



ECLAS Conference 2025: agriCULTURAL landscapes

30 years of landscape architecture education in Nitra, Slovakia

Slovak University of Agriculture in Nitra

Conference details

- Main page and abstract submission: <https://conference.eclas.org>
- Integrated Doctoral Colloquium and Summer School for Doctoral Students: September 5 -10, 2025
<https://conference.eclas.org/eclas-conference-2025/doctoral-colloquium-2025/>
- Conference days: September 6 -10, 2025
- ECLAS General Assembly: September 9, 2025
- Conference Excursion Day: September 10, 2025
- Main venue: Slovak University of Agriculture in Nitra, Slovakia,
<https://maps.app.goo.gl/N7qgpEAQdZE53DH9>
- The conference includes a multiplier event of the 'Landscape in Focus' ERASMUS+ project

Timeline:

- 18.12.2024: Call for Abstracts Opens
- 15.02.2025: Abstract Submission Deadline. Submit:
<https://app.oxfordabstracts.com/stages/76997/submitter>
- 15.04.2025: Notification of Acceptance
- 31.05.2025: Registration Deadline
- starting 5th of September: Doctoral Colloquium
- 06. – 10. September 2025: Conference Dates

agriCULTURAL landscapes

Why in Nitra? 30 years ago, the Faculty of Horticulture and Landscape Engineering was established at the Slovak University of Agriculture (SUA) in Nitra. This occasion marked the beginning of landscape architecture education in Slovakia, building upon the tradition of the Lednice landscape school in Czechoslovakia.

Why agriCULTURAL landscapes? Nitra is often referred to as the capital of agriculture in Slovakia. It is situated in the fertile Danube Lowland and agriculture has played a central

role here for centuries. Moreover, Nitra has been the hub of the most important national institutions for agricultural research, innovation, education, and exhibition. SUA Nitra is the only agricultural university in the country and currently the only university providing landscape architecture education.

With this year's ECLAS conference, we want to celebrate three decades of landscape architecture education in the agricultural capital, at the only agricultural university in one of the most important agricultural regions of Slovakia. Thus, the theme agriCULTURAL landscapes.

The challenge of ensuring food production and biodiversity conservation on the same land, while enabling mitigation of and adaptation to changing climate presents significant challenges for agriculturally shaped landscapes. How can agriCULTURAL landscapes become more multifunctional, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable? How can they be socially acceptable, ecologically ambitious, and economically viable? What is the role of current and future landscape architects in planning and designing sustainable agriCULTURAL landscapes?

Agriculture has long shaped our landscapes, creating a dynamic relationship between food production and the natural environment. Today, these agriculturally shaped landscapes face growing challenges: ensuring food production and biodiversity conservation on the same land, while enabling climate protection and adaptation. At the same time, these landscapes play a crucial role in the global food chain, which is under increasing pressure to meet rising demands while maintaining environmental sustainability. Climate change, soil degradation, water scarcity, and urban expansion disrupt this delicate balance, threatening both productivity and ecological systems.

How can we perceive, plan, and design agriCULTURAL landscapes? By reimagining agricultural landscapes as multifunctional spaces, we can align food production with biodiversity conservation, soil health, and climate resilience. This approach not only supports local landscapes, but also strengthens the global food chain, ensuring its sustainability, equity, and capacity to feed future generations. Innovative solutions and collaborative efforts across sectors are essential to create systems that are productive, resilient, and beneficial for both people and nature on a global scale.

You may share teaching, research, and practice perspectives of past, present, and future agriCULTURAL landscapes.

You may deal with any agriCULTURAL landscapes - be it:

- from small to large,
- from rural to urban,
- from traditional to innovative,
- from everyday to exceptional,
- from historical to contemporary (and future)..

All contributions should address the following cross-cutting questions. Depending on the nature of your theme, not all questions might be addressed at the same level of depth.

1. How can agriCULTURAL landscapes support biodiversity and climate resilience?
2. What is the cultural significance of agriCULTURAL landscapes in shaping identities?
3. How do agriCULTURAL landscapes influence community well-being and health?
4. What are the economic benefits and key drivers of new agriCULTURAL landscapes?

We offer five thematic and one open track as possible entry points to the umbrella theme:

- Track 1: Ecology and Economy
- Track 2: Heritage and Identity
- Track 3: Democratic Landscape Transformation
- Track 4: Teaching and Learning
- Track 5: Innovative Landscape Practice
- Track 6: Open Track

In the following we present each track with some more detail, including the track chairs:

Track 1: Ecology and Economy:

Track Chairs: Ladislav Bakay, Marek Hus (SUA Nitra)

Keywords: resilient food landscapes, food security and safety, regenerative landscapes and bioeconomy, agroforestry, agritourism and related topics

Thematic outline: Agricultural landscapes are central to food production and support the economy at all levels from local to global. Well-planned and structured foodscapes are crucial for the resilience of food systems, and for food security and safety. Agricultural landscapes provide jobs for farmers and related industries and many people depend on farming for their livelihoods. Agriculture is a key driver of rural development and rural economies. In many regions, agricultural landscapes can also generate income from agritourism and other recreational activities in the landscape.

At the same time, agricultural landscapes are important biotopes for many animal species. Many agricultural landscapes are part of the NATURA 2000 network. Depending on farming practices, agriculture can either enhance or threaten biodiversity. More sustainable and environmentally-friendly management practices, such as organic farming or agroforestry can sustain or enhance biodiversity.

In this thematic track, we are looking for contributions on diverse economic and ecological aspects of agricultural landscapes, including co-relations between these two aspects. How can agricultural landscapes be economically productive and at the same time environmentally and economically sustainable? How can landscape architects and planners contribute to more sustainable and resilient agricultural landscapes? What existing good practices can serve as inspiring role models? Your contribution may tackle one of these questions or elaborate on related issues.

Track 2: Heritage and Identity

Track Chairs: Attila Tóth (SUA Nitra), Lei Gao (NMBU), Alex Mexi (USAMV Bucharest), Albert Fekete (MATE)

Keywords: tangible and intangible heritage, landscape character and identity)

Thematic outline:

Agricultural landscapes are specific cultural landscapes with unique historical and contemporary structures that co-form landscape character and identity. Many structures and elements of historical agricultural landscapes can be considered as tangible heritage, while traditional farming practices are important parts of intangible heritage.

agriCULTURAL landscapes reflect historical traditions and modern transformations. Changes through urbanisation, economic shifts, or ecological factors may affect their heritage value, highlighting the need to balance conservation with contemporary development.

Sustainability is key in heritage conservation, weighing ecological and economic factors. Adaptive land-use models ensure the preservation of cultural heritage while meeting modern needs. Governance and policy frameworks, alongside community-driven initiatives, influence landscape conservation and transformation.

agriCULTURAL landscapes also serve as spaces for recreation, education, and cultural engagement. Effective interpretation and tourism management can enhance heritage appreciation while maintaining sustainability.

Key questions include redefining agriCULTURAL landscapes as cultural assets, ensuring sustainable conservation, and understanding governance's role in shaping heritage. Exploring these themes fosters interdisciplinary collaboration, ensuring a balanced approach to heritage and identity within landscapes.

Track 3: Democratic Landscape Transformation

Entering the second generation of the Landscape Convention

Track Chairs: Ellen Fetzer (LE:NOTRE Institute), Juanjo Galan, Mana Taheri, Beata Dreksler (ECLAS), Ingrid Sarlov-Herlin (SLU), Katarína Slobodníková, Soňa Bellérová (SUA Nitra)

Thematic outline: The year 2025 marks the 25th anniversary of the Council of Europe Landscape Convention, opened for signature in Florence in 2000 and ratified by 40 member States. The Convention aims to protect, manage, and plan landscapes while promoting public awareness and participation.

Since its inception, it has stressed public involvement in landscape evaluation, assessment, and development, advocating for participatory processes to create landscape quality objectives.

In 2024, at the Council of Europe Summit in Reykjavík, responsibility for the Convention shifted from the Directorate-General for Democracy to the Directorate-General for Human Rights, highlighting landscapes as integral to human rights.

As we enter the second generation of the Landscape Convention, several pressing questions arise:

- What competences are needed for democratic landscape transformation?
- How can these competences be developed in higher education?
- How can local planning and policy embrace and promote democratic landscape transformation?
- What barriers prevent planning and policy from adopting processes and methods of democratic landscape transformation?
- What new forms of research are required?
- What existing good practices can serve as models?

This thematic track invites educators, researchers, professionals, activists, and public planners to engage in a transdisciplinary reflection on the current position of the Council of Europe Landscape Convention. The goal is to generate a joint publication as part of the conference proceedings.

Through this collaborative effort, we also aim to identify knowledge gaps in education, research, and professional practice, and to brainstorm ideas for future development projects.

Track 4: Teaching & Learning

Track Chairs: Marcel Raček, Zuzana Vinczeová (SUA Nitra), Adamczyk-Mucha Kamila, Linnéa Fridell, Juanjo Galan (ECLAS)

Thematic outline:

Agricultural landscapes face global challenges, such as climate change, and biodiversity loss. There is a need for enhancing the sustainability and resilience of agricultural landscapes and developing multifunctional landscapes that integrate food production, ecology and biodiversity, tourism and recreation and other functions and uses.

What is the role of current and future landscape architects and planners in this context? How can landscape architects and planners contribute to sustainable land management, in close cooperation and partnership with farmers and other stakeholders? How can we prepare future generations of landscape practitioners, researchers, and scholars for planning and designing multifunctional and sustainable agriCULTURAL landscapes? Which teaching and learning methods and models are required? Are

This thematic track invites educators, researchers, professionals, and students to share their experiences of teaching and/or learning with a focus on agriCULTURAL landscapes. We are looking for inspiring teaching and learning models, methods, and outcomes dedicated to or linked to agriCULTURAL landscapes. The aim is to inspire each other and discuss future possibilities within education and pedagogy.

Track 5: Innovative Landscape Practices

Track Chairs: Mária Bihuňová (SUA Nitra), Magdalena Błaszczuk, Mana Taheri, Frederico Meireles (ECLAS)

Keywords: innovation landscape transitions, transformations

Thematic outline:

Landscape architecture goes beyond aesthetics, addressing environmental, social, cultural, and economic challenges at various scales. Some of today's most pressing tasks are tackling climate change, biodiversity, and building ecosystem resilience, while designing functional, inclusive spaces.

EU initiatives such as the European Green Deal, the Nature Restoration Law, the 3 Billion Trees Pledge, and the New European Bauhaus provide a framework for sustainable transformation, combining climate action with social and cultural innovation. These initiatives, along with the attention to the regenerative landscapes approach, encourage practices that restore ecosystems, support biodiversity, and promote resilience across all contexts. They also highlight the need for integrating aesthetics, functionality, and community well-being into landscape solutions.

This track seeks to explore key questions:

- What defines innovative practice in landscape architecture?
- In which areas are new solutions, tools, and practices most urgently needed?
- What barriers exist to implementing innovative actions, and how can they be overcome?
- How can landscape architects foster cross-sector collaboration to maximise impact?

This thematic track welcomes researchers, practitioners, educators, and activists to share their experiences, showcase successful case studies, and debate the future of innovative landscape practices. It aims to create a platform for inspiration, dialogue, and actionable ideas.

Track 6: Open Track

Track Chairs: Miroslav Čibik (SUA Nitra), Henrik Schultz, Samaneh Nickayin

Thematic outline:

The five thematic tracks have been designed with the idea of providing an integrated discussion about agriCULTURAL landscapes and the role of landscape architecture and related disciplines in designing the transition. Do you have a perspective on the topic that does not fit well to any of the five above themes? Then this 'open theme' section is the right place for you. However, make sure you are referring to the conference overall theme and responding to the four cross-cutting questions. This is also the place for discussing planning and design projects with a very practice-led approach, or design studio work.