

*Target group: Members of organizations and collectives committed to a more sustainable and resilient agriculture*

# The potential reasons for and benefits of becoming a member of a European network of living labs and research infrastructures for agroecology transition

## Summary

- ALL-Ready is laying the grounds for a European network of Living Labs and Research Infrastructures. The network will facilitate and strengthen the transition towards agroecology throughout Europe.
- To better understand the benefits of such a network, we built a set of inclusion criteria. These include:
  - Being involved in activities that have a significant impact on the sustainability and resilience of the production system through the use of agroecological methods;
  - Being involved in living labs and research infrastructures whose capacities can accelerate the spread of agroecology.
- We have created a questionnaire which allows organizations and groups to understand where their activities “sit” in relation to the agroecological transition, and to clarify why it may be interesting for them to become part of the network



*Photo: INRAE*

## Problem

In this project we are interested in connecting with groups and organisations

involved in the agroecology transition, and whose activities correspond to the ‘living lab’ or ‘research infrastructure’ model. However, we acknowledge that not everyone involved in these activities will

recognize such labels. In order to recognize potential members of the network regardless of how they themselves define their activities, we:

- considered all aspects of the food system (including production, processing, distribution, consumption);
- built criteria focusing on the activities and values of the organisations, rather than their descriptions or histories.

This allowed us to make sure that all relevant organisations are included in the network, even if they do not identify themselves as living labs or research infrastructures.

## Solution

To help organisations understand whether they may be interested in taking part in the network, we prepared a **questionnaire**. This questionnaire allows an organisation or group to self-evaluate with regards to how involved they are in agroecology, and which of their activities may be significantly strengthened and scaled-out within a network of living labs and research infrastructures.

In general, relevant organisations would include:

- those already actively involved in practicing or researching sustainable and resilient agriculture, for which the framework of agroecology helps gathering their diversity;
- those whose involvement in the agroecology transition could be accelerated by their belonging to the network;
- those whose involvement in the network will be beneficial to other network members, thereby accelerating the overall agroecology transition.

## Benefits

The questionnaire can further be used in order to:

- enhance understanding of which aspects of the agroecology transition are prioritised existing actors, and which need further attention to achieve a holistic development;
- evaluate the progress of the transition and of the network (specifically by repeated surveys of network members to highlight areas which require further support);
- identify gaps in the network which could be filled by the inclusion of specific additional actors.

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*The European network of living labs and research infrastructures enable agroecology transition*

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## Research needs/Main results

The criteria and indicators are divided into the following categories:



**Approach/Governance:** support of co-creation of innovation and knowledge.



**Objectives/Vision:** promotion of resilience, sustainability and diversity.



**Principles:** support of climate change and environmental adaptation of agricultural practices and promotes synergies between different ecosystem functions.



**Activities:** the organisation promotes efficiency in the use of natural resources and is involved in responsible management and use of natural resources.



**Values and "living values":** the organisation is involved in creating circular and solidarity economies and is focused on values of social and ecological justice.

## Practical recommendations

Filling in the survey helps initiatives to make their own statement on their contribution to agroecology transition, identify their interest in

being part of the network, while using it regularly gives an overview on the progress of agroecology transition.

### Further information

#### FURTHER READING

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Photo: INRAE



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**About ALL-Ready:** ALL-Ready is a Coordination and Support Action (CSA) funded by the European Commission (EC) with the aim of preparing a framework for a future European network of Living Labs (LL) and Research Infrastructures (IR) that will enable the transition towards agroecology throughout Europe. Based on the premise that agroecology can strengthen the sustainability and resilience of farming systems, the project will contribute to addressing the multiple challenges that they are facing today including climate change, loss of biodiversity, dwindling resources, degradation of soil and water quality.

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