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Place:

Nicola Morelli, Professor MSO
Department of AD:MT
Aalborg University
Rendsburggade 14, 9000, Aalborg, Denmark
Coordinator of the Open4Citizens (O4C)
Project: www.open4citizens.eu

Date:

Dear Prof Morelli,

We welcome the opportunity to become a founding member of the European Network of OpenDataLabs (henceforth “ENODL”) aiming to reach approximately 15 members before the end of the year in the EU and Associated States (henceforth “Europe”). We understand there is a common desire to share existing know-how in the domains of Open Data, Hackathons and Urban Public Services and the will to proceed expeditiously with a launching event of ENODL before mid 2018 in a European location. We are also prepared to move quickly in that direction and believe we are well suited to do so, despite the fact that we may have never used the term OpenDataLab (ODL) to identify our activities in the domain at hand. This letter summarizes our understanding of the scope and limits of our prospective collaboration.

1. Structure of the Network

ENODL will be a not for profit association established under the Belgian law (“AISBL”) in order to ensure the limited liability of all participating entities. Every member will be part of the association’s governance with equal rights. Indicatively no specific attempt will be made at creating a “heavy” organisation with tangible and intangible assets, equipment, staff, etc. and the Brussels seat will be located at the premises of a sister association, virtually free of charge, so that the financial requirements and the resulting membership fees will be kept at the very minimum. Initially the University of Aalborg will host the secretariat of the association and its official website, while the internal functioning and the external actions of ENODL will depend on the individual plans of its members and the respective self-funding capacities.

2. Definitive membership agreement

The signature of the membership agreement will take place before mid-2018 during the official launching event of ENODL subject to the approval, by the respective governing bodies of the University of Aalborg and of our own organisation, of the definitive statutory documents of the AISBL that will include, among other things, the definition of a membership fee, functioning rules of all the ruling bodies, and an outline of the vision, mission, operations, and financial conditions of the association. Until that time, the signature of this letter of intent does not constitute any binding commitment from either side.

3. Common goals and activities

What follows is a non-exhaustive list of goals and activities that have brought the parties close to each other letting them realise the importance of performing a common work within the scope of the forthcoming ENODL in Europe:

- An ecosystem for public service co-creation
 - Though it may also be a facility for developing application prototypes or building mock-ups and concepts, the main goal for an OpenDataLab is to be a space for experimenting new public services at the intersection of people and data.
 - That is why we plan to ensure a wide availability of tools and methods for creativity and innovation, first and foremost the O4C hackathon model. Basically, the O4C hackathon gives you a workflow, tools, processes and knowledge for developing new and innovative public services, based on open data, with the active contribution of non-IT savvy citizens and the support of expert service designers. The direct involvement of citizens would make the hackathon results much more likely to be taken up, therefore facilitating the integration and scaling up of the new services.
 - This ecosystem is therefore a perfect space for experimenting how the use of open (and big) data as well as digital technologies can influence the development of open data based solutions for Smart Cities and Communities. Which means, ultimately, that prototypes and applications are indeed developed within an OpenDataLab, but with a focus on the co-creation processes (and their effects) rather than on the objects to be innovated (such as the existing public service systems or community rules and institutions).
 - Also for this reason, it is essential to identify, in each context in which the OpenDataLab operates, the relevant actors, their needs, and the knowledge and

competencies that could contribute to the development of new open data based public services.

- Part of a network
 - Currently, five OpenDataLabs are operating in the cities of Barcelona, Copenhagen, Karlstad, Milan, and Rotterdam. These will be the first nodes of what we aim to create as a global network, akin to the FabLabs movement.
 - All nodes will share the same set of principles (notably expressed by means of a common Charter), tools and processes, centred on the O4C hackathon model (although local experimentations are welcome). This in order to enable any local project to be easily transferred and replicated in any other node of the network.
 - The O4C Platform developed by Datapoces in Denmark will be supportive of this networking aspect by offering communication and interaction facilities. For instance, the FabLabs movement has a videoconferencing system available (at <http://mcs.cba.mit.edu/18.85.8.46>) that links all the nodes, where questions can be asked and projects and collaborations more easily get started.
- Bridging two communities
 - Every OpenDataLab is actually a bridge of two communities: *the local community*, where its operations are developed and finalised, and the *global community* of all OpenDataLabs in the (European or global) network. On one side, the OpenDataLab leverages the extended participation of local citizens sharing its aims, although with many different goals and purposes, fostering the collaboration amongst them and between them and the people working (part/full time) in the OpenDataLab.
 - Like several FabLabs or maker spaces, the OpenDataLab will represent an opportunity for these citizens to manage the existing open datasets as a common resource and possibly to promote the opening of new public data sets (or increase the demand for this) or even to organise the crowdsourced generation of data. Thus, the OpenDataLab will become a Public Innovation Place that realizes community building, support local initiatives and aggregate human resources around specific problems or opportunities.
 - On the other side, existing OpenDataLabs will also form a community, which will leverage the continuous exchanges of information and collaborations amongst its

members: therefore, it will be important to create opportunities to visit other OpenDataLabs, for instance through a yearly global meeting (the first to be held in a central location, before Summer 2018) and a number of local meetings (for instance, side events to local conferences and workshops organised by the O4C consortium partners during the second cycle of project hackathons). By so doing, critical knowledge can be shared within the community and new ideas and solutions become more widespread and find broader take-up and implementation.

- Using a dedicated platform
 - The platform now under development in the context of the O4C project will be a facilitation tool for organizing data related hackathons. It will contain different tools (from educational and theoretical to practical ones) in order to help sharpen data understanding in esp. not-IT-savvy participants. It will serve the hackathon organizers by empowering them to control the overall process of their event and also offering a set of features and tools for participants to play with data.
 - After the end of the O4C project period, in June 2018, this platform will be made (freely) available to current and new OpenDataLabs in order to promote the development of the community and facilitate work and collaboration among the network nodes.
- With a Service design approach
 - Beside tools and datasets, people expect also to gain access to specific knowledge, experience and research abilities in the OpenDataLab, particularly on the topic of service design.
 - The service design knowledge will be synthesised in the Hackathon Starter Kit and in the tools and methods suggested in the Hackathon handbook (outcomes of the O4C project). Such tools consist of cards, design process descriptions, templates and whatever can be used to facilitate the co-design activities within communities or experts, that are otherwise not involved in collaborative design processes.
 - Alongside the delivery of open data driven solutions, however, additional benefits can be identified in the reinforcement of a local community of interest and in the diffusion of domain related and thematic knowledge amongst the participants and external observers - the most likely actors to step into a subsequent edition of the hackathon itself.

- The above representation expresses the essence of the OpenDataLab innovation potential both at local community level - as enabler of public service co-creation by non-IT-savvy citizens - and in perspective, at global network level - as the common and joint output of initiatives and collaborations by all the nodes of the ENODL.
- With educational and training purposes
 - Capacity building of OpenDataLabs participants is connatural to all planned activities. Targets of this effort can be both the people working inside them and those attracted from time to time by some of their initiatives. For instance, offering access to Open Data has indeed a training or capacity building component, same goes for public service co-creation via O4C hackathons, using service design tools, methodologies and processes. Ultimately, education to citizenship can be said to be the goal of an OpenDataLab.
 - All of the above eminently relates to the overarching aim of the Open4Citizens project, which is about bridging the gap between the potential offered by Open Data and the capacity of citizens to understand and exploit such potential.
 - For what we have learnt across the O4C project pilots, the use that non-IT-savvy citizens can make of available data remains conditional on at least three requirements:
 - An increased awareness of the opportunities offered by data availability;
 - A broader diffusion of creative (design thinking) capabilities within the general public; and
 - The cultivation of technical skills within the population, to help them ideate and co-create new applications based on the datasets (that could be) made available by their owners.
- Not a franchising, but with some elements in common
 - OpenDataLabs are not adopting a standard franchising blueprint. There is not even a brand book or guidelines to follow in order to set up an OpenDataLab "franchise". Which means, as a consequence, that each OpenDataLab can and will be a bit different from all the other ones, specifically because it reflects the local conditions, with all the degrees of freedom that this may bring with it (and which will be one of the strongest points in favour of becoming a member of the ENODL, namely to share and gain from sharing the differences rather than the common points).

- This has also something to do with sustainability related aspects: for sure there will be many different formats and business models, but in principle, being an OpenDataLab will not constraint to the adoption of any strict organizational or business model.
- Aiming for sustainability
 - Whether an OpenDataLab is initiated by an existing institution (be it public or private) that funds its functioning, or starts independently, it always brings some costs, in the sense that there can be rents, salaries, external suppliers and partners to be paid, equipment to buy or replace, and everything has to be managed in such a way to reach break-even at least.
 - Irrespective of whether it takes money directly or indirectly through some sponsoring institution, or is really and totally self-funded, an OpenDataLab must be financially sustainable in order to last.
 - In the end, starting from an existing institution to build one just means having somebody who provides the cash for starting the business; it shouldn't be thought of as an inevitable requirement or a constriction.
 - There is still a lot of experimentation and work to do on developing proper business models for OpenDataLabs (especially when started within an institution, there is the tendency to care less about the business model and the revenues, which is something we would like to avoid), but this perspective must be adopted in order to develop a good OpenDataLab.

4. Contact persons

The parties identify the following contact persons for the fulfilment of next steps:

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Non-binding signature

This letter is nonbinding and constitutes an indication of intent only and creates no liability or obligation of any nature whatsoever among the parties hereto with respect to any contemplated transaction or any other matter or action described or referred to herein. Legally binding obligations with respect to the contemplated transaction will only arise upon execution of a definitive membership agreement as stipulated in point 2 above.

If the foregoing is satisfactory, please indicate your agreement with the foregoing by countersigning a copy of this letter and returning it to our attention. We look forward to proceeding together on this transaction.



Nicola Morelli

Professor MSO

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Place: _____ Date: _____