GRANULAR

Newsletter 10 - April 2026

REGISTER TO GRANULAR & RUSTIK FINAL CONFERENCE!

The **GRANULAR** and **RUSTIK** projects are pleased to announce their joint **Final Conference**, which will take place on **24–25 June 2026** at **Fondation Universitaire** in **Brussels, Belgium**.
This two-day event will bring together project partners, policymakers, practitioners, and rural stakeholders to explore key results and discuss future perspectives for rural development and innovation.

REGISTER NOW!

GRANULAR NEWS

Beyond GDP and smarter indicators: GRANULAR Bootcamp explores how to measure what really matters for rural areas

Designing better policies for rural areas requires better ways of measuring what actually matters. This was the central message emerging from the GRANULAR Knowledge Transfer Accelerator Bootcamp in March, which brought together over 100 participants from across Europe, including policymakers, researchers and practitioners to discuss how indicators can better reflect rural realities and support more effective EU policymaking.

Read the highlights reports!

GRANULAR partners discuss final phase of the project at General Assembly

In March, GRANULAR held its sixth General Assembly online, as the project enters its final months before concluding in September 2026. The meeting allowed partners to align on remaining tasks and reflect on key results achieved so far. Project Coordinator Tristan Berchoux opened the meeting by highlighting that the primary objective for the final six months is the integration of GRANULAR's diverse results into a coherent narrative on rural Europe.

Check it out!

Climate neutrality in EU rural areas: from measurement to action

Rural areas are central to Europe's ambition to achieve climate neutrality by 2050. Covering nearly 80% of the EU's territory and hosting vast natural resources, rural regions hold enormous potential for climate mitigation and adaptation. Yet, they remain underserved by monitoring tools and policy frameworks largely designed for urban contexts.To address this gap, GRANULAR Knowledge Transfer Accelerator hosted a webinar in January on "Advancing Climate Neutrality in EU Rural Areas".

Read the highlight report!

What has GRANULAR achieved in 2025?

The year 2025 marked significant progress for the GRANULAR project, with several key milestones achieved. Four new reports were published, providing valuable insights, and a new interactive viewer was launched on the digital platform to enhance accessibility and user engagement. In addition, three Knowledge Transfer Accelerator events were organised to strengthen knowledge exchange, while GRANULAR Living Lab cross-visits enabled the sharing of practical experiences and lessons learned in real-world contexts. A video recap highlighting these achievements and their impact is available!

Watch the video!

Beyond data: why belonging shapes rural Europe's future

On 10 March 2026, the European Committee of the Regions in Brussels hosted the final conference of the PREMIUM_EU European project, "The Future of Rural Europe: Making migration work for regions in decline." Among policymakers, researchers and practitioners from more than 40 countries was Paweł Chmieliński, President of the European Rural Development Network (ERDN) and a partner in GRANULAR. He joined the opening policy panel to bring a Central and Eastern European perspective on one of rural Europe's most pressing questions: what actually makes people stay, return or leave?

Find out more!

LIVING & REPLICATION LABS IN FOCUS

Who Does What in Rural Proofing?

Rural proofing rarely follows a neat or linear path. When applied in real settings, it quickly raises practical questions. Who produces the evidence? Who makes sense of it? And who finally uses the results? These questions were explored during a workshop held as part of a GRANULAR cross-visit held in the Netherlands in April, which brought together members of the project's Multi-Actor Labs and representatives from the hosting municipalities. The aim was simple but important: to reflect collectively on how rural proofing works in practice and on the roles different actors play along the way.

Read more!

GRANULAR French Living Lab deploys new tool to monitor the decline of chestnut groves in Vallespir

Since 2022, the Vallespir region in France has been experiencing severe drought, which are damaging local biodiversity. More than 60% of the region is covered by extensive forest, consisting mainly of deciduous species such as chestnut, beech and holm oak. This forest plays a vital role in local biodiversity (providing specific habitats), the economy (outdoor activities and timber harvesting), the mitigation of natural risks (such as wildfires), and cultural and heritage services (landscapes characteristic of the region).

Find out more!

GRANULAR releases Multi-Actor Labs cross-visit dossiers from across Europe

The GRANULAR project just published five Living Lab cross-visit dossiers, offering a deep dive into innovative rural development strategies from its Multi-Actor Labs in France, Italy, Poland, Scotland, and Spain. These reports are the result of a collaborative four-year effort to generate new datasets, tools, and methods that empower place-based rural policies across the continent. Each dossier captures the highlights, learnings, and practical insights from multi-day visits where researchers, local stakeholders, and decision-makers joined forces to tackle pressing rural challenges.

Read the dossiers!

EUROPEAN NEWS

Good Practice Brochure 'Place-based innovation'

This first edition of the Rural Pact Good Practice Brochure focuses on place-based innovation and its role in addressing economic, social and environmental challenges in rural areas. It highlights how solutions rooted in local realities, supported by collaboration and tailored approaches, can strengthen rural development. The publication presents six good practices from across Europe, covering initiatives such as support for rural entrepreneurs, regional innovation systems, forest-based bioeconomy, social entrepreneurship, local food systems and digital heritage.

Check it out!

New Discussion Paper: LEADER–CLLD Post-2027: Redefining the EU's role in local development

Raquel Pastor Carretero and Serafin Pazos-Vidal from AEIDL's Rural and Territorial Development team have just produced a new discussion paper showing that LEADER-CLLD is at a crossroads. They examine how the proposed 2028–2034 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) could redefine the future of LEADER and Community-Led Local Development (CLLD). The paper warns that the shift to a Single Fund and to National and Regional Partnership Plans (NRPPs) represents the most significant governance overhaul in three decades, with far-reaching implications for rural development.

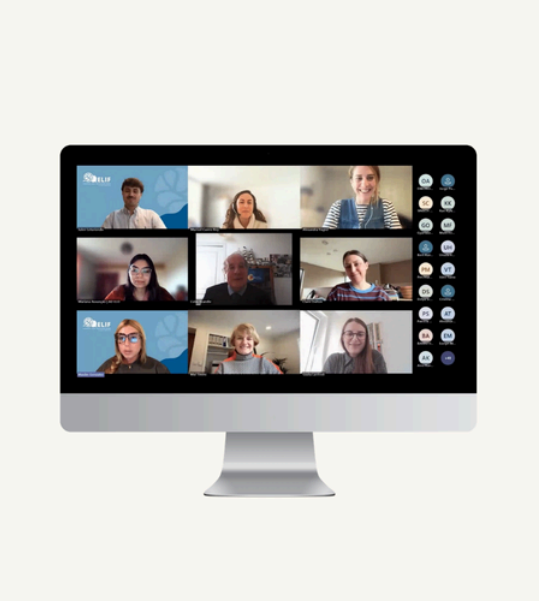
Find it out!

OTHER PROJECTS

Initiative to support women-led rural businesses launched in Leskovac

An initiative aimed at strengthening small women-led businesses from rural areas was launched on 18 February 2026 in Leskovac. The event was organised by the Institute for Development and Innovation (IRI), together with the Center for Development of Jablanica and Pčinja Districts.This event marked the beginning of a broader, structured support process that will continue in the coming months. The initiative focuses on providing practical assistance in branding and graphic design to women entrepreneurs who run small businesses in villages across the Jablanica and Pčinja districts.

Find out more!



How community-led initiatives are supporting older people in rural Europe

Older people living in rural areas face **overlapping challenges** anchored in territorial inequalities, that go beyond ageing itself. Limited access to health services, social isolation and digital exclusion are some of them. Across Europe, communities are developing **innovative, locally driven responses**. This article explores key insights from experts and practitioners on how to better support older people while strengthening social connections and resilience in rural areas.

Read more!

The FUTURAL project invites you to its 2nd EU-RIF

The FUTURAL project, funded by Horizon Europe, organises the 2nd EU Rural Innovation Forum (EU-RIF #2) on 5th & 6th of May 2026 at the

Which tools work best for CAP Strategic Plans? Lessons from Tools4CAP case studies

Jonava Cultural Centre in Jonava, Lithuania, convening policymakers, practitioners, EU projects and rural innovators from across Europe. Under the title “From Smart Villages to Smart Rural Futures: experiences from the Baltic region”, the forum will showcase practical tools, policy insights and real-life rural innovation examples, highlighting how Smart Villages can strengthen resilience, competitiveness and quality of life in rural areas.

Register now!

How can Member States strengthen the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of CAP Strategic Plans (CSPs) in a more evidence-based and participatory way? This report brings together practical lessons from 12 Tools4CAP case studies that tested a range of tools and assesses what enables (or blocks) their real-world uptake. The analysis synthesises experiences from 12 case studies conducted across 11 countries, using the project’s Tune-up Evaluation Framework (TEF) to compare tools in a structured way and identify what practitioners need to consider when selecting and deploying them.

Discover them!

EVENTS

SERIGO Webinar – When inequalities overlap: women’s health in rural Europe

6 May 2026

Online

European Green Week 2026

3-4 June 2026

Brussels, Belgium

Rural Pact Policy Lab – Anchoring rural areas in the National and Regional Partnership Plans

3 June 2026

Brussels, Belgium

European Sustainable Energy Week

9-11 June 2026

Brussels. Belgium & Online

RUSTIK & GRANULAR Final Conference

24-25 June 2026

Fondation Universitaire | Brussels, Belgium

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UK Research and Innovation

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