

About this document

Introduction



This document illustrates the innovation strategy of Wikimedia Switzerland (WMCH) for the four years 2022-2026. It is conceptually part of the broader WMCH strategy for this period. This innovation strategy was developed between January 2022 and June 2022 supported by an external consultant. After a kick-off workshop with the consultant, its development included a survey addressed to the community using the newsletter and a banner followed by a workshop with four experts.

This strategy is quite new in the movement because the Wikimedia affiliates don't have a programme of innovation to take inspiration or there are not past experiences to consider, and the same Wikimedia Foundation is restructuring its own tech department.

Scope



The scope of this strategy focuses on innovation in relation to internal activities also carried out by other programmes of Wikimedia CH and external activities to Wikimedia CH aimed primarily at innovation.

Considering Wikimedia CH as part of a wider movement, this strategy also considers the connections with other entities in the movement, primarily chapters, user groups and Wikimedia Foundation, but also volunteers and Wikimedia communities and specifically the community tech¹ which is one of the wider Wikimedia communities.

This is the triple direction of this programme:



Relationships with other Wikimedia CH programmes (GLAM, education, community, etc.);



Relationships with Wikimedia movement (chapters, user groups, tech community, etc.);



Specific projects of the Innovation programmes mainly connected with partners not related to the Wikimedia movement.

¹ https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Community_Tech

By explicitly creating a space for experimentation and innovation, Wikimedia CH allows for a process of continuous, collective learning to find ways in which to serve our mission both within Switzerland and within the greater Wikimedia Movement to help the diffusion of knowledge and learning².

The aim of the programme is to collaborate with other programmes to bring an innovative push within the various areas also in consideration that innovation is an enabler for Wikimedia CH strategy but in the same way to bring innovation in general to the movement to deserve the high demand of innovation, mainly focused on digital and technological innovation.

In the first case the activities will be agreed and carried out with the leaders/managers of the other programmes, while in the second case the innovation program will continue to incubate the projects until they are mature enough to bring value to the programmes. The process of incubation is recurrent because activities can enter again in the incubator for review or re-engineering to keep the products or the models always up to date.

In this case, the innovation programme will have an area of design, creation and experimentation and another area of awareness and improvement.

Besides these two areas there will be some permanent projects mainly requiring a continuous engagement by the innovation programmes or because some projects can be retained like pilot projects to experiment new models or ideas.

A special relationship is with IT and technology because the innovation is mainly associated to "digital" innovation and to digital change. Having a good IT infrastructure and a well-defined IT strategy will help to support the Innovation programme. The changes in IT certainly have a strong impact on innovation more than on other programmes for which the collaboration between the two departments is very close and often overlaps.



In order to set the stage for the whole document, the first section after this short introduction provides a brief overview of the innovation also connected to the Wikimedia movement including the results of the survey executed between 23th February and 8th March 2022.

Following, the vision of this innovation strategy is synthetically expressed.

² Wikimedia CH 5-year strategy (2022-2026), 14 February 2022

³ Wikimedia CH 5-year strategy (2022-2026), 14 February 2022

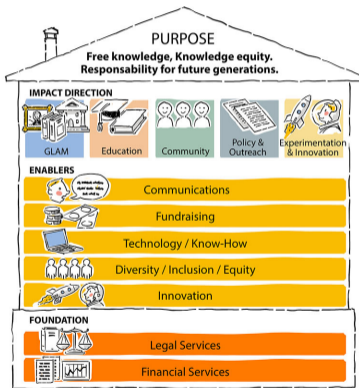
⁴ Wikimedia CH 5-year strategy (2022-2026), 14 February 2022

⁵ <https://www.wikimedia.de/unlock/>



Wikimedia CH strategy 2022-2026

The new impact direction of Wikimedia CH in terms of innovation aims to create a dedicated space for experimentation and innovation that helps us be a learning organisation, anticipate and address societal changes and focus on supporting our core purpose. We will work to create a safe space and framework for experimentation and bold ideas while encouraging the exchange of knowledge in an accessible, non-judgemental way⁶.



⁶ 5 years strategy of Wikimedia CH – Management summary

The creation of this space is part of strategy of Wikimedia CH that identifies this space in an external opportunity for "initiating ideas and providing room for experimental questions". How this space should act is also included in the external opportunities in the Wikimedia CH strategy because "activities that have already produced impact should be scaled up, not in terms of increasing the number of activities but in increasing impact. These activities include advocacy and policy work, GLAM processes, strategy- and solution-based tools and a variety of hackathons and ateliers".

In a volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous environment Wikimedia CH embraces "the concept of continuous learning and exchange and provide space for experimentation as well as innovative/creative ideas using new tools and models in various focus areas (i.e. climate, education, GLAM, etc.)" in the speed at which things change is ever-increasing, and an organisation may find itself caught in a reactionary mode. "Being open-minded, flexible, creative, and proactive are the keys to success. Hence, it is crucial to provide a space in which failure and learning are invited".

Wikimedia CH strategy 2022-2026: the aim and the goals

The aim of the Wikimedia CH strategy for 2022 to 2026 is to "create space and a framework to be a learning organisation, anticipate societal changes with room for experimentation and innovation and focus on supporting our core purpose".



The keywords are:



Be a learning organisation.



Anticipate social changes



Support experimentation and innovation



Supporting core purpose

The Way forward is to:



Create a safe Innovation Lab for bold, unconventional or silly ideas.



Enable experimentation and innovation with the Innovation Lab or other enablers.



Assess future trends, make Wikimedia CH future-ready and contribute to the same readiness for the global Wikimedia Movement.



Support the development of technological solutions and new models.



Create room for experimentation.



Develop concepts of new tools to improve accessibility, equity and knowledge.



Ensure that the "space" is accessible to and benefits the entire Movement.



Exchange knowledge and learn innovative models and tools.

Climate change could become a good first candidate for this "space".

The target for 2026 are based to find solutions, improve, and implement innovative ways forward and propose and share these lessons learnt with the wider Wikiverse.

"This work includes creating a pool of technologically relevant partners and proposing new solutions to other selected partners. Wikimedia CH aligns itself with the Movement's 2030 Strategy looking into developing new software functionalities for its projects; if possible, better integrating various tools in the editing experience; establishing partnerships with other free knowledge projects; and improving its policies to include more diverse knowledge domains. The overall aim, of course, is to deliver knowledge as a service for all".

Wikimedia CH strategy 2022-2026: innovation as enabler

It is possible to see Innovation as impact direction but also as enabler. In this case the aim is to "leverage Wikimedia CH's (and Switzerland's) capacity and expertise to improve innovation and to embrace a culture of experimentation and learning for all areas as one of our key enablers. We want to be open to experimenting with new models and tools in every aspect of our work, not limited to IT only. This openness and creativity will further align Wikimedia CH's programmes and undertakings with real needs."

The way forward is to:



Implement
an Innovation Lab



Define the organisation
and structure



Define the service
to support other
programmes



Select projects
to support



Ensure learning/sharing
from other chapters



Reach out to
other chapters

Definition of innovation: the community survey

To identify clearly the concept of innovation as perceived in Wikimedia movement, Wikimedia CH submitted a survey to the community from 23th February to 8th March which received 263 answers. In this short survey the goal was to define the meaning of "Innovation" in Wikimedia movement.

Innovation can have several interpretations. Among these interpretations are mainly the following:



Having
an idea



Executing
an idea



Addresses
a real challenge



Adding
a value



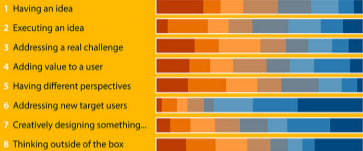
Different
perspective

This is the result:



Rank Options

First choice Last choice

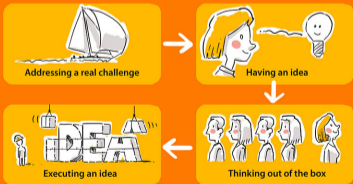


This is the ranking:

- 1st choice: having an idea (60 answers);
- 2nd choice: executing an idea (47 answers);
- 3rd choice: addressing a real challenge (53 answers);
- 4th choice: Having different perspective and thinking out of the box.

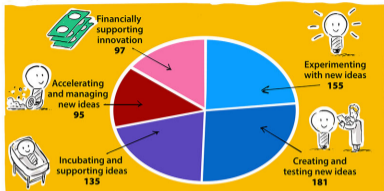


This can be considered the relationships between the 4 options:



³<https://www.ideatovalue.com/inno/nickskillcorn/2016/03/innovation-15-experts-share-innovation-definition/>

Interesting the second question about the aspects to be included in this innovation programme where creating and testing ideas is predominant more than only experimenting with the possibility to incubate and to support these new ideas not necessarily with financial support.



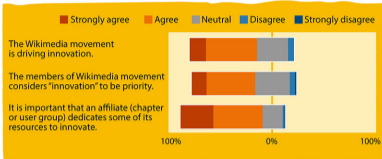
In this case is clear that the directions are two:

- Incubate new ideas during the whole lifecycle;
- Incubate and support ideas (not necessarily new but also about refreshing or regenerating previous ideas).

About the challenges of the Innovation programme there are several topics presented by the community that can be grouped in some areas:

-  - Climate change and sustainability;
-  - Usability and simplification of the user interface of Wikimedia projects;
-  - Accessibility and inclusiveness;
-  - Simplified content for different target of users;
-  - More open and user friendly community;
-  - Fake news and quality of the content;
-  - Clear rules to define projects and ideas.

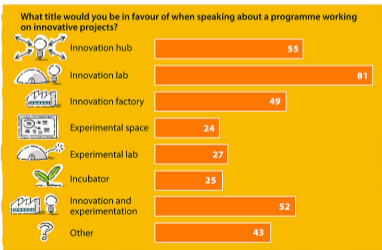
Important is the concept that users identify frequently Wikimedia with Wikipedia and consider this programme also like a programme of Innovation for the whole movement. Interesting at that point the question about innovation in the movement:



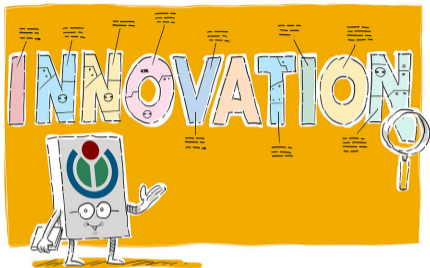
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Definition of innovation: the experts' review

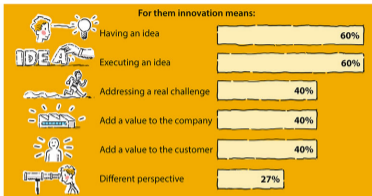


The session done with experts gave additional inputs that can be summarized like that.

- What is important is the identification of problems to solve. Wikimedia CH should limit this gap and identify the best solutions to the problems. This is the model of hackathons for instance where are proposed challenges which are problems.
- Listen to people and to "actual" users. If we focus on what we already know, we risk to don't focus in what is unknown.
- Some people can have good ideas to solve a problem but not the technology to realize the solution or they have great ideas but not the focus on the problems.
- We already see innovation in Wikimedia projects and Wikimedia CH can help to accelerate what is already present. In this case Wikimedia CH can operate also in terms of endorsement to help existing solutions.
- Multi-year perspective to have an efficient innovation.

Definition of innovation: opinion of CEOs and experts

More words from different CEOs about innovation are helpful to close the circle⁹. Interesting the concept that behind these interviews conducted in 2016 and in the 2022 there is the need to have a diverse opinion combining male and female opinions.



Interesting the aspect that the first three position are the same of the community survey while the fourth point is different because the community selected more the different perspective than adding a value to the company or to the customer. Normal in a not-for-profit organization.

Important is the separation between innovation and creativity (i.e. collection of ideas) or invention.

The question about the missed actions to support innovation presents some interesting feedbacks.

In this case it's clear that what is the main risk is to don't put the required level of support. Coming up with ideas is relatively easy, fast, and cheap, but then those ideas need to be executed. This is where companies often fail, by not providing the required level of time and budget to take a rough idea, refine it, experiment on it, and finally turn it into a real solution. If the resources are low, the level of mediocrity in a solution is around the corner. At the same time the concept of multi-year project is always missed because it's not sufficient to have a version 1 of a product to have an innovation, because this is only the first step.

Sometimes the energy is used to have more and more ideas and that causes more noise, while the best is to focus only on the right ideas.

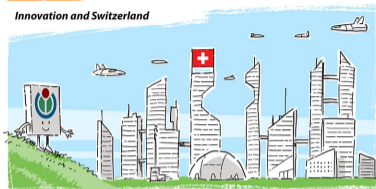
In this case it's crucial to expand the culture of innovation to train people about the importance of innovation and about the right resources to use. In this case it is stressed that innovation is not only related to a product, but it's also related to structure and to company itself.

A point that comes up is that the people working in innovation should be in a psychologically safe environment where is possible to make mistakes and learn from both doing and failure. This environment should be collaborative, accountable and inclusive.

⁹<https://www.ideatovalue.com/inno/nickskillcorn/2016/03/innovation-15-experts-share-innovation-definition/>

The context

Innovation and Switzerland



Global Innovation Index

The overall GII score is the simple average of the Innovation Input and Output Sub-Index scores.

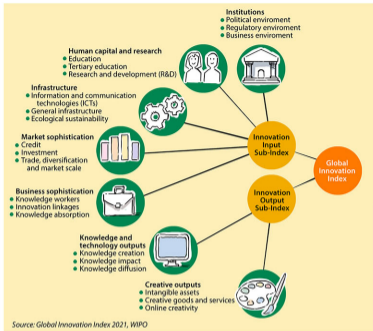


Rank	Economy	Income Group Strength/Weakness	Strength/Weakness	Score
1	Switzerland	Strength	Strength	65,5
2	Sweden	Strength	Strength	63,1
3	United States of America	Strength	Strength	61,3
4	United Kingdom	Strength	Strength	59,8
5	Republic of Korea			59,3
6	Netherlands		Strength	58,6
7	Finland			58,4
8	Singapore			57,8
9	Denmark			57,3
10	Germany			57,3
11	France			55,0
12	China	Strength		54,8

Source : Global Innovation Index

⁹<https://ideascale.com/what-makes-switzerland-a-leader-in-innovation/>


¹⁰<https://www.globalinnovationindex.org/analysis-indicator>



Looking at the international innovation index, Switzerland remains always on the top countries, anyways first in Europe:

Large and small country ranking

Rank	Country	Overall	Innovation inputs	Innovation performance
1	South Korea	2.33	2.74	1.92
2	Japan	2.26	1.75	2.55
3	Singapore	2.23	1.51	2.74
4	Switzerland	1.90	2.14	2.00
5	USA	1.88	1.59	1.99
6	China	1.87	1.76	1.81
7	Finland	1.80	1.28	2.16
8	Iceland	1.79	1.16	2.25
9	France	1.64	1.25	1.88
10	UK	1.60	1.55	1.50
11	Netherlands	1.55	1.40	1.55



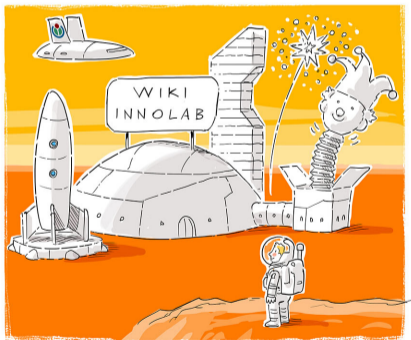
Vision and name of the programme

This strategic document pursues the following vision of Wikimedia Switzerland:

Wikimedia Switzerland is a relevant and recognized player in innovation and technology. Through Wikimedia Switzerland people can incubate and experiment and realize new ideas to support Wikimedia movement and Wikimedia movement can be supported and benefit in terms of innovation and new inspirational solutions. Wikimedia Switzerland's activities promote and support a community mainly interested in technology in a global, interdependent and digital world.

Considering all suggestions, the name of the Innovation programme should be: Innovation Lab and in short version Innolab.

The reference to Wiki should be present like suggested also by members and in this case can be "Wikimedia CH Innovation Lab" and in short version "Wiki Innolab".



⁹<https://ideascale.com/what-makes-switzerland-a-leader-in-innovation/>

¹⁰<https://www.globalinnovationindex.org/analysis-indicator>

Six principles and four main areas

Seven principles have been identified as the guiding stars of the innovation strategy. Four are areas of activity (P1, P2, P3 and P4), and three concern WMCH's organization and relationships (P5, P6 and P7).

Activities



P1. Incubator
Experiment and accelerate new ideas



P2. Pit-stop
Review and update existing solutions



P3. Factory
Host projects and give tech support



P4. Tech community
Recruite and support tech members

Organization



P5. Safe space
Create a safe space for collaborators



P6. Partnership
Select and define tech partners



P7. Wikimedia movement
Share in the movement

(P1) Incubator: experiment and accelerate new ideas



The incubator is the area where new ideas are selected and experimented and accelerated. In this area there is the realization of an idea that can be a technical project but also a new methodology or a new process or also a new solution.

For instance, it will be possible to setup a new model of editathons or to experiment a new solution for the community health.

Like incubator, it will help to develop the idea by providing a full-scale range of services starting with training and ending with funds. In this incubator also existing solutions in the Wikimedia movement can find a safe environment to develop their concept.

The acceleration is the process to have a new realization to be released to the programme. In this area the output is always a programme or the community in general.

The model is the same of the usual incubators and can be associated to the Unlock Accelerator of Wikimedia Germany¹¹.

New ideas will be mainly collected using information in Wikimedia projects but also organizing hackathons.

¹¹<https://www.wikimedia.de/unlock/>

[P2] Pit-stop: review and update existing solutions



When a product or a solution has been released, the innovation is not finished because to innovate the process should be a multi-year process. In this case the concept behind this area is to be like a pit-stop where solutions can be updated or upgraded or re-engineered.

In some cases, they can also be substituted by new and more fresh solutions. Following the strategy of Wikimedia CH, in this case successful solutions can be scaled-up. The concept of pit-stop helps also to centralize the technology and the development in a single place avoiding inefficient and duplication but also scaling solutions horizontally. If a programme has found beneficial a solution, why not giving the same solution to an another programme?

The risk in innovation is to operate like a sealed chamber where a programme has their own developers and technologies while another programme has not.

In addition, the solution to have a pit-stop in the innovation programme to serve other programmes helps the other programmes to focus in their core activities and dismissing more time consuming activities like that of the software development that can compromise the planning in case of problems.



[P3] Factory: host projects and give tech support

The factory is an area where there are specific projects more connected with innovation. A specific field is the climate change where the knowledge of technology and science is more present and requires a specific target of users or some specific activities like photo contests where the use of some tools can help the innovation programme to experiment solutions.

The factory can also provide tech support to other programmes and specifically around tools which are released to other programmes.

This specific action can be useful when it is required a strong technical knowledge.

Another advantage for the Innovation programme to have dedicated projects is to use these project as sandbox to experiment solutions that can be afterwards released to other programmes.



[P4] Tech community: recruit and support tech members

Computer and data scientists and engineers are the main key actors in any innovation environment. They are the required catalyst that transforms inspirations, technologies, content and tools into opportunities and activities.

The key to a deep and sustainable impact in innovation is having tech members on board mainly recruited among computer scientist and engineers. Strategic action will aim to engage motivated and committed tech members and to empower them, fostering their autonomy in integrating Wikimedia projects in their professional activities.

This specific community doesn't find a specific programme in Wikimedia CH that can value their knowledge while the innovation programme can offer them a safe space to experiment and to propose new solutions.

Using Tech hackathons or specific days dedicated to Wikimedia projects, and specifically to same types of Wikimedia projects like Wikidata, can help to get in touch with these potential members outside the movement.



[P5] Safe space: create a safe space for collaborators

People working in innovation should be in a psychologically safe environment where it is possible to make mistakes and learn from both doing and failure.

This environment should be collaborative, accountable and inclusive.

The development of an internal team helps also to internalize knowledge and to reduce the risk of tech partners or suppliers not supportive anymore.

To focus on the project there are several recent models (i.e. SCRUM) protecting the team from disruption or external bad influences.

In this case it's important that there is a trusted relationship between the programme leader and the team. In this case the programme leader selects the team, and the team has only relationship with the programme leader.



[P6] Partnerships: select and define tech partners

Motivated and creative collaborators are the catalyst to transform technologies, platforms and content into innovative opportunities at all levels.

Long-term tech partnerships, also with suppliers, will help to reduce risks and blocks of service.

In the innovation the strategical partnerships are crucial. Mainly in software development, these partnerships help to realize better solutions but the risk of these partners to don't be supportive is high.

An agreement or a service level agreement can help to reduce these risks.

In addition, the centralization of innovative partners can help other programmes to plan activities without sacrificing a specific programme.



[P7] Wikimedia movement: share in Wikimedia movement

Within the Wikimedia movement, different associates have developed and are developing different approaches and practices, not only through their innovative projects, but also by how they manage partners and collaborators.

Innovation programmes are not frequent in Wikimedia affiliates and the programme of Wikimedia CH can generate more interest in the Wikimedia tech community.

¹¹<https://www.wikimedia.de/unlock/>

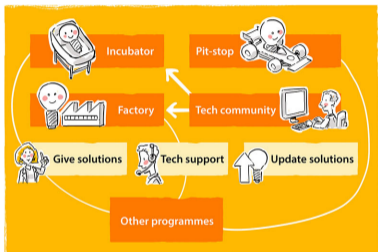
Relationships with other programmes

The Innovation programme has its own projects grouped under the factory but has other two areas at the service of other programmes, specifically the Incubator and the Pit-stop. The Incubator provides solutions to other programmes through experimentation and realization of ideas.

The Pit-stop is the area of updating and upgrading existing solutions.

The factory provides also tech support for instance during online events or to assist affiliates that want to use Wikimedia CH tools.

The fourth area, specifically the Tech community, is only related to the Innovation programme because operates in the technology and science to build volunteers and collaborators that will support the programme.



Rationalize the innovation



To support all the programmes the best solution is to have a single entity to manage innovation including some aspects strictly related to innovation like software development. This model helps to reduce the costs because a solution can be developed for all other programmes and not strictly related to a single programme.

In addition, it helps other programmes to focus in their core activities and not to follow the complicated aspects of innovation like the software management.

Having a central point to manage software development it can help to negotiate better with suppliers and to plan a better roadmap distributing resources in a better way.

Scenario 1:

in this case every programme has its own developers, uses its own technologies, and define its own solutions.

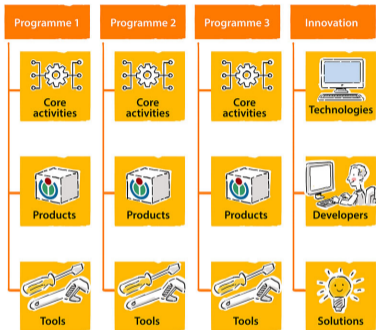
This scenario looks more flexible because everything is in the hands of the programme manager but it's inefficient in terms of costs because the costs can inflate and it's inefficient because there can be some overlaps and in some cases there can be a conflict in terms of resources if two programmes use the same resources.

In addition the risk is that every programme can focus only in a product and to use all energies for this product transforming the programme more in a software farm and to focus on the lifecycle of a product.



Scenario 2:

In this case the Innovation programmes centralize the technologies, the developers and the solutions and provide to the programmes products and tools. The costs are lower because the resources can serve more programmes and there are no conflicts between programmes if they use the same resources.



Relationships with IT area



Considering the presence of Innovation programme and of IT area, the areas of competence should be defined.

While IT is more management of the infrastructure and servers, Innovation programme has a strict connection with software development.

The relationship with IT area is very strict because the Innovation has a huge involvement in Digital Innovation and sometimes the Innovation requires specific IT architectures.

An IT strategy in Wikimedia Ch is not present yet, but we recommend to setup this strategy as soon as possible also involving Innovation programme to better setup a strategy that can serve Innovation programme in a better way and indirectly all other programmes.



Links

<https://app.mural.co/t/strideunschool4503/m/strideunschool4503/1648046122180/8a75af1ccaa9e32a7b60790d867a67692134f739?sender=anais.saegesser1155>

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<https://forms.office.com/Pages/DesignPageV2.aspx?origin=Neo-PortalPage&subpage=design&id=fvh0Fx-tGU2YeJcWkwVeTVDuf3mXmwhDhNC30v5JLX1URE5YMIFPOEIDN1MwRkZRMEJGWIVEV1pXUy4u&analysis=true>