

Inter- organizational collaboration in the Care Living Labs Flanders.

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Background: Flanders launched an initiative to enhance social innovation in elderly care in a living lab methodology. Living labs, platforms and projects, were designed in a bottom-up manner grounded in a policy program. This program urges, among others, to create a (partially) open innovation ecosystem in which partnerships handle the entire value chain of elderly care.

Purpose: This contribution examines the stated program-objectives with regard to partner collaboration and how the 6 platforms and 23 projects have interpreted these. It makes a critical reflection based on literature about inter-organizational collaboration and governance.

Methods: The program evaluation is based on a document analysis and complementary semi-structured interviews.

Results: Although platforms differ widely in their complexity of the partnership and governance (structures and approach), all of them build partnerships that have potential to address the open innovation ambition. Some projects though have a far less open multi-sectorial collaboration. Furthermore the aim of the program is creating sustainable platforms. This objective is not explicit for all of them based on the document analysis.

Conclusions: Scientific insights on open innovation, effective networks and sustainable collaborations help to make a critical appraisal of the platforms and projects. Some risks and opportunities with regard to collaboration are discussed against the background of the program objectives.