



Methodology: Applying integrated approach in rural development capacity building



















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Introduction

Integrural methodology is a thorough reflection on the tool of living labs as an orientation tool for the work that Integrural wants to implement. This guidance is aimed at supporting local innovators and educators to support micro-farmers in innovation practises and develop practical innovation patterns apt at being flexible at local level.

1. The living lab approach for rural innovation

1.1 Living Labs

In the literature, Living Labs are terms to diversely define different methodologies or spaces or entities which are aimed at innovating something - an approach, a product, a project, or a set of competencies for social innovation.

The power of Living Labs resides in being real-world testing environments that address certain areas and target specific groups to enhance joint development. Not only, as living labs can raise awareness on certain topics and pool knowledge from different participants to generate innovative solutions and confrontations.

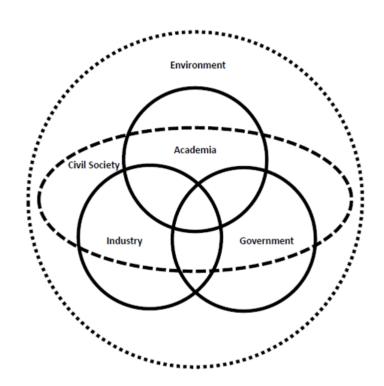




In general, one can recognise different steps to establish a Living Lab approach.

STEP 1. Establish the group and the place for the Living Lab.

As foreseen by Integrural project, it is crucial to develop a lead group. Through our participatory approach, through open call, local networking and contacting, we aim to develop strong local bonds to discuss problems, define aims, and create a mixed group of participants from public and private entities. A good way to establish innovation for design thinking is the Quintuple Helix model



STEP 2. Define the local implementation

With Integrural, we aim to capacity-build actors at local level to define actions, timing, tasks. To do so, local workshops and international training programmes





must be run, refining the timeline of the roll-out and check the needed expertise. Through different learning moments and practical activities, participants can develop innovative thinking and share knowledge, and deepen their capacity of handling situations and experiment solutions. In this sense, it is crucial to guide participants in different tasks according to their expertise.

STEP 3. Establishing a community of users.

Having established the organisational structure of the Living Lab, one of the first things it will need to do is to create a community of users.

Communication, dissemination, engagement are the keywords of this specific step. In particular, it is crucial for users to understand why they should be participating in laboratories, or in the activities planned by the Living Lab.

STEP 4. Activating the process of consultation.

Once defined the exploration (methods and techniques to carry out the research), the operating group (how, by whom, when and where the information is going to be gathered) and the process of the results, it is crucial to underline the ultimate transformative goal of the Living Lab. To this end the report should have an eminently practical approach, bearing more resemblance to an instruction manual and an implementation guide than a description of the results obtained.

1.2 Innovation in rural areas

"Innovation's role in EU rural development policy is highlighted in the Community Strategic Guidelines for Rural Development with reference to its "potential to achieve particularly positive effects in meeting the new challenges of climate change, the production of renewable energies, more sustainable water management practises and halting biodiversity decline. Support for innovation in these areas could take the form of encouraging the





development, take-up and application of relevant technologies, products and processes", (Council Decision 2009/61/EC amending the guidelines on rural development).

What is more, the discussion on the innovation gap between rural and urban areas in Europe is on-going, vivid and has brought to different discussions on the actual concept of innovation. In general, innovation in rural areas may not always be associated with high-level impacts or inventions; it may simply involve introducing good practises, rethink of how cultural heritage is connected, put in place things which already exist but with a new perspective, or using technologies and adapting them to particular conditions or circumstances which are specific of targeted rural areas. In this way, innovation has to be seen more as a new vision on endogenous factors through processes which take into account new competencies, digitalisation, and reorganisation of the imaginary at local level.

Certainly, different papers discuss the innovation gap as a combination of slower digital transformation processes and lower specialised skills by rural population. According to Eurostat, the overall level of digital skills in the EU in 2019 was lowest among adults living in rural areas. Only 48% of adult rural inhabitants had basic or above basic digital skills, compared to 55% for adults living in towns and suburbs and 62% for adults living in Cities.

Though, Covid19 has changed the current scenario or, better, has accelerated and anticipated some processes. In particular, covid19 has highlighted the necessity of guaranteeing new ways of accessibility and new range of competencies that can build long-term solutions. In this sense, our living lab approach orientation has been seen by us as a pioneer - we need to bring people together to set up an innovation mindset, even before discussing what actually innovation means.

Being inspired by a living lab approach, we have gathered the opinions of almost 100 rural micro-businesses and heritage operators from France, Greece, Italy, Portugal, and Spain to understand how to conceive in practical terms innovation, as a number of changes in technology, work organisation, project management, promotion and integration of activities, etc. that an organisation embraces to create added value in its own working outcome.





In this regard, we have reflected on the current gaps, both structural and perceived, of the different rural areas targeted by the project to understand which competencies can ignite a process of Living Lab approach and start innovative patterns.

Clusters and networks in rural areas

As we see our work, the development of experiments of living labs in the different targeted areas touched by Integrural is the basis to reflect on how to develop and plan networks, and how to further reflect on existing ones to enhance creativity, rural transformation and new methods/practises in rural areas.

In this sense, we do not see clusters and networks as crystallised concepts or defined organisations, but more an organisational horizon toward which we want to bring participants. We are aware that in all the targeted areas strong networks and experiences are present, and the point is to understand how to make information, knowledge, good practises can be shared and readapted - this is also the mission of Integrural in terms of training for innovation and strategic thinking to combine agriculture and heritage management

Living lab innovation competencies for rural areas

Different competencies

1. Basic entrepreneurship





Competence Area	#1 Basic Entrepreneurship
Competence Statement	The capacity to act upon opportunities and ideas to create value for others. The value created can be social, cultural, or financial. It embraces different types of entrepreneurship: intrapreneurship, social entrepreneurship, green
	entrepreneurship and digital entrepreneurship.
Knowledge	1.1 Identify and seize the opportunities depending on the features of the area that they are activated
Tallowiougo	1.2 Recognize the social, cultural and economic landscape, in order to create value
	1.3 Classify what value is in social, cultural and economic terms
	1.4. Recognize the potential an idea has for creating value in line with the rural features and needs
	1.5 Outline and reproduce the knowledge in order to develop better solutions for the rural challenges
	1.6 Estimate the consequences of entrepreneurial action on the community and the environment
	1.7 Identify the individual or/and group strengths and weaknesses
	1.8 Arrange technical, legal, tax and digital matters
	1.9 Estimate the cost of turning an idea into action
	1.10. Select effective communication, in order to establish networks or/and cooperations





	1.11 Define priorities and set long-, medium- and short- term goals
Skills	1.12 Locate new connections and bring together scattered elements of the landscape
	1.13 Illustrate innovative approaches that combine knowledge and resources
	1.14 Develop strategies to make the most of the value generated by ideas
	1.15 Describe an action plan which identifies the priorities and milestones to achieve goals
	1.16 Estimate risks of unintended outcomes
	1.17 Operate with others, solve conflicts
	1.18 Reproduce good practises, adapted to the individual and territorial features
	1.19 Compose the material, non-material and digital resources
Responsibility and Autonomy	1.20 Identify individual and territorial abilities, strengths and weaknesses
	1.21 Use sustainably resources, define strategies to mobilise them, in order to generate value for others
	1.22 Compute, modify, comply with the budget of the activities.
	1.23 Comply with the action plan, solve matters, especially that affect community





2. Professional digital literacy

Competence Area	#2 Professional digital literacy
Competence Statement	The ability of employees/employers to use and evaluate the impact of digital tools on their company in each department/activity, the capability of embedding mobile chats and communication apps to improve information/task sharing and micro e-commerce practices to favour better product branding and tackling innovation gaps.
Knowledge	 2.1 Identify and describe common digital tools (such as communication and e-commerce apps) 2.2 Describe the benefits of digital technology for each company department/activity 2.3 Recognise common uses of digital tools in the workplace. 2.4 Explain how instant messaging and Webcam communication works.





Skills	2.5 Demonstrate basic understanding of how digital tools, apps are used 2.6 Demonstrate the ability to save/download and attach/upload files 2.7 Communicate effectively in social media/communication apps 2.8 Use search technologies effectively 2.9 Organise and manage digital information 2.10 Demonstrate the ability to use e-commerce apps effectively
Responsibility and Autonomy	2.11 Be a discerning consumer of digital content 2.12 Critically evaluate and analyse information and its source (relevance and credibility)

3. Project Management (VerdeMente)

Competence Area





Competence Statement	The ability of entrepreneurs, managers and workers to study and analyse public funding grants, programmes and calls, design projects and proposals, build partnerships, manage,
	develop and justify projects.
Knowledge	3.1 Identify the main international/regional calls and programmes
	3.2 Define the main elements of a concept note and a partner's letter of interest
	3.3 Identify the main elements of a strategy for a partner search
	3.4 Identify the benefits of participating to an international project
	3.5 Compare the main international/regional calls and programmes
	3.6 Identify the main tools for management
Skills	3.7 Illustrate the main elements for a successful project proposal
	3.8 Analyse the successful elements of a strong partnership
	3.9 Demonstrate the main elements of effective communications with partners
	3.10 Being able to interact with management tools





	3.11 Being able to review the strong points of good practises 3.12 Identify typical weaknesses in International Projects
Responsibility and Autonomy	3.12 Appreciate international collaboration and synergy bulding 3.13 Value innovation as a transversal approach to project management
	3.14 Know how to establish partnerships, design proposals and manage international projects

4. Cultural heritage integration (Time Heritage)

Competence Area	#4 Cultural Heritage Integration
Competence Statement	The ability of entrepreneurs and mediators to use and evaluate the incorporation of cultural heritage elements on their strategies in each product/activity, the capability of research and value cultural heritage in their territories and places, and take advantage of it to favour better product branding and community engagement.





Knowledge

- 4.1 Identify and describe tangible and intangible cultural heritage elements (such as monuments, sites, historic buildings, traditional gastronomy, arts & crafts, folksongs and tales). The process can be done through proper "cultural heritage mapping", with the help of local authorities/experts or simply by observing and writing down the elements of your local cultural heritage that can be linked to your business/organisation.
- 4.2 Think creatively on how to integrate the tangible or living cultural heritage of your region in the project/company/municipality mission, vision and strategies.
- 4.3 Learn how to research, manage and valorise this cultural heritage. Cultural heritage needs its bearers: local communities are its inheritors but they need to adopt it, enhance it and incorporate it in their daily lives.
- 4.4 Discerning "real" from "invented" heritage: in some cases, particularly with living heritage, this is not actually old, but reconstructed or re-invented. It is essential to look for authenticity, either through interviews with elders or through research.
- 4.5 The Internet and beyond: the internet can serve rural entrepreneurs both in their effort to find out more about their heritage (for example, looking for museum exhibits on-line, which are connected to archaeological sites in their region) and for enhancing their own heritage beyond local limits (through social media, web pages and other applications). It requires, however, some strategies and good internet research skills.





Skills	4.5 Demonstrate basic understanding of how digital
	tools and apps are used and how to create digital

tools and apps are used and how to create digital content, abiding to the regulations of intellectual property rights.

- 4.6 Organise and manage digital information (download/upload files, search with keywords, visit virtual libraries etc).
- 4.7 Communicate effectively in social media/ communication apps and, if possible, think of a social media strategy.
- 4.8 Develop the ability to write about local cultural heritage and develop (digital) storytelling.
- 4.9 Thinking of creative ways to incorporate cultural heritage into your branding strategy (e.g. using images of heritage assets for branding, using packaging based on traditional crafts etc).
- 4.10 Try to break the notion of "cultural heritage" in aspects like techniques, methods, materials, creators etc in order to discern which elements of the past can be used in the present and how they can be carried further into the future.

Responsibility and Autonomy

Cultural heritage is not only a "giver" but also a "taker". You have to act responsibly towards it. In any case of intervention towards tangible heritage, for example, you need to seek advise from experts and relevant authorities before taking any action.

Don't forget that managing authorities of tangible cultural heritage have to be asked for a permit in





advance if actual pictures are used for branding or advertising.

Cultural heritage does not belong to you, personally, but to your community. Don't let it out of your decisions: you have to act inclusively.

5. Development of the territory's resources, branding and territorial marketing (IADT)

Competence Area	#5 Development of the territory's resources, branding and territorial marketing
Competence Statement	The capacity for entrepreneurs and mediators to include their project in a global approach to the development of the territory, by sustainably enhancing its specific "resources" (material and immaterial) and by joining networks and "learning" groups for a global/combined promotion of products/services associated with the territory and in an approach of specification and territorial marketing.





	5.1. Identify/reveal the resources of a territory
Knowledge	(diagnosis with creative methods, strategic and prospective choices) and the possibilities of combining them into a collective "basket".
	5.2. Creation of a partnership (cooperation, animation, participation) to enhance and combine resources, in a collective learning framework
	5.3. Valorisation or even specification (brands) of the resources and the territory, contractualisation,
	5.4. Communication strategy / territorial marketing
	5.5. Monitoring and evaluation
Skills	Capacity to read and analyse territorial resources, mobilisation of participative methods (e.g. digital and cartographic visualisation, territorial games, prospective approach, collection of users' experience, etc.)
	Capacity to mobilise and articulate territorial resources and actors (collective action)
Responsibility and Autonomy	Capacity to listen, to lead and to negotiate between actors, capacity to mobilise marketing tools

6. Know and implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and global thinking (UTAD)





Competence Area	#6. Implement the sustainable development goals in the workplace (SDGs)
Competence Statement	The employees/employers will be able to recognize and define the 17 SDG in order to implement a consciously selected set of SDG in their workplace. They will capable to effciently communicated their SDG strategy so that it becomes clear that their company contributes positively and actively to the sustainability of the planet.
Knowledge	 6.1 Identify and describe the 17 SDGs 6.2 Recognise and analyse how the SDGs are being implemented by other companies 6.3 Analyse existing communication strategies (of the SDGs) by other companies
Skills	 6.4 Assess what you are doing in your workplace to improve sustainable development 6.5 Decide which of the SDGs you want to improve or implement in your workplace 6.6 Select good practices that can be implemented and consciously associated with the SDGs 6.7 Define a timeline for the implementation of the new SDG and/or components





	6.8 Define a basic communication strategy about what your company/organization does in favor of the SDGs
Responsibility and Autonomy	 6.9 Be able to recognize and define the 17 SDGs 6.10 Be able to implement a consciously a selected set of SDGs in your workplace 6.11 Communicate how you implement the SDGs in your workplace 6.12 Contribute positively and actively to the sustainability of the planet

7. Funding access

Competence Area	#7. Funding access
Competence Statement	The capacity of entrepreneurs and mediators to develop competences to actively look for and/or develop funding opportunities at different levels (local, national and European) and incorporate this possibility on their business plan.





Knowledge	7.1. Identify different funding channels and opportunities for different purposes and objectives and at different levels (local, national, European) 7.2. Learn how to engage in funding opportunities and how to manage them 7.3. Learn how to apply/promote funding opportunities
Skills	7.4. Demonstrate basic understanding on how to look for different funding opportunities (public, private, competitive, non competitive,) at different levels (local, national, European) 7.5. Develop the ability to promote different funding opportunities 7.6. Develop creative ways to find/apply to funding 7.7. Organise and manage different funding opportunities
Responsibility and Autonomy	Capacity to objectively look, identify, choose and apply and/or promote, creative ways to fund your business





Syllabus for innovation

#1 Basic Entrepreneurship

ENTREPRENEURSHIP BASICS

- Entrepreneurship, Intrapreneurship: what they mean
- Identifying resources and opportunities of the area, social, cultural and economic landscape
- Reproducing adapted good practises
- Creating and applying a plan of action
- Risk management basics

2. ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN RURAL AREAS

- SMEs framework
- New opportunities, strategies to face rural challenges
- Applying ideas that create added value on the area

3. PRODUCING

- Origin, Certification, Labelling and standards
- Consequences on the community/environment, zero footprint production
- Operating as individual or member of a cooperation
- Young farmers: new skills, technical matters

4. TRADE

- Agricultural international trade, networking
- Agriculture markets: the road to consumers
- Added value of products anchored to the area: local seeds, local breeds
- Health and safety, packaging, handling and transport

5. OTHER SECTORS





- Small industry: integration to rural communities
- Tourism: the rural perspective
- Culture: incorporation with rural activities
- Innovative enterprises in rural areas
- Hand-made products: the value of genuineness

#2 Professional digital literacy

1. HOW TO EFFICIENTLY USE THE INTERNET FOR MARKETING PURPOSES

- Google SERP
- Google SEO
- Keywords for business
- Business online presence: definitions & tips

2. SMART WORK STRATEGIES

- How to plan a smart work strategy in a business: steps
- Examples of smart work

3. CLOUD

- Main cloud advantages
- Practical tips how to assess cloud needs of a rural business
- How to integrate cloud technology in a rural business

4. HOW TO USE COMMUNICATION CHANNELS FOR BUSINESS

- Emails
- WhatsApp
- Telegram
- Call software

5. E-COMMERCE

- How to plan an e-commerce
- How to set up an e-commerce: platforms and digital payments
- Security of payments (SSL certificates)
- How to promote an e-commerce





6. GDPR 4 RURAL

- What GDPR is
- DPO: roles
- How to plan a GDPR plan for a business: basic steps

7. ONLINE REPUTATION

- Improving the image of a rural business
- Social media listening
- Good tips in using the social media

#3 International Project Management

1. FUNDAMENTALS OF INTERNATIONAL PROJECT MANAGEMENT

- Defining project ideas and proposals
- Searching for funding
- Elaborating a concept note
- Working a proposal
- Managing International Projects

2. BEST PRACTICES AND GUIDELINES FOR PARTNERS

- Principles and guidelines to be a best project's partner
- Examples of best practices projects

3. THE IMPORTANCE OF NETWORKING

- Kinds of Networks
- Expressions of networks
- Connecting projects, connecting people

#4 Cultural heritage integration

1. UNDERSTANDING LOCAL CULTURAL HERITAGE

- Cultural Heritage Mapping
- Writing and reading about local Cultural Heritage on Wikipedia





Intergenerational approach and interviews with elders

2. DIGITIZING LOCAL CULTURAL HERITAGE

- Methods and means of digitization
- Legal regulations regarding public use of digitised material
- Developing digital literacy (search methods, processing digitised material etc)
- Asking the experts

3. LOCAL/ PRODUCT BRANDING BASED ON CULTURAL HERITAGE

- Choosing aspects of cultural heritage that have a "branding" power (either strong visual impact, e.g. castles, temples, or important stories to tell, e.g. rites and customs or mythology)
- Create actual links so that the public understand the relation between the heritage asset and your company/product/service.
- Respect your local cultural heritage ("commodification" or "cheap marketing" always make a bad impression)

4. GIVE AND TAKE: VALORISE YOUR CULTURAL HERITAGE

- Cultural Heritage can help you enormously build identity for what you make/sell/create; however, you have to remember to refer to it correctly, to respect, it to valorise it and to behave like actual bearer of a long tradition.
- Address the authorities or experts and proceed with crowdfunding if a local heritage asset is endangered.

5. INCLUSIVE CULTURAL HERITAGE VALORISATION

- Learning to co-work, co-include, co-protect cultural heritage. There is space for all traditions.
- How to incorporate cultural heritage assets, particularly the tangible ones, in your daily lives.
- Building strong community ties based on shared cultural heritage

#5 Development of the territory's resources, branding and territorial marketing





1. DIAGNOSIS OF THE TERRITORY'S RESOURCES

- Identification of the types of resources
- Evaluation of the resource: characterisation and degree of specificity, relations with consumers and users
- Involve various stakeholders (associations, local authorities, entrepreneurs, etc.)
- Explore the potential combinations between resources / image of the territory

2. DEVELOP A SHARED PROJECT AND A TERRITORIAL BRANDING STRATEGY

- How should a project fit into the territory? What relationship with other activities? What is the value of the project for the economic activities and the territory?
- The identification of the different categories of actors to be mobilised and the quality of their representation in the project's bodies.
- Allocation of leadership resources, identification and organisation of skills and resource persons to be involved
- Construction of a territorial offer

3. QUALIFICATION PROCEDURES / BRANDS AND SPECIFICATION OF PRODUCTS AND TERRITORIES

- Types of qualification process
- Types of marketing approach
- The action plan
- The communication
- Evaluation

#6. Implement the sustainable development goals in the workplace (SDGs)

1. WHAT ARE THE 17 SDGs? (Theoretical approach)

- History, context, end goal, general description
- Detail the SDGs, mentioning their targets





2. HOW TO IMPLEMENT THE SDGs IN YOUR WORKPLACE? (Practical approach;

project based learning)

- How do companies/organizations implement the SDGs?
- Based on benchmarking exercises with online found material, having other companies/organizations as reference, examples of how the SDGs can be implemented will be gathered
 - A) Group exercise with provided study cases
 - B) Group exercise with self chosen study cases;
- Establish selection criteria in order to identify the most relevant SDGs for the social context and the economic activity in question;
- Identify, describe and operationalise the SDGs, which are essential for your workplace;
- Define a timeline for the operationalization of the selected SDGs/targets and identify the necessary changes, investments and/or resources.

3. HOW TO COMMUNICATE THE SDGs ACHIEVEMENTS AND PLANS? (Practical

approach; project based learning)

- Evaluate possible SDG promotion strategies based on benchmarking exercises, having other companies/organizations as reference;
- Build a basic communication strategy to show the company's/organisations alignment with the SDGs.

#7 FUNDING ACCESS

1. FUNDING FOR BUSINESS: DIFFERENT TYPES OF FUNDING

- Bootstrapping what is it? Advantages and disadvantages, limitations and potential
- Non competitive funding: Crowdfunding, cooperative funding, bank loans, private investors, public aids
- Competitive funding: private, public

2. COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY





- European agricultural fund for rural development (EAFRD)
- CLLD-Leader

3. HOW TO SPOT OPPORTUNITIES

- Identify different funding channels and opportunities for different purposes and objectives and at different levels (local, national, European)
- Local: Networks, Cooperatives, public and private initiatives
- National: networks, cooperatives, programs, competitive and non competitive opportunities, funding for HR's, for projects, for equipments,...
- European: networks, cooperatives, programs, competitive and non competitive opportunities, funding for HR's, for projects, for equipments,...

4. ENGAGE AND MANAGE FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

- Access funding opportunities and matchmake with project objectives
- Decision making

5. APPLY/PROMOTE FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

- Business plan and strategic objectives
- Importance of networks
- Crowdfunding platforms

Linkography

https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/publi-enrd-booklet-2016-en.pdf

https://territoriall.espon.eu/articles/216382?article=34-1

https://ruralization.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/EU-RURAL-REVIEW.-LONG-TER M-VISION-FOR-RURAL-AREAS-1.pdf

https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/EDN-20200207-1





https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/find-funding/eu-funding-programmes/european-agricultural-fund-rural-development-eafrd_en

https://www.interregeurope.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/plp_uploads/policy_briefs/Policy_brief - How to boost entrepreneurship in rural areas.pdf

https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/publications/search_en

CultRural+ Coaching and Training Session: how to do networking and apply an Erasmus+ application - https://youtu.be/MCb0EIZWHdg

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