

[About us](#) ▼[Menu](#) ☰[Home](#) → [Research projects](#) → EMPOWERALL

RESEARCH PROJECT

EMPOWERALL

In progress 01/09/2026 → 31/08/2029

Empowering Young Farmers to Coordinate Agrifood Transformations through Engaged Research Infrastructures and Agroecological Living Labs

Contact our coordinator



Pablo F. Méndez

Agroecological Living Labs governance and LTSER Platforms -
Spanish National Research Council (CSIC), SPAIN

✉ pfmendez@ingenio.upv.es

[INFO](#)[CONTACT](#)[PARTNERS](#)

Summary

EMPOWERALL addresses the critical role of youth in agroecological transitions, recognizing their capacity for innovation and long-term commitment to transforming agrifood systems. Despite their potential, young farmers face systemic barriers—political, social, economic, and environmental—that limit their leadership in resilient agriculture. EMPOWERALL's goal is to create enabling conditions for young

farmers to drive agrifood systems transformation through transdisciplinary, multi-actor Agroecology Living Labs (AELLS).

Starting with four AELLS in Romania, Slovakia, France and Spain, the project will co-design, test, and refine good practices, inclusive governance mechanisms, and agroecological innovations, including social innovations and business models rooted in agroecological principles. EMPOWERALL integrates diverse perspectives to shape action-oriented policies grounded in local realities. The project strengthens its scientific foundation and connects agroecological solutions to long-term observation and research, through a close collaboration with the Agroecology Partnership, and with the Integrated European Long-Term Ecosystem, Critical Zone and Socio-Ecological Research Infrastructure (eLTER RI).

EMPOWERALL adopts a user-centred Living Lab approach to foster collaboration among young farmers, scientists, policymakers, and local communities and consumers. Each AELL is a real-life experimental setting where participants co-create, test, and evaluate technological, social, nature-based and governance innovations. Using transdisciplinary action research, and experimental and place-based approach, AELLS identify local challenges and co-develop context-specific solutions, combining systems and futures-thinking tools to design sustainable transition pathways.

Co-creation and knowledge exchange between farmers, scientists, and advisors are central to EMPOWERALL's innovations, which are validated through iterative learning cycles. Governance within AELLS is built around multi-actor collaboration frameworks, ensuring fair participation and decision-making. Youth Advisory Councils in each AELL formalize youth involvement in governance and policy discussions, providing a platform for sustained engagement and leadership. EMPOWERALL is designed to deliver lasting change by empowering young farmers as leaders of agroecological transitions. The project promotes youth-led innovation and enhances the visibility of young farmers in agrifood governance. By linking AELLS to eLTER's long-term data and monitoring systems, EMPOWERALL ensures that agroecological practices are evidence-based and scalable.

In the short term, EMPOWERALL will create structured spaces for knowledge exchange and co-production, and participatory decision making, leading to the adoption of sustainable practices that enhance biodiversity, soil health, and climate mitigation and resilience. In the medium and long term, it will strengthen governance mechanisms and stakeholder networks, fostering systemic change in agrifood systems. EMPOWERALL's transnational approach will produce actionable

tools and frameworks, ensuring that agroecology becomes a viable career path for the next generation of European farmers.

Project implementation overview

EMPOWERALL is organised into six interconnected work packages (WPs) spanning 36 months, progressively moving from field-level diagnosis to European-scale policy recommendations. The project operates across four Agroecological Living Labs (AELLS) embedded within Long-Term Socio-Ecological Research (LTSER) Platforms in Romania, Slovakia, France and Spain.

WP1 – Youth-driven AELL definition, mapping and engagement within LTSER Platforms (M1–M12)

Led by CSIC, with contributions from ILE, UPCO, CEBC, SCDA, NIBIO, UB and Árvore, WP1 lays the foundations of the entire project. It characterises each LTSER Platform and the sustainable farming initiatives operating within its boundaries, maps the relevant stakeholders with a specific focus on young farmers and rural youth, and co-designs the initial governance structure of the AELLS, including Youth Advisory Councils. Its main outputs are preliminary synthesis narratives on each AELL's potential and a technical report on Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems (AKIS) and Value Network Maps.

WP2 – Systemic methodological framework and initial diagnosis (M1–M18)

Led by UPCO, with CSIC leading the analytical tasks, and contributions from ILE, CEBC, SCDA, NIBIO, UB and Árvore, WP2 co-designs with stakeholders a shared Participatory Systems Modelling framework. It then applies this framework to conduct in-depth analyses of the AKIS in which each AELL is embedded, and to identify agroecological innovations and business models aligned with futures co-produced with young farmers. Its outputs include the modelling framework itself, a full AKIS analysis report, and a report on local desirable futures and emerging innovations.

WP3 – System analysis and dynamics for youth-led agroecological innovations (M15–M27)

Led by NIBIO, with UPCO and CSIC co-leading the synthesis tasks, and contributions from ILE, CEBC, SCDA, UB and Árvore, WP3 deploys the modelling framework in facilitated workshops at each AELL to map the systemic lock-ins and leverage points

that hinder or enable agroecological transitions. A cross-case synthesis then identifies recurring patterns transferable to other European contexts.

WP4 – AELL–LTSER network interactions and policy impact pathways (M12–M36)

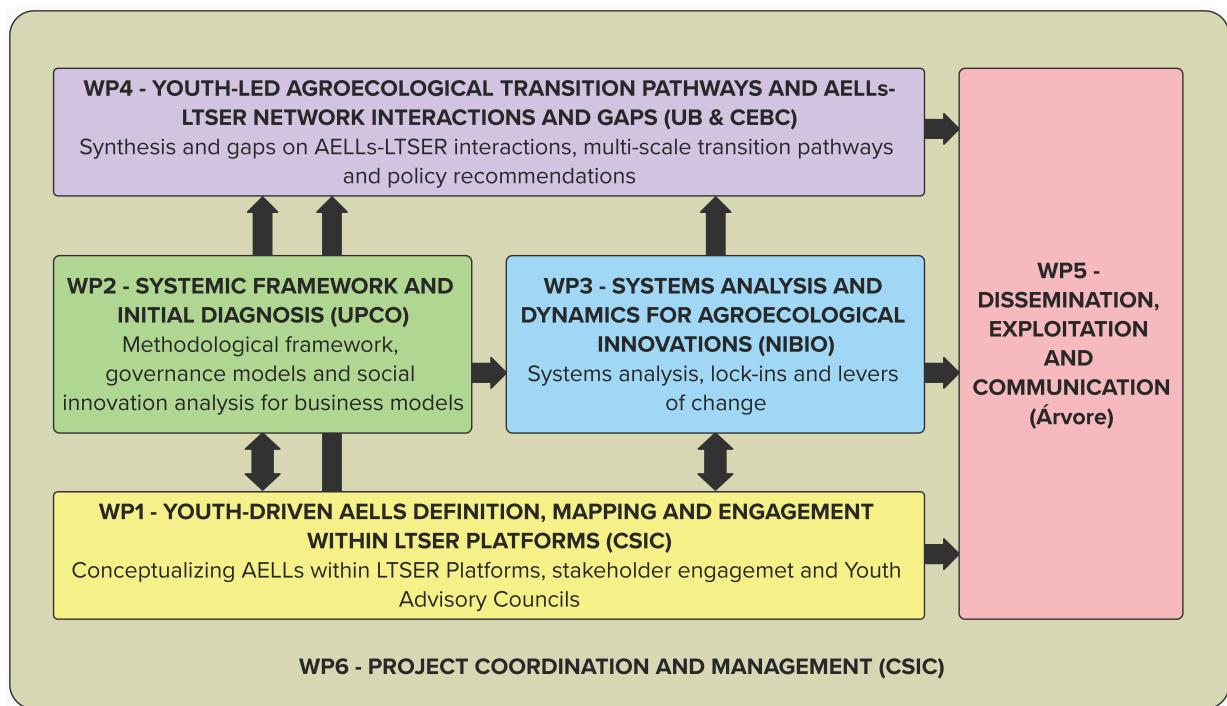
Led by UB and CEBC, with CSIC leading the policy task, and contributions from ILE, SCDA, NIBIO, UPCO, Árvore, GODS and SAS, WP4 synthesises results from WP1–3 to co-design context-sensitive transition and impact pathways with each AELL, assess gaps and synergies between AELLs and LTSER Platforms, and formulate EU-level policy recommendations for scaling youth-led agroecological innovation. Its outputs include interim and final reports on LTSER–AELL interactions, a transition pathway report for each AELL, and a set of EU policy recommendations.

WP5 – Dissemination, exploitation and communication (M1–M36)

Led by Árvore, with CSIC coordinating outreach and contributions from all partners, WP5 runs continuously throughout the project. It manages the project's visual identity, website, social media presence and all communication materials, producing videos, infographics and accessible knowledge products aimed at young farmers, practitioners, policymakers and the broader public. Its main outputs are three successive versions of the Dissemination, Exploitation and Communication Plan.

WP6 – Project coordination and management (M1–M36)

Led by CSIC with contributions from all partners, WP6 oversees scientific coordination across the consortium and with the Agroecology Partnership, manages administrative and legal obligations, ensures ethical and data protection compliance, and hosts the Steering Committee and Advisory Board. Its key outputs are the Project Management Manual and a revised Data Management Plan.



EMPOWERALL WPs diagram. Source: EMPOWERALL project

SHARE THIS PROJECT



agroecology.ps@ilvo.vlaanderen.be

Coordinator: Projektträger Jülich (Germany)

Co-coordinator: Agence nationale de la recherche, ANR (France)

Useful links

[Disclaimer and Privacy Policy](#)

[Credits](#)

[Contact](#)

[Subscribe to our newsletter](#)

Follow us



[Manage cookies](#)