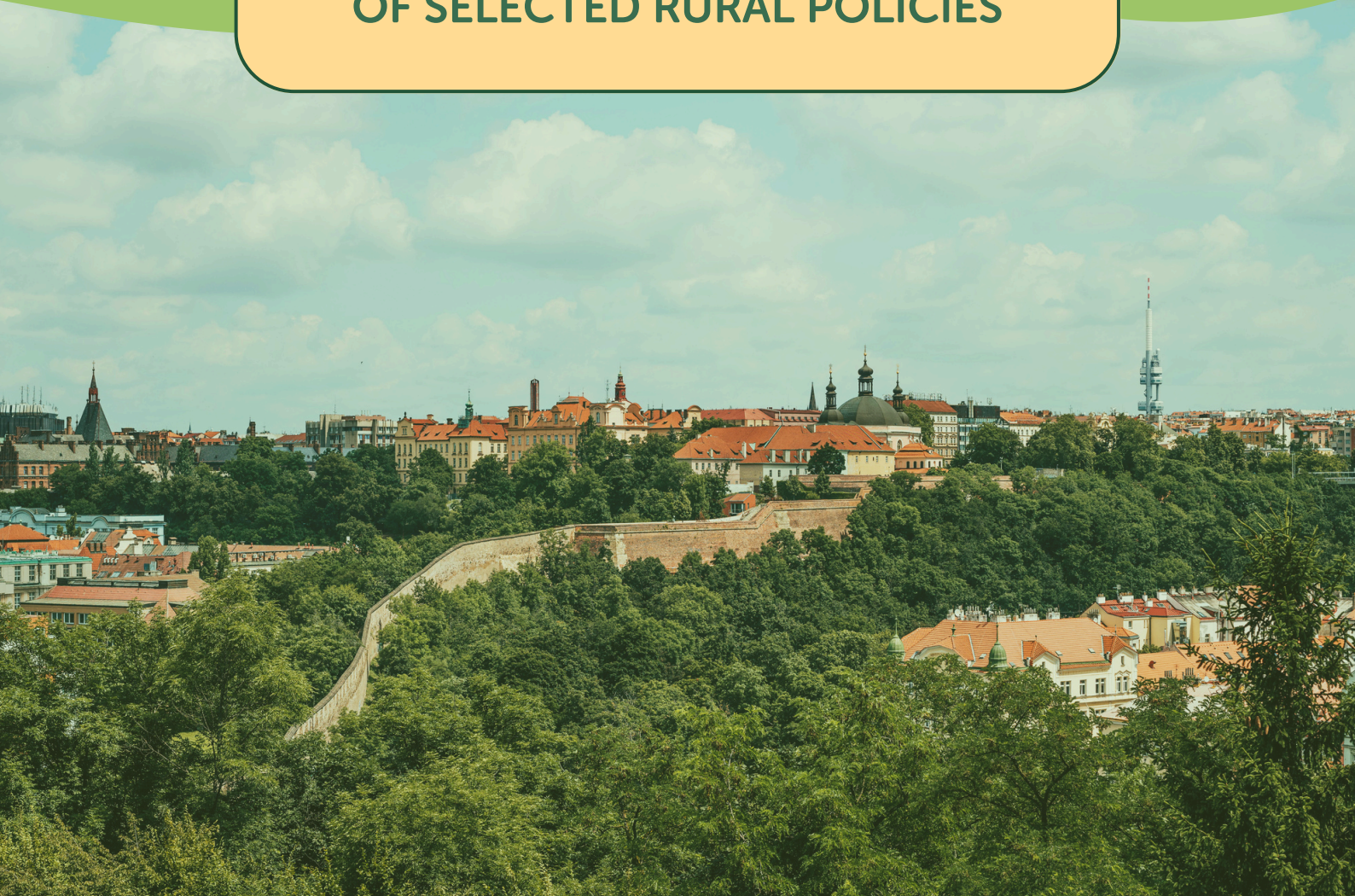




GRANULAR

MULTI-ACTOR LABS FICHES

RURAL PROOFING ASSESSMENT
OF SELECTED RURAL POLICIES



Extracted from *GRANULAR report on Rural Proofing of Selected Rural Policies (2025)*.

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NAME OF THE REPLICATION LAB: Finland

COUNTRY/REGION: Finland

TITLE OF THE INITIATIVE: Finnish Island Policy

“The programme aims to ensure the right of islanders to a healthy environment and to influence decisions concerning their living environment”

Initiative ID

Level of initiative

Multi-level

The Archipelago Act and the Programme are adopted at the national level, while the implementation is carried out regionally.

Stage of the initiative

Planning stage/Implemented

The Archipelago Act is currently under revision, while the National Archipelago Programme 2024–2027, published in 2024, is currently under implementation.

Rural Relevance

Proactive rural targeting

Finland's Island Policy is expressly designed to address the specific circumstances of island municipalities, particularly in remote areas.

Nature of the initiative

Binding/Non-binding

The Archipelago Act is a binding legal framework, while the National Archipelago Programme is a strategic guidance document, recommending priorities, outcome targets and monitoring mechanisms.

Summary of main impacts



Stronger Rural Areas

The Finnish Island Policy is deeply rooted in strengthening participatory governance and local democracy. The Island Development Act supports a long-standing tradition of regional balance by empowering communities, particularly through initiatives like LEADER and CLLD. The programme actively promotes local experimentation and the co-creation of innovative service models. It addresses demographic challenges by recognising the rise of seasonal residency and promoting services tailored to multi-residence patterns.



Prosperous Rural Areas

The programme views a vibrant, diverse economy as being key to archipelago vitality. It promotes multidisciplinary entrepreneurship, especially in areas of fishing, tourism, and food production. Networking between local entrepreneurs and youth is supported, with scholarships helping young people establish services and businesses. Although support for the bioeconomy and producer organisations is less explicit, the focus on primary production, innovation, and local value chains underscores an effort to strengthen economic opportunities.



Connected Rural Areas

Digital and physical accessibility are central priorities in the Finnish Island Development Act. The programme treats digital connectivity as equally vital as physical access, enabling remote work and service delivery. Strategic objectives include improving infrastructure, such as road and cycling routes, as well as introducing flexible mobility options that cater to seasonal population shifts. Notably, efforts also focus on enhancing digital skills and human capital within the community, which is essential for supporting location-independent lifestyles.



Resilient Rural Areas

Environmental and climate resilience are strongly emphasised. The archipelago is seen as a testing ground for sustainable solutions, including renewable energy and circular economy practices. Local experimentation is encouraged to reduce environmental footprints and promote climate adaptation. Legal frameworks embedded in the Island Development Act stress the protection of natural landscapes and fundamental environmental rights. Social inclusion is another priority, with specific recognition of equality and social security.

**NAME OF THE REPLICATION LAB:** Greece**COUNTRY/REGION:** Greece, Crete**TITLE OF THE INITIATIVE:** Residence and/or working permit for citizens of third countries with a national entry visa

“The presence of digital nomads in rural areas may accelerate the digitisation process in rural areas”

Initiative ID

Level of initiative

National

It is a national-level initiative, enacted by the Hellenic Parliament (Law 5038/2023) and overseen by the Ministry of Migration and Asylum.

Stage of the initiative

Implemented

Since its adoption on 1 April 2023, the visa scheme has become operational.

Rural Relevance

Incidental rural targeting

The initiative does not specifically target rural areas, solely focusing on eligibility, application procedures and supporting documents for non-EU remote workers in order to establish the Digital Nomad Visa framework.

Nature of the initiative

Binding

The national legislation is binding, and compliance is mandatory under the Immigration Code.

Summary of main impacts



Stronger Rural Areas

Although the initiative does not specifically target rural areas, it attracts digital nomads to Greece, which can be seen as a first step to revitalise such areas. Their presence can rejuvenate local economies by increasing demand for housing, co-working spaces, and services, while also introducing new technologies and global perspectives. However, the temporary nature of their stays and potential cultural gaps could create tensions with residents.



Prosperous Rural Areas

Digital nomads bring with them entrepreneurial mindsets, potentially stimulating local economies. They can contribute to diversified income streams, help local businesses expand into new markets, and support the development of new services such as remote work hubs. These effects are particularly significant in communities where traditional employment is limited, offering new paths for prosperity.



Connected Rural Areas

Digital nomads inherently depend on strong digital infrastructure, prompting necessary investments in broadband, smart services, and transport networks. This, in turn, improves accessibility for all rural residents. To maximise positive outcomes, rural-proofing should inform targeted investments in infrastructure, inclusive digital upskilling for residents, and policies that encourage integration between digital nomads and local communities. This ensures that rural areas become more connected and more resilient and sustainable in the long term.



Resilient Rural Areas

Although the initiative is not directly focused on environmental policy, digital nomads often seek ecologically responsible lifestyles, supporting conservation, green infrastructure, and sustainable practices. Their preferences may encourage the adoption of renewable energy and eco-friendly policies by local authorities. Digital nomads may also engage in or initiate environmentally friendly behaviours, contributing to climate action and local resilience.



NAME OF THE LIVING LAB: Distretto Rurale Val di Cecina

COUNTRY/REGION: Italy

TITLE OF THE INITIATIVE: Provisions on Municipal Fiscal Federalism

"The economic revenue can be invested in improving infrastructure and services, and thus, the quality of life in rural areas, creating job opportunities and stimulating growth"

Initiative ID

Level of initiative

Multi-level

Implementation, though enacted as a national legislative decree, is entirely run at the local level. The tourist tax is collected by private accommodation facilities and remitted to the local treasury.

Rural Relevance

Incidental rural targeting

The initiative does not make explicit reference to rural areas.

Stage of the initiative

Under implementation

The decree was published on 23 March 2011 and has been in force since its entry into effect on 1 January 2024, update for Art. 4). Since then several Italian municipalities adopted the "stay tax".

Nature of the initiative

Binding

As a legislative decree, the initiative is binding, thus, municipalities that choose to adopt the tax must comply with its provisions.

Summary of main impacts



Stronger Rural Areas

The tourist tax policy offers substantial potential for rural revitalisation by enabling municipalities to reinvest the revenue generated into essential local services and infrastructure. This can strengthen the quality of rural communities and enhance their attractiveness. By funding training initiatives and job opportunities, it also encourages youth engagement and economic revitalisation. Revenue can support cultural and environmental assets by contributing to sustainable tourism.



Prosperous Rural Areas

The policy supports diversified rural economies by directing resources into local cultural and tourism-related events. These activities offer platforms for local businesses, artisans, and food producers to showcase their work, creating economic spillovers in the hospitality and cultural sectors. Although there is no specific attention to entrepreneurship, bioeconomy, or producer organisations, the core of the initiative facilitates economic uplift by boosting tourism-linked revenue streams.



Connected Rural Areas

Although digital aspects were not specifically addressed, the policy has a notable effect on physical connectivity. Revenues from the tourist tax can be allocated to upgrade rural mobility infrastructure, such as unpaved roads or small-scale transport services, enhancing access for both residents and visitors. These improvements are essential for fostering inclusion, supporting the tourism economy, and reducing rural isolation.



Resilient Rural Areas

There is no explicit alignment of the tourist tax policy with climate adaptation, land use, or environmental resilience pillars in the information provided. As such, the connection to elements like circularity, ecosystem services, or carbon farming remains indirect. These themes could represent a future opportunity for enhancement, linking tax-funded tourism growth with environmental sustainability goals and reinforcing long-term rural resilience.

**NAME OF THE REPLICATION LAB:** Italy Unipi**COUNTRY/REGION:** Italy**TITLE OF THE INITIATIVE:** Compensation for livestock farms for predation damages caused by wolves

“Investing where identity and community meet each other, transforms rural places into vibrant and self-sustaining territories”

Initiative ID

Level of initiative

Regional

This is a regional-level initiative issued by the Region of Tuscany via Directive No. 13473 of 13 June 2024, under the Agriculture & Rural Development Directorate (ARTEA).

Stage of the initiative

Under implementation

The decree entered into force on 20 June 2024. During its implementation stage, applications are actively being processed, with annual reporting and disbursements underway.

Rural Relevance

Proactive rural targeting

The initiative explicitly targets rural livestock farms in Tuscany suffering losses from wolf (*Canis lupus*) predation. It provides compensation to small, medium and micro- enterprises engaged in certain livestock activities and with the condition to adopt at least one preventive measure.

Nature of the initiative

Binding

As a Regional Directive, the measure is binding for both authorities and eligible farms. However, the participation of farms is voluntary, making the support conditional rather than mandatory for all livestock enterprises.

Summary of main impacts



Stronger Rural Areas

The initiative strengthens rural areas by protecting livestock farming from predation, helping maintain traditional practices essential to rural identity and livelihoods. Compensation and prevention measures support local economic stability and intergenerational continuity in farming. This contributes to rural revitalisation by enabling farmers to remain active in more marginal territories and sustain culturally significant land uses.



Prosperous Rural Areas

By reducing financial risks from predation, the initiative helps stabilise core rural sectors and prevent income loss. This strengthens the economic base of livestock farming and creates indirect opportunities in related services (e.g. fencing, dog training). It supports rural prosperity by enabling farmers to reinvest, diversify, and remain economically active in vulnerable areas.



Connected Rural Areas

While not directly aimed at connectivity, the initiative reinforces the case for service accessibility in remote areas. The requirement for veterinary inspections, digital applications, and administrative follow-up implies a need for functional support systems. By helping farmers remain in sparsely populated zones, it can indirectly support infrastructure and service needs in less connected rural communities.



Resilient Rural Areas

This is the initiative's strongest area of impact. It supports environmental resilience by promoting coexistence between farming and protected species through prevention measures like fencing and guard dogs. These practices reduce pressure on biodiversity, preserve natural capital, and maintain ecosystem services, especially in areas reliant on wild grazing. The initiative aligns with climate-sensitive and low-impact land use strategies.

**NAME OF THE REPLICATION LAB:** Lithuania**COUNTRY/REGION:** Lithuania**TITLE OF THE INITIATIVE:** Assessment and practical implementation of Universal Design (UD) principles to improve the accessibility and efficiency of public services in Ignalina region

“We are not just laying cables or building ramps—we are connecting people to opportunities”

Initiative ID

Level of initiative

Local

This is a local-level initiative driven by the Ignalina District Local Action Group in Lithuania.

Rural Relevance

Proactive rural targeting

The initiative does not explicitly refer to rural terms. It aims at ensuring that all public services and infrastructure are universally accessible, which inherently targets those rural areas that risk being left behind.

Stage of the initiative

Planning stage

The initiative is currently undergoing consultations before the final adoption.

Nature of the initiative

Non-Binding

The initiative is non-binding but it produces guidance and tailored policy recommendations for local and national bodies.

Summary of main impacts



Stronger Rural Areas

The application of Universal Design (UD) principles in the Ignalina district has enabled public services to become more inclusive and responsive to community needs. Residents contribute through informal conversations and structured feedback, reflecting a tightly knit local culture. The initiative addresses aging and depopulation by tailoring services like mobile libraries, youth engagement tools, and support for people with disabilities. By making both cultural and service infrastructure more accessible, the initiative strengthens social cohesion and liveability.



Prosperous Rural Areas

Through improved access to education, training, and public infrastructure, the initiative enables broader community involvement in local development and economic activity. By removing barriers, it empowers youth, entrepreneurs, and service users to engage more fully in Ignalina's future. While not directly targeting the economy, the inclusive service environment is essential for fostering rural vitality.



Connected Rural Areas

UD implementation is transforming Ignalina's approach to mobility and digital connectivity, ensuring that improvements in transport and online access benefit all residents, regardless of age or ability. The initiative fosters inclusive transport planning and promotes digital inclusion, particularly for citizens with limited mobility. It builds the foundations for resilient digital communities by addressing both infrastructure and digital skills.



Resilient Rural Areas

Although not focused on the environment, the initiative advances social resilience by adapting services to demographic realities and ensuring equal access for vulnerable populations. By improving care, education, and everyday accessibility, it helps reduce social isolation and supports independent living. Women, the elderly, and people with disabilities benefit from more equitable participation in public life.

NAME OF THE LIVING LAB: Netherlands P10

COUNTRY/REGION: The Netherlands

TITLE OF THE INITIATIVE: National Housing Policy

"Housing policy becomes rural-proof when villagers are given the tools to build their own future"

Initiative ID

Level of initiative

Multi-level

Responsibility is shared across three levels: 1) the national government sets overall housing needs and policy frameworks; 2) provincial administrations negotiate specific regional targets through Region Deals; and 3) municipalities finalise quotas and issue permits to builders and social-housing cooperatives.

Stage of the initiative

Planning stage

The initiative is undergoing current consultations, together with public hearings and Region Deal negotiations, alongside dedicated workshops to integrate insights on rural-urban housing dynamics.

Rural Relevance

Proactive rural targeting

Dutch housing policy has historically prioritised urban centres, but since 2009, a modicum of rural-targeted expansion was introduced. This was done by piloting of "Red for Green" schemes, which allow conditional rural building rights in exchange for environmental enhancements.

Nature of the initiative

Non-binding

While national targets and provincial quotas carry political weight, rural-specific instruments like "Red for Green" and New Rural Estates are voluntary.

Summary of main impacts



Stronger Rural Areas

The decentralised nature of the Netherlands' housing policy allows rural municipalities to tailor housing strategies to local needs, including through mechanisms such as Collective Private Commissioning (CPC). These empower communities to plan and build housing suited to younger and elderly residents, bolstering demographic sustainability and participatory planning.



Prosperous Rural Areas

Affordable housing is identified as a key driver of rural economic diversification, youth retention, and multifunctional land use. Rural residential options support entrepreneurship and enable work-life combinations, while farm women and labour migrants also emerge as key actors in shaping inclusive and sustainable rural economies.



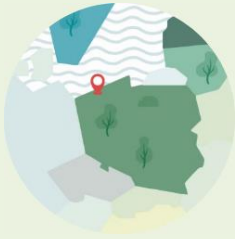
Connected Rural Areas

Although digital infrastructure is managed in a separate policy domain, rural revitalisation efforts depend strongly on broadband connectivity and accessible transport. Improved rail links and recognition of digital literacy needs, especially among youth, highlight how housing policy intersects with mobility and connectivity.



Resilient Rural Areas

Housing-linked initiatives such as Red for Green and carbon farming pilots are integrating climate goals with land use planning. They promote multifunctional landscapes and renewable housing materials, while tackling challenges like farm succession and rural energy efficiency. These align housing with broader goals of climate resilience and environmental restoration.



NAME OF THE LIVING LAB: Poland West Pomerania

COUNTRY/REGION: Poland

TITLE OF THE INITIATIVE: West Pomeranian Voivodeship Rural Development Policy and Development Strategy until 2030

“Strong communities grow where people feel they belong and have a say”

Initiative ID

Level of initiative

Regional

The set of initiatives is implemented at the regional level by the authorities of the West Pomeranian Voivodeship.

Rural Relevance

Proactive rural targeting

The set of initiatives aim to comprehensively improve the quality of life of residents and increase the potential development of the West Pomeranian Voivodeship, with a particular emphasis on revitalising rural areas through targeted investments and sustainable growth initiatives.

Stage of the initiative

Under implementation

Currently, both initiatives are in the implementation stage, with activities and investments underway but not yet completed.

Nature of the initiative

Non-binding

While the initiatives are not legally binding, they are strategic planning documents that play a crucial role in shaping regional development and guiding the use of public and EU funds.

Summary of main impacts



Stronger Rural Areas

The initiative empowers local communities by addressing development gaps, encouraging inter-municipal cooperation, and fostering inclusion of marginalised groups through participatory governance and social capital building. Efforts focus on ownership, trust, innovation and collaboration, strengthening the local fabric of rural life



Prosperous Rural Areas

By investing in short food supply chains, green products, and local entrepreneurship, the initiative boosts rural economies, employment, and innovation. Support for SMEs, producers organisations, and the bioeconomic sector builds a diversified and resilient rural economy



Connected Rural Areas

Improved digital and physical connectivity are central to this initiative, tackling digital exclusion with infrastructure and skills training while enhancing rural mobility through integrated transport solutions. These elements are critical to equitable access and revitalisation.



Resilient Rural Areas

The policy supports energy transition and land-use adaptation in harmony with the region's strong organic farming base and natural capital. It promotes a bioeconomy, green growth, and sustainable tourism while aiming to counteract soil degradation and resource over-exploitation.

**NAME OF THE LIVING LAB:** Rural Scotland**COUNTRY/REGION:** United Kingdom**TITLE OF THE INITIATIVE:** Environment Strategy for Scotland

"From healthy soils to clean air, resilience grows where nature thrives"

Initiative ID

Level of initiative

Multi-level

The initiative is multi-level, characterised by a governance model which allows region-specific adaptation of policies under the national framework.

Stage of the initiative

Under implementation

After the official publication in 2020, the Strategy is currently in the implementation stage, with detailed outcome pathways being developed and an initial monitoring framework in place as of January 2025.

Rural Relevance

Proactive rural targeting

The initiative explicitly commits "to help ensure that local economies and communities in rural areas thrive," embedding rural considerations throughout its vision and outcomes framework.

Nature of the initiative

Non-binding

The initiative is non-binding, nonetheless, it sets guiding principles, outcome targets and recommended approaches. The document itself is advisory, framing subsequent legislation and regulation.

Summary of main impacts



Stronger Rural Areas

The Strategy empowers rural communities through place-based planning tools such as Local Development Plans, which promote participatory processes in land use decisions and sustainability goals. These mechanisms encourage local ownership in shaping rural futures, blending environmental stewardship with social inclusion.



Prosperous Rural Areas

The Strategy envisions rural areas as drivers of a sustainable economy, advancing the bioeconomy, circular innovation, and small business growth. It promotes green jobs, value-added natural products, and producer group support to foster diversified and thriving local economies.



Connected Rural Areas

Although not specifically focused on infrastructure, the Strategy emphasises skills development, digital platforms for reuse and recycling, and smart transport planning, particularly in rural and remote settings. Digital tools and low-carbon mobility are seen as key enablers of inclusion and environmental justice.



Resilient Rural Areas

Central to the Strategy is the restoration and protection of natural assets such as soils, peatlands, and biodiversity, alongside reducing emissions from agriculture. Scotland's role in the global climate agenda is clear, as the Strategy commits to nature-based solutions and resource circularity.