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LIVE LABS 2: PROCESS EVALUATION FINAL REPORT



SYSTRA

LIVE LABS 2: PROCESS EVALUATION

PROCESS EVALUATION REPORT

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Live Labs 2

- 1.1.1 Live Labs 2 is a three-year, £30million, UK-wide programme funded by the Department for Transport (DfT) and run by ADEPT (The Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning & Transport). It has a delivery period that will run from 2023 until March 2026, providing funding to Local Highways Authorities (LHAs) to develop and invest in innovative solutions for local roads, with a focus on decarbonisation of local highways infrastructure and assets. It follows the successful roll-out of Live Labs 1.
- 1.1.2 Live Labs 2 launched in July 2022, with LHAs able to submit bids to ADEPT. Figure 1 below outlines the key stages of the competition.

Figure 1. Stages of the Live Labs 2 Competition



1.2 The Process Evaluation

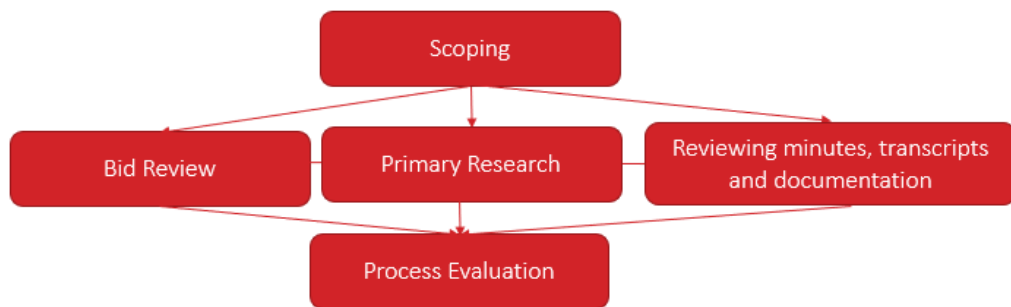
- 1.2.1 The Competition Phase of Live Labs 2 reflects the innovative nature of the programme, allowing for broad and creative bids, and final funding award recommendations made through a 'Dragons' Den' style expert panel, rather than through a more traditional paper-based tender process typically seen in the transport sector. The Transport Secretary made the final decision on funding.
- 1.2.2 As such, ADEPT is keen to understand the effectiveness of the approach to the competition process for awarding funding, with a view to informing future funding allocation processes. The purpose of this report is to draw together the key findings and lessons learnt from the competition process to inform how future competitions are delivered in the industry, drawing out what worked well, and what could be improved from each stage.
- 1.2.3 As defined by the Magenta Book, a process evaluation asks: "What can be learned from how the intervention was delivered?". This process evaluation will allow a deeper understanding of the competition phase of Live Labs 2, from the opening of the bidding (July 2022) to the end of the mobilisation stage (March 2023).
- 1.2.4 The Process Evaluation covers both subjective issues (i.e. perceptions from stakeholders on the successes and challenges of the competition) and objective issues (factual details, such as timelines), bringing together these elements to conclude key learnings and actionable recommendations for ADEPT for future competition design.

1.3 Overview of Approach

- 1.3.1 As outlined in Figure 1 below, the process evaluation began by scoping the research, to fully understand the people, inputs and activities that took place during the competition, and to design a series of evaluation questions to shape the research.

1.3.2 The evaluation comprised of three strands of review and research; firstly, an objective review of all submitted bids against the Prospectus. Secondly, in-depth interviews and mini-group discussions with stakeholders involved in the process. And thirdly, a review of documentation, meeting notes and transcripts. Further detail on our approach to these is set out in Chapter 2.

Figure 2. Data Gathering



1.4 This Report

1.4.1 This report is the overall Process Evaluation, and is informed by the three stages outlined above.

- Chapter 2 outlines the outcomes of the scoping stage; the agreed Process Map and Evaluation Questions;
- Chapter 3 sets out details of our approach to the three data gathering tasks;
- Chapter 4 set out the key findings, against each stage of the competition in turn;
- Chapter 5 sets out a summary in relation to the Evaluation Questions and outlines out key actionable recommendations.

2. SCOPING THE RESEARCH

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 SYSTRA undertook an initial review of available literature, including the Prospectus and information available on the ADEPT website, and carried out discussions with core members of the ADEPT team to develop two core outputs to inform the Process Evaluation.

2.2 Process Map

2.2.1 Building a Process Map is a key stage within a process evaluation to formulate an in-depth understanding on the relationships and roles of key stakeholders, across the key inputs and activities. Figure 3 below sets out the agreed Process Map for the competition phase of Live Labs 2.

Figure 3. Process Map

← Competition Stage →					
	Preparation and Bid Phase Submission of Expression of Interest (nine weeks to 30th September 2022)	Shortlisting (1) Initial review (week commencing Mon 3rd October 2022)	Shortlisting (2) Dragons' Den (week commencing Mon 31st October 2022)	Award and Change Control Interim Period (November – December 2022)	Mobilisation of preferred Live Labs (January to March 2023)
Commissioning Board	Agree Competition Process including scoring/review criteria, selection of industry experts as 'Dragons'. Sign off of Prospectus.	»»»	»»»	Change control (costs)/ consolidation of bids	»»»
Project Management Team (ADEPT/WSP)	Prepare and launch guidance Facilitate and run drop-in /1:1 sessions for proposers	Facilitate shortlisting Notify bidders of outcomes	Facilitate shortlisting inc. guidance on Dragon's Den session Notify bidders of outcomes	Support change control processes Facilitate plenary session for successful bidders	Facilitate kick-off meeting Initiate mobilisation phase (information and 1:1s)
Dragons	»»»	»»»	Recommend shortlist final Live Labs for mobilisation funding in 'Dragons' Den'.	»»»	»»»
Proposers and Partners	Receive and review guidance (the Prospectus) Attend drop-in/1:1 session(s) Prepare bids and complete submission Template Develop teams/partners	Receive outcome of progression to next stage	[If successful] Present pitch to 'Dragons Den'	[All] Receive outcome of progression to next stage (Letter or Kick-off Meeting) Attend plenary meeting [If successful] Review Bids (Budget and Live Lab teaming arrangements)	Attend kick-off meeting Preparation of Business Case
DfT	Early comms/press releases Ministerial sign-off of Prospectus	Undertake technical assessment Undertake final sift to shortlist x 10	Ministerial sign-off of preferred Live Labs	Change Control (Costs)/ Consolidation of Bids	DfT Press Release Release business case funding

2.3 Evaluation Questions

2.3.1 Following on from the Process Map, a set of evaluation questions can be determined, ensuring all stages of an intervention or programme are considered, and that can be tailored to the roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders involved.

2.3.2 Figure 4 sets out the detailed evaluation questions for this research. These were then used to formulate our assessment tools; in particular, the topic guides and survey forms for primary research, tailored to the relevant stakeholder group.

Figure 4. Evaluation Questions

	Stage					
	Your Role	Pre-Bid Preparation	Bid Preparation	Shortlisting and Dragons Den	After the Competition	Communications
Commissioning Board	<p>Was your (and others) role(s) in the Competition phase of the project clear?</p> <p>Were you happy with the governance arrangements for the Board in respect of the Competition Process?</p>	<p>What were your views on the documentation and support provided to bidders?</p> <p>Is there anything different you would have liked to have seen?</p> <p>What learnings were taken from LL1?</p>		<p>Was the shortlisting process and evaluation criteria appropriate and fit for purpose? Is there anything that may have strengthened these processes?</p> <p>Were bids received equally from a spread of geography and topic areas? If not, what barriers may have existed?</p> <p>What could be improved?</p>	<p>Were the arrangement for change control appropriate?</p> <p>To what extent are you satisfied that the final bids met the aims of the LL2 programme?</p> <p>Did the competition process result in the right outcome?</p> <p>Was there anything unexpected from the range and type of bids?</p> <p>What impact has the competition has on the market in terms of awareness of Net Zero?</p>	<p>Were new relationships and networks developed to enhance the competition process? Hoe effective were these?</p> <p>Has the communications strategy supported the competition process?</p>
Project Management Team (ADEPT/WSP/Coast Communications)	<p>Was your role in the competition phase of the project clear?</p> <p>Did the different stakeholders work together effectively throughout?</p>	<p>What were your views on the documentation and support provided to bidders?</p> <p>Is there anything different you would have liked to have been able to offer?</p> <p>What learnings were taken from LL1?</p>	<p>To what extent were the workshops/1:1 with proposers useful? Were the resources/support available at this stage sufficient?</p>	<p>What was your experience of observing the Dragons Den process?</p> <p>Were bids received equally from a spread of geography and topic areas? If not, what barriers may have existed?</p> <p>What could be improved?</p>	<p>Were the arrangements for change control appropriate?</p> <p>To what extent are you satisfied that the final bids met the aims of the LL2 programme?</p> <p>Was there anything unexpected from the range and type of bids?</p> <p>Were feedback and outcomes provided in a timely and meaningful manner?</p> <p>What learnings can be taken forward as BAU or to inform other competitions?</p>	<p>How effective were communications between different parties?</p> <p>Has the communications strategy supported the competition process?</p>
Dragons DfT	<p>Was your role in the competition phase of the project clear?</p>			<p>Was the shortlisting process and evaluation criteria appropriate and fit for purpose? Did all parties involved work together effectively?</p> <p>Was the support and guidance from the team sufficient to inform the shortlisting?</p> <p>How were conflicts or disagreements resolved?</p> <p>What could be improved?</p>	<p>Did the competition process result in the right outcome?</p> <p>What impact has the competition has on the market in terms of awareness of Net Zero?</p>	<p>Were you satisfied with communication and support from the Board and project team?</p> <p>Were you satisfied with external communications to potential bidders and the wider industry?</p>
Proposers (and Partners)	<p>What informed the decision making process to proceed with a bid?</p> <p>What process did you go through to identify teams and partners? How effectively did these work at bid stage?</p>	<p>Was the documentation and guidance from ADEPT fit for purpose?(scope, budget, competition process, assessment)</p> <p>What additional information would have been useful?</p> <p>To what extent did other sources help you develop your bid i.e. White Papers from Live Lab 1?</p>	<p>Were the timescales sufficient?</p> <p>Did you experience any barriers or challenges with bid preparation?</p> <p>Were the support sessions from ADEPT useful?</p> <p>Was the template clear enough and sufficient to convey your proposals?</p> <p>What could be improved?</p>	<p>What was the process (if applicable) for rescoping your bid/collaborating with other Live Labs?</p> <p>Were the timescales and channels for communicating outcomes appropriate? Would earlier information sharing with other bidders have been beneficial?</p> <p>In your view, was as the Dragon's Den session an appropriate approach to the competition?</p>	<p>Has the information and support provided been sufficient to progress your Business Case? Are the timescale sufficient to get systems, processes and teams in place?</p> <p>What about legal, procurement and contractual details?</p> <p>Did any unexpected outcomes arise during the competition?</p> <p>Overall, what could have been improved about the Competition phase?</p> <p>Were you overall satisfied that the bidding process was fair and appropriate?</p>	<p>Were the communication channels used for the competition process fit for purpose?</p> <p>Were new relationships and networks developed to enhance the competition process? Within the industry and other bidders?</p> <p>Were you satisfied feedback provided at each stage?</p>

3. DATA GATHERING APPROACH

Bid Review

- 3.1.1 The purpose of the Bid Review was to assess the consistency of the submissions in line with the guidance and tools given in the Prospectus to better understand whether any instructions were unintentionally ambiguous, confusing or unclear. The review did not look at the merit of the bids or undertake any re-scoring or assessment and was a fully independent review undertaken by SYSTRA Ltd.
- 3.1.2 The review looks to answer the following questions;
- Were the bids in line with the instructions and content requirements set out in the Prospectus? [both in the bid response Annex and the Prospectus itself]
 - What key differences, and similarities, were there in bids that were submitted?
 - To what extent did different bidders interpret the guidance differently?
 - Were there any particular areas where responses varied or deviated from the guidance?
 - Were there any notable observations regarding style, presentation or length of bid?
 - Did the bids represent a range of geographic locations, and use a range of different partners across the industry?
 - What further information may have made the bidding process more efficient and robust?
- 3.1.3 SYSTRA reviewed all of the 30 bids that were received, both successful and unsuccessful, to undertake a qualitative assessment based on the structure of the bids. Each section of each bid was reviewed in turn, extracting key information about approach to each section (style, content, length), alignment with the instructions provided in the Prospectus, any key metrics (such as value, number and name or partners, location), and any other relevant or overarching observations. In addition, information about the outcome of bids, and where available, feedback from stakeholders and queries submitted by bidders was also included against each bid. The collated spreadsheet then enabled a review of each section in turn, cross-referencing back to the bids to help further identify similarities, differences and inconsistencies.
- 3.1.4 It should be noted that this exercise reviewed the initial bids as submitted during the competition phase, and did not take into account any rescoping or consolidation that happened later in the competition phase.

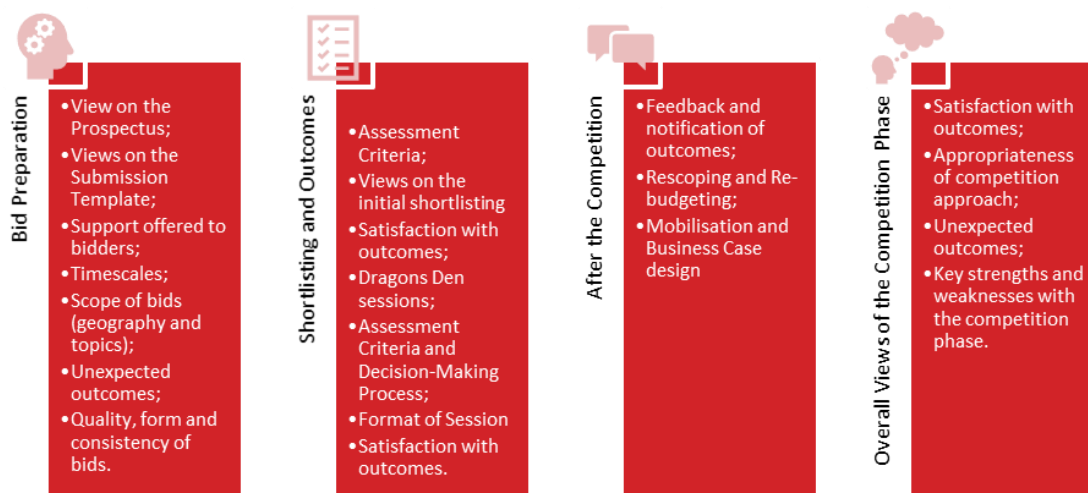
Secondary Data review

- 3.1.5 All bidders were offered 1:1 sessions with the Programme Management Team and 36 transcripts of these discussions between the Live Labs 2 Programme Director and prospective bidders were reviewed to extract key themes related to the competition process evaluation.
- 3.1.6 Minutes from Commissioning Board meetings were also reviewed and the SYSTRA team attended a number of meetings to observe as part of this review.
- 3.1.7 Information and reports provided on the ADEPT website were also reviewed, including the Prospectus and other information available to bidders.

Primary Research

- 3.1.8 Interviews were carried out online, using Teams, at a time convenient to the respondent. Interviews were scheduled to take 45-minutes, however some took less time. All interviews were recorded or transcribed, for ease of write-up and analysis. All research was conducted in accordance with the Market Research Society and Data Protection legislation.
- 3.1.9 Discussions were led by a topic guide, tailored to the respondent type and designed to systematically review each stage of the competition process in which they were involved. They specifically focussed on what worked well and what could be improved across the following areas:

Figure 5. Process Evaluation Topics



Completed Interviews

- 3.1.10 In total, SYSTRA spoke to 39 individuals across 18 interviews and mini-group sessions, with at least one participant from each stakeholder group. This is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Completed Interviews

Stakeholder Type	No. Interviews / Mini Groups	Total No. Participants
Stakeholders: ADEPT Programme Management Team	3	3
Stakeholders: Commissioning Board	2	2
Stakeholders: DfT Sponsoring Department	1	1
Stakeholders: Dragons (Independent Panel)	1	1
Bidders and Partners	11	33*
Total	18	39

*one response was provided through an online survey

- 3.1.11 The qualitative data was analysed using a thematic approach, drawing out key trends and findings based on the core evaluation questions and process map. Differences observed between different stakeholder groups have been highlighted throughout this report. Due to the small number of responses in some stakeholder groups, these are referred to collectively as 'stakeholders' where appropriate in the report, both to aid grouping views and to avoid identification of any individual. In addition, any views and related quotes should be attributed to the individual in their role and their own perceptions, rather than representing the views of any organisation as a whole.

The findings from the activities outlined above are drawn together in Chapter 4 to evaluate each stage of the competition, highlighting what worked well, and what could be improved.

4. FINDINGS

4.1 Pre-Bid Preparation

Prior to the formal launch of the competition, ADEPT had carried out some early soft market testing events / roadshows, so a number of prospective bidders had been engaged with the project at an earlier stage.

4.1.1 When asked, ‘when did you first hear about the plans for the Live Labs 2 Competition?’ there was a mix of experiences; some had heard about it through their networks, some had heard directly from contacts at DfT or other organisations during the market testing events / roadshows, and some were only aware when it was formally launched in a press release.

4.1.2 All bidders were positive about participating in the Live Labs competition; many stated how it aligned with their the views and ambitions of their authority / organisations and expressed enthusiasm for participating in something so innovative.

“We pride ourselves on delivering safer, greener highways – is our strapline. So [Live Labs 2] was a perfect synergy between what we want to do, and what our clients (ADEPT members) have also signed up to” [Bidder Partner]

4.2 Bid Preparation

The Prospectus and the Template

Core Evaluation Questions:

Bidders	Stakeholders
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Was the documentation and guidance from ADEPT fit for purpose? (scope, budget, competition process, assessment)• What additional information would have been useful?• To what extent did other sources help you develop your bid?• What informed the decision making process to proceed with a bid?• Was the template clear enough and sufficient to convey your proposals?• What could be improved?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What were your views on the documentation and support provided to bidders?• Is there anything else you would have liked to have been able to offer?• Were the communication channels used for the competition process fit for purpose?



The document known as the ‘Prospectus’ was the key guidance provided to bidders, a 32-page document available on the ADEPT website which included information on the background to Live Labs, the mission and goals, the challenge and scope, the role of partnership working and information about the competition process itself.

As an Appendix, a Proposal Template was provided, detailing the Proposal submission requirements, both in terms of content and length. In addition, an overview Theory of Change was provided.

- 4.2.1 Overall, a broad range of bids (30) across geography and topic areas were presented to ADEPT, with the majority making use of the tools available to them; the Prospectus and direct support from ADEPT. The provided Template allowed bidders to produce creative, tailored bids. However, in some cases, this flexibility also brought with it inconsistencies in bid submissions, which may have affected ease of comparability across bids, particularly for core aspects such as funding and costs. However, bidders did have opportunities to raise queries.
- 4.2.2 No bids were rejected due to not conforming with the core requirements, including following the order of the Template, font size and page margins, and page limits. Some requests were received to submit bids after the deadline, but these were rejected in line with the competition requirements.
- 4.2.3 Figure 6 shows the core bid components required in the Prospectus.

Figure 6. Requirements of Submission Template

Live Lab title	Lead authority	Owner & champion	Location(s)	Elevator pitch
Short form proposal	Term contractor	Educational/ academic / research partners	Other partners	Indication of scale and programme
Funding package, leverage etc.	Approach to delivery	Approach to EDI	Approach to knowledge sharing	Carbon measurement and quantification
Data collection	Approach to commercialisation	Risk register	Innovation log	Theory of change

- 4.2.4 Bidders were generally content with the Prospectus, with some noting some areas that could potentially be improved; this included more clarity on budget, and some would have liked more detail in general. Other would have liked to have seen case studies, the ability to submit CVs, or an early stage ‘pitch’ to short-list bids at an earlier stage.

“...Prospectus was... the kind of go to document” [Bidder]

“There were no expectations set on the budget so it was difficult to figure out what to pitch in terms of that.” [Bidder]

- 4.2.5 A number of queries that were raised during discussions and email correspondence to the ADEPT inbox related to the practicalities of bidding, such as format (document type, font sizes), however the bid document structure was specified tightly in the Prospectus to ensure ease of comparison during assessment and to prevent overly long submissions.
- 4.2.6 The Prospectus was developed primarily by ADEPT and approved by the Commissioning Board and the DfT. Stakeholders (the Programme Management Team, Commissioning Board, and the DfT) felt that, on reflection, there was nothing in particular they would wish to improve with the Prospectus, but it was noted that in such a fast-moving industry, it is likely that it would be outdated very quickly, and as such, would require a significant refresh for future competitions.

What worked well?

- The Prospectus was clear and easy to understand;
- It allowed for a broad range of creative bids.

What could be improved?

- More prescriptive bidding requirements would aid comparability e.g budget, risk and funding streams
- Information on the assesment/evaluation criteria.
- Including submission date and email address within the Appendix A instructions.

Bid Support

Core Evaluation Questions:

Bidders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Were the support sessions ADEPT useful?

Stakeholders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •To what extent were the workshops/1:1 with proposers useful? •Were the resources/support available at this stage sufficient? •Is there anything else you would have liked to have been able to offer?

All prospective bidders were offered the opportunity to attend 1:1 sessions with the Live Labs 2 (LL2) Programme Director to ask questions and ‘test’ their ideas. In addition, they could submit queries via the LL2 mailbox.

- 4.2.7 All stakeholders welcomed the 1:1 sessions between the Programme Management Team and prospective bidders.
- 4.2.8 Nearly all bidders commended the knowledge and helpfulness of the Programme Management Team in the sessions. An online forum was set up for the process, but was not widely used. Likewise, an FAQ was produced but not all involved were aware of this.
- 4.2.9 Stakeholders felt that the 1:1 sessions were valuable. One did perceive some inefficiencies, where the same queries were raised multiple times, and that arranging and carrying out the sessions was very resource intensive, but accepted this was inevitable with this approach. It was also noted that not all those that submitted bids participated in a session.

- 4.2.10 Some alternative ideas about this stage were put proposed; such as an online 'launch event' / 'Frequently Asked Questions' event for all prospective bidders, a face to face 'conference style' session for knowledge sharing, or a 'pitch' at an earlier stage.

"I was thinking maybe some frequently asked questions might have helped because people tend to ask the same sorts of questions. So maybe something like that could have helped"
[Commissioning Board]

What worked well?	What could be improved?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bidders were pleased to have the opportunity to share ideas and shape their bids; • Stakeholders were pleased to engage with potential bidders informally at an early stage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A live 'FAQ' or 'Clarifications Questions' communicated more explicitly with all bidders would ensure all parties have the same information; • The sessions were resource-intensive for the Programme Management Team.

Timescales to submit bids

Core Evaluation Questions:

Bidders	Stakeholders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were the timescales sufficient? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were the timescales sufficient?

Live Labs 2 launched on 28th July 2022 opening a nine week period for applications, closing on 4th October 2022.

- 4.2.11 All involved in the process were generally satisfied with the length of the bidding period, however, the Programme Management Team and Bidders noted that having it during the summer holiday period created some challenges around resourcing. Therefore, a perceived risk from this is that potentially interested bidders would be unable to submit bids. However, all involved accepted this was unavoidable.

- 4.2.12 Similarly, a number of bidders highlighted challenges with the level of information about 'next steps'.

"the issue that's troubled us is largely around timetable. It might have been useful, looking back on the prospectus, if it had some kind of defined delivery dates and dates for how the outline business case was going to be submitted... That's caused a bit of delay and programming challenges from within our respective councils" [Bidder]

What worked well?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The length of time to submit bids was acceptable; •The Programme Management Team were flexible and extended the timescale to accommodate a bank holiday.

What could be improved?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The bidding period would have been better recieved during the Spring or early Autumn, rather than during the 'summer holiday' period.

Bids Received

Core Evaluation Questions:

Bidders

Stakeholders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Were bids received equally from a spread of geography and topic areas? If not, what barriers may have existed? •Was there anything unexpected from the range and type of bids?

4.2.13 In total, 30 bids were received by ADEPT, aligned with the template provided in the Prospectus.. Although all bids encompassed one or more of the broad themes, the focus of the Live Labs varied; some offered an holistic, broad proposal drawing in a range of solutions to decarbonisation across a large geographic area or defined highway corridors. Others focused on a particular area, such as lighting or fleet management. In addition, some bids were targeting the development and/or trial and roll-out of specific products or tools. Stakeholders were happy with the bids received:

“What really struck me is that they were so different, not just in the content but in the whole way they were presented...it was really quite different, but that was great”
 [Commissioning Board member]

“[Bidders] responded brilliantly to the breadth of the brief” [Programme Management Team]

4.2.14 Bids were received from a relatively even **geographic spread** in terms of delivery area, however Northern Ireland and Wales were only stated as core geographic location(s) within two bids.

“Proposals should encompass geographic areas (or corridors) in close proximity or remote but linked by common challenges and link interventions with people, the assets they use, the places they visit and the activities they undertake across urban, peri-urban and rural areas.”

Prospectus, Page 16

Table 2. Locations(s) of Live Labs 2 projects (Core Project Areas)

Region	No.*
South East	6
South West	5
West Midlands	5
East of England	4
North West	4
East Midlands	3
Scotland	3
Yorkshire	3
North East	1
Northern Ireland	1
Wales	1
Total	36

*some bids covered multiple regions, each region covered is counted separately.



4.2.15 Bids were clear about ownership and champions, and all offered broad and comprehensive partnering arrangements, across a wide range of partner types.

4.2.16 Partnership working is a core requirement of the Live Lab projects. Bidders were required to set out ‘educational/ academic / research partners’, their role and contact details; and all bidders named at least 1 individual or organisation (i.e. University), with one naming 11. Likewise with ‘other’, wider partners, on average bids named 6-7, with one naming 17. In a small number of cases, partners were described as, for example, ‘pledging support’ or ‘expressing interest’, so not committed to a firm role, and for others, they just described the type of partner, rather than the required detail.

4.2.17 Level of funding, and funding leverage, was also a key component of bids. Bidders were asked to outline overall funding required broken down by different elements. On average, funding requests were in the region of £4.6 million, and the majority were between £5m and £7m. Within the Prospectus, there was no guidance on the range of value of bids expected, however, bidders would have been aware of the overall funding pot available as well as the number of projects funded under Live Labs 1 and many received further verbal guidance on this during 1:1 sessions.

“Live Labs 2 will grant fund up to five or six Live Lab proposals within an overall programme budget of £30m”
Prospectus Page 21

4.2.18 The table below shows the value of funds requested, highlighting a small number of outliers in the value of funding requested. It should also be noted that of the 10 that proceeded to the Dragons’ Den stage, the average of the bids was slightly higher, at £6.2m.

Table 3. Funding Requirements (from ADEPT)

Region	No.
<1 million	1
£1.1m-3m	3
3.1m-5m	10
5.1m-7m	14
Over 7.1m	2
Average (all)	£4.8m
Average (successful)	£6.2m

- 4.2.19 The presentation of these costs were, in the majority of cases, as requested by the bidding template, presented against workstreams. Some presented costs as part of a project structure / flow diagram, but the majority provided a table. However, some of these were consolidated (such as presenting a single cost for ‘project costs’ encompassing everything from project management, to stakeholder engagement, marketing and communications) whereas others provided a more detailed breakdown, itemising project costs. Likewise, some were provided as single costs against tasks for the project duration, whereas some broke down the costs annually, and / or by sub-contractor.
- 4.2.20 Some singled out Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) costs, whereas others did not, and there was limited guidance on the expected scope and scale of M&E provided in the Prospectus, with the Template simply stating the requirement to be to provide an ‘outline of grant funding requirements with a high-level breakdown and an indicative programme, including staged delivery of benefits’.
- 4.2.21 Other additional funding sources were identified by bidders. As with the approach to presentation of core costs, this varied between bidders. Some provided a short generic statement outlining potential sources (such as s106 contributions, future government capital grants, academic grants) but without applying a value, and some provided an itemised list of identified sources.
- 4.2.22 Others outlined ‘pro-bono’ support provided (and anticipated), or ‘Benefit in Kind’ funding, and discount arrangements with suppliers. Some detailed potential match-funding arrangements, and co-investment from private partners. Therefore, it was difficult to draw comparisons of the value of these arrangements between different bids and difficult to have confidence in the actual level of additional funding anticipated, and therefore the potential impact on project delivery. Some bids explicitly noted the difficulties in specifying and having firm commitments at this stage in the process. Nearly all of those that were successful indicated firm commitments / funding streams within their bids.
- 4.2.23 In terms of the required detail on ‘approach to delivery’, it is noted that ‘delivery’ has been interpreted slightly differently; some bidders placing more emphasis here on technical roll-out, with others placing more emphasis on project management; with the Prospectus not specifying in detail the expectations on the balance between these two aspects.
- 4.2.24 There was a variable response to the EDI (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion) section; which as noted in the Prospectus “...based on our experiences in Live Labs 1 this is a critical differentiating factor for future success.”.

What worked well?

- A good volume of high quality, innovative bids aligned to the ambition of the project.

What could be improved?

- Increased representation from Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland;
- More tightly-scoped or detailed budgets to reduce need for rescoping.

4.3 Shortlisting and Outcomes

There were two stages of shortlisting; firstly, the 30 submitted bids were shortlisted to 10 by the DfT. Following this, these 10 bids participated in a Dragons' Den style pitch, with leading industry experts making the final set of recommendations for successful Live Labs projects. Their recommendations were endorsed by the Commissioning Board, then shared with DfT Ministers for final approval.

Core Evaluation Questions:

Bidders	Stakeholders
<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Were the timescales and channels for communicating outcomes appropriate?•Was the Dragons' Den session an appropriate approach to the competition?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Was the shortlisting process and evaluation criteria appropriate and fit for purpose?•Is there anything that may have strengthened these processes?•How were conflicts or disagreements resolved?•Was as the Dragons' Den session an appropriate approach to the competition?

- 4.3.1 Nearly all bidders and their partners made some observations around the scoring and assessment criteria. Both successful and unsuccessful bidders noted that they had little awareness of the scoring or evaluation criteria used, however, in general, those involved were satisfied with the outcomes.

"We didn't know what carried the most weight in terms of scoring and emphasis" [Bidder]

Initial Shortlisting

- 4.3.2 In total, 30 bids were received by ADEPT, aligned with the template provided in the Prospectus.

Following receipt of 30 submitted bids, the initial short-listing to 10 bids was carried out by the DfT, to an agreed scoring criteria.

- 4.3.3 The initial shortlisting was carried out by the DfT, who were provided with all 30 bids and selected 10 that best met their objectives, based on evaluation criteria that they designed.
- 4.3.4 Bidders were informed of outcomes on the 25th November, alongside a short 1-2 line summary of feedback from the DfT.

What worked well?	What could be improved?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">•All parties were satisfied with the outcomes from this stage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Timely notification of outcomes and feedback.

Dragons' Den Sessions

The 10 short listed bidders were invited to prepare and present a 10-minute 'pitch', followed by a 15-minutes Q&A, to a panel of 'Dragons', compiled of independent industry experts who would recommend which Live Labs should be allocated funding.

Figure 7. The Dragons' 'Panel'



- 4.3.5 Most bidders and their partners were satisfied with the Dragons' Den approach and found it a positive and engaging experience.

"The pitch was innovative and high energy, excellent!" [Bidder]

Preparation and Notification

- 4.3.6 The Prospectus outlined the planned date for the Dragons' Den session. Following initial shortlisting, ten bidders were given notification that they were invited to the Dragons' Den session on the 25th October, with the session taking place on the 4th November. These bidders were provided with a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document about the session, which included details of timings, support available, the names of the Dragons, the format of the session, and a brief sentence on 'next steps', including expected notification timings.
- 4.3.7 Ahead of the Dragons' Den session, a number of bidders fed back that guidance on what to present at the session was provided quite late, and others were disappointed at the late notice that they were invited, although it should be noted that the potential date was outlined in the Prospectus.

The Dragons' Den sessions

- 4.3.8 The Dragons' Den session was held online, via Teams. The session was originally booked to be held in person, however, train strikes meant a late change to the format; no participants highlighted this as causing a particular difficulty and were happy with the format of the sessions.

- 4.3.9 Bidders were mostly positive about the sessions, describing them as “fun” and “engaging” and another said “it was a really great way of involving the Members. It really brought them into the project, it got their attention, got them excited by it. And so I think that was really positive”.
- 4.3.10 A participating bidder felt they would have liked a longer Q&A session to provide greater insight to the proposals. Another felt there were too many participants watching their pitch. They nearly all agreed they would have liked more time: “...they were very rushed, you didn’t really have a chance to cover all aspects of what the project hoped to obtain” [Bidder]
- 4.3.11 The Programme Management Team was happy with the session, but expressed some disappointment at not being able to conduct the session in person. Conversely, others felt that running it online was more aligned with the carbon objectives of the programme, and would support online sessions in future.
- 4.3.12 However, it was noted by a couple of stakeholders that a face-to-face session may have built a better relationship between the Dragons and the Programme Management Team, and one of those involved stated they would have liked to have had the opportunity to have more informal discussions prior to the session (or indeed a separate Teams chat). This sentiment was mirrored by a member of the Programme Management Team, who explained they would have liked to see a “...water cooler moment, as they call it, so you lose a bit of that human interaction element”.
- 4.3.13 Feedback from the Dragon that we spoke to was also positive. They felt it was an “honour” to participate, and that the session was appropriate in length, and information was provided in advance as required.

Decision-making at the Dragons’ Den

- 4.3.14 In relation to assessing the bids at the Dragons’ Den session, Dragons were provided with a scoring criteria but also used their ‘professional opinion and personal integrity’ to come to a consensus through a ‘show of hands’ to help rule bids ‘in’ or ‘out’.
- 4.3.15 All stakeholders involved in the Dragons’ Den session agreed that the right outcome was achieved.

What worked well?

- All participants enjoyed the sessions;
- All parties were satisfied with the outcomes from this stage.

What could be improved?

- More formal approach to scoring;
- Bidders would have liked a slightly longer session and more preparation time.

Outcomes and Feedback

Core Evaluation Questions:

Bidders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Were the timescales and channels for communicating outcomes appropriate? •How effective were communications between different parties?

Stakeholders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Did the competition process result in the right outcome? •To what extent are you satisfied that the final bids met the aims of the LL2 Programme? •Were feedback and outcomes provided in a timely and meaningful manner?

4.3.16 Bidders and stakeholders expressed frustration at the delays in communicating outcomes to both successful and unsuccessful bidders at shortlisting stage. It was accepted, in particular by stakeholders, that this was due to unavoidable DfT / ministerial sign-offs required, and was outside of the control of ADEPT.

4.3.17 Following initial shortlisting, all bidders received written feedback on their bids. This was only intended to be shared with bidders who were unsuccessful at this stage, but due to a communication mix-up, all bidders received their feedback, with some incorrectly being told they were unsuccessful, although this was resolved immediately.

4.3.18 All bidders and in particular their partners (who may have been reliant on their lead bidders to pass on information) expressed disappointment in the timeliness in communications following the Dragons’ Den. *“The biggest disappoint of the whole process was the way it went after the Dragons’ Den presentation” [Bidder]*

4.3.19 One bidder expressed some sympathy with this: *“hiccups and political elements observed through the process were expected as a result of having DfT fund the process”.*

4.3.20 Stakeholders were less impacted by the delays in notification of outcomes, but did share the frustrations expressed by bidders. The Programme Management Team felt this delay didn’t result in wasted time, as it gave the time to progress communications and project management aspects.

“If we could have told them sooner, we would have done... It made me very uncomfortable that we couldn’t tell them where we had got to. It really did.” [Programme Management Team]

4.3.21 There is an ambition for unsuccessful bidders to ‘shadow’ successful bids as “fast followers”, and as of May 2023, this process is expected to be signed-off by the Commissioning Board in June.

What worked well?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Ambition for 'fast followers' for unsuccessful bidders.

What could be improved?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Improved communication with bidders; •More timely notification of outcomes.

4.4 After the Competition

Following ministerial approval, some successful Live Labs were asked to consolidate their offer with another bidder, and / or re-budget their project. Following this, a kick-off meeting launched the start of the Mobilisation Phase, where each project had three months to formalise their Strategic Business Cases.

Consolidation and Rescoping

Core Evaluation Questions:

Bidders	Stakeholders
<ul style="list-style-type: none">•What was the process (if applicable) for rescoping your bid/collaborating with other Live Labs? How well did this work?•How effective were communications between different parties?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Were the arrangements for change control appropriate?

- 4.4.1 The seven successful Live Labs were consolidated into four connected themes, where topics and expertise aligned. These bidders had to go through a process of rescoping their Live Lab and associated budget.
- 4.4.2 Some stakeholders expressed concern as to whether bidders were aware that this was a possibility. All agreed it would have been difficult to do the consolidation at an earlier stage. During initial discussions, it would have been too resource intensive to assist with collaborating, and by developing bids independently, the strengths of each could be brought together to create an even stronger offer and expertise.
- 4.4.3 In terms of budget, a bidder expressed a concern that the reduction of budget risked reducing the strengths of the bids, and two noted they didn't receive any formal guidance on cutting down their budget; although another felt it was *"all very intuitive [...] we had to work it out ourselves"* but had concerns *"there was an expectation that we would still deliver the same outputs for a reduced cost"* [Bidder].

What worked well?	What could be improved?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Consolidating successful bids into 'themes' brought together the 'best' of different bids.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Bidders were not all aware that consolidation and rebudgeting were a possibility, and would have liked to be informed earlier.

Mobilisation

Core Evaluation Questions:

Bidders	Stakeholders
<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Has the information and support provided been sufficient to progress your Business Case?•Are the timescales sufficient to get systems, processes and teams in place?•What about legal, procurement and contractual details?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•How well has the mobilisation phase worked?

- 4.4.4 The funded mobilisation phase began with an online kick-off meeting in January 2023, attended by all successful Live Labs, who had an opportunity to share their plans with the other teams and gave the opportunity for the Programme Management Team to introduce the mobilisation phase.
- 4.4.5 Despite the ‘funded mobilisation’ phase described in the Prospectus and the 1:1 calls, nearly all bidders and partners engaged with during this process evaluation felt the requirements for this were not communicated clearly enough to them, with some different perceptions taken from the terminology ‘mobilisation’ verses ‘Strategic Outline Business Case’; *“With hindsight I don't think the need for an OBC was communicated at the outset (before bidding), it would have been really useful to know that this was expected (and funded) during the mobilisation period” [Bidder]*.
- 4.4.6 Those that were participating in the mobilisation phase agreed that this phase was more *“involved”* than they anticipated. However, the Programme Management Team noted that the process has been necessary and has resulted in seven robust Live Lab projects.
- 4.4.7 There remained an element of frustration around the perceived uncertainties of timescales, which bidders stated has impacted wider aspects of the projects such as maintaining partner relationships.

What worked well?	What could be improved?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">•The kick-off session was received positively by stakeholders and bidders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Not all bidders were aware of this stage, and would have liked to be informed earlier.•Clarity of terminology regarding 'mobilisation phase' vs 'Strategic Outline Business Case' preparation.

4.5 Overall Views

Core Evaluation Questions:

Bidders	Stakeholders
<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Overall, what could have been improved about the Competition phase?•Were you overall satisfied that the bidding process was fair and appropriate?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Did the competition process result in the right outcome?•Overall, what could have been improved about the Competition phase?•Were you overall satisfied that the bidding process was fair and appropriate?

Overall outcomes

- 4.5.1 All stakeholders were satisfied with the overall outcomes of the competition, in terms of the breadth and depth of Live Labs proceeding to the mobilisation stage, and felt that the stages of the competition worked well and were appropriate.

*“On the whole, there was consensus on who was to go through and who shouldn't”
[Programme Management Team]*

- 4.5.2 All bidders, regardless of being successful or unsuccessful, were keen to continue to engage with this project and future projects and were, on the whole, content with the outcomes.

The Competition

- 4.5.3 Respondents were asked about their overall views on the extent to which the competition was fair. Most were generally positive in their feedback, noting that it was fairly straightforward, the instructions were clear and reflected the innovative nature of the work.

“It was a fairly simple bid procedure which was appreciated. The bid document was easy to follow and the timescales were clear” [Bidder]

- 4.5.4 Conversely, a number of bidders described the process as being onerous and resource intensive.

- 4.5.5 More generally, the core improvements reflected by bidders included more transparency over scoring, evaluation and next stages, and improved communication of outcomes and feedback.

5. CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Summary of Findings

- 5.1.1 The majority of those involved in the process agreed the Prospectus was **appropriate and fit for purpose**. A small number felt it could have been a bit more specific in some areas, such as budget.
- 5.1.2 Nearly all bidders noted that **the evaluation and scoring criteria had not been set out to them**, and this was observed through the process of reviewing bids, queries and documentation. Some felt the bidding process was easy and straightforward; others found it onerous.
- 5.1.3 All stakeholders agreed that **the 1:1 discussions between the Programme Management Team and bidders were an appropriate forum in which to offer them support** through the bidding stage, but many did recognise there was a lot of overlap in queries and/or different information shared with different bidders, as such a more clearly communicated and regularly updated **FAQ** or similar would have been appreciated. From reviewing bids and materials, more information on 'how to bid' would have made communications more efficient, and about 'next steps' for the competition.
- 5.1.4 Most bidders agreed **the timescales for submitting their bid were tight**; but many were aware of the competition in advance and had begun preparations. A number of stakeholders were dissatisfied that the competition ran over the summer holiday period, and suggested a 12-week window may have been better, however, it was generally accepted that this was unavoidable and preferable to delaying the programme as a whole.
- 5.1.5 Nearly all stakeholders were **satisfied with the scope of bids received**, both in terms of volume, topics and geographic spread, and this was also observed through the review of bids.
- 5.1.6 Bidders felt they did **not receive enough notice for the Dragons' Den session** (although it should be noted that the date was set out in the Prospectus) and felt that they would have liked **longer for the Q&A**.
- 5.1.7 Those involved in managing and scoring the Dragons' Den were happy with the session, with two stakeholders suggesting a **more formalised record of scores and outcomes would have been more robust**. However, stakeholders were satisfied with the overall outcome.
- 5.1.8 Most involved in the Dragons' Den were satisfied with the session being held online, but some recognised **it lacked some potentially valuable 'human interaction'**.
- 5.1.9 All bidders were **frustrated by the delays and mix-ups in notification of outcomes**. Similarly, there were frustrations around the level of funding allocated and the amount of resource time needed for the business case stage. Stakeholders shared the frustrations but were bound by the timings of DfT and ministerial sign offs.
- 5.1.10 As a whole, bidders and stakeholders were satisfied with the outcomes of the competition and felt it was appropriate and fit-for-purpose.

5.2 Recommendations

- 5.2.1 Drawing together the findings from all stages of the Process Evaluation for the competition phase, the key findings for each stage of the Competition are outlined below, alongside suggested actions to address the findings of the evaluation.

Table 4. Suggested actions arising from feedback

Stage	What Stakeholders / Bidders Said	Action
Bid Stage	The bid review noted inconsistencies across presentation of budget and costs	Provide more prescriptive guidance on the presentation of budget and costs, such as a template tables or details of cost breakdowns required.
Bid Stage	Bidders expressed frustration about delays and miscommunications	Provide additional information on 'next steps' such as expected timings for notification of outcomes and feedback, the mobilisation stage, subject to the necessary sign-offs.
Bid Stage	Answering duplicate queries in 1:1 sessions and email was resource intensive	Offer a live/updated 'FAQ' or 'Clarification Questions' on the ADEPT website Develop a common 'Agenda' for 1:1 sessions.
Bid Stage	<i>"We didn't know what carried the most weight in terms of scoring and emphasis" [Bidder]</i>	Communicate Evaluation / Assessment Criteria in Prospectus
Bid Stage	Not all bidders participated in 1:1 sessions	Invite 'Expressions of Interest / Intentions to Bid' upon launch of Prospectus and require bidders to book a 1-1 slot
Bid Stage	Bidders took differing approaches to presenting key information such as costs, making ease of comparability more difficult	Provide fixed formats for key aspects of bids.
Bid Stage	Both bidders and stakeholders felt that the timing and length of bid preparation phase was not optimal	Consider a 12-week bidding period, in particular if encompassing Summer or Christmas time; Spring or Autumn would be optimal.
Shortlisting	<i>"We didn't know where we stood, and there was no notification whatsoever, and I thought that was really poor" [Bidder]"</i>	Ensure timely and consistent notification of outcomes, and ensure communications are sent to agreed team members (leads and partners as required).
Dragons' Den	Final assessment was not formally recorded	Maintain systematic records of scoring and feedback
Dragons' Den	Stakeholders noted they missed the human interaction and informal discussions though the online session	Facilitate informal sessions with Programme Management Team and Dragons before and after pitches; or Programme Management Team and Dragons to attend in person in future

Stage	What Stakeholders / Bidders Said	Action
		with bidding teams optionally online or in person.
Dragons' Den	Some stakeholders and bidders felt a longer pitch/Q&A would have been useful	Consider extending presentation to 20 minutes with 20 minutes Q&A
Consolidation and Rescoping	Some bidders and stakeholders expressed dissatisfaction in this process	Ensure it is communicated at an early stage that this may be a requirement following success of a bid.
Mobilisation	<i>"With hindsight I don't think the need for an OBC was communicated at the outset (before bidding), it would have been really useful to know that this was expected (and funded) during the mobilisation period"</i>	Review terminology; consider referring to mobilisation stage as 'Strategic Outline Business Case' stage in future with mobilisation to follow this, and more information set out in the Prospectus on this.
General	During the Process Evaluation, not all those contacted were aware that their contact details would be used for further follow-up.	Clearer information on how the contact details provided in the bid documents will be used, and/or request contact details only for project leads. Template to include link to Privacy Notice and to ensure it is clearly set out who the core team contacts are.

5.3 Competition Format

5.3.1 The overall competition process for Live Labs 2 was well received, and it was agreed that the outcomes were positive. However, a few challenges emerged with some aspects of the competition. Building on the recommendations outlined in Section 5.2 above, below is a suggested 'blueprint' for future competition, maintaining the overall format but adding and amending certain elements to overcome the challenges which arose previously; however, it is noted that the resourcing constraints may limit the feasibility of some of these suggested steps.

Table 5. Suggested Competition Format

Timescale	Stage	Activities
Pre-Launch	Competition Design	Develop Prospectus and Template to include fixed formats for core elements such as Pricing, as well as including evaluation/scoring criteria, key dates/next steps.
Week 1	Competition Launch	Publish Prospectus (Bid Pack and Template);
		Host Launch Event(s); online or in-person on a regional basis;

Timescale	Stage	Activities
		Invite 'Expressions of Interest' from those that intend to bid and to book 1:1 timeslot;
Week 2-13	Competition Phase	<p>12 week bidding period (Spring or Autumn Launch); reducing to 10 weeks if not encompassing August or Christmas period.</p> <p>Encourage all bidders to participate in a 1:1 sessions covering core topics to ensure consistent information is provided and shared.</p> <p>Where appropriate, publish general FAQs resulting from 1:1 sessions, launch event and email queries.</p>
Week 14-18	Initial Funder	Shortlisting: Initial shortlisting carried out by funders to the agreed evaluation/scoring criteria
Week 19	Initial Outcomes	Shortlisting: Communicate outcomes and feedback to agreed bidding team members
		Inform shortlisted bidders of the format and requirements for the Dragons' Den /panel session
Week 22	Final Shortlisting: Panel Session	Host 'Dragons' Den' session with Programme Management Team/Dragons' attending in person and bidding teams optionally online.
		Presentations to be up to 20 minutes, with up to 20 minutes of Q&A
Week 23	Final Outcomes	Shortlisting: Communicate outcomes and feedback to agreed bidding team members
Week 24-30	Ministerial Sign Off	
Week 30 - 34	Consolidations Rescoping	/ Iterative and transparent approach
Week 34-40	Strategic Business Case Stage	Outline <p>Launch Event</p> <p>Interim SOBC submission</p> <p>Communities of Practise/Lessons Learnt Sessions for sharing successes and challenges</p> <p>Kick off of 'fast followers' initiative.</p>
Week 40+	Mobilisation	Live Lab Projects start

5.4 Alternative Considerations

5.4.1 During the Evaluation, a number of alternative steps to the Competition process emerged, which could be considered in future. These are provided for information only, not taking account of the feasibility of implementing such steps. These included:

- Launching the Competition with a conference-style session, to introduce the Competition, allow for shared Q&A, and include some case studies from previous successful Live Lab projects.
- As outlined above, requiring bidders to submit an early, formal 'Expression of Interest' / 'Notification of Intent to Bid' and to book a 1:1 timeslot within the first 4 weeks of the Competition Phase, to give the Programme Management Team an early indication of the volume and scope of bids. Following these 1:1s, the FAQs should be published and shared.
- Consider revising the shortlisting stages; the first stage being a 10-minute 'elevator pitch' (either written or to a panel) which, if successful, allows bidders i.e. 10-15 to progress to the next stage of the Competition and develop a full bid. This may encourage a larger pool of 'pitches' (first stage bids), due to the reduced resource input, and give earlier opportunities for consolidation, but may risk 'drop outs' if feasibility issues arise during development of bids.
- Facilitating 'Communities of Practice' style sessions throughout all stages of the Competition, to share common questions and challenges, as well as continuing 1:1 sessions held in confidence.

5.5 Next Steps

5.5.1 ADEPT will use this report to inform the delivery of the Live Labs 2 programme, as well as future competitions in the industry. The Process Evaluation will be further extended to cover the delivery and legacy stages of Live Labs 2, alongside impact and value for money evaluation of the programme.

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