

[Home](#) → [Members details](#) → Rheingau Living Lab

MEMBER

Rheingau Living Lab

Living Lab Reallabor Rheingau | Germany



Rheingau Living Lab (LL) is an initiative coordinated by Hochschule Geisenheim University (HGU) that fosters climate adaptation, sustainability, and innovation in viticulture through real-life experimentation and collaboration with regional stakeholders. LL integrates research, education, and local action to transform vineyard landscapes into multifunctional, resilient systems. It addresses the entire wine production value chain while promoting biodiversity, water efficiency, and resource-friendly practices. Based in the Rheingau region and the UNESCO World Heritage Upper Middle Rhine Valley, LL actively involves farmers, researchers, students, municipalities, public bodies, and the wider public.

Aim

The LL aims to develop and implement innovative, climate-resilient, and sustainable strategies for the transformation of viticulture and cultural landscapes in the Rheingau region and the UNESCO World Heritage Upper Middle

Rhine Valley. It focuses on strengthening the resilience of wine-growing systems by promoting biodiversity, multifunctional land use, efficient resource management, and climate adaptation. A core objective is to co-create solutions with stakeholders from science, practice, administration, and civil society that are ecologically sound, economically viable, and socially fair and inclusive. LL seeks to enhance ecosystem services, support sustainable livelihoods, and enable long-term landscape transformation through knowledge exchange, experimentation, and regional cooperation. Its approaches are designed to be transferable and provide inspiration for other wine-growing regions.

Background information

The LL builds on the transdisciplinary project KliA-Net [→], initiated by HGU in 2019 to develop and implement climate adaptation strategies in viticulture. Over time, [→] additional third-party funded projects such as Ambito and GeisTreich expanded the network and focus. These projects laid the foundation for a continuous, practice-oriented collaboration with regional stakeholders. Since then, LL has evolved into a structured platform for knowledge transfer and sustainable landscape transformation in the Rheingau region and the UNESCO World Heritage Upper Middle Rhine Valley.

Funding structure

The LL is supported through various third-party funded projects.

Activities

- Efficient water resources management and climate adaptation;
- Biodiversity and structural landscape diversity;
- Cultivation and breeding;
- Technology and digitalization;
- Multifunctional use;
- Cooperation and networking.

Methods, stakeholder engagements and tools

Rheingau LL applies a real-life experimentation approach in active vineyards, combining scientific research with practical implementation. Stakeholders from viticulture and agriculture research education public administration and civil

...ment and agriculture, research, education, public administration, and civil society co-develop solutions through workshops and field demonstrations. Interactive formats such as on-site knowledge exchange visits, exploratory workshops, network meetings, and a mobile exhibition support social learning and dialogue. Regional networks and digital tools facilitate continuous knowledge exchange and collaborative decision-making.

Achievements

- Cooperation on climate adaptation in the Rheingau region: network meetings, stakeholder workshops, independent activities of local authorities, and discussions with winegrowers and wineries.
- Development of catalogs of measures for climate adaptation and natural water retention in the Rheingau region.
- Symposia like “Land consolidation and climate adaptation” and “Climate change and cultural heritage”.
- Scenarios for future landscape development in the historic terraced landscape of the Upper Middle Rhine, a region characterized by land abandonment.

Publications



- <https://geistreich.hs-geisenheim.de/plattform-des-wissens>
- <https://www.hs-geisenheim.de/e...>
- <https://www.eltvile.de/leben-wohnen/nachhaltiges-eltville/klimaschutz-anpassungen/klia-net/>

Photos





Rothenberg in Geisenheim. Source: Winfried Schönbach



VitiCULT protects young vines from excessive sun and drought, thereby improving plant growth in the face of climate change. Source: Philipp Stieffenhofer





Newly planted vineyard with terraced rows and diverse plant communities. Source: Ilona Leyer

Contact

Websites:

- <https://geistreich.hs-geisenheim.de/>
- <https://www.hs-geisenheim.de/en/practice/competence-center-cultural-landscape-cult>



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