

WELCOME TO LABFORWARD

Tips for a successful ELN transition

<ELN implementation - Guiding the change management process>

Humans are creatures of habit. By introducing an ELN, you will change working routines which, for some researchers, have been adopted for several decades. Certainly, there will be team members who are thrilled about the change, as well as those who will greet this new tool with reluctance. Not only does it require open mindedness from your team but also good change management tools from your side to successfully implement an ELN in your laboratory. At Labforward, we are here to support you with this process and have collected tips regarding all **organizational aspects of the change process**, how to **communicate successfully** with your team, and how to provide them with **continued support**.

<Organizational tips>

Set up a clear project plan for ELN implementation in your lab

| Break down the individual tasks required to implement an ELN in your team, assign tasks to team members, and set (reasonable) deadlines for them.

Make sure your group is well equipped for usage of a digital lab notebook | Personal laptops or tablets should be provided and a stable and secure internet/intranet connection should be available in laboratories and office spaces.

Set 1-2 people as the “responsible drivers” for enabling change in your team | Change requires guidance and leadership so that your group knows who to follow and who to turn to with questions and concerns. Search for the “change advocates” in your team! If possible, incentivize your advocates to take on the role - for example, by freeing them from other tasks.

Set up a standardized system for data collection in your Labfolder group | Setting up a system for data collection in your Labfolder group simplifies and streamlines collaboration. Find more tips [here](#).

Consider making the use of an ELN mandatory in your group | As previously mentioned, people are naturally resistant to change. If there is no clear rule about it, they may stick to what they are used to.

Give users time to get familiar with the system in order to lose their “fear of the unknown” | Create a “Playground project” in your Labfolder group and share it with the entire team so they can create test content during the first several weeks.

Start small and show that it works* | Start the ELN implementation with a small team or single department and create ambassadors for the new way of capturing data. The other groups will see the benefits themselves and follow after any potential roll-out issues have been ironed out.

** Particularly for bigger labs with several teams*

<Tips regarding communicating with your team>

Have a clear goal in mind and communicate it to your team |

What benefits will the transition to an ELN bring, both for the organization and individual staff members? What can the team look forward to (short- & long-term)?

Communicate clear timelines in your team | After allowing some weeks for exploration and to create content in the “Playground project”, create a well-defined deadline from which point on, data will need to be collected in the ELN. From that day on, no new physical lab notebooks should be provided to staff. However, Make sure there are clear and realistic expectations regarding the timeframe in which you expect your group to make this change: too short, and your group will feel stressed and pressured, too long, and they may stick to what they are used to.

Make the ELN an important reporting tool in lab meetings |

Group members should show their research results directly in ELN entries without needing to prepare separate presentations for lab meetings. Like this, you can also check how and if the ELN is being used regularly.

Ask your team for feedback | Is there anything you could do better to support your team with the change process? Actively ask your team for their opinion and take the opportunity to learn and grow.

<Tips for providing continuous support>

Share support material with your team | Our [beginner guide](#) and [video tutorials](#) help users to learn about the different features of Labfolder and Labregister. Our [helpdesk](#) assists in answering specific questions and our [release notes](#) keep you up to date about the newest changes and features in the system.

Use regular meetings to explore the ELN together | During the first couple of weeks, you can use a few minutes of your regular lab seminars to discuss the lab's progress with ELN implementation. Listen to your team: Where are they struggling? What is needed to remove blockers? In case there are questions that can't be answered internally, you can always reach out to us.

Motivate your team and show interest | Some of the many benefits an ELN can provide may not be visible in the initial implementation but, instead, at later stages (For example: when searching for older experiments/data from former team members, etc.). Keep motivating your team and celebrate milestones together!

Accept that switching to an ELN is a process that takes time, patience, and continued effort | There will be team members who embrace change, some who will be on the fence, and some who will resist change. Take the concerns of resistant team members seriously but don't argue with them. Instead, empower the excited team members and encourage them to share their motivation and knowledge, as they will most likely be able to help those who are struggling with the transition process.