

GRANULAR Bootcamp

Knowledge Transfer Accelerator | 8th & 9th activities 19 March 2026 (10:00 – 13:00 CET), online

Rural areas are at the heart of the European Union's objectives for territorial cohesion, sustainability, and social inclusion. Yet the indicators used to design, monitor, and evaluate EU policies often fail to capture the full complexity of rural realities. Traditional economic measures, such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP), remain dominant in policy assessment, while newer performance-based funding frameworks increasingly rely on nationally defined indicators that risk overlooking sub-regional diversity and lived experience in rural territories.

This policy bootcamp responds to the growing need for more meaningful, place-sensitive indicators to guide rural policymaking. It brings together EU institutions, researchers, and practitioners to critically examine **what should be measured, how it is currently measured, and how measurement frameworks could be improved** to better reflect rural wellbeing and development outcomes.

The bootcamp is structured around **two complementary webinars** that together form a coherent learning and policy reflection:

- *Webinar A – Beyond GDP metrics for rural areas: measure what (really) matters*
- *Webinar B – Performance indicators in the new MFF: What do they mean for the future of rural areas?*

Webinar A – Beyond GDP metrics for rural areas: measure what (really) matters (10.00 – 11.30)

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) remains the primary indicator of economic performance in the European Union, yet it does not capture many aspects that shape people's lived experiences, particularly in rural areas. **Dimensions such as environmental quality, social cohesion, access to services, resilience, and subjective wellbeing are central to rural prosperity** but remain largely invisible in conventional economic metrics.

In response, the [European Union has stepped up efforts to move "beyond GDP"](#) by developing complementary indicators that reflect sustainable and inclusive wellbeing, advancing tools such as the [Sustainable and Inclusive Wellbeing Index](#), designed to complement GDP.

Evidence from the GRANULAR project on Wellbeing in rural areas shows that wellbeing and quality of life in rural areas depend on a complex mix of social, environmental, psychological, and economic factors. While many rural communities benefit from strong social ties and a sense of belonging, they also face specific challenges linked to service access, deprivation, and development trade-offs. This webinar aims to **connect EU-level Beyond GDP initiatives with granular, place-based evidence**, exploring how wellbeing-oriented metrics can better inform rural development and territorial policymaking.

10:00 – 11:30	<i>Webinar A – Beyond GDP metrics for rural areas: measure what (really) matters</i>
10:00 – 10:05	Welcome & Introduction – <i>Serafin Pazos-Vidal, European Association for Innovation in Local Development (AEIDL)</i>
10:05 – 10:15	Beyond GDP Metrics in Europe: why, when and for whom? – <i>Laura Rayner, ZOE Institute for future-fit economies</i>
10:15 – 10:45	Measuring what matters: Wellbeing, quality of life and what else? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable Inclusive Wellbeing Indicator – <i>Peter Benczur, Joint Research Centre</i> • Indicators for rural wellbeing and Quality of Life – <i>Gundi Knies, Thünen Institute</i>
10:45 – 11:15	Open discussion and Q&A – <i>moderated by María Alonso-Roldan, AEIDL</i>
11:15 – 11:20	Conclusion to the session – <i>Maite Iglesias, AEIDL</i>
11:20 – 11:30	<i>Coffee break</i>

Webinar B – Performance indicators in the new MFF: What do they mean for the future of rural areas? (11.30 – 13.00)

The proposed [2028–2034 Multiannual Financial Framework \(MFF\)](#) introduces a new performance framework that links EU funding more closely to indicators, milestones, and targets. At the same time, rural development objectives are increasingly integrated into broader cohesion and structural policies through [National and Regional Partnership Plans \(NRPPs\)](#).

While this integrated approach may improve coordination between funds, it also raises concerns for rural areas. Many performance indicators are defined at **national level**, making it difficult to capture **local and sub-regional impacts** or reflect the diversity of rural territories. This creates a risk that rural priorities may be insufficiently considered in performance-based funding decisions.

A stronger focus on **granular, place-based evidence** and **rural proofing** is therefore essential to ensure that policies respond to the realities of different rural areas and avoid one-size-fits-all approaches.

This webinar aims to examine how the new performance framework affects rural areas, identify gaps in existing indicators, and explore how **GRANULAR evidence**, including tools such as the [GRANULAR Rural Compass](#) and new data on rural attractiveness and perceptions, can support more rural-sensitive policy design, monitoring, and evaluation under the new MFF.

11:30 – 13:00	<i>Webinar B – Performance indicators in the new MFF: What do they mean for the future of rural areas?</i>
11.30 – 11.35	Introduction to the session – <i>Serafin Pazos Vidal, AEIDL</i>
11:35 – 11:45	Performance indicators in the new MFF – <i>David Bokhorst, European University Institute</i>
11:45 – 11:55	Performance framework: implications for rural areas – <i>Serafin Pazos Vidal, AEIDL</i>
11:55 – 12:05	Rural attractiveness and perceptions: evidence for place-based policy – <i>Carlos Tapia, Nordregio</i>
12:05 – 12:15	GRANULAR Rural Compass for rural diversity – <i>Bettina Bock, Wageningen University</i>
12:15 – 12:50	Open discussion & Q&A – <i>moderated by Serafin Pazos Vidal, AEIDL</i>
12:50 – 13:00	Conclusion to the session & to the KTAs – <i>Merveille Ntabhashe, AEIDL</i>