



The International
Association
for the Study of
the Commons



Institutions
for Collective Action
www.collective-action.info



Universiteit Utrecht

Institutions for Open Societies

Call for (Contributions to) Practitioners' Labs

XVI Biennial IASC conference

“Practicing the Commons: Self-Governance, Cooperation, and Institutional Change”

(Utrecht, 10-14 July 2017)

Deadline: March 31, 2017

In July 2017 the XVI Biennial Conference of the International Association for the Study of the Commons (www.iasc2017.org) shall take place in the Netherlands. The meeting will be held in the wonderful historic city center of Utrecht, a major university town in the middle of the Netherlands and will be hosted by the Institutions for Collective Action-research team (www.collective-action.info) and the Strategic Theme “Institutions for Open Societies of Utrecht University” (<http://www.uu.nl/en/research/institutions-for-open-societies>).

With the theme of the conference, “Practicing the Commons: Self-Governance, Cooperation, and Institutional Change”, the organizers intend to bring together not only scholars working on commons, but also practitioners involved in commons or organizations dealing with commons and shared resources from around the globe. Therefore, the organizers of the IASC2017-Conference will organize several Practitioners' Labs. **At these labs, practitioners have the opportunity to put forward their experience on commons-issues and at the same time discuss the challenges and questions they encounter with academics working on these issues, as well as with fellow-practitioners and policy makers.**

How does a Practitioners' Lab work?

Practitioners' Labs are organized around specific topics and will take 90 minutes. First, several practitioners will give a short (5-10 minutes) presentation about their initiative and the challenges and questions they encounter that are related to the topic of the specific lab. Second, the participants of the lab (both practitioners, policy-makers and academics) will have an interactive session or debate about the raised issues.

If you want to join in a practitioners lab as a practitioner, you can propose your organizations' description and the questions you would like to see addressed. There are basically three ways in which practitioners can participate in a lab:

1. Full session proposals

Compose your own lab with a clearly defined topic and a number of contributors (500 words in total) that have agreed to take part. In this case, the proposal for a lab needs to be submitted and each of the contributors needs to register **their own initiative/organization at the conference** as well as **to formulate topics and questions** they would like to see addressed at the Practitioners' Lab, using a specific code provided to them by the lab organizer.

2. Session-related individual proposals

Propose a contribution to an already set-up Practitioners' Lab, on a theme proposed by one of the partners of the conference. You can find these already set-up Practitioners' Labs underneath. More labs to which you can contribute will be posted over the next few months through the conference website (see <http://www.iasc2017.org/when/practitioners-labs/>).

The local organizers of the IASC2017-conference have sought collaboration with a careful selection of a number of Dutch organizations (foundations, companies and policy organizations) that are actively and genuinely concerned about the commons, and related issues. Their participation in the conference consists of financial support and an active engagement to contribute to the conference by participating with the conference delegates in debates that currently play an active role in Dutch society and beyond.

3. Independent individual proposals

Send in an individual contribution describing the organization you are involved in and formulate a number of questions you would like to see addressed. The local organizers will then compose sessions on a specific theme, based on the debating issues raised by the individual contributors.

The Practitioners' Labs will be announced in the official program for all conference delegates to attend and will run parallel to academic sessions. After the conference, the descriptions of the initiatives/organizations will also be shown on the IASC-website, so that these will remain visible to other interested parties.

If you want to propose or contribute to a lab, or submit your case and/or questions, please go to <http://conferences.iasc-commons.org/> to create an account and submit. Have you already registered for the Utrecht 2017-Conference? Then log in to your account and submit your case and/or submit your questions by choosing the option *Contribution Practitioners Lab*.

Practitioners can of course also attend the conference as non-presenting participants (please go to <http://conferences.iasc-commons.org/> for further information).

Academic researchers are also welcome to submit proposals, but do need to take into account that the Practitioners' Labs are explicitly designed for exchanging experience on practical issues.

Checklist for case descriptions

Make sure your case description contains the following elements.

- name of your organization/common
- contact details (name contact person, position, address, social media)
- type of institution (cooperative, common, water board, irrigation community, fishery, etc.)
- location (please provide sufficient details so we can display your case study on a map)
- surface area
- legal form of your institution
- main activities
- sector your organization deploys its activities in (energy, food, health care, etc.)
- start year of your organization
- is your organization officially recognized by the local government? If so, how?
- a concise history of the institution, identifying highs and lows of its history
- number of members at the moment
- obligations of members and possible benefits to members
- Questions your organization would like to see discussed via a Practitioners' Lab; examples are e.g.:
 - How to address collaboration with local governments?
 - How to make sure that reciprocal relationships between commoners develop?
 - ...

With your consent, your case description will be published online on a website related to the conference, in order to draw more attention to your organization and to offer all other commons-experts information that may be useful. You may be approached in the future to revise the information you have provided.

In case you have additional questions, please contact the local organizers of the IASC-conference through iasc2017@iasc2017.org, or the Executive Director of the IASC, iasc@iasc-commons.org.

List of already set-up Practitioners' Labs



687. Reimagining the Future of Food, Capital and Community. Towards a transparent, sustainable and closed-loop production model

In this Practitioners' Lab the negative impact of the current global agriculture and food system on the environment and the wellbeing of both producers and consumers will be central. Policy-makers, researchers and consumers alike are increasingly recognizing the need for a more sustainable agro-food system, and provide innovative organizational models to change the agro-food supply chain. The co-creation model that will – amongst others – be explained during this session and has been implemented by some Dutch cooperative supermarkets, like Lazuur-Wageningen, focusses on the design of a closed-loop and a transparent financing system to facilitate the provision of capital to small-scale food producers worldwide, for sustainability investments. Additionally, the model aims to unlock the potential of large-scale capital funds to contribute to sustainable food production and consumption. The organizers of this lab invite contributions that focus in particular on (1) types of alternative agreements retailers (such as supermarkets) elsewhere maintain with their suppliers and how these could be improved; (2) how sustainable governance mechanisms, in particular Participatory Guarantee Systems could complement the co-creation model; (3) how to organize the producer-side of the co-creation model; (4) how the development towards new pension and other insurance fund models like pension in kind (guaranteed access to food) can contribute on the consumer side.

To submit your proposal for a contribution to this lab, please select during the registration procedure the option “a contribution to an already existing lab” and then use the code **687** to connect your proposal to this particular lab.



689. The role of emerging regional sustainability networks for local initiatives

In this Practitioners' Lab we focus on the development of supporting structures for regional sustainability networks. These rapidly emerging networks provide the combined impetus needed for sustainable regional development. Within these networks local and regional governments, entrepreneurs, educational institutes, research & development centers and community organizations cooperate in different combinations. The participants seek to find sustainable solutions for economic and social issues by making new connections, learning from each other and developing different forms of social innovation. E.g. by creating cooperative forms of governance in a certain area.

These networks are gaining more and more power. A new infrastructure is developing next to the existing political and administrative 'governance' structures. The question is: can both structures co-exist and complement each other? Other questions are: which organizational model fits the best in a certain area and how can you create a viable model that is financially successful.

About DuurzaamDoor: In the past four years the DuurzaamDoor-program of the Ministry of Economic Affairs, in full cooperation with the twelve provinces in the Netherlands, has contributed significantly to the development of these new regional networks. By bringing them together in national and regional meetings, by exchanging experiences, by promoting the networks in media, publications, linking regional networks with sustainability scientists and by financing research in order to find solutions for certain financial barriers. In 2017 a new DuurzaamDoor-program will start for a period of four years, aiming at a growing support for the further development of these regional networks. In this practitioner lab we will explore different kinds of support structures for regional sustainable economic development in order to learn lessons for the coming years.

To submit your proposal for a contribution to this lab, please select during the registration procedure the option “a contribution to an already existing lab” and then use the code **689** to connect your proposal to this particular lab.



Vereniging van
Nederlandse Gemeenten

1667. Participation Paradoxes in the interaction between local governments and initiatives

Citizen initiatives directed to the improvement of neighborhoods, living environments and social conditions are booming. Governments often welcome these activities, and not only because of budget cuts. There is a growing conviction that the involvement of citizens often results in better solutions and that an increasing number of societal issues cannot and must not be solved by government action only. There are, however, a number of serious questions and paradoxes in the interactions between local governments and citizen initiatives as aims and interests can widely differ. For instance, because of their policy aims, governments tend to be mainly interested in those initiatives that fit into existing policy plans. As such, often policy agenda's determine the passion and energy of initiatives instead of the other way around. And how to deal with initiatives that conflict with other governmental core responsibilities, such as equality before the law or safety or do not fit into existing policy plans? Other paradoxes relate to the overrepresentation of specific societal groups among initiatives and the fact that often the same active individuals raise their voice, colliding with principles of democratic legitimation and equality.

How can governments and initiatives deal with these questions and paradoxes? Local contexts differ often too much to design a one fits-all solutions or to develop clear blueprints guaranteeing workable answers. This lab, organized by the Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG), Studio Goudswaard and the municipality of Utrecht, discusses several examples of participation paradoxes. It proposes a concrete working concept to facilitate and stimulate the conversation between initiatives and local governments and the development of creative and innovative solutions about how to deal with these paradoxes (the so-called Participation Paradox Atelier). The organizers invite policy makers, civil servants, practitioners and scholars to formulate their own questions and paradoxes based which can be used in the lab as concrete cases.

To submit your proposal for a contribution to this lab, please select during the registration procedure the option “a contribution to an already existing lab” and then use the code **1667** to connect your proposal to this particular lab.



1685. Strengthening the position of cooperatives on the global market

The world population is increasing rapidly and it is expected that there will be 9 billion people in 2050. This growth will largely take place in Asia, Africa and to a lesser extent in Latin America. In these places, agricultural production will have to grow to meet future demands. Cooperatives can play an important role in this development. In Kenya for example, 20% of the 13,5 million farmers are currently organized in a producer cooperative. Cooperatives play a very important role for these farmers, because it provides them with access to affordable means of production, and makes them a more powerful market partner. There is however a huge gap between the biggest cooperatives worldwide, and the small agricultural cooperatives that are found in Kenya. How can the position of these small cooperatives be strengthened without losing their cooperative identity? Can a gradual bottom-up development of cooperatives be successful in a world where big food- and retail companies are calling the shots? And in what way can governments or development organizations as Agriterra support the development of cooperatives?

This practitioners' lab is part of Agriterra's campaign 'Small Farmers, Big deal', which calls upon Dutch companies in the agri-food sector, the Dutch government and knowledge institutions to include smallholder farmers and their organizations in developing countries in their trade, aid and investment policies.

To submit your proposal for a contribution to this lab, please select during the registration procedure the option "a contribution to an already existing lab" and then use the code **1685** to connect your proposal to this particular lab.