



# GRANULAR

Newsletter 11 - September 2026

## GRANULAR & RUSTIK Joint Final Conference highlights place-based solutions for Europe's rural future

The GRANULAR & RUSTIK Joint Final Conference took place on 24 and 25 June 2026 at the Fondation Universitaire in Brussel. Organised by the European Association for Innovation in Local Development (AEIDL) and Euromontana, the event marked the culmination of four years of research and multi-actor collaboration through the GRANULAR and RUSTIK projects.

Bringing together more than 100 participants, including EU policymakers, researchers, local development practitioners, Local Action Groups (LAGs) and NGOs, the conference explored how more granular data and functional territorial approaches can support fair digital, ecological and social transitions.

CONFERENCE MATERIAL

READ MORE!



## GRANULAR NEWS

# What Is Rural Proofing? Making Policies Work for Rural Areas



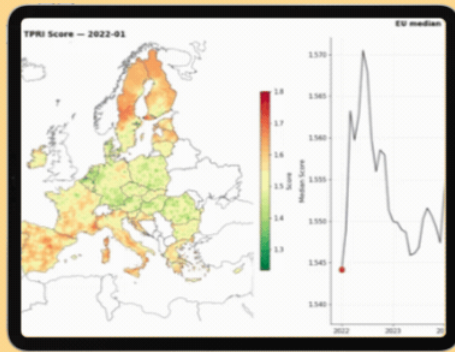
In GRANULAR, rural proofing is a structured and participatory process,

## What Changes When Rural Data Gets More Local?

Most of Scotland's wind turbines stand in the countryside. The GRANULAR Scottish Living Lab wanted to know where exactly, and in whose communities. Mapped against the Scottish rural-urban classification and the deprivation index, 44% are in accessible rural areas and 37% in very remote rural areas, against 0.9% across all urban classes. Community ownership brings real local benefit, the Lab found, but the more deprived communities are least likely to start and finish one. Hence its question to policy: who hosts the infrastructure of the transition to net zero, and who benefits from it?

[Check it out!](#)





## Unveiling Rural Transport Poverty: A New Tool for Policy Makers

The GRANULAR project has introduced a groundbreaking tool to better understand and address transport poverty in rural Europe: the Transport Poverty Risk Index (TPRI). This high-resolution index, developed by Nordregio researchers Carlos Tapia and Karina Maria Berbert Bruno, integrates climate risk frameworks with local socioeconomic data to pinpoint where rural mobility challenges are most acute. By combining energy price trends, public transport access, and demographic factors, the TPRI offers policymakers a dynamic, spatially nuanced lens to tackle rural transport poverty risks.

[Read it here!](#)

## GRANULAR Results: Data, Tools and Rural Communities in Action



## The stakeholder engagement toolkit for territorial initiatives

The GRANULAR Stakeholder Engagement Toolkit is an online, practice-oriented resource designed to support territorial actors throughout the stakeholder engagement process. It represents a result of the strict collaboration between researchers and rural actors. Moreover, the Toolkit aims to support not only stakeholder participation itself, but the broader coordination of territorial initiatives and the integration and exchange of knowledge among rural actors. The toolkit takes a step forward from the experience and practical knowledge developed throughout the GRANULAR project, particularly through the Multi-Actor Labs and their initiatives.

[Check it out!](#)



## LIVING & REPLICATION LABS IN FOCUS



### Rural Chania: Lessons from the Digital Decade 2030 Rural Proofing Workshop

What happens when the EU's digital ambitions meet the realities of rural life? In rural Chania, the answer is clear: digital transformation can open exciting new opportunities—but only if it is designed with rural communities, not simply for them. On 19 June 2026, the GRANULAR Rural Chania Replication Lab brought together representatives from the Regional Unit of Chania, the Technical University of Crete, regional authorities working on agricultural land and forest management, farmers, and other stakeholders at the Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Chania (CIHEAM MACh).

[Read more!](#)

## Regional Voices on the Green Transition

Northern Sweden has become one of Europe's key regions for the green transition. Major investments in fossil-free industry, renewable energy and new technologies have placed the region in the international spotlight. Several factors explain this development. Northern Sweden has abundant natural resources, large amounts of renewable electricity, available land and a long industrial tradition. Together, these assets create favourable conditions for investments that support Europe's transition towards a climate-neutral economy.

[Find out more!](#)



### Discover the latest GRANULAR Living Lab Cross Visits!

Two new Living Lab Cross Visit dossiers are now available! Travel with GRANULAR to Northern Sweden, where partners explored how rural communities are navigating the green industrial transition, from local entrepreneurship to large-scale investments. Then head to the Netherlands, where the P10 cross-visit focused on rural well-being, strong communities and the role of rural municipalities, bringing together participants from seven countries to exchange experiences and ideas.

[Read the Dutch dossier!](#)

[Read the Swedish dossier!](#)

## EUROPEAN NEWS



### OECD Global Forum on Local Development 2026 highlights the importance of foresight, resilience and the renewed role of place

The OECD Global Forum on Local Development 2026 one of the most important gathering of experts in this field opened in Maastricht with a setting that was both symbolic and highly relevant to the discussions that followed. Located at the intersection of the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany, the cross-border region provided a living example of the growing interdependence between territories and the importance of cooperation in addressing shared economic and societal challenges. This territorial context framed a first day centred on how regions position themselves in an

increasingly uncertain and rapidly evolving global landscape.

[Check it out!](#)

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

The highlights report from the Rural Pact Policy Action Lab ‘Anchoring rural areas in the National and Regional Partnership Plans’ is now available. It captures key messages on integrated rural support, monitoring, and stakeholder engagement in the future Plans. The event, held on 3 June 2026 in Brussels, brought together around 120 participants from 23 countries. Organised by the Rural Pact Support Office in cooperation with DG AGRI and DG REGIO, it explored how the proposed National and Regional Partnership Plans (NRPPs) could support rural communities and how rural stakeholders can be involved in their planning and preparation.

[Read more!](#)



## **OTHER PROJECTS**



### **Farm visits for education: social and inclusive innovation through community voices**

Agriculture is more than a sector; it is a living environment where knowledge, craftsmanship, innovation and community come together. With Met de klas de boer op, Inagro and the Province of West Flanders open that world to young learners. By inviting classes onto real farms, the initiative strengthens social and inclusive innovation: pupils of different ages, backgrounds and learning



### **RUSTIK Project: Decentralised Rural Proofing**

The first RUSTIK policy brief, “Decentralised Rural Proofing”, introduces a governance approach that brings rural proofing closer to territories by anchoring micro-assessments in local contexts and linking them back into multilevel policy processes. Drawing on Living Lab experiments in five diverse rural regions, it illustrates how Decentralised Rural Proofing can expose governance bottlenecks, highlight spatial justice concerns and support more coherent, participatory policy design.

profiles discover agriculture in an authentic, sensory and accessible way.

[Read more!](#)

[Find out more!](#)



## **RURACTIVE Webinar Highlights the Power of Rural Innovation Ecosystems on World Rural Development Day 2026**

On 6 July 2026, the RURACTIVE project celebrated World Rural Development Day by hosting the online webinar Building Rural Innovation Ecosystems for the Right to Stay: Lessons and Opportunities from RURACTIVE. The event brought together researchers, practitioners, policymakers and rural stakeholders from across Europe to explore how community-led innovation can help create vibrant, resilient rural areas where people have genuine opportunities to live, work and thrive.

[Check it out](#)

## **EVENTS**

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### **European Week of Regions and Cities 2026**

**12-14 October 2026**

Brussels, Belgium

### **From grassroots innovation to EU policy: governance pathways linking local action and European strategies**

**13 October 2026**

Jacques Delors building, JDE 53, Rue Belliard 99/101, Brussels, Belgium

### **SERIGOxELIF webinar: Unlocking finance for community-led social innovation in rural areas**

**15 October 2026**

Online

### **European Startup Village Forum 2026**

**15 October 2026**

Brussels. Belgium

### **Europe's rural future: Responding to rural priorities through integrated national and regional strategies and LEADER**

**3-4 November 2026**

Killashee Hotel, Naas, County Kildare, Ireland



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