Future-wise Collaboratorium

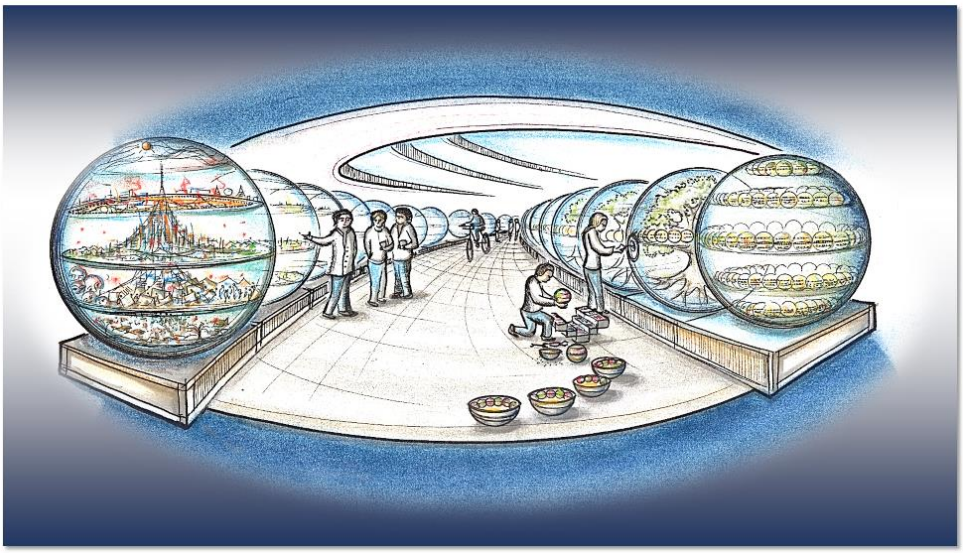
V0.4 – 15-06-21

The *Future-wise Collaboratorium* is a global online *'Laboratory for collective intelligence'*.

It aims to develop and test new kinds of systems and pathways for transformation.

COLLABORATORIUM – 'DEEPER MIND LAB'

A fictional vision of an underground 'Large Think-onomic Synergizer' (from Deeper City, Ravetz 2020)



In 2021 we are working on three main themes, each with 3-4 topics:

- ***Eco-wise*:** bio-regional, peri-eco-urban, green new deal, and the '*collective climatic intelligence*';
- ***Smart-wise***: cities, localities, governance and the 'CHAI' (*Collective Human-Artificial Intelligence*);
- ***Fore-wise***: foresight cities, communities, 'pandemonics', and the '*collective policy intelligence';*

The cartoon here shows a *'deeper mind lab':* a future-fiction version, with a real equivalent, the online whiteboard workspaces at the centre of the Collaboratorium.

This program is linked to the *Future-wise Cities* theme at the Manchester Urban Institute (*https://www.mui.manchester.ac.uk/research/themes/future-proof-cities/*).

For updates and background see the *Future-wise conversations/*

WHERE TO START

Each topic is first set up in an online ***Conversation,*** a kind of creative 'think-do-tank'. This aims to explore, develop & test practical examples of *collective intelligence*. Each conversation has a panel discussion, an interactive session using the whiteboard, and an exhibition of work in progress in the virtual gallery. Each Conversation explores some over-arching questions for its topic:

a) What would a *collective intelligence* look like on the ground?

b) What are the pandemic effects & implications?
c) Which practical pathways could move towards a *collective intelligence*?
d) Which other pilot experiments could be set up, and how to take this forward?

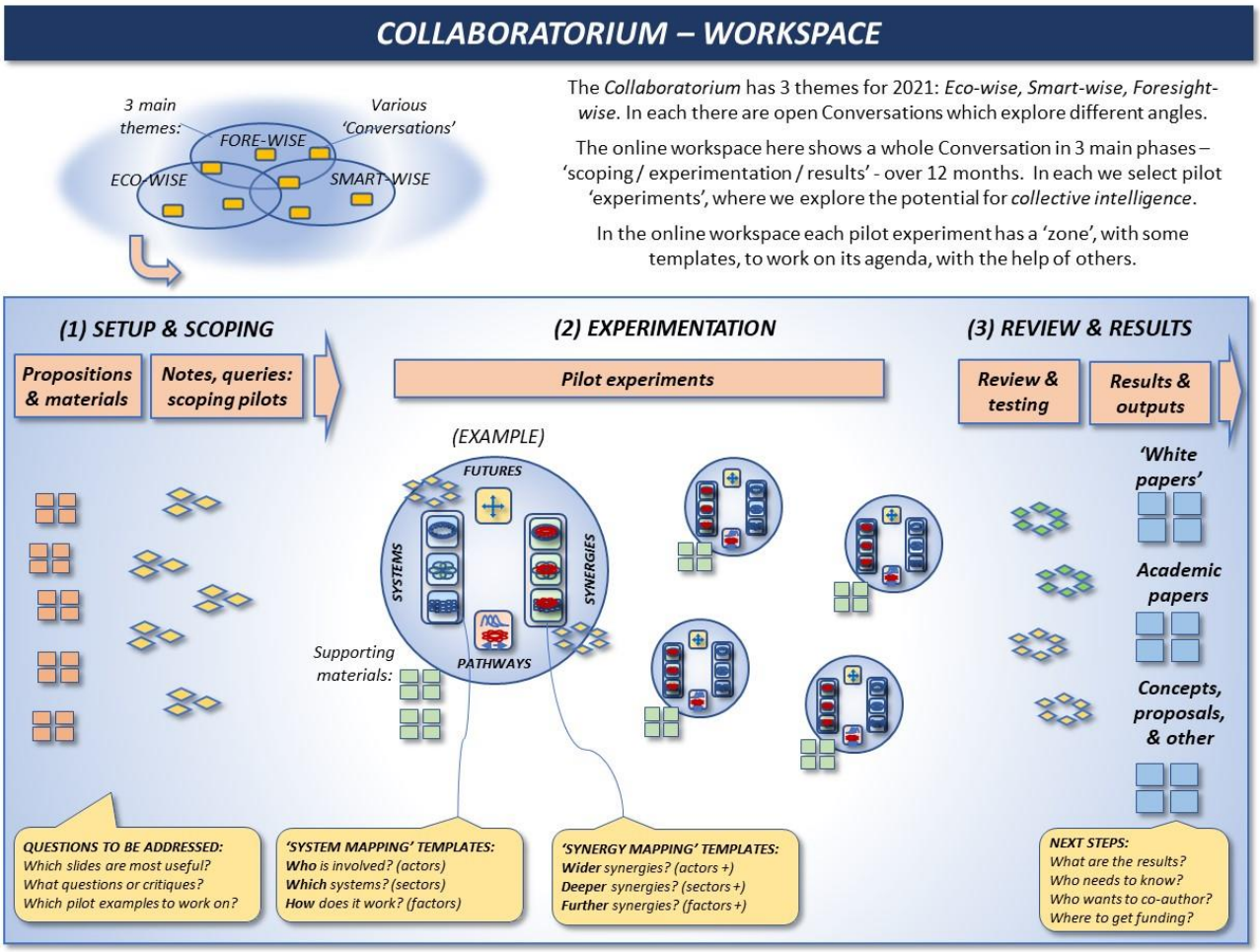
HOW DOES IT WORK

The online workspace here shows a whole Conversation in 3 main phases over 12 months – 'scoping / experimentation / results'. In each Conversation we select experimental pilots, where we explore the potential for *collective intelligence*.

For each experimental pilot, we then invite:

- a panel of speakers for comment and dialogue;
- potential co-authors / researchers for that pilot;
- a wider community of interest, to join the discussion and experimental pilot.

In the online workspace shown below, each pilot experiment has a 'zone', with a set of templates, to work on its agenda with the help of others.



The whiteboard is very useful as an interactive workspace. We use a common set of templates (the *'synergistic model canvas')*, and others can be added. Slides or documents can be loaded and comments made with sticky notes: these can be colour coded, e.g. yellow=normal comment: green=idea: red=disagreement: purple=question, etc.

Each Conversation uses our unique '1-2-3' online combination: '1D' discussion platform, 2D whiteboard, and 3D virtual gallery / garden space.

WHO IS INVOLVED

As of mid 2021 the Collaboratorium has emerged as a viable concept, with so far around 250 participants in 12 major meetings covering 8 main topics. We are now reaching out to interested people for engagement via 3 main roles:

- ***Expert group***: to advise on overall strategy;
- ***Co-authors*** on each of the pilot topics;
- ***Network:*** an wider open 'community of interest'.

Visiting panel speakers are also invited to one or more of these roles.

At the moment the Collaboratorium is a self-organized network within the Manchester Urban Institute. When the first round is complete, we aim to attract funding and establish the Collaboratorium, (if needed) as a free-standing operation.

(The graphic here shows a real time meeting as the inspiration for the online version).

WHICH TOPICS

The themes were evolved and topics were selected by open dialogue, through a series of online conversations in 2020-21: (the ***'3.0'*** meaning the *collective intelligence* dimension).

Smart-wise theme:

- Smart-wise local 3.0
- Smart-wise city gaming 3.0
- Smart-wise city livelihood 3.0
- Smart-wise governance 3.0

Fore-wise theme:

- Foresight Cities 3.0
- Foresight Social 3.0
- Foresight Pandemonics 3.0

Eco-wise theme:

- Peri-eco-urban 3.0
- Green new deal 3.0
- Bio-regional 3.0
- Food-agro-ecology 3.0

More topics or sub-topics may emerge as the Collaboratorium develops. In each topic:

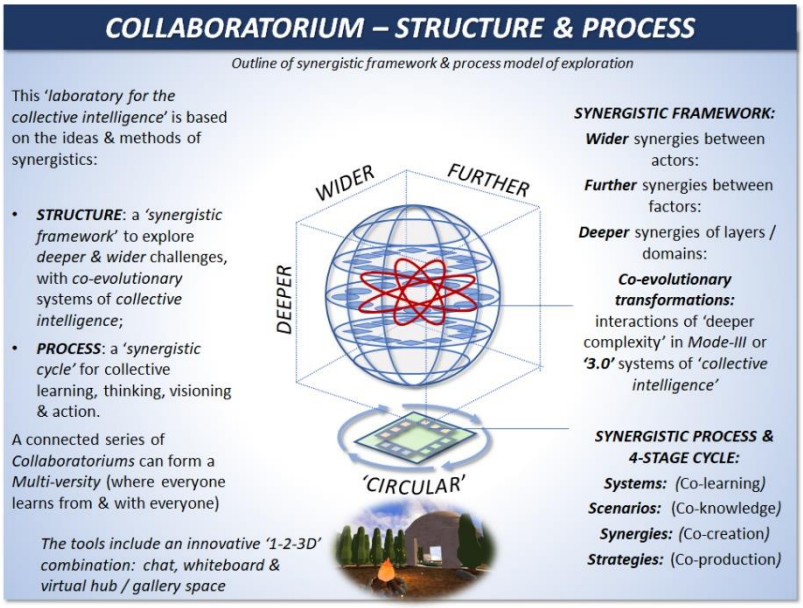
- We use visual thinking with the *'synergistic model canvas'* (a set of templates), in the Mural online workspace;
- This is set up by the coordinator for that topic, and then others are invited to contribute, in the Conversation meeting or otherwise;
- Further topics or sub-topics can be created, with new templates when needed.

WHAT LIES BEHIND

The methods and tools used here draw on the new book *Deeper-City-Collective-Intelligence-and-the-Pathways-from-Smart-to-Wise.*

This set out the general scope of a Collaboratorium:

- ***Wider*** synergies between actors:
- ***Further*** synergies between factors:
- ***Deeper*** synergies of layers / domains:
- ***Co-evolutionary*** synergies for transformation, with ***'3.0'*** systems of '*collective intelligence*'



WHAT ARE THE RESULTS

Overall each topic aims at very practical results:

- A mapping of the challenge and its 'deeper complexity';
- R&D for a concept model / pathways for transformation;
- Proposals for next steps.

We aim for each theme to report results, via its community of co-authors:

- Academic papers, in a journal special issue (Foresight, Urban Planning, Frontiers etc)
- 'White papers' - a general public proposition, to policy, business, civic society etc;
- Concept proposals for future funding, events etc.
- Other media and comment

WHY DO THIS?

We see multiple overlapping global challenges ahead – climate change, artificial intelligence, political extremism, to name a few. In each it's clear we need to look beyond short term problems, towards the potential for transformation – and this calls for an emerging *collective intelligence,* with *deeper* layers of value: social, technical, economic, ecological, political, cultural, and so on.

The book *Deeper-City-Collective-Intelligence-and-the-Pathways-from-Smart-to-Wise* demonstrates the mappings of 40 such pathways. The Collaboratorium aims to take them forward into practice, by development and testing with a wider global community. The pandemic 2020-21 is a challenge, but also has mobilized a shift to online tools, well suited to international collaboration.

Overall the Collaboratorium is itself an experiment, to see how far a global community can work together on challenges of common interest.