GRANULAR

GRANULAR
Digital Platform

User manual

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1. GRANULAR Digital Platform – User Manual

This user manual is designed to explain in detail how to navigate and use the GRANULAR Digital Platform's features, including the Dataset Repository an Visualisation Toolkit. The GRANULAR Digital Platform delivers a repository of rural datasets generated both within and outside the GRANULAR project, as well as visualisation capabilities towards facilitating an in-depth exploration of rural data and indicators.

> The term 'user' refers to any individual, whether a member of a project consortium partner or not, interested in searching for and retrieving information about the rural topics addressed in GRANULAR Digital Platform and associated with European research projects.

This user manual consists of the following sections:

- '**Structure of the GRANULAR Digital Platform'** (Section 1.1): provides an overview of the system's structure to facilitate navigation from user's point of view.

- '**Interacting with the 'GRANULAR Digital Platform'** (Section 1.2): focuses on each individual page of the digital repository. It provides insights into the platform's user interface and user experience.

The first version of the GRANULAR Digital Platform can be accessed directly via the following URL: https://platform.ruralgranular.eu/home. It can also be accessed from the main menu of the GRANULAR project's website ("DIGITAL PLATFORM" tab), as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Access to the 'GRANULAR Digital Platform' from the GRANULAR project's website menu.

1.1.   Structure of GRANULAR Digital Platform

The GRANULAR Digital Platform is an online and open-access repository for exploring existing and newly sourced novel data and indicators on rural areas. The GRANULAR repository of rural datasets and the visualisation toolkit are the two modules of the Digital Platform.

1.2.   Interacting with the GRANULAR Digital Platform

An overview of each page of the platform is presented, focusing on: (i) the information and content made available to the user; (ii) the actions that can be executed; and (iii) the elements used for facilitating the navigation from one repository page to another.

1.2.1.   1.2.1 The GRANULAR Digital Platform homepage

The homepage of GRANULAR Digital Platform is at the top of the repository's structure hierarchy (Figure 2).
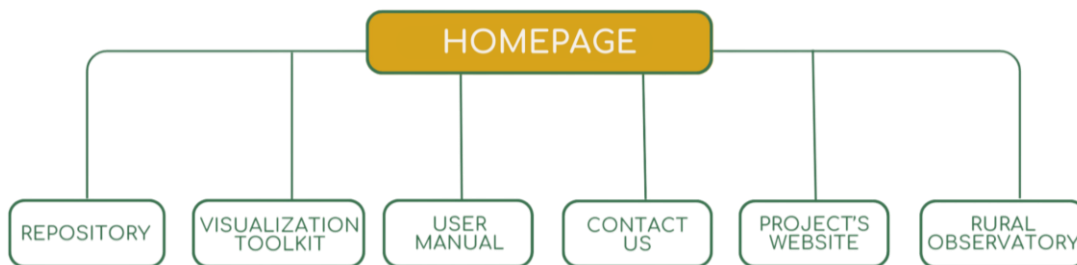

Figure 2: Digital Platform's homepage structure

The Digital Platform's primary navigation menu is located at the center of the page, allowing users to navigate the repository pages (Figure3). The design of the GRANULAR Digital Platform is consistent with the project's visual identity.
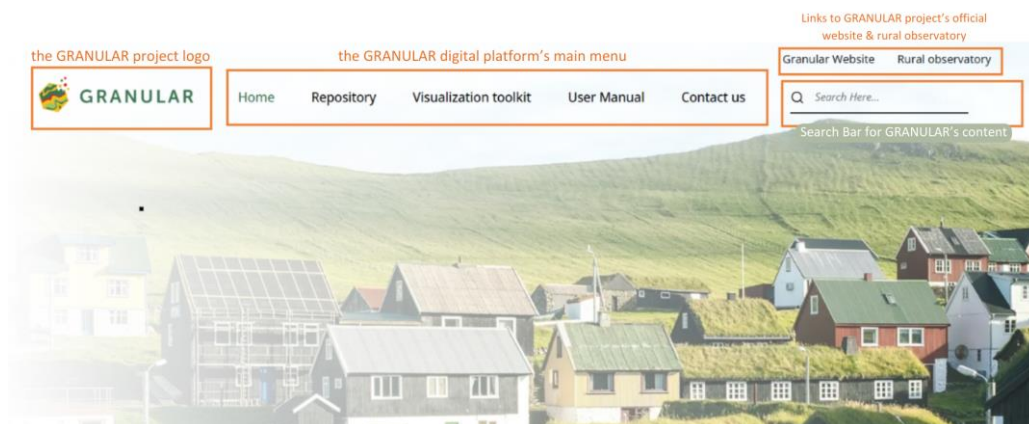

Figure 3: Logo and main menu of GRANULAR Digital Platform.

The GRANULAR Digital Platform's homepage provides access to background information about the GRANULAR project. It also provides an overview of the topics addressed by the project (Figure 4) and the datasets that are accessible to the users (Figure 5), including topics such as Demography and Migration, Environment and Energy, Infrastructure and Accessibility, Health, Economic Development, Labor Market, Living Conditions and Social Inclusion, Rural Typologies, Administration and Governance, Agriculture and Food, Recreation.
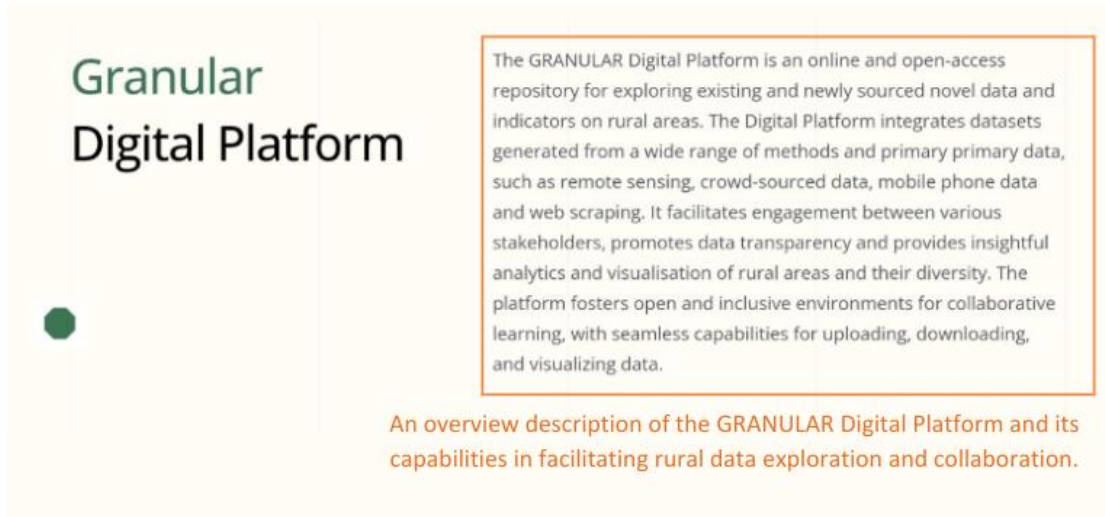

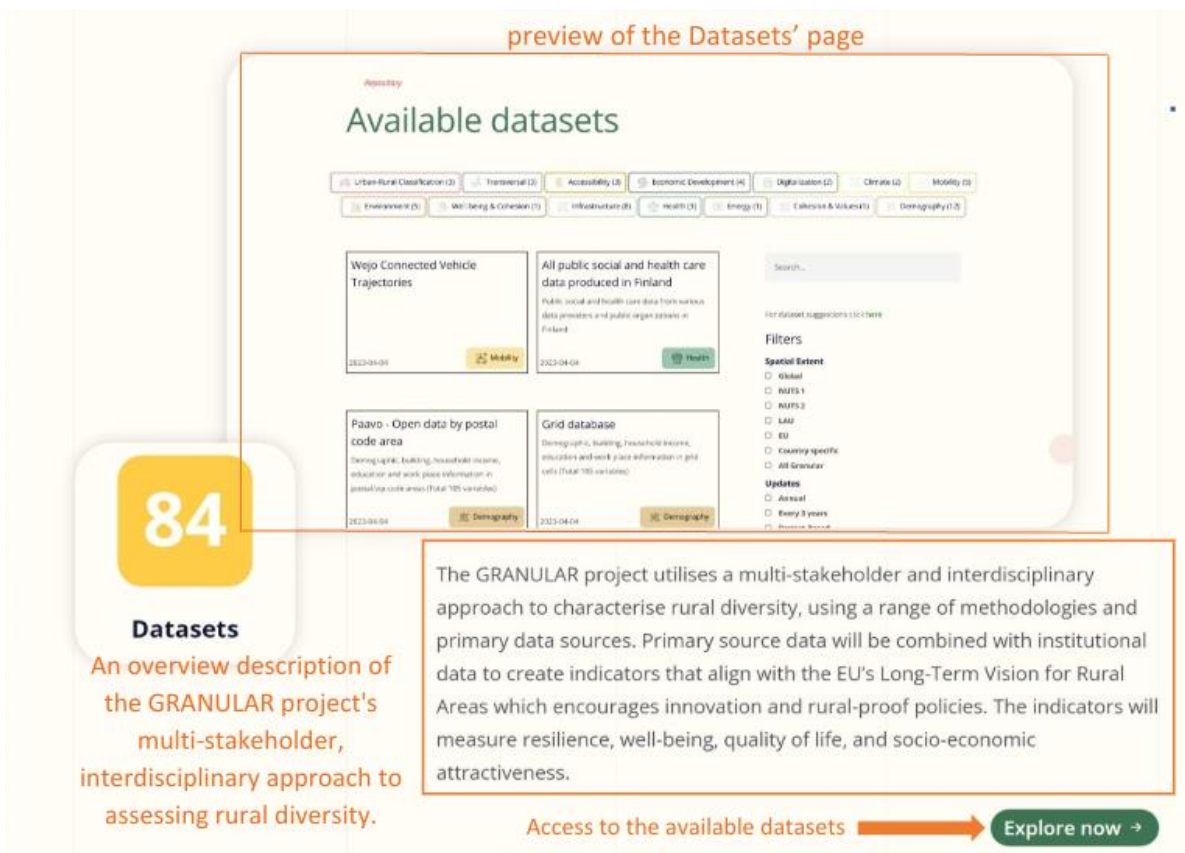Figure 4: Short description of the GRANULAR Digital Platform (homepage)

Figure 5: Short description of GRANULAR's approach

In the coming years, additional datasets will be added to the repository's inventory and they will be displayed to the user in various categories (Figure 6).
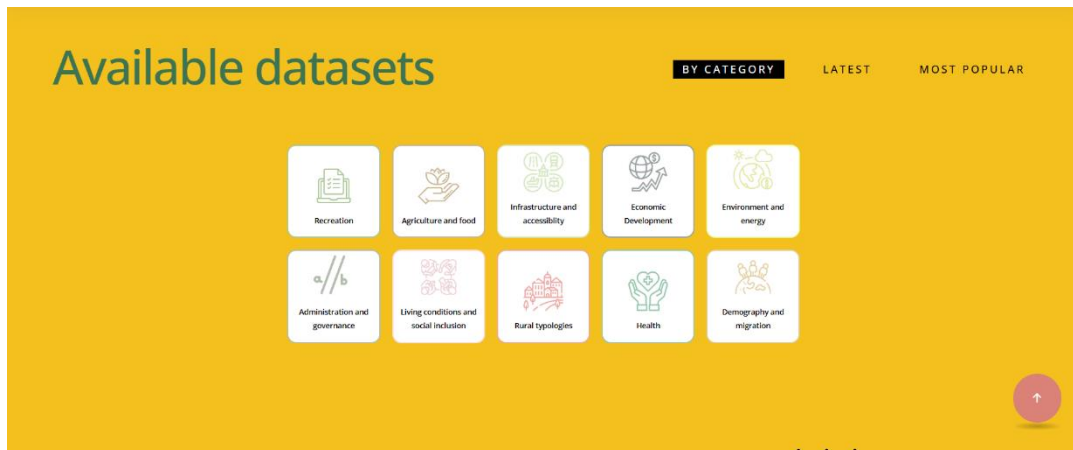

Figure 6: Datasets categories and filtering option on homepage

Additionally, the homepage contains a list of frequently asked questions and their answers (Figure7).
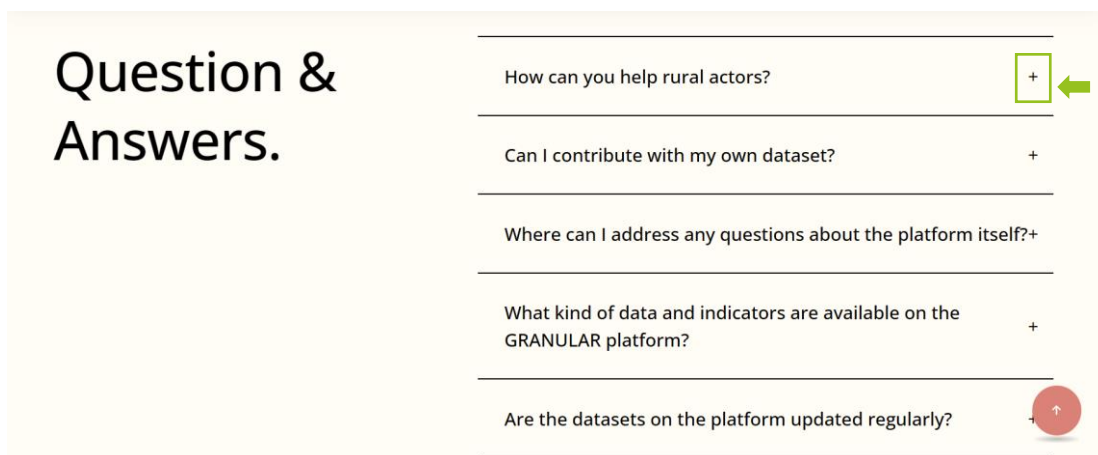

Figure 7: Q&A section

By clicking the 'Contact us' button from the menu bar, it is possible to contact representatives of the GRANULAR project (coordinators, development team, CODE representative) regarding any general- or platform-related issues. When the user clicks on this link, a contact form appears for them to complete. The user can send an email to the administrator of the platform by providing information about the topic they wish to discuss, along with their name and email address (Figure 8).
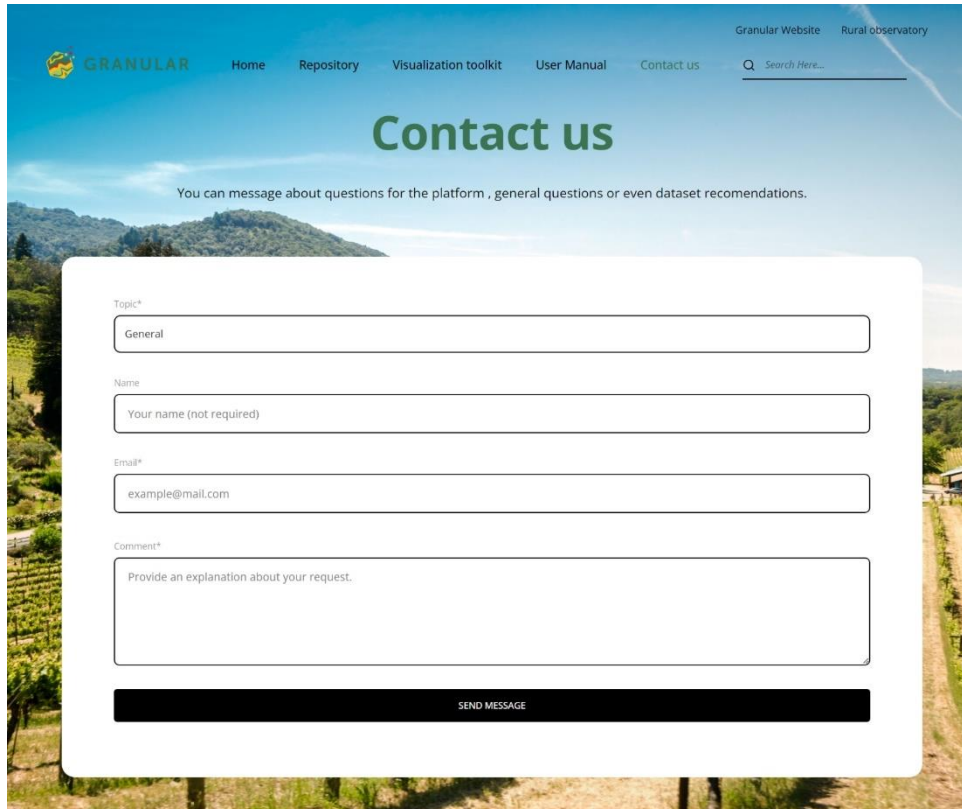
Figure 8: Contact Form

A mechanism is also available on the "For further info & support" banner (Figure 9), to contact representatives of the GRANULAR project, for any project- or repository-related issue, by clicking on the 'Contact us' link. When clicking on this link the email application, used by default by the user's computer, opens to enable the user to send an email to the project development team's email address (platform@ruralgranular.eu).

Figure 9: Contact us' section

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The footer section (Figure 10) provides an array of practical links facilitating seamless navigation to all sections of the GRANULAR Digital Platform. Furthermore, the footer houses essential contact details of project members, including their full names and email addresses. Additionally, it prominently features icons that grant access to the official social media channels associated with the GRANULAR project.
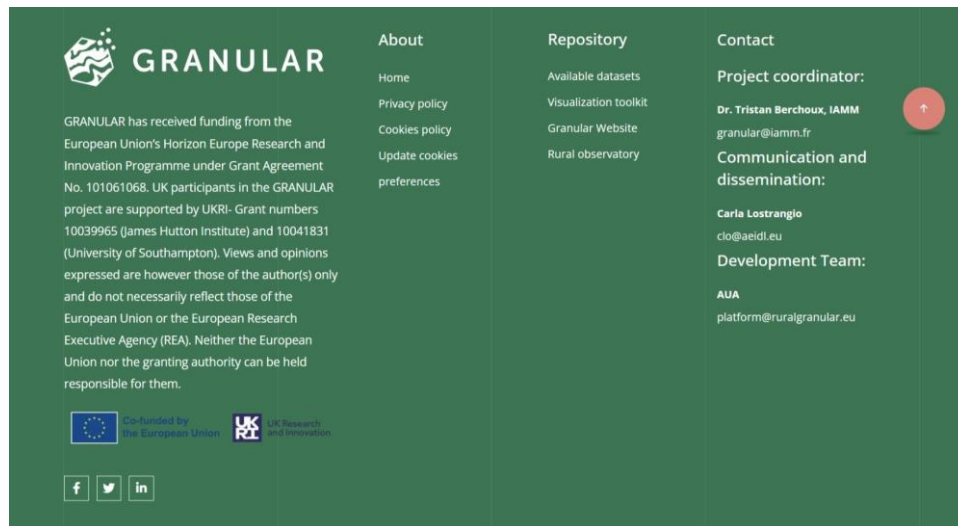

Figure 10: Footer section of the Digital Platform.

1.2.2. The Repository page

The 'Repository page' of the GRANULAR Digital Platform is accessible through the header menu. This page serves as a comprehensive repository of all accessible datasets, systematically categorised for user convenience (Demography and migration; Environment and energy; Health; Infrastructure and accessibility; Economic development; Labor market; Living conditions and social inclusion) (Figure 11) . A free-text search bar is also accessible on all pages, allowing for custom queries (Figure 11).
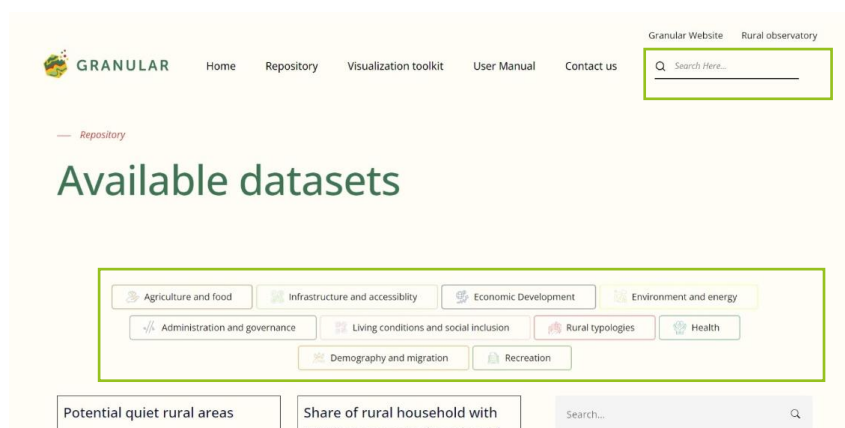

Figure 11: Search bar and Datasets Categorization

In addition, users may initiate the dataset suggestion process by selecting the "dataset suggestions" option on the same page (Figure12). This action directs them to a submission form where they are prompted to provide basic information, including their name, email address, the URL of the suggested dataset, and brief descriptions or comments (Figure13). Subsequently, the suggested dataset undergoes a review process for potential inclusion in the platform's repository.
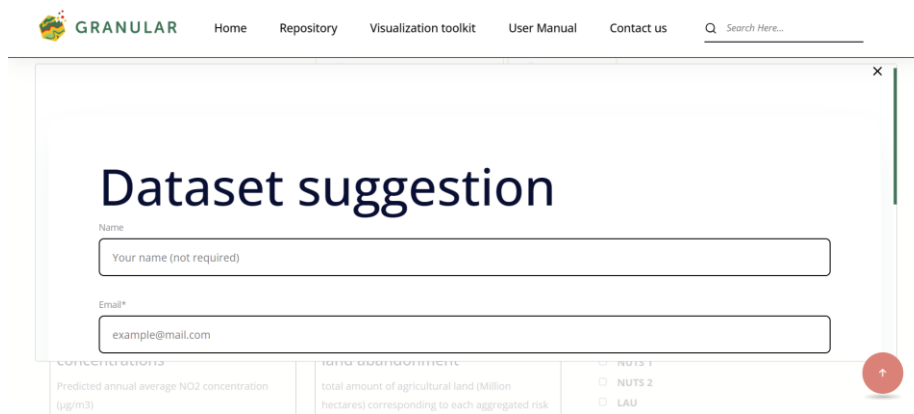

Figure 12: Dataset suggestion

Figure 13: Dataset suggestion form

At the lower right-hand corner of the page, a list of the platform's most popular datasets are presented (Figure 14).
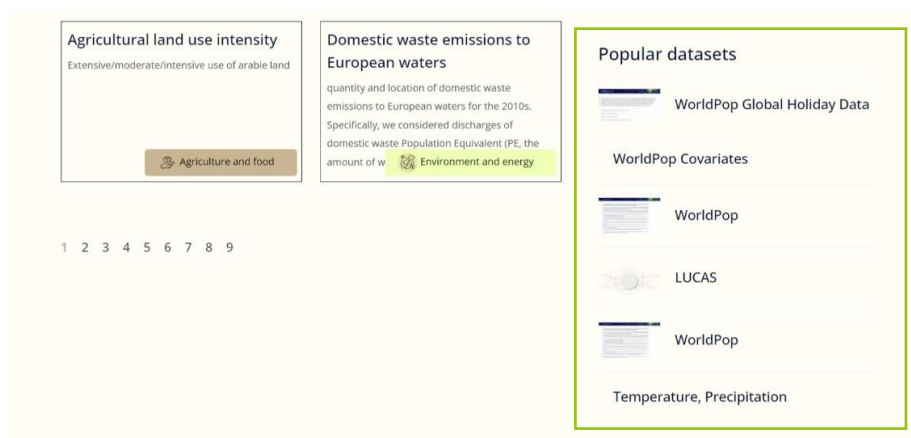

Figure 14: Popular datasets

Each dataset is accompanied by a concise summary of its content. Filtering options are also provided, allowing users to customise the results returned. Multiple filters may be selected. After opting for the desired filters, the user may click on the "Apply Filters" button to execute the filtering operation. By clicking on the "Remove Filters", the filters previously selected are cleared (Figure 15).
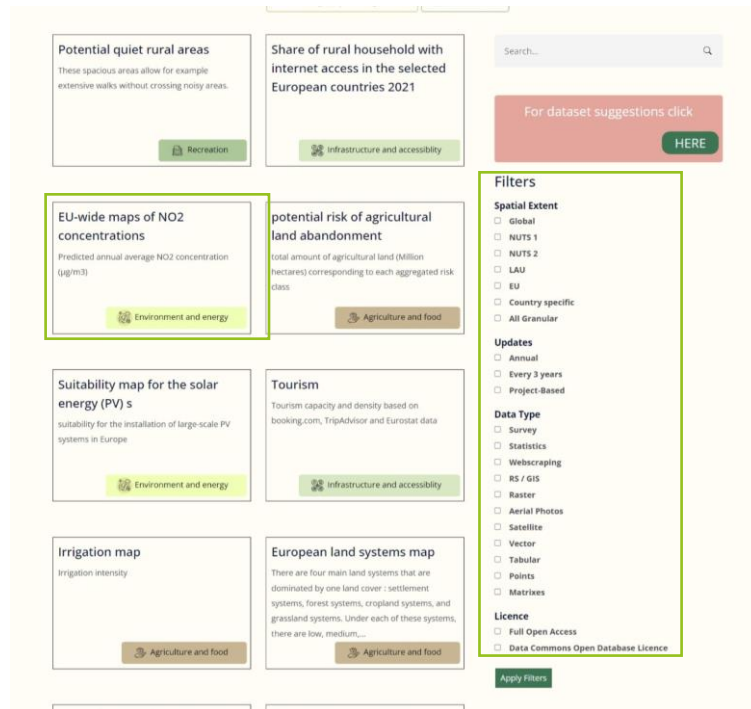

Figure 15: Datasets preview & filtering options

Upon selecting a specific dataset, users are directed to its dedicated webpage. This page provides details such as the dataset's type, authorship, upload date, title, a succinct description of its content, and relevant tags (Figure16). On the right-hand side of the page, users can access the "Dataset Suggestion" feature, which provides a list of suggested datasets with similar content (Figure 16).
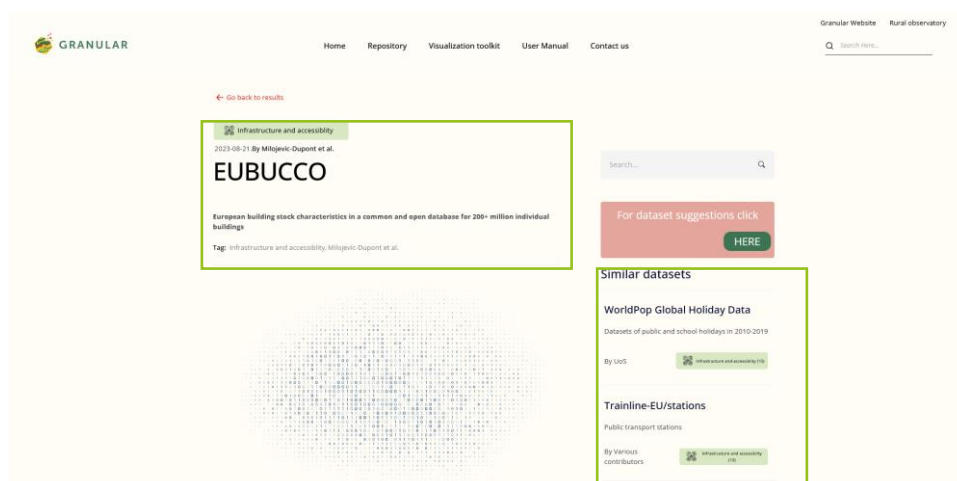

Figure 16: Dedicated dataset's webpage

Moreover, a table featuring the dataset's available metadata is provided. Within the "Available Metadata" section of the webpage, a hyperlink for downloading the dataset is available, designated by the "URL" title, for datasets with open access (Figure17). Furthermore, a link to the research paper associated with the dataset can be found under the "DOI API" title. Users have the option to download the dataset's metadata by clicking on the "Download CSV" button, located beneath the "Available Metadata" section (Figure 17).
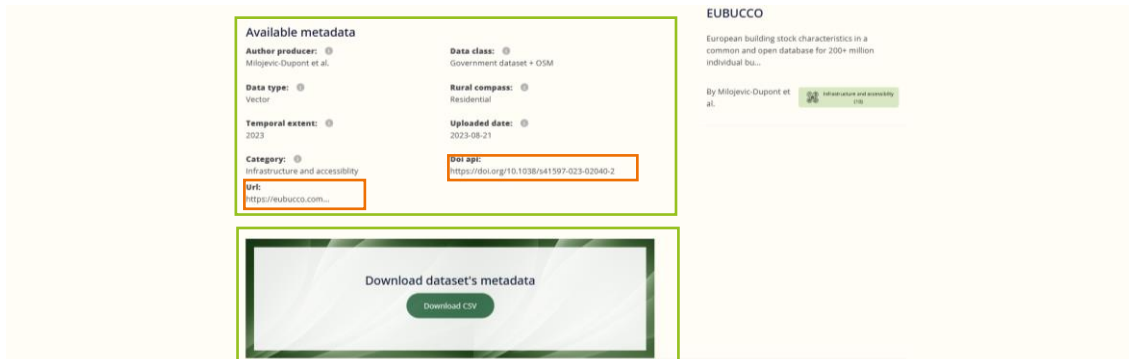

Figure 17: Available metadata

1.2.3. The Visualisation Toolkit

Upon visiting the visualisation toolkit (Figure 18), the user can select from a list of predefined indicator categories, analogous to the filters used in the repository section of the Digital Platform, and automatically, a graph will be generated and displayed on the user's screen, as explained in the paragraph below.
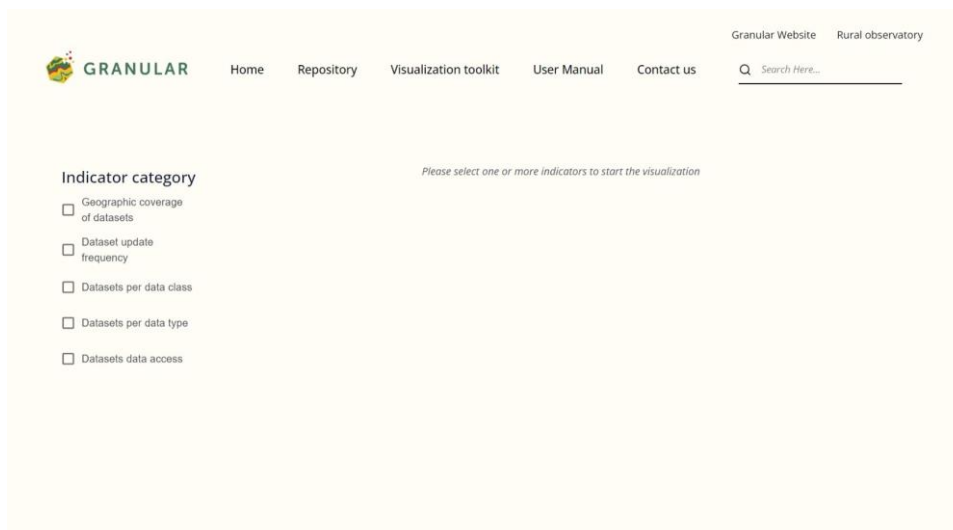

Figure 18: Visualisation Toolkit's landing page

The Visualisation Toolkit allows to display the data using three types of graphs to choose from: Nightingale, Basic, and Doughnut (Figure 19).
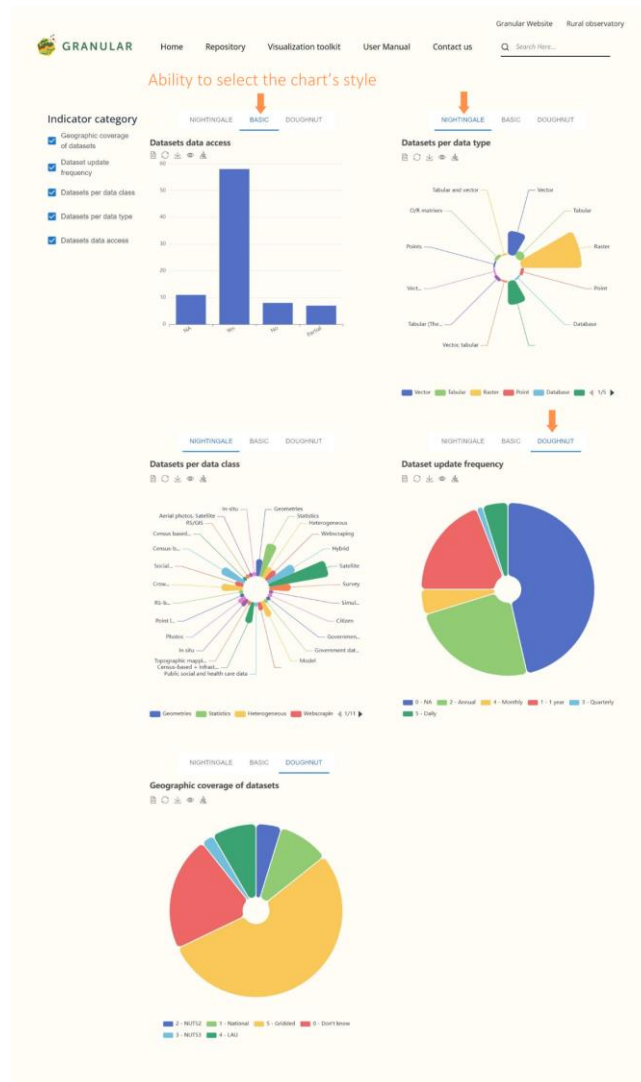
Figure19: Available graph types.

Users have the ability to selectively include or exclude dataset types from the generated graph by interacting with specific elements located at the bottom of the graph. It is important to note that this functionality is exclusively accessible within the Nightingale and Doughnut graph options and are intentionally designed to enhance the customisation of the graph, aligning it more precisely with the user requirements. Grayed-out elements indicate options that are currently disabled (Figure 20).
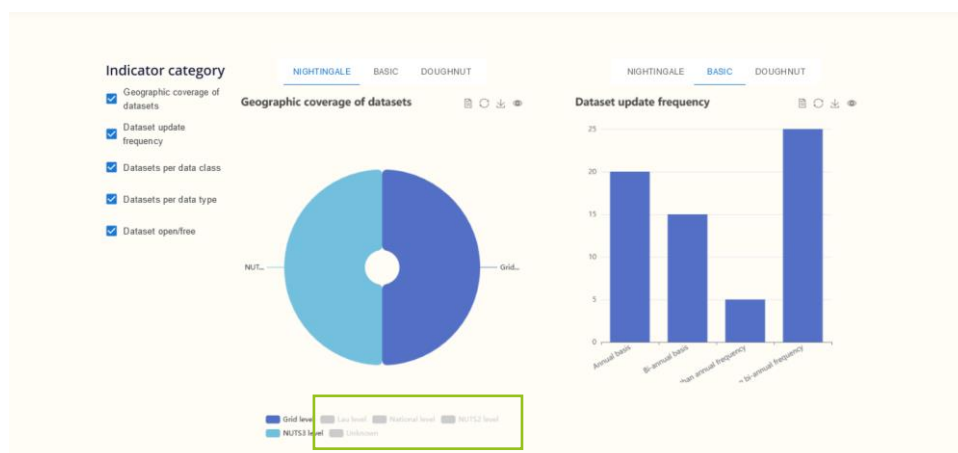
Figure 20: Graph's grayed-out elements

Below the graph title, a toolbar illustrates a few options for the created graph (Figure 21), explained in detail below:
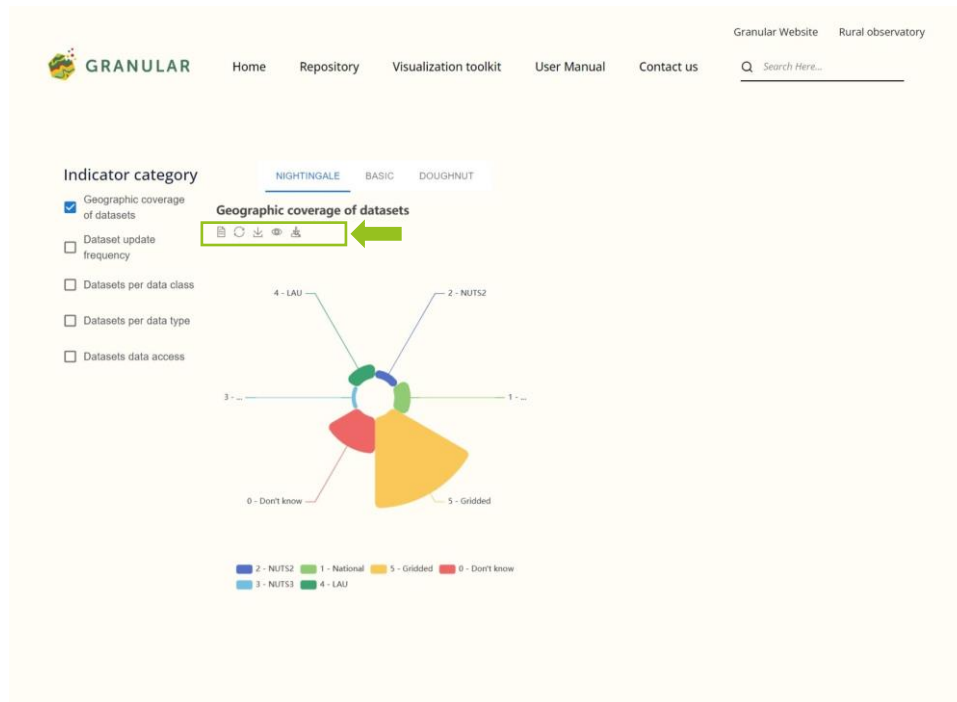

Figure 21: Toolbar with options

Data View: This option allows the user to access a comprehensive list of datasets featured in the graph, complete with their respective quantities (Figure22).
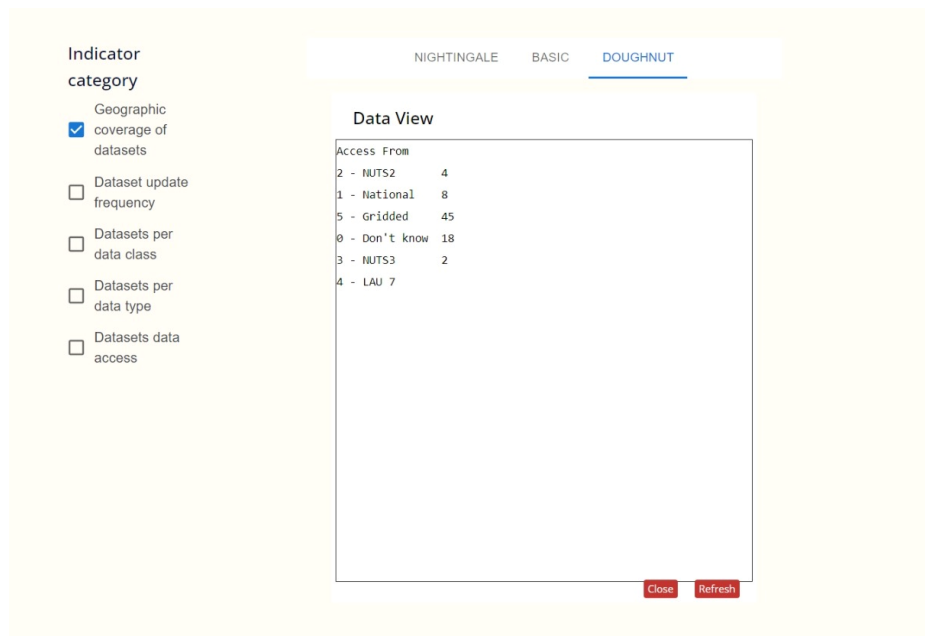

Figure 22: Data View option

Restore: The "Restore" option serves the purpose of reactivating any previously deactivated graph elements, effectively eliminating applied filters.

Save as Image: Users can download the graph in .png format on their personal device.

Show Metadata: Upon selection of "Show metadata," a table containing the graph's metadata is dynamically generated (Figure23).
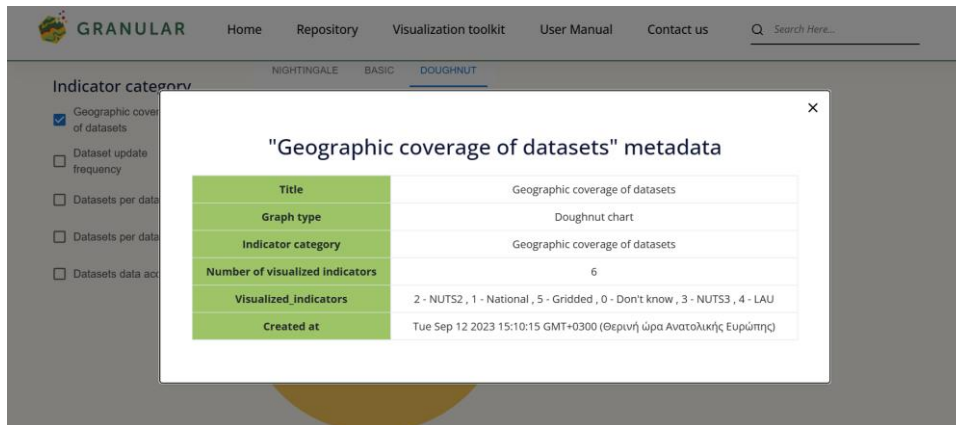

Figure 23: Metadata table

Download CSV: Opting for "Download CSV" results in the acquisition of a .csv file, downloadable to the user's computer. This file contains detailed information regarding the types and quantities of datasets featured within the graph, as presented in the "Data View" option.

1.2.4. Link to GRANULAR project's official website

The homepage of the GRANULAR Digital Platform enables the user to obtain a rapid overview of the scope and objectives of the GRANULAR project (Figure4). However, if the user requires access to further information about the project, they can be redirected to its official website by selecting the 'GRANULAR website' option available in the Digital Platform's main menu (Figure 3).

2.   Useful Contact Information

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