



# GRANULAR

## LIVING LAB FRANCE

**Better knowledge for better  
rural policies**



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# Pays Pyrénées Méditerranée (France)

PAYS PYRÉNÉES  
MÉDITERRANÉE

## ABOUT THE TERRITORY

## THEMATIC FOCUS



### Characteristics and trends

The French Living Lab is situated in the Pays Pyrenees Mediterranee, which is the meeting point of the Pyrenean Mountains and the Mediterranean Sea. This territory offers a diverse array of striking landscapes with 60% of its area covered by forest. The Tech coastal river is the common element that unites this area, alongside the Catalan culture and a 120 km border with South Catalunya.

The French Living Lab selected three thematic priorities:

“Our main goal is to further explore the local issues, inform public and private decision-making and contribute to the energy and ecological transitions while bringing European research closer to rural areas.”

The French Living Lab plans to co-develop novel observation tools, encourage new connections between data producers and users, contribute to interactions with scientific actors and expand interactions with European actors. Members of the French Living Lab collectively selected three thematic priorities for which relevant data are missing at the local level.

- Mobility: understanding day-to-day and tourist mobility needs to encourage a shift towards eco-friendly transport options less reliant on fossil fuels.
- Leisure impact on biodiversity: Studying sensitive biodiversity spots and human activity in natural areas (mountains, forests, coastlines) to protect biodiversity from outdoor recreation impacts.
- Drought's environmental Impact: monitoring drought effects on natural resources like forests, seas, and local agriculture to aid climate change adaptation in the region.



Pays Pyrenees  
Mediterranee  
(France)



Living Lab



Mobility



Leisure



Biodiversity

### Priorities



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## Challenges

Climate change is a big challenge for the area of the French Living Lab. In this territory, energy production meets only 20% of its energy needs, which are mostly related to the mobility and housing sectors. For the remaining share, the Living Lab area is highly dependent on oil products which raises questions with respect to GHG emissions and cost variations. Nevertheless, photovoltaic panels and wood are also widely used.

Tourism (seaside, thermal, outdoor activities) and agriculture (viticulture, arboriculture, breeding) account for an important number of seasonal jobs. Local agriculture can rely on several quality products and 20% of the agricultural areas are biologically grown. However, agriculture has been recently affected by climate change and water scarcity. A decrease in rainfall and a rise in temperatures are lowering water availability. Highly sensitive to natural risks, the area is also threatened by exceptional and sudden water flows putting nearly all the municipalities of the area under flood risk, as well as forest wildfires in the mountains.

Another key challenge in this area is mobility, with a particular emphasis on accessibility to day-to-day points of interest and main services. The presence of a high share of the elderly population and the high unemployment rate (nearly 4 points higher than the regional average) contributes to making mobility and accessibility a challenge in this territory. Finally, the cross-border location between France and Spain makes it more complex to implement public policies and tackle coherently cross-border and local issues.

## ABOUT THE LIVING LAB



## Composition

The core team of this Living Lab is composed of local institutional authorities, research organisms, agricultural and non-agricultural businesses, consulting NGOs, natural parks and citizens' representatives.

The governance model relies on a core group steering: 1) the general activities of the Living Lab, 2) thematic workshops studying each of the selected priorities, 3) and an annual general committee bringing together all the Living Lab's members.



## Objectives

The overall objective of the French Living Lab is to support innovation and observation to inform local decision-making. The French Living Lab plans to co-develop novel observation tools, encourage new connections between data producers and users, contribute to interactions with scientific actors and expand interactions with European actors. In particular, this Living Lab prioritised the three following objectives:

- To provide better data on the number of people present in the area, in order to anticipate and plan appropriate responses for the delivery of public services;
- To better understand the quality of life, the touristic attractiveness of the region, outdoor activities and uses of natural areas in order to handle biodiversity threat;
- To investigate the main sources of energy consumption and provide data on mobility flows in order to promote alternative solutions to fossil fuels in this territory.



# 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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