

# The role of Living Labs in designing sustainable strategies

Living Labs for agroecology  
transition and soil health



*European Network of Living Labs - Dolinda Cavallo, Project manager*

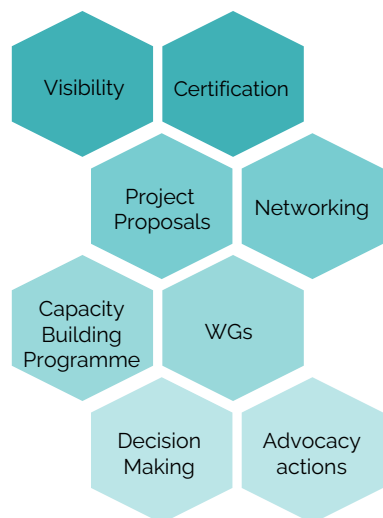
# ENoLL – European Network of Living Labs

5 continents  
36 countries

600 historically certified living labs

~ 160 active members (89% in Europe)

Active in 20+ EU-funded projects to support LL creation and strengthen the impact of LL



**ENoLL is the international non-profit association of certified Living Labs**

- Founded in 2006 under the auspices of the Finnish European Presidency
- ENoLL focuses on facilitating knowledge exchange, joint actions and project partnerships among its members
- Its aim is to **promote** the Living Labs concept, **support EU policies, enhance Living Labs and their sustainability** and **enable their implementation at a global level.**
- ENoLL growing community includes members that operate by the main living lab principles such as **multi-stakeholder co-creation, iterative active user involvement** and **real-life intervention.**

## A PATH TO GROW

**Certification & Labelling**  
Quality evaluation procedure, formal certification

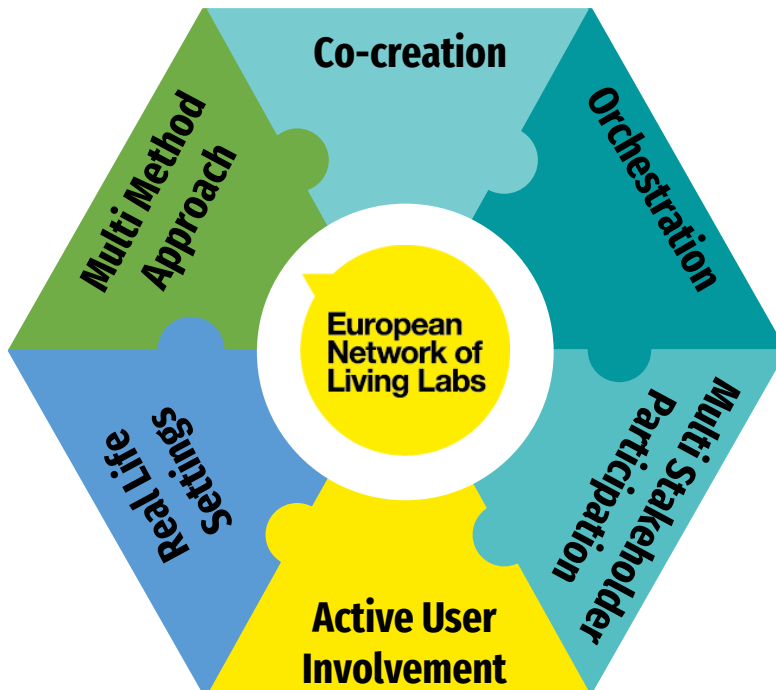
**Capacity Building**  
Learning programmes for LL creation and ENoLL certification

**WGs**  
Knowledge exchange & collaboration on hot topics

# What are Living Labs?

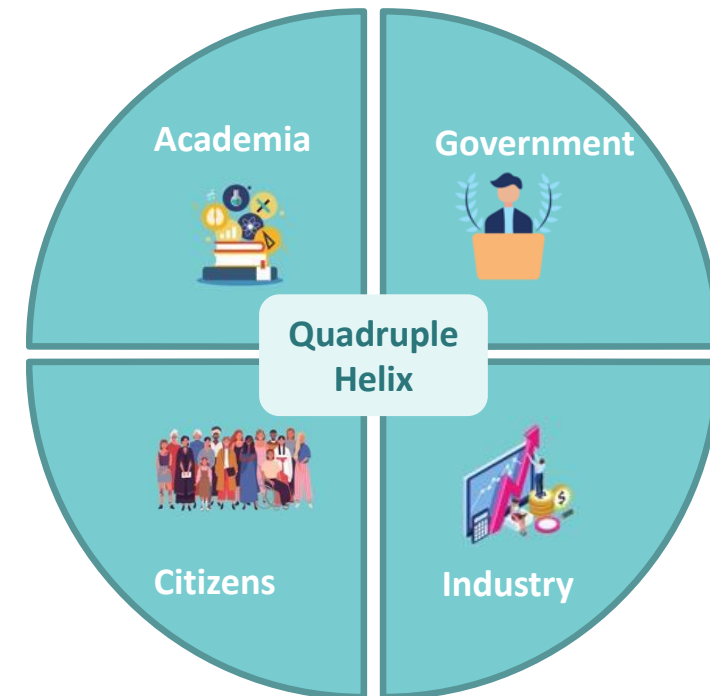
European Network of Living Labs

Living Labs are **open innovation ecosystems** in **real-life environments** based on a **systematic user co-creation approach** that integrates research and innovation activities in communities, placing **citizens at the centre of innovation**

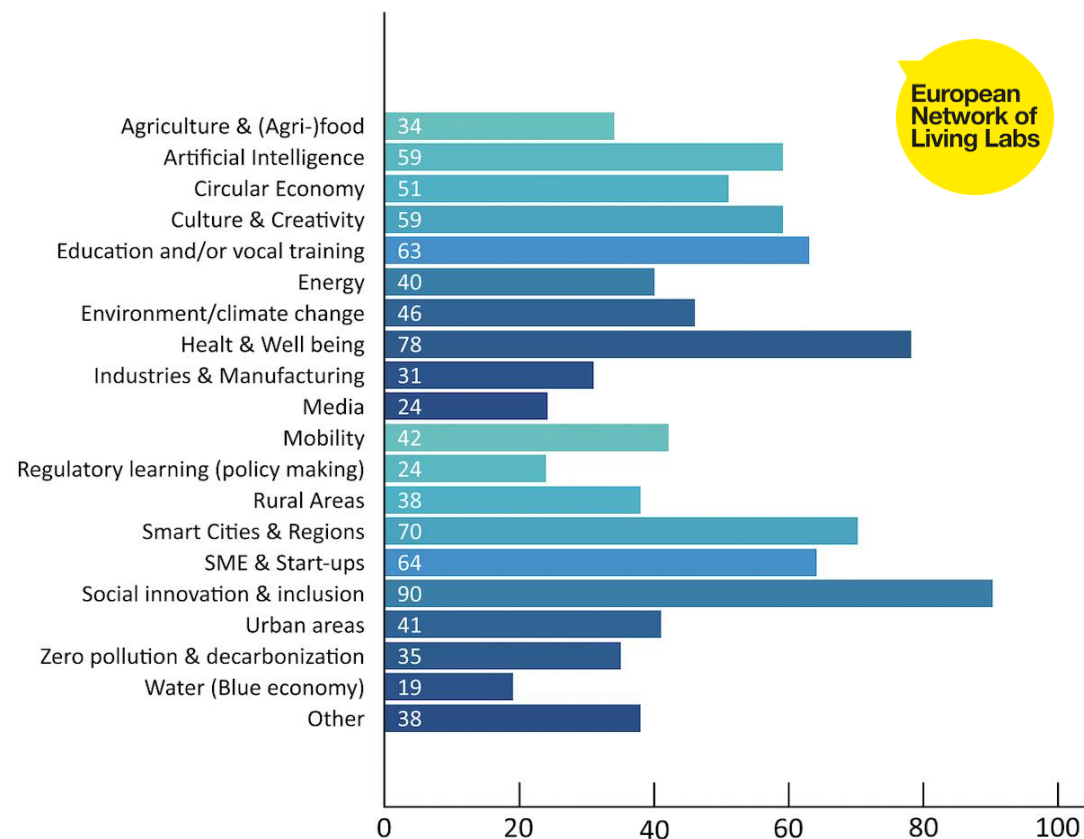
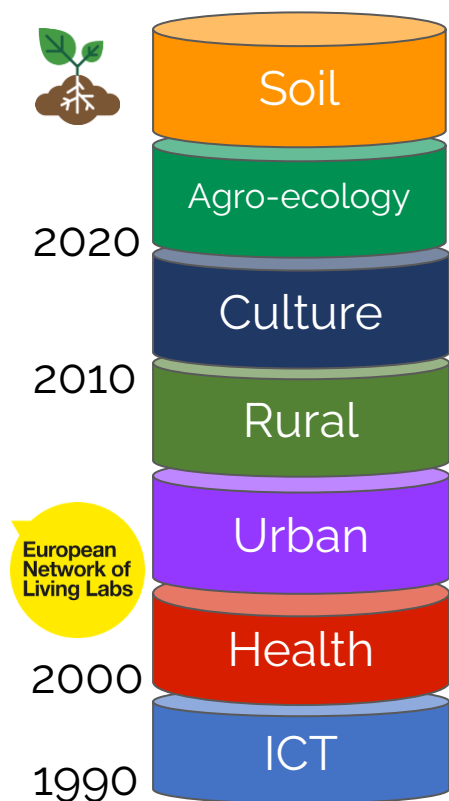


Living Labs operate as **intermediaries** among **citizens, research organisations, companies and government** agencies or levels for joint-value co-creation, rapid prototyping or to scale up innovation and businesses.

They are open innovation ecosystems in **real-life** environments using **iterative feedback processes** throughout the lifecycle approach of an innovation



# Living Lab evolution & current area of work



European Network of Living Labs



Multiple areas of work & transversal approach



# AGRI-RURAL LIVING LAB

Suppliers

Retailers

Customers

Farmers



Researchers



Advisors



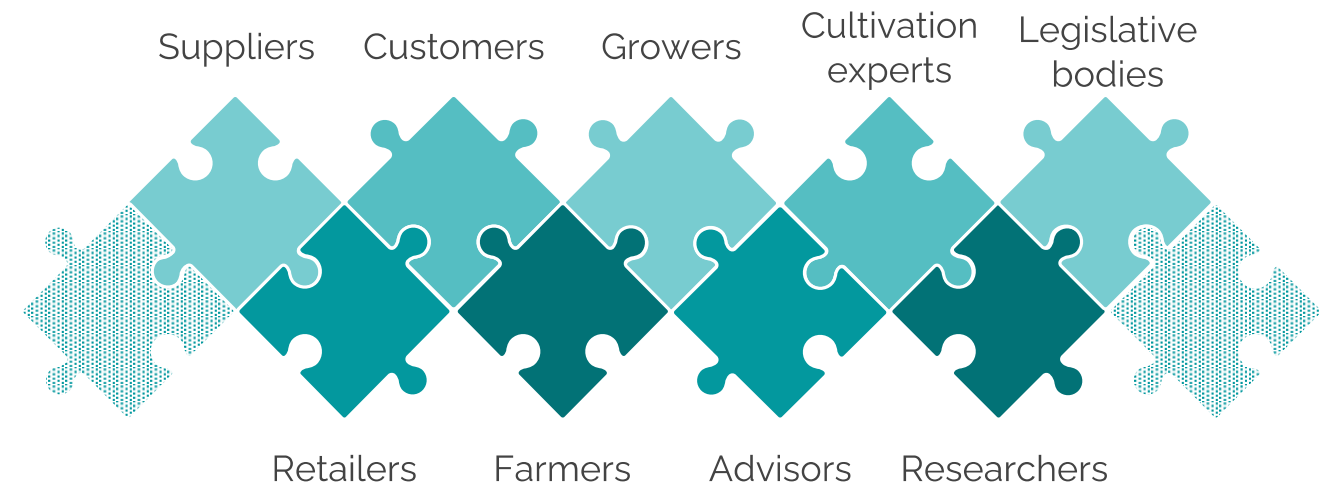
Existing and new technology



Cultivation experts



# Living Labs: agri-food



**ÖMKi On-farm Living Lab**  
Hungary

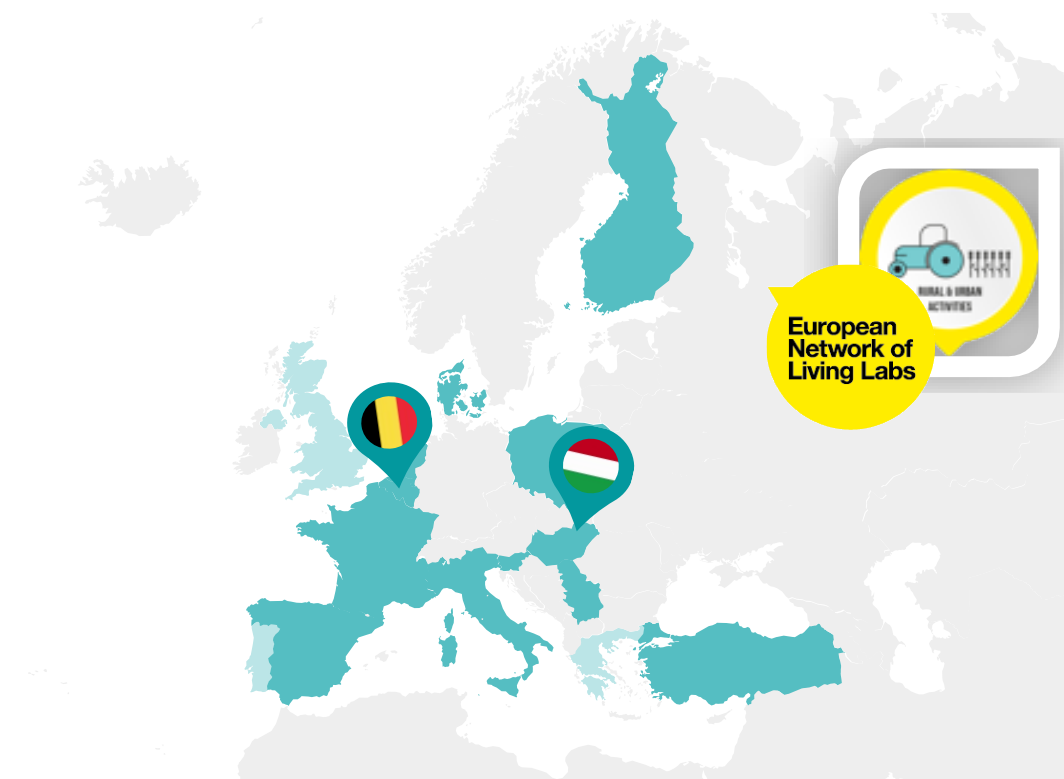


The ÖMKi On-Farm Living Lab is an **agroecology-focused nationwide** participatory experimentation **network** that includes a variety of **field trials and technology tests co-designed and co-implemented with farmers** in Hungary, with the aim to promote agroecological transition. Through the national network, ÖMKi tests how newly released sustainable and organic technologies, products, and practices perform in diverse, everyday farming.

**Agrotopia**  
Belgium



The living lab 'Agrotopia' is supported by the 9000 m<sup>2</sup> **Agrotopia rooftop research greenhouse** on top of the agricultural market in Roeselare. 6000 m<sup>2</sup> cultivation area, a compartment for multilayer indoor growing with artificial lighting, and a 12 m high vertical compartment allow to co-create, develop, validate, and demonstrate innovative best practices for vegetable hydroponic systems.





# Why involve citizens / civil society?

Living Labs are open innovation ecosystems in real-life environments based on a systematic user co-creation approach that integrates research and innovation activities in communities, placing **citizens at the centre of innovation**

**Lack of involvement of citizens** might lead to:

- Products and services not being used.
- Lack of transparency.
- Innovators and end-users not understanding each other.
- Frustration and production of a technical innovation instead of social

*Värmland County Administrative Board, A Quadruple Helix guide for innovations, (Karlstad: Värmland County. Administrative Board, 2018)*

**Why involve citizens & users?**

- Greater chance for user-friendly solutions to be taken up by the population
- Products / services more likely to succeed



# Why Living Labs?

## Derisk innovation

Transforming clients into developers, LLs support the creation of products and services that are more suitable for the market



## Real-life environment

LL provide a real-life environment for **testing and validating innovations**

## Bridge the research/market gap

LL help bridge the gap between research and market uptake, leading to **more impactful innovations**



## Address complex societal challenges

LL are powerful tools for co-creating solutions that address complex societal challenges and **wicked problems** that are complex, dynamic, and often involve multiple stakeholders



## Involve end-users in the innovation process

LL involve end-users in the innovation process, ensuring solutions are **tailored to their needs**



## Insights into the adoption

LL provide valuable insights into the adoption and **sustainability of innovations** in the long run



## Faster innovation cycle

LL facilitate **rapid iteration and prototyping of solutions**, leading to faster innovation cycles



## Quadruple helix

LL enable collaboration between different stakeholders, including researchers, industry partners, and communities

By leveraging the strengths of Living Labs, we can create innovative solutions that meet the needs of end-users while also driving societal impact.



# Living Labs EU-wide recognition

22 topics within **Horizon Europe** explicitly ask to set-up/use Living Labs

Living Labs recognised as a research infrastructure in the **European Research Area**

**Joint Working Groups** ENoLL & European Commission

Living Labs cited as one of the five flagships of the **New European Innovation Agenda**



## Partnership for Agroecology

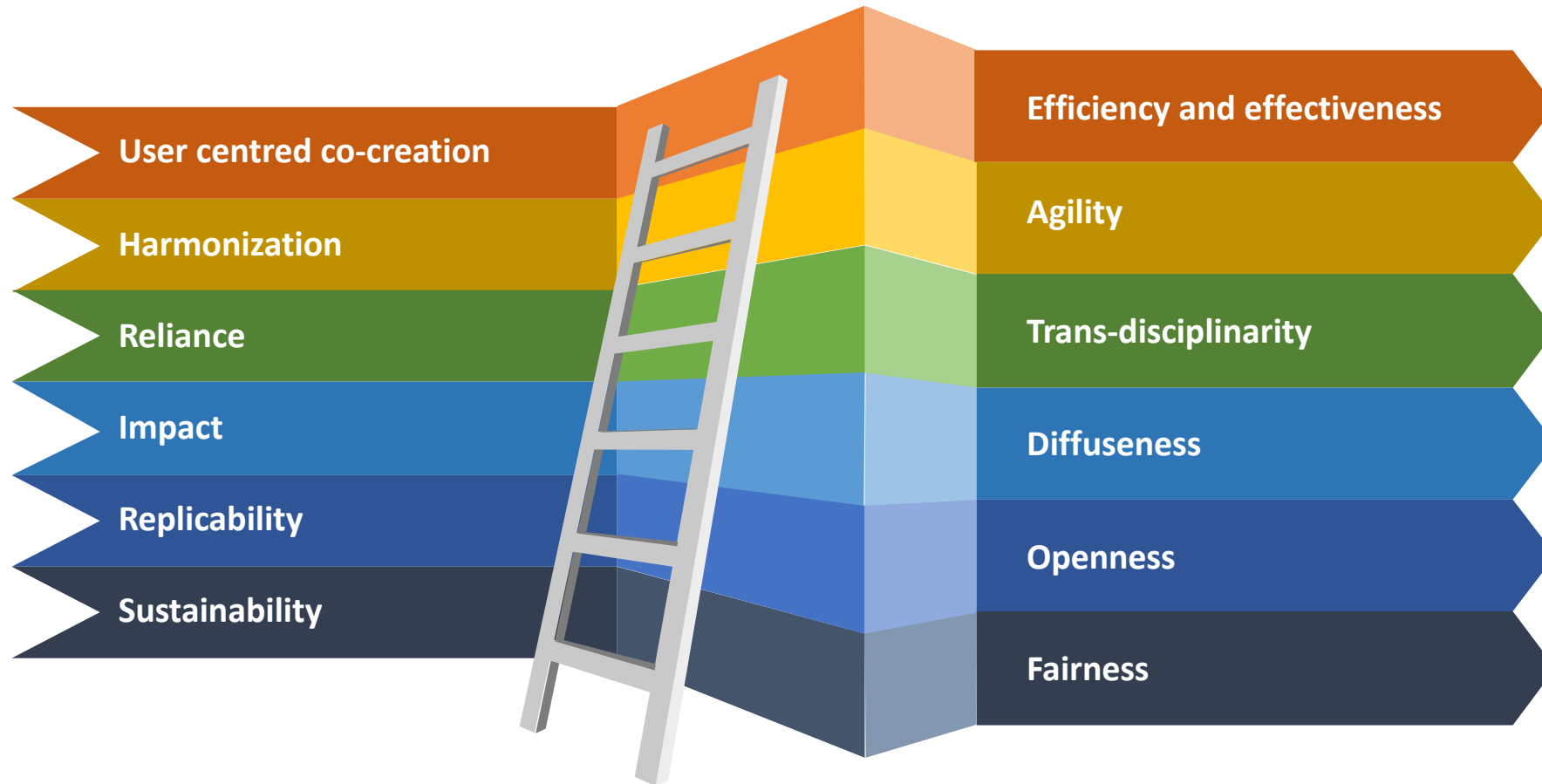
Structure and support a network of Living Labs and research infrastructures to accelerate the transition towards agroecology throughout Europe



## A Soil Deal for Europe Mission

Creation of 100 Living Labs and Lighthouses in Europe, to lead the transition towards healthy soils by 2030

# How to support Living Labs?



# Living Labs for Agroecology



## ALL-Ready

The European Agroecology Living Lab and Research Infrastructure Network:  
Preparation phase

## LLs & RIs PILOT NETWORK

- 11 LLs from 9 European countries
- 9 RIs from 5 European countries
- 2 advisors from Canada and Spain



"It's important to choose the 'right' stakeholders when co-constructing the system and to share the same vision of the objectives to be achieved."

"The context is fundamental: approaches that work in e.g., traditional agriculture might not be the adequate ones for agroecology."

"Take the time needed to build relations, to learn to know each other's perspective and visions and learn to be very good listeners"

# Living Labs for Soil Health

**PREP SOIL**  
**PREPSOIL**  
 Preparing for  
 the 'Soil Deal for Europe' Mission

July 2022 – June 2025  
 GA 101070045

[prepsoil.eu](http://prepsoil.eu)

- Taxonomy & features specification
- Identification & mapping
- Model business plan
- Service package

**NATIOONS**  
**NATIOONS**

National engagement activities  
 to support the launch of  
 the Mission 'A Soil Deal for Europe'  
**100 LLs and LHs**

November 2022 – October 2024  
 GA 101090738

[natioons.eu](http://natioons.eu)

- National engagement sessions
- Supporting applicants
  - Coaching
  - E-learning & capacity building
  - Matchmaking
  - Helpdesk

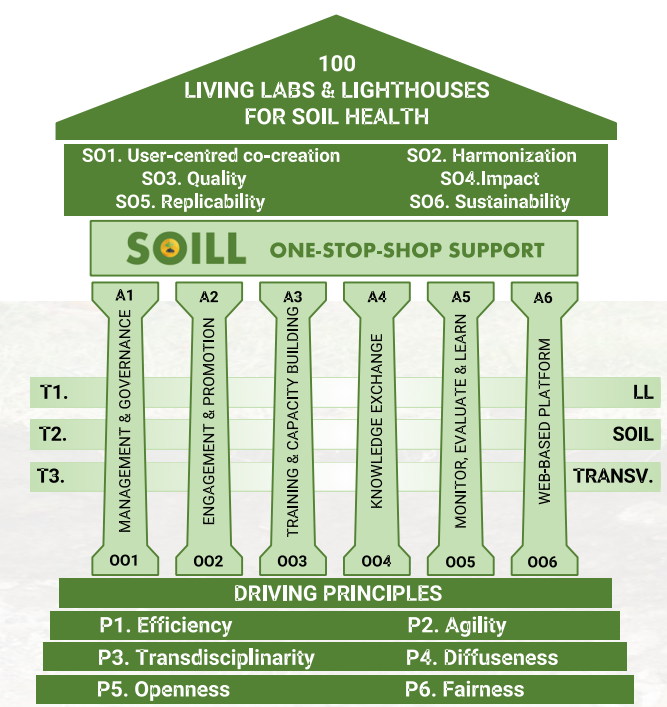


**SOILL**

**SOILL**

Support structure for Soil Health Living Labs

January 2024 2024 – December 2028  
 GA 101112782





# Thank You

## Our contacts



### European Network of Living Labs



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