



GRANULAR

LIVING LAB ITALY

**Better knowledge for better
rural policies**



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Rural District in Val di Cecina (Italy)



ABOUT THE TERRITORY

Characteristics and trends

The Living Lab has a large territory that includes hilly, plain, and coastal areas, the common characteristic is the presence of the Cecina River with its 74 km that runs through various agricultural landscapes. The main geographical and socio-economic characteristics of the area reveal that it has conditions of high rurality index, with a high rate of organic method, articulated and widespread tourist system, with a production structure in which there is an entrepreneurial fabric in the sectors of industry, craftsmanship and services.

At the same time, it is configured as an area with environmental resources, the heritage of agri-food production specificities and cultural assets and activities of absolute importance. The presence of the territory of the Municipality of Cecina completes the picture of commercial and tourist services with one of the attractive poles for seaside tourism of the entire Etruscan Coast.

THEMATIC FOCUS

“How can we contribute to food systematic change, climate change adaptation, and tourism sustainability?”

This is the focal question of the Italian Living Lab, the Rural District of Val di Cecina. The Living Lab represents a laboratory of innovative ideas to promote sustainability and an alternative form of territorial governance.



Val di Cecina Rural District, part of the province of Pisa and Livorno (Italy)



Food

Priorities



Climate



Tourism

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Challenges

Despite the multiple potentialities, the territory suffers from a phenomenon of simplification, caused by the decrease of peasant population and simplification of agricultural landscapes, with the tendency to replace the polyculture of sharecropping with a monocultural system especially wine and cereals in the hillside. In the case of the mountainous areas the pastures are decrease with consequent progress of the forest. A partial response to contrast the process of abandonment of internal areas was the agritourism. Anyway, the increase of the average age of farmers and poor generational turnover with limited entrepreneurial culture and insufficient technical assistance, in addition to the lack of a structured territorial platform for distribution logistics contributes to the weaknesses of the agri-food systems.

In addition, in recent decades groups of single-family houses have spread far from centers and services, unrelated to the economy of the countryside in which they are immersed (and which gives them real estate value). These interventions, which often occupy sites of considerable environmental value, represent the result of interests disconnected from the long-term economic and settlement logics that presided over the overall design of the places.

ABOUT THE LIVING LAB



Composition

The active core of the Living Lab consists of numerous stakeholders including public authority and policymakers such as 12 Municipal Authorities, Union Municipalities and the Chamber of Commerce, researchers like the Technological Centre, agricultural cooperative and four producer Consortium, consulting company, producer associations and Foundation, finally two higher education institution.

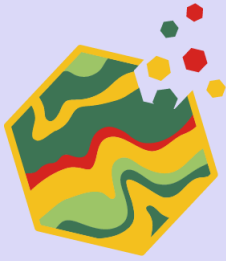


Objectives

The work of the Living Lab fits into these trends and aims to be the main engine of changes to allow:

- The implementation of integrated territorial planning to cope with climate change especially concerning the availability of water.
- The construction of infrastructure for the logistics of agri-food products to allow the right support of agriculture and food chains.
- The planning of sustainable management of the touristic flows to deal with the lack of entrepreneurial culture and the localism and administrative fragmentations.





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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