



GRANULAR

Living Lab “Val di Cecina” - Italy

Facilitator Marco Ricci

“Living Labs in EU's rural areas: HOW TO?”

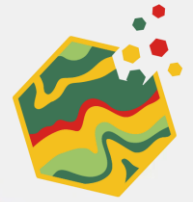
27 November 2023

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Research Executive Agency. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them. UK participants in the GRANULAR project are supported by UKRI- Grant numbers 10039965 (James Hutton Institute) and 10041831 (University of Southampton).



Funded by
the European Union

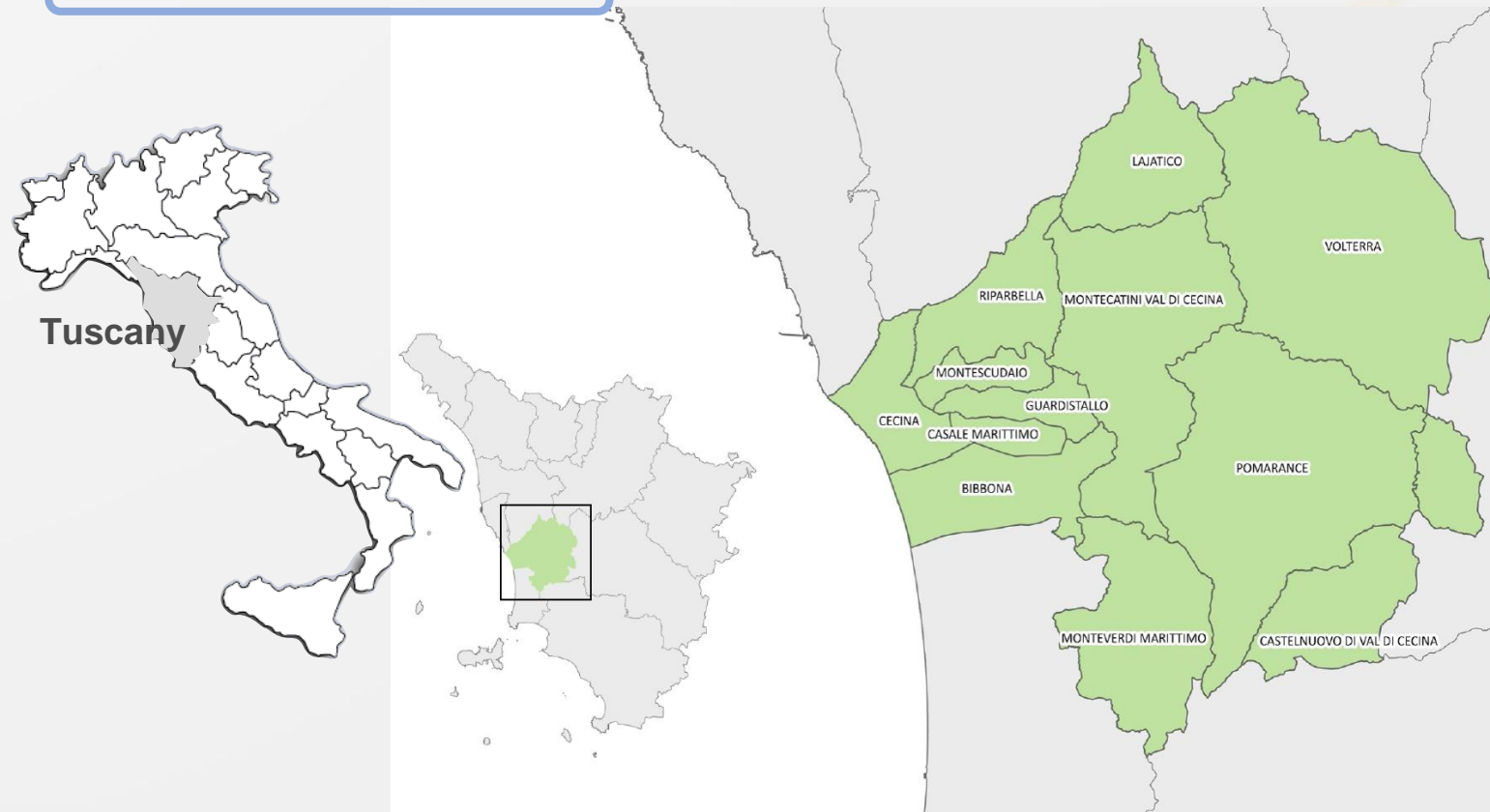
LL VAL DI CECINA: IDENTITY, STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE



Living Lab Val di Cecina

GRANULAR

Map for geographical situation



One district, many territories

Different types of territory:

- hilly and wooded, hilly and small farm, low tourist presence
- coastal, plain, large agricultural companies, heavily touristed

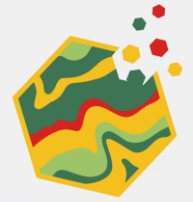
Strong connections:

- historical and cultural
- economical (raw material, agricultural production...)
- infrastructural



Funded by
the European Union

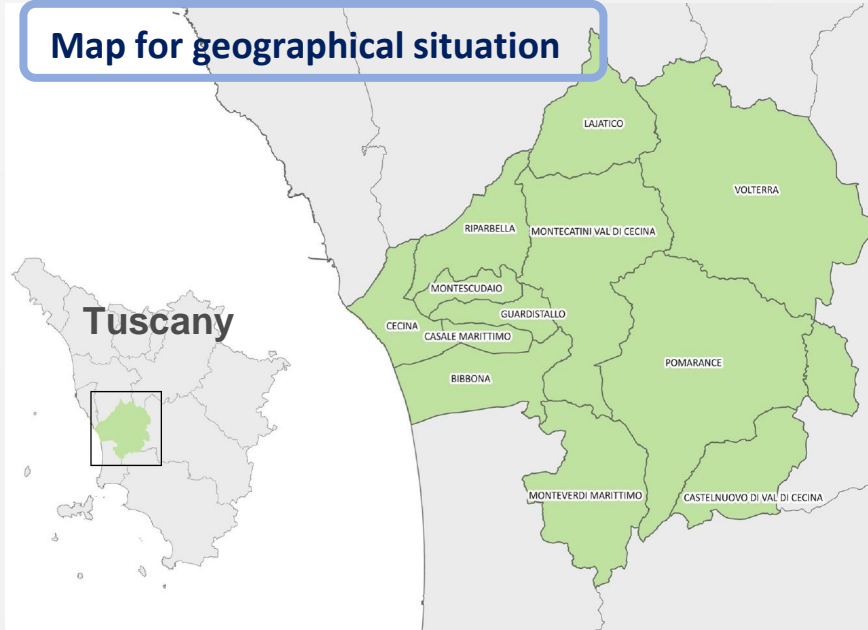
LL VAL DI CECINA: IDENTITY, STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE



Living Lab Val di Cecina: based on Val di Cecina Rural District

GRANULAR

Map for geographical situation



Main characteristics, trends and challenges

- 1.120 kmq; 59.100 inhabitants
- stable population, increasing tourism, decline in livestock farming
- increase in sustainable agri-food practices (33% UAA organic, 21% UAA in conversion)
- hydro-geological problems
- lack of local mobility services
- lack of logistics services for agri-food processing
- lack of adequate fast connectivity services (for innovative activities)
- main challenge : integrated planning and funding of actions

Local network and involved actors

The Rural District was founded in 2019, by the action of:
12 Municipalities, 1 Union of municipalities, 3 Agricultural trade association, 2 Trade associations, other commercial partners.



Funded by
the European Union

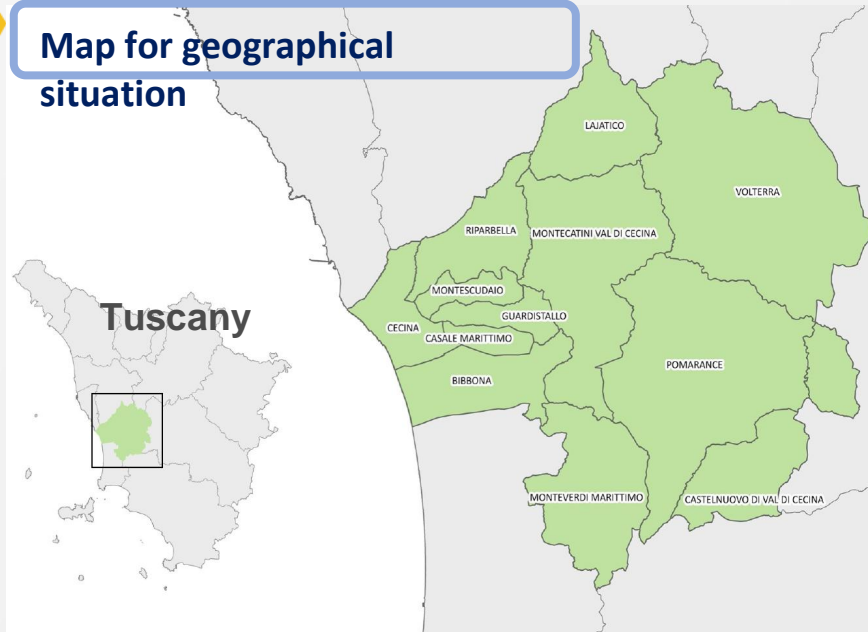
LL VAL DI CECINA: IDENTITY, STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE



Living Lab Val di Cecina: based on Val di Cecina Rural District

GRANULAR

Map for geographical situation



Current political framework and local policy elaboration:

- Regulatory framework on rural districts was recently completed: many have been established and many are in the process.
- A network of rural districts is being established at a regional and national level.

Territorial Economic Project of the Rural District has been approved:

- SWOT analyses by main sector (agri-food production, tourism and promotion of the territory, environment and life quality)
- Objectives of the rural district
- Action : 11 main actions; 42 specific actions (administrative, cultural, social, structural...)

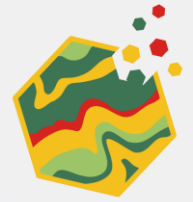
Objectives/expectation from GRANULAR

- development of datasets aimed at improving multifunctionality in agricultural enterprises and qualifying the tourist offer
- improve the involvement of the local stakeholders in the definition of useful datasets
- development of useful tools to improve the effectiveness of local governance actions



Funded by
the European Union

PROGRESS AND ACTIVITIES OF THE LL VAL DI CECINA



GRANULAR

Goal and identity, structure and governance

- Our main goal:
 - to acquire **useful tools** to guide policies aimed at the sustainable development of the Val di Cecina area.
 - to **strengthen governance tools and cohesion** among members of the rural district.
- The Rural District of Val di Cecina is managed through an Association (which already existed at the start of the project) and administered according to the following organization:
 - Assembly of Associates (municipalities, public bodies, Chamber of Commerce, associations and organizations, consortia, cooperatives, business networks), with competences on programming, budgets, obligations required by the regional law on Districts;
 - Board of Directors (BD): with a large managerial role on everything;
 - President, Vice-President, Treasurer: with the tasks of representing and implementing the decisions of the BD and guiding the activities of the BD;
 - An administrative secretariat: ensured by the CR Volterra Foundation through a dedicated part-time person;
 - Scientific technical support through external consultancy entrusted to GreenGea



Funded by
the European Union

PROGRESS AND ACTIVITIES OF THE LL VAL DI CECINA



GRANULAR

Identification process of thematic priorities

- The priorities identified in this first phase are:
 - Organization of the food chain
 - Tourism and its impacts (environmental and economic)
 - Ecosystem services (availability of water)
- To identify those priority, a special workshop was held, in online mode, starting from the needs already identified in the Territorial Economic Project of the District.
The facilitation of the workshop was done by GreenGea, with simple online tools.
- The main difficulty was to bring together all those involved in the district. In fact, to obtain reliable results, all categories of territorial economic subjects must be represented.
 - We plan to address this difficulty by making appointments more frequent and on a regular basis, so as to be able to guarantee better timing for the activities.



Funded by
the European Union

PROGRESS AND ACTIVITIES OF THE LL VAL DI CECINA



GRANULAR

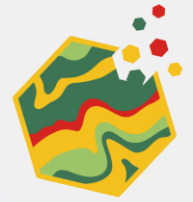
What about the concept of rurality?

- Since the rural district already existed at the start of the project, the activities carried out up to this moment have not influenced the identity of the district and the relationships between its members.
- At the same time, participation in GRANULAR represents a fundamental element in giving meaning to the constitution of the Rural District and the related Living Lab.
- We are convinced that with the start of operational work (Action Plan) we will soon have results in this sense as well.



Funded by
the European Union

PROGRESS AND ACTIVITIES OF THE LL VAL DI CECINA



GRANULAR

Planning of future activities and needs to achieve them

- Our goal is to start the working groups. In particular, the first step will be to deepen the priority themes in terms of critical elements and data necessary for a better understanding of the problems. The meetings will be held online to allow for the participation of as many LL members as possible.
- At this stage, the main challenge is to identify the real nodal points of the territory's criticalities and the data with which to analyze them adequately, to go beyond the datasets that we already use routinely.
- To do this, it is first of all necessary to analyze the priorities identified from the point of view of each type of stakeholder present in the LL. For this it will be important that everyone is represented in the different working groups
- We need to know as soon as possible what kind of data we can get beyond what we already know. Expanding the database for the analysis of territorial phenomena is a crucial element for the success of the project.



Funded by
the European Union

THE ACTION PLAN



GRANULAR

THEMATIC PRIORITY

1- AGRI-FOOD SUPPLY CHAINS

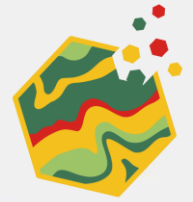
2- WATER RESOURCES

3- TOURISM



Funded by
the European Union

THE ACTION PLAN – THEMATIC PRIORITY 1



GRANULAR

AGRI-FOOD SUPPLY CHAINS



▪ Main objectives

1. Encourage the socio-economic sustainability of the area
2. Encourage the environmental sustainability of the area
3. Enhancing the well-being and healthcare of the community.

- 1.a. Complete the **infrastructure equipment** of the supply chains;
- 1.b. **Reduction of costs** deriving from intermediation between producers and consumers, in order to foster greater profitability for both parties;
- 1.c. Identification of **new opportunities and sales channels** for local producers and processors, outside the conventional markets.

2.a. Increase the **presence of small local farm** that act as a protection in the area;

2.b. Increase consumption of local products from sustainable supply chains and **decrease the consumption of imported products**;

2.c. Increase the area under cultivation through organic farming.

3.a. Rediscover **traditional products** linked to the culture of the area;

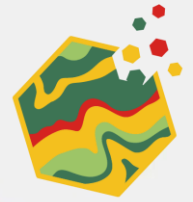
3.b. Increase consumption of **organic and seasonal local products**;

3.c. Establish **greater relationships** between producer and consumer.



Funded by
the European Union

THE ACTION PLAN – THEMATIC PRIORITY 2



GRANULAR

WATER RESOURCES



▪ Main objectives

1. Enhancing the management of water resources for agricultural use;
2. Enhancing the management of **notable** water resources;
3. Enhancing the management of water resources for environmental objectives.

- 1.a. Improve knowledge of the **water reserves** in the area;
- 1.b. **Reducing withdrawals**, optimizing the use of water resources;
- 1.c. Orient crops and agronomic practices to **lower water use**.

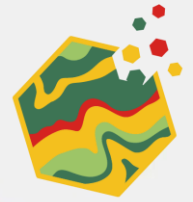
- 2.a. **Increase groundwater storage** capacity;
- 2.b. **Increase surface storage** capacity (reservoirs).

- 3.a. Improving **water availability** in ecosystems;
- 3.b. Recreate **free areas for flooding** and heavy rains;
- 3.c. Improving the **quality of surface waters**.



Funded by
the European Union

THE ACTION PLAN – THEMATIC PRIORITY 3



GRANULAR

TOURISM



▪ Main objectives

1. Encourage tourism in the area and a better distribution (in terms of time and space);
2. Promote a greater valorization of the cultural and environmental heritage spread throughout the territory;
3. Limit the (negative) economic and environmental impacts of tourism..

- 1.a. Support sustainable agriculture and **rural tourism**;
- 1.b. **Strengthening of infrastructure** for the reception and use of the territory;
- 1.c. **Improve synergies** between different tourism activities in the area.

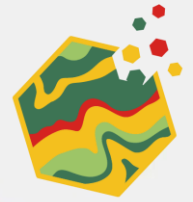
- 2.a. **Cultural and environmental enhancement** of the area through a program of events;
- 2.b. Encourage the **participation and collaboration** of the players for the creation of a diversified but complete tourism offer.

- 3.a. To **improve knowledge** about the current situation of tourism in the area and its environmental and social impact;
- 3.b. Identification of tools to promote **sustainable tourism**.



Funded by
the European Union

THE ACTION PLAN – THEMATIC PRIORITY



GRANULAR

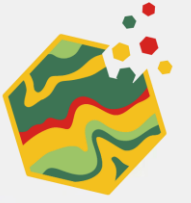
- **How - (Method)**

- *Data collection from private stakeholders: survey and interviews;*
- *Data collection from public bodies: data request list;*
- *Data collection from other sources: WP3 and WP4 collaboration (open data sets, technologies...)*



Funded by
the European Union

MAIN DIFFICULTIES



GRANULAR

▪Difficulties encountered in establishing and running the Val di Cecina Living Lab.

The main characteristic of the Living Lab is that of being made up of different types of local actors such as:
agricultural companies, local authorities, trade associations, research institutions...

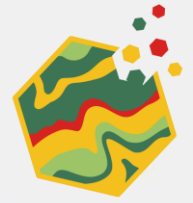
At the same time this represents an important management problem:

- organize meetings with different subjects with different work needs
- keep the different needs together in defining priorities
- make everyone understand their part of competence and make them carry on the work



Funded by
the European Union

MAIN DIFFICULTIES



GRANULAR

this leads to two main problems:

Delay in work

Differences in the degree of participation between members



Funded by
the European Union

MAIN DIFFICULTIES



GRANULAR

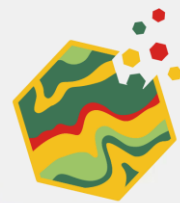
We don't have a solution yet..but we are working on it!

Some possible “simple” solutions:

- more active coordination group
- have multiple meetings at different times
- working groups on different priorities



Funded by
the European Union



GRANULAR

Final consideration

There is a high level of awareness on:

“It’s not easy but we have to do it
To give the rural areas a chance.”



Funded by
the European Union



Thank you for your attention

marcoricci@greengeasnc.it

GRANULAR



@ruralgranular



@ruralgranular



@ruralgranular



www.ruralgranular.eu



Funded by
the European Union