

Target group: researchers

How to map policies and initiatives that foster transition to agroecology in Europe?

Summary

- ALL-Ready's work package 2 maps agroecology initiatives, agroecology living labs, research infrastructures and policies that foster transition to agroecology across Europe
- The endeavour is based on qualitative investigation designs, and an assessment framework containing key concepts and conceptual boundaries



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Problem

Mapping connotes the identification of practices, policies, gaps of various kinds, and types and sources of evidence to inform practice, policy-making, and research. However, 'agroecology' and 'agroecology transition' mean different things to different people. Therefore, manifestations of agroecology practices, as well as policies and mechanisms such as living labs and research infrastructures that foster agroecology transition are difficult to map, categorize and compare. Adding to the complexity, there are many different scientific traditions, study designs, and types of evidence that exist.

Solution

Building on the aforementioned points, there is no one 'correct' way to map agroecology. In the current mapping endeavor, the design incorporates a combination of closed and open-ended questions within a qualitative survey framework. Closed questions enable comparisons between countries and respondent groups, while open-ended questions facilitate the exploration of respondents' perceptions.

The series of open questions capture the diverse interpretations of agroecology initiatives and policy practices within a conceptual framework where knowledge generation and exchange in agricultural knowledge and innovation systems (AKIS) are recognized as central elements for fostering transition. Living labs and research

infrastructures serve as key mechanisms in this context. The respondents in this study are key informants from agricultural policy, research, and practice who are already familiar with the topics.

Benefits

The mapping has provided an overview of what is happening on the ground with respect to agricultural transition across highly heterogeneous European settings. In particular, it helps us understand the enablers, barriers, and incentives for agroecology transition, with a specific focus on funding arrangements and regulatory frameworks.

The mapping helps us to understand the enablers, the barriers and the incentives for agroecology transition.

Main results

The mapping activities have resulted in the following:

- The report 'Mapping of Agroecology Living Labs and Research Infrastructures,' which provides interview guidelines that can serve as inspiration for those seeking to map agroecology and agroecology transition using the ALL-Ready approach.
- An 'Assessment Framework' report that outlines the approach and methodologies applied in mapping and analysing agroecology, living labs, and research infrastructures in Europe.
- A 'Report on Funding Mechanisms for Agroecology Initiatives' that offers a retrospective analysis of funding support for relevant agroecology initiatives across

Europe (FP7, Horizon 2020, rural and regional development, etc.).

- A 'Report on Drivers of Agroecology Transition,' based on interviews with National Contact Points (NCPs) in 23 countries. The report includes individual country reports and analyzes European regulatory, planning, and funding frameworks influencing research, innovation agendas, and agroecological production practices.
- An 'Overview of Agroecology Living Labs and Research Infrastructures in Europe' that ranks these initiatives regionally and according to indicators measuring their contributions to agroecology transition.
- The 'Agroecology Open Innovation' report (currently in draft), highlighting best practice cases of agroecology living labs and research infrastructure innovations in Europe.

Finally, the mapping team has completed a synthesis report titled 'Advancing the Agroecology Transition Using Living Labs.' Drawing on the outcomes of all deliverables, this report identifies enablers for the transition to agroecology and makes recommendations for establishing a network of living labs across Europe.

Practical recommendations

Scientific traditions, coupled with mappers' perspectives on agroecology (practice, science, movement, etc.), knowledge systems, and transition and transformation dynamics, play a significant role in shaping mapping frameworks.

However, it is essential for the mapping of agroecology and agroecology living labs and research infrastructures to rely on clear concepts and definitions that are well understood by both interviewers and respondents.

Further information

ALL-Ready_D2.1_Assesment framework report: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.8147037>

ALL-Ready_D2.3_Report on drivers of agroecology transition: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.8147044>

Mapping of Agroecology Living Labs and Research Infrastructures: Interview guidelines: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.5729143>

All-Ready_D2.2_Funding Mechanisms for Agroecology Initiatives

All-Ready_D2.4_Overview of Agroecology Living Labs and Research Infrastructures in Europe

All-Ready_D2.5_Agroecology open Innovation: Best cases across Europe

All-Ready_D2.6_Towards a Network of European Agroecology Living Labs: Advancing the agroecology transition using living labs and research infrastructures



Photo: INRAE



Photo: ÖMKi

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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