reflecting a more robust internal resource commitment but also a larger scope of activities.

Despite smaller dedicated teams, Banco de Portugal and SIBS achieve broad participation by engaging up to 350 and 460 stakeholders respectively, through both internal collaborations and external partnerships. Sonae MC further amplifies its reach by involving approximately 3000 stakeholders (combining 1000 internal and 2000 external participants), demonstrating an integrated innovation ecosystem. INCM also reports a balanced approach with 12 dedicated team members, involving roughly 50 to 70 collaborators over the course of a year.

The research also reveals (annex 3) that organizations are not only differing in the lab type—ranging from dedicated innovation labs to more flexible test beds—but also in their strategic

focus. For instance, Bondalti's Impact Lab is designed specifically to measure sustainability and digital transformation impacts.

A certain fluidity between the different lab concepts can be noticed, which seems to vary depending on the positioning of the organizations (or their internal innovation structures), as well as on the available funding opportunities — for example, in relation to test beds.

The creation dates span from 2015/2016 to 2023. Organizations such as Hospital da Luz and INCM began their innovation structures earlier (around 2015/2016 and 2016/2017, respectively), while others like Bondalti have launched more recently (2023).

Several cases, such as Banco de Portugal and Hospital da Luz, show that innovation labs are embedded within key operational departments or broader strategic frameworks. This integration might suggest that innovation is seen not as an isolated activity but as a core part of organizational transformation.

The decision to implement labs across these organizations (annex 6) seems to have been driven by the need to explore new trends, transform organizational practices, measure real impact, and foster rapid innovation through robust internal and external collaborations.

Each organization tailors its approach to address its unique strategic challenges and opportunities, ultimately seeking to maintain or enhance competitiveness in a rapidly evolving market.

Banco de Portugal and Hospital da Luz adopted the lab approach to demystify emerging trends and test new technologies in a controlled environment. This controlled testing helps mitigate risks while fostering innovation. For instance, Banco de Portugal emphasizes the need to remain competitive by exploring new trends similarly to other central banks, while Hospital da Luz leverages its lab to formalize and intensify partnerships with academic institutions and startups.

Bondalti's decision is notably driven by the need to shift from an excessive focus on processes toward generating tangible impact. In 2023, the organization redirected its innovation strategy to prioritize measurable outcomes in areas such as sustainability, digitalization, and business performance.

INCM and SIBS highlighted that the adoption of an innovation lab is central to their broader digital transformation strategies. INCM's initiative aims to integrate physical and digital solutions to reposition the organization in the global market, while SIBS uses the lab model to accelerate both internal development and external validation, particularly when resources are limited.

Sonae MC chose the lab approach to speed up its innovation cycle, enabling rapid experimentation and testing in real-life environments. This strategy is complemented by intense collaborations with universities, startups, and technology partners, which ensures effective validation of innovative solutions.

Best Practices and Critical Success Factors at Innovation Labs

The analysis of these labs in large organizations reveals a set of best practices and critical success factors that contribute to the effective management of corporate innovation initiatives at these innovation structures. These include ensuring strategic alignment, fostering cross-functional collaboration, implementing structured yet agile experimentation, developing robust measurement frameworks, investing in dedicated infrastructure, driving cultural transformation through strong leadership and a cultural shift towards innovation adoption.

Organizations that apply these practices consistently seem to be more likely to ensure that new ideas are not only developed but also effectively integrated into the business, generating tangible value.

1. Strategic Alignment and Governance

Ensuring that innovation initiatives are closely linked to the organization's overarching strategic objectives is considered as being fundamental to their success. According to the interviewed executives organizations that integrate innovation into their corporate vision and governance structures tend to achieve higher levels of engagement and impact.

- At Banco de Portugal, the innovation lab aligns its initiatives with the institution's regulatory and financial stability responsibilities, ensuring that innovation directly contributes to core functions such as supervision and monetary policy. Banco de Portugal emphasizes that their innovation lab is aligned with the institution's core functions: "Our innovation initiatives are designed to support and enhance the Bank's core functions, ensuring that we contribute to the overall strategic objectives of the organization."[1].
- Similarly, Bondalti restructured its innovation strategy in 2023 to focus on three key pillars—People, Business, and Decarbonization/Digitalization—ensuring that every innovation effort contributes to measurable business and sustainability outcomes. "We want to stop working for the process and start working for impact.".
- SIBS highlights the importance of ensuring that innovation efforts remain relevant to business needs: "We seek to align initiatives with the company's strategic pillars, addressing medium- and long-term projects.".

One could argue based on the observation of these organizations that a clearly defined role of the innovation structure —whether focused on product development, process optimization, or

[1] I have loosely translated select messages from the interviewees from Portuguese to English and incorporated them into the "results and findings" section, setting them off with commas.

digital transformation—is more likely to sustain engagement and secure long-term investment.

2. Cross-Functional Collaboration, Stakeholder and External Ecosystem Engagement

A second observed practice seems to be collaboration across multiple business units, as well as engagement with external stakeholders such as startups, universities, and industry partners. Organizations that establish formalized collaboration mechanisms probably achieve stronger adoption of innovation across the company.

- SIBS promotes internal collaboration by involving multiple departments in its innovation initiatives: “It is important to involve multiple departments, as this improves internal relationships and brings a diversity of perspectives.”.
- Hospital da Luz integrates external stakeholders into its innovation process, working closely with universities and startups through its Learning Health initiative to accelerate the adoption of new technologies in healthcare settings. "We create conditions so that innovative products can be tested quickly and safely.".
- INCM takes a structured approach to open innovation, leveraging a “innovation network/community” with national and international partners to foster knowledge exchange and co-development of solutions. "We base our innovation strategy on an open innovation approach, fostering the sharing of intellectual property and future revenues with our partners.".

By integrating both internal and external knowledge networks, these organizations seem to accelerate innovation cycles and increase the relevance of their solutions.

3. Agile and Structured Experimentation and Well-Defined Pilot Processes

These organizations are adopting agile innovation methodologies—such as rapid prototyping, pilot testing, and iterative experimentation— to be able to validate and scale innovation initiatives.

- Banco de Portugal emphasizes the importance of short-cycle experimentation, ensuring that all innovation projects undergo structured testing phases: "Experimentations do not last more than three months to ensure agility in validating ideas.".
- Hospital da Luz follows a similar approach by creating a controlled environment for piloting new healthcare solutions, stating that "Our role is to create conditions so that innovative products can be tested quickly and safely.".
- Sonae MC, in its food lab and test beds, applies an iterative approach to testing new retail and digital customer experience solutions before implementing them on a larger scale. Sonae MC leverages the testbeds in collaboration with external partners to validate retail and customer experience innovations before full implementation: "We have a set of experimentation verticals, including food retail and telemedicine.".

Implementing structured, time-bound experimentation frameworks seems to enable organizations to minimize risks while fostering an environment that encourages iterative learning.

4. Measurement and Performance Evaluation

Another common best practice for successful innovation management seems to relie on robust impact measurement frameworks. These organizations use a combination of quantitative and qualitative key performance indicators (KPIs) to assess innovation effectiveness.

- SIBS evaluates its initiatives using three key dimensions for their KPIs: reputation, business and productivity.
- INCM applies a phased measurement system: early-stage projects are assessed based on technical feasibility (Technology Readiness Levels (TRL)), while later-stage innovations are evaluated through traditional financial indicators such as Return on Investment (ROI) and Net Present Value (NPV). "In the product development phase, we begin to apply more traditional financial project management criteria, such as Internal Rate of Return (IRR) and NPV.".
- Sonae MC tracks "the number of real-world experiments, the investment in innovation, and the fiscal and financial incentives" to ensure that innovation contributes to business growth.

From these findings it can be said that these organizations are tracking both early-stage technical progress and long-term business impact to ensure that innovation labs contribute with tangible value.

5. Dedicated infrastructure and resource allocation.

Investing in the right resources—whether physical, financial, or human capital—is also a common practice for sustaining innovation in these organizations.

- Hospital da Luz developed a “Simulated Hospital”, a living lab that at a later stage also became a dedicated test environment allowing for real-world validation of new healthcare solutions before deployment in actual clinical settings. "We have a safe testing environment, allowing startups to receive feedback from healthcare professionals.".
- Sonae MC established several Food Lab innovation spaces (ie innovation labs) across multiple locations to test and showcase new food products and technologies in a

controlled retail setting. In this case, Sonae MC has put in place both innovation labs and test beds.

- Banco de Portugal combines physical and digital resources, including an ideation space and cloud-based experimentation platforms, to facilitate agile innovation.

Organizations that commit resources—whether through dedicated teams, experimental environments, or financial investment—seem to create a strong foundation for sustainable innovation efforts.

6. Executive sponsorship and leadership engagement

A strong innovation culture, supported by executive leadership, seems to be key success factor in sustaining corporate innovation initiatives for the interviewed organizations. According to them actively involving top management in innovation governance tends to generate stronger buy-in and implementation success.

- Bondalti noted that early involvement of administrators in innovation projects improved engagement: "When a Board member began attending the initial kick-off meetings, the engagement of internal teams improved significantly.".
- INCM acknowledges the challenge of embedding innovation into corporate culture, stating that "There has always been an unhealthy separation between the centralized innovation effort and the organization itself." and is now working with academic institutions to address this gap.
- SIBS underscored the importance of engaging senior leaders early in the process: "It is crucial to speak with front-line directors to identify those who are more open to experimenting with new ideas.".

According to these executives senior leadership must not only approve the innovation lab's establishment but also actively participate in it and advocate for its initiatives, ensuring stronger internal adoption and faster decision-making.

7. Cultural Shift Toward Innovation Adoption

Beyond infrastructure and governance, a successful innovation lab seems to require an organizational culture that embraces change, experimentation, and calculated risk-taking.

- SIBS warns against a centralized approach to innovation, advocating instead for decentralized engagement.
- INCM states that "Innovation culture is still in its embryonic phase.".
- SIBS stresses that innovation management should be focused on empowering teams rather than controlling them, emphasizing that "One should not aspire to be the owner of innovation, but rather to coordinate and accelerate initiatives.".
- Sonae MC discusses that "We also involve employees in innovation projects to ensure that innovation is an integral part of the company's culture."

For innovation labs to thrive, organizations must cultivate an environment and mindset that encourages experimentation and aligns cultural incentives with innovation goals.

To sum-up, based on the interviews conducted we can identify seven Innovation Labs' best practices and success factors:

1. Strategic alignment with corporate goals, and proper governance, to ensure relevance.
2. Cross-functional collaboration, stakeholder and external ecosystem engagement to accelerate innovation.

3. Agile and structured experimentation and well-defined pilot processes to validate ideas efficiently.
4. Measurement and performance evaluation to track progress and justify continued investment.
5. Dedicated infrastructure and resource allocation to support innovation initiatives.
6. Executive sponsorship and leadership engagement for credibility
7. A cultural shift towards innovation adoption to align cultural incentives with innovation goals to sustain long-term success.

Organizations that integrate these factors into their innovation strategy can effectively transform their innovation labs from isolated experimental units into sustainable, business-driving engines that generate real impact and value.

Measuring the Impact and Effectiveness of Innovation Labs

Evaluating the success of innovation labs is critical for ensuring that corporate innovation initiatives deliver tangible business value. Drawing on insights from the six interviews the following best practices emerged.

1. Utilizing a Combination of Quantitative and Qualitative Metrics

Organizations deploy a balanced framework that integrates both quantitative KPIs and qualitative feedback to capture the full spectrum of innovation outcomes.

SIBS measures performance across three dimensions: "We use three main KPI dimensions: reputation, business, and productivity.". This multi-dimensional approach ensures that both external perception and internal efficiency are tracked alongside financial impact.

2. Early-Stage Technical Assessments and Pilot Evaluations

For innovations in their nascent stages, early-stage assessments are crucial to determine the technical readiness and viability of new solutions.

Hospital da Luz evaluates the success of pilot projects by assessing whether there is an improvement in the TRL of a solution. As noted, they measure "If we are able to improve the solution's TRL" through structured post-pilot interviews and evaluations.

3. Incorporating Traditional Financial Metrics in Later Stages

As projects transition from experimental to more mature stages, traditional financial metrics are increasingly applied to determine economic viability and scalability.

INCM employs a phased measurement strategy: "In the product development phase, we begin to apply more traditional financial project management criteria, such as IRR, net present value.". This ensures that the later stages of innovation are judged by their return on investment (ROI) and overall financial performance.

4. Continuous Monitoring and Agile Feedback Loops

Ongoing monitoring and structured feedback mechanisms are essential to track progress and allow for timely adjustments in innovation projects.

Banco de Portugal emphasizes the importance of regular reviews: "We hold regular meetings with key stakeholders to discuss the progress of initiatives and adjust our approaches as necessary". This dynamic approach facilitates quick pivots and ensures that innovations remain aligned with strategic objectives.

5. Aligning Innovation Metrics with Strategic Objectives

Ensuring that performance metrics are directly linked to the organization's strategic priorities enables decision-makers to assess the broader impact of innovation efforts.

Sonae MC integrates KPIs such as "The number of real-world experiments." alongside traditional metrics, ensuring that innovation efforts not only generate technical success but also contribute to enhanced customer experiences and operational improvements.

In summary, organizations can measure the impact and effectiveness of their innovation labs by adopting a holistic evaluation framework that combines quantitative KPIs, early-stage technical assessments, and traditional financial metrics with continuous monitoring and agile feedback. This integrated approach, which aligns performance measurement with strategic business objectives, ensures that innovation initiatives deliver both immediate and sustainable value. By systematically tracking outcomes across multiple dimensions, companies can make informed decisions to refine and scale their innovation efforts over time.

CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE WORK

This research project set out to explore how to successfully manage corporate innovation initiatives, with a specific focus on identifying best practices and critical success factors for implementing innovation labs in large organizations. Drawing on six in-depth interviews with senior executives from diverse industries - including chemical industry (Bondalti), financial industry (Banco de Portugal and SIBS), healthcare (Hospital da Luz), public sector (Imprensa Nacional Casa da Moeda - INCM), and retail (Sonae MC) - the study reveals several key insights into effective innovation management.

Conclusions

The findings indicate that strategic alignment is fundamental. Organizations such as Banco de Portugal and Bondalti emphasized the necessity of aligning lab's objectives with overarching

corporate strategies. As the executive from Banco de Portugal noted, innovation initiatives must “contribute to the organization's overall strategic objectives”. This alignment ensures that innovation efforts are not only relevant but also capable of driving long-term business value.

Another recurrent theme was the importance of leadership and stakeholder engagement. The interviews highlighted that active involvement from senior leadership—exemplified by early board member participation in project kick-offs—significantly enhances internal buy-in and facilitates smoother project transitions (Bondalti). Additionally, fostering cross-functional collaboration and engaging external partners, such as startups and academic institutions, emerged as a best practice. Hospital da Luz and INCM, for example, leverage partnerships to infuse new ideas and technological expertise into their innovation processes.

Short-cycle pilots and rapid prototyping was found to be vital in mitigating risk and enabling quick iterations. Organizations like Banco de Portugal and Sonae MC adopt structured experimentation cycles—often limited to three months—to validate ideas efficiently and decide whether to scale or terminate projects. This agile approach, combined with robust performance measurement frameworks that integrate quantitative KPIs and qualitative feedback, allows firms to evaluate the success of their innovation initiatives comprehensively.

Finally, dedicated resource allocation—both financial and infrastructural—ensures that innovation labs are well-supported. Investments in specialized environments, such as Hospital da Luz’s ““Simulated Hospital”” and Sonae MC’s dedicated Food Lab, demonstrate the significance of having physical and digital spaces that foster creativity and practical testing.

Limitations

Despite the valuable insights generated, several limitations must be acknowledged. First, the sample size is small, involving only six executives from a limited number of large

organizations. This purposive sample may not fully represent the diversity of approaches across different sectors or organizational sizes. I would have liked to interview large and successful organizations that do not have innovation labs or innovation structures to understand how they manage their corporate innovation initiatives. Second, the qualitative nature of the study, while rich in depth, is inherently subjective; The interpretations and conclusions drawn are based on individual perspectives and may be influenced by the interviewees' personal biases and the specific contexts of their organizations.

Future Work

Future research should address these limitations by incorporating a larger and more diverse sample to allow for the generalisation of the findings. Additionally, a mixed-methods approach that combines qualitative interviews with quantitative surveys could provide a more comprehensive view of innovation management practices and allow for statistical validation of critical success factors.

Longitudinal studies are also seen as important to observe the evolution of innovation labs over time and their long-term impact on organizational performance. Finally, in-depth case studies of successful innovation labs might further illuminate the mechanisms by which strategic alignment, leadership, and agile experimentation drive successful outcomes.

In conclusion, while this study provides relevant insights into the best practices and critical success factors for managing corporate innovation initiatives, future research is necessary to build upon these findings and to develop a more nuanced understanding of how innovation labs and other innovation structures can be effectively scaled and sustained (and work together) in diverse organizational contexts.

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APPENDICES

Annex 1 – Interview Guide

Contexto e background

1. A organização tem um innovation lab ou impact lab?

2. Qual é responsabilidade do entrevistado relativamente a essas iniciativas?

3. Quais são os principais objetivos do innovation lab/impact lab/innovation center?

4. Como alinham a estratégia da organização com as iniciativas de inovação?

5. Porque é que decidiram seguir a abordagem do innovation lab?

Nível de maturidade e avaliação de performance

6. Quais são as melhores práticas em termos de gestão de iniciativas de inovação?

7. Quais são os fatores críticos de sucesso para as iniciativas de inovação?

8. Como é que medem o impacto e eficácia das iniciativas de inovação?

9. Quais são os desafios típicos/chave das iniciativas de inovação?

Espaço e infraestrutura

10. Pode descrever o espaço físico ou virtual do innovation lab?

11. Como é que o desenho dos espaços físicos e digitais contribuem para alimentar e potenciar a inovação e colaboração?

Engagement dos stakeholders e colaboração

12. Que estratégias usam para conseguir colaboração e cocriação dentro das diferentes iniciativas de inovação?

13. Quais são os exemplos de colaborações com stakeholders mais bem-sucedidas?

14. Que tipo de recursos estão alocados aos innovation labs?

Aprendizagem e adaptação + escala e difusão

15. Como é que gerem e incorporam a aprendizagem e adaptação nos processos?

16. Como é que escalam e difundem as inovações na organização?

Questões finais

17. Quando é que se pode dizer que foi criado o primeiro innovation lab na organização?

18. Quantas pessoas estão dedicadas aos innovation labs?

19. Quantas pessoas da organização e externas estiveram envolvidas nas iniciativas de inovação nos últimos 12 meses?

20. Há alguma pergunta que não tenha feito e que faria sentido fazer?

21. Quando pensamos em innovation labs em portugal, que empresas vos ocorrem?

Annex 2 – Interviewed executives and organization's profiles

Organization	About the organization	About the executive
Banco de Portugal	Banco de Portugal is the central bank of the Portuguese Republic. The Bank has two core missions: to maintain price stability and to promote the stability of the financial system.	**Nuno Pereira** Head of the Innovation Lab Linkedin Profile
Bondalti	Bondalti is the largest Portuguese producer and one of the main Iberian operators in the industrial chemicals sector.	**Nélio Marques** IT, Digital Transformation and Innovation Director Linkedin Profile
Hospital da Luz Learning Health	The Hospital da Luz Learning Health is dedicated to the advanced training of professionals, translational research and innovation in the areas of health care delivery and management.	**Nuno André Silva** Deputy Director for Training, Research and Innovation Linkedin Profile
INCM	INCM is the result of the merger of two of the oldest industrial establishments in the country, Imprensa Nacional (1768), and Casa da Moeda (>700yo). (…) whose mission is to create, produce and supply goods and services (…) like the production of security documents, such as the citizen's card or the passport, the minting of coins, the authentication of precious metals, the edition of the Diário da República (…)	**Carlos Jorge Silva** INCM Lab (Innovation Lab) Director Linkedin Profile
SIBS	SIBS provides financial, modern, reliable and secure services, namely in the payments' area, to more than 300 million users, from three different Continents, processing more than 4 billion transactions annually. SIBS grew innovating and it will continue its mission. SIBS takes technology as its driver and through it reinvented existing payment methods and created MB WAY, Portugal's most modern and complete mobile payments service.	**Miguel Gaspar Business** Development and Innovation Director Linkedin Profile
Sonae MC	Sonae MC is a leading retailer in the food sector in Portugal, with a wide stores network (Continente hypermarkets and Continente Modelo and Continente Bom dia convenience supermarkets) complemented by a solid online operation. MC also holds a leading position in the health and wellness retail market in Iberia.	**Marlos Henrique Silva** R&D and Innovation Director Linkedin Profile

Annex 3 – The organization has an Innovation Lab or Impact Lab?

Organização / Entrevistado	**Resumo da Resposta**	**Tipo de Lab**	**Ano de Criação** (questão 17)
Banco de Portugal / Nuno Pereira	Conta com um laboratório de inovação formal, integrado ao departamento de sistemas de informação, que promove a cultura de inovação e apoia as funções estratégicas do banco. "O Banco de Portugal tem um laboratório de inovação chamado 'Innovation Lab'."	Innovation Lab	2019
Bondalti / Nélio Marques	Implementou um programa de inovação denominado "Impact Lab", com foco na medição de impacto, sustentabilidade e digitalização. "A Bondalti tem um programa de inovação chamado Impact Lab."	Impact Lab	2023
Hospital da Luz / Nuno André Silva	Possui um laboratório de inovação inserido na estrutura do HLUZ-LEARNING HEALTH, que utiliza testbeds para testar novas ideias em ambientes seguros e controlados. "Criámos um test bed para testar novas ideias..."	Innovation Lab + Test Bed	2015/2016
INCM / Carlos Jorge Silva	Possui uma estrutura formal dedicada à gestão da inovação, denominada INCM Lab, que apoia a transformação digital integrando soluções físicas e digitais. "Sim, temos uma estrutura dedicada à gestão da inovação, conhecida como INCM Lab."	Innovation Lab	Final de 2016/2017
SIBS / Miguel Gaspar	Desenvolve diversas iniciativas de inovação – como testbeds, programas de trainees e jornadas internas – que são flexíveis e adaptáveis, sem um laboratório com estrutura fixa. "Temos várias iniciativas de inovação, mas não existe um 'Innovation Lab' com uma estrutura fixa e calendarizada."	Test Beds	2020
Sonae MC / Marlos Henrique Silva	Adota uma abordagem multifacetada composta por iniciativas como o Continente Labs, Food Lab e diversos testbeds, integrando diferentes frentes de inovação. "Temos o Continente Labs, Food Lab e testbeds – uma abordagem que integra várias frentes de inovação."	Innovation Lab + Test Beds	2019

Annex 4 – Which are the main objectives of the Lab?

Organização	Resumo da resposta
Banco de Portugal / Nuno Pereira	O entrevistado sublinhou que o principal objetivo do lab é "experimentar e validar novas soluções" que otimizem os processos internos, destacando a necessidade de "adaptar as inovações às exigências regulatórias" e melhorar a eficiência operacional no setor financeiro.
Bondalti / Nélio Marques	O executivo referiu que o impact lab tem como meta "revolucionar os processos tradicionais", criando um ambiente onde tecnologias emergentes possam ser testadas sem comprometer a estrutura atual, o que permite a transformação gradual dos modelos de negócio.
Hospital da Luz / Nuno André Silva	Para o Hospital da Luz, o objetivo primordial é integrar novas tecnologias que promovam a excelência no atendimento ao paciente. O entrevistado enfatizou que "a inovação deve estar alinhada com a missão de cuidar", utilizando o lab como espaço para desenvolver soluções que elevem a qualidade dos serviços de saúde.
INCM / Carlos Jorge Silva	O diretor do INCM Lab destacou que o lab serve como um espaço de experimentação destinado a fomentar uma cultura de inovação. Segundo ele, é essencial "explorar novas ideias e mensurar os resultados de forma prática", possibilitando que a organização aprenda com os testes e evolua continuamente.
SIBS / Miguel Gaspar	O executivo da SIBS afirmou que o principal objetivo é desenvolver soluções digitais que transformem os processos de negócio. Ele ressaltou a importância de "adotar abordagens ágeis e disruptivas" para manter a competitividade, utilizando o lab para impulsionar a transformação digital da organização.
Sonae MC / Marlos Henrique Silva	Na visão do entrevistado da Sonae MC, o lab visa promover a integração de tecnologias emergentes com as operações tradicionais. Ele afirmou que a iniciativa busca "criar valor através da inovação colaborativa", fortalecendo a posição estratégica da empresa no mercado e incentivando a troca de conhecimentos entre as áreas.

Annex 5- How do you align the organization's strategy with the innovation initiatives?

Organização / Entrevistado	**Resumo da Resposta**
Banco de Portugal / Nuno Pereira	Estratégia alinhada com as diretrizes regulatórias, priorizando segurança e conformidade.
Bondalti / Nélio Marques	Alinhamento estratégico voltado para a otimização de processos e inovação operacional contínua.
Hospital da Luz / Nuno André Silva	Integração da estratégia de inovação com a missão institucional, promovendo excelência nos serviços.
INCM / Carlos Jorge Silva	Estratégia de inovação integrada ao planeamento corporativo, incentivando experimentação e colaboração.
SIBS / Miguel Gaspar	Fusão entre estratégia digital e transformação cultural, impulsionando a inovação sustentável.
Sonae MC / Marlos Henrique Silva	Direcionamento estratégico focado na incorporação de tecnologias emergentes e expansão de mercado.

Annex 6 – Why did you decide to follow the (innovation) Lab approach?

Organização / Entrevistado	Resumo da Resposta
Banco de Portugal / Nuno Pereira	Adotaram a abordagem do Innovation Lab para desmistificar novas tendências e explorar ideias inovadoras de forma controlada. Segundo o entrevistado, a iniciativa possibilita testar novas tecnologias e métodos, além de reforçar sua importância ao observar que "outros bancos centrais também estão a investir em laboratórios de inovação, o que reforça a importância desta abordagem para nos mantermos competitivos e relevantes no setor financeiro".
Bondalti / Nélio Marques	A decisão surgiu de uma necessidade de redirecionar a estratégia de inovação para focar no impacto real. Em 2023, optou-se por abandonar o foco excessivo em processos e priorizar a medição e a geração de impacto nas áreas de pessoas, negócios e descarbonização/digitalização.
Hospital da Luz / Nuno André Silva	A abordagem foi adotada para formalizar e intensificar parcerias já existentes com faculdades e startups, criando um test bed que proporciona um ambiente seguro e controlado para testar novas ideias de forma rápida, acelerando o desenvolvimento de soluções inovadoras.
INCM / Carlos Jorge Silva	A decisão de adotar o Innovation Lab decorre da necessidade de transformar a organização, integrando soluções físicas e digitais. Essa aposta estratégica visa desenvolver tecnologias próprias e reposicionar a empresa para se manter relevante no mercado global.
SIBS / Miguel Gaspar	A abordagem do Innovation Lab é utilizada para acelerar tanto a validação externa quanto o desenvolvimento interno. Ela permite testar rapidamente novas ideias, funcionando como um acelerador para equipas com recursos limitados, e contribuindo para um impacto claro na organização.
Sonae MC / Marlos Henrique Silva	Optaram pela abordagem dos Innovation Labs para acelerar o ciclo de inovação, possibilitando a experimentação rápida e testes em ambientes reais. Essa estratégia também favorece a colaboração intensa com universidades, startups e parceiros tecnológicos, garantindo a validação eficaz das soluções inovadoras.

Annex 7 – Which are the typical/key innovation iniatives' challenges?

Organização	Resumo da Resposta
Banco de Portugal / Nuno Pereira	O entrevistado destacou que "a adaptação às normas regulatórias" representa um desafio central, enfatizando que "a inovação deve alinhar-se às exigências do setor". Além disso, mencionou a dificuldade de implementar novas tecnologias sem comprometer a segurança operacional e a necessidade de ajustar processos para cumprir com rigorosos padrões internos e externos.
Bondalti / Nélio Marques	O executivo referiu que "a rigidez dos processos tradicionais" dificulta a adoção de inovações disruptivas. Segundo ele, "a implementação de tecnologias inovadoras requer uma mudança cultural profunda", o que implica superar a resistência interna e adaptar modelos de negócio que, historicamente, operam com métodos consolidados e pouco flexíveis.
Hospital da Luz / Nuno André Silva	Conforme o entrevistado, as barreiras culturais internas e "as limitações orçamentais" são os principais entraves. Ele observou que "a integração de novas soluções tecnológicas" enfrenta resistência devido a hábitos consolidados e restrições financeiras, o que impede investimentos robustos em inovação, prejudicando a transformação digital do ambiente hospitalar.
INCM / Carlos Jorge Silva	O Diretor da INCM sublinhou que "a resistência interna à mudança" é um dos maiores obstáculos, destacando a dificuldade em "mensurar os resultados" das iniciativas de inovação. Segundo ele, "a cultura de inovação ainda está em fase embrionária", o que reforça a necessidade de desenvolver métodos mais eficazes para avaliar e ajustar os projetos inovadores.
SIBS / Miguel Gaspar	Para o entrevistado da SIBS, um dos desafios mais críticos é "a integração de soluções tecnológicas" num ambiente altamente regulado. Ele ressaltou que "o cumprimento das normas" e a adaptação de processos tradicionais para dar lugar a métodos digitais criam tensões e exigem um esforço contínuo para harmonizar inovação com a segurança e estabilidade dos sistemas.
Sonae MC / Marlos Henrique Silva	O executivo da Sonae MC destacou que "conciliar a inovação disruptiva com as operações tradicionais" é uma tarefa complexa, pois existe uma "dualidade entre inovação e operação" que gera conflitos. Ele enfatizou que, para manter a competitividade, é essencial superar desafios relacionados à mudança de mindset e à integração de novas tecnologias com sistemas legados.

Annex 8 – Size of the dedicated teams and the number of broader people involved

Organização / Entrevistado	Nº de pessoas dedicadas aos Innovation Labs	Nº de pessoas (internas e externas) envolvidas nos últimos 12 meses
Banco de Portugal / Nuno Pereira	"No Innovation Lab, temos três pessoas dedicadas exclusivamente ao laboratório. Estas pessoas são responsáveis por coordenar as iniciativas de inovação, facilitar a colaboração entre os departamentos e garantir que os projetos estão alinhados com os objetivos estratégicos do Banco de Portugal. Estes recursos humanos são cruciais para o sucesso das nossas iniciativas de inovação."	"Estimamos que cerca de 350 pessoas estejam envolvidas direta ou indiretamente com o laboratório num ano. Este número inclui tanto colaboradores internos do Banco de Portugal quanto stakeholders externos que participam nas nossas iniciativas de inovação. A colaboração com entidades externas é fundamental para trazer novas perspetivas e conhecimentos, enriquecendo assim as nossas iniciativas e aumentando o seu impacto.
Bondalti / Nélio Marques	"Duas"	Não disponível
Hospital da Luz / Nuno André Silva	"A 100% uma pessoa e meia."	"Essa é uma métrica que estamos a tentar medir."
INCM / Carlos Jorge Silva	"12"	"Eu diria que, no último ano, tivemos cerca de 30 a 40 investigadores externos a trabalhar nas nossas soluções ao longo do ano. Internamente, pelo menos umas 20 a 30 pessoas são envolvidas pontualmente em projetos nossos."
SIBS / Miguel Gaspar	"Atualmente, temos uma equipa de 2 a 4 pessoas dedicadas aos Innovation Labs. Esta equipa pode escalar conforme as necessidades dos projetos, e temos acesso a programas de financiamento europeus e nacionais."	"Internamente, cerca de 50 a 60 pessoas estiveram envolvidas nas iniciativas de inovação. Externamente, aproximadamente 400 entidades participaram, incluindo stakeholders de aceleradoras e programas de inovação."
Sonae MC / Marlos Henrique Silva	"18 pessoas"	"Nos últimos 12 meses, tivemos cerca de 1000 pessoas da MC envolvidas diretamente nas iniciativas de inovação. Além disso, contamos com a colaboração de aproximadamente 2000 parceiros externos, incluindo universidades, startups e empresas tecnológicas."