



GRANULAR

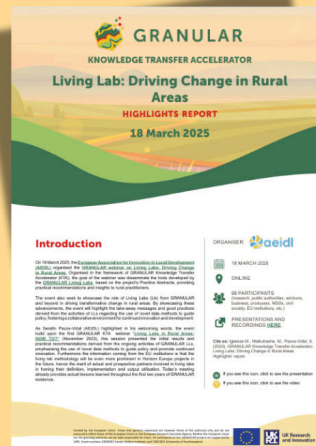
Newsletter 7 - April 2025

Living Labs Driving Change in Rural Areas: Insights from the GRANULAR Webinar

On 18 March, a total of 98 participants joined the latest GRANULAR webinar to explore the transformative role of Living Labs in shaping rural development across Europe. Organised by the European Association for Innovation in Local Development (AEIDL) as part of the GRANULAR Knowledge Transfer Accelerator (KTA), the webinar provided a platform to showcase innovative methodologies, share practical insights, and discuss the future of data-driven rural policies.



LIVING LABS: DRIVING CHANGE IN RURAL AREAS



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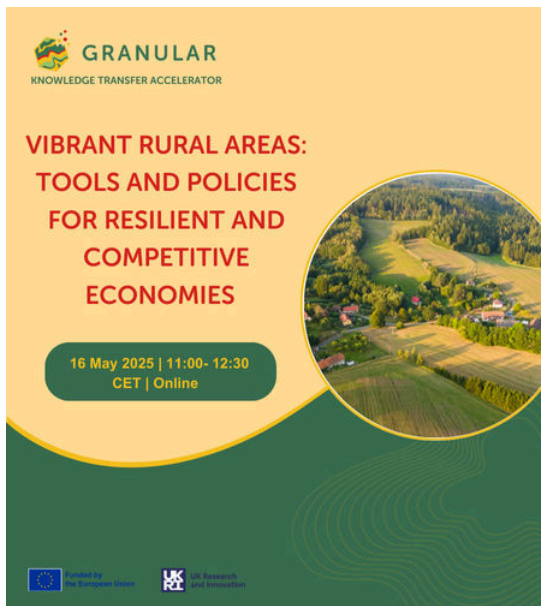
UK Research and Innovation



FIND OUT MORE!

READ THE REPORT!

GRANULAR NEWS



Vibrant Rural Areas: tools and policies for resilient and competitive economies

Join us for an engaging webinar on rural economic resilience, where researchers and practitioners will explore how new data and indicators can inform smarter, more targeted policies. The event will highlight innovative tools such as the Competitiveness Compass and the EU Startup and Scaleup Strategy, and examine how economic diversity, innovation, and decarbonisation can strengthen rural areas. We are pleased to announce the participation of a speaker from the Joint Research Centre (JRC), adding valuable insights on resilience and policy relevance.

[Register NOW!](#)

FUTURAL and GRANULAR Join Forces to Strengthen Rural Resilience Across Europe

GRANULAR is pleased to announce its collaboration with the FUTURAL project, establishing a partnership to address the unique challenges of rural areas and promote tailored EU policies for their sustainable development. While FUTURAL focuses on developing digital smart solutions to support rural innovation, GRANULAR provides advanced tools and datasets that empower rural stakeholders to lead public action based on data-driven insights.

[Check it out!](#)



LIVING & REPLICATION LABS IN FOCUS

GRANULAR Kicks Off First Cross Visit on Rural Mobility in France

From March 26 to 28, 2025, the French Living Lab in GRANULAR – Pays Pyrénées Méditerranée – hosted the first GRANULAR cross visit, featuring a three-day programme centred on Rural Mobility. In total, seven cross visits are planned within the project, each organised by a different Living Lab. These events are pivotal in fostering knowledge exchange and collaboration among rural communities across Europe. They build upon the experiences and achievements consolidated by the Multi-Actor Labs over the past two years of the project.

[Find out more!](#)



Universal Design for Inclusive Rural Development: GRANULAR in Ignalina Region, Lithuania

On April 9, 2025, a focus group on “Universal Design and its Implementation in the Ignalina Region” took place at the Paliesius Manor in the Ignalina region, Lithuania. The event was organised by researchers Dr. Živilė Gedminaitė-Raudonė and Dr. Monika Belhaj from the Lithuanian Centre for Social Sciences, Institute of Economics and Rural Development, in cooperation with the Ignalina Local Action Group. The meeting brought together the Mayor of Ignalina Region Municipality, representatives of the municipal administration and public institutions, architects, and local community members.

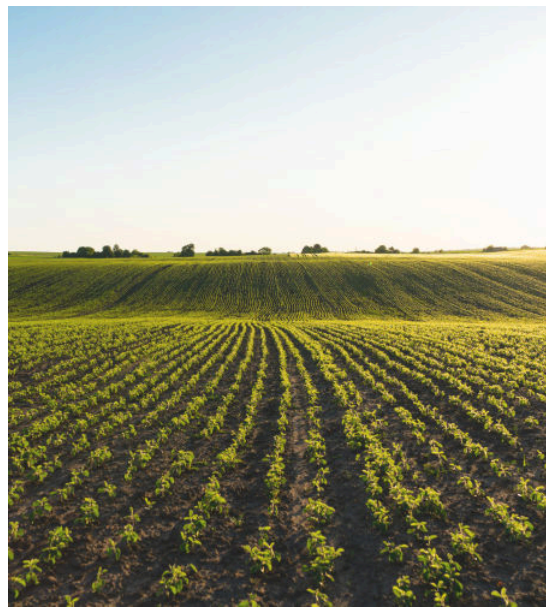
[Read more!](#)

EUROPEAN NEWS

EU Ministers and new Agricultural Vision calling for expanded Rural Proofing in Europe

The European Union is strengthening its commitment to integrating rural areas into its policies through enhanced Rural Proofing measures, as shown by the new Vision for Agriculture and Food and a dedicated discussion in Agriculture and Fisheries Council. Defining Rural Proofing mechanisms is highlighted as necessary to guarantee that policies are well-suited for individuals residing and working in rural areas.

[Check it out!](#)



The barriers to gender equality in EU rural areas and agriculture

On 5 March 2025, close to the International Women's Day, the High-Level Conference on Women in Leadership: Empowering Women in a Changing World shed light on the ongoing challenges and opportunities in the fight for gender equality. Held by the European Committee of the Regions, the event underscored the crucial role of local and regional authorities in translating EU policies into tangible progress for women across all areas. Our colleagues Maite Iglesias and Merveille Ntabhashe, from the Rural Territorial Development team at AEIDL, were present at the conference where they had the opportunity to learn about gender equality challenges and opportunities, assess progress, and explore necessary changes.

[Read more!](#)

Rural voices presented at the European Rural Parliament mid-term event in Brussels

On January 30th, the European Rural Parliament took place in Brussels, Belgium. Organised by ERCA, PREPARE and ELARD, this event was an opportunity to engage with policy makers and present rural needs and recommendations just at the time the post-2027 EU budget and policies are being discussed. The EU Commissioner on Agriculture and Rural Development was a keynote speaker at this event. Since 2013, the European Rural Parliament is an EU-wide platform raising the voice of rural people. It comprises 7 pan-European organisations, 17 national rural parliaments, 70 organisations in 40 countries working at national and regional levels.

[Check it out!](#)





New Joint Research Centre Report explores how Innovation can revitalise Rural Areas

The European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) has published a report on Revitalising Rural Areas through Innovation and Entrepreneurship, analysing public and private initiatives that help train, attract, and retain talent in rural Europe. Developed as part of the Startup Village Forum, the study highlights how innovation can transform rural areas into places of opportunity and reduce the territorial innovation gap.

[Read more!](#)

OTHER PROJECTS



Last chance to register: The role of data in driving transitions in rural areas

Join RUSTIK for an online event where they will explore the role of data in supporting rural transitions and shaping sustainable futures, gaining insight from the Horizon Europe RUSTIK project (Rural Sustainability Transitions through Integration of Knowledge for improved policy processes). Rural areas provide ecosystem services, high-quality land-based products, cultural assets, and more. Nevertheless, they face increasing social and ecological challenges including demographic change, climate change, a digital divide, and limited economic diversification. To navigate these complexities and support sustainable development, data plays a crucial role in guiding these territories toward transition pathways.

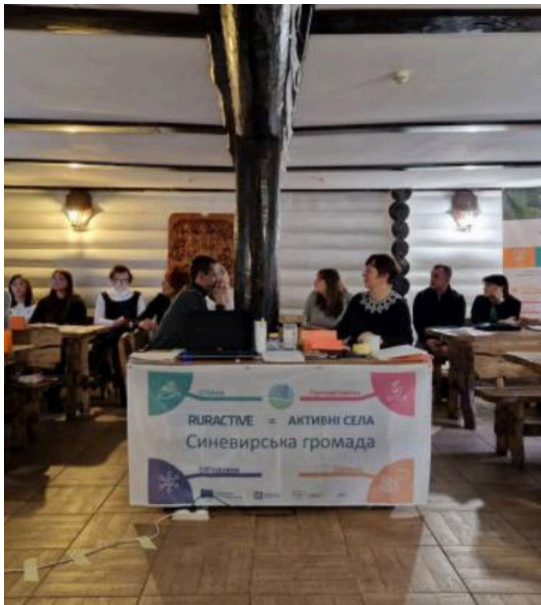
[Sign up!](#)



FUTURAL Policy Webinar: “Smarter, Stronger and More Competitive Rural Areas: The Way Forward for EU policies”

The EU Institutions are preparing for the next Multi Annual Financial Framework that will be tabled in July 2025. This builds from the Political Guidelines of the European Commission, themselves drawing ideas from the Letta and Draghi Reports, as well as the Long-Term Vision for Rural areas and the recent Vision for Agriculture and Food. The time is right to consider the role of community-led, social, technological and business innovations in creating vibrant rural areas. Building on this, the project will organise a Policy Webinar on ‘Smarter, Stronger and More Competitive Rural Areas: The Way Forward for EU policies.

[Register now!](#)



Solutions to address the most pressing rural challenges: RURACTIVE Dynamos continue their journey towards a more sustainable future

Throughout January and February 2025, the RURACTIVE Dynamos held another round of successful workshops with their local stakeholders. This second local workshop, titled 'Learning from Others', built on the development of common visions and main challenges in their Rural Innovation Ecosystem discussed in the first local workshop. It aimed to explore, identify and co-develop solution proposals tailored to address each of the identified challenges. Dynamos embarked on a collaborative process and creative dialogue with more than 260 members of their local communities, such as representatives of the municipality and regional public administration, entrepreneurs and investors, cultural professionals and many others.

[Read more](#)



Ruralities: “Consultation on the Regional Spatial Plan – Housing Provision” in Posavje region

On February 26, 2025, the Posavje Regional Development Agency (RRAP-P18), together with the Ministry for a Sustainable Future and the Housing Directorate, organized a consultation on housing supply at its premises. The event brought together key stakeholders from housing policy and regional development to discuss ways to improve housing availability and quality in the region. The discussion covered two main areas. The first focused on planning and location of housing projects, looking at spatial possibilities, investment priorities, and the role of housing funds. Participants agreed that better planning is essential to provide affordable and high-quality living conditions for residents.

[Check it out!](#)

EVENTS

[Good Practice Webinar on sustainable rural tourism](#)

7 May 2025

Online

[EU Rural Innovation Forum](#)

14-15 May 2025

Zelaieta Zentroa (Amorebieta-Etxano, Spain)

[EU Vibrant Rural Areas: tools and policies for resilient and competitive economies](#)

16 May 2025

Online

FUTURAL Policy Webinar: 'Smarter, Stronger and More Competitive Rural Areas: The Way Forward for EU Policies'

21 May 2025

Online

BEATLES' webinar & workshop: "Sustainability Impact of Climate-Smart Agriculture: Balancing Environmental, Economic and Social Pillars"

21 May 2025

Online



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aeidl@ruralgranular.eu

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