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Building Innovation Ecosystems: *How an Innovation Intermediary Facilitates Circular Collaboration in the End-of-Life Tyre Sector*

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Abstract

Innovating Circular Economy solutions requires ecosystem-level collaboration between a diverse set of stakeholders. Innovation Intermediary firms can orchestrate these ecosystems to promote innovative output, building legitimacy and guiding collaboration from their neutral role within the network. This study conducted with the innovation consultancy Beta-i examines the implementation of the NextLap Tech Hub: a collaborative innovation program that develops and pilots circular solutions for End-of-Life Tyre material. The study's objective was to examine how Beta-i, as an intermediary, implemented this program and facilitated collaboration between a diverse set of ecosystem actors. It addressed a gap in research around how neutral intermediaries orchestrate collaborative innovation of circular solutions while engaging in ecosystem building activities. The qualitative study was both exploratory and descriptive, following an action research strategy and adopting a multi-method approach to combine semi-structured interviews, document analysis, participatory observation and reflective journaling from the author's embedded position on the NextLap project team.

The data was analyzed through a multi-level operational framework of innovation intermediary orchestration mechanisms developed by Schepis et al. (2021) and was supplemented with dynamic orchestration capability and ecosystem development theory, exploring how the program was implemented to facilitate innovative output and strengthen its positioning in the End-of-Life Tyre space as a collaborative innovation ecosystem. Mutually dependent orchestration mechanisms supported each other and furthered program goals, forming interdependent feedback loops between activities across the multi-level framework. Trusting relationships and transparent stakeholder communication enhanced dynamic orchestration capabilities, while a newly developed Hub platform aimed to strengthen the innovation ecosystem. The study's practical contributions include a detailed description of implementation across the project lifecycle and insights into managing collaborative innovation in a real-world context. Additionally, it extends the theoretical framework of intermediary-led orchestration with an ecosystem-driven approach to industry level mechanisms and a project lifecycle perspective of feedback loop evolution.

A inovação de soluções de Economia Circular requer colaboração entre múltiplos stakeholders ao nível do ecossistema. As empresas Intermediárias de Inovação podem orquestrar estes ecossistemas para promover resultados inovadores, construindo legitimidade e facilitando a colaboração a partir da sua posição neutra na rede. Este estudo, realizado com a consultora de inovação Beta-i, analisa a implementação do NextLap Tech Hub, um programa de inovação colaborativa dedicado ao desenvolvimento e teste de soluções circulares para materiais

provenientes de pneus em fim de vida. O objetivo foi compreender como a Beta-i implementou o programa e facilitou a colaboração entre diferentes atores do ecossistema, respondendo a uma lacuna na literatura sobre a orquestração de inovação colaborativa por intermediários neutros. A investigação, de natureza qualitativa, exploratória e descritiva, seguiu uma estratégia de investigação-ação e combinou entrevistas semiestruturadas, análise documental, observação participante e diário reflexivo, resultantes da posição integrada do autor na equipa do projeto.

Os dados foram analisados através do quadro operacional multinível de mecanismos de orquestração de intermediários de inovação de Schepis et al. (2021), complementado por teoria sobre capacidades dinâmicas de orquestração e desenvolvimento de ecossistemas. Os resultados demonstram que mecanismos de orquestração interdependentes se reforçaram mutuamente, criando ciclos de retroalimentação entre atividades desenvolvidas em diferentes níveis. Relações de confiança e comunicação transparente fortaleceram as capacidades dinâmicas de orquestração, enquanto uma nova plataforma Hub procurou consolidar o ecossistema de inovação. Os contributos práticos incluem uma descrição detalhada da implementação do programa e conhecimentos aplicáveis à gestão da inovação colaborativa. Teoricamente, o estudo amplia o enquadramento da orquestração liderada por intermediários através de uma perspetiva orientada para o ecossistema e para a evolução dos mecanismos ao longo do ciclo de vida dos projetos.

Keywords

Circular Economy (CE); Collaborative Innovation (CI); Innovation Ecosystem (IE); Ecosystem Orchestration (EO); Innovation Intermediary (II)

Declaration of AI Usage

During the creation of this document, the author used ChatGPT and NotebookLM for the purpose of supporting their research efforts, searching for and organizing journal articles and other theoretical sources, coding of data along the selected framework, translating the abstract section into Portuguese, and formatting the references into an APA style bibliography. After using this tool, the author reviewed and edited the content as needed and assumed full responsibility for the content of the work.

Abbreviation List

End-of-Life Tyre (ELT); NextLap (NL); NextLap Tech Hub (NLTH)

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1. Introduction

The transition toward a circularity has become a cornerstone of global sustainability efforts amid accelerating climate change and shifting natural resource dynamics; one sector with strong circular potential but limited exposure is the End-of-Life Tyre (ELT) space. Although ELT material retains high reuse value, cross-sector collaboration is hindered by a fragmented stakeholder base and technical complexity, necessitating coordinated action between diverse actors from across the value chain (Uvarova & Astaja, 2022).

Circular economy (CE) value-creation models integrate economic, environmental, and social dimensions (Kirchherr et al., 2017), showing how coss-sector, collaborative innovation (CI) is essential for achieving systemic transformation (Mishra et al., 2019; Cirella & Murphy, 2022). Complex, inter-organizational networks can form, shifting the focus from isolated, dyadic relationships to multi-lateral ecosystems (Jacobides et al., 2018; Baldwin et al., 2024). Absent hierarchical governance structures, ecosystem orchestration (EO) theory explores the mechanisms used to organize these innovation ecosystems (IE), coordinate network member resources, and support value creation (Dhanaraj & Parkhe, 2006).

Intermediary organizations have emerged whose sole purpose is to coordinate IEs without having direct stake in the innovation output (Noviaristanti et al., 2023; Caloffi et al., 2023). Simultaneously operating on a narrow, project-focused level, member network level, and wider industry level, intermediary firms rely on dynamic orchestration capabilities to promote innovation and intentionally develop their surrounding ecosystem (Schepis et al., 2021; Randhawa et al., 2022). The present study explored this innovation intermediary (II) phenomena to explain how a neutral facilitator brokers relationships, mobilizes network resources, and sustains innovation ecosystems.

From this intermediary position, the innovation consultancy Beta-i has sought to coordinate innovation in the ELT space since 2021 through the NextLap Tech Hub (NLTH), a collaborative innovation platform that promotes circular solutions by connecting startups and R&D institutions with corporate partners to co-develop and pilot innovative applications for recycled tyre materials. Through a seven month engagement with Beta-i (October 2025 - April 2026), I helped implement the NextLap (NL) program, supported innovative, ELT-focused pilot partnerships, and gained first-hand insight into how a neutral intermediary orchestrates a CE-focused ecosystem.

Limited research exists on how IIs implement collaborative innovation programs in a specifically CE context while also actively managing their surrounding ecosystems. Addressing this gap, this study examined the implementation through each phase of the NextLap program to answer the following research questions: *How is the collaborative IE of the NextLap Program implemented in order to support innovation in the ELT space? How does Beta-i, as an intermediary, build the NextLap ecosystem to promote collaborative, circular solutions?*

This research has advanced theoretical knowledge by documenting feedback loops between cross-level orchestration mechanisms and extending the framework developed by Schepis et al. (2021) by layering an ecosystem perspective to industry level activities and observing feedback loop evolution across the project lifecycle. Managerial contributions include practical insights into how IIs can effectively implement and manage collaborative ecosystems in a real-world setting, highlighting interdependence of key orchestration mechanisms that support stakeholder coordination, relationship development, and innovative output.

This research proposal begins with a literature review, **Chapter 2**, that narrows the research focus, identifies key gaps and develops the theoretical framework. **Chapter 3** outlines the study's methodology, **Chapter 4** builds the internship research context and presents the gathered data, while **Chapter 5** analyses and discusses the observations within the theoretical framework. **Chapter 6** concludes the study, and is followed by **References** and **Appendix** that present data sources, interview guides and project lifecycle diagrams.

2. Literature Review

The foundational concept of CE innovation, upon which the NextLap program is built, "must be understood as a fundamental systemic change," incorporating social equity, environmental quality and economic impact (Kirchherr et al., 2017, p. 229). Given the central role of inter-organizational collaboration in CE network development, barriers must be overcome to align diverse actors around a shared circular vision (Bourdin & Jacquet, 2025). These collaborative ecosystems require coordination mechanisms to be productive, leading to ecosystem orchestration and innovation intermediary theory as the main lenses for understanding how third-party intermediaries implement orchestration activities to support and shape their innovative output.

2.1 From Interorganizational Collaboration towards Innovation Ecosystems

Productive CE pathways are inherently complex and difficult for a single organization to achieve, instead requiring intense collaboration between diverse stakeholders across sectors when compared to traditional linear economic models (Cirella & Murphy, 2022). As innovation shifts towards collaborative networks of autonomous actors, it unlocks the potential for leveraging complementary resources between stakeholders (Baldwin et al., 2024; Crupi et al., 2021), encouraging the flow of information and supporting cooperative problem solving (Crupi et al., 2021; Ibach et al., 2025). If circular collaboration incorporates additional actors, stakeholder relationships can transform from bilateral alliances into complex, multilateral networks (Jacobides et al., 2018; Baldwin et al., 2024). Building social capital through mutual trust and value alignment can support joint problem solving in multi-party collaborative networks (Cirella & Murphy, 2022). However, as it is difficult for an individual entity to set terms or standards for the entire network through typical contractual arrangements (Baldwin et al., 2024), non-hierarchical governance structures must be employed to organize activities and coordinate innovation output.

The structure of IEs can be defined through the types of collaborative activities undertaken, the actors involved, their relative positions within the network and how they are linked to one another (Adner, 2016). Both inadequate coordination, which can create misaligned stakeholder expectations (Adner, 2016), and excessive focal-firm control within a "circular egosystem" (Gomes et al., 2023) can undermine ecosystem stability and limit innovative output. Given the complex, non-hierarchical nature of IEs, traditional governance and coordination mechanisms are less effective in aligning stakeholders (Adner, 2016). This opens a key question of how a focal firm can coordinate its ecosystem through orchestration mechanisms, synchronizing its members to promote value creation (Gomes, et al., 2023).

2.2 Ecosystem Orchestration

EO theory explores how a network member can mobilize resources, align partners, and enable value creation without relying on a formal hierarchical authority. Hub firms can occupy leadership positions and coordinate the resources and capabilities of other actors, influencing network design and defining membership and structure during the recruitment process (Dhanaraj & Parkhe, 2006). Three interdependent orchestration processes that determine network effectiveness and enhance innovative output are *knowledge mobility, innovation*

appropriability, and *network stability* (Dhanaraj & Parkhe, 2006). Orchestrators support these three processes by *enabling* their network members; leading open discussion to facilitate knowledge mobility and building social capital through trust-based interpersonal relationships help maintain network stability and promote innovation appropriability (Ritala et al., 2012). This *enabling* method of coordination is particularly important across the ecosystem lifecycle, as orchestration techniques must adapt to the ecosystem's changing needs and actor dynamics over time (Ritala et al., 2012).

During early stage formation when the value proposition is ambiguous and transaction costs remain high, transparent communication helps clarify the vision and align diverse actors (Ritala et al., 2012; Foss et. al., 2023). In growing ecosystems, the focus can shift towards reaching a critical mass of participants that amplifies the network's impact (Thierry & Lescop, 2020). Building social capital and strengthening ties between participants can help maintain network stability (Ritala et al., 2012), while adjusting network structure to support knowledge codification and collaborative learning can promote greater knowledge fluidity (Dhanaraj & Parkhe, 2006). At maturity, EO methods must continue to maintain network stability, while also retaining members amid the risk of migration to competing platforms (Thierry & Lescop, 2020).

The literature reviewed above largely focuses on ecosystems orchestrated by focal firms that have vested interests and directly benefit from the value created through innovation (Dhanaraj & Parkhe, 2006; Nambisan & Sawhney, 2011). However, alternative ecosystem structures have emerged which are coordinated by a neutral third party instead of a focal orchestrator who directly captures value of innovative output. As neutral facilitators, these intermediaries enhance the collective innovative capacity of an ecosystem from which they do not directly extract value.

2.3 Innovation Intermediaries

2.3.1 Defining Innovation Intermediaries

IIs can be broadly defined as organizations that facilitate collaborative innovation between two or more actors (Howells, 2006; Noviaristanti et al., 2023; Abi Saad et al. 2023). Similar to focal firm orchestrators, they do not hold formal authority within the network, but differ in that they also lack commercial leverage and are not directly involved in either innovation inputs or commercial outputs. (Schepis et al., 2021).

While early research on II organizations focused primarily on intermediaries as consultants supporting internal R&D (Noviaristanti et al, 2023), a subsequent shift towards systemic perspectives recognized the impact that intermediary firms could have on the broader ecosystem, bringing frameworks such as the Triple Helix model that explored an II's role in supporting public, private and R&D institutions for sustainable environmental transitions (Caloffi et al., 2023). Considering circular economy transitions as systemic shifts, intermediary theory has evolved from limited dyadic matchmaking and knowledge broker functions towards ecosystem orchestrators, who integrate actors and generate value across the value chain (Noviaristanti et al. 2023) .

The diverse roles that IIs play in facilitating collaboration have led to the development of numerous frameworks, highlighting the complexity of this phenomenon. Howells (2006) lays out a functional typology in which intermediaries develop an understanding of their clients' needs and industry innovation drivers, and process that knowledge to find and connect them with suitable innovation partners. Acting as an arbiter, they provide advice as a neutral third party and can facilitate a variety of complex relationships by coordinating innovation through these knowledge processing, relationship brokering, and commercialization functions (Howells, 2006).

Van Lente et al. (2003) distinguished between intermediation, which might follow the functional pathway described above, and systemic coordination that functions at a wider, network level. Strengthening linkages, providing interactive learning opportunities within the network while raising awareness outside the ecosystem to support network growth are increasingly required at the systemic level (Van Lente et al., 2003). This systemic approach acknowledges that intermediaries can fulfill orchestration functions across the broader ecosystem, in addition to operating at the project and internal network levels.

2.3.2 Mechanisms, Activities & Levels of Operation

Ecosystem-focused intermediation, which reinforces the connections between actors and institutions that are necessary to deploy the innovation (Abi Saad et al., 2024), can be organized across multiple operational levels, from narrow, project-based activities to big-picture, systemic mechanisms. IIs can assume multiple roles such as Orchestrator, Knowledge Broker, and Value Generator, and actively support innovation on the firm, industry, and system level (Noviaristanti et al., 2023). An alternative multi-level framework

further delineates between different types of intermediaries, from those which operate project, user-specific, or niche-specific levels, to regime based and systemic intermediaries enacting broader impact (Kivimaa et al., 2019).

The research of Schepis et al. (2021) breaks down orchestration mechanisms into a nuanced, multi-level framework, operating at the project level, member network level, and industry level. Within each of these operational levels, intermediaries promote productive, innovative ecosystems using an array of mechanisms, which can be grouped into the categories of developing goals, connecting stakeholders for collaboration, resource exchange and legitimacy building (Schepis et al., 2021). Many of the orchestration mechanisms contained in these categories are cross-cutting in nature, and can be applied on each of the three framework levels. As with the orchestration methods identified by Dhanaraj and Parkhe (2006), the activities at each level are reinforcing, with positive outcomes at one level supporting the efforts on the other two. This framework also identifies how the value creation of each mechanism impacts the innovative output of the ecosystem as a whole (Schepis et al., 2021).

Project level activities are concerned with promoting specific project outcomes, scoping projects and partnership brokering through relationship development and partnership facilitation (Schepis et al., 2021). Activities on the member network level seek to coordinate member interactions, mobilizing their tacit and operational knowledge resources and eliciting their contributions through needs assessments and pitch sessions (Schepis et al., 2021). Finally, activities on the industry level are concerned with the wider vision and legitimacy of the ecosystem, promoting its value through in-person summit events and brand identity, while extending its reach through open calls for member recruitment. Intermediaries can engage with new stakeholders through activities like external scouting and member onboarding, which helps maintain stability and grow the existing network (Schepis et al., 2021).

2.3.3 Ecosystem Design and Construction

Over time, IIs can use ecosystem-level dynamic capabilities to move beyond passive partnership brokering and facilitation towards intentionally shaping the wider network. As the ecosystems reach the late stages of maturity, the intermediaries can begin actively shaping their network spaces through “ecosystem revamping,” by adjusting ecosystem structures, relationships, and institutional arrangements to ensure long-term viability and expanded opportunities for participants (Randhawa et al., 2022). As intermediaries intentionally alter

ecosystem structure with the shaping dynamic capability, configuring governance and alignment structures to maximize system resiliency (Randhawa et al., 2022), these particular architectural elements can be illuminated by research into ecosystem design and blueprinting.

While ecosystem design is an intentional undertaking on the part of the orchestrator, the blueprint is still influenced by surrounding conditions. Weaker substantive uncertainty makes it "possible to involve more actors in an ecosystem and build more and more complex links between them" (Lingens et al. 2021, p. 45), while the configuration of these actors depends on how closely their expertise aligns with that of the orchestrator. Large knowledge gaps that cloud the joint value proposition can be overcome through strong relational systems; convening network members during onboarding can build a common identity, while artifacts like the pitch booklets and pilot canvases observed in the case of this study can have both symbolic value and clarify roles and procedures (Colovic et al., 2025). Taken together, these insights show that while orchestrators can actively shape the ecosystem structure, their decisions tend to be influenced by the unique context of their particular ecosystem (Lingens et al. 2021). Ecosystem design serves as a useful complementary perspective when exploring how an II might strengthen, develop and shape their ecosystem as they evolve and mature their network orchestration.

2.4 Primary Theoretical Framework

This study will adopt the operational, tri-level framework of Schepis et al. (2021) as the primary theoretical framework, which specifically organizes orchestration activities based on their level of impact. While alternative frameworks also acknowledge how intermediaries can impact multiple levels, many use activities or practices as the starting point for analysis before considering which level they might impact (Howells, 2006; Vidmar, 2021; Cirella & Murphy, 2022; De Silva et al., 2018) and fail to capture the systemic nature of collaborative IE development. Other frameworks take the impact level as the primary organizational principle; Kivimaa et al. (2019) classifies IIs according to their position and function within broader transition systems, and the three-tier framework of Noviaristanti et al. (2023) focuses on the roles that IIs may fill within the ecosystem. However, these approaches still use a functional approach as opposed to operational, focusing on the function an intermediary organization fills instead of the mechanisms it employs.

Instead, the systemic, operational approach of Schepis et al. (2021) takes the level of impact as the primary organizational framework, which is followed by an activity-based breakdown of orchestration mechanisms that are active on each level. As opposed to the functional frameworks above, this operational architecture was better suited to understand project implementation as it relates to collaborative ecosystem development, linking the multi-level mechanisms to interdependent and reinforcing orchestration activities. This analytical framework progresses from impact level to orchestration mechanisms and finally to specific activities and practices through which the mechanisms are put into motion, providing both the operational structure needed for analysis and a lens on the wider, systemic ecosystem impact an II can generate.

Understanding the interrelated feedback loops of orchestration activities between and across levels lends itself to a systemic, analytical approach. Industry level activities that include wider stakeholder engagement to build network legitimacy support resource mobilization on a network level (Schepis et al., 2021). By securing this network level buy-in and successfully engaging with its members, an intermediary can be more successful at scoping opportunities and brokering partnerships on a project level (Schepis et al., 2021). Coming full circle, promoting project outcomes positively impacts stakeholder engagement and network growth on the initial industry level. Drawing on its multi-level, operational approach that acknowledges systemic orchestration feedback loops, the Schepis et al. (2021) structural framework guided data collection and subsequent coding of this study to examine the implementation of an intermediary-led ecosystem.

2.4.1 Extending the Theoretical Framework

Taking a holistic, CE approach, the present study explored how an intermediary orchestrated diverse actors and delivered project-based innovation value within a broader ecosystem context. In this light, the concept of the framework's industry level as outlined by Shepis et al. (2021) was too narrow for the cross-sectoral nature of this circular context. While the intermediary in that study was engaging with a relatively narrow set of energy-sector actors, circular innovation ecosystems tend to span diverse industries (Cirella & Murphy, 2022). This unique context suggests the possibility that industry level could instead be understood to refer to the entire ecosystem of cross-cutting actors along the value chain as opposed to those from a single industry. Extending the original understanding of the Schepis et al. (2021) framework

in this way better aligns with the reality of collaborative CE innovation and opens the door for analysis of ecosystem design and construction.

With a specific focus on collaborative ecosystem development, complementary perspectives on ecosystem construction extended the research, interpreting how orchestration mechanisms extend beyond project facilitation toward deliberate ecosystem construction, interacting with the wider landscape. Acknowledging how iterative feedback loops can enable the intermediary to impact its surrounding ecosystem and become a co-collaborator in value development (Randhawa et al., 2022), the supplementary perspective provides nuance to the primary operational framework of Schepis et al. (2021) and allows an understanding of continuous ecosystem cultivation when categorizing and analysing how II activities are implemented within a program setting.

3. Methodology

The research was structured hierarchically following Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill's Research Onion (2019, p.131), first outlining the research approach and methodological choice, followed by the research strategy, time horizon, and data collection and analysis. It combines deductive and inductive research approaches, adopting a hybrid thematic analysis. Established theory informed the data collection and deductive analysis, while broader themes relating to the evolution of the program were interpreted from the empirical data, allowing the findings to potentially extend the existing theoretical framework through inductive means.

A qualitative methodology collecting multiple data sources uncovered the particular social phenomenon of relationships between different actors (Saunders et al., 2019) and allowed for triangulation during the analysis stage. Exploratory mechanisms aimed to "clarify the understanding of an issue, problem or phenomenon" (Saunders et al., 2019, p.179) as the project evolved. This approach, which allowed emerging insights from the empirical context to inform analysis of how the program was enacted in practice, was further contextualized by descriptive elements, providing an accurate account of events and project dynamics that were encountered through the exploratory study (Saunders et al., 2019).

The student researcher followed an action research strategy, given their participatory role gathering research data while actively implementing the NextLap program. This approach focuses on "the resolution of important social or organizational issues together with those who

experience these issues directly," enabling the author to participate directly in the spiraling action research cycles that are central to the action research strategy (Coghlan & Brannick, 2014, p.6). Adopting a longitudinal time horizon, the study tracked the evolution of the NLTH ecosystem over a seven month period to examine how the implementation developed throughout the project lifecycle, from the introduction of new players to the formation of close partnerships. Multiple data collections over the research period were organized along key program milestones, exploring how the orchestration mechanisms and ecosystems building initiatives evolved through the project.

The study incorporated data from multiple perspectives on how the NextLap program was implemented, including a total of seven semi-structured interviews conducted with internal colleagues and external stakeholders exploring their perceptions, experiences, and relational dynamics (Appendix; Semi-Structured Interview Guides & Table 1). Three Beta-i employees from different seniority levels on the NextLap project team were interviewed about the current program edition and its broader evolution, while externally, interviews with one innovator, one industrial partner, and two client representatives provided perspectives from across the program ecosystem.

Internal documents including project reports, communication materials, slide decks and proposals were also analysed as data sources (Appendix; Table 2). Additionally, the student researcher electronically recorded their own experiences from active participation in program implementation as a student intern in the form of an observational journal. A total of 20 journal entries detailed main milestones and project phases with relevant observations from internal/external meetings, execution of program tasks, and stakeholder interactions (Appendix; Table 3). Finally, the gathered data was complimented by a relevant body of existing research literature that was analysed to frame and contextualize the findings.

All collected data was stored securely on password protected devices, following a data management plan developed in accordance with ISEG guidelines. Interviewees provided informed consent for interviews, signing a Consent Form upon review of a detailed Participant Information sheet. Consideration was given to discussing sensitive data, and participant identities have been anonymized when presenting the data. The data was organized and coded following the established theoretical framework, identifying patterns and mechanisms of how the NextLap program was implemented to facilitate collaborative pilot partnerships and develop its wider ecosystem. A thematic analysis through the theoretical

lenses of innovation intermediation and ecosystem orchestration allowed the student researcher to interpret how specific actions, relationships, and structures contributed to circular innovation outcomes.

4. Research Context, Data, & Results of NLTH Implementation

4.1 Project Context & Student Researcher's Embedded Position

As a leader in CI, Beta-i brings unique innovation methodologies to facilitate collaboration between corporations, startups and ecosystem partners as a third-party intermediary (Beta-i, n.d.-*a*). Since its first edition in 2001, the mission of Beta-i's NLTH program has been to transform ELT into valuable resources, providing "technological development and networking opportunities with industry partners" to "nurture cutting-edge ideas and technologies that promote the full circularity of tyres" (Beta-i, n.d.-*b*). The program is sponsored by Valorpneu, a Portuguese non-profit tasked with managing the national system for collecting, transporting, and directing used tyres toward reuse, recycling, and recovery (Valorpneu, n.d.).

Challenges of developing circular relationships around ELT materials are highlighted by NLTH project documentation (P.D.1), stakeholder interviews (INT.C1; INT.C2), and established research (Uvarova & Astaja, 2022). CE value capture from ELT must span many sectors (P.D.1) and bring together diverse actors, from R&D organizations to startups and large corporations (P.D.2). Additionally, poor market perception of recycled tyre rubber, fragmented demand, and the absence of coordinated investment represent additional barriers to commercializing innovative ELT solutions (P.D.1; INT.C1; INT.C2).

Through the NLTH, Beta-i acts as an II to orchestrate an ELT innovation ecosystem, addressing stakeholder fragmentation, a key roadblock to circular innovation stemming from limited communication and cooperation (Uvarova & Astaja, 2022), by facilitating pilot projects and improving coordination and knowledge mobility along the value chain (P.D.2; P.D.4). The program also seeks to grow its ecosystem reach across industries by publicizing its value creation and engaging with new stakeholders from a wider audience (P.D.2; P.D.4). The project lifecycle of the fourth NLTH edition can be broken down into a series of milestones and phases that took place over ~9 months (Appendix, Fig. 1–5). Ongoing ecosystem building activities were part of a strategic shift towards a continuous, dynamic

model to “anchor the hub in permanent partnerships,” and “position NextLap as a leading reference in tyre circularity” (P.D.4).

From September, 2025 until April, 2026, I joined the NextLap program in an active, implementation role directly embedded within the Beta-i consulting team. Over 800 hours as an Innovation Consulting Intern provided in-depth exposure to the program’s implementation, evolution, and outcomes. I contributed to decision-making, collaborated on project activities, and led selected initiatives that supported milestone outcomes, gaining an understanding of Beta-i’s role as an II. I actively participated in twice-weekly team syncs, once-weekly client meetings, collaborative working sessions, and monthly 1:1 meetings with the project team lead. My primary responsibilities included managing stakeholder communications, facilitating cross-stakeholder collaborative meetings, creating project documentation, co-creating a digital ecosystem hub platform, and ownership of creating a new sustainability assessment framework and evaluation tool to measure the impact of pilot projects.

4.2 Industry Framing & Ecosystem Vision

Beta-i started the fourth NLTH edition in September 2025, building on past learnings to strengthen its position as a leader in circular ELT innovation and shift from time-bound pilots to a permanent ecosystem (P.D.4). The NextLap team began holding weekly syncs with the client that served as a structured channel of communication, building trust through regular updates on activities and progress (P.D.5). My onboarding period included review of key project documentation, both from past and present editions, to develop the necessary context for program development. (P.D.1; P.D.2; P.D.4; P.D.6).

An ecosystem-building focus aimed to reshape stakeholder interaction and expand reach by engaging actors across a wider range of sectors, supporting Beta-i’s positioning while helping the client attract diverse industrial partners and solutions (P.D.4). The NLTH 2.0 proposal outlined the shift to a living platform, offering tailored journeys, stronger branding, and greater systemic impact in ELT circularity (P.D.2, P.D.6; INT.B1). Multiple stakeholder interviews referenced this evolved vision, noting how the evolution of program positioning would further strengthen its community and reach new sectors (INT.C1). Thanks to the trust developed with the client over past years, the fourth edition began on a strong reputational foundation; “the name NextLap means something” in the ELT recycling space (INT.C2),

helping renew client buy-in and “make them believe” in the ambitious vision for the next step in program evolution (INT.B2).

4.3 Network Construction

From September to December 2025, the program focused on network construction by reengaging existing members, recruiting new actors to expand ecosystem participation, and facilitating the first introductions to build pilot partnerships.

4.3.1 Partner Prospecting & Onboarding: Needs Assessment, All Partners Meeting

Between September and October, 2025, the team identified a fragmented landscape, with corporates lacking experience in external innovation, unaware of CE collaboration value, and risk-averse toward innovation initiatives (INT.B2). From the perspective of an industrial partner, participating in the NLTH program over multiple editions allowed them to “gain a clearer understanding of the overall ELT products ecosystem and of the various potential circular-economy solutions associated with it” (INT.P1).

The project team engaged new industrial partners to expand ecosystem participation using a partner pitch deck to communicate its mission and core innovation value proposition, explain how the wider ELT context was relevant for a variety of industrial players, and showcase the success of previous editions to build program legitimacy (P.D.7). Trust building was central to engagement, with introductory conversations focused on establishing reputation and fostering a relationship conducive to open, reciprocal exchange (INT.B1).

These efforts secured participation from one returning partner and four new partners, who then completed the individual Needs Assessments to understand their pain points and prioritize their innovation challenges. The NextLap team organized these requirements to guide the search for suitable innovators (P.D.10) and built partner trust and confidence in their ability to deliver (INT.B2). The All Partners Meeting (November, 2026) introduced these stakeholders and clarified ecosystem structure and goals, building community and aligning priorities and expectations (P.D.9). After a trust-building ice breaker activity, the presentation outlined the program timeline, workflow, and partner responsibilities (P.D.9), an experience that fostered a sense of belonging to a wider CE ecosystem and encouraged shared learning (INT.P1). I created the Partner Journey Handbook (P.D.11), a roadmap for each partner that reiterated the value proposition, aligned expectations, clarified responsibilities and shared best

practices and timing for the upcoming phases. By demonstrating credibility in the circular ELT innovation space and establishing trust early on, the NLTH expanded its network, secured stakeholder buy-in, and improved alignment with partner needs.

4.3.2 Innovator Prospecting & Onboarding: Scouting, Open Call & Application Evaluation

The ~2-week Scouting phase (late September to mid-October) identified and organized potential innovators aligned with partner challenges from the Needs Assessment (O.J.11/11). I synthesized partner Needs Assessment responses, co-created and organized a lead database with over 1.000 existing innovators, and sourced ~400 new, targeted innovators based on specific challenges outlined by the program partners (P.D.12). Based on a strategy deck outlining target profiles, relevant resources and lead databases, and outreach and conversion metrics (P.D.13), we segmented potential innovators into three categories, R&D, mid-range TRL, and To-Market solutions, using specific resources to identify and engage with leads from each group (P.D.12).

A significant challenge was that not all Needs Assessments were completed at scouting kickoff; early efforts had to rely on general scope and limited understanding of partner needs (O.J.11/11) so many leads sourced early on were not specifically able to address the partners' challenges. However, after incorporating the partner feedback we took a more targeted approach, refining our search criteria to find an additional >400 leads along with the improved organization of ~1.000 leads from previous editions (P.D.12).

The Open Call phase (mid-October to mid-November) engaged relevant innovators and converted them into the NextLap program. I co-created an outreach strategy and communication copy (P.D.14) and built out the application form and evaluation criteria (P.D.16), which prompted interested innovators to detail their capabilities. Initially focused on email and social media, the strategy shifted mid-phase due to limited traction with leads and the newly synthesized Needs Assessment insights. The detailed partner challenges allowed us to significantly narrow our focus on specific solutions and technologies, which in turn lent itself to a more personalized scouting and engagement strategy compared to the previous email campaign (O.J.19/11). I shifted my outreach almost entirely to LinkedIn, supplemented by WhatsApp messages, calls, and personalized 1:1 video chats engagement with prospects (P.D.18).

After the phase ended, I gathered data and created a detailed Scouting Report that analysed the Scouting and Open Call process, results, learnings and developed recommendations for future editions (P.D.18). In total, we contacted a total of >1.400 innovators and I conducted 28 1:1 meetings with applicants to educate them on the program and guide them through the application process. This analysis showed that the outreach strategy shift delivered results; with a ~70% increase in total finalized applications compared with the previous edition, we found that 64% of the top innovator profiles were sourced through targeted, manual scouting, while 65% were engaged with personalized outreach via LinkedIn. Direct, face-to-face contact via video chat helped to ensure alignment with the challenges and also build trust and buy-in on the part of the innovators, evidenced by the 61% of top innovators that were converted through the 1:1 calls (P.D.18).

I updated criteria used to score innovator applications, assessing innovation level, pilot feasibility, sustainability impact, partner challenge fit, and innovator capacity to execute the solution (P.D.16). Each member of the NextLap team evaluated the 48 finalized applications, selecting 26 for the next stage based on the composite scores and contextual discussion. The number of innovators that met the standard to be included in the shortlist was 50% greater than the previous edition, pointing to the successful approach to Scouting and Open Call previously discussed (P.D.18).

4.4 Stakeholder Mobilization & Coordination

4.4.1 Reverse Pitch & Online Pitch Preparation

Starting in December, 2026, the NextLap team helped partners create Reverse Pitch videos outlining their background, needs, and collaboration goals (P.D.19). Similar to the Needs Assessment, this was an opportunity for partners to outline their innovation and sustainability goals and key technical requirements, but with the videos designed specifically for an innovator audience (O.J.08/12). To ensure consistency, the Partner Journey Handbook (P.D.19) included a step-by-step format for recording the reverse pitches, which I edited and disseminated to the selected short list innovators ahead of the Online Pitch, allowing them to tailor their presentation directly to the needs of the partners (P.D.11).

Additional preparation for the Online Pitch included coordinating documents and schedules for 26 innovators and multiple representatives from the 5 partner firms, totaling ~50

participants over the two day event. To align expectations and ensure smooth flow, I created the Partner Pitch Booklet (P.D.20), which outlined the event goals, format, scheduling, evaluation process, and innovator profiles for the partners, while a project colleague also developed an Innovator Pitch Booklet (P.D.21) detailing the partners' profiles, capabilities, and program goals for the pitching innovators. The NextLap team also created an internal planning document that tracked availability, precise scheduling and session details, in order to coordinate event flow and record observations from pitches and Q&A sessions (P.D.33).

4.4.2 Online Pitch

Held over two afternoons (December 3–4, 2025), the Online Pitch was the first introduction between the shortlisted innovators and partners, who would evaluate pilot feasibility and select innovators to advance to the next stage of the program. Each of the 26 innovators was given 5 minutes to pitch their solution, followed by a 5 minute, partner-led Q&A session. During the event each partner used evaluation sheets that I created (P.D.22) to score the innovators, following the same criteria that the we had used to evaluate the innovator applications. After a post-event review period, the partners returned the evaluation sheets along with their selected innovators to advance to the next phase.

The NextLap team's planning and facilitation were well received by both innovators and partners. Stakeholders left positive feedback on NPS forms that I updated and distributed after the event; from a total of 17 responses, both the overall and stakeholder-split ratings were 8,3 out of 10, and respondents noted that the event was well organized with the NextLap team successfully facilitating productive Q&A exchanges (P.D.23). The importance and longevity of this milestone was also noted in stakeholder interviews; the Online Pitch is one element that has been maintained through previous program editions (INT.B1), part of the NextLap facilitated relationship development (INT.B3) that helps bridge the divide between stakeholder (INT.C2).

4.4.3 Enhancing Stakeholder Community: Hub Platform Development

Alongside network construction and stakeholder mobilization, the NextLap team developed a platform to strengthen community ties and ecosystem positioning (O.J.16/10). Research that I had conducted into ecosystem best practices (P.D.32) informed the development of the Hub, a platform for pilot management, program coordination, and community building (O.J.18/02). During development, I collaboratively brainstormed the goals, architecture, features and user

journeys, and helped construct the platform in the Notion workspace (O.J.18/02). This Hub concept was critical to the vision in the client proposal, aiming to enhance stakeholder experience, streamline project facilitation, and strengthen ecosystem positioning as a continuous innovation community (INT.B1; INT.B2; INT.B3).

To improve pilot experience, I helped develop tools, tutorials, and collaboration workspaces to support stakeholder communication around their pilots. Community-building features included an ELT newsfeed, regularly updated with curated articles that members could comment on and discuss. The platform showcased past pilots, with plans to feature alumni learnings to extend program continuity (P.D.34). Message boards were created to centralize communication, improve visibility, and enable direct stakeholder interaction. By moving communications from scattered emails to a centralized platform, both program updates would have greater visibility and pilot progress would be easier to monitor. Encouraging direct communication on the platform reduced facilitation demands and empowered stakeholders to lead pilot development (INT.B1; O.J.18/02).

To help transition the NLTH to an ongoing collaborative innovation program, the Hub would provide an onboarding structure for new stakeholders outside of the time-bounded cohorts from each edition. This would provide a sense of program continuity, integrating new and ongoing pilots on a common platform with shared learnings (INT.B3) and would allow new members to get up to speed and connect with other members autonomously to search for collaboration opportunities (INT.B1). The Hub would also improve NextLap ecosystem positioning by serving as a visible artifact for those outside of the community, building legitimacy by showcasing past project outcomes and encouraging new members to join its dynamic innovation network (O.J.18/02).

4.5 Selection, Structuring and Knowledge Integration: Forming Pilot Partnerships

4.5.1 Pilot Design: Discovery Meetings

After the December Online Pitch, partners selected innovators to move forwards into the Pilot Design phase while the NextLap team prepared for the next program milestone: Discovery Meetings (O.J.19/12). The primary goal of these meetings was to build stakeholder relationships that would enable open exchange of tacit knowledge to clarify needs and capabilities as partnerships developed (O.J.26/01). Through January, 2026 the project team

facilitated 31 of these exploratory, 30–45 minute, 1:1 meetings between partners and selected innovators (P.D.34). I coordinated scheduling, facilitated multiple meetings and managed follow up, soliciting and distributing technical material between stakeholders.

The Discovery Meetings were largely left unstructured; the NextLap team began by reiterating the goals of the session, leading short introductions, and then allowed the stakeholders to take the lead (O.J.13/01). A less structured format encouraged open dialogue, built trust, bridged stakeholders with differing levels of experience, and allowed them to frame problems collaboratively before moving to solutions (INT.B2). After each call, the project team solicited partner feedback, keeping detailed notes on the partner impression and pilot feasibility for reference in the subsequent phase (P.D.34), and managed distribution of necessary technical documentation (P.D.24).

4.5.2 Ecosystem Building in Action: Hub Platform Deployment

The Discovery Meetings concluded at the end of January, after which the partners selected the best innovators with whom to continue collaborating. During this review and selection period in early February, the NextLap team began deploying the Hub community platform to each partner and the innovators who were selected to advance (O.J.18/02). Deployment continued through March on a rolling basis, onboarding stakeholders using a pre-defined communication and engagement strategy (P.D.35).

I co-created the engagement strategy to introduce the Hub, promote pilot collaboration tools, encourage community activity, and gather user feedback (O.J.18/02; P.D.35). Generally speaking, the initial portion of the communication plan would be rolled out over the course of a month, with subsequent engagement depending on how the pilot development progressed. I onboarded the entire innovator cohort to the new platform while creating content within their profiles/collaborations. In addition to email and platform messaging, I led 1:1 onboarding calls to guide innovators through Hub navigation, highlight vital tools, and resolve technical issues (O.J.02/03). After the initial onboarding, engagement nudges sought to build a dynamic community, sparking conversation between stakeholders on the ELT Newsfeed page and encouraging them to share their industry experience.

Hub deployment was a learning process, with no prior roadmap within the program or Beta-i's experience. A number of adjustments were made along the way in the communication strategy and the Hub architecture itself (O.J.02/03). After an initial lag of innovator

engagement and platform activity, I reworked the communication strategy away from information-heavy introductions, which highlighted many different features and functionalities, towards a clearer, simpler call to action that improved onboarding, reduced access issues, and increased adoption and engagement (O.J.02/03). We also saw the opportunity to improve the feedback form questionnaires and rework the Pilot Collaboration workspace to improve co-creation experience, adding partnership-restricted message boards and shared documentation folders (O.J.18/02; O.J.02/03).

4.5.3 Pilot Design: Deep Dive Meetings

As the Pilot Design phase progressed with partners finalizing their innovator selections, the project team coordinated the Hub onboarding and Deep Dive conversations, with 7 of the 21 Discovery Meeting innovators advancing to this next stage. These 90-minute sessions, held from late February to April, 2026, clarified and documented important aspects of each pilot partnership. Compared to Discovery Meetings, the NextLap team played a more active facilitation role to ensure technical alignment and coordination for Pilot Development (O.J.11/02).

To aid this facilitation, the conversations were guided by a script outline to help the facilitator (P.D.25) and structured around a vital client deliverable, the Pilot Canvas (P.D.26), which I guided each innovator through completing before their meetings. The document was meant to align stakeholders on pilot scope, requirements, risks, costs, and any additional value chain actors necessary for implementation, while building the pilot timeline and assigning responsibility for next steps. Asking the right questions through this framework prompted stakeholders to consider both technical details and broader ecosystem implications (INT.B1), aligning expectations and bringing together diverse perspectives. Each innovator filled out a first draft of the canvas in advance, and during the Deep Dive conversations the partner would add their perspective, ensuring their expectations were taken into account and resulting in a co-created pilot framework (O.J.11/02).

I took an active role leading Deep Dive meetings, keeping within scope by systematically discussing each category on the canvas. This ensured that all perspectives were explored, and key elements of pilot design were proactively discussed and agreed upon by all parties. From the innovator perspective, this was an important value proposition of the NLTH, setting a solution-oriented agenda and supporting concrete timelines for pilot milestones (INT.I1).

From the partner perspective, the Deep Dive conversations were the "most critical sub-phase of the programme," and helped to establish "the role of each party… and responsibilities for the upcoming pilot test" – ultimately, they would "determine whether the next steps are taken toward a potential pilot test" (INT.P1).

Over the ~2 month period, the project team coordinated and facilitated a total of 8 Deep Dive conversations and conducted subsequent follow up through the Hub platform. Each Collaboration Workspace enabled transparent communication and document sharing, with the NextLap team guiding early exchanges while encouraging stakeholder ownership (P.D.37; O.J.19/03).

4.6 Collaborative Innovation Output: Pilot Development

As the Pilot Development stage began, I led innovator communications and coordinated collaborative development to ensure smooth project flow for each partnership. As my research engagement with Beta-i and the NextLap team concluded before this phase matured, I only observed these initial steps, with this edition's long-term CI outputs falling outside the study's scope. Nonetheless, preliminary data on governance, knowledge mobilization, and conflict resolution, combined with observation of past editions, illustrated how Beta-i supported pilot innovation as an II.

4.6.1 Project Governance, Knowledge Mobilization and Conflict Resolution

The NextLap team established pilot governance during the Pilot Design Deep Dive meetings, agreeing on and documenting roles and responsibilities in the Pilot Canvas (P.D.26), which would be used going forward as a reference point when roadblocks arose. Ongoing coordination occurred on the Hub, where the NextLap team used live progress pages in the Collaboration Workspace to assign tasks and track updates through multi-stakeholder communication (O.J.07/04). We monitored and managed emerging partnerships with a Hub-based pilot-progress communication page, coordinating the shipping and receiving of product samples, sharing technical requirements, and supporting site visits to bring stakeholders together in person (O.J.07/04).

While we as the II initially led this coordination, we observed a shift towards stakeholder driven communication and autonomous pilot implementation as relationships developed and their familiarity with the Hub grew (P.D.37). Less active coordination was needed with the

previous edition's mature, ongoing pilots, having established a governance structure at this early stage which solidified the roles and responsibilities of the partnerships in the longer term. Ultimately, the NextLap team took a client-centric approach to big-picture program governance, using the sponsoring client's priorities and mission to structure the projects (INT.B1).

The NextLap team played an active role in conflict resolution and expectation alignment, adopting context-based approaches that leveraged established relationships and trust to support effective communication. For example, when one stakeholder adopted an overly commercial focus, the relationship manager used personal communication to encourage a more collaborative innovation mindset (O.J.07/04). I also played a role in aligning expectations and overcoming barriers to progress with a different stakeholder, who was hesitant to offer estimates for pilot execution before receiving key information from their pilot partner. I leveraged my personal relationship to resolve the situation, speaking over the phone to hear their perspective, share our context of multi-stakeholder coordination, and ultimately reach a compromise to provide the needed information (O.J.07/04).

4.6.2 Sustainability Assessment & Ongoing Pilot Development

One of my principal contributions was developing a Triple Bottom Line Sustainability Assessment to evaluate, quantify and validate pilot-level impacts across economic, environmental, and social dimensions (P.D.27). The aggregated results would support communication and marketing initiatives by providing evidence of program impact through two concrete KPIs: tons ELT diverted from landfill and tons CO2 emissions avoided. I developed Hub-based guides for the innovators (P.D.29) and a semi-automated evaluation framework (P.D.28) to simplify both stakeholder input and internal scoring.

As my research concluded, there were a total of 7 pilots under early stage development from this cohort to which the Sustainability Assessment would soon be rolled out, as well as 2 ongoing pilots from previous editions that the NextLap team continued to support. The closer level of coordination seen with the early stage pilots had given way to less frequent and more high level support with the mature pilot, including coordinating with a third party environmental consultancy to offer an in-depth environmental assessment of the solution and develop a digital certification certifying its recycled material impact (P.D.37, O.J.05/02). In this way, the NextLap team continued brokering partnerships for mature pilots while

simultaneously shifting the leadership of day-to-day activity coordination and progress updates to the project stakeholders. As the fourth edition of the NLTH approached its end, activity shifted towards planning the final summit event and sustaining stakeholder buy-in to the Hub platform.

4.7 Capstone Event & Ecosystem Consolidation

4.7.1 NextLap Summit

The NextLap Summit Proposal (P.D.31) outlined a bold vision for the capstone event, bringing together network members and external industry leaders, startups, public institutions and academics to showcase the newly developed innovative solutions. It built on the pillars of action, circularity and collaboration to highlight the client's facilitation of ELT CE innovation, position the NLTH as a vital collaborative platform and foster connections between key stakeholders (P.D.31). The proposal included collaborative breakout activities to encourage participation of the attendees and would act as a soft launch for the Hub platform, showcasing the community building efforts and attracting new participants to explore the site and join the network (P.D.31).

4.7.2 Hub Institutionalization

Looking beyond the proposed summit, growing and institutionalizing the Hub platform will be an essential focus for the future of the NLTH program as a whole. Over the observed deployment of the Hub, the community development potential was already apparent. Stakeholders began to bring their industry perspective to discussions and share tacit knowledge, with one even proactively asking to showcase a recently successful project development from outside the NextLap program (P.D.37). Stakeholders bought into using the Collaboration Workspace for pilot communication, and left positive feedback on the Hub's community building and pilot management potential (P.D.36).

By the end of my research period, a Hub 2.0 platform was in development (P.D.30), applying lessons learned through improved architecture and functionality while leveraging AI to synthesize internal documentation and member feedback, identify collaboration opportunities and best practices, and support continuous program improvement (INT.B3). The soft launch of the prototype to a wider audience at the Summit would enhance the reputation of the NLTH, improving ecosystem positioning and driving network growth by presenting highly

relevant content and opportunities to potential members (INT.B3). By institutionalizing the Hub as the tangible platform upon which the innovation of the NLTH takes place, the future of the program would be better positioned to capture new opportunities via collaborators that it previously would not have been able to (INT.B1) and support the continuous ecosystem concept set out at the start of the edition (P.D.2).

5. Discussion

5.1 Interdependent Orchestration Mechanisms: Cross-level Feedback Loops

Beta-i's facilitation activities, stakeholder communication and innovation toolkits supported outcomes across the project, network and industry levels (INT.C1), and showed interdependency between intermediary-led orchestration mechanisms. Intra-level activities provided mutual support and influenced other mechanisms across the other three levels, with activity focus evolving through the project lifecycle, bringing the possibility of orchestration evolution to the Schepis et al. (2021) framework.

5.1.1 Industry x Network Level Feedback Loops

Initial phases of Project Kickoff and Network Construction involved industry and network level orchestration activities, laying the foundation for broader ecosystem participation. Envisioning the program's evolution required a demonstration of past II value through stakeholder engagement, leveraging trust built in previous editions. These industry level practices supported network level outcomes, as Beta-i was able to mobilize client sponsorship resources through the Memorandum of Understanding that outlined their roles and responsibilities (P.D.8), while also helping manage industry level ecosystem stability. This phase showed a codependent industry x network level feedback loop, with industry level activities enabling network level resource mobilization through client support, which in return further enhanced industry level ecosystem stability.

Network Construction presented similar industry x network level feedback loops; industry level envisioning demonstrated Beta-i's value as an II and enhanced stakeholder engagement, which supported network building. Partner Onboarding elicited network member input on innovation opportunities and technical requirements, which fed back into industry level network stability by aligning innovator profiles with emerging needs and opportunities. Gathering network partner contributions through the Needs Assessment directly supported

industry level stakeholder engagement outcomes. The Scouting Dashboard Report (P.D. 19) provided quantitative evidence of how these network level contributions supported industry level ecosystem engagement and stakeholder conversion. By linking industry level stakeholder engagement to network level capability alignment, cross-level activities supported each other and built a bridge between stakeholders (INT.C2; INT.I1), setting the foundation for project-level work.

5.1.2 Network x Project Level Feedback Loops

Mirroring the cross-level interplay above, the Stakeholder Mobilization phase formed network x project level feedback loops as it began coordinating stakeholders. Reverse Pitch recordings (P.D.19) elicited challenge-related tacit knowledge contributions, while the Online Pitch booklets (P.D.20 & P.D.23) aligned stakeholder expectations and coordinated interactions. These network level activities supported project level scoping and partnership brokering during the Online Pitch event and improved innovators' understanding of user needs. Helping them adopt a commercial perspective, develop partnerships, and commercialize R&D from their lab "to give solutions to society" (INT.I1), this network x project level feedback loop showed how alignment of network stakeholder needs and capabilities strengthened project partnership brokering.

As the project lifecycle progressed, Discovery Meetings brokered partnerships by building project level relationships and advancing project scoping for viable collaborations. These contributed to network-level outcomes through shared technical documentation, which in turn would support project level solution development. The meetings built trust and mobilized network level technical resources, which enhanced project level scoping and CI outcomes in their own network x project level feedback loop. The Deep Dive Meeting Pilot Canvas (P.D.26) was integral in mobilizing network resources and supporting project scoping to develop new collaborative pilot opportunities. Deep Dive conversations and subsequent Hub based coordination further developed stakeholder relations through partnership brokering, promoting pilot project development and ensuring stakeholder perspective alignment through the structured discussions. A feedback loop with network-level mechanisms supported these project-level activities, in which the Pilot Canvas mobilized, aligned resources, and in turn strengthened pilot project outcomes.

5.1.3 Cross-Cutting Framework Feedback Loops

Hub platform development and deployment displayed cross-cutting relevance across all impact levels of the Schepis et al. (2021) framework. Toolkits and workspaces supported project scoping, while community features coordinated network interactions and encouraged member contributions. Message boards supported project activities and network resource mobilization by increasing knowledge mobility, driving innovation development. Improved stakeholder buy-in and network level knowledge sharing would strengthen pilot outcomes while also increasing industry level community visibility, attracting new ecosystem participants and widening potential for future partnerships. As the Hub was deployed, the mutually supportive nature of its inter-level orchestration activities came into focus; adjustments to functionality were needed to support pilot development, as poor stakeholder experience on the project level could weaken buy-in and hinder network level engagement for future initiatives. In turn, a dynamic network community would support industry level outcomes by strengthening positioning, increasing ecosystem awareness and demonstrating clear value, which would attract new members and sustain engagement across the network.

During Pilot Development, Hub-based network resource mobilization supported the project level, with the established governance framework enabling the exchange of pilot-critical operational data and technical knowledge. The Sustainability Assessment promoted pilot outcomes with clear KPIs, communicating innovation value within and beyond the network, supporting industry level envisioning by strengthening the NextLap mission across the ecosystem and demonstrating Beta-i's orchestration value to network collaborators. Supporting the findings of Schepis et al. (2021), the success of the Hub's ecosystem building vision depended on cross-level feedback loops, showing how well-implemented mechanisms at one level can reinforce outcomes across others.

The NextLap Summit would also rely on cross-cutting feedback loops, using project outcomes to increase awareness of successful innovation partnerships in the wider ecosystem. In turn, this supported further industry level engagement by demonstrating Beta-i's value as an II and attracting new ecosystem participants. The event would also elicit network contributions from partners, through ownership over the collaborative breakout sessions, and from non-members to inform future collaboration opportunities, supporting industry level outcomes of stakeholder engagement while leveraging the Hub platform to scale the network. The proposed summit event and Hub-based community building illustrate how certain

milestones and activities can employ mechanisms across all three levels of the framework and drive impact on one level from successful activity on another.

5.1.4 Evolution of Orchestration Mechanism Interdependence through the Project Lifecycle

Extending the tri-level framework of Schepis et al. (2021) with a new, longitudinal layer, this research showed that the inter-level orchestration activity feedback loops above evolve throughout the project lifecycle, with distinct early-, mid- and late- stage feedback loops. At the beginning stages of the project, activities focused on the industry and network level, while more effort was spent on network and project level activities as the pilot partnerships formed and collaborative output began. Cross-cutting ecosystem development was prioritized throughout the project in the form of the NextLap Hub platform development and deployment. Finally, the industry level outcomes of the Summit event proposal all depended on support from mechanisms across levels that were employed during the program and at the summit itself. The event's vision tied together the smaller feedback loops developed during the program edition, and crystalized how the industry level impact of the original Schepis et al. (2021) might be extended to consider wider, ecosystem level impact.

Further extending the longitudinal perspective to mature pilots from the previous project edition, the industry x network feedback loops overtook the project specific activities, as the intermediary scaled back its involvement in day-to-day project coordination, instead opting for industry level stakeholder engagement and network resource mobilization. Beta-i implemented the NextLap program through orchestration mechanisms that spanned project, network and industry level impact in order to drive innovative output and strengthen its ecosystem positioning. Analysing the collected data against this tri-level theoretical framework enhanced the research of Schepis et al. (2021) by showing the evolution of these feedback loops over the longitudinal project lifecycle, with orchestration focus shifting as the network was formed, partnerships were strengthened and pilots matured.

5.2 Ecosystem Development for Systemic Impact

5.2.1 Strengthening the Ecosystem: Resource-Based Dynamic Capabilities

Ecosystem design theory illustrates the NLTH's evolution across program editions and its future via the Hub 2.0 platform. Following Lingens et al. (2021), since the program began in

2021 the NextLap team reduced knowledge distance through experience and technical research, tightly aligning its growing ecosystem around its core mission (INT.C1; P.D.1). Building and deploying institutional knowledge resources supported this ecosystem alignment, which could maintain focus through its clear mission and technical understanding in cases where stakeholder discussions drifted away from ELT material specific innovation (O.J.07/01). The NextLap team was also "essential in establishing communication between actors involved in the program and in setting the pace for [pilot] developments…" (INT.P1). This facilitation of transparent communication was supported by trusting relationships among the network members (INT.C1) and was a vital part of the project coordination that Beta-i brought to the program (INT.I1). Trust-based communication as a social capital resource was key to strengthening and growing the NLTH ecosystem, a crucial value proposition for the intermediary (INT.B2).

Deploying these institutional knowledge and social capital resources helped develop the dynamic *sensing* capability to identify network opportunities (Randhawa et al., 2022); stakeholders were willing to share tacit information and material resources that the NextLap team was able to capitalize on, identifying potential opportunities and roadblocks. The program's fourth edition ecosystem development focused on expanding its reach across the value chain and engaging a broader set of actors from a wide range of industries, essential for achieving success in the wider mission of the program and of its client (INT.C1; INT.B2). The NextLap project team used its expertise and experience to reorient the program towards a more diverse set of stakeholders, using the *shaping* dynamic capability to reconfigure the ecosystem around its vision of a dynamic, platform-supported innovation community (P.D.2; P.D.35; Randhawa et al., 2022).

5.2.2 Systemic Innovation: Ecosystem Extension of the Orchestration Framework

Systemic intermediaries must align stakeholders and manage long-term innovation (Van Lente et al., 2003), evidenced by the NextLap team's continued facilitation of previous editions' pilots more than a year after launching. In the transition towards systemic innovation, "many agencies are exploring ecosystem facilitation models, in which their role is… more focused on helping different ecosystem actors connect to define problems and solutions themselves" (IDIA, 2021). This approach is consistent with Beta-i's role as a II; neutral in terms of understanding the challenges and priorities of their stakeholders, but active in driving network connections and supporting emerging partnerships (INT.B2). By engaging diverse actors and

considering ecosystem-level impacts (P.D.2), the NextLap project could avoid “creating distorted incentives and further entrenching elitist patterns of power” and facilitate more inclusive ecosystem approaches (IDIA, 2021). Development of the Hub platform would continue to strengthen ecosystem positioning and move from time-bound pilot cohorts to a continuous CI program by enabling autonomous networking, accelerating member integration, and showcasing outcomes to build legitimacy and attract new participants.

Revisiting the Schepis et al. (2021) framework, these network and industry level orchestration activities broadened the NLTH’s reach across sectors and geographies (INT.C1), positioning it as a well-known and desirable ecosystem for corporates pursuing sustainable innovation (INT.C2). The inter-level activity feedback loops noted in section 5.1 show how the strength of stakeholder engagement and ecosystem-wide envisioning were built on tangible innovation output on the project level, which in turn depended on strong bonds between members on the network level. However, as discussed in section 2.4.1, the original framework of Schepis et al. (2021) stops short of addressing ecosystem-wide impact, focusing on the energy-specific sector that was the subject of their study instead of taking all actors along the wider value chain into account.

Considering narrow, industry-specific impact can lead to a fragmented perspective that fails to capture the socioeconomic paradigm shift that CE innovation entails (Bourdin & Jacquet, 2025). The data collected and analysed here suggests the need to extend industry level mechanisms towards a cross-sector, ecosystem level, one which would acknowledge the systemic nature of circular innovation that transcends any single industry. Enhancing the industry level impact of the Schepis et al. (2021) orchestration framework to an ecosystem level perspective recognizes the cross-sectorial nature of NLTH’s circular mission and the diverse set of actors that must be engaged for its success, allowing for a more nuanced understanding of the project’s context. The interdependence of its ecosystem building efforts on network and project level outcomes extends the original model of Schepis et al. (2021), adding the context of cross-sectorial collaboration that is unique to its goal of circular innovation.

6. Conclusion

From September, 2025 through April, 2026, I conducted action research on the NLTH program at Beta-i while contributing to project outcomes as an Innovation Consultant intern.

From my embedded position, I explored how the program was implemented to support CI pilots in the ELT space, and how the NextLap team sought to build and strengthen the surrounding ecosystem to drive circular solutions. I gained an understanding of the project lifecycle and gathered data from internal documentation, stakeholder interviews, and my own experience recorded in an observational journal.

Analysis through the tri-level orchestration framework of Schepis et al. (2021) showed how activities on project, network and industry levels supported circular innovation. From their intermediary position, the NextLap team implemented orchestration mechanisms that were self-reinforcing both within the same impact level and across other levels of the framework. This cross-level interdependence formed feedback loops, in which efforts at one level supported positive outcomes on another, which in turn strengthened the initial level's mechanism. The NextLap team promoted innovative output as an II by actively developing its ecosystem, connecting stakeholders for collaboration, supporting resource exchange and building legitimacy of the program and itself as a value-generating collaborator.

These interdependent orchestration mechanisms were supported by strong, interpersonal network relationships; trusting and transparent communication was a core pillar of their dynamic orchestration capabilities. These widened the reach of the NLTH ecosystem to diverse stakeholders, helping transition towards a continuous innovation platform and position Beta-i as a CE collaboration leader. This transformation was anchored around the newly developed Hub platform, which supported mechanisms on all three levels of the Schepis et al. (2021) framework and strengthened its surrounding ecosystem to support wider opportunity for collaborative solutions.

The findings of this study may support both practitioners actively building CIEs and future theoretical research into how intermediaries implement orchestration mechanisms to facilitate collaborative, circular innovation. Practically, the research provides actionable insights into how IIs can effectively implement and manage CE-focused collaboration in real world environments, identifying virtuous feedback loops of interdependent orchestration mechanisms that facilitate stakeholder coordination, relationship development and innovative output. Academically, it extends the multi-level interdependent framework of orchestration mechanisms developed by Schepis et al. (2021), recontextualizing its industry level mechanisms in broader, CE ecosystem development terms and adding a longitudinal lens to how the inter-level feedback loops are formed and develop over the project lifecycle.

There were a number of limitations that this study faced, primarily as a result of the fixed-term timeline of the research engagement with the NextLap project team. The student researcher was not able to observe the final pilot development phases through completion; closing the research window before the pilots from 4th edition began developing concrete outputs and limited exposure to previous edition's ongoing pilots narrowed the perspective on the longer term innovation outcomes that the NLTH program can produce. Additionally, a higher number of stakeholder interviews would have deepened the understanding of how the NextLap team supports circular innovation. Interviews were only conducted with one representative from each stakeholder type, and did not include any of the fourth edition innovator cohort, meaning that the stakeholder perspective was limited and did not reflect the breadth of the recent ecosystem building efforts.

The analysis and conclusions derived from this study could be extended through observation and comparison of the next edition of the NLTH program to analyse the outcomes of the current ecosystem building and Hub platform 2.0 development efforts. Additionally, building on this study of program implementation to focus on where value is truly created and delivered to stakeholders could unlock further actionable insights for improving intermediary-led CIE output. Based on this extension, the present study could be used in conjunction with other II case studies to map common enablers and barriers involved in building collaboration-based innovation ecosystems.

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Appendix

Semi-structured Interview Guides

Beta-I: Internal Project Team Interview Guide

Interview Objectives:

A. *Understand how learnings from previous editions of the program have informed current design and implementation choices;*
B. *Explore how different stages of the program lifecycle enable or constrain collaboration and innovation;*
C. *Identify the orchestration and intermediation practices used by the team to coordinate ecosystem actors;*
D. *Examine how the project team navigates tensions and role boundaries at different Levels of Implementation while acting as a neutral innovation intermediary.*

Interview Questions:

1. *How does the project team deliberately coordinate actors during each phase of the program?*

- *How do these coordination mechanisms differ across project level, network level, and industry-wide impact?*

2. *Which were the biggest challenges or learnings from previous editions?*

- *How have they influenced changes to how stakeholder coordination and collaboration are structured in this edition?*

3. *Are there any coordination or facilitation mechanisms that have remained consistent across editions?*

- *Why do you think these have endured and what do they achieve?*

4. *This edition aims to move from a time-bounded pilot model toward a more continuous, hub ecosystem:*

- *What concrete actions are being taken to foster a continuous, dynamic community,*
- *What metrics will be used to assess its progress,*
- *How is ongoing engagement among actors being supported?*

5. *How do you break down the value proposition of specific actions or practices that the team uses to drive program outcomes?*

6. *Which indicators (formal or informal) does the team use to assess project success and ecosystem health? (ex. collaboration quality, knowledge exchange, or network stability)*

7. *How do you understand Beta-i's role (capabilities and limitations) as a neutral intermediary in this ecosystem?*

- *Does that shape how the program is implemented on a project level, network level and/or industry-wide level?*

8. *What kinds of tensions or trade-offs tend to arise when coordinating diverse stakeholders, and how does the team typically address them?*

9. *Are there any other important points about how this project is implemented or how the ecosystem operates that we didn't discuss?*

Client: Project Sponsor Interview Guide

Interview Objectives:

A. *Understand how NLTH is perceived to support innovation in the ELT sector;*
B. *Explore the client's perspective on how NL promotes collaboration and Circular Economy practices across the value chain;*
C. *Examine perceptions of the shift toward a continuous innovation ecosystem and its expected benefits for the sector;*
D. *Understand how the project aligns with the client's public mandate and sector-wide objectives.*

Interview Questions:

1. *From your perspective, how does the NLTH Program contribute to innovation in the ELT sector compared to existing innovation approaches, on the Project Level, Member Network Level, and Industry Level?*

2. *What aspects of the program most effectively enable cross-sector collaboration for circular economy solutions?*

3. *How do you assess the success or value of the project in the bigger picture, beyond individual pilot outcomes?*

4. *This edition aims to move beyond a time-bounded program toward a continuous innovation ecosystem. How do you view this shift, and what value do you expect it to bring to the ELT sector?*

5. *What functions do you see Beta-i performing as a coordinating intermediary within the broader ELT sector (e.g., brokering, aligning interests, facilitating trust), and which are most critical?*

6. *In what ways does the project align with your organization's public mandate and broader policy or sectoral objectives?*

7. *Are there any other important points about how this project is implemented or how the ecosystem operates that we didn't discuss?*

Network Members: Partner & Innovator Interview Guide

Objective of interview:

A. Understand how NLTH is perceived to support innovation for ELT solutions and how the project promotes CE collaboration across the value chain.
    a. Understand their perspective of facilitation mechanisms used by Beta-i as an II.
B. Examine perceptions of the shift toward a continuous innovation ecosystem and its expected benefits for the sector;
C. Understand their perspective of actually engaging with the NL ecosystem on a continuous basis - barriers and enablers.

Interview Questions:

1. *How has participating in the NextLap program influenced your ability to develop or test circular economy solutions, in terms of gaining access to knowledge, resources, or capabilities you would not have accessed independently?*

2. *What were the key program milestones (onboarding, matchmaking, pilot design facilitation) that most enabled this collaboration?*

3. *What role did Beta-i play in facilitating coordination, communication, trust and/or conflict resolution between partners?*

4. *Did participation feel like being part of a broader ecosystem or more like a standalone project? Why or why not?*

5. *Has participating in the NL program changed your perspective on the wider ELT recycling ecosystem, or your perception of being connected to a wider CE ELT space?*

6. *What aspects of the program most helped effective collaboration and innovation?*

7. *What aspects of the program most hindered effective collaboration and innovation?*

8. *What conditions would need to be in place for you to continue collaborating and engaging within this ecosystem after the pilot ends?*

9. *Are there any other important points about how this project is implemented or how the ecosystem operates that we didn't discuss?*

Table 1: Stakeholder Interview Sessions

Code	Stakeholder Type	Role in Ecosystem	Interview Date	Interview Location	Duration
INT.B1	NLTH Project Team	Project implementation	February 3, 2026	Video Conference	53 min
INT.B2	NLTH Project Team	Project implementation	February 4, 2026	In-person: Beta-i Office	47 min

INT.B3	NLTH Project Team	Project implementation	February 5, 2026	Video Conference	32 min
INT.C1	Project Client	Sponsor of NLTH Program	February 12, 2026	Video Conference	30 min
INT.C2	Project Client	Sponsor of NLTH Program	February 12, 2026	Video Conference	32 min
INT.I1	Innovator	R&D, solution developer	February 12, 2026	Video Conference	51 min
INT.P1	Industrial Partner	User of solution	March 18 & March 19, 2026	Email exchange	*NA*

Table 2: Internal Project Documentation

Code	Project Phase	Document Name	Description
P.D.1	Project Kickoff	2105_NLAP3 - Ecosystem Mapping	Defines ecosystem challenges, opportunities, and key application sectors of circular ELT products
P.D.2	Project Kickoff	2140_NLTH NextLap Tech Hub - Future _ Proposal	Defines vision, success criteria, and evolution from previous editions
P.D.3	Project Kickoff	2140_NLTH_ Valor Pneu's MoU - NextLap Tech Hub 2.0	Clarifies roles, scope, deliverables, confidentiality
P.D.4	Project Kickoff	2140_NLTH - Internal Kick off	Defines stakeholders, responsibilities, project plan, next steps
P.D.5	Project Kickoff	2140_NLTH - Client Syncs	Establishes cadence for updates and communication
P.D.6	Project Kickoff	2140_NLTH - 9. Marketing & Comms (Drive Folder)	Creates consistent program identity and communication
P.D.7	Partner Onboarding	2140_NLTH Partners Pitch Deck	Explains value proposition and past success to partners
P.D.8	Partner Onboarding	Partner MoU (Drive Folder)	Defines commitments, expectations, and collaboration structure
P.D.9	Partner Onboarding	2140_NLTH All Partners Meeting	Introduces actors and workflows across ecosystem
P.D.10	Partner Onboarding	2140_NLTH - Needs Assessment Summary	Captures partner challenges, priorities, and constraints
P.D.11	Partner Onboarding	2140_NLTH Partners Journey	Explains full program journey and

		Handbook	expectations. INC.Reverse Pitch Guidelines: Defines how partners communicate their needs
P.D.12	Scouting / Open Call	2140_NLTH Scouting Masterfile 2.0	Maps info for external innovator leads: profiles, contact info, communication history, and match to partner needs
P.D.13	Scouting / Open Call	2140_ NLTH - Scouting Strategy	Defines outreach approach and targeting logic
P.D.14	Scouting / Open Call	2140_NLTH - Hello's Copy & Flow	Communication template and scheduling plan for converting innovators into network
P.D.15	Scouting / Open Call	2140_NLTH Innovator Pitch Deck: All Tracks	Educates applicants on program structure and expectations
P.D.16	Scouting / Open Call	2140_NLTH - Evaluation Framework	Standardized scoring criteria of innovator applications
P.D.17	Scouting / Open Call	Completed Innovator Applications	Assesses fit between innovators and partner needs
P.D.18	Scouting / Open Call	2140_NLTH: Scouting Dashboard Report	Synthesizes results of Scouting and Open Call milestones
P.D.19	Partner Onboarding	Reverse Pitch Recordings	Partners present partner challenges to innovators
P.D.20	Online Pitch	2140_NLTH Online Pitch Booklet (Partners)	Prepares partners to evaluate collaboration potential based on innovator pitches
P.D.21	Online Pitch	2140_NLTH Online Pitch Booklet (Innovators)	Prepares innovators to present effectively during Online Pitch
P.D.22	Online Pitch	2140_NLTH - Evaluation Sheet (Partners): Blank Copy	Captures partner preferences for innovators based on Online Pitch
P.D.23	Online Pitch	Next Lap Tech Hub - Online Pitch | NPS (Innovators & Partners)	Measures satisfaction and identifies improvements from stakeholders on Online Pitch event
P.D.24	Pilot Design: Discovery Meetings	2140_Innovator Technical Docs (TDS, SDS, BOM)	Shared folder to exchange detailed technical info between actors
P.D.25	Pilot Design: Deep Dive Meetings	Deep Dive Meeting Script	Facilitation guideline to use during Deep Dive conversations, based around Pilot Canvas
P.D.26	Pilot Design: Deep Dive Meetings	Innovator & Partner | Pilot Canvas - Next Lap Tech Hub	Structured co-design of pilot between actors detailing aspects of pilot design and development
P.D.27	Pilot Development	2140_NLTH: Pilot Sustainability Assessment	Google form with TBL assessment, to be filled out by each pilot innovator
P.D.28	Pilot Development	2140_NLTH: Pilot Design Sustainability Assessment Masterfile	Contained information on metrics, scoring criteria and scoring calculator used to measure expected pilot impact

P.D.29	Pilot Development	Sustainability Assessment - Overview Video & How-To Video	Guides participants on best practices and next steps for completing Sustainability Assessment
P.D.30	Hub 2.0: Future NLTH	2140_NLTH - 12. Future HUB 2.0 (Drive Folder)	Framework for planning the next generation Hub platform
P.D.31	NextLap Summit	2140_NLTH NextLap Tech Hub Innovation Summit Proposal	Client proposal for 4 edition summit event
P.D.32	Notion Hub Platform	2140_NLTH: Ecosystem Building Brainstorming	Research and brainstorming document on NLTH positioning and ecosystem building.
P.D.33	Online Pitch	Online Pitch Masterfile	Planning document for Online Pitch event
P.D.34	Pilot Design: Discovery Meetings	2140_NLTH: Discovery Conversation Masterfile.xlsx	Planning document for Discovery Meetings, tracking contact availability, scheduling and meeting outcomes
P.D.35	Hub Development and Rollout	2140_NextLap Tech Hub Notion _ Communication Plan	Planning and scheduling for Hub communication and engagement strategy
P.D.36	Pilot Design: Deep Dive Meetings	2140_NLTH 20.03.2026 - Weekly Synch #26	Client sync presentation with program updates
P.D.37	Hub Development and Rollout	2140_NLTH 10.04.2026 - Weekly Sync #28	Client sync presentation with program updates

Table 3: Observational Journal Entries

Entry #	**Code**	**Date of Entry**	**Topic**
1	O.J.16/10	16/10/2025	Communication & Coordination with Valorpneu, end client
2	O.J.11/11	11/11/2025	Scouting Activities
3	O.J.19/11	19/11/2025	Open Call Activities
4	O.J.28/11	28/11/2025	Partners Communication & Coordination
5	O.J.03/12	03/12/2025	Online Pitch
6	O.J.05/12	05/12/2025	Reflections on Scouting, Open Call, & Application Activities
7	O.J.08/12	08/12/2025	Impact of Time Crunch on Scouting, Open Call and Online Pitch
8	O.J.19/12	19/12/2025	Online Pitch & Partner Evaluations Reflection
9	O.J.07/01	07/01/2026	Discovery Meetings: Kick Off
10	O.J.13/01	13/01/2026	Discovery Meetings: Ongoing Observations

11	O.J.26/01	26/01/2026	Discovery Meetings: Wrap Up
12	O.J.29/01	29/01/2026	Reflection on Pilot Feasibility Issues
13	O.J.05/02	05/02/2026	Intro to Sustainability Certification Service Provider
14	O.J.11/02	11/02/2026	Deep Dive Meetings: Kick Off
15	O.J.18/02	18/02/2026	Notion Hub: Architecture and Deployment
16	O.J.18/02	18/02/2026	Reflection on Sustainability Assessment, Hub Positioning, & Ecosystem Development Activities
17	O.J.02/03	02/03/2026	Hub Deployment / Stakeholder Engagement Activities
18	O.J.19/03	19/03/2026	Deep Dive Meetings: Observations & Wrap Up
19	O.J.27/03	27/03/2026	Pilot Canvas 2.0 Revision
20	O.J.07/04	07/04/2026	Pilot Development Activities on the Hub

Project Mapping Diagrams

Fig. 1: *Project Timeline Overview + Hub Platform Development & Rollout*

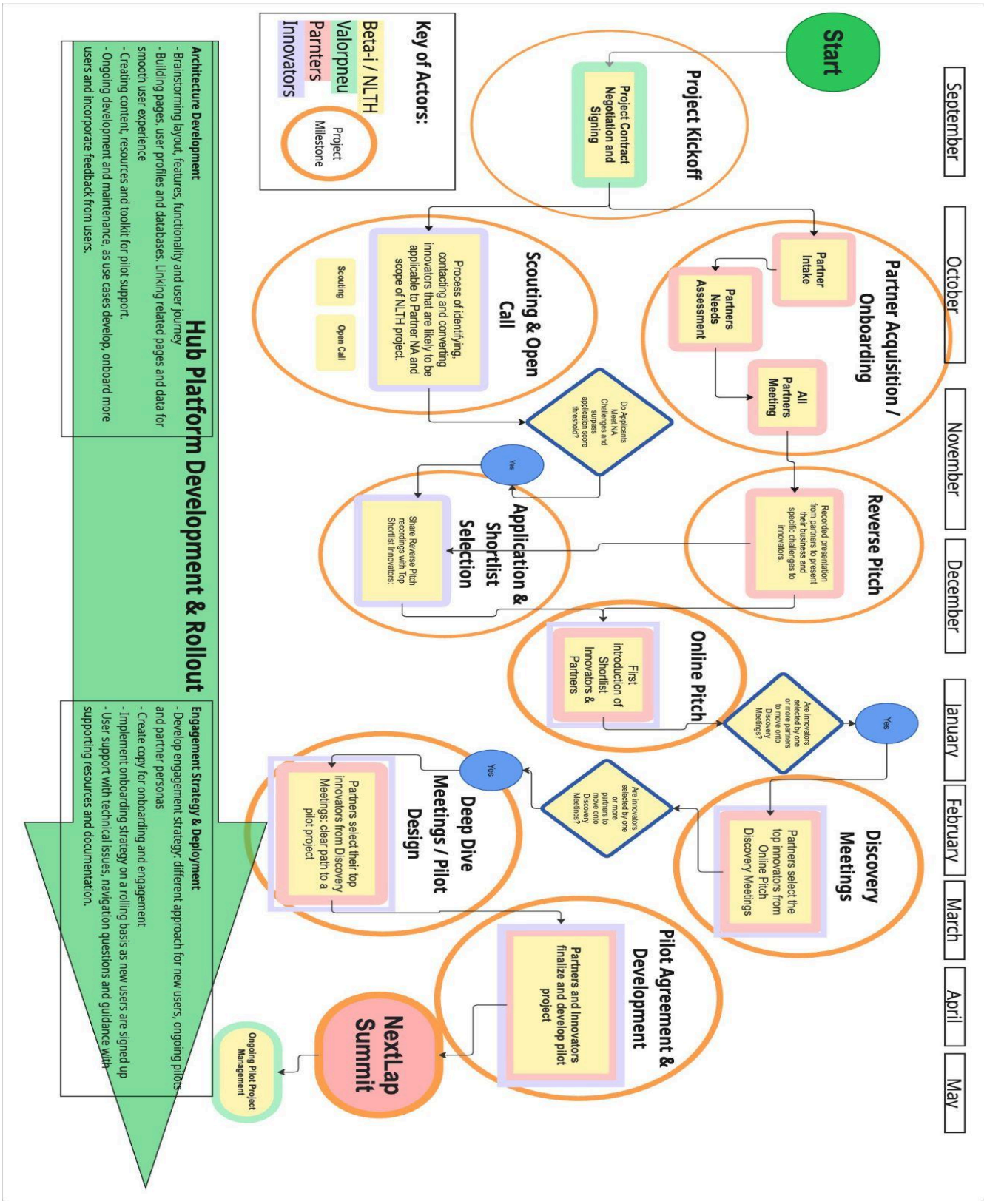

Fig. 2: *Project Phase Details: Project Kickoff, Partner Onboarding, Scouting & Open Call*

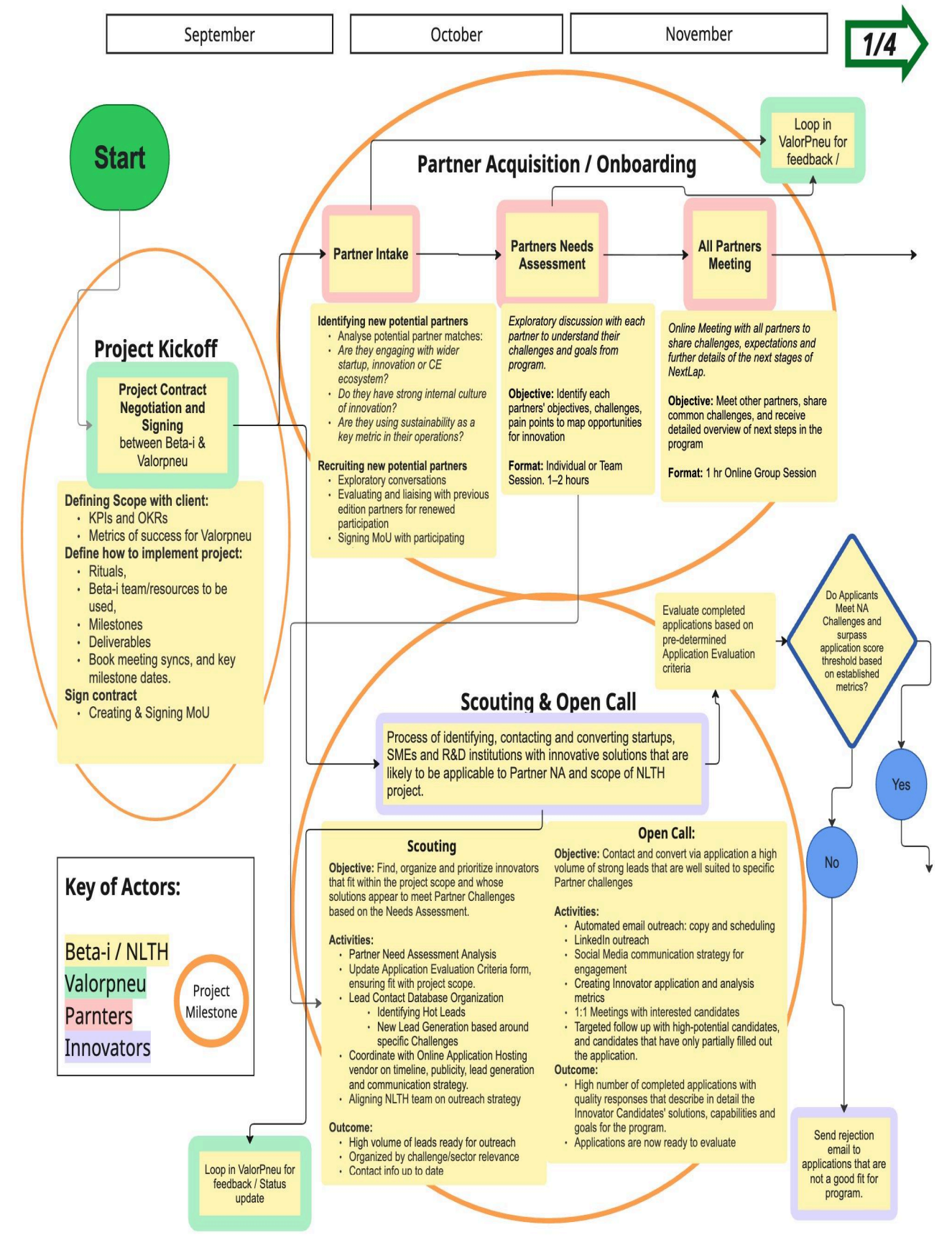

Fig. 3: *Project Phase Details: Reverse Pitch, Innovator Applications & Shortlist, Online Pitch*

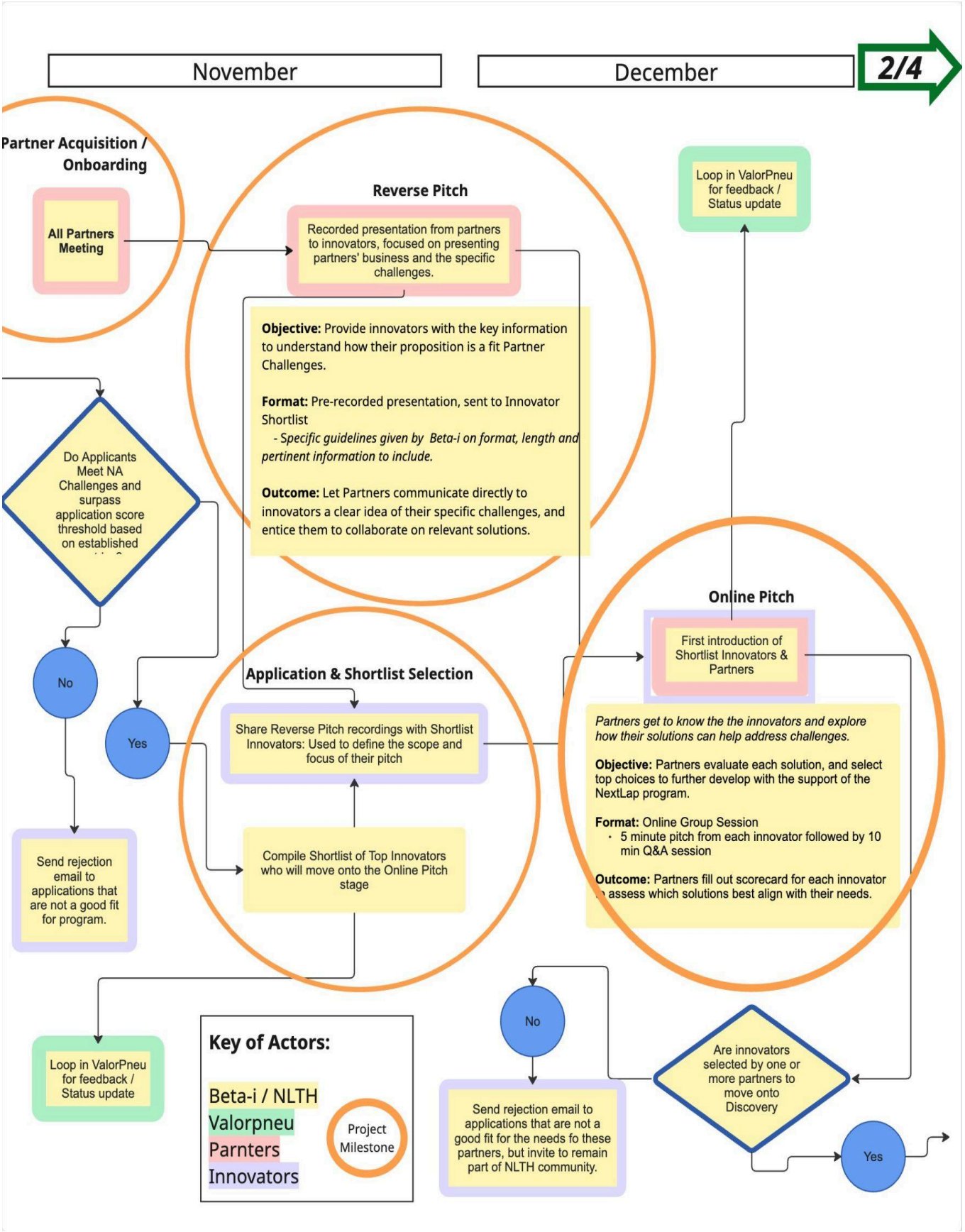

Fig. 4: *Project Phase Details: Project Design - Discovery Meetings & Deep Dive Meetings*

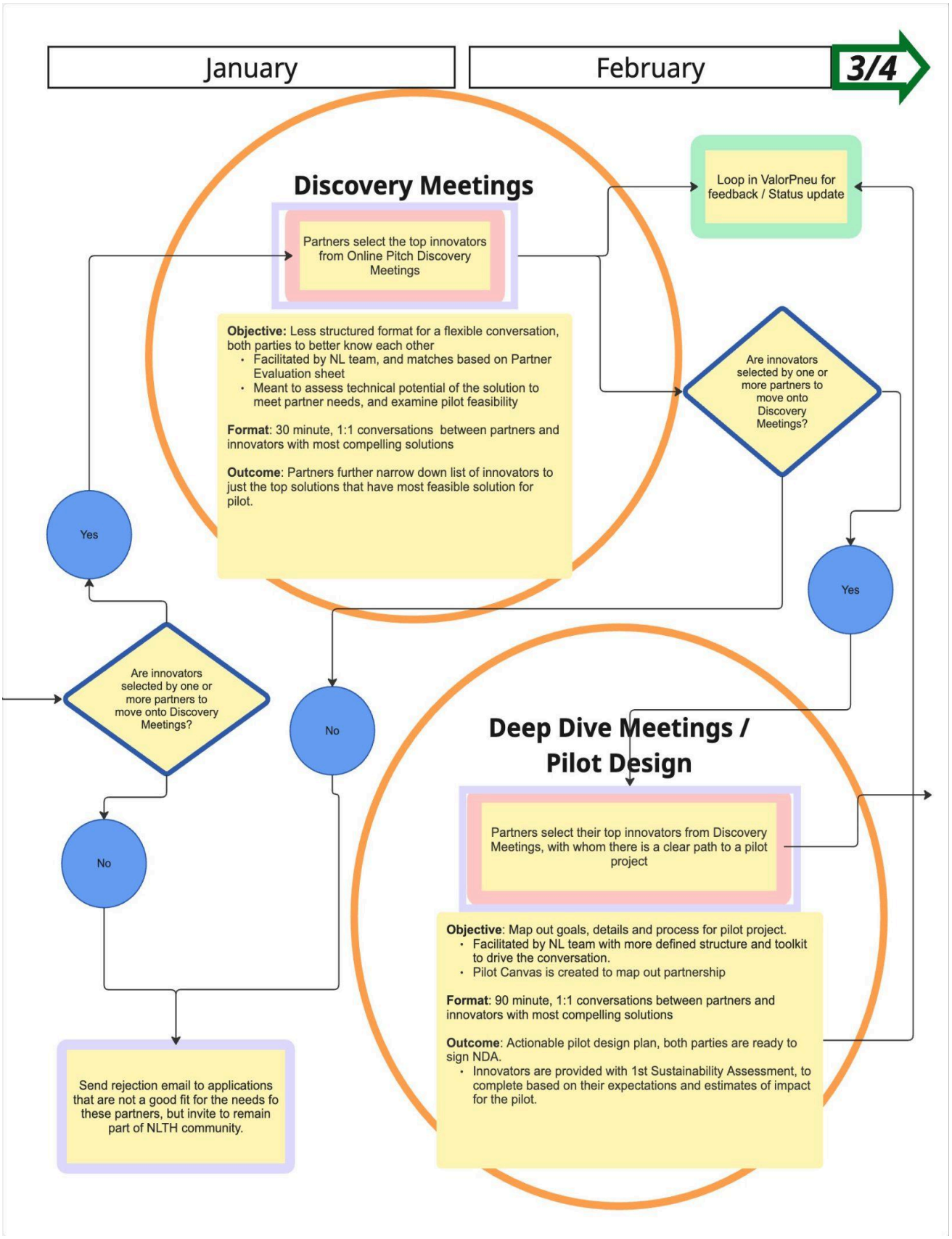

Fig. 5: *Project Phase Details: Project Development, NextLap Summit*