



Digital report on the results of the Open call for business challenges

Deliverable 5.1

YouthLivingLabs

Open Innovation Youth Living Labs Network



Co-funded by
the European Union

Disclaimer of warranties

This project has received funding from the European Union's ERASMUS+ program under Grant Agreement No. 101185615.

This document has been prepared by YouthLivingLabs project partners as an account of work carried out within the framework of the Grant Agreement. This deliverable reflects only the author's view and that the Commission Agency is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.

Deliverable factsheet

Number: **D5.1**

Title: **Open call for business challenges**

Lead beneficiary: **Jovesolides Egypt**

Work package: **5**

Dissemination level: **PU**

Submission date: **23/12/2025**

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Document history:

Revision	Date	Main modification	Author
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2	19/12/2025	Main Content	Milagros Barrios

Abbreviations

Erasmus+: The EU Programme for Education, Training, Youth, and Sport

EU: European Union

NEET: Not in Employment, Education, or Training

WP: Work Package

GDPR: General Data Protection Regulation

YLL: Youth Living Lab

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Executive Summary

This report presents the outcomes of the **open Call for Business Challenges** for the selection of companies under the *Youth Living Labs* initiative. The process, coordinated by **Jovesolides Egypt** with the support of all partners, aimed to identify companies motivated to share their Business challenges from participating countries to join the program's training and experimentation activities.

Jovesolides Egypt designed and managed the **online application form**, ensuring the process was **clear, inclusive, and accessible**. The form integrated the selection criteria defined in Task 5.2, focusing on inclusivity and equitable participation.

A total of **58 applications** were received, of which **57 were validated** after applying eligibility and consent checks. This strong engagement reflects both the **visibility** of the initiative and the **high interest among Entities** in capacity-building and employability programs.

Key Insights:

- **Geographic Distribution:** Applications came from Jordan (10 Companies), Egypt (16 Companies), Greece (12 Companies), Spain (15 Companies), and Cyprus (4 Companies), with 1 company from a neighbouring country from Italy.

- **Sector:**

Education and Youth represents about 29% of all registered entities, the largest single group. Creative and Culture, plus Civil Society and NGOs together make up about 31%, showing a strong social/creative profile of the pipeline.

- **Size of the Company:**

- The majority are very small organisations: about 39% have 1–5 employees and 26% have 6–10 employees.
- Only about 13% fall into the 21–50 employee range; the average size across all valid responses is around 10 employees.

- **Challenge Themes Distribution:**

- Digital/Marketing dominates (32%), with frequent requests for social media strategies, websites, visibility, and online campaigns.
- Youth/Education (27%) focuses on empowerment, learning tools, EdTech, and skill-building for young people.
- Innovation/Tech/AI (21%) seeks solutions in automation, digital tools, and emerging tech applications.

- **Skills Requirements Distribution:**

- Creativity/Design leads (39%), with frequent mentions of design thinking, creative problem-solving, artistic skills, and visual communication.
- Digital/Marketing (32%) emphasizes social media, content creation, digital tools, and communication strategies.
- Research/Analysis (21%) includes data analysis, research skills, and analytical thinking for problem identification.

● Mentorship Commitment Distribution:

- Over half (53%) of organisations commit to 1 hour/week of mentorship, making it the most common level.
- 2 hours/week is nearly as popular (43%), showing a strong willingness for more substantial support.
- Total weekly mentorship available across all organisations: 65 hours (ideal for matching multiple youth teams).

● Internship Offer distribution:

- 67% of organisations are willing to offer internships, showing strong practical commitment beyond mentorship.
- With 39 Yes responses, this creates substantial internship opportunities for Youth Living Labs participants.

● Internship timing:

- 34% simply specify "2026" without exact dates, showing flexibility in timing.
- 20% explicitly mention 3-5 month durations (most common length).
- Q1 2026 (Jan-Mar) is the most specific timeframe (14%), aligning with project cycles.

● Internship Mode:

- 76% prefer online internships, making them highly accessible across Mediterranean/MENA countries.
- Only 24% require in-person, mostly from Jordan/Egypt organisations.

1. Introduction

The YouthLivingLabs initiative seeks to empower young people who are Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEETs) by equipping them with practical skills, mentorship, and opportunities for innovation and collaboration. Within this framework, the Call for Expression of Interest was launched to identify motivated and eligible young individuals from the participating partner countries to join the upcoming training and experimentation phases. Out of the applicants' pool, beneficiaries were selected to participate in the training programme. Then we launched a Call for Business challenges (Annex 1) to select 50 companies where NEET participants will do their internship.

This deliverable presents the results of that call, outlining the profile, motivations, and distribution of companies who expressed interest in taking part in the Youth Living Labs activities.

The process was coordinated by Jovesolides Egypt, with the support of all partners, and involved the development, management, and analysis of an online application form designed to ensure transparency, inclusiveness, and accessibility. The form incorporated the selection criteria defined in Task 5.2 and targeted 50 companies from the consortium countries, prioritizing those facing challenges in their Business.

Through this open call, the project aimed to build a diverse pool of potential entities across participating countries, enabling the selection of companies who demonstrate both motivation and potential for impact within their communities. The findings summarized in this report serve as the foundation for the company selection process and provide insights into the Geographics, experiences, and aspirations of companies.

Based on the Description of Action, this call had to have at least 50 applications, at least 10 companies per partner country. This KPI was achieved.

2. Methodology

The methodology for the Call for Business Challenges for the *Youth Living Labs* initiative aimed to ensure a transparent, accessible, and effective process for participant selection. The approach involved multiple stages: designing the application form, ensuring it was widely disseminated, applying eligibility criteria, and conducting data analysis. Each phase was carefully structured to align with the project's core values of inclusivity and fairness.

2.1 Design and Development of the Online Application Form

The online application form was central to the selection process, designed to collect essential information while being easy to navigate for all potential companies. The design process involved a user-centric approach, ensuring accessibility and clarity.

2.1.1 Structure and content

The online application form was structured to collect both quantitative and qualitative data and was divided into 14 key sections to support the matching process within the Youth Living Labs. These sections were designed to build comprehensive organisational profiles while enabling effective alignment between youth teams, business challenges, and mentorship or internship opportunities.

The form first gathered basic organisational identification data, including company name and country of operation, using short text fields and dropdown menus to facilitate geographic matching. Spain and Egypt represented the highest number of responses, accounting for 30% and 25% respectively, out of a total of 57 valid geographic entries. Information on sectoral focus revealed that the majority of organisations operated in the education and youth sector (29%), while organisational size data showed a predominance of small entities, with 39% reporting between one and five employees.

To ensure smooth collaboration during the Youth Living Labs, dedicated sections were included to collect contact details of company representatives responsible for mentorship activities, including name, email address, phone number, and professional role.

A central component of the form focused on the definition of the business challenge. Organisations were asked to describe their core problem statement in detail, with digital transformation and marketing-related challenges being the most frequently identified (32%). To support effective team matching, companies also specified the skills required from participating youth teams, with creativity and design emerging as the most commonly requested competencies (39%).

The mentorship and internship dimensions of the Youth Living Labs were addressed through several targeted fields. Organisations indicated their availability for mentorship support, with 53% committing to approximately one hour per week. In addition, 67% of respondents confirmed their intention to offer internship opportunities. Further details were collected regarding internship duration and timing, with 34% indicating flexible placements planned for 2026, as well as the mode of delivery, which was predominantly online (76%). Internship location information was also collected to support logistical planning where applicable.

From a data collection perspective, the application form combined structured quantitative fields, such as dropdowns and checkboxes, to support statistical analysis and matching algorithms, with open-ended qualitative sections that allowed for in-depth human review and informed team assignment decisions.

In total, 58 organisations from six countries (Spain, Egypt, Greece, Jordan, Cyprus, and Italy) submitted complete applications. Overall, the application form was carefully designed to gather sufficient and meaningful data while keeping the process clear, accessible, and respectful of the companies' time, ensuring both efficiency and quality in the selection and matching process.

2.1.2 Accessibility and inclusiveness considerations

Special attention was given to accessibility and inclusiveness in the design and deployment of the online application form, with the objective of ensuring that a wide and diverse range of companies could participate in the Youth Living Labs initiative.

To accommodate organisations from different linguistic and regional contexts, the application form was made available in multiple languages. This approach reduced language-related barriers and facilitated participation from companies whose working language was not English, thereby supporting broader geographic representation.

The form was also designed following a user-friendly approach, featuring a clean and intuitive layout with clear instructions and well-defined field labels. This design choice aimed to minimise confusion, reduce completion time, and ensure that applicants with varying levels of digital proficiency could navigate the form with ease.

In addition, the online platform was optimised for use across different devices, including both desktop computers and mobile devices. This ensured that organisations could access and complete the application form regardless of their preferred technology or technical infrastructure.

Overall, these accessibility and inclusiveness measures were intended to remove potential barriers to participation and promote the involvement of a diverse range of stakeholders, ultimately contributing to the inclusion of young people from different educational and socio-economic backgrounds within the Youth Living Labs.

2.2 Dissemination and Outreach Process

A comprehensive dissemination and outreach strategy was implemented to ensure that the Call for Business Challenges reached potential companies across all participating countries. The approach combined digital communication channels with local-level engagement in order to maximise visibility and inclusiveness.

Digital marketing played a central role in the outreach process. The call was promoted through social media platforms, email newsletters, and the project's official website, allowing the initiative to reach a broad and geographically diverse audience. These channels were used to share clear and concise information about the objectives of the Youth Living Labs, the application process, and the benefits of participation.

In parallel, targeted outreach activities were carried out through local networks, including intermediary organisations, schools, youth centres, universities, and relevant Facebook and LinkedIn groups. This localised approach helped ensure that companies and stakeholders operating in disadvantaged or hard-to-reach areas were informed about the opportunity and encouraged to engage with the initiative.

Furthermore, the project actively engaged with community leaders and key local stakeholders to strengthen dissemination efforts. These partnerships played an important role in amplifying the reach of the call, increasing trust in the initiative, and ensuring that information was effectively communicated to the intended target groups.

Overall, the dissemination and outreach process was designed to maximise awareness and participation, ensuring that as many eligible organisations and young people as possible were informed about the programme and motivated to apply.

2.3 Eligibility Criteria and Validation Procedures

To ensure a fair, transparent, and consistent selection process, clear eligibility criteria were established and communicated in advance through the Guide for Companies. These criteria provided a common evaluation framework and ensured alignment between the submitted business challenges and the objectives of the Youth Living Labs initiative.

Each application was assessed based on its alignment with the Youth Living Labs curriculum, ensuring that the proposed challenge was connected to the skills and competencies acquired by participants through the academy. Particular attention was given to the clarity of the challenge description, with applications required to present a well-defined and realistic problem that could be addressed through youth-led solution design within the scope of the programme.

Relevance to real business needs was another key evaluation dimension. Challenges were reviewed to confirm that they addressed genuine issues or opportunities within the company's sector, thereby increasing the practical value of the Living Labs for both companies and participants. In addition, the willingness of organisations to offer internships or mentoring opportunities following the challenge was considered an important criterion, as it reflected the company's commitment to supporting young people beyond the ideation phase.

Finally, applications were evaluated in terms of feasibility and scalability, assessing whether the solutions developed by youth teams could realistically be implemented or expanded within the company context.

Following submission, all applications underwent a validation process to verify compliance with the established eligibility criteria. This step ensured consistency in evaluation and confirmed that only eligible and relevant challenges were included in the final selection process.

2.4 Data Collection and Analysis Approach

Data collection was carried out through the online application form, which was designed to capture both structured quantitative data and unstructured qualitative inputs. This dual approach enabled a comprehensive analysis of applications while supporting informed decision-making throughout the selection and matching process.

The structured data, collected through dropdown menus and checkboxes, facilitated the systematic analysis of key metrics such as sector distribution, challenge themes, required skills, and levels of mentorship commitment. These quantitative elements supported statistical overview and the use of matching criteria to align companies with suitable youth teams.

In parallel, qualitative data gathered through open-ended fields provided deeper insights into companies' motivations, expectations, and commitment to mentorship. This information was analysed thematically, allowing the project team to identify common drivers behind organisational interest in the programme and to assess the suitability of challenges beyond purely numerical indicators. The qualitative review also played a key role in refining team assignments and ensuring meaningful collaboration during the Youth Living Labs.

In total, 58 complete applications were analysed, representing organisations from six countries: Spain, Egypt, Greece, Jordan, Cyprus, and Italy. By combining quantitative metrics with qualitative thematic analysis, the project team obtained a comprehensive view of the applicant pool. This approach enabled the identification of key trends and supported the selection of a diverse group of beneficiaries closely aligned with the objectives and values of the Youth Living Labs initiative.

3. Overview of Applications Received

The *Call for Business Challenges* for the YouthLivingLabs initiative generated a strong response across all participating countries. The process demonstrated the effectiveness of the dissemination and engagement strategies, attracting a diverse pool of motivated Companies. This section outlines the total number of applications received, the validation process used to determine eligibility, and the geographic distribution of companies.

3.1 Total Applications Submitted

A total of 58 applications were submitted through the online application Google Form. This figure reflects a high level of engagement and awareness across the project's outreach channels, including social media, local partner networks, and youth organizations.

The response indicates both the visibility and appeal of the *Youth Living Labs* initiative and the strong interest among young people in opportunities for capacity-building, entrepreneurship, and innovation.

Of the 58 submissions, 57 were validated as eligible according to the established criteria, while 1 applications were excluded due to being out of the partner's countries.

3.2 Validation Process and Criteria

All received applications underwent a multi-step validation process to ensure that participants met the eligibility requirements set out in the Guide for companies and Open Call documentation. The validation process involved:

1. **Legally registered** company, start-up, or SME in one of the partner countries (Spain, Cyprus, Greece, Jordan, and Egypt).
2. **Active in sectors open to innovation** and willing to collaborate on youth empowerment.
3. **Agreement to follow the project's inclusion, equality principles.**
4. **Capacity to assign one representative** to liaise with project partners and mentor youth teams.

After these checks, **57 applications** were confirmed as valid.

3.3 Geographic Distribution of Companies

Applications were received from across the project's partner countries, with the majority concentrated in Egypt (27.59%) and Spain (25.86%), reflecting strong local engagement and effective communication strategies by local partners.

Greece and Jordan together account for about 38%, while Cyprus and Italy remain a small but relevant part of the ecosystem.

Country	Count	Percentage
Egypt	16	27.6%
Spain	15	25.9%
Greece	12	20.7%
Jordan	10	17.2%
Cyprus	4	6.9%
Italy	1	1.7%

Youth Living Labs: Country Distribution (58 organisations)

North Africa and Southern Europe account for 74%

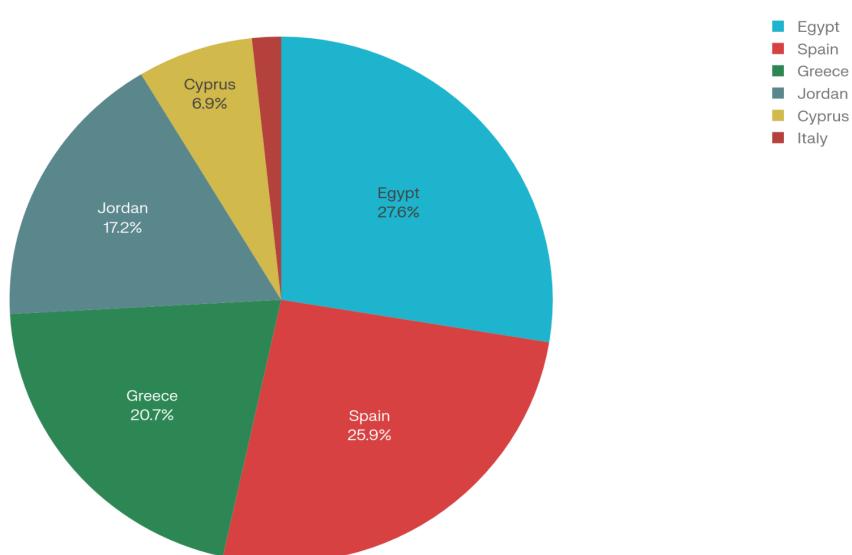


Figure 1: Geographical distribution of the companies

Due to the open online format, it was possible to collect additional responses from countries that might initially seem unrelated, which nonetheless highlights the broader regional interest in the Youth Living Labs initiative. As noted above, all applications were double-checked to ensure eligibility.

3.4 City Distribution Summary Table

City	Count	Percentage
Amman	10	19.2%
Remote/Online	9	17.3%
Cairo	8	15.4%
Zaragoza	5	9.6%
Athens	5	9.6%
Alexandria	3	5.8%
Other (11 cities)	11	21.2%

Amman dominates (19%) as the top physical hub, perfect for Jordan youth teams.

Remote/Online (17%) + 76% online internships = high flexibility.

Core hubs: Amman-Cairo-Zaragoza-Athens cover 64% of organisations.

Complete Location Summary

- Countries: Spain (29%), Egypt (28%), Greece (21%), Jordan (19%)
- Cities: 5 hubs + remote = optimal matching across regions
- Internship access: 76% online eliminates geographic barriers.

4. Profile of companies

This section presents an overview of the main characteristics of the organisations that submitted business challenges to the Youth Living Labs open call, based on the data collected through the application form. The analysis provides insight into the organisational profiles, sectoral distribution, and thematic focus of the proposed challenges.

Overall, the participating organisations were predominantly micro and small entities. A significant proportion of applicants reported having between 1 and 5 employees (39%), followed by organisations with 6 to 10 employees (26%). This profile reflects the strong engagement of small-scale organisations, which are often closely connected to local communities and open to innovative, collaborative approaches such as the Youth Living Labs.

In terms of organisational type, the applicant pool represented a diverse mix of non-governmental organisations, social enterprises, startups, and consultancies. Despite this diversity, a common orientation was observed across organisations, with a strong focus on youth, education, creativity, and technology-driven innovation. This alignment indicates a high level of coherence between the profiles of participating organisations and the objectives of the Youth Living Labs initiative.

4.1 Sector profile

The sectoral analysis revealed several dominant areas of activity among participating organisations. Education and youth-related services emerged as a leading sector, often combined with creative and cultural activities, digital and technological innovation, and social inclusion initiatives. In addition, a notable number of organisations operated within the fields of green innovation and sustainability.

Many organisations were positioned at the intersection of youth empowerment, innovation, and community development, reflecting a cross-sectoral approach within the Youth Living Labs framework.

4.2 Challenge focus

The analysis of submitted challenges showed clear thematic patterns across the applications. A large proportion of challenges were related to digital transformation, marketing, and visibility, including the development of websites, social media strategies, and digital content.

Another significant group of challenges focused on youth, education, and skills development, with particular emphasis on EdTech solutions, STEM-related initiatives, and innovative learning approaches. In addition, several organisations proposed challenges linked to innovation, technology, artificial intelligence, and environmental sustainability, addressing topics such as waste reduction, CO₂ impact, and circular economy models.

Together, these challenge areas reflect both the practical needs of participating organisations and the broader societal priorities addressed by the Youth Living Labs, reinforcing the relevance and impact potential of the initiative.

4.3 Skills and support offered

- **Skills requested from youth:** mainly creativity/design ($\approx 40\%$), digital/marketing ($\approx 32\%$), research/analysis and teamwork.
- **Mentorship:** 1–2 hours per week in most cases.

Mentorship Commitment

53 responses

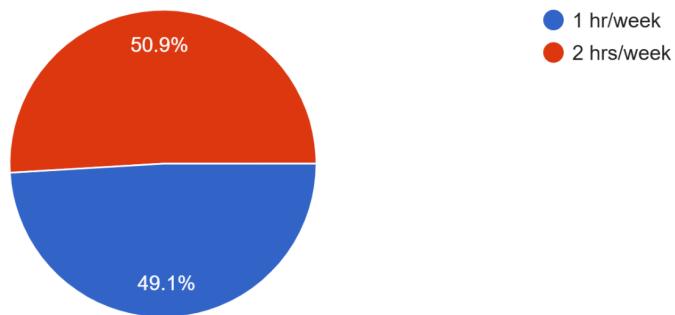


Figure 2:Mentorship commitment Status

- **Internships:** about two-thirds of organisations are willing to host interns, mostly online and for 3–5 months in 2026.

Will internship be offered?

53 responses

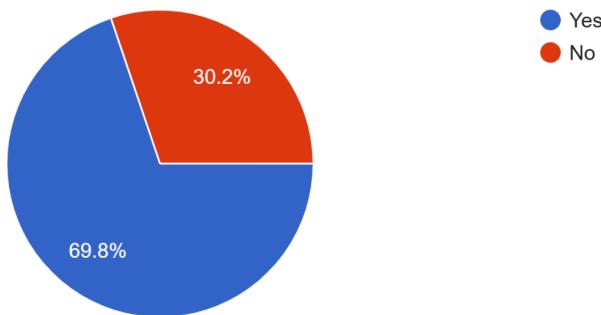


Figure 3:Internship offers Status

The applicant profile is: small, impact-oriented organisations in MENA and Mediterranean Europe, working on youth, education, creative industries, tech and sustainability, ready to mentor and often host online internships.

5. Expected outcomes: Skills required to solve the challenges

This section presents a qualitative analysis of organisations' open-ended responses regarding their motivation for participating in the Youth Living Labs training programme and their expectations concerning the skills and competencies needed to address the proposed challenges. Overall, the responses indicate a strong alignment between organisational needs and the project's objectives related to youth empowerment, social innovation, and employability enhancement.

Across the applications, **creativity and design**-related skills emerged as particularly relevant. Organisations expressed a need for youth teams capable of applying creative thinking and design methodologies, such as problem framing, ideation, and prototyping, as well as visual communication skills. Competencies in branding, graphic design, UX/UI, storytelling, media production, and content creation were frequently mentioned as essential to support the development and communication of innovative solutions.

Digital and marketing skills were also widely requested. These included the ability to manage social media channels, plan and implement digital marketing campaigns, produce written content, and apply basic search engine optimisation techniques. In addition, organisations emphasised the importance of managing websites or landing pages, performing simple video editing tasks, and creating engaging online content to improve visibility and outreach.

In terms of technology (**Tech, AI and digital tools**), organisations primarily sought familiarity with practical digital tools rather than advanced technical expertise. This included the use of productivity platforms, customer relationship management systems, simple web builders, and basic data collection tools. Some organisations also expressed interest in basic applications of artificial intelligence and automation, such as the use of tools like ChatGPT, no-code solutions, simple dashboards, and workflow automation.

Research, analysis, and project-related skills were another recurring theme. Organisations valued the ability to conduct desk research, map stakeholders or markets, analyse and synthesise information, and support project planning. Basic competencies in process optimisation, workflow mapping, and documentation were also considered relevant for addressing organisational challenges.

Several challenges required an understanding of **education, youth, and social** contexts. This included knowledge of education and EdTech, learning design, facilitation, or curriculum support, as well as familiarity with youth work, social inclusion, community engagement, and diverse cultural environments.

Business and entrepreneurial skills were also referenced, particularly in relation to innovation and early-stage development. Organisations indicated a need for youth teams with basic business thinking capabilities, including business modelling, value proposition design, customer discovery, and growth strategies suitable for small or emerging organisations.

Finally, strong emphasis was placed on transversal and **soft skills**. Communication, collaboration, empathy, and intercultural competence were seen as essential for effective **teamwork** and co-creation. Organisations noted the importance of being able to work collaboratively with organisational staff, manage feedback constructively, and present ideas and solutions in a clear and structured manner.

Overall, the analysis indicates that organisations primarily seek creative, digitally competent, and research-oriented youth teams who are comfortable working with online tools and collaborative processes, rather than highly specialised technical profiles.

6. Conclusion

The Youth Living Labs initiative has successfully engaged a diverse group of small, impact-oriented organisations across the Mediterranean and MENA regions, particularly from Egypt, Spain, Greece, and Jordan. These organisations operate in areas closely aligned with the programme's objectives, including youth and education, creative industries, digital innovation, social inclusion, and sustainability.

The analysis of submitted challenges demonstrates a clear and consistent demand for creative, digitally skilled, and research-oriented youth teams capable of working collaboratively with real organisations. The challenges focus on practical needs such as digital visibility, process optimisation, the use of digital and AI tools, and the development of community-centred and socially driven solutions, ensuring strong relevance to both organisational contexts and youth learning outcomes.

Supported by strong mentorship commitments, a high proportion of online and medium-term internships, and well-aligned challenge themes, the Youth Living Labs ecosystem is well positioned to deliver meaningful, applied, and scalable learning experiences for participants. At the same time, it generates concrete value for participating organisations, strengthening their innovation capacity and reinforcing the programme's potential for sustainability, transferability, and long-term impact.

Annexes

Annex I: Application Form Template Youth Living Labs:

Application Form

Youth Living Labs offers a unique opportunity to foster local innovation and inclusive participation.

This initiative brings together young individuals, organizations and communities to co-create solutions to real-world challenges.

We appreciate your interest in the program. Please fill out the form below. All fields are required unless stated otherwise.

1. Personal Information

- Company Name
- Location (City, Country)
- Sector
- Size (How many employees)
- Name of Company Representatives
- Contact Email of Company Representatives
- Phone number of Company Representatives

2. Challenge Details

- Title
- Description (max 500 words) What problem do you want participants to solve?
Why?

3. Expected Outcomes

- Skills required to solve the challenge
- Mentorship Commitment:
 - 1 hr/week
 - 2 hrs/week
- Will an internship be offered?
 - Yes
 - No
- Specify the expected start date, end date, and total duration of the internship
- Will the internship be:
 - Online
 - In person