ECO-Ready Scenario workshop with Living Labs

Location: Den Haag, NL
Dates: 27-28 June 2024
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Overview
The Eco-Ready Scenario Development Workshop was organized by Work Package 1 (WP1). The primary goal was to continue the co-creation with Living Labs participants of comprehensive scenarios tailored for each of the 10 Living Labs. Following a first introduction on the advanced modelling tools that will be utilized for scenarios development MAGNET and LCA and their links to Living Labs specific tasks, focus group discussions were conducted to identify main drivers and intervention options related to specific products previously selected by Living Labs themselves.

Day 1: Introduction and Group Discussions
Morning session: general presentations

The first day commenced with a series of general presentations designed to set the stage for the workshop's activities.

Purpose of the workshop: The opening session provided an overview of the workshop's purpose, emphasizing the critical role it plays in the broader Eco-Ready initiative. This session aimed to align all participants with the workshop's objectives and the expected outcomes.

Scenario modelling tools:
MAGNET: Participants were introduced to the MAGNET (Modular Applied GeNeral Equilibrium Tool), a scenario modelling tool. The presentation detailed how Living Labs members would engage in discussions to select multiple drivers and potential interventions to develop various scenarios. It was highlighted that only one scenario would be ultimately selected for detailed modelling with MAGNET. The selection criteria emphasized the importance of choosing a scenario that was both representative of the region's agrifood resilience challenges and supported by consistent data availability.
LCA: The session also covered Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) methodologies, focusing on the selection of one product per Living Lab. The integration of social impacts alongside environmental impacts was stressed, highlighting the synergies between LCA outcomes and MAGNET models. Some outcomes from the LCA could be seamlessly integrated into MAGNET models to enhance the comprehensiveness of the scenarios.

Questions raised by Living Labs members on Day 1

- Is the definition of a good scenario when it is testable by the Living Labs?
- Are the scenarios given in the proposal fixed? No, the objective is to get inspired in the discussion with other to ultimately even re-consider and improve your own scenarios developed in the proposal

- Then, how flexible are the scenarios developed in the proposals versus the scenarios developed with LCA and MAGNET?
- What additional work will be required from the Living Labs exactly?/ specific tasks
- When the Living Labs are collecting data from externals from the Living Labs, how are they supposed to continue delivering data to them, as was promised?

Afternoon session: focus group discussions on key drivers

The afternoon was dedicated to interactive focus group discussions, fostering collaborative engagement among participants. To optimize and diversify discussions, the format of the focus group was based World Café methodology: four different thematic tables, each with diverse participants from the different Living Labs who were rotating from table to table (approx. 20 minutes discussion per table).

Themes: Participants were divided into four groups to discuss a variety of themes. The discussions centered around identifying the main drivers of food insecurity, lack of food system resilience, and production shocks in different regions.

Discussion highlights:
The groups identified and discussed several key themes related to specific regional problems, including for instance climate-related issues in Southern Europe, such as droughts, soil erosion, and land abandonment. In contrast, some participants noted emerging opportunities created by climate change, particularly in Northern European countries, where new products opportunities are emerging that can be better explored. For instance, a representative from Denmark highlighted the new adoption of wine production as a response to rising temperatures, showcasing how certain regions are adapting to climatic changes.

Dinner together to facilitate networking and interactions between Eco-Ready Work Packages members and Living Labs.

Day 2: Deepening Discussions and Plenary Session

The second day of the workshop focused on deepening the discussions initiated on the first day, with workshops aimed at further analyzing and elaborating on the identified sub-drivers.

Morning session: workshops on sub-drivers of key drivers
Participants engaged in intensive workshops to explore the primary drivers affecting food security and resilience in greater detail. This session aimed to drill down into the specifics of each driver, examining their implications and interconnections. The discussions also included potential policy and technical interventions that could mitigate the adverse impacts of these drivers. This collaborative effort was crucial in refining the scenarios and ensuring they were grounded in practical and actionable insights.

Afternoon session: plenary session
The afternoon plenary session provided a platform for representatives from each Living Lab to present their findings and insights.

The session was structured around "imagining the long-term potential consequences of extreme events," where different representatives shared their region-specific scenarios. Each representative detailed the main products selected for their regions, the primary drivers or causes of extreme events or shocks, and proposed interventions.

Key issues identified:
Natural events: Droughts were highlighted as a significant challenge, particularly in Southern Europe, where they pose a severe threat to agricultural production.
Economic factors: Interregional price competition emerged as a crucial economic factor influencing food security and resilience.
Policy factors: Various policy-related issues were discussed, such as regulatory constraints on agricultural practices (e.g., the prohibition of growing on slopes in the Czech Republic).
Social and demographic factors: The discussions also covered social and demographic challenges, including the ageing population and raising agricultural land abandonment. These factors contribute to the complexity of achieving sustainable food security and resilience.

Conclusion
In conclusion, the Eco-Ready Scenario Development Workshop successfully provided a comprehensive platform for the Living Labs to engage in meaningful discussions and collaborative scenario development and network. The workshop facilitated a deeper understanding of the regional challenges and potential interventions necessary for enhancing food security and resilience across Europe. Participants left with a clearer vision of their roles and the steps needed to advance the Eco-Ready initiative.