

CO-CREATION METHODS AND PARTICIPATORY APPROACHES

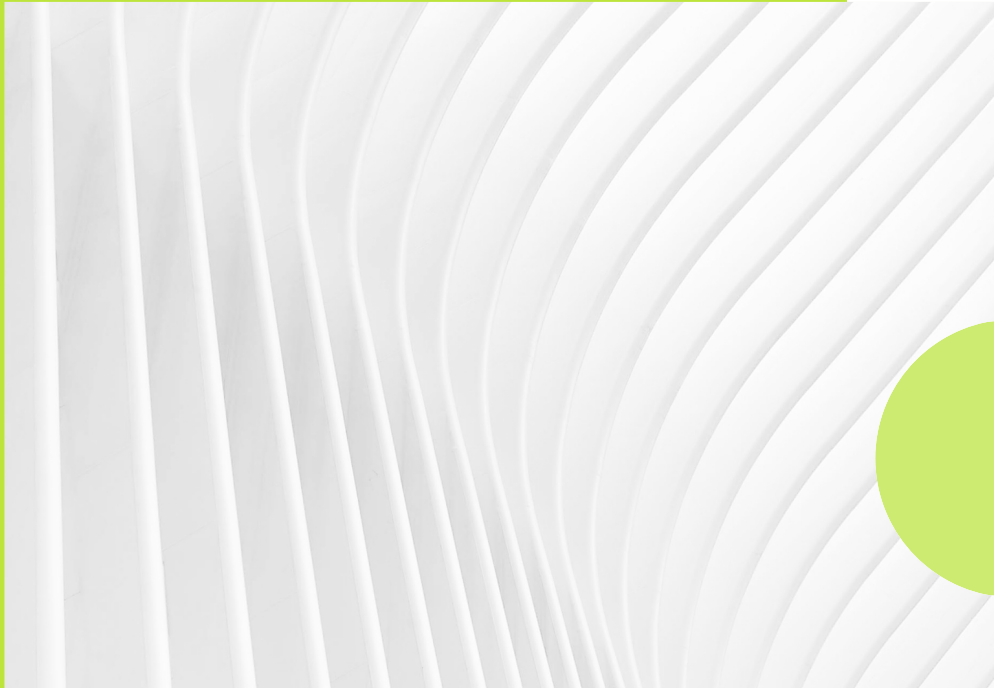


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GREEN  LABS



INTRODUCTION



GREEN LABS Project

A transnational EU-co-funded initiative that promotes eco-innovation and sustainable development by creating an international network of Living Labs. These real-world labs bring together citizens, researchers, businesses, and public authorities to co-create solutions that support the green transition.



OBJECTIVES

1. Set up a network of living labs in all partner countries.
2. Launch the Green Labs network as an open innovation ecosystem for circular solutions.
3. Boost community engagement and co-creation for local eco-innovation.
4. Provide a digital ecosystem for collaboration and knowledge sharing.
5. Support EU goals by testing scalable models for sustainability and resilience.

CO-CREATION METHODS

1. Workshops & Participatory Design sessions

Description: Structured sessions where stakeholders collaborate to define problems and create solutions.

Example: A museum invites visitors, curators, and local artists to co-design an interactive exhibition.



CO-CREATION METHODS

2. Living Labs

Description: Real-life environments where innovations are developed and tested with end-users.

Example: Residents work with city planners to co-create and test a smart public transport app.



CO-CREATION METHODS

3. Crowdsourcing & Open Innovation

Description: Gathering ideas, designs, or solutions from a large, diverse group.

Example: LEGO Ideas platform where fans submit and vote on new product designs.



CO-CREATION METHODS

4. Storytelling & Narrative Co-Creation

Description: Communities collaboratively create and share stories or histories.

Example: Local residents co-write historical narratives for a digital heritage archive.

Local residents co-create stories involving local community to create a Museum of the Holocaust



CO-CREATION METHODS

5. Co-Design Prototyping

Description: Users and designers jointly create and refine prototypes.

Example: Patients and healthcare staff co-design a hospital wayfinding system.



CO-CREATION METHODS

6. Hackathons & Innovation Sprints

Description: Short, intensive events to develop solutions collaboratively.

Example: NGOs, developers, and citizens build disaster-response tools in a 48-hour hackathon.



CORE PRINCIPLES OF CO-CREATION

User-Centric Approach

End-users help shape solutions, ensuring real needs are met and social acceptance is high.

Open Innovation

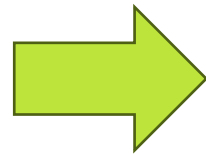
Stakeholders share data, insights, and methods, enabling faster iteration and better collaboration.

Co-Creation & Experimentation

Participants jointly design, prototype, and test ideas in real environments, building shared ownership.

Multi-Stakeholder Engagement

Brings together government, academia, industry, civil society, and the environment to enable broad, long-term collaboration.



The aim of co-creation is to create shared value – together with your stakeholders:

- It's about people, not about users or customers. Think of participants as '**active agents**' rather than 'beneficiaries'.
- Co-creation is a strategic choice and has strategic consequences.
- Co-creation invites **multiple perspectives**. Everyone is an expert in their own right – by balancing professional and experiential expertise a level playing field is created.
- Co-creation **is inclusive**, or rather: should be non-exclusive. Think about the representation you aim for, don't (only) go for the obvious.
- Co-creation is an **open and constructive process**, where (process and/or outcome) control is shared. In some cases the motto 'community voices, curatorial choices' is used, but if you are not comfortable sharing control don't do it.
- Have an open attitude, create a **safe space**, let people feel free to contribute in their own way. **Be clear on what you expect from participants and how their efforts will be visible.**
- It's about collective creativity - in a creative process a different dialogue between people is started. It's not about finding the right idea, it's about finding a multitude of ideas.
- Co-creation thrives with shared ownership - in both results and process.
- Co-creation is open ended. Keep people involved after sessions have ended, give feedback on the choices you make afterwards.



RESOURCES



[HTTPS://WWW.VAST-PROJECT.EU/WP-CONTENT/UPLOADS/2024/02/VAST_BOOKLET_CONDUCTING-EFFECTIVE-CO-CREATION-ACTIVITIES-AND-WORKSHOPS.PDF](https://www.vast-project.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/VAST_BOOKLET_CONDUCTING-EFFECTIVE-CO-CREATION-ACTIVITIES-AND-WORKSHOPS.PDF)

https://resources.riches-project.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/RICHE_S-D4-2-Good-practices-and-methods-for-co-creation_public.pdf

<https://youtu.be/8pz4EYwmgrs?si=a6Py0PKhL1Vho3cf>

<https://padlet.com/romaninimariaelena/co-creation-methods-examples-aim29antamnaz7ke>

TARGET AUDIENCE

- **Policymakers & Local Authorities** – Municipalities, regional governments, and EU institutions seeking to integrate Living Labs into sustainability strategies.
- **Academic & Research Institutions** – Universities, think tanks, and innovation hubs aiming to harness Living Labs as **collaborative research environments**.
- **Businesses & Startups** – Companies involved in **green technology, circular economy solutions, and eco-innovation** that can benefit from real-world experimentation.
- **Civil Society & Community Organizations** – NGOs, grassroots movements, third-places and cooperatives working on **environmental and social sustainability** initiatives.
- **Funding Agencies & Investors** – Entities looking to support and scale up Living Lab initiatives through **public-private partnerships, grants, and crowdfunding**.



STAKEHOLDER ROLES

Stakeholder Group	Role in the Living Lab	Expected Contribution
Government & Municipalities	Policy development, funding, regulatory support	Provide policy frameworks, grants, and infrastructure support
Academic Institutions	Research, expertise, training	Contribute scientific knowledge, conduct impact assessments
Businesses & Startups	Solution development, piloting	Develop & test green technologies, provide funding
Civil Society & NGOs	Community engagement, advocacy	Ensure public participation, advocate for sustainability
End-Users (Citizens, Local Groups)	Testing, feedback	Provide real-life testing environments, suggest improvements



LIVING LAB DESIGN

Step	Description	Expected Outcome
Needs Assessment	Identify environmental, social, governance and economic challenges to be addressed.	A well-defined problem statement and area of focus for each Living Lab.
Stakeholder Analysis	Map relevant actors (government, businesses, academia, civil society, end-users).	A structured engagement plan ensuring balanced representation.
Setting Objectives & KPIs	Define clear goals, success criteria, and performance indicators.	A measurable Living Lab roadmap for tracking progress.
Resource & Funding Considerations	Identify necessary resources (financial, human, technological).	A funding plan incorporating local & EU-level funding sources in a perspective of sustainability.
Ethical & Legal Considerations	Address data privacy, sustainability ethics, and compliance with regulations.	A compliance framework for ethical operations.



GREEN LABS PROJECT

The GREEN LABS project aims to support and stimulate the green transition by promoting innovation and greening of VET systems through internationalization, exchange of practices, and knowledge sharing among partners, in accordance with the Osnabrück Declaration of 2020 on vocational education and training for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience.

