

HOW A LAB WORKS

One project, one obstacle, one afternoon

FOR EVERYONE

Fourteen projects built on work **GDN has supported**, each stuck on **one specific obstacle**. At each table, around eight people who would not otherwise meet design a way past it in one afternoon. **The host** brings the project and decides. **Solution Partners** say what could be built, **a Scaler** says what would make it fundable, **Peer Innovators** bring what happened elsewhere, and **the facilitator** runs the table and keeps the record.

FROM PITCH TO CONCEPT, IN FIVE STEPS · the facilitator runs each step and keeps the record

1 UNDERSTAND THE PROJECT

Each project's brief and a short video from its host are online before the conference, so you can arrive knowing the project. On the day, a short pitch on the project, its one obstacle and what has been tried, then questions to understand it.

1

THE TABLE

Ask questions about what already exists. Your ideas come in step 3.

THE HOST

Pitch, and answer honestly, including what failed.

2 AGREE THE PROBLEM

The table agrees the one problem it will work on for the rest of the afternoon.

2

THE TABLE

Each person writes one sentence, "*The thing stopping this project from scaling is...*", then reads it out.

THE HOST

Choose the closest sentence and adjust it.

3 DESIGN A WAY PAST IT

Ideas first, in silence. Then open discussion on what gets built, the data it needs and the smallest version that could run next year.

3

THE TABLE

Write up to two ideas, then build on the host's choice.

THE HOST

Pick the ideas worth building.

4 MAKE IT REAL

A partnership behind the design, a test of how it could fail, and one first step with a name and a date.

4

THE TABLE

Say what your organisation could offer and would need. Name one way it could fail.

THE HOST

Accept or decline a partner. Agree the first step.

5 CHECK IT AND SHARE IT

The concept is read aloud, checked and shared with the whole room.

5

THE TABLE

Correct anything wrong. Confirm what you said your organisation could do.

THE HOST

Say yes, yes with a correction, or no. Then 90 seconds to the room.

What a Lab can work on

a technology a data system an AI tool
a partnership a new way of delivering

Outside an afternoon's reach

Political will, or a project that needs only money. The table designs what it can around them, and the concept says what stays outside.

AFTER
TOKYO

By 22 December
Typed two-page concept
back to the table

By 10 January
Corrections close

Mid-January
The Tokyo Portfolio goes to
partners and funders

2027
The strongest concepts
become candidate pilots

Nothing is committed in the room. No money is allocated and no contract is signed. The project stays with its host, and anything built later belongs to whoever builds it.