



RURAL URBAN EUROPE



ROBUST [VIRTUAL] FINAL CONFERENCE

REFLECTING ON 4.5 YEARS ROBUST (+ 2 YEARS OF PREPARATIONS)

21 SEPTEMBER 2021



HAN WISKERKE

The ROBUST timeline

- ROBUST is a Horizon 2020 multi-actor research and innovation project
- Call for proposals entitled “*Consolidated policy framework and governance models for synergies in rural-urban linkages*”
- Started to develop consortium and project in July 2015
- Stage 1 proposal submitted 17 February 2016
- Full proposal submitted 13 September 2016
- Project started 1 June 2017 and ends 30 November 2021

Changes during the ROBUST timeline

- Economic focus prevailed in the call text: “*enable further growth and job creation in rural areas*”
- COVID-19 pandemic: has impacted our work (incl. conference), but also redefined rural-urban relations and interdependencies
- Growing attention for climate change & biodiversity: Green Deal
- Shift from focus on economic growth to wellbeing
- Shift from sectoral to integrated approach

Objective of ROBUST

- The overall goal of ROBUST is to
 - a) advance our understanding of the interactions and dependencies between rural, peri-urban and urban areas, and
 - b) identify and promote policies, governance models and practices that foster mutually beneficial relations.
- Approach (multi-actor):
 - 11 Living Labs (LLs)
 - 5 Thematic Communities of Practice (CoPs)

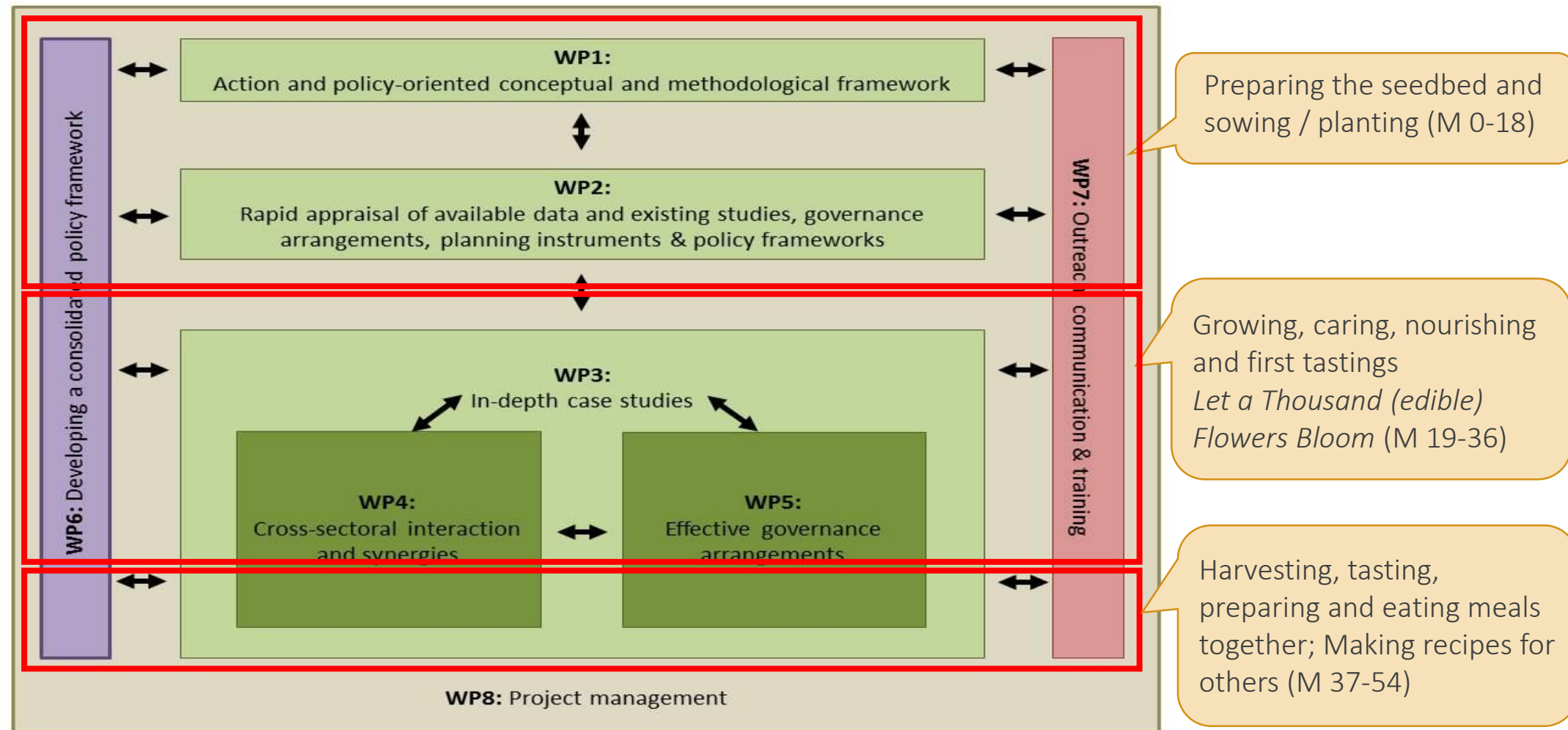
Living Labs



Communities of Practice

Living Lab	Community of Practice				
	New business models and labour markets	Public infrastructure and social services	Sustainable food systems	Cultural connections	Ecosystem services
Tukums					
Helsinki					
Ljubljana					
Ede					
Lisbon Metropolitan Area					
Gloucestershire					
FrankfurtRheinMain					
Lucca					
Mid Wales					
Styria Metropolitan Area					
Valencia					

Work plan



Reflecting on the harvest

- A very rich and diverse harvest:
 - Inspiring and well-documented examples
 - Improved understanding of common dynamics and trends (across LLs), but also of the place-specificity of (governing) rural-urban relations
- This conference gives you a flavour of this harvest, but stay tuned to <https://rural-urban.eu/> for the full harvest

Reflecting on the process

- Working in LLs and across LLs in CoPs was a new approach for many of us (*e.g. LLs as a tool many implemented in urban areas*), hence a 'learning-by-doing' process
- Balancing act:
 - Flexibility vs. structure (i.e. ROBUST Description of Work);
 - Initial plans vs. new (local) policy priorities
 - Diversity vs. commonalities
 - Competing interests and diverging expectations
- To have better impactful research and innovation, these projects need more time (10 years?)

It's team work, so thanks to all ROBUSTers!





Thank you very much!

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ROBUST receives funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 727988. The content of this publication does not necessarily reflect the official opinion of the European Union. Responsibility for the information and views expressed therein lies entirely with its author(s).

First key note speaker: Alexia Rouby

- Research programme Officer DG Agri
- Active involvement in ROBUST at the research – policy interface from the very beginning (highly appreciated)
- Important message at kick-off meeting:
 - *I don't want this to be yet another project that concludes "there is no one size fits all" or "areas are so diverse, there are no aggregate lessons learned", but a project that builds robust and useful recommendations*
- Although we too concluded that areas are diverse, I think we managed to go beyond that and were able to provide useful input for the Long Term Vision on Rural Areas

KEYNOTE

ALEXIA ROUBY

Policy Officer, DG-AGRI, European Commission

“Rural-Urban in the EC's
Long Term Vision for
Rural Areas”

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