



Environmental Science Division

Horizon Europe Cooperation Offer (Clusters 6)

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Contact for partner search

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Executive summary

The University of Latvia (UL) SES-GC provides interdisciplinary Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) expertise for Horizon Europe Cluster 5 projects, specialising in socio-ecological systems governance. We combine policy and institutional analysis with participatory, socially engaged research to co-design implementable, fair, and effective transition management. Our strengths include evidence synthesis; stakeholder engagement and behavioural research; science–policy interfaces and policy monitoring; citizen science and living-lab design; and analysis of natural resource use and local-level governance, with strong empirical grounding and stakeholder networks in Latvia and the wider Baltic region.

About the University of Latvia

- Established in 1919, it is one of the leading research universities in the Baltic States.
- More than 15,000 students, from 2024 consolidated into six faculties with 15 research institutes.
- Manages a diverse research project portfolio of over EUR 40 million.
- Experience bridging science and policy to facilitate sustainability transitions with policymakers, municipalities, and other stakeholders.
- Shared resources include conference facilities, data management infrastructure and repository, analytical tools and software, and access to publications/databases supporting FAIR data management.

What we offer to Horizon Europe consortia

- **Governance and policy coherence** for land, water, biodiversity and bioeconomy transitions: institutional analysis, regulatory mapping, implementation conditions, multi-level governance.
- **Living labs and co-creation:** design and facilitation of inclusive stakeholder processes; citizen science design; replication/scaling strategies (incl. municipalities/regions).
- **Socio-economic and distributional assessment:** social sustainability, fairness, trade-offs/synergies, and local acceptance of interventions and innovations.

- **Circular and sharing economy governance:** scaling conditions, governance of reuse/circular initiatives; social sustainability dimensions relevant for circular bioeconomy solutions.
- **Quantitative sustainability evidence:** material flow analysis, footprint techniques and indicators to support policy and transition monitoring.
- **Latvia/Baltics as a strong case and replication site:** access to national/municipal policy processes and stakeholder networks for piloting and learning transfer.

Core competencies

- **Environmental and climate governance assessment:** policy coherence, institutional configurations, and multi-level governance for land/water/biodiversity and rural transitions.
- **Circular and sharing economy:** social sustainability, governance models and conditions for scaling circular initiatives (incl. urban-rural interfaces).
- **Environmental economics & quantitative sustainability analysis:** MFA, EEIO/MRIO-informed approaches, footprinting and indicator development (policy support).
- **Sufficiency and sustainable consumption:** behavioural change and eco-social policy mixes (relevant for food systems, bio-based living, demand-side measures).
- **Participatory research methods:** Policy Delphi, co-creation labs, stakeholder mapping and engagement, evidence synthesis for policy uptake.

Selected EU project experience* (past 5 years)

- TransScale: Scale-Up and Scale-Out Sharing Capacity for Sustainable Urban Transformation (ERA-Net, 2024–2026).
- tExtended: Knowledge Based Framework for Extended Textile Circulation (Horizon Europe, 2021–2026)
- Assessment of pre-requisites for promoting the social sustainability of the circular economy in Latvia: Human Scale Development approach (EU Recovery and Resilience Facility, 2024–2025).
- OPTAIN: Optimal strategies to retain and re-use water and nutrients in small agricultural catchments (Horizon 2020, 2020–2025).

*Note: Some researchers have individually participated in projects led by institutions other than UL.

Selected publications (past 5 years)

Liobikienė, G., & Brizga, J. (2025). Determinants of meat consumption: Applying the expanded Theory of Planned Behaviour in Latvia. *Cleaner and Responsible Consumption*, 16, 100247.

Liobikienė, G., & Brizga, J. (2025). Factors influencing carbon footprint in Latvian consumption: Environmental awareness and a socio-economic analysis. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 489.

Lagzdina, E. (2025). Public Perceptions of Circular Economy in Latvia: Insights for Municipal Governance. *Sustainability*, 17(18), 8496.

Liobikienė, G., & Brizga, J. (2025). Determinants of meat consumption: Applying the expanded Theory of Planned Behaviour in Latvia. *Cleaner and Responsible Consumption*, 16, 100247.

Brizga, J., & Räty, T. (2024). Production, consumption and trade-based forest land and resource footprints in the Nordic and Baltic countries. *Forest Policy and Economics*, 161, 103166.

Rutitis, D., Smoca, A., Uvarova, I., Brizga, J., Atstaja, D., Mavlutova, I. (2022). Sustainable Value Chain of Industrial Biocomposite Consumption: Influence of COVID-19 and Consumer Behaviour. *Energies*, 15, 466.

Brizga, J., Kurppa, S., & Heusala, H. (2021). Environmental Impacts of Milking Cows in Latvia. *Sustainability*, 13(2), 784.

Liobikienė, G., Miceikienė, A., Brizga, J. (2021). Decomposition analysis of bioresources: Implementing a competitive and sustainable bioeconomy strategy in the Baltic Sea Region. *Land use policy*, 108, 105565.

Brizga, J., Hubacek, K., & Feng, K. (2020). The Unintended Side Effects of Bioplastics: Carbon, Land, and Water Footprints. *One Earth*, 3(1), 45-53.

Potential Horizon Europe topics where SES-GC can contribute

Below is a pragmatic shortlist of topics (Clusters 6, Work Programme 2026–2027) where UL's SSH and governance expertise is directly relevant.

| Topic ID | Topic title (abridged) | Why UL fits | Potential role |
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| HORIZON-CL6-2026-02-CLIMATE-01 | Effective, fair and coherent climate policies for mitigation & adaptation in agriculture and forestry | Comparative policy analysis; trade-offs & synergies; distributional impacts; mutual learning formats. | Lead/partner on SSH & governance, policy evaluation, stakeholder dialogue |
| HORIZON-CL6-2026-02-CLIMATE-02 | Towards the water infrastructures of the future | Governance and policy enablement; stakeholder engagement; institutional analysis for implementation. | SSH & governance work package; stakeholder engagement |
| HORIZON-CL6-2026-02-COMMUNITIES-01 | Boosting sustainable competitiveness in rural areas through innovation | Community engagement and just transition framing; innovation diffusion; local governance and scaling. | Case studies in Latvia/Baltics; stakeholder processes |
| HORIZON-CL6-2026-03-GOVERNANCE-02 | Social drivers in agriculture for assessing social sustainability | Survey/interview design; social sustainability assessment; policy implications. | Task lead on social research & synthesis |
| HORIZON-CL6-2026-01-CIRCBIO-01 (two-stage) | Circular systemic solutions through living labs in cities and regions (CCRI) | Living lab design; governance models; monitoring and evaluation; scaling/replication strategies. | Living lab governance/M&E; Latvia as replication site |
| HORIZON-CL6-2026-01-CIRCBIO-10 | Bio-based innovation in society: supporting the sustainable way of living | Behaviour changes and sufficiency research; policy mixes; societal acceptance and uptake. | SSH lead on behaviour/policy mix |
| HORIZON-CL6-2026-01-BIODIV-01 (two-stage) | Living labs for co-creating solutions for the restoration of ecosystems | Stakeholder co-creation; governance arrangements; socio-economic co-benefits/trade-offs; gender-sensitive engagement. | Living lab governance & socio-economic assessment |
| HORIZON-CL6-2027-01-BIODIV-06 | Living labs driving transformative changes via knowledge integration and inclusive governance | Inclusive governance; institutional barriers; citizens' assemblies/participatory instruments; knowledge integration. | Lead/partner on governance innovation & participatory methods |

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| HORIZON-CL6-2027-02-CLIMATE-02 | Resilience of European agriculture/forestry and supply chains against crises & systemic risks | Systemic risk framing; governance and policy coherence; stakeholder mapping. | SSH & governance task leader |
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