

# New multi-actor organizational forms structuring design processes in territorialized innovation dynamics: towards a research agenda.

**Side-event organised with the support and assistance of the LINDDA project and IDEAS**

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Today, the relocation of food systems is seen as a way of increasing their sustainability (by using resources more sparingly, by closing cycles to make ecosystems more resilient, by distributing value more fairly between the actors in these systems, etc.). Relocation of this kind calls for territorialized approaches (at different scales), i.e. taking into account the specific challenges of a given area, while facilitating innovation between the stakeholders concerned and/or involved in the emergence or reconfiguration of agri-food systems to increase their sustainability. While a number of international research projects are explicitly designed to promote such innovation dynamics, raising questions about the way in which these projects are set up and managed, as well as their impact (see the special session organized by W. Rossing at FSD 8 for a discussion of this issue), more permanent and more or less established forms of organization (e.g. third places, regional Agroecosystem Living Labs, innovation platforms, on-farm experimentation networks, etc.) are also emerging, sometimes independently of initiatives led by academics. They have a governance structure dedicated to encouraging the establishment and implementation of multiple multi-stakeholder innovation processes serving transitions in agri-food systems, and highlighting *in-situ* experimentation as a structuring element in these processes. This governance structure is a decision-making forum, but also a forum for debate and controversy on the way in which these processes can and should contribute to the territorial and innovation dynamics for which this organizational form was set up.

Some of these organizational forms are based on the development of digital technologies. These can then be one of the design targets within the system. They can also be a resource that will equip the design process and become a medium for mediation between stakeholders organizing themselves collectively to deal with issues of transition towards sustainable agri-food systems. Finally, they can be a resource for the governance process itself within these new organizational forms.

This seminar will provide an opportunity for scientists from the fields of agronomy, animal science, food science and the humanities and social sciences to reflect on an interdisciplinary research agenda that will strengthen our capacity to analyze, support and participate in these new organizational forms, with particular attention to the way in which digital technology is part of the dynamics that have been created and contributes to them. More specifically, the agenda will be built around the following questions:

- the contribution of the latter to strengthening collective design capacities in the service of transitions in agri-food systems towards sustainability and their relocation;
- the way in which digital technology constitutes a resource for stakeholders (to collaborate in the dynamics at work, to contribute to the solutions put forward and implemented).

## **Call for contributions**

We propose to work on the basis of the experiences of scientists analyzing or being involved in these new organizational forms.

The authors of the contributions should endeavor to highlight the way in which their cases or experiences raise questions about one or more of the following themes:

- the methods of governance within an organizational form and in relation to an area, enabling the players involved to define shared goals, ways of working together and a strategy for innovating

together in the specific local context. The role of digital tools in this governance could be a key focus.

- the organization in time and space of activities aimed at stimulating collective design in multi-actor, territorialized processes (from diagnosis to ideation, from *in situ* experimentation to the consolidation of a collective process at the service of innovation in the region)
- Mediations (including digital tools, skills, intermediation processes, etc.) that are designed and operational, whether to facilitate the institutional construction and governance of the organizational form in question or to support multi-actor innovation dynamics. Particular attention will be paid to the design of mediation supports, their diversity and their combination to support a multi-actor and territorialized innovation dynamic (e.g. facilitating the expression of controversies, linking the desirable and the possible, the systemic and complex dimension of problems, supports for collective reflexivity, etc.).
- the activities and skills of the people involved in the *in situ* experimentation or institutional construction of these organizational forms, and the way in which these activities and skills are transformed in relation to the dynamics of innovation and transition in which they are implemented. Particular attention will be paid to the role of scientists in these processes and organisational forms (analysis, disciplinary contribution, leadership, etc.).

### Seminar organization

Authors are invited to send a first summary of their contribution **by 30 April** (~600 words) in Word format, indicating the title, the first and last names of the authors, the e-mail address of the corresponding person, and briefly describing: (i) the type of organizational form, (ii) the multi-actor dynamic and the problem it aims to address, (iii) the researcher's involvement, (iv) the seminar theme(s) that this work could help to discuss.

A selection of proposals for the writing of a more developed text (6000 words) will be made by a committee composed of scientists working on the themes at the heart of the discussions planned in the seminar and feedback will be given to those who have proposed cases on **15 May**. Those who have been asked to develop their abstracts are expected to submit their full papers **by 15 June**.

A program will be sent to those who have submitted abstracts at the end of May to confirm their participation in this side-event **by the end of June**. We are looking for a maximum of 25 contributions, so that we can conduct in-depth discussions in sub-groups or in plenary, which will probably also mean limiting the final number of participants to 40 (non-contributors who are interested in taking part in the side-event).

All the papers (abstracts and full texts) will be sent at **the beginning of July** to those who have confirmed their participation in the seminar.

During the seminar, discussion tables will be organized by theme, and a transversal discussion will take place. Students from the Learning Planet Institute will report on how they perceived the dynamic of interdisciplinary exchange and will be able to highlight the salient points of the different organizational forms that will have been discussed in relation to a grid produced in the LINDDA project to address the characteristics of infrastructures at the service of design to accompany transitions in territories and towards sustainable food systems. Design students will be able to contribute to the graphic facilitation and report back on what has been said about how to design mediations.

**Date and venue: 25 August afternoon and 26 August morning, Palaiseau.**

Contributions to be sent to: [quentin.toffolini@inrae.fr](mailto:quentin.toffolini@inrae.fr) and [thibault.lefeuvre@inrae.fr](mailto:thibault.lefeuvre@inrae.fr)