Restoration for the future
WETLANDS
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ALFAwetlands – Wetland restoration for the future

Press Release

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ALFAwetlands Consortium meeting-2025
Press Release

ALFAwetlands Consortium Meeting in Estonia

The **ALFAwetlands Consortium Meeting (CM)** took place from June 26 to 28 in Tartu, Estonia — widely regarded as the intellectual capital of the country and located near one of Europe's largest bogs. The meeting was hosted at the modern Oecologicum building of the University of Tartu's Institute of Ecology and Earth Sciences and organized by the University of Tartu, the project's local partner.

The CM focused on reviewing the progress of ALFAwetlands implementation, sharing current research findings, and planning next steps. The program included technical sessions on Living Labs and preparations for the final conference, along with meetings of the **Advisory Board and General Assembly**.

A key highlight was an open session on the newly released **European Wetland Map** — a powerful geospatial tool supporting wetland restoration across Europe.

Coinciding with the meeting, participants had the opportunity to engage in the follow-up **INTECOL Wetlands Conference**, also held in Tartu.

As part of the event, a field trip was organized to the **Kuresoo Restored Site** and the **Öördi experimental area** — both part of the Estonian Living Lab in Soomaa National Park. Attendees observed restoration work and received direct insights into greenhouse gas monitoring methods. Researchers presented data on carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide emissions, enabling comparisons across different ALFAwetlands Living Labs.

A newly released **brochure** offers further information about the **Living Labs**, including presentation recordings: https://alfawetlands.eu/promotional-materials/

ALFAwetlands in Estonia

In Estonia, ALFAwetlands plays a key role in enhancing scientific and geospatial understanding of peatlands —ecosystems critical in the fight against climate change. The project monitors rewetting efforts, such as those in Soomaa National Park, that help peatlands regain their natural carbon-sequestering capabilities while supporting biodiversity. This supports Estonia's national and EU commitments to restore at least 25,000 hectares of drained peatlands by 2050.

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"It was great to meet the ALFAwetlands consortium in person again. I'm impressed by the complexity of the work being done. The project is progressing well and holds huge potential for future research cooperation. It was also very valuable to visit the Estonian Living Lab sites — they're completely different from what we have in Spain,"

says **Francesc Sabater Comas**, Associate Professor at the University of Barcelona and ALFAwetlands partner.



Consortium meeting session



Demonstration of measurement at Living Lab

ALFAwetlands research news

The consortium continues to advance research under five dedicated Work Packages (WP):

WP1. Meta-analyses & Land Use Assessment for Enhancing European Wetland Knowledge

WP1 has significantly improved the geospatial knowledge base on European wetlands by finalizing the European Wetland Map which compiles the available knowledge and expertise in freely downloadable GIS data of different resolutions. It furthermore developed comprehensive wetland databases and land use/land cover (LULC) maps for all project partner's catchments, which are used in several subsequent analyses within ALFAwetlands. Additionally, collaboration with EU sister projects has been established to align results and amplify impact.

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WP2. Co-creation & Inclusive Wetland Restoration

Careful dialogue - and process designs targeted to different settings and intended outcomes together with active facilitation help deliver both jointly owned and hand-on knowledge and action strategies, as well as inclusive processes attentive to stakeholder differences. They also make outcomes like stakeholder fatigue and disappointment less likely. ALFAwetlands WP2 has developed and tested a design for promoting individual and collective capacities and agency to restore wetlands and is now actively engaging in the European discussions about how to make best use of co-creation as a pathway for involving and engaging more people in not least establishing nature-based solutions. As part of this process, co-creation workshops in Finland, Germany, Latvia and Sweden had been organized.

WP3. Efficiency of Innovative Ecosystem Scale Restoration Practices

WP3 continues to compile a has produced database that will contain GHG emissions from our Living Labs & BES assessment, and is working on results calibration, development and application of remote sensing and GIS models to track changes in vegetation, water quality, wetness, surface temperature and GHG fluxes. In addition, a report on methods for quantifying BES responses in wetlands has been finalized.

WP4. Modelling & Scenarios

Recent work has improved WP4's ability to model how rewetting degraded wetlands affects greenhouse gas emissions and carbon storage. These models are now being used to explore the impacts of rewetting at both local and EU-wide levels under different climate and land-use scenarios. In addition, new EU-wide simulations have been conducted for degraded peatlands currently used as cropland, grassland, and forest, based on the latest data from the European Wetland Map. These simulations help to illustrate how different land uses contribute to greenhouse gas emissions. Climate change projections based on current land management practices have also been completed, and the GLOBIOM land-use model has been updated with this new information. Models have also explored how partial and full rewetting of drained peat grasslands could help reduce emissions across Europe.

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WP5. Economic & Social Impacts of Wetland Restoration

WP5 has carried out both regional and national surveys to assess public opinions on wetland restoration in Finland, Sweden, Estonia, Latvia, Austria, and Spain. The regional surveys focused on the recreational use and significance of wetlands, while the national surveys explored the perceived value of ecosystem services that wetland restoration would enhance. Data analysis is currently underway, and the findings are expected to be published in 2026. In addition, WP5 will conduct a targeted survey among landowners to gather insights into their perspectives on wetland restoration, their willingness to participate in such activities, and their expectations regarding financial compensation.

"*Living Labs presentations, given during ALFAwetlands technical session, were really important for our overall project goals. By integrating citizen perspectives, microbial and satellite data, carbon flux monitoring and modelling, ALFAwetlands builds a comprehensive foundation for science-based wetland restoration and climate policy*", admits Tuula Larmola, project deputy coordinator from Luke.





ALFAwetlands consortium during the meetings and in field

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