

# Case: LIKE-A-PRO Living Labs: Rethinking Food, Rethinking the Future

Inclusive participant recruitment for living labs, participatory strategic development, process implementation of Living Labs across EU countries and ensuring the long-term sustainability



5 June 2024

## Case description

- The LIKE-A-PRO Living Labs (2024) is co-run by [CSCP](#) with 11 participating **Food Environment Citizen Innovation Living Labs (FE CIILs)** with the focus on improving European food environments towards fostering alternative protein consumption.
- It aims at developing **16 new food products** based on seven alternative types of proteins (e.g. Rapeseed kernel, cultivated mushrooms) to be introduced to markets by various entrepreneurs (to incentivize consumers to pick up those products)
- The Living Labs have the objective of (1) exploring the **Food Environment** from a consumer perspective, (2) identify **key influencing factors** with regards to food choice, and (3) promote **pathways to design** effective Food Environments
- The aim is to co-create diverse food mechanisms together with consumers by working on a **Consumer Choice Framework**: a methodological framework created by CSCP to promote sustainable food consumption behaviour in a **local food context**.
- The different angles of the Consumer Choice Framework are (1) **Choice Editing** - alternative protein as only option, procurement, VAT), (2) **Choice expansion** - best product strategies, marketing strategies, (3) **Choice Environment** - placement in store, labelling, and (4) **Beyond choice** - communication and cultural norms

## Take-home lessons

- The role of the CIILs (Living Labs) appears to deviate from classical Living Lab approaches. Putting user impact and participatory design central, LIKE-A-PRO applies a **dual concept for their labs**, namely (1) **dedicated workshops** with a strong research focus inviting consumers and other stakeholders in a process that 'mimic real-live situations', and (2) **the point-of-sale** as the 'natural habitat' of the consumer, like retail shops, restaurants, canteens or markets where researchers talk to citizens. Findings from both methods are actually compared.
- These co-creating mechanisms are meant to understand how alternative protein products can be better marketed by working directly with the consumers when developing a **new value proposition** for these products which in turn should result in more acceptance of alternative proteins in local food contexts.
- Since the acceptance of consumers of alternative food proteins is **not at a sufficient scale yet**, CSCP wants to accelerate this positive change towards a healthier and sustainable diet by diversifying and strengthening access of alternative types of proteins and specific products into the market and collect feedback from European consumers about the developed products in a **risk-free environment**.
- The added value of the LL-approach is that the perspectives of EU consumers regarding alternative proteins takes the **cultural and social differences** between various European countries into account.
- The developed COM-B Model (see annex) helps map and understand consumers' mindset and feelings when choosing food (e.g. time, prices, social norms, cultural differences and personal motivation). This is a **complex process** as these mindsets and feelings behind food choices can be multi-faceted and not always rational.
- On the communication strategy: Campaigns and educational institutes can play a key role in creating communication materials that move beyond environmental reasoning and connect on a more personal level with consumers.
- One of the key considerations of asking people to join workshops is that there should always be an added value for everyone: people want to be part of the creation process, some people want to socialise, others to share their opinions. These should be detected and addressed.

## Discussion

- Aleksandra: "In terms of reaching out to different groups of consumers, the language that is used is very important – this in terms of nationality, region, social setting and age group."
- Andreas: "The Living Lab is rather research focused and comes across as powerful in elucidating what people think when exploring consumer routines, preferences, barriers to change, and potential solutions, also policy-wise. Thus something that suggests to re-think the role of living labs in such projects in terms of research potential"
- Arlind: "One of the **test case for choice editing** and later applied in the point-of-sale environment was to move away all conventional protein food items (meat) and see how consumers would react – it turned out that a step-wise approach ('choice editing by degree') towards replacing/removing food items received more positive reactions."
- Geoffrey: "Creating a trustful, stable and long-term relationship between researchers and the target group should aim at understanding the different needs on both sides and to make sure that both are finding a place in the approach."
- Arlind: "one of the challenges that the LIKE-A-PRO Living Labs project is facing is on the **participant engagement** in LL's. There is a lot of interest in the project activities, yet life is busy and dynamic and for many sustainability is not their priority in life. Hence, commitment levels are not as consistent and strong."
- "Also, there is a diversity in social demographics, incomes and cultural values within these groups of people, making it hard to reach people outside the sustainability 'bubble'."
- Andreas: "The approach reminds me of an older study before the 'age of living labs', with a very elaborated research into so-called 'Food Styles' - connected with the concept of social millieu, addressing routines and logistics of people – being discussed in workshops."

## Attendees

Pedro Couto - UTAD (Wasteless Project)  
Andreas Exner – RCE Graz-Styria (FEAST)  
Nadia Tonoli – Bergamo Municipality (Food Trails)  
Livia Cepoiu – RCE Graz-Styria  
Geoffrey Kwala- Uganda Permaculture Consortium  
Nadia Tonoli - Municipality of Bergamo (Food Trails)  
Arlind Xhelili - CSCP (Like a Pro Living Lab)  
Natalie Robb - Oxfordshire County Council  
Aleksandra Jovanovic – Susmetro (FEAST)  
Dirk Wascher - Susmetro (FEAST)

## Further reading/Annex

- [Like a Pro project webpage](#)
- [COM-B Model](#) - A framework for behaviour change
- [Projekte: ISOE](#) - Strategies for socio-ecological transformations
- [Long-term Living Lab Support towards Food System Transformation](#)
- <https://www.iso.de/en/nc/research/projects/project/496577880cbaeecaecf2d86487a97d4/>
- [http://ernaehrungsdenkwerkstatt.de/fileadmin/user\\_upload/EDWText/TextElemente/Ernaehrungsoekologie/ernaehrungsstile\\_Ernaehrungswende\\_5.pdf](http://ernaehrungsdenkwerkstatt.de/fileadmin/user_upload/EDWText/TextElemente/Ernaehrungsoekologie/ernaehrungsstile_Ernaehrungswende_5.pdf)
- [PSLifestyle](#)

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