WORKSHOP

Learning in the Living Lab

The SIBIL Experiment

Early experiences & lessons from Zuyd IB

Captivate | Our Story (10') | Theory (10') | SIBIL Today (10') | Interactive (20') | Recaptivate

Jules Verheesen · International Business · Zuyd University of Applied Sciences · 16 April 2026

Let's Be Honest for a Moment...

Three questions before we start

Do students work on real problems — or simulations of real problems?

Do companies co-create with us — or do they just guest lecture?

Does our research connect to what companies actually need?

If the answer is 'not really' — you're in the right room.

Jules Verheesen

Coach & Lecturer | Researcher

Sustainable International Business Research Centre · Zuyd University

WHO'S IN THE ROOM?

I went from corporate to classroom — and now I'm trying to blur the line between them.

2015 - 2023 — **Corporate World**

Supply chain & sustainability roles at **Nike** and **VDL-**Nedcar — where I learned that business and sustainability actually belong together.

2023 → now — **Lecturer & Coach · Zuyd IB**

Teaching Sustainable Supply Chain Management.
Coaching students on real business challenges.

2025 → now — **Researcher · SIB Research Centre**

Building SIBIL — the Living Lab that connects IB students, companies, and research. Today's session is part of that experiment.

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What is a Living Lab?

More than a company project: a structured ecosystem for real-life experimentation

> *"Living Labs are open innovation ecosystems in real-life environments,* ***focused on co-creation, rapid prototyping & testing, and scaling-up innovations.****"*
>
> *ENoLL — European Network of Living Labs*

5 Factors for a Successful Living Lab (Overdiek & Geerts, 2023 — 'Innoveren met Labs 2.0')

1

Resource Availability

Funding, time, people and infrastructure to sustain experiments long-term

2

Co-creation & Empowerment

An attitude of genuine partnership — not just users as research subjects

3

Transparent Participation

Clarity about roles, expectations and level of involvement for all parties

4

Experimentation

Safe space to try, fail, learn and iterate; not just deliver a polished product

5

Tech + Social Balance

Combining technical innovation with social and organisational change

How SIBIL Started — Our Story

2024 — The Trigger

Internal funding, and how to link research center to students.
Research centres must attract (some) external funding and therefor redesign our proposition.

Early 2025 — Exploring Ideas

Business model canvas drafted. Students invited to co-create: branding, themes, names, potential products that we can deliver.

Mar 2025 — Naming Poll

Team vote: Green Heroes won internally.
However, after checking with companies — **SIBIL** was the clearer, more professional fit.

Sep 2025 — First Challenges

CHILL & Maeconomy challenges run.
BiotechBooster subsidies submitted. Focus sharpened: ag-tech startups.

Now — Building Structure

Clarity: focus on ag-tech startups with a clear Innovation challenge.
Minor integration planned.
SIBIL as a structural programme.

Key learning: We started inside-out. The lab's purpose only became clear when we started listening to what companies actually needed.

INTERACTIVE 1 / 2

Living Lab Reality Check

Where is your IB programme right now?

1

Mostly classroom-based

Theory, guest lectures, simulated cases

2

Some real-life projects

Occasional company assignments, ad hoc

3

Structural company collaboration

Repeatable model, regular partners

4

Almost a Living Lab

Multi-stakeholder, co-creation, research link

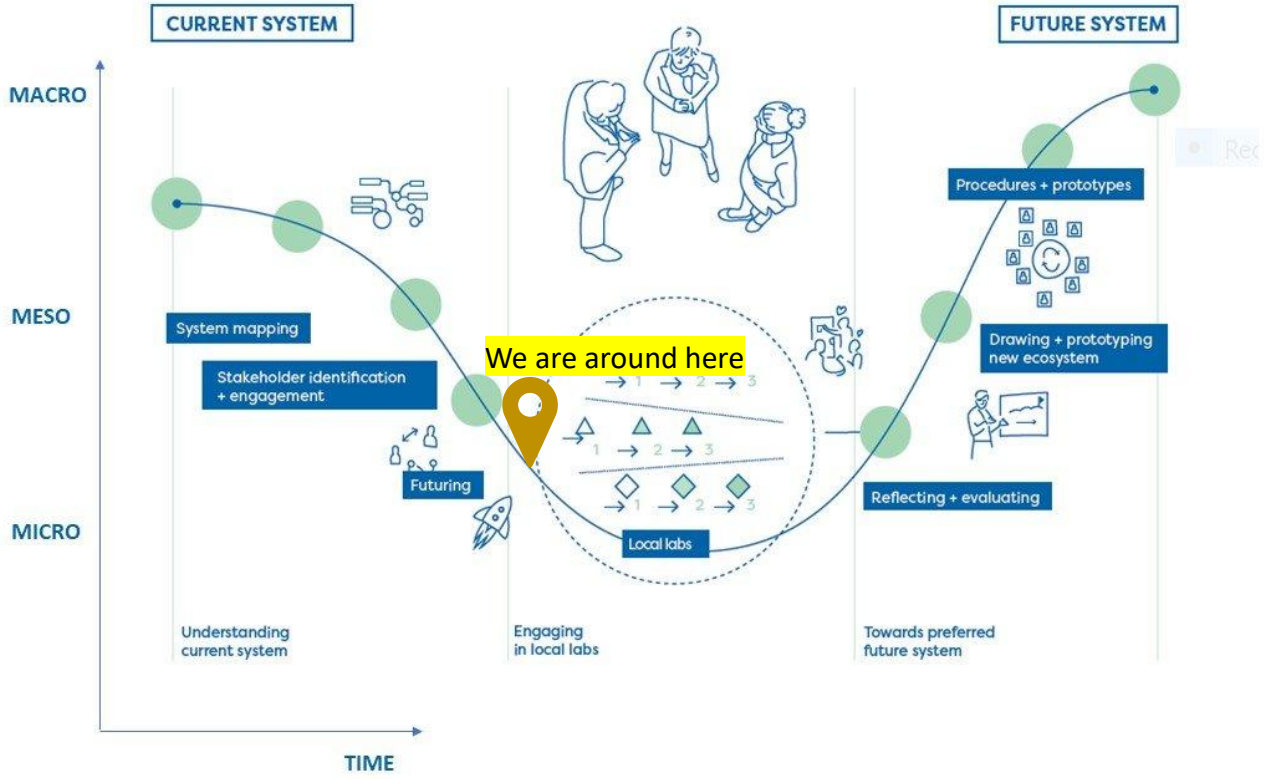
👉 *Stand up / raise your hand for your level — then share: what are you already doing? What works?*

How Labs Create System Change — The ISLE Model

De Lille & Overdiek (2020) — 'Systemen innoveren met labs'

"Labs start from the existing system as a point of departure, using local experiments to transition toward new systems." — Overdiek & De Lille

How Labs Create System Change — The ISLE Model



Why Does This Matter for IB?

The event theme: 'Providing Business Education for Business with Business' — but how many of us have a structural model to make that real?

IB students need to **experience real complexity** — not simulated cases

Companies need **more than an intern** — they need **structured co-creation** with clear output

IB research needs to move closer to practice to **generate** meaningful (regional) **impact**

A Living Lab provides the structure to make all three happen. Together, repeatedly, and growing over time

The SIBIL Model

Sustainable International Business Innovation Lab — Zuyd University of Applied Sciences

Education

Students gain hands-on experience tackling real international sustainability challenges in the Maastricht region

Research

Research translates into regional impact, innovation and circular economy solutions

Business

Companies receive practical, research-driven insights and recommendations with measurable (sustainable-) impact.

Real Challenges

Focus: AgriTech startups & circular economy — building expertise together over the coming years

What We Did — Two Challenges Completed

Proof of concept: the Living Lab approach works

CHILL Challenge

Partner: MobileXL

In collaboration with CHILL

Challenge: How can MobileXL measure and communicate its sustainability impact?

Output: Interactive sustainability dashboards for internal & external reporting

🎓 **Students · Business · Research**

Maeconomy Challenge

Partner: Maeconomy

In collaboration with Maeconomy

Challenge: Supporting circular and sustainable business model innovation

Output: Business-oriented recommendations for circular economy transition

🎓 **Students · Business · Research**

✓ **Both challenges received positive feedback from students and external partners**

Funding & What Comes Next

Building financial support to scale SIBIL into a structural programme

BiotechBooster — Aestuarium

AgriTech startup in aquaculture. Student teams supporting **market entry** strategies and **sustainability impact measurement**.

SUBMITTED

BiotechBooster — Optiverm

AgriTech startup in vermiculture & organic soil solutions. Students contribute applied **consultancy and impact assessment.**

SUBMITTED

Gemeente Maastricht — Circular Initiatives

Municipal subsidy aligning SIBIL with the Maastricht regional circular economy agenda.

IN PROGRESS

IB Minor Integration — Sustainability & Consultancy

Cases from CHILL & Maeconomy become core components. From pilot → embedded in IB curriculum.

NEXT YEAR

Honest Reflection

We're in Phase 2 of the ISLE model — here's what we know so far

✓ What's Working

- Students are motivated when challenges are genuinely real and can work with real data
- Companies engage when they see concrete student output
- The lab name gives identity to scattered activities
- Subsidy applications benefit from a named, structured Lab
- AgriTech focus is sharpening our expertise and partnerships

? Still Figuring Out

- How to maintain company engagement across multiple years
- How to assess students fairly on open-ended work
- How to connect individual challenges into a bigger lab identity
- How to secure structural funding, not just per-project
- How to move from Phase 2 → Phase 3: real systemic impact

Your input in this session feeds directly into moving SIBIL from Phase 2 → Phase 3.

INTERACTIVE 2 / 2

Build Your Own Living Lab

Groups of 3–4 · ~15 minutes · Share 1 key insight

"If you would start a Living Lab tomorrow in your IB programme..."

1. What type of company or sector would you involve?
2. What kind of student project would you run first?
3. How would it fit in your curriculum structure?
4. What is your biggest expected challenge?

💡 *Your answers will be collected as input for SIBIL's roadmap — we're building this together*

Harvest — What Did We Hear?

One insight per group · Themes from both exercises

Company & Sector Ideas

Curriculum Integration

Student Project

Barriers & Obstacles

3 Takeaways

1. Local experiments are the starting point — not the end goal.
   One challenge, one partner, one experiment. Connect them over time toward Phase 3.

2. A successful Living Lab needs all 5 factors: resources, co-creation mindset, transparency, experimentation space, and balance between tech & social change.

3. We don't have to build this alone.
   IB programmes across the Netherlands face the same questions. Multiple learnings form different living labs could accelerate all of us.

Interested in staying connected to SIBIL?

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The thinking behind SIBIL — three books on how labs can innovate

Labs 1.0

Innoveren met Labs

Anja Overdiek · 2020

- Technology-driven
- Expert-centred lab setting
- Limited real user input
- SIBIL learned: this was our starting mistake

Labs 2.0

Innoveren met Labs 2.0

Anja Overdiek & Heleen Geerts · 2023

- Users involved in testing
- More realistic settings
- 5 key success factors
- SIBIL now: this is our working model

Labs 3.0

Innovating with Labs 3.0

Overdiek et al. · 2025

- Open ecosystems
- Co-creation with all stakeholders
- Societal & systemic impact focus
- SIBIL Goal: this is where we're going

Remember those three questions?

Here's what a Living Lab answers — if you build it right.

Do students work on real problems — or simulations of real problems?

→ **In a Living Lab: real companies, real challenges, real stakes.**

Do companies co-create with us — or do they just guest lecture?

→ **In a Living Lab: structured co-creation, clear deliverables, long-term relationships.**

Does our research connect to what companies actually need?

→ **In a Living Lab: practice feeds research, research feeds practice.**

Now let's innovate! Together with business. 🌱

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Thank You