

## Montpellier in Europe's spotlight for rural development

***From 31<sup>st</sup> January to 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2023 more than 100 rural experts from different sides of Europe will meet in Montpellier, France, to discuss policies and tools for the future of rural territories. Two large European events will be hosted by the Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Montpellier, coordinator of the EU-funded GRANULAR project and partner of the EU-funded SHERPA project.***

### An European conference for rural areas

On 31 January and 1 February, the European conference on “[Co-creating rural futures](#)” will take place at the premises of the Mediterranean Agronomic Institute in Montpellier, France. The conference will bring together more than 100 rural experts from all across Europe and be a hub to discuss policy interventions that can improve rural living with respect to climate change, digitalisation, social issues and revitalisation of the rural economy.

The conference will also allow exchange practices and solutions across rural Europe on these topics, thanks to the [work done](#) by the European funded [SHERPA \(Sustainable Hub to Engage into Rural Policies with Actors\)](#) project. Besides, 41 rural areas will share their experience in running rural interfaces, a governance mechanism to bring together actors from science, society and policy, to co-create recommendations for rural policies. Piloted by the SHERPA project, rural interfaces aim to promote more tailored policies for rural areas. Recommendations to improve rural policies will be presented during the event.

### A stakeholder meeting to plan the work

The SHERPA's conference will be followed by a 3-day consortium meeting to discuss how novel data and technologies- such as crowd sourcing, Internet of Things, Earth Observation, Artificial Intelligence and citizen science- informed by participatory laboratories can provide knowledge for a better understanding of rural areas and hence, to improve rural policies. This meeting is organized as part of the EU-funded [GRANULAR \(Giving Rural Actors Novel data and re-Useable tools to Lead public Action in Rural areas\) project](#), coordinated by Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Montpellier.

Furthermore, on 2<sup>nd</sup> February, participants of the meeting will visit the [Pays Pyrénées Méditerranée](#), one of seven Living Labs of the project where rural actors from science, policy and civil society will co-design, test and validate GRANULAR work. Other Living Labs are located in Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Sweden and the United-Kingdom.

### European institutions at the events

Representatives from the European Commission from the [Directorate General of Agriculture and Rural Development](#) will participate in these events. They will explain how the European Union plans to revitalise rural areas throughout for instance the European Rural Observatory and the European Rural Pact, two flagship initiatives launched recently in the framework of the European Long-Term Vision for Rural Areas.

### For further information

**Communication and dissemination for SHERPA and GRANULAR** - Carla Lostrangio ([clo@aeidl.eu](mailto:clo@aeidl.eu))  
**Coordinator of the SHERPA project** - Olivier Chartier ([sherpa@ecorys.com](mailto:sherpa@ecorys.com))  
**Coordinator of the GRANULAR project** – Dr. Tristan Berchoux ([granular@iamm.fr](mailto:granular@iamm.fr))

