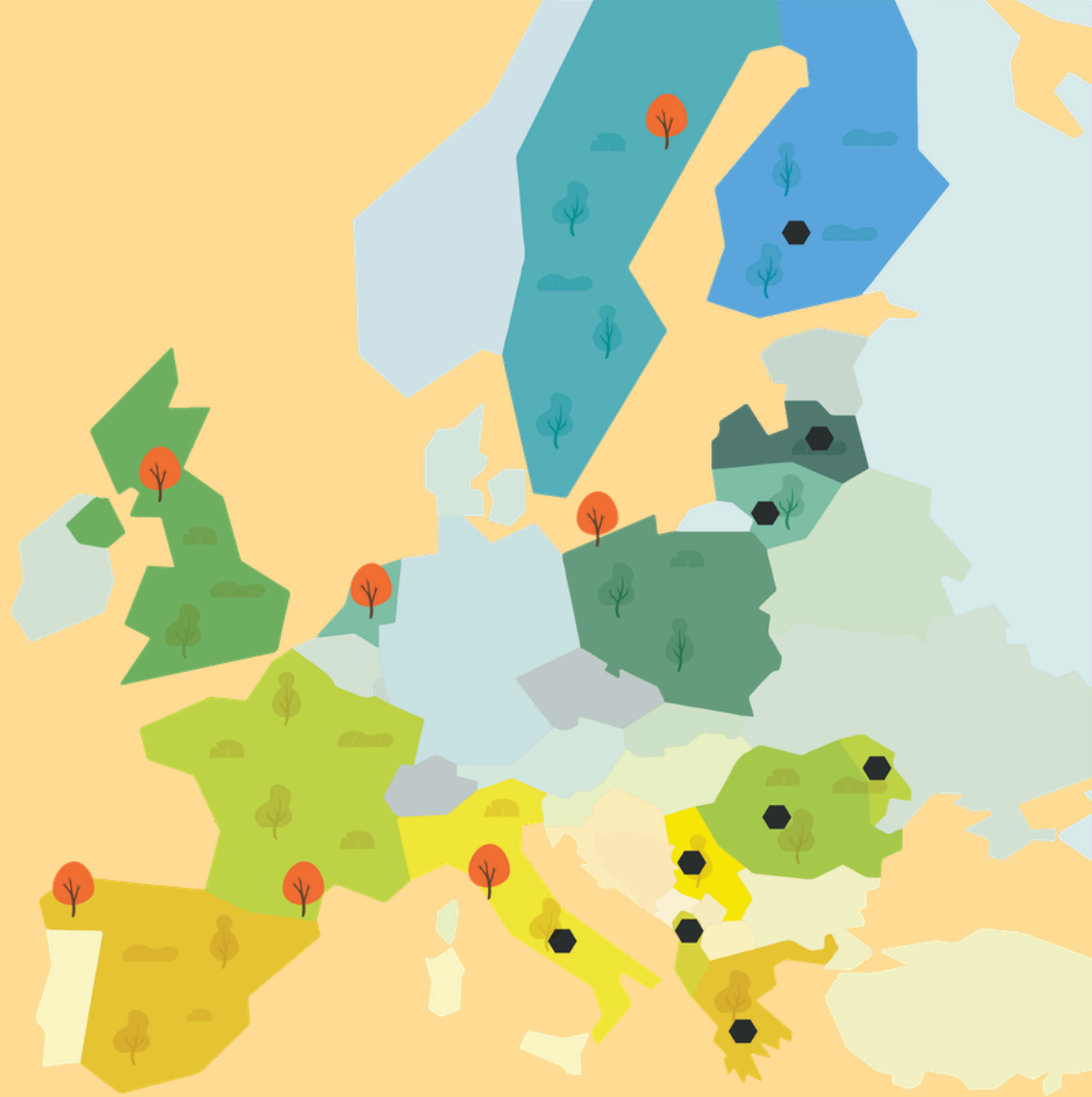




GRANULAR

LIVING LABS CROSS VISIT DOSSIER

Sweden: Regions of North Sweden



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Regions of North Sweden

ABOUT THE CROSS VISIT

In May 2026, project different partners and Living Labs gathered in Northern Sweden for a cross-visit organised within the GRANULAR project. The programme focused on how rural areas are affected by the green transition and how local communities, municipalities and businesses respond to opportunities and challenges linked to industrial transformation.

DAY 1: Overview of Activities

The first day focused on local development in the village of Granu in Vindeln Municipality. The group started with a stop at the Vindel River, where participants were introduced to the role of rivers and natural resources in northern Sweden. The main visit took place in Granu Beckasin, where Christopher Storm, manager, presented how tourism investments have contributed to local development, employment opportunities and the attractiveness of a small rural community. Participants discussed how tourism can support local services and strengthen community resilience.

During the afternoon, participants visited the local grocery store, which combines traditional retail with a self-service solution that enables access outside normal opening hours. This was followed by a visit to Tegsnåset's muster, where locally sourced fruits and berries are transformed into value-added products. Both visits illustrated how entrepreneurship and innovation can help sustain economic activity in rural areas.

Location

Topic
Green industrial transition
Number of participants
11 participants
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The day concluded with a guided forest walk focusing on the historical and contemporary importance of forests in northern Sweden, followed by a presentation from Vindeln Municipality about local development and the municipality's role in supporting rural communities. Participants reflected on the importance of natural resources and local leadership.

DAY 2: Overview of Activities

The second day began in Bygdsiljum, where participants visited the sawmill and engineered timber production facilities. Discussions focused on the role of forestry, wood-based industries and modern timber construction in the green transition. Participants learned how forest resources are transformed into products such as glulam and cross-laminated timber and how industrial development contributes to local employment and value creation.

The group also explored community development in Bygdsiljum, focusing on cooperation between industry, local residents and development organisations. This offered a clear example of how local capacity and civic engagement can contribute to long-term rural development.

In the afternoon, the visit continued to Skelleftee. Representatives from Skelleftee Municipality presented their experiences related to the establishment of the Northvolt battery factory and the subsequent changes following the company's bankruptcy and transition to new ownership. Participants discussed opportunities and risks associated with large-scale industrial investments, including housing, labour markets, infrastructure and municipal planning. The visit also included a tour of the industrial area and a guided visit to Sara Kulturhus.

INSIGHTS & LEARNINGS

The cross-visit successfully combined local and regional perspectives on rural development and the green transition. Participants gained insights into how small rural communities can create development through entrepreneurship, tourism and local cooperation, while also exploring the opportunities and challenges associated with large industrial investments.

The contrast between Granå, Bygdsiljum and Skelleftee created valuable discussions about different development pathways in rural areas. Participants appreciated the opportunity to meet local entrepreneurs, municipal leaders and community actors directly. The visit also strengthened networking and knowledge exchange between the Living Labs involved in GRANULAR.

Several participants highlighted the importance of understanding how natural resources, local communities and the green transition are interconnected. The visit also demonstrated the importance of balancing economic development with environmental and social sustainability.

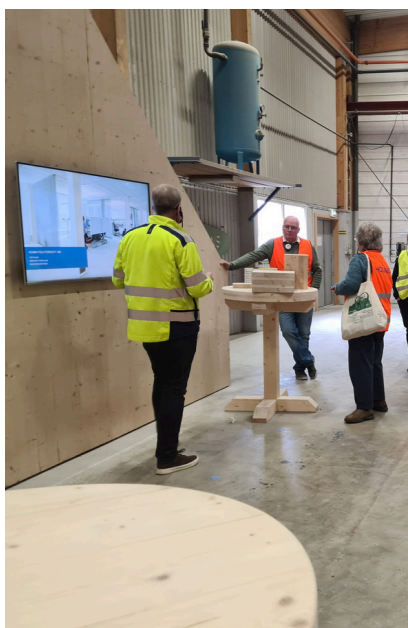
Overall, the cross-visit worked very well. The programme was ambitious but allowed participants to experience several different rural contexts within a short period of time. If anything could be improved, additional time for reflection and structured discussion between visits would have been valuable, allowing participants to compare experiences from their own regions with the Swedish examples in even greater depth.

USEFULNESS FOR DECISION MARKERS

Participants learned about the impacts of industrial investments on local and regional planning, as well as strategies for strengthening resilience in smaller communities.

Decision makers also gained insights into how local development can be supported through collaboration between businesses, municipalities and civil society organisations. The examples from Granå, Bygdsiljum and Skelleftee demonstrated different approaches that may be relevant in other European rural territories.

PHOTO HIGHLIGHTS





GRANULAR

GRANULAR is a four-year multi-disciplinary and transnational project. It aims at generating new datasets, tools and methods to better understand rural diversity and to promote place-based rural policies.



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