

Living lab terms of reference

D4.2







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D4.2 LIVING LAB TERMS OF REFERENCE

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Responsible Author(s)	Agnes Raffay-Danyi (UP), Maya Ivanova (Zangador Institute)		
Contributor(s)	AAU, Bergamo, FMTU, Maribor, Oulu, Tallin		
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	ССТ	Cultural and creative tourism	
	RRA	Rural and remote areas	

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Living labs provide the framework for the activities involved in the various phases of design thinking. Living labs can be defined as an approach to innovation in which all stakeholders in a product or service participate directly in the development process.

In the CROCUS project eight cross-border living labs are established incorporating stakeholders representing businesses, cultural institutions and community groups. Each lab will establish its own terms of reference to guide their work and ensure a common understanding.

The document consists of two parts: Part I. outlines the general Terms of Reference for Living Labs in the CROCUS project, discussing the living lab approach of the CROCUS project and the key principles of the establishment and the operation of the Living Labs. Part II. provides a blank template for the individual living labs which can be tailored to their individual needs and to the contexts they are operating in, in terms of aims, scope, participants, activities, financial issues and language of communication.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 *Aims*

The document aims to set the parameters for the establishment and operation of the Living Labs in the CROCUS project. The first part details the general Terms of Reference which regulate the collaboration of the stakeholders in the Living Labs, with special attention to the role and responsibilities of the Core Development Team and the Living Lab Coordinator. The second part aims to provide guidance to the individual cross-border Living Labs how to define their specific aims, the scope of their operation, key participants, financial and communication issues, and the timeline of their activities.



TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE LIVING LABS CROCUS PROJECT

This document consists of two parts:

- Part I sets out the background and general rules concerning the eight Living labs established as part of the CROCUS project.
- Part II provides a template for the specific features of the individual living labs.

3 Part I - Living Lab elements and operation

3.1 Living Lab approach within the CROCUS project

Living labs can be defined as an approach to innovation in which all stakeholders in a product or service participate directly in the development process.

Living labs in the CROCUS project stem from the design thinking approach, placing them at the core of cross-border innovation. These labs serve as the primary platform for the iterative and human-centred process of developing Cultural and Creative Tourism (CCT) business models. Living labs provide the framework for the activities involved in the various phases of **design thinking**.

The **empathising phase** starts with gathering data through interviews and surveys involving local businesses, citizens, tourists, and other key stakeholders. This allows researchers to understand the unique needs, challenges, and values within each cross-border area. In this phase, living labs establish their Core Development Teams, involving key stakeholders from both regions. In the **defining phase**, the gathered data is used to determine the parameters for new sustainable CCT business models. These parameters are presented to stakeholders, and feedback is collected to refine the ideas through a *Definition Workshop* with the *Core Development Team*. During the **ideating phase**, living labs hold *Ideation Workshops* on both sides of the border to engage diverse stakeholders, including citizens and policymakers, to generate ideas for business model prototypes. Using the insights from ideation, the **prototyping phase** involves the living labs in developing two sustainable CCT business model prototypes based on the Sustainable Business Model Canvas tool. These prototypes are further refined based on feedback collected in *Refining Workshops* on both sides of the border.

Living labs are open innovation platforms and/or public-private partnerships of firms, public agencies, universities, institutes and people (relevant stakeholders, more broadly) collaborating for the creation, prototyping, validating and testing of new services, products and systems in real-life contexts.

Each cross-border area will have its own needs and challenges, and the precise form and organisation of the labs will vary accordingly.

3.2 Key principles of Living Labs in CROCUS

1. Aims of the Living Labs

- To bring together key stakeholders in cultural and creative tourism, local government, industry and the local community with a collaborative approach, useful for integrating and harmonising knowledge and resources from different fields.
- To identify key challenges and needs related to cultural heritage in cross-border areas.
- To enhance cross-border cooperation and stakeholder engagement in cultural heritage.
- To develop new sustainable CCT business model prototypes and at the same time explore possible synergies from cross-border cooperation. Each living lab will produce two CCT business model prototypes, with input from citizens, businesses, and cultural organisations.

2. Fundamental principles and characteristics of living labs

- Multi-Stakeholder Involvement: The living labs involve a diverse group of stakeholders, including
 users, public and private actors, and knowledge institutes. Decision-making is shared horizontally,
 promoting a network collaboration structure that minimises traditional hierarchical dominance.
- *Multi-Disciplinary Approach*: A key principle of the living labs is the inclusion of a broad range of skills, capabilities, and expertise to ensure comprehensive problem-solving and innovation.
- Capacity Building: The living labs engage in capacity-building by involving practitioners, institutions, and communities, fostering skills and knowledge across all levels to support sustainable development.
- Active User Engagement and Bottom-Up Approaches: The living labs foster co-creation and coinnovation, encouraging the active involvement of users and stakeholders in service design and the adoption of creative methods.
- Frequent Interactions and Accessible Communication: Regular and varied interactions among participants are encouraged. Communication is facilitated through physical and virtual meetings, mailing lists, and other tools, ensuring accessible language and minimising jargon to promote inclusivity.
- Intrinsic Motivation and Commitment: The living labs strive to maintain participants' intrinsic motivation and commitment by demonstrating the project's relevance to each actor, reaffirming shared interests, and fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility.
- Open Platforms for Innovation: The living labs function as open platforms for developing innovations or new products related to CCT, and exploring emerging interests, behaviours, and opportunities within the sector.
- Monitoring and Evaluation: All activities are continuously monitored and evaluated on both technical and conceptual levels, contributing to their refinement and ensuring they are adaptable to other contexts.
- Documentation and Dissemination: The lessons learned through the living labs are documented and disseminated to inform broader applications while contextualising the findings to generalise their applicability.
- Replication and Iteration: The feedback gathered from activities and evaluations is used iteratively to further develop and refine innovative products and interventions, ensuring continuous improvement and adaptation.

3. Main tasks and activities of the Living Labs

The living labs will carry out activities in alignment with the work packages WP4 and WP5 of the CROCUS project. The reports from each living lab context analysis ('empathising stage') will be discussed with the core development group for each lab during 'definition' workshops that will set the parameters for the 'prototyping' phase. In the next steps, the Core Development Team in each living lab will engage a wider group of local stakeholders in a participatory process of 'ideating' and 'prototyping' phases of the design thinking process, finally resulting in 16 CCT business model prototypes.

• Empathising and Defining:

 Secondary data collection, surveys, and interviews to identify local needs and challenges. Engaging stakeholders in understanding the issues related to cross-border cultural heritage.

Prototyping and Testing:

- Organizing workshops using co-creation methodologies to develop and test prototypes of CCT initiatives.
- Using standard tools and methodologies for stakeholder engagement, focusing on participatory design.

4. Expected outcomes

- Each living lab will produce two sustainable CCT business model prototypes, which will be refined following feedback workshops in each border region.
- The Core Development Teams will also develop roadmaps for piloting, promotion, and future crossborder cooperation so that the testing phase of the design thinking process can be implemented after the end of the project.
- Knowledge and experience developed through the living labs will be synthesised to produce good
 practice guides, a toolkit and training aid, citizen resources pack and policy scenarios that will
 contribute to the exploitation of the project's results and ensure long-term impact.

5. Geographic and administrative scope of the living labs

At the heart of CROCUS is a process of cross-border cooperation to prototype sustainable CCT business models in eight living labs, which will be established in cross-border rural and remote areas, comprised of two neighbouring border regions, and led by a local living lab coordinator. The project focuses specifically on cross-border areas, which have been selected to ensure coverage of:

- all four EU macro-regions
- a range of different types of rurality, from rural areas close to cities to extremely remote regions
- different types of tangible and intangible cultural heritage that can become part of placemaking processes.

The labs are established in rural and remote areas crossing the following borders:

- Denmark/Germany
- Slovenia/Italy
- Italy/Switzerland
- Finland/Sweden
- Estonia/Latvia
- Hungary/Slovenia
- Bulgaria/Romania
- Croatia/Slovenia

The location of the living labs, consortium partner responsible, border regions and countries involved, type of cultural heritage and degree of rural remoteness for each border region (NUTS 3 level) are shown in Figure 1.

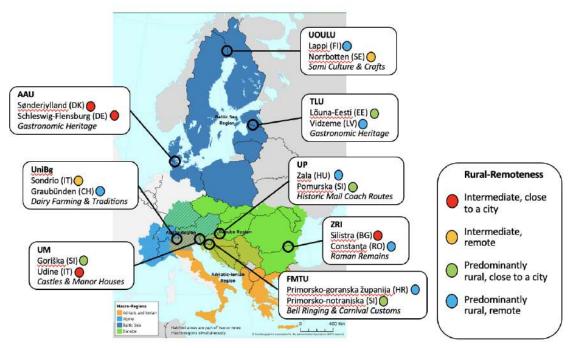


Figure 1 Location of CROCUS Living Labs

6. Participants in the Living Labs

Ensuring that both border regions involved in the living lab are equally represented and have their concerns and interests addressed will be critical to the success of the labs. It is strongly recommended that the Living Labs involve diverse representatives from the tourism sector and local community.

The following four types of stakeholders are considered important for the successful operation of the Living labs in a cultural tourism and rural context:

Education sector

- Universities (including university students for their innovative approach)
- Colleges
- Schools

Public sector

- National, regional and local tourism authorities
- Regional councils
- Regional development agencies
- National parks
- Chambers of commerce
- Private-Public Partnerships in the field of tourism and culture

Business Sector

- Accommodation
- F&B
- Tour Operators & Travel Agencies
- Visitor Attractions

- Destination Management Organisations
- Local artists
- Craftsmen
- Creative hubs
- Cultural institutions

Civic sector

- Associations and NGO in the field of cultural and creative tourism
- Wine and gastronomy routes
- Community groups
- Local action groups

7. Process of establishment of the Living Labs

The process of establishing the living labs starts with selecting a Coordinator and recruiting a Core Development Team for each lab. Their first task will be to discuss and approve the Terms of Reference for their respective living labs, taking into account the unique characteristics that need to be included for each lab.

For easier coordination, a Living Lab Registration List is implemented. The main contact details of each member of all 8 living labs are inserted to ensure higher visibility and external credibility. This also accredits and strengthens their reputation at the national/regional level and can be used for joint communication across the living labs and within the CROCUS consortium. The Registration List is regularly updated if a member leaves or a new member joins the team.

When an individual accepts to join the Core Development Team, he/she should make it in a written form (by email), thus providing evidence for his/her commitment. A copy of those emails should be kept as an archive by the Coordinator and the research partner.

8. Definition of roles in the living lab

The **Coordinator** is an individual with a well-established network, experience of cross-border cooperation projects and knowledge of the local circumstances.

The responsibilities of the Coordinator are to:

- help the research team identify and recruit other members of the Core Development Team
- work closely with the rest of the Core Development Team to help identify the needs and challenges
 of the area
- help identify participants for future workshops
- ensure that both border regions involved in the living lab are equally represented
- organise workshops, e.g. select venues, take care of catering, transportation, etc.
- prepare and keep minutes from each meeting (Core Development Team meetings, *Definition, Ideation and Refining Workshop* with the Living lab)
- participate in monitoring and coordination meetings with the research team from CROCUS
- be in regular contact with the Core Development Team and the research team
- share knowledge and experience with the seven other CROCUS living lab coordinators

The Core Development Team for each living lab will comprise a small group of key stakeholders from the regions on each side of the border, which should include more than one gender. The living lab coordinator will help the research team identify and recruit other members of the core-development team. These should be at least 8 persons – 3 from each side of the border + Coordinator + researcher(s) from the CROCUS team. The Core Development Team for each lab will together identify other important stakeholders and sources of data so that the researchers can investigate the social, economic, environmental, and institutional contexts, cultural and natural heritage and capacities of the cross-border area as well as the needs and perspectives of local businesses, citizens and tourists. Also, they will help with the data collection by identifying appropriate target respondents. If a member of the Core Development Team is no longer able to participate, the Coordinator should as soon as possible help to find another relevant stakeholder to join the team.

The responsibilities of the Core Development Team are to:

- work closely with the researcher team to assist with the investigation of social, economic, environmental, and institutional contexts, cultural and natural heritage and capacities of the crossborder area as well as the needs and perspectives of local businesses, citizens and tourists.
- identify other important stakeholders and sources of data
- discuss and approve the Terms of reference of each living lab
- engage a wider group of local stakeholders in a participatory process of CCT business model prototyping
- participate in the Stakeholder workshops on both sides of the border to the extent possible
- use the material produced from the workshops to develop two draft business model prototypes per living lab

The **Facilitator** is an individual who is familiar with the living lab area and will run the workshops. The facilitator could be selected by the coordinator, or the coordinator could take the role of a facilitator during the workshops, i.e. both roles could be merged. Depending on the qualifications of the applicants, the two roles might be offered to a single individual/company or to two different ones. As workshops for stakeholders will be held in the local languages, it may be necessary for some Living Labs to appoint two facilitators rather than one.

Member(s) of the research teams — Member(s) of the research team represents the CROCUS consortium. He/She is present at all workshops and is part of the Core Development Team. Researchers study the cooperation processes as they unfold, using participant observation and interviews with participants (minimum 8 per living lab) to gain an in-depth understanding of the process from the perspective of different stakeholders.

Other stakeholders – They are diverse representatives across many sectors of the tourism and local community. They participate in the in-person stakeholder workshops, organised by the Living Lab within the framework of the CROCUS project.

9. Living Labs operation

Living labs have two different levels of operation – *Core Development Team meetings* and *Stakeholder Workshops*.

Meetings of the Core Development Team

The Core Development Team will have at least 5 meetings within the CROCUS project (see the anticipated process flow in Figure 2). Some of these meetings can take place online. If necessary, the Core Development Team may schedule additional meetings.

Planned meetings are for:

- Empathising research
- Definition workshop
- Developing prototyping protocol, tools and resources
- Developing draft prototypes
- Developing piloting, promotion and cooperation roadmaps

For every meeting, there should be record of the Date, Time and Place of the meeting, Minutes, Photos (if available), Agenda, List of participants, Decisions made, and Online platform if the meeting will be virtual. All these details should be duly documented and kept by the Coordinator and the Researcher in a chosen repository/archive platform, preferably the MS Teams repository of the CROCUS project. The Coordinator should prepare a calendar with dates for easier planning and coordination of the

The Coordinator should prepare a calendar with dates for easier planning and coordination of the meetings. When a new meeting is planned, the Coordinator should inform the rest of the members at least 3 weeks in advance, and coordinate with each of them the relevant details. A meeting can take place if at least half of the Core team members attend it.

Stakeholder Workshops

Members of the Core Development Team must participate in the workshops with local CCT stakeholders to the extent possible. Not all members must be present however, a selection of members must represent the Core Development Team in the workshops. Each of the workshops happens in-person, on both sides of the border, and it is anticipated that 10-20 stakeholders take part in each workshop, ensuring balance in terms of gender and age distribution as far as possible.

Planned workshops:

- Ideation workshop
- Feedback & Refining workshop

Similar to the Core Development Team meetings, for every Stakeholder workshop there should be a record of Date, Time and Place of the meeting, Minutes, Photos (if available), Agenda, List of participants (including gender), and Decisions made. Participant observation will allow the Crocus researcher to collect information during the workshops, and it can be augmented by follow-up interviews with workshop participants.

Participation in all meetings and workshops depends entirely on the commitment of the stakeholders involved, and it is therefore paramount that the Core Development Team do their utmost to attract relevant participants.

athising	1223			WP5					
arch	Definition workshop	Develop prototyping protocol, tools & resources	Ideation worksho		Develop draft prototypes	Feedbac refining worksho		Develop piloting, promotion & cooperation roadmaps	
with data ction in er regions	Cross- border area	Cross-border area	Border region A	Border region B	Cross- border area	Border region A	Border region B	Cross-border area	
•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	
•			•	•		•	•		
e	ss-border with data ection in der regions B	with data ection in der regions B	tools & resources Cross-border with data ection in der regions B tools & resources Cross-border area	tools & resources Siss-border with data ection in der regions B Tools & resources Cross-border area Cross-border area A Border region A	tools & resources Siss-border with data ection in der regions B Tools & resources Cross-border area Cross-border region A Border region B	tools & resources ss-border with data ection in der regions B Tools & resources Cross-border area Cross-border region A Border region B Border region B Border region B Cross-border area	tools & resources ss-border with data ection in der regions B B Border region A Border region A Border region A Border region A Border region A	tools & resources ss-border with data ection in der regions tools & resources Cross-border area Cross-border area Border region Border region B Border region B Border region B Border region B Border region B	

Figure 2 Living labs design thinking process and stakeholder input & participation in workshops

10. Language of communication

Ideally, all Core Development Team meetings and email communications should be conducted in English, provided all team members speak the language. Otherwise, simultaneous translation should be arranged if required.

Stakeholder workshops should be conducted in the local language.

11. Tentative time plan

Table 1 Tentative time plan

October 2024	 Stakeholders database for the Core Development Team Identification of the Core Development Team
Early/Mid November	 Recruit the Core Development Team Appointing the LL coordinators Establishment of Living Labs Draft Terms of Reference
November 2024	 Core Development Team discusses Draft Terms of Reference and secondary research data and indicators Approve and finalise LL Terms of Reference Final Template for secondary research Start secondary data collection
December 2024	 Core Development Team discusses draft questions for the primary research. Final Terms of Reference officially accepted Interviews start
January-May 2025	 Primary research – Core Development Team to help with identifying appropriate respondents
June 2025	 Working on the LL area analyses Finalising the individual LL areas reports Quality check and feedback
July 2025	Submission of the individual LL areas reports
August-September 2025	Definition Workshop with the Core Development Team
April – July 2025*	Developing prototyping protocol and tools
August 2025 – June 2026 *	 Facilitate business-model prototyping, including Develop prototyping protocol, tools & resources Ideation Workshops Develop draft prototypes Feedback & refining workshops Develop piloting and implementation roadmaps
August 2025 – June 2026 *	Monitor and evaluate prototyping process

^{*} Timeline and activities to be further specified in Spring 2025

12. Monitoring, knowledge sharing and evaluation

The progress of the living labs will be monitored and evaluated through reporting templates for the workshops and bi-monthly online meetings attended by the living lab coordinators. These meetings will also enable the sharing of experience and knowledge between the labs.

13. Financial issues

For the operations and management of the living labs, certain subcontracting funds are available for each CROCUS partner. They should be used for the coordination of prototyping activities by the eight Living Labs to a local stakeholder. Subcontracting of a Living Lab Coordinator and a Living Lab Workshop Facilitator. Depending on the qualifications of the applicants, the two roles might be offered to a single individual/company or two different ones. Subcontracts will be awarded according to the principles of best value for money and absence of conflict of interest (according to Articles 6.2B of the Amended Grant Agreement) and in accordance with national law provisions. This will be done under one or more subcontracting procedures, depending on local circumstances.

Field work and organizational costs (e.g. catering for the participants) will be organized, according to each living lab decision.

14. Data protection

- All data collected within the living labs will be handled in compliance with relevant data protection regulations, including GDPR.
- Personal data will only be collected when necessary and will be anonymised where possible.
- Participants will be informed about how their data will be used, and their consent will be obtained before any data collection.
- Data security measures will be taken in compliance to the CROCUS Data Management Plan.

15. Conflict of interests

- All members of the Core Development Team, Living Lab Coordinator, Facilitator, and stakeholders must disclose any potential conflicts of interest.
- Measures will be taken to ensure that any conflicts of interest are managed transparently and do not influence the activities or outcomes of the living lab.
- A statement of interests will be declared by all key participants to ensure accountability and transparency.

16. Main risks and mitigation measures

- **Stakeholder Engagement**: There is a risk of insufficient engagement or imbalanced representation from stakeholders, which could impact the success of the living labs. Mitigation measures include targeted outreach and awareness campaigns to ensure balanced and diverse stakeholder participation, addressing any reluctance to participate.
- Geographical Challenges: The physical distance between cross-border stakeholders can pose
 logistical challenges and affect participation. Mitigation includes using virtual meetings and
 online collaboration tools to facilitate participation, as well as organising in-person meetings at
 convenient locations for all stakeholders.

- Coordination Challenges: Coordinating activities across multiple stakeholders and regions can be complex, potentially leading to miscommunication or delays. Mitigation includes clearly defining roles and responsibilities, establishing structured communication channels, and maintaining regular contact through scheduled meetings and updates.
- Stakeholder Fatigue: Extended involvement in living lab activities may lead to stakeholder fatigue, reducing active participation. Mitigation involves diversifying activities to maintain interest, providing breaks or rotating responsibilities, and ensuring that participation remains meaningful and engaging for all stakeholders.
- Language Barriers: Language barriers can lead to misunderstandings and limit effective communication among stakeholders from different regions. Mitigation involves using English as a common official language, providing bilingual facilitators, translating key materials, and ensuring that workshops and meetings are conducted in both languages where possible.
- Lack of Continuity: High turnover among stakeholders or core team members can disrupt Living
 Lab activities and affect knowledge continuity. Mitigation measures include strong
 documentation practices, such as maintaining detailed records of activities, decisions, minutes
 and progress, as well as ensuring effective knowledge transfer to new participants.

4 Part II - Specific Terms of References for the CROCUS Living Lab established in the specific border region

4.1 *Aims*

The CROCUS project explores innovative and sustainable business models for cultural and creative tourism in rural areas in eight cross-border regions in Europe. Building on current practices and initiatives, Living Labs engage local stakeholders to identify new or improved business models for cultural tourism to stimulate more sustainable development.

In the specific border region, the Living Lab will focus on ...

The Living Lab will:

- Produce an analysis of existing business models, challenges and potentials in the border region, with data collected from businesses, local residents, and tourists
- Help to develop new and/or improved business models through facilitated workshops including a wide range of stakeholders
- Produces prototypes of sustainable business models and roadmaps for their implementation
- (Additional items if appropriate)

4.2 Geographic and administrative scope

The living lab area covers the following geographical and governmental areas:

4.3 Participants in the Living lab

Name	Organisation represented	Location	Expertise

4.4 The role of the Core Development Team

The role of the Core Development Team is to assist the respective CROCUS partner research team and the *Living Lab coordinator* by:

- identifying additional members of the Core Development Team
- advising on the general CCT themes which the Living Lab will focus on
- advising on possible interviewees for the initial background research, in addition to the members of the Core Development Team itself
- participating in a cross-border Definition Workshop for the Core Development Team
- advising on communication channels and strategies to promote the work of the Living Lab in the border region
- commenting on drafts of workshop programmes for Living Lab workshops on both sides of the border
- advising on recruitment of stakeholders to participate in Living Lab Ideation and Feedback & Refining workshops
- participating, if possible, in Living Lab Ideation and Feedback & Refining workshops
- participating in a cross-border Road mapping Workshop for the Core Development Team
- participating in an interview as part of the evaluation process of the Living Lab

4.5 Timeline

The suggested timeline indicates the key project activities only, it should be amended with more details adjusted to the needs of individual Living Labs by the Core Development Team.

Autumn/Winter 2024	First Core Development Team meeting to establish the Living lab and
	accept Terms of reference
Winter 2024/2025	Core Development Team meeting planning data collection
Winter 2024/Spring 2025	Data collection, analysis
Spring /Summer 2025	Developing prototyping protocol, tools & resources
Summer 2025	Cross-border <i>Definition Workshop</i> for the <i>Core Development Team</i>
Summer 2025	Core Development Team meeting to discuss the LL individual report draft
Autumn 2025	Stakeholder workshop - one Ideation workshop on each side of the border
Winter 2025/2026	Stakeholder workshops
Winter 2025/2026	Feedback & refining workshops
Spring 2026	Road mapping

4.6 Languages of communication

If all Core Development Team members speak English, it can be considered the official language of communication for the Core Development Team, otherwise translation should be provided. The Stakeholder workshops on both sides of the border will be conducted in the local language.

4.7 Financial issues

Expenses of all in-person meetings and workshops within the living lab will be covered by the respective CROCUS project partner as part of the funding from CROCUS. These costs include:

- Venue
- Catering
- Accommodation of the Core Development Team members (if necessary)
- Transportation costs of the Core Development Team members

4.8 Acceptance of terms of reference

All Core Development Team members have indicated their acceptance of these terms of reference by sending a separate email to the living lab coordinator.