

Living Lab Systems

Participatory Anthropology Report

IF-ALL - International Forum on Agroecosystem Living Labs
Bordeaux / France / 15-17 October 2025

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- Romanian Academy, Iasi Branch
- TWIN-IN project / Erasmus+
- Still3 - Systems Thinking Living Lab

Conference Objective

The event featured discussion panels and parallel sessions of scientific papers to establish state-of-the-art practices, share lessons learned from case studies and address challenges facing the international agroecosystem living lab community. The Forum highlighted networking events and field tours aiming to generate dialogue and create an inspiring space for collaboration and action.



IF-ALL Conference

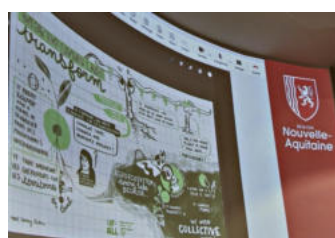
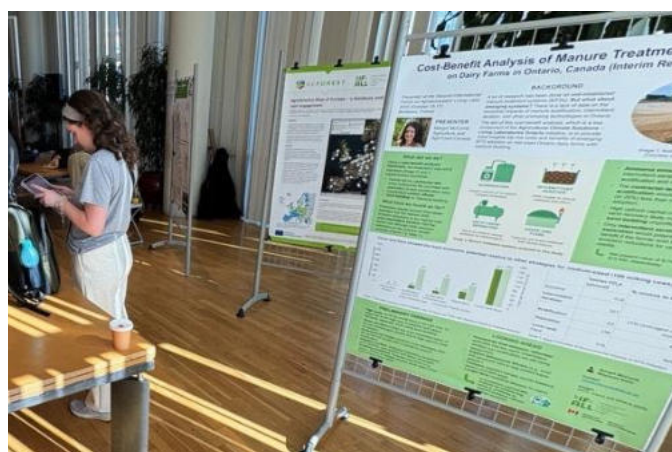
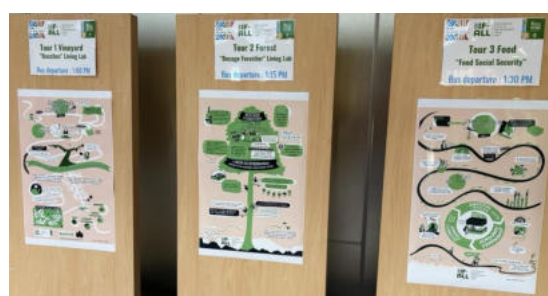
General Introduction



⇒ The event addressed living lab systems within the broader community of regional, national, and global agroecosystems. It was organized as an open forum, focused on collaborative activities, to facilitate the data exchange and good practices, and also strengthen networking and partnerships in research, innovation, and development actions.

⇒ The conference gathered representatives from all multi-actor systems and all around the globe organizational cultures.

⇒ On its second edition, IF-ALL has already defined a tradition and secured its continuity by creating opportunities for a long-term sustainability in RIA ecosystems focused on living lab systems.



Challenges to Engage with Sustainability in an Agricultural Region: A Living Lab Approach to Address Land Sustainability Challenges in Brăila County, Romania	Sima	Mihaela	Institute of Geography, Romanian Academy
Living Labs in EU projects under an environmental lens	Goldel	Bastian Christoph	University of Pisa
Enhancing Co-Creation Processes in Territorial Living Labs Through Capacity Building	Lafond	Davis	UTAD (University of Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro)
The Agroecology Partnership, an EC-funded initiative valuing living labs to drive engagement in the agroecological transition	Le Gall	Olivier	ANR
Coordinating Collaboration: A Key Driver for Thriving Agroecological Living Labs	Riemer	Natalia	Vereinigung Ökologischer Landbau in Hessen e.V.
Cost-Benefit Analysis of Manure Storage and Management Strategies on Dairy and Hog Farms	McComb	Margot	AAFC
Agroecological Transition Through Participatory Modeling in Living Labs, in Laghouat, Algeria	Cagiran	Sevde	CIHEAM Institut Agronomique Méditerranéen De Montpellier
Let's Graze Smart on Protected Grasslands! - Experiences from Hungary	Marton	Aliz	OMKI (Hungarian Research Institute of Organic Agriculture)
Drivers and Impact of participation: comparing Italian Agroecology Living Lab initiatives	Ciaccia	Corrado	CREA - AA

The challenge of involving citizens to imagine collectively sustainable dairy cattle production systems	Duval	Julie (Elise)	INRAE
Construction of the agroecological Living Lab in Yakouren and Laghouat: a participatory approach for recognizing agroecological Potential	BENZERARA	Lilia	CIHEAM IAMM, Institut agronomique méditerranéen de Montpellier (IAMM)
Case study of a stakeholders' collaborative and emancipatory learning process to restore groundwater quality from agricultural pollution	Bellet	Louise	Syndicat de l'eau de l'est Seine et Marnais (S2e77) / INRAE
Agroecology living labs fostering prosperous and sustainable agri-food systems	Roxana	Ciceo	University of Agronomic Sciences and Veterinary Medicine of Bucharest
Participatory rural innovation lab: towards a sustainable agri-food system in the context of climate change	Vanegas Cubillos	Martha Cristina	Alliance Bioversity and CIAT
Sustainable reorientation of the wine industry from production areas: Evidence from Living Labs in the Bordeaux region	ELIA	Natacha	Gironde Chamber of Agriculture

The pilot traceability system for the poultry sector producers in Poland	Borek	Robert	IUNG-PIB
Envisioning Change in Ontario's potato sector: A Theory of Change for increased BMP adoption	Potter	Charlotte	University of Guelph
Leveraging Network to Network Science for Advancing Productivity, Sustainability and Resilience of Agroecosystems	Awada	Tala	University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Agroforestry Map of Europe – a database and map for direct user engagement	Hübner	Rico	German Agroforestry Association (DeFAF)
VivAgriLab: LivingLab fostering agroecology in the south-west of Paris region	Leadley	Paul	INRAE
On-Farm Research Reveals Higher and more Stable Yields from Cover Crops	Ulbrich	Ruben	Michigan State University

Workshops - Wednesday, 15th of October

Poster Session

SUMMARY

The poster session focused on introducing the following types of results, models, and deliverables:

↪ **Living Labs**, especially in the field of agroecology, generally targetted organic crops, forestry systems, hydrological resources, fertilizer management, and cereal crops.

↪ **Sustainability Models** in systems facing high-risk social challenges and climate change. The participatory culture along with consolidation of social, community, economic and green behaviours are keynotes within these systems.

↪ **Models of Knowledge Transfer**, based on the collaboration between beneficiaries, actors of knowledge production, and representatives of the decision-making bodies.

↪ **Integration and Digital Transformation** made a special subject approached horizontally, in strategic relations between the climate resilience and digital sustainability, and vertically, in the transfer circuits between models of practices and decision-making models. In this context, Horizon Europe Partnership “Agriculture of Data” (AgData) is a good tool for intervention and collaboration.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

- Presentations provide plenty of arguments for regarding the living labs systems as operationally functional and mature enough systems with effects on medium and long-term impact.
- The exploratory and collaborative processes are supported by consolidated instruments and strategies.
- It is still felt as a problem the issue of living lab sustainability and their direct correlation with financing sources coming from Horizon programs.
- There is a need to develop methodologies for integrating living labs into extended development systems and ecosystems.
- There were also talks about widening collaborations within intersectorial contexts, as consolidated synergies for projects, and in interdisciplinary contexts, at transregional, national, international, and transeuropean levels.
- This session made the perfect curtain-raiser for plenary presentations and parallel sessions. At the same time, this first section was a strong socializing vector.

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Parallel Sessions

Thursday, 16th of October

→ The 2nd day of the event addressed the next issues:

- Fostering transitions
- Empowering participation
- Monitoring and Evaluating success

→ Symbolically, the focus was on the participatory dimension and impact generated by Living Lab systems.

→ Put together, the topics convey the idea of a strategic correlation between the idea of participatory collaboration and long-term impact management. Even if it might not have been the organizers intention, this correlation also surfaced in some of the discussions in sessions 1 and 3.

→ Further, there were always present the idea that the sustainability of living lab systems is fundamentally influenced by collaborative actions and the impact produced at the socio-economic and political level.

→ The importance of introducing research actions not only in consolidated transfer activities, but also in complex evaluation systems was highlighted as well. The management of scientific research must be complemented by circular evaluation processes, in synergy with dynamic adaptation actions to new challenges in living lab systems.

→ In dynamic adaptation processes, evaluation and monitoring activities are essential, following adaptive models and aligning with systemic methodologies, which incorporate complex quantitative and qualitative approaches as well.

→ An important vector for catalyzing transformative transition is the innovation ecosystem. To have a long-term impact, living labs need transfer actions in the economy and the decision-making sphere.

→ Methodologies that are centered on problem-based learning synergizes simply and effectively with dynamic assessment and adaptation methodologies.

→ Africa provides interesting strategic approaches, especially through the sustainability and resilience models developed in its own systems.

→ Concurrently, the global spread of living lab systems provides comparative matrices, which improve the practical and strategic projection of the living lab concept.

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Theme 1 - Fostering transitions Room: 111 - 1st Floor

NATAE: Fostering agroecological transitions in North Africa through Living Labs	Mark Caulfield (Wageningen University & Research)
From organized and distributed sociotechnical experiences to a living-lab for sustainable viticulture	Marc Barbier (INRAE)
From Living Labs to the Living Landscape: Thinking transition through a culture of experimentation in rural spaces.	Marc Piraux (CIRAD)
Advancing Agroecological Transitions Through Living Labs: A Transdisciplinary Approach to Co-Creation and Knowledge Integration	Monica Nunes Dantas (UTAD)

Theme 1 - Fostering transitions Room: 111 - 1st Floor

From vegetables to rangelands: uruguayan agroecosystem living labs experience to build ecologically intensive agriculture through coinnovation	Santiago Dogliotti (Facultad de Agronomía - Udelar)
Multi-stakeholder platforms for the governance of agroecological transitions: A typology and lessons from seven Agroecological Living Landscapes	Angela Navarrete-Cruz (Alliance Biodiversity & CIAT)
Agroecosystem Living Labs as spaces for gradually creating systemic synergies between innovation paths at different scales	Quentin Toffolini (INRAE)
Living Labs for AgriFood Resilience: Raising SEEDS of change in MENA Region	Vishwa Paresch Patel (Future Food Organisation)

Theme 2 - Empowering participation Room: Plenary - 2nd Floor

Considering farmers' needs in agroliving labs : a case study	Mélanie Broin (Agropolis International)
Supporting community-driven and evidenced-based innovations in investment projects: lessons learnt from IFAD and implications for agroecosystem Living Labs in development	Myrtille Lacoste (IFAD)
Methods for fostering transdisciplinary research and co-design of agroecological solutions through structured Vision-to-Action (V2A) processes in multi-stakeholder spaces	Lisa Elena Fuchs (Alliance Biodiversity-CIAT)
Putting co-design to the test: a Living Lab in Kenya	Birgit Habermann (ILRI)

Theme 2 - Empowering participation Room: Plenary - 2nd Floor

Living in an Agroecosystem Living Lab: Participant Reflections from the Living Laboratories Initiative in Canada	Chris McPhee (AAFC)
Lost in Navigation? Ensuring Living Lab Frameworks Stay on Course with Local Needs	Etienne Delay (CIRAD)
Regional Living Labs for sustainability-oriented agricultural system transformation: Insights from the East Brandenburg Pilot Region	Julia Gunnoltz (Leibniz Centre for Agricultural Landscape Research)
Co-Creating Sustainable Solutions: A Case Study of Stakeholder Engagement from the United States' Long-Term Agroecosystem Research Network	Taylor C. Ulbrich (Michigan State University)

Theme 3 - Monitoring and Evaluating success Room: 214 Montesquieu - 2nd Floor

Agricultural Living Labs: Bridging Transformative Learning	Michelle Bonatti (ZALF)
Advancing multicriteria soil health monitoring through the California Farm Demonstration Network	Margaret Lloyd, Lindsey Klein (UCCE)
Assessing and enhancing the transformative potential of agroecosystem Living Labs: a social innovation perspective	Mariagiulia Mariani (University of Pisa)
Applying Utilization Focused and Developmental Evaluation: a Case Study in a Living Lab in Keur Moma Sarr, Senegal.	Marie-Danielle Sarr (ISRA BAME)

Theme 3 - Monitoring and Evaluating success Room: 214 Montesquieu - 2nd Floor

Early monitoring of 7 Living Labs testing on-farm agroecological innovations in North-West Europe	Penelope Lamarque (Wallon agricultural research center)
Developmental evaluation to track progress and learn from Living Labs	Erwan Sachet (CIRAD)
Navigating co-creation processes to build sustainable agroecological systems	Mireille Matt (INRAE)
Unraveling the Lab in the Living: Scientific Consensus in Experimental Approaches, Quasi-Experimental Observations, Participatory Research, Field Trials and Living Labs	Antje Risius (University of Göttingen)

Parallel Sessions

Friday, the 17th of October

The 3rd day of the event tackled the following issues:

- Promoting Innovation
- Integrating Policy
- Enabling research

The focus was on knowledge transfer and the relationship between research action, the economic environment (main beneficiary of innovation action) and governance (in the transfer of tools for formulating strategies and policies).

Considering that 60% of the participants came from academia, the following topics were pursued:

↪ There is a systemic gap between the research action and transfer action.

↪ There is a weak presence of scientific argument in strategic, political discourses and in general in the narratives of decision-makers.

↪ Living Labs are important tools for knowledge transfer, but the major risk posed by their sustainability leads to the fragmentation of long-term actions.

↪ Participatory action becomes a very important dynamic interface.

↪ Although LLs are dynamic by default, new strategies and practices, that increase dynamism and adaptability, must be explored and modeled.

↪ LLs The relationship between local and global objectives must be assumed as a strategic perspective.

↪ Africa is an ecosystem favouring exploratory actions and the identification of strategic solutions for agri-food systems.

↪ În următorul program cadru (FP10), trebuie întărite relațiile dintre sistemele Clusterelor Horizon, Misiuni, rețelele de tip Agroecology, ERA, CoARA și ceilalți actori importanți de la nivelul decizional și strategic.

↪ The question of the day was: How can we leverage sound science-society-policy? The debate was sparked by the discussions in the plenary session of the day.

↪ Another key topic of the day revolved around the idea that living lab systems must also have a strong policy lab component (modelling and knowledge transfer in support of policies).

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Theme 4 - Promoting Innovation Room: 111 - 1st Floor

Are organic amendments useful only for soil fertility management? A co-innovative study case from Central Argentina's peri-urban horticultural systems	Gaona Flores Maria Amparo (INTA)
Living Labs for Precision Nitrogen Management in Potato Production using Zone Delineation and AI Approaches	Athyna Cambouris (AAFC)
High acceptance of biodiversity-friendly measures in German landscape labs through co-design	Maria Busse (ZALF)
Co-designing technical Innovations in the context of Agroecological Living Landscapes. Approaches, results, and cross-country learnings	Bernard Triomphe (CIRAD)

Theme 4 - Promoting Innovation Room: 111 - 1st Floor

Institutional innovation in a tertiary canal in the Lower Valley of the Chubut River	Lucas Damian Diaz (INTA)
The living lab as a tool to support farmers in the agroecological transition in Sub-Saharan Africa: case of Lac de Guiers in Sénégal	Rahim Ouedraogo (CIRAD)
Bridging the Gap: Engaging Peripheral Producers Through Gamified Focus Groups in the Peace Region Living Lab	Nadia Mori (Peace Region Living Lab)
Capacity building model for emerging living labs: a framework for forestry innovation	Maxence Arnould (INRAE)

Theme 5 - Integrating Policy Room: Plenary - 2nd Floor

The plant/eat kids living lab to support transitions in a food system linked to the consumption of local and quality meat	Claire Planchat (INRAE)
From Living Labs to territorial networks: fostering diversity, recruitment, and stakeholder engagement	Dalia Mattioni (University of Pisa)
Identification of Benefits and Barriers to On-Farm Carbon Management Techniques in Nova Scotia to Support Sound Policy	Edith Callaghan (Acadia University)
The Multistakeholder collaboration framework, the agency and stakeholder theories intertwine in setting up an agroecology living lab for international Agricultural development - Case of Cocoa in Cameroon	Precilia Tata Ngome (IRAD)

Theme 5 - Integrating Policy Room: Plenary - 2nd Floor

Governance Structures of Agroecological Living Landscapes in Five Countries	Angela Navarrete-Cruz (Alliance Biodiversity & CIAT)
Co-Creating Science Policy Society Interfaces in Soil Health Living Labs	Katharina Helming (ZALF)
From the Living Lab to the Policy Labs in the Knowledge Ecosystems	Codrin Dinu Vasiliu (Academia Romana - Filiala Iasi)
What kind of territorial intelligence should be developed to improve food consumption and production in local areas? Products of territorial interest promoting sustainable food systems	Olivier Lepiller (CIRAD)

Theme 6 - Enabling research Room: 209 Montaigne - 2nd Floor

The United States Department of Agriculture's Long-term Agroecosystem Research (LTAR) Network: Research for innovation and sustainability	Taylor C. Ulbrich (Michigan State University)
Living Labs and the Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation System: what is the nexus?	Beatriz Herrera (Universidad de Hohenheim)
From the ambition of a living lab to a small step in participative sciences	Clémence Agasse (Université de Rennes)
Siliana Living Lab: a platform for agroecological transition in cereal plains	Inès Zouari (National Institute of Agronomy of Tunisia)

Theme 6 - Enabling research Room: 209 Montaigne - 2nd Floor

Soil Mapping as a Boundary Object to Drive Innovation in Agroecosystem Enhancement and Participatory Research	Kimberly Cornish (Food Water Wellness Foundation)
Participatory research with farmers: 7 key stages and 3 axes of "de-topianisation"	Séverine Laurence Lagneaux (CRA-W)
Empowering Early Career Researchers: Mentorship, Co-Creation, and Design in Living Labs	Sonia Massari (University of Pisa)
A Living Lab approach to WEFE Nexus modeling: engaging stakeholders for adaptation solutions in Mediterranean agriculture	Veronica Bonomelli (CIHEAM-IAMM)

General Conclusions

Digital Transformation of the Living Lab Systems



In the general paradigm, Living Lab systems are focused on three main objectives:

- (1) circular experimental actions, in Delphi steps, through which something is tested, the results are analyzed and the debate with the beneficiaries returns,
- (2) participatory actions, with the involvement of beneficiaries in a multi-actor system (academia, governance, entrepreneurship, civil society),
- (3) real-time actions.

Digitalization is an chief element in all of these processes. However, the digital transformation of the living lab system is not generally seen as a strategic objective.

- Although the 4-Helix system (Q-Helix - quadruplu helix - academia, governance, entrepreneurship, civil society) is widened, theoretically speaking, to the 5-Helix model, by involving the *digital agency*, the digital dimension is largely regarded as instrumental at this point. Digital systems and entities are not seen as *stakeholders*.
- Under the circumstances, the ethics issues of digital knowledge production will become problems that relate not only to the development of the capacity of Living Lab systems, but also to important topics in methodological debates within research and innovation management. Digital ethics and anthropology are themes carrying more than methodological content, also socio-economic cargo (with extended societal impact).
- In the case of LLs, the data management is not usually regarded as a strategic action on the whole, except for when digital processes produce considerable effects at the ecosystem level. Such a challenge must be tackled through methodologies of epistemology and digital anthropology.
- Digitalization is a process that optimizes and secures sustainability, it does not artificially automatizes or substitutes. In digital transformation and integrated data management, behaviors centered on the community of practices and direct or indirect beneficiaries, with well-defined roles aligned with user communities, must be supported as much as possible.
- Digital entities and processes are regarded mainly as services, support activities, related actions, and tools of analysis, monitoring and evaluation. My attention was drawn to some debates in which the strategic effects of digital agency, namely strategic projection and futurological organization, were also discussed.
- Liberalizing access, decentralizing digital processes, user-centeredness, and engaging communities of practice are often precise methodological tasks for living labs. In these contexts, I believe that there is a bi-univocal methodological transfer relationship between the multi-actor component of living labs and accessibility-oriented digital systems.





- Living lab systems are starting to introduce digital tasks and objectives into the logistics capacity development component as well. The same can be observed in the sustainability and durability management of living labs. I think this phenomenon is also an indirect positive effect of the funding methodologies in the European Commission's programs, underlining the idea that funding processes can also develop paradigm transfer tools, directly or indirectly, in the production and knowledge transfer systems. Positive side effects spring from systemic approaches in funding systems. Bidirectional objectives, such as the ecology-digitalization duality, or three-dimensional ones such as the One Health concept (human, animal and environmental health) also produce systemic effects at the level of actions that operationalize these work agendas or funding programs. In the draft document of the European Commission's FP10 framework program, it can be noticed this systemic diversification of strategic objectives, and that such an approach needs to be strengthened.
- Living lab systems are beginning to introduce digital objectives in the capacity building component, as well as in the sustainability of the actions, processes and projects they develop. I think this phenomenon is also an effect of the funding methodologies in the European Commission's programs. This underlines the idea that funding processes, either directly or indirectly, develop paradigm transfer tools.
- The emerging concept of *Avenues of Collaboration* has also been discussed in the digital ecosystems of living lab systems. Such concepts have the advantage of creating methodological and systemic links with the RIA paradigms supported by the European Commission in recent years through networks and systems such as: ERA, CoARA, *Fifth Market* (knowledge market), *European Innovation Valley*, *Twin development*.
- Digitalization globalizes the demonstration actions of *living lab systems* and transforms these laboratories into *lighthouse* systems with international strategic effect in extensive collaborative networks.
- In agricultural ecosystems, there is a strong emphasis on digital transformation, especially when it comes to 3.0, 4.0 or 5.0 technologies. However, the transition to new generation digital technological systems involves profound transformations not only at the level of production and organizational management activities, but also in research and innovation activity. Accordingly, correlated digital transformation strategies must be identified, with effects on the entire research development chain and reference socio-economic systems.
- Digital strategies can make the difference between *transformative change* and *incremental change* of a living lab system.
- Digitalization has stepped onto a steep slope, consolidating an increasingly chief role in development that produce positive effects but also systemic challenges. We can easily see how digitalization offers competitive and integrative advantages. In this context, living lab systems can explore these effects, experiment with them and strategically shape them, becoming *demonstrator systems*.

General Conclusions

Living Labs systemic contexts



↪ One of the key features of a living lab lies in its versatile nature, or its multifunctional role: it can work as a project, as a network or community, as an organization or as a system as well. This is the most important aspect of the operationalization of a living lab. This entity encompasses and integrates material, digital, structural, collaborative functions, strategic effects, systemic perspectives, linear methodologies, complex models, multi-actor networks, actions focused on a single objective, actions with distributed and diversified objectives. A living lab can be simultaneously static and dynamic, strategic and contextual, monolithic and diversified, and this functional and operational versatility never infringes the concept of the living lab as such.

↪ This very systemic versatility of a living lab is both methodological and operational. This is one of the reasons why a living lab can be best organized with systemic tools. Because the system, beyond the idea of complexity, also implies dualistic or multiple dynamics, which take place at the level of phenomena or entities that we often consider to be competing, not collaborative: such as, quantitative and qualitative methodologies, or focused objectives and multi-directional objectives.

↪ And, precisely in view of systemic approaches, and taking into account the idea that an ecosystem is a supersystem of systems, the concept of living lab as a system must also be analyzed in the general context of funding ecosystems, be they European, national or regional. In these configurations, in the systems of the Widening countries, the components of dissemination and consolidation of living lab specific methodologies must also be developed, especially in research and transfer actions.

These aspects have been already approached and should be furthered in debates related to:

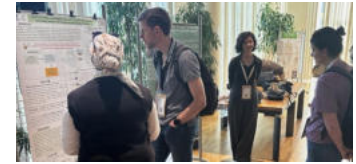
- (1) evaluation and monitoring systems;
- (2) the structural features of living lab entities and systems;
- (3) risk management in living lab-centric systems;
- (4) circular sustainability management (resilience, durability, sustainability).

↪ Another intriguing matter is related to broadening and integrating the concept of living lab not only with the commonly correlated conceptual sets (*lighthouse, demonstrator, policy lab, co-creation lab, innovation lab, development lab, exploratory testing, participatory development*), but with concepts that are chief vectors in other contexts of European Commission programs. One such concept is One-Health: its scope has effects beyond the relationship between anthropological, anthrozoological and ecological health. Thus, the theoretical framework represented by the One Health concept constitutes an integrative model for systemic approaches in the context of living labs.

↪ In the discussions I was actively involved, I supported the circular relationship between the innovative function of the living lab and the strategic function of the policy lab. In this sense, I offered the example of the dual function of living & policy lab, methodologically explored in the Cities2030 project (H2020 - ID: 101000640). More, to emphasize the idea of circular sustainability, I offered the example of the synergy between FILL (living lab for urban systems, in the Cities2030 project) and RoRuralia (living lab for rural systems - in the RURALITIES project - Horizon Europe ID: 101060876).

General Conclusions

RIA Ecosystem (Research and Innovation Actions)



↪ Systemic models are increasingly used in projects, networks, partnerships, workshops, actions and activities. The particular features of complex and dynamic organizations (such as systems) allow for strategic management through which we can more easily ensure feasibility, sustainability and resilience, both at the level of activities and in terms of impact and sustainability.

↪ This is one of the reasons why a living lab can be optimized by integrating three paradigms of research, development, and innovation actions:

- (1) the paradigm of the experimental and exploratory research laboratory,
- (2) the project model, as a program for operationalizing specific objectives,
- (3) the system concept, in response to complex networks and processes.

↪ In the debates where I was part of, it surprised me that there was little talk about the general contexts of the framework programmes funded by the European Commission. These frameworks were always used as a reference, but their specific objectives were not correlated with models and practices specific to living lab activities in knowledge production and transfer. For example, there was little or no talk about important programmes for networking and strengthened knowledge transfer, such as ERASMUS, ERC, COST Actions, MSCA.

↪ On the whole, the results of the projects were presented more than their relationships with the framework systems and networks. The European Commission programs were mainly presented in the plenary communications. These issues were indirectly addressed in the debates on the policies specific to living lab systems. There is a clear need to develop a strategic concept of the living lab systems, research and modelling of strategies based on participatory processes in the exploratory contexts specific to these types of infrastructures. I come back to the idea already formulated in the Cities2030 project that a living lab system includes an important policy lab component.

↪ I think there is a certain reluctance when presenting strategic actions at the project level, with an impact on general frameworks or on European funding policies. There have not been many discussions in which the sustainability of living labs was debated in the context of long-term framework actions. In the general debates, it has been particularly considered that the sustainability risks are structural risks, which are related to the specific situation of each laboratory or to the theoretical and methodological framework.

↪ I think that discussions about strengthening the living lab concept must have two directions:

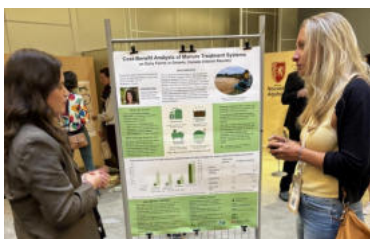
- (1) from top to bottom, by distributing and decentralizing strategic objectives,
- (2) from the bottom to the top, by strengthening participatory intelligence from actors and agents of reference systems to coordinators and decision-making entities at the ecosystem level (multi, trans and intersystemic).

↪ A facet worth considering is the potential of living lab systems to develop and support citizen science actions (society's involvement in research and knowledge transfer processes) and science shop (non-institutionalized research support networks).

↪ Based on these observations, I believe it is important to explore a three-dimensional living lab concept, with the following dimensions of research, development, and innovation:

- (1) Living Lab,
- (2) Co-creation Lab,
- (3) Policy Lab.

↪ Each of these processes is integrated into each of the dimensions. It is common to the concept of living lab to involve participatory actions, strategic transfer, and consolidation of sustainability. However, I think it is methodologically useful to explore their structural organization in specific, clearly defined dimensions. This modelling can also provide important tools for complex mappings in identifying phenomena specific to living lab systems when considering research and transfer actions.



General Conclusions

Living Lab Concept

Living Lab Concept Sustainability

↔ From an epistemological and methodological point of view, each concept consolidates itself in the form of a conceptual system. Each concept begins as a critical narrative, develops in the form of a methodological operationalization, consolidates itself as a reference theory and then enters a crisis of its own sustainability, being faced with new challenges.

↔ In this conference, as well as in the other European conferences that had a section dedicated to the living lab model, the need for epistemological reconfiguration of the concept was felt.

↔ Regarding the epistemology of the living lab concept, perhaps the most important recommendation of the entire IF-ALL event can be formulated in relation to the need for an expanded concept of the Living Lab model, to respond to the following epistemological and operational challenges:

- (1) The FP10 agenda (Horizon 2028-2035) requires a strategic and systemic approach to methodologies centered on the living lab model
- (2) The relationship of the living lab concept with the extended concepts: policy lab, co-innovation lab, transformative lab, innovation lab, knowledge transfer lab, lighthouse, demonstrator, regional lab, biocommunity lab
- (3) Expanding collaborations from European projects globally.

↔ Another important aspect related to the sustainability and methodological adaptability of the living lab concept is that a living lab is operationally determined by its geographical, cultural, thematic, social, economic and even political dimensions, given that it is applied in very different contexts.

↔ In this regard, it should not be ignored that, at present, the concept of living lab is mostly regulated by European practices, theories and reference organizations. In the rest of Europe, for the most part, living lab systems are rather emerging.

↔ An important aspect in this context is that many non-European organizations, especially in emerging areas, adopt living lab methodologies rather to increase their chances of integration into European partnerships and funding contexts. This aspect is worth exploring and using as a tool to develop strategic synergies in the context of global extension of research and innovation objectives. This is another example of how a tool can be operationalized and as a common language for sustainable collaboration at European and trans-European level.

↔ Living Lab systems are a model of success. And success in knowledge ecosystems leads to an increase in complexity both conceptually and in terms of available resources and opportunities. What we defined as living lab a decade ago is beginning to acquire a conceptual complexity that requires new exploratory, experimental and strategic modeling actions. We can no longer discuss living lab systems without talking about themes and objectives such as: Exploratory lab, Lighthouse, Policy lab, Agency systems, Regional lab, co-creation lab, Knowledge ecosystems, Literacy lab.

↔ Living lab systems have reached such a high degree of efficiency and operational maturity that we are even facing challenges in linguistic alignment of the set of concepts and models that this paradigm has enabled.



General Conclusions

Networks & Communities

Beneficiaries Communities

↪ One of the principles of establishing a living lab system is given by the actions, tools and processes of collaboration with the beneficiaries, in a permanent, innovative, proactive and direct relationship. In this sense, the management of beneficiary communities (whether stakeholders or indirect beneficiaries) becomes a strategic component of living lab systems. In this sense, we can observe that there is a set of common problems and challenges at the level of European and even international living lab systems.

↪ During the conference, there were discussions both in plenary and separately on the general themes of collaborative actions and participatory network structures. These aspects were constantly addressed during this conference as well, a sign that there are important issues in the management of beneficiary communities. This time, a special emphasis was placed on communities of practice, stakeholder co-involvement, sustainability of beneficiary communities, digital or material collaborative tools, heuristic actions (exploratory and co-creation), gamification methods for workshops with beneficiaries.

↪ As long as the community of beneficiaries is an absolutely necessary component for the establishment of a living lab, I believe that the methodologies for structuring and systematizing the alliances and networks developed through the activities in these systems need to be improved. The sustainability actions of living lab systems must also include actions to develop the capacity and resilience of the beneficiary communities.

↪ There are general problems common to every living lab system. These problems can be identified, analyzed, and addressed through cross-system collaborative actions.

↪ But there are also specific problems, generated mainly by the socio-economic particularities of the reference ecosystems. These specific problems must be addressed in an exploratory system and through actions of exchange of good practices. In this sense, widening and demonstrator instruments are welcome and deserve to be strengthened in the next FP10 framework program.

↪ First of all, although it goes without saying, the community of stakeholders must be structured in a much more strategic way according to the types of beneficiaries (direct and indirect), according to the roles in knowledge co-creation actions, according to the roles they have in the system transformation processes (resilience actors and change agents), according to the roles in multi-actor systems and last but not least according to the specific interests of each group.

↪ Multidisciplinary research in research fields that deliver psychosocial, economic, political, cultural, ethical, aesthetic, linguistic (and other) models in interaction with beneficiary communities must be expanded.

↪ Funding instruments need to be improved to engage beneficiaries in the process of knowledge and participatory governance. One of the objectives of the new lump-sum systems is to contribute to solving these problems, but there is a growing need for strategic management also in terms of direct resources for collaborative and participatory actions not only in relation to beneficiary organizations and communities, but also with beneficiary ecosystems, at local or global level.

↪ As a specific conclusion for the working groups I am part of: The LLINN Symposium (organized by the Iași Branch of the Romanian Academy within the Cities2030 project) must be reactivated and developed on the two sustainable components: as a forum for living lab systems but also as a platform for research on the living lab system.



Personal Presentation

From the Living Lab to the Policy Labs in the Knowledge Ecosystems

● Codrin Dinu Vasiliu

IF-ALL International Forum on Agroecosystem Living Labs IFALL / 15-17 October 2025 / Bordeaux

Presentation
Codrin Dinu Vasiliu
Romanian Academy - Iasi Branch

From the Living Lab to the Policy Labs in the Knowledge Ecosystems

Argument **Keywords:** Living Labs, Bioeconomy, Knowledge ecosystems, Policy Labs, Lighthouses, Strategic systems

Methods
To address these issues, we related our main methodological paradigms to the systems thinking and of theories. Within this paradigm, we developed the KAPIMS model, for managing stakeholders communication and structuring the participatory knowledge within the reference system.

Significance for policies and practices
The sustainability of the living lab is strengthened by developing the policy lab dimension within the lab ecosystem. According to the concept of Dual Development Lab, the sustainability chain in the lifecycle of the living lab is: (1) Living Lab, (2) Demonstration, (3) Lighthouse, (4) Living & Policy Lab. The systemic approach strengthens the impact and sustainability strategy.

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Knowledge chains From Living Labs to Knowledge Systems

Knowledge Chains of Production and Distribution

Participatory Knowledge → Scientific Research → Open Knowledge → Knowledge Transfer → Participatory Governance → Strategic Knowledge

Concept: Codrin Dinu Vasiliu

UrbBIO Ecosystem is built on the basis of UrbBIO Knowledge System

The UrbBIO project operationalization group will act in all stages of the project development. Because the food ecosystem problems require rapid intervention, the UrbBIO consortium will develop spin-offs in the implementation life cycle of the project. Spin off action will also support the sustainability and post-factum systemic transfer.

Three-dimensionality

1. Research - Knowledge Transfer - Development
2. Participatory Knowledge - Participatory Education - Participatory Governance
3. Project - Living Lab - System

UrbBIO Research Knowledge System Spin-Offs
ERIC & MSCA Project proposals

Research Action Levels
EU Action Levels

UrbBIO Platform Community & Project
UrbBIO CEST Action spin-offs
UrbBIO ERASMUS+ spin-offs

Global Action Levels
HORIZON 2020-2024 spin-offs

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Multi-Actor Matrix

CRFS Arena Urban Food System Reality Level

Stakeholders Interface

Deep Understanding
MYSTERY: MYSTERY OF Food Security

Unstructured Knowledge / Problem Based Learning Living Labs / Policy Labs

Structured Knowledge / Systems Thinking Isenberg Model

Multi-Actor Matrix

	AC	EC	GA	CS	SC	LE
K	AC-K	EC-K	GA-K	CS-K	SC-K	LE-K
C	AC-C	EC-C	GA-C	CS-C	SC-C	LE-C
D	AC-D	EC-D	GA-D	CS-D	SC-D	LE-D
S	AC-S	EC-S	GA-S	CS-S	SC-S	LE-S
N	AC-N	EC-N	GA-N	CS-N	SC-N	LE-N
E	AC-E	EC-E	GA-E	CS-E	SC-E	LE-E

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AllEcoSys Living Labs Systemic Map

Systemic Mapping
The living labs will be mapped on systemic 3d map.

- USAMV Campes Hardscra
- Moara Domneasca Didactic & Agronomic Research Station
- Rodagria Cooperativa
- Bekeza SRL, Calarasi
- Garden of the Ravens
- Iasi Vermicompost

Living Labs Systemic Map

Entrepreneurship
Governance
Innovation
Society
Communities
Social inclusion

Participatory Governance
Knowledge transfer
Open Education
Co-creation
Participatory Knowledge
Tacit Knowledge

Deep Rural RURAL Periurban URBAN Regional

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Center for Excellence in Socioeconomics of Agri-Food Resilience

Cluster 1
Agri-Food Excellence Hub

Cluster 2
Knowledge Ecosystem Excellence Hub

Cluster 3
Visual Narratives Excellence Hub

Cluster 4
Societal Transformation Excellence Hub

25 Living Labs

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The Cesar system transformation

The system was developed, and reorganized on 5 clusters.

Knowledge Cluster
Agrifood Cluster
Intercultures Hub
Innovation Hub
Societal Hub

Living Labs
Rural & Urban Systems

Living Labs / Policy Labs / Co-creation Labs
Innovation Labs / Knowledge System Labs

Living Labs
Knowledge Cluster
Agrifood Cluster
Intercultures Hub
Innovation Hub
Societal Hub

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3D Cesar Ecosystem

Vertical Circular Knowledge Production

CL CLIPP Hubs, in synergy with Horizon Clusters 2, 4, 6

CL4 CLIPP Hub Digital Anthropology

CL6 CLIPP Hub Biosystems

CL2 CLIPP Hub Multiculturalism

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Keywords & Key Narratives

- Exploratory effect
- Heuristic Effect
- Structuring Effect
- Systemic Effect
- Strategic Effect
- Visual Effect

Knowledge Ecosystems ♦ Systems Thinking ♦ Living Labs ♦ Stakeholders Community ♦ Multi-Actor Approach ♦ Small Data ♦ Problem-Based Learning ♦ Open Science ♦ Responsible Research and Innovation ♦ Bottom-Up Epistemologies ♦ Tacit Knowledge ♦ Urban Systems ♦ Rural Systems ♦ Responsible Identity ♦ Clusters ♦ Participatory Knowledge ♦ Participatory Governance ♦ Participatory Development ♦ Epistemic Chains ♦ Research Based Innovation ♦ Transformative Innovation ♦ Incremental Innovation ♦ Facilitators ♦ Replicators ♦ Digital Transformation ♦ Knowledge Brokers ♦ Interdisciplinarity ♦ Multidisciplinarity ♦ Sustainable Memory ♦ Added Value ♦ Post-Factum Actions ♦ Autopoiesis ♦ Scaling ♦ Going on ♦ Building the Future

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Narrative of the Presentation

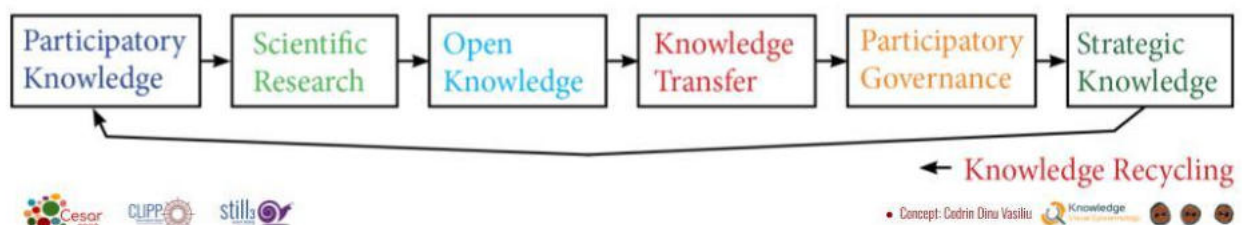
From the Living Lab to the Policy Labs in the Knowledge Ecosystems

• Codrin Dinu Vasiliu

⇒ In a conference with a very complex agenda and a lot of technical, high-level information, I chose a narrative approach, keeping the references in the area of events and experiences undergone by the teams I was part of. I insisted on the resources, advantages but also the challenges given by being part of an emerging system, centered on the institution of the Romanian Academy and the Rural Development Research Platform association. In this context, interdisciplinarity, multidisciplinary, multi-qualification and adaptability to challenges were important advantages for our research and transfer teams. These advantages were also operationalized in the conceptualization and development actions of the FILL, RoRuralia and those in the Cesar system living labs.

⇒ The Romanian Academy was founded after the model of the French Academy (Académie française), with the mission of organizing and standardizing the knowledge behind the national linguistic, cultural, historical and geographical system. To rephrase it, the Romanian Academy had the constitutive mission and task of organizing knowledge regarding the national language, culture, history and geography, starting with 1866. Over time, The Romanian Academy has diversified its research portfolio, coordinating a system of at least 70 RDI (Research, Development, Innovation) institutes. Thus, the Romanian Academy represents a huge ecosystem of interdisciplinarity, and this must be capitalized on throughout the chain of knowledge production and transfer.

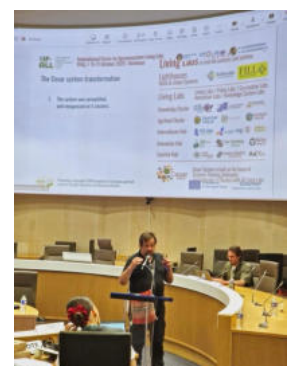
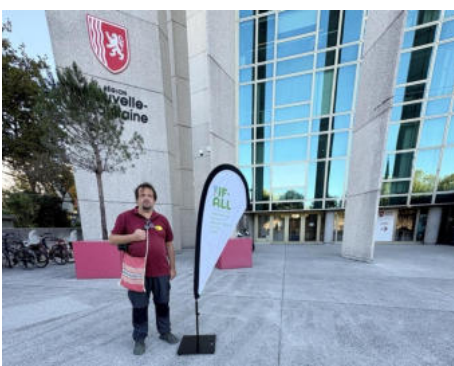
Systemic Chain of Knowledge Production and Distribution



⇒ At the same time, interdisciplinarity requires dynamic and adaptive tools. For this reason, methodologies and toolkits from living lab systems are quite useful in the context of inter- and multidisciplinary research actions.

⇒ Under the circumstances, research actions on living lab and policy lab systems were developed in the Iași Branch of the Romanian Academy. Such research was developed in synergy with the European projects Cities2030, Ruralities, TWIN-IN, AllEcoSys (Agroecology).

⇒ The issues addressed were developed in relation to particular topics, such as *systems thinking*, Iceberg model of sustainability intervention, circular sustainability, beneficiary communities (*stakeholders*), development matrix.



Narrative of the Presentation

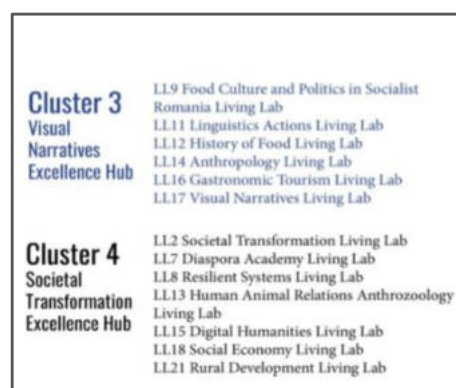
From the Living Lab to the Policy Labs - Codrin Dinu Vasiliu



→ The living lab concept has been applied especially in the operationalization systems of technical research and particularly in the interaction networks with beneficiaries in urban, rural, regional contexts. We can easily find the development of living labs in agri-food or ecological ecosystems.

→ Nevertheless, the systems and toolkits based on the specific methodologies of living labs can be developed in any network that involves the production, transfer and sustainable consolidation of knowledge.

→ The living lab concept has been applied especially in the operationalization systems of technical research and especially in the interaction networks with beneficiaries in local, rural, regional contexts. We find the development of living labs very easily in agri-food or ecological ecosystems.



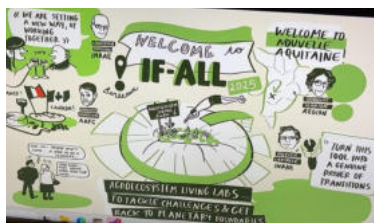
→ The living lab becomes very useful even in knowledge systems that do not involve smart technologies or technological research. So far little has been explored about living labs as dynamic, adaptive tools, which can be used, for example, in SSH, artistic, political, economic fields. In this context, I presented how we conceptualized in the Cesar system living labs for fields that may appear eccentric, at first, or exotict at least, in such a use and operationalization: linguistics, digital anthropology, history.

→ Following this path, I presented our intention to operationalize the living lab system even at the level of much more specific objectives than those given by the research or development fields. In line with the needs manifested in the ecosystems of project proposals funded by the European Commission, our working groups are developing at least two laboratories of this type: Financial Management Living Lab, and Open Data Living Lab. These tools will use exploratory actions aligned to the specific problems of the funding frameworks of the Horizon program and will present in an open system strategic approaches of systemic type for financial and data sustainability in the projects of the next FP10 framework.



→ I have provided some examples of such initiatives to operationalize living lab systems in areas covering knowledge and development objectives that may not seem specific to exploratory and experimental activities in direct relation to the beneficiary community.

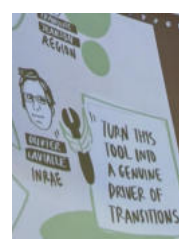
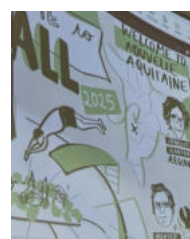
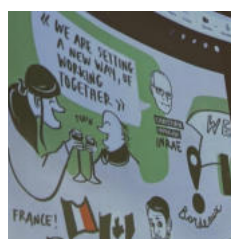
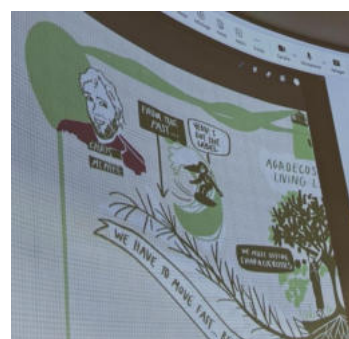
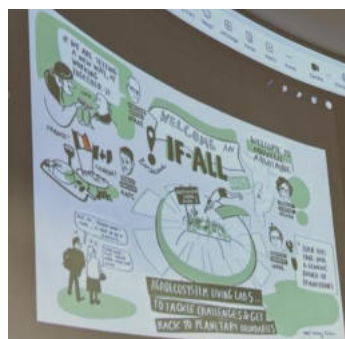
→ Accordingly, the Cesar concept, in the absence of funding, was reconfigured to activate a series of living labs with emerging potential. This system is currently structured for the next funding programs.



↔ The conference benefited from the visual anthropology carried out by the graphic facilitator, Fanny Didou. This is an interesting event, but it is also an action that contributes to the co-creative boost of the conference actions. The model is worth applying to other conferences.

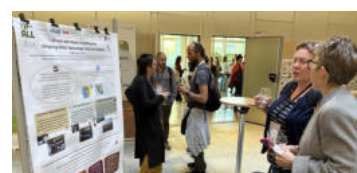
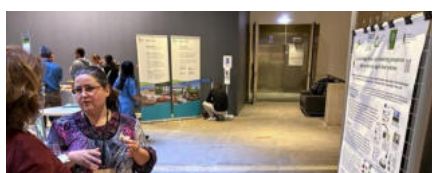
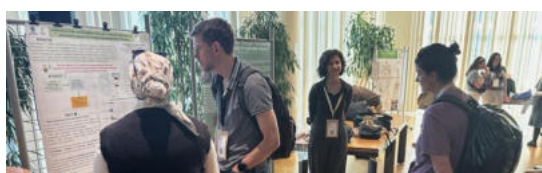
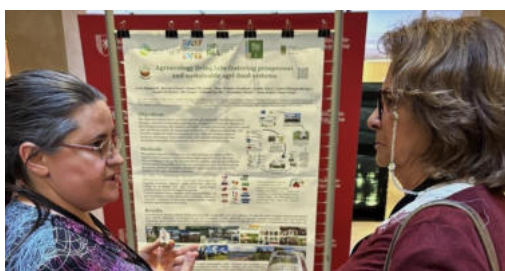
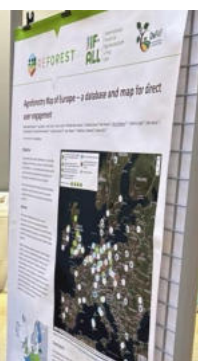
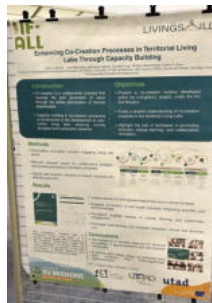
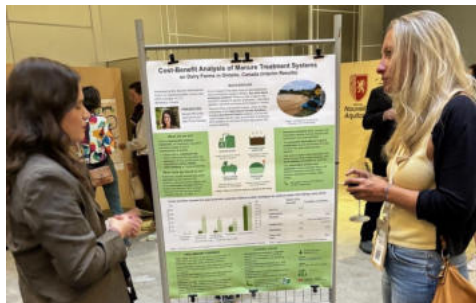
Best Practice Models Visual Anthropology

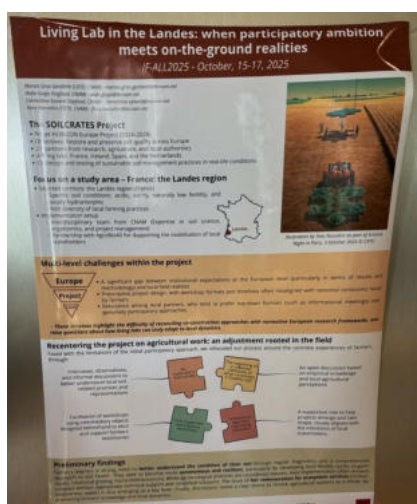
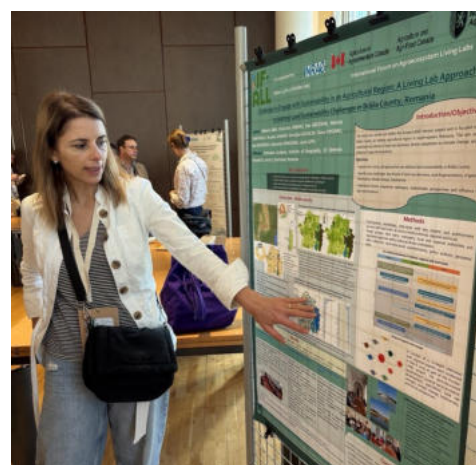
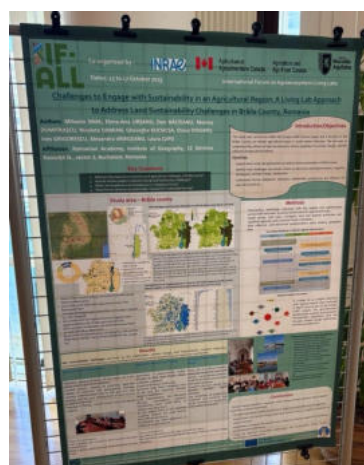
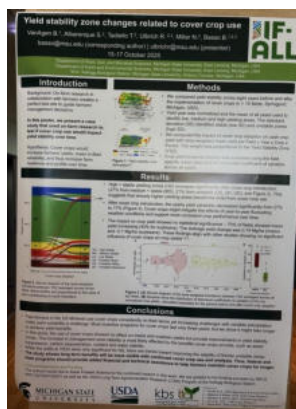
Visual narratives around the event



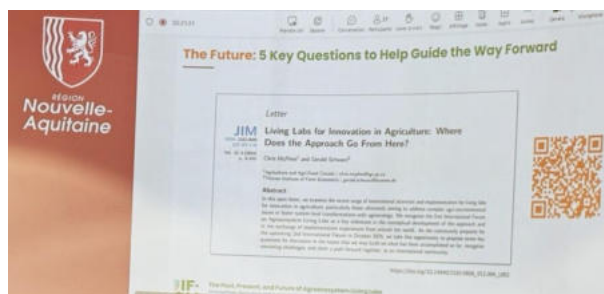


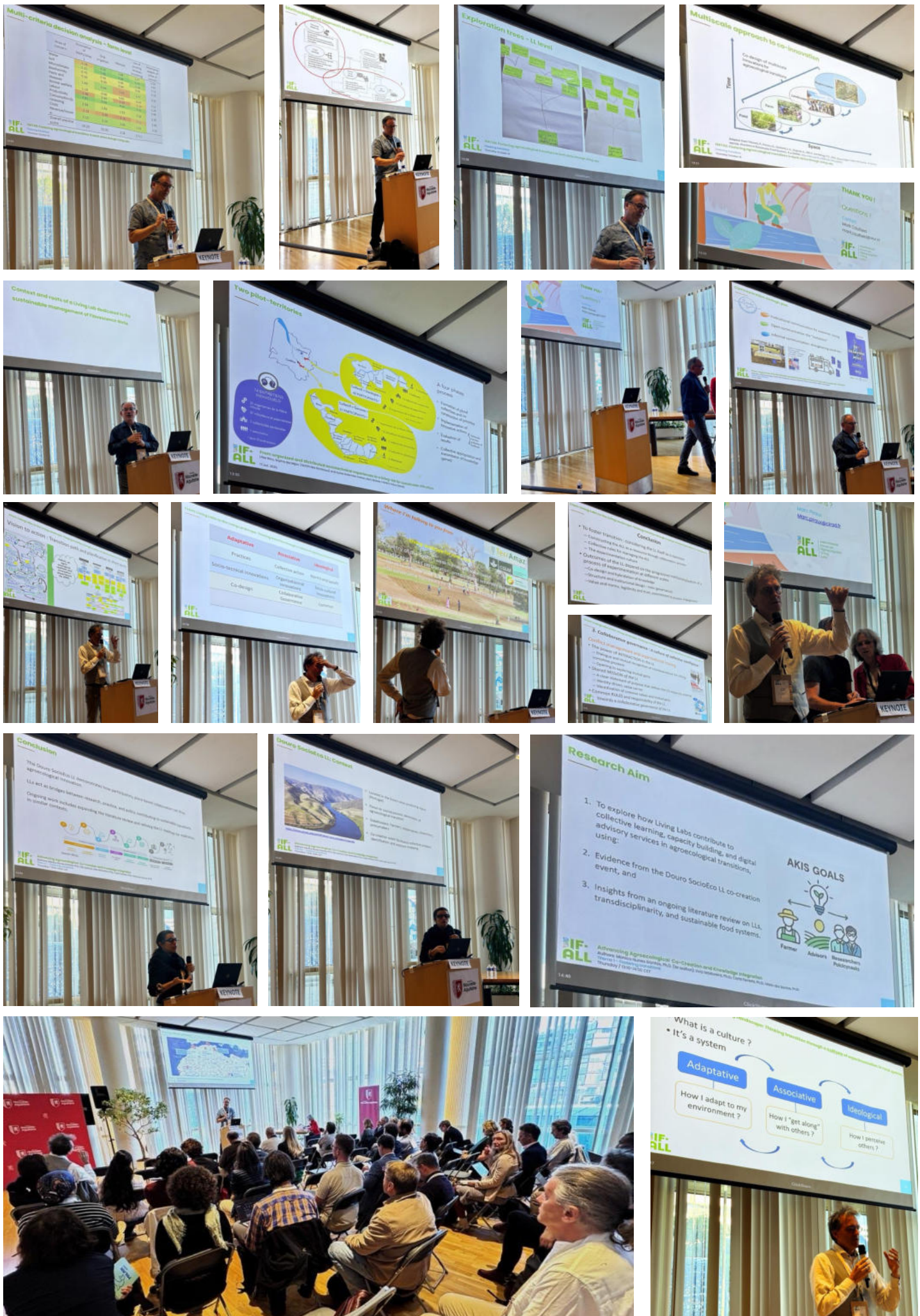
Poster Session Presentation of LL actions Interactive session











Afişul Conferinței



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Agroalimentaire Canada



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Laboratoare vii, de tip Living Lab



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- The information presented in this material does not necessarily represent the official position of the European Commission and the programmes that finance these projects.
- Responsibility for the data and opinions presented lies exclusively with the authors who contributed to the production of this material.
- This material is developed as a synergy research action within Still3, FILL, and RoRuralia living labs, and it does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the European Commission.



- Still3 (Systems Thinking Living Lab) is an emerging living lab that is exploring the knowledge ecosystems development on the systems thinking basis.
- FILL (Food for Iasi Living Lab) is an innovative and strategic hub in urban food systems, built by the Romanian Academy Iasi Branch and Iasi Municipality within the Cities2030 Horizon 2020 Programme, financed by the European Union.
- RoRuralia (RoRuralia Living and Policy Lab) is a rural food system living and policy lab, built by the Rural Development Research Platform and Iasi University of Life Sciences within the RURALITIES Horizon Europe project, financed by the European Commission (ID 101060876)
- Cities2030 is a HORIZON 2020 Project, under the Grant agreement ID: 101000640. This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation program under Grant Agreement 101000640.
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Word Clouds. Keywords and Narrative Frames

➡ Knowledge Ecosystems ➡ Bordeaux ➡ October ➡ Agroecosystems ➡ Cluster 6 ➡ OECD ➡ Canada ➡ Systems Thinking ➡ Networking ➡ Région Nouvelle-Aquitaine ➡ Europe ➡ Living Labs ➡ Bioeconomy ➡ Participatory Knowledge ➡ Agrifood ➡ Energy ➡ Natural Resources ➡ Scaling ➡ Multiplying ➡ Multi-actor Systems ➡ Innovation ➡ Dynamic Ecosystems ➡ Data-driven Decisions ➡ Value Chain ➡ Resilience and Sustainability ➡ Circular economy ➡ Future Food ➡ Research Management ➡ Knowledge Anthropology ➡ ENOLL ➡ Policy Labs ➡ Participatory Governance ➡ INRAE ➡ FAO ➡ CGIAR ➡ USDA ➡ ZALF ➡ INTA ➡ IRD ➡ AAFC ➡ Thünen Institut ➡ Ghent University ➡ Institute of Geography ➡ Romanian Academy ➡ University of Pisa ➡ University of Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro ➡ ANR ➡ Vereinigung Ökologischer Landbau in Hessen ➡ AAFC ➡ CIHEAM Institut Agronomique Méditerranéen De Montpellier ➡ ÖMKi (Hungarian Research Institute of Organic Agriculture) ➡ CREA - AA ➡ University of Agronomic Sciences and Veterinary Medicine of Bucharest ➡ Gironde Chamber of Agriculture ➡ Alliance Biodiversity and CIAT ➡ Syndicat de l'eau de l'est Seine et Marnais ➡ IUNG-PIB ➡ Michigan State University ➡ Wageningen University & Research ➡ University of Guelph ➡ Agropolis ➡ Alliance Biodiversity-CIAT ➡ ILRI ➡ ZALF ➡ UCCE ➡ University of Pisa ➡ ISRA BAME ➡ Facultad de Agronomía - Udelar ➡ University of Nebraska-Lincoln ➡ German Agroforestry Association ➡ Future Food Organisation ➡ AAFC ➡ CIRAD ➡ Leibniz Centre for Agricultural Landscape Research ➡ Wallon agricultural research center ➡ University of Göttingen ➡ ENOLL ➡ INTA ➡ ZALF ➡ Acadia University ➡ Universidad de Hohenheim ➡ Université de Rennes ➡ National Institute of Agronomy of Tunisia ➡ Peace Region Living Lab ➡ Food Water Wellness Foundation ➡ CIHEAM-IAMM ➡ Academia Romana - Filiala Iasi ➡ Transformative Change ➡ Still3 ➡

Codrin Dinu Vasiliu: I am a scientific researcher at the Romanian Academy, Iași Branch. My areas of interest cover the following fields: knowledge ecosystems, systems thinking, living lab systems, anthropology of knowledge, digital anthropology, anthrozoology.

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Disclaimer: The notes in this report are an effect of the participatory observation action initiated in the conference. The ideas presented here reflect exclusively the interpretations of the author of this report.

The general conclusions from this conference come from discussions, observations, intuitions. Nevertheless, I can use them as nuanced information. Due to natural physical limitations, I could not take part in every section, since they were held in parallel. Thus, my interpretations represent a perspective driven by the event agenda, but mainly centered on personal experiences.

Conference chairs:
Christian Huyghe, INRAE, France
François Chrétien, AAFC, Canada

Scientific Committee



David Archer,
USDA, United States



Eduardo Cittadini,
INTA, Argentina



Katharina Helming,
ZALF, Germany



Allison-Marie Locantini,
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President, Scientific
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Host
Région Nouvelle-Aquitaine



Moderators of parallel sessions, by theme: 1. Fostering transitions – Muriel Mambrini (IRD) 2. Empowering participation – Gerald Schwarz (Thünen Institut) 3. Monitoring and Evaluating success – Katharina Helming (ZALF) 4. Promoting Innovation – Yann Raineau (INRAE) 5. Integrating Policy – Eduardo Cittadini (INTA) 6. Enabling research – Henry Chau (AAFC, Living Lab – Alberta AgriSystems)

International Forum on Agroecosystem Living Labs

Programul Conferinței / IF-ALL / 2025 / Bordeaux / 15-17 October

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