

THE LABS RESULTS IN:

NORTH WEST. IT

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OBSERVATORY ON THE INNOVATIVE CAPABILITIES IN SMES (*)

	N. SESSIONS	N. PARTICIPANTS	AIMS	ACHIEVEMENTS
Labs for SMEs	6	8 (professionals in innovative businesses and services)	To start up an observatory activity on a target group of SMEs in a specific geographic area, in order to help them to accelerate own innovative processes and to increase their competitiveness.	A well integrated group of people with different professional backgrounds A self training experience oriented to set up a community of practice A shared approach on innovative capabilities in SMEs

(*) Labs for 2nd tier facilitators: scheduled for September 2008

TOOLS AND METHODS	LABS FOR SMES
Main tools used	Planning and problem solving tools SWOT analysis To-do minutes Visualisation Moderation Brainstorming

Overall evaluation on Labs for SMEs

Briefing and preparation: central aspects:

- Informal participants' feedbacks of previous sessions
- Ad personam communications with participants, in general and specifically with potential ones
- Agenda diffused by email

Achievements in terms of: contents and methods

Plan work on launching the Observatory

Website developed: www.nordovestinnovazione.it

To-do minutes

Moderation, visualisation, brainstorming

Narration

The preparation phase was sufficiently adequate to each session aims

The group of promoters was well sounded and did not suffer from new entries

The drawing up of the map of capabilities in innovative SMEs (Pentacolo dell'innovazione) was made in cooperation and was used by the group for conceiving innovation in an integrated (holistic) way

The group adjusted its pace to realistic aims (in other words: what can we do with our forces, why and how and by when)

To be a self-directed group (autonomous and concrete) was its way to express its own will to play an innovative approach to help SMEs in their growth and networking expectations

Personal feedback

The Lab experience has been lived by the group (community) members with high expectations on sharing practice and information. Networking was positive.

Facilitators helped the group to be anchored to concrete items and not to lose themselves in unstructured communication.

Visualisation has been fundamental as well as prioritising and establishing to-do plans

Lessons learned and recommendations

- Innovation is not just a technical word. It is a red thread that links many aspects of an enterprise, including HR
- Innovation has a training meaning when referred to action learning
- Visualisation and mapping need adequate supports
- To agree own-done outputs in the group is a way to reinforce a community in progress
- Nothing has to be given for granted even from senior teachers/trainers. Expertise in training and in process management are essential as well as competence in project designing and planning
- The Observatory was a self training experience for the 1st tier facilitators
- Reflecting on workshops (evaluation) to be done also in a more formal way
- Preliminary phase of sensibilisation is essential and needs time and concentration
- Chairing and moderating a meeting are different tasks
- Facilitator's flexibility to adapt AL method to specific context is an important asset