BUILDING A COMMON VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF FOOD & AGRICULTURE

2024 EUROPEAN ORGANIC CONGRESS

#EUorganic2030 #EOC2024

10-12 SEPTEMBER

BUDAPEST, HUNGARY

ORGANIC LIVING LABS & LIGHTHOUSE FARMS IN EUROPE

a presentation by Gerda Jónász, PhD

based on a study of the same title published by TP Organics (2022)
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The TP Organics study on organic living labs and lighthouse farms

AIM
Showcase the innovativeness of the organic sector,
and its potential to trigger a profound transformation of the European agri-food system,
starting from bottom-up innovation with organic living labs and lighthouse farms

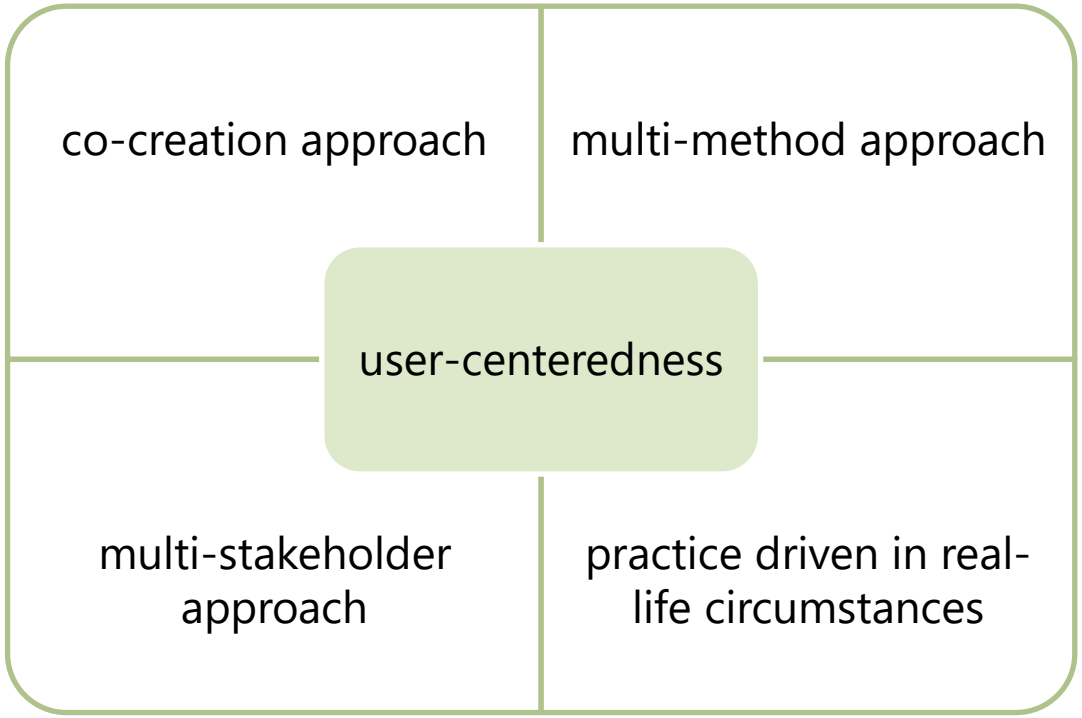
METHODOLOGY
Selection of a set of organic living labs and organic lighthouse farms
Data collection through in-depth interviews

ANALYTICAL FOCUS
Their innovative approaches and practices as living labs and lighthouse farms

Selection criteria I. The concept of living labs

The European network of living labs (ENoLL) defines living labs (LLs)
"as user-centred, open innovation ecosystems based on systematic user co-creation approach, integrating research and innovation processes in real-life communities and settings. Living labs are both practice-driven organisations that facilitate and foster open, collaborative innovation, as well as real-life environments or arenas where both open innovation and user innovation processes can be studied and subject to experiments and where new solutions or products are developed."

Main components of living labs (based on ENoLL definition)



Selection criteria II. Organic living labs and organic lighthouse farms

Organic living labs

- focus on the improvement of and experimentation with organic farming practices
- use co-creative methods to plan and conduct real-life experimentations (e.g.: on-farm trials, experimental fields on working organic farms, with the active involvement of a wide range of stakeholders)
- address farmers' needs on a very practical level
- also interested in addressing problems on the scale of the larger food system

Organic lighthouse farms

- single sites or farm networks that are commercially viable
- provide sustainably produced food and ecosystem services
- provide space for
  - the demonstration of organic practices,
  - education and peer-to-peer learning
- aim to increase the adoption of innovative solutions among farmers
- often work together with research institutions or companies to conduct experiments to improve organic practices

The selected initiatives for the TP Organics study

7 Organic living labs:
Agrolab (Spain)
Bio Danubius (Romania)
Carbon Action Platform (Finland)
InnoForum (Germany)
LLAEBIO (Belgium)
ÖMKi (Hungary)
INAGRO (Belgium)

5 Organic lighthouse farms:
INAGRO (Belgium)
EKOFARMA PROBIO (Czech Republic)
GRAND FARM (Austria)
La Junquera (Spain)
Mustiala (Finland)

Findings I. What do they excel in?

Facilitation of co-creation processes:

Secure collaborations
Coordinate multi-stakeholder co-creation processes
Develop platforms for interactive innovation
Provide space for knowledge-exchange

Conduct and coordinate research:

Conduct, coordinate real-life participatory testing
Provide space for research, access to partners with real-life context
Promote open innovation

Outreach

Organize/host demonstration activities
Facilitate knowledge-exchange, and the adaptation farm-scale solutions
Engage in teaching and training programs
Proactive advocacy work
Support the uptake of organic farming by including even non-traditional agricultural stakeholders into research and innovation

Findings II. Their networking experience

DOING WHAT?

Research development
developing/managing/hosting/ participating in networks, clusters, organic hubs, umbrella associations, and research collaborations

Knowledge-exchange and outreach

- organizing regular meetings for their partners,
- proactive dissemination of research outcomes
- hosting/organizing on-farm demonstration activities
- showcasing their approach as LLs and LHs

WITH WHOM?

Knowledge centres (universities, research centres/institutes), social innovation centres

Living labs or lighthouse farms
Partners from EU/ Interreg projects, their networks; members of their associations/networks/hubs/clusters

Individual stakeholders from the value chain (both members of their initiatives and non-members)
and
organic farmers' organizations, farmer associations, CSA groups, social groups

ALLOWS THEM TO:

Identify common challenges, relevant research topics
Follow-up on these together sharing resources and competences

Meet their and their partners' development goals
Strengthen their economic viability

Make their members and partners more knowledgeable and aware of the newest advances

Improve their own approach and methodology as living labs/lighthouse farms

FINDINGS III. They have great potential to…

Due to the effective co-creation methods and their excellence in networking and boosting knowledge exchange, the organic living labs and organic lighthouse farms have great potential to:

- Find solutions to local, practical problems
- Contribute to the better implementation of organic solutions
- Enable faster knowledge exchange
- Fight the underrepresentation of organics in national AKIS

Recommendations

„The living labs and the lighthouse farms have great potential boost the effectiveness of the efforts made to sharing knowledge and innovation in the organic sector"
TP Organics' (2022)

1. Support peer-to-peer learning events

2. Invest in online platforms and social media

3. Bring organic and conventional farmers together

4. Raise awareness about the LL and LHF concepts in the organic sector

5. Invest in courses and trainings for farmers

6. Set up a sub-network for organics in the Soil Mission network of living labs and lighthouse farms

7. Better connect and integrate organics in national AKIS

8. Set up an EU network of organic advisory services

Thank you for your attention!

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