NOTE FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE MEMBERS OF THE BUREAU

Subject: IDEA Lab - State of Play after two years of innovation testing

SUMMARY

At its meeting on 9 October 2019 the members of the Working Group on Buildings, Transport and a Green Parliament discussed the works that had been conducted to improve Members’ working environments in Brussels and Strasbourg. This successful and unanimously welcomed upgrade of the Members’ office set-up has been made possible also thanks to the successful outcome of a pilot project in which several members of the Bureau participated during the last parliamentary term (2014-2019), aiming at the modernisation of offices. In light of the usefulness of the pilot project to prepare the final decisions, the Working Group endorsed the creation of a permanent test environment for innovation - an IDEA Lab - to try out and assess new technical, furniture, security, facility management, meeting as well as IT and EMAS solutions prior to large scale implementation.

During the Bureau Away Days of 3-4 October 2019 the members of the Bureau supported the suggestions made by the President as well as the proposal of the Working Group to set up an IDEA Lab. Members also expressed the view that unused spaces on Members’ floors could be converted for better use. At its meeting on 23 October 2019 the Bureau formally approved the proposal to create an IDEA Lab.

At its meeting of 12 February 2020 the members of the Working Group on Buildings, Transport and a Green Parliament were informed about the state of play of the IDEA Lab and held an exchange of views on the proposed way forward. Accordingly, the objective of the IDEA Lab is to transform the reflection on Members’ working environment into a permanent and coordinated process. During the Bureau meetings of 16 December 2019, 22 July 2020, 24 September 2020, 16 December 2020, and 18 January 2021 the members of the Bureau suggested that the IDEA Lab tested solutions in the area of environmental performance, security (especially electronic locks), IT and teleworking as well as ICT innovation strategy.

The present note is intended to provide a non-exhaustive mid-term review of ideas which were discussed and tested in the IDEA Lab. These are grouped in three categories: adaptive architecture, smart facilities management and ICT equipment.

The members of the Bureau are invited to:

- take note of the information provided in this note.
I. BACKGROUND

1. At its meeting on 9 October 2019 the members of the Working Group on Buildings, Transport and a Green Parliament discussed the works that had been conducted to improve Members’ working environments in Brussels and in Strasbourg. In fact, in line with the “Building Strategy Beyond 2019” approved by the Bureau on 16 April 2018 Members had been provided with more office space ("one plus two" in Brussels and "one plus one" in Strasbourg) as well as a modernised working environment.

2. The new office set-up for Members had been preceded by a pilot project during the previous parliamentary term, involving several members of the Bureau. In light of the usefulness of the pilot project to prepare the final decisions, the Working Group endorsed the creation of a permanent test environment for innovation - an IDEA Lab - to try out and assess new technical, furniture, security, facility management, meeting, IT and EMAS solutions prior to large scale implementation.

3. During the Bureau Away Days of 3-4 October 2019 the members of the Bureau supported the proposal of the Working Group to set up an IDEA Lab. Members also expressed the view that unused spaces on Members’ floors could be converted for better use. At its meeting on 23 October 2019 the Bureau formally approved the proposal to create an IDEA Lab.

4. At its meeting of 12 February 2020 the members of the Working Group on Buildings, Transport and a Green Parliament were informed about the state of play of the IDEA Lab and held an exchange of views on the proposed way forward. Accordingly, the objective of the IDEA Lab should be to transform the reflection on Members’ working environment into a permanent and coordinated process. The scope of the reflection comprises Members’ offices, corridors and unused spaces and areas of the floors occupied by the Members participating in the IDEA Lab. In line with the competences delegated by the President to the members of the Bureau, the Bureau invited four Vice-Presidents and two Quaestors to join the testing phase of the IDEA Lab. The Working Group also agreed to have a regular exchange of views on the IDEA Lab during their regular meetings.

5. During the Bureau meetings of 16 December 2019, 22 July 2020, 24 September 2020, 16 December 2020, and 18 January 2021 the members of the Bureau suggested that the IDEA Lab tested solutions in the area of environmental performance, security (especially electronic locks), IT and teleworking as well as ICT innovation strategy. The Bureau came back to the IDEA Lab during its Away Day on 18 October 2021 when discussing the follow-up of Focus Group 5.

II. LIFE CYCLE OF IDEAS

6. Members of the Working Group on Buildings, Transport and a Green Parliament and Members participating in the IDEA Lab can submit ideas via the dedicated online platform of the IDEA Lab (https://idealab.in.ep.europa.eu/). This possibility was extended to all Members who participated in Focus Group 5 of the President’s reflection process. The platform is also available via a mobile app.

7. The ideas submitted via the platform are shortlisted by an inter-DG Task Force following a preliminary assessment based on clarity, usability and feasibility. Shortlisted ideas are then evaluated based on budget, human resources and compliance with inter alia data protection or security requirements. Ideas that were evaluated positively are presented and deployed in the IDEA Lab in order to gather feedback, test their usability and analyse scalability. Should the assessment be positive, the appropriate bodies are asked to approve the project(s), as appropriate, based on an assessment of financial and human resources needed prior wider implementation.
8. The present note provides a non-exhaustive overview of ideas which were discussed and tested in the IDEA Lab. These are grouped in three categories: adaptive architecture, smart facilities management and ICT equipment.

III. ADAPTIVE ARCHITECTURE OF THE MEMBERS' OFFICES AND COMMON AREAS

9. Following the successful upgrade of Members' offices completed in August 2019, the administration started an extensive study on the spaces that are available on Members' floors and which are currently not appropriately or efficiently used. The study identified a relatively high amount of such spaces (1500 m²), including obsolete storage or photocopying rooms, with the objective to assess their upgrade into useable prime surfaces that could be of benefit to the Members. The study could be the basis for a future comprehensive cadastral inventory of such spaces.

10. The potential gradual removal of modular bathrooms in Members' offices has also been considered as part of a potential space gain that could be achieved over the coming 5-10 years. Therefore, the choice of an office located at the last floor was the most judicious. Only on this floor is it possible to cut and isolate the existing water pipes and adjust the ventilation ducts without any inconvenience for the other floors. These possible improvement and efficiency gains have been tested through the works taking place in the IDEA Lab (SPINELLI, E-Wing, 15th floor) whereby unused and obsolete areas were transformed into office space and a meeting room. The total gain of usable space is significant and has reached 20% of net increase of the total useable surface in the offices and common areas.

11. The outcome of the works completed on the 15th floor as a concrete example of a potential wider concept for office and meeting rooms was welcomed by Focus Group 5 and presented to the Bureau in the context of the assessment of all the conclusions of the Focus Groups. Should the Bureau consider the possibility to implement this programme as beneficial to the Institution, a rollout over the coming years could be implemented by the responsible services. A potential upgrade of the office space provided to office-holders could also be considered.

12. The possibility to install individual safes in Members' offices has already been offered to all Members (via the furniture catalogue). The related idea of a wall of safe deposit boxes has been presented to the Bureau Working Group on Buildings, Transport and a Green Parliament and an evaluation of its potential rollout is still ongoing.

13. Bleachers (bench seats) for informal and small ad-hoc meetings are currently being tested in the IDEA Lab's multi-purpose room. Due to COVID restrictions their usefulness could not be fully evaluated so far.
Former spaces:

Office space and multi-purpose room after transformation:
IV. SMART FACILITY MANAGEMENT

14. Several ideas in the area of smart facility management are currently in the preparation or testing phase. These include "smart cleaning" which provides the possibility to adapt the frequency of the cleaning in real time, according to the information provided by sensors installed in the offices. In parallel, a mobile version of the computerised maintenance management system is being deployed in order to increase the reactivity and traceability of technical interventions. A predictive and conditional technical maintenance, currently applied for the maintenance of lifts, could be gradually rolled out to other areas pending technical feasibility assessments. Touchscreens that represent the next generation of controlling the lightning/heating/HVAC parameters are currently being tested in the IDEA Lab. All these features can lead to efficiency gains in several areas such as energy or cleaning supplies.

15. In order to increase the recycling of individual office waste, small portable waste containers are being tested. These can be used to collect and transport waste to the five-compartment recycling bins during the phasing out of individual mixed waste bins.
16. As requested by the Bureau on 18 January 2021, various models of electronic locks were tested in the IDEA Lab in the course of 2021. Evaluation criteria included also the compatibility with Parliament’s access badges. The results of the evaluation were presented to the Bureau Working Groups on Buildings, Transport and a Green Parliament on 27 October 2021. Further technical assessments are being carried out by the responsible services to inform future decisions. Finding the most suitable solution in the framework of the IDEA Lab will not only lead to increased security but also to financial savings in the long run.

17. Further security measures could also be tested in the IDEA Lab to avoid unnecessary expenses. The testing could include practicability, acceptance, added-value, data protection compliance and proportionality. New solutions are emerging from research and development in the area of smart safety and security combined with smart facility management. The synergy effects of these solutions could result in considerable savings but should to be tested in real operations.

V. ICT EQUIPMENT AND DEVELOPMENTS

18. In order to support Members in their communication activities, several solutions for immersive videoconferencing and low-threshold video recording, such as video booths and a mobile studio in a box, are being tested in the IDEA Lab. The analysis of this technology not only encompasses technical feasibility and required resources but also a risk analysis, including in the area of reputational risk.

19. A virtual *dictaphone* based on speech-to-text technology was installed with the possibility of machine translation. It allows to dictate and translate text with the help of a mobile app. A tablet with the application is available in the multipurpose room of the IDEA Lab. The mobile app is available for Members participating in the IDEA Lab.

20. The idea of a "Voice Assistant" and "Concierge" bot was not shortlisted due to privacy and data security considerations. Neither was the use of holographs for meetings in the current state of the art shortlisted because the technology is not yet mature to be tested.
VI. MEETING FACILITIES AND SIGNPOSTING

21. The classical nameplates for Members' offices could be replaced by digital signage using an elnk application. The digital signage can give additional information such as "do not disturb". The digital signage will soon be implemented in the IDEA Lab.

22. Other ideas that are currently being tested include "on the spot reservation for meeting rooms" and "digital signage screens" on Members' floors. The reservation system would allow to make a reservation of a meeting room "on the spot" via a touchpad installed in front of the entrance to a meeting room. The digital signage screens could be used to display information related to meetings or events organised by Members. Dynamic signposting and a wayfinding app based on geo-localisation were not yet tested because the compliance with data protection requirements is still being checked.

VII. CONCLUSIONS

The members of the Bureau are invited to:

- take note of the information provided in this note.