



# Ruralities

**RURALITIES- CLIMATE SMART, ECOSYSTEM-ENHANCING AND  
KNOWLEDGE-BASED RURAL EXPERTISE AND TRAINING CENTRES**

## **D4.2 RURALITIES TRAINING TO EMPOWER/EQUIP ROLE MODELS AND REPLICATORS**

**Horizon Europe Grant agreement: 101060876**

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Version 2.0

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**Abbreviations and acronyms**

<b>Acronym</b>	<b>Description</b>
RURALITIES	Climate smart, ecosystem-enhancing and knowledge-based rural expertise and training centres
SIMSES	Simplified rural socio-ecological systems
KPI	Key performance indicators
EU	European Union
AU	African Union

# 1 ABSTRACT

The project 'Climate smart, ecosystem-enhancing and knowledge-based rural expertise and training centres' (RURALITIES) delivers an ecosystem-enhancing and climate action driven expertise and learning framework organized in hubs e.g., the '**RURALITIES**', comprising a series of innovative methodologies with the learner at its core, supported by a comprehensive network of living labs, and a blockchain-based digital platform combining the Internet and wireless technologies, to assist engage, connect and empower actors. This is done via a multi-point approach e.g., multi-actors, multi-disciplines, multi-systems, multi-scale, multi-sectors, and multilevel.

RURALITIES is rooted in the recruitment, preparation, training and coaching of 1.000+ facilitators for a variety of tasks (e.g., trainers, facilitators, role models, hub coordinators, etc.), and who play a significant role in creating the matrix and the platform upon which the learning framework is built, develops and evolves. **RURALITIES** proposes to ideate, implement, futureproof, validate and deliver the aforementioned expertise and learning centers via real-scale practicing in 6 simplified rural socio-ecological systems (SIMSES) e.g., demonstrators, 2 in Italy, 1 in the United- Kingdom (UK), 1 in Slovenia, 1 in Spain and 1 in Romania. RURALITIES coordinates identified actions of local, and regional authorities in support of rural innovation in regions and economic sectors where rural innovators are not yet engaged in a relevant network.

**RURALITIES** coordinates identified SIMSES networks promoting rural innovation solutions whilst establishing innovative multipoint 'RURALITIES Hubs' of expertise and training on rural innovation. This is done via coordinating action for the managing authorities and regional bodies influencing regional and national policy instruments in Italy, the UK, Slovenia, Spain and Romania.

## Partners:

Number	Role	Short name	Legal name	Country
1	COO	PEDAL	PEDAL CONSULTING SRO	SK
2	BEN	RDRP	ASOCIATIA RURAL DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH PLATFORM	RO
3	BEN	CETRI	CENTER FOR TECHNOLOGY RESEARCH AND INNOVATION (CETRI) LTD	CY
4	BEN	ASIN	ASOCIACION DE INVESTIGACION DE INDUSTRIAS CARNICAS DEL PRINCIPADO DE ASTURIAS	ES
5	BEN	NIC	KEMIJSKI INSTITUT	SI
6	BEN	UPM	UNIVERSIDAD POLITECNICA DE MADRID	ES
7	BEN	IRI	INSTITUT ZA RAZVOJ I INOVACIJE - IRI	RS
8	BEN	PART	PARTICULA GROUP DRUSTVO S OGRANICENOM ODGOVORNOSCU ZA ISTRAZIVANJE RAZVOJ I PROIZVODNJU	HR
9	BEN	UNIZG	SVEUCILISTE U ZAGREBU AGRONOMSKI FAKULTET	HR
10	BEN	ACTS	AFRICAN CENTRE FOR TECHNOLOGY STUDIES	KE

11	BEN	CITT	CENTRO DE INVESTIGACAO E TRANSFERENCIA DE TECNOLOGIA PARADESENVOLVIMENTO COMUNITARIO	MZ
12	BEN	EQUIP	EUROPEAN SOCIETY FOR QUALITY AND PATIENT SAFETY IN GENERAL PRACTICE/FAMILY MEDICINE	DK
13	BEN	MUNI	MUGLA SITKI KOÇMAN UNIVERSITY	TR
14	BEN	MARIN	MARIN BIYOTEKNOLOJİ URUNLERİ VE GİDASANAYI TİCARET LIMITED SİRKETİ	TR
15	BEN	ULB	UNIVERSITE LIBRE DE BRUXELLES	BE
16	BEN	INAG	INAGRO, PROVINCIAAL EXTERN VERZELFSTANDIGD AGENTSCHAP INPRIVAATRECHTELIJKE VORM VZW	BE
17	BEN	AASMT	ARAB ACADEMY FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND MARITIME TRANSPORT	EG
18	BEN	RRAP	REGIONALNA RAZVOJNA AGENCIJAPOSAVJE	SI
19	BEN	YXSAV	YXS AVALANA SRL	RO
20	BEN	UNIVI	UNIVERSITATEA PENTRU STIINTELE VIETII "ION IONESCU DE LA BRAD" DIN IASI	RO
21	BEN	SIRET	ASOCIATIA GRUPUL DE ACTIUNE LOCALASIRET-MOLDOVA	RO
22	BEN	SUA	Sokoine University of Agriculture	TZ
23	BEN	UNINO	UNIVERSITE DE NOUAKCHOTT AL AASRIYA	MR
24	BEN	IFAYA	INSTITUT FACULTAIRE DES SCIENCESAGRONOMIQUES (IFA) DEYANGAMBI	CD
25	BEN	ACD	ALTERNATIVE COMMUNAUTAIRE POUR LE DEVELOPPEMENT DURABLE (ACDD)	CI
26	BEN	PROTO	PROTOTIPI LIMITED	NG
27	BEN	AMVO	ALMANAR VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATION	SD
28	BEN	CDD	COMMUNICATION POUR UN DEVELOPPEMENT DURABLE C.D.D.	TG
29	BEN	YTED	YOUTHS IN TECHNOLOGY AND DEVELOPMENT UGANDA LIMITED	UG
30	BEN	CTIC	FUNDACION CTIC CENTRO TECNOLOGICO PARA EL DESARROLLO EN ASTURIAS DE LASTECNOLOGIAS DE LA INFORMACION	ES
31	BEN	FHV	FONDAZIONE HOMO VIATOR - SAN TEBALDO	IT
32	BEN	MOFE	MONTEFELTRO SVILUPPO SCARL	IT
33	BEN	MUSE	MUSEUM GRAPHIA	IT
34	BEN	CDM	LA CORTE DELLA MINIERA SRL	IT



35	BEN	DEX	DESARROLLO DE ESTRATEGIAS EXTERIORESSA	ES
36	BEN	REDA	ASOCIACION RED ASTURIANA DEDESARROLLO RURAL	ES
37	BEN	GMV	MONTAGNA VICENTINA SOCIETA COOPERATIVA	IT
38	BEN	MARA	MAROC HORIZON D'AVENTURES	MA
39	BEN	UNWI	UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI	MW
40	BEN	NOMA	OKMNOMADS.ORG	GH
41	BEN	UNIM	MAGYAR AGRAR- ES ELETTUDOMANYIEGYETEM	HU
42	BEN	ENIC	ECOLE NATIONALE D'INGENIEURS DECARTHAGE	TN
43	BEN	UASZ	UNIVERSITE ASSANE SECK DE ZIGUINCHOR	SN
44	BEN	CPF	CONFEDERATION PAYSANNE DU FASO	BF
45	BEN	UNAD	UNIVERSITY OF RWANDA	RW
46	BEN	ZLAN	ZAMBIA LAND ALLIANCE	ZM
47	BEN	EVRO	EVROSAD PROIZVODNJA TRGOVINA EVETOVANJE D.O.O. KRSKO	SI
48	BEN	SEVO	TURISTICNO DRUSTVO SENOVO	SI
49	BEN	IISAC	ISTITUTO D'ISTRUZIONE SUPERIORE ACECCHI	IT
50	AP	HITP	THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP	UK
51	AP	ASPI	ASPIRE-IGEN GROUP LIMITED	UK
52	AP	EW	CONSERVATION EDUCATION AND RESEARCH TRUST	UK

## 2 INTRODUCTION

The current document, titled D4.2 RURALITIES Training to empower/equip role models and replicators (D4.2) has been elaborated within the framework of the RURALITIES project which is co-funded by the European Union's Horizon Europe Research and Innovation programme under Grant Agreement No. 101060876. UK participants in Horizon Europe Project RURALITIES are supported by UKRI grant numbers: 10051963 The Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership and 10050988 Earthwatch Europe.

WP4 outlines a framework for communication, dissemination, exploitation of project results and synergies to foster two-way exchange through networking with multi actors. The overall objective of WP4 is to achieve the transfer of information about the aims, progress and outcomes of the project and ensure dissemination to and the uptake (exploitation) of project results by key end-users, whilst fostering sustainable synergies and two-way information exchange mechanisms with relevant networks and stakeholders.

In light of WP4 objectives, T4.3 - Gamify RURALITIES, recruit and equip role models and 'replicators' (T4.3) aims to create RURALITIES serious game and enhance rural people's perception on rural innovation through a game-based awareness-raising and capacity building education process.

D4.2 represents a strategically designed capacity-building and training program of the activities of T4.3. This initiative is essential in cultivating a robust cohort of over 100 role models and replicators, who are crucial for supervising and guiding the collaborative creation and advancement of the RURALITIES Augmented Knowledge Alliance by March 2024. Furthermore, these trained individuals play a significant role in contributing to the transcontinental AU-EU campaign 'Rural Thrive 2050'. The program's primary objective is to provide comprehensive training and resources to these key figures, thereby ensuring they are well-equipped to undertake their anticipated tasks effectively within RURALITIES. This includes fostering skills necessary for leadership, community engagement, and project management within the context of rural innovation and development.

D4.2 is closely tied to D4.3 - "RURALITIES Role Models, Replicators, and Serious Game,". Its scheduled completion is set for M18 of the project timeline. D4.3 will serve as a platform to highlight and describe the role models, replicators, and the serious game within the broader context of the project's objectives and outcomes.

### 2.1 Objective of D4.2

The objective of D4.2 is to establish a capacity building program that fosters the sharing of knowledge among a network of engaged role models and replicators. The aim is for these role models and replicators to emerge as leaders or influencers within their respective areas. This initiative will encompass the identification of these, their collaborative efforts, and their contributions to various outcomes and anticipated tasks. These tasks include supervising the co-creation of the RURALITIES Augmented Knowledge Alliance and participating in the transcontinental AU-EU campaign 'Rural Thrive 2050,' among others.

Over the initial 18 months of the project, RURALITIES partners have been and will actively engaged in creating a repository of RURNex actors worldwide through Task 5.1. This approach adopts a multi-actor strategy that involves identifying facilitators who will serve as role models, influencers, and replicators. By March 2024, the aim is to identify 100 facilitators (T4.3) who will then join the co-creation process and contribute to the RURALITIES Augmented Knowledge Alliance. This online platform is envisioned to house a repository of over 10,000 actors within the RURNex network worldwide.

Once engaged, facilitators will be equipped to expand and actively oversee the development of this network throughout the project's lifecycle. Importantly, one of the primary goals of engaging facilitators in this co-

creation process is to empower them with the necessary tools to sustain and enhance synergy within the RURALITIES ALLIANCE even after the project concludes.

D4.2 also serves to inform and educate project partners, particularly SIMSES partners, by providing background information and guidance on involving actors from their respective areas. It outlines how to effectively utilize the network both during and after the project's lifecycle, with the aim of ensuring the network's sustainability.

In summary, D4.2 outlines a comprehensive strategy to build capacity, foster knowledge sharing, and empower role models within the RURNex network. This initiative seeks to create a lasting impact by equipping facilitators with the tools needed to sustain the network's synergy beyond the project's duration. Additionally, it provides valuable guidance to project partners on engaging actors and maximizing the network's utility for long-term benefits.

## 2.2 Structure of the document

D4.2 presents a structured and systematic approach outlining the development of the training program and the underlying considerations. Within this framework, we introduce "RURALITIES TRAINING," designed to empower and equip Role Models and Replicators (refer to ANNEX 1). This training material is intended for distribution among these key stakeholders, serving as a valuable resource to enhance their understanding and knowledge of the project and its initiatives. This document has been structured into two primary sections, each serving a distinct purpose and containing a unique set of information:

1. **RURALITIES TRAINING:** Description, Creation process, Implementation, Evaluation, Impact measurement
2. **SUPPORTIVE TOOLS AND MEASUREMENTS:** Introducing a range of supportive tools and resources designed to assist our project partners.

The material offered is comprehensive in nature, providing robust support to these actors. Additionally, a concise PowerPoint presentation format (refer to ANNEX 3) has been created as a practical tool for project partners to utilize during workshops within their respective demonstration areas. To guide project partners effectively in conducting workshops across various settings, we have prepared a detailed guide (refer to ANNEX 2) specifically for RURALITIES project partners. This guide outlines best practices for utilizing the training material and the accompanying PowerPoint presentation in diverse workshop scenarios.

## 3 RURALITIES TRAINING – A CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMME

### 3.1 Description of RURALITIES TRAINING

In this section, our primary goal is to provide a comprehensive understanding of the background and objectives that underpin the RURALITIES TRAINING program. We intend to delve deeper into the thought processes and rationale that influenced the design of each component of this training initiative. Our aim is to offer a detailed perspective on the factors and principles that guided the development of this program, shedding light on the considerations that informed every aspect of its structure and content.

#### 3.1.1 RURALITIES Ethos

The "RURALITIES Project Ethos" section holds significant importance for the project's target audience, primarily consisting of Role Models and Replicators operating within rural communities. This ethos serves as the foundational philosophy that underpins every facet of the RURALITIES training program, and its value cannot be overstated. Understanding the ethos provides Role Models and Replicators with inspiration and guidance. It fills their participation with a profound sense of purpose and dedication to the project's core values, elevating their roles beyond mere involvement and positioning them as stewards of sustainable rural development. Many individuals who join RURALITIES are driven by a deep passion for sustainability and the well-being of rural areas. Knowledge of the project's emphasis on sustainability, ecosystem enhancement, and knowledge sharing resonates with their personal values. This resonance not only fosters a deeper commitment but also encourages active and passionate engagement in the program. Moreover, the ethos plays a crucial role in shaping the decision-making process for Role Models and Replicators within their communities. It offers a strategic framework for them to consider when devising and executing initiatives. By encouraging them to prioritize sustainability, ecosystem health, and knowledge empowerment, it ensures that their efforts are aligned with the project's overarching goals.

#### 3.1.2 Creation of the Ethos

The development of the RURALITIES Project Ethos was a comprehensive and collaborative process. It emerged from a series of crucial steps that helped crystallize the core values and principles guiding the project. The project team engaged in dialogues with a diverse array of stakeholders, including rural communities, sustainability experts, ecosystem enhancement specialists, educators, and policy-makers. These discussions played a pivotal role in identifying the fundamental values that should shape the project's ethos. Research and evidence-based best practices also played a crucial role in shaping the ethos. The team conducted thorough research to identify global exemplars in rural development, sustainability, and knowledge sharing. This research formed the bedrock upon which the ethos was constructed, ensuring that it was firmly grounded in proven approaches.

Perhaps most importantly, the creation of the ethos was an iterative process that involved feedback loops with the target audience itself – the Role Models and Replicators. Their perspectives, insights, and experiences were continuously incorporated into the ethos. This dynamic approach ensured that the ethos remained a living document that evolved in response to the evolving needs and experiences of those it aimed to serve. Furthermore, the ethos was intentionally designed to align seamlessly with regional and national policies related to rural development, sustainability, and education. This alignment not only ensured that the project remained compliant with existing regulations but also enhanced its potential for long-term impact and scalability.

Lastly, the ethos was crafted with flexibility and adaptability in mind. It recognizes the ever-evolving nature of rural challenges and opportunities and emphasizes the project's commitment to adapt to future challenges and innovations as they emerge. This forward-looking perspective empowers Role Models and Replicators to stay agile in their approaches and continue driving meaningful change within rural communities.

### 3.1.3 WHO? – Identifying the actors of the RURALITIES Community

The "RURALITIES TRAINING" segment within the broader RURALITIES project assumes a critical role in empowering and equipping two distinct groups: Role Models and Replicators. This section will explore the significance of these roles for our target audience and delve into the development and structure of this component to effectively cater to their needs. In this section, our objective is to define and profile the individuals and entities comprising the RURALITIES Community.

#### **Role Models: Inspiring Positive Change**

Role models embody individuals who serve as beacons of inspiration and motivation, guiding others through their exemplary behavior, attitudes, and successful achievements. Their role within the RURALITIES project cannot be exaggerated. Role models are set to become living examples of what can be accomplished through sustainable practices and innovative solutions. Their actions and accomplishments will serve as a source of inspiration and motivation for facilitators and local communities alike, demonstrating the feasibility of implementing project initiatives. The role of role models extends beyond mere inspiration. They are instrumental in providing guidance and mentorship to the unorganized rural actors involved in the project. Sharing their experiences and wisdom, they help others navigate the challenges and opportunities presented by rural development and sustainability. By embodying excellence and ethical behavior in their respective fields or communities, role models set high standards for others to aspire to achieve. Essentially, they become benchmarks for success within the RURALITIES project, influencing positive changes in behavior and attitudes within rural communities. Role models lead by example, and their influence has the potential to trigger broader transformation within rural communities, catalyzing sustainable development in various dimensions.

#### **Replicators: Spreading Success Across Diverse Landscapes**

In contrast, replicators play a pivotal role in taking the successful practices, models, and innovations developed within the RURALITIES project and adapting them to the diverse rural contexts across participating countries. They are instrumental in ensuring that these innovations have a far-reaching impact, reaching beyond the project's immediate sphere. Replicators are endowed with the expertise to adapt these successful models to new contexts, thereby ensuring their relevance and effectiveness in addressing the unique challenges faced by different rural settings. They serve as key agents in disseminating best practices and innovations to diverse areas and communities, effectively bridging the gap between project achievements and their widespread utilization. Furthermore, replicators contribute to the learning process by providing valuable feedback on the implementation of replicated models. This feedback loop leads to continuous improvements and refinements, enhancing the overall effectiveness of project initiatives. By replicating successful models, replicators play an indispensable role in realizing the project's vision on a broader scale, maximizing the positive impact of our efforts.

#### **Diverse Rural Actors: The Foundation of the Project**

The success of the RURALITIES project hinges on the active involvement of a wide spectrum of rural actors. This diverse group includes farmers, local business owners, educators, community leaders, and local government officials, all of whom play pivotal roles in implementing project practices and innovations within

their communities. In essence, they are the backbone that transforms the project's vision into reality at the grassroots level. Rural actors bring invaluable local knowledge and expertise to the table, which is indispensable for tailoring project initiatives to local needs and conditions. They are instrumental in engaging and mobilizing the broader community, ensuring widespread participation and support for project activities. Their feedback and insights contribute to project refinements, making it more effective and relevant to local contexts. Importantly, the long-term success of the project hinges on the continued involvement and commitment of these rural actors, ensuring that project initiatives continue to thrive and create lasting positive change beyond the project's timeline.

### **Project Partners: A Collaborative Network for Rural Development**

Our project partners represent a diverse and dedicated group of organizations, institutions, and stakeholders committed to rural development and sustainability. They are critical collaborators in the RURALITIES project, actively participating in translating project concepts into actionable steps within their areas of expertise and geographic regions. These partners bring deep insights into local conditions, contributing invaluable knowledge crucial for adapting project initiatives to the unique needs and environments of rural areas. They serve as vital links between the project and local communities, fostering meaningful connections and mobilizing community members to actively participate in project activities. Partners with a focus on innovation and technology play a pivotal role in identifying cutting-edge solutions and integrating them into project initiatives. The collective efforts, expertise, and resources of our 52 project partners create a powerful force for rural development and innovation.

#### **3.1.4 WHERE? – Pilot Areas and Beyond**

In the context of the RURALITIES Training initiative, one of the fundamental aspects revolves around the identification and utilization of specific areas known as SIMSES, or Simplified Rural Socio-Ecological Systems. These designated sites play a pivotal role in the successful implementation and dissemination of the project's methodologies. In this section, we will delve into the significance and roles of SIMSES within the RURALITIES project, explore the various demonstration areas, and emphasize the broader reach of our mission beyond the initial pilot areas.

### **Understanding SIMSES within RURALITIES**

Within the RURALITIES project, SIMSES, which stands for Simplified Rural Socioeconomic Systems, represent a distinct and innovative approach to comprehending rural regions across diverse geographical locations worldwide. These systems offer a holistic framework for assessing various facets of rural areas, encompassing their geographical characteristics, demographic composition, economic activities, and developmental strategies. SIMSES serve as focal points for comprehensive exploration, enabling a deep dive into the unique attributes and challenges faced by rural communities. In order to facilitate a deeper understanding of this particular concept, we've taken the initiative to create tailored visual representations within the training materials, catering to the unique needs of different audience groups. These visuals (ANNEX 1, Figure 5) have been thoughtfully designed to address potential difficulties that individuals from various backgrounds or levels of expertise might encounter while trying to grasp the subject matter, ultimately serving as valuable tools to enhance their comprehension and learning experience.

### **Demonstration Areas of RURALITIES**

In line with the RURALITIES project's objectives, we have identified six demonstration areas strategically located in different regions. These areas serve as exemplars, illustrating the diversity of SIMSES and rural contexts across the project. The selected demonstration areas encompass:

**1. Marche, ITALY**

**2. Veneto, ITALY**

**3. Highland and Islands, Scotland, UK**

**4. Posavje, SLOVENIA**

**5. Asturias, SPAIN**

**6. Iasi, ROMANIA**

In summary, SIMSES are pivotal for practically demonstrating and adapting the methodologies of the RURALITIES Training initiative. These designated areas enable us to validate and refine our approaches, ensuring their suitability and sustainability within local communities. Moreover, rural actors play a central role in implementing these methodologies, guaranteeing their applicability and long-term impact on the ground. The geolocations and various characteristics are prominently displayed in ANNEX 1, specifically within the visual representations presented in Figures 6 and 7. These figures provide a comprehensive and detailed overview of the locations and attributes in question, offering a valuable reference for further analysis and understanding.

### **Project Partner Countries from Europe and Africa**

Our commitment within the RURALITIES Training initiative extends beyond the confines of demonstration areas. We are dedicated to sharing the valuable insights and findings gained from our SIMSES not only with the participating European countries but also with our partners in Africa. This commitment to knowledge transfer forms the cornerstone of our mission and is achieved through a multifaceted approach.

We actively engage with local communities, policymakers, and stakeholders in participating EU countries to ensure that the lessons learned and successful practices are integrated into regional and national policies. Our collaboration with African partners facilitates the exchange of knowledge and best practices, empowering rural communities on a broader scale. This unwavering commitment to disseminating our findings underscores our dedication to global rural development and sustainability, transcending borders and making a meaningful impact on rural areas worldwide.

### **3.1.5 WHAT? – Presenting the Knowledge Alliance and Rural Thrive campaign**

#### **RURALITIES Knowledge Alliance**

The Knowledge Exchange component within the RURALITIES project plays a pivotal role in advancing its mission of promoting rural innovation and sustainability. At its core, the RURALITIES Knowledge Alliance serves as an active hub where diverse expertise converges, fostering collaboration and the exchange of valuable insights. This exchange is a two-way street, involving both the contribution of expertise by role models and replicators from various backgrounds and the distribution of this knowledge to rural actors.

In this training section we emphasize the central role of the Knowledge Alliance in driving rural development. The main message here is that the alliance acts as a catalyst for innovation, drawing on the wealth of expertise contributed by role models and replicators. These individuals shall bring a diverse range of knowledge, spanning areas such as transportation, eco-tourism, cultural heritage, agriculture, vocational education, and more, enriching the collective expertise of the alliance. We also highlight the objectives of this knowledge exchange. These objectives encompass the promotion of knowledge sharing, the creation of a comprehensive knowledge repository, and the dissemination of insights through a multi-channel approach. This collective knowledge serves as a foundation for developing innovative methodologies, best practices, and sustainable strategies aimed at enhancing rural ecosystems and promoting climate-smart practices.

This part stresses the significance of this knowledge exchange beyond the alliance's boundaries. The project's commitment to reaching rural actors in diverse regions is underscored, emphasizing that the knowledge generated within the alliance is not confined to its members. By adopting a multi-channel approach, including traditional methods and digital platforms, the project ensures that these valuable insights benefit a wider audience and contribute to the sustainable development of rural areas.

## **RURAL Thrive 2050**

The RURALITIES project goes beyond being a platform for innovation and knowledge exchange within its network; it strives to make a global impact. This section aims to draw the attention to this introducing the audience into the details of the RURAL Thrive 2050 campaign.

This explanation is crucial because it underscores the pivotal and indispensable role that role models and replicators play in the success of the Rural Thrive 2050 Campaign. It emphasizes that their responsibilities span across various critical dimensions, highlighting their active participation in shaping the campaign's direction through the participative design process. Furthermore, it emphasizes their direct engagement with rural communities during the local testing phase, ensuring that the campaign resonates effectively and addresses the unique needs of these communities.

The explanation also stresses the role of these individuals as campaign ambassadors, emphasizing their responsibility to promote the campaign's message while aligning it with broader EU goals and strategies for 2030 and 2050. Additionally, it underscores the importance of leveraging the knowledge and insights gained through their involvement in the RURALITIES project. This knowledge dissemination aspect is particularly significant, as it empowers rural communities with evidence-based solutions, project results, and key findings, providing them with the necessary tools and insights for sustainable development.

At its core, this section offers a comprehensive roadmap that guides individuals and groups involved in planning and executing their future activities effectively. By providing this structured guidance, the training material empowers users to make informed decisions and set clear goals, ultimately contributing to the overall success and impact of their endeavors.

### **3.1.6 WHY? – Detailing synergies**

The importance of the concepts outlined in this section - creating synergies, problem-solving, and building knowledge - cannot be overstated in the context of rural development. Firstly, creating synergies is crucial because rural challenges are often multifaceted and interconnected. By collaborating with diverse stakeholders, we can pool resources, expertise, and ideas to address complex issues comprehensively. This holistic approach enhances the impact of our efforts, fostering innovation and breaking down silos that can hinder progress in rural areas.

Secondly, effective problem-solving is vital for addressing the urgent needs of rural communities. Many rural areas face pressing challenges like limited access to essential services and economic opportunities. Problem-solving not only improves the quality of life in these areas but also empowers communities to actively



participate in finding solutions, promoting self-reliance and resilience. It lays the foundation for sustainable futures by focusing on long-term solutions that can adapt to future challenges.

Lastly, building knowledge is essential for rural development because it allows us to leverage expertise and tap into the valuable resource of accumulated knowledge. This knowledge-rich environment enables continuous learning and improvement, ensuring that our actions are evidence-based and effective. Sharing this knowledge amplifies the impact of our efforts, benefitting a broader audience and informing policy and decision-making in favor of rural development.

### 3.1.7 HOW? – Showing ways to execute

Addressing this question holds paramount importance in the realm of activity implementation, as it serves as a critical bridge between conceptual objectives and practical execution. By clarifying the tools and methodologies required to achieve our desired goals, we not only provide a clear roadmap but also ensure the feasibility and effectiveness of our endeavors. This comprehensive understanding of the practical aspects equips our actors to make informed decisions, select the most appropriate resources, and strategize for successful implementation.

Moreover, addressing this question fosters a proactive mindset, encouraging actors to accurately plan and consider the details of the anticipated activities. It empowers us to align our efforts with the most suitable tools and methodologies, enhancing our efficiency and effectiveness in navigating the complexities of implementation. In essence, this step ensures that the actions are not just well-intentioned but also well-prepared, setting the stage for the successful realization of the objectives in a structured and systematic manner.

The RURALITIES project emphasizes a multi-actor approach to co-creation, involving diverse stakeholders such as role models, replicators, local communities, experts, and policymakers. This approach is detailed in this section as a wide range of perspectives and expertise are included. Through participative workshops, seminars, and interactive sessions, collaborative discussions and refinement of ideas take place, fostering valuable input from participants to shape the project's direction. Collaborative decision-making is favoured, based on consensus building, is central to the project's philosophy, aiming to create solutions that resonate with all stakeholders and cultivate a sense of ownership and commitment.

Utilizing RURALITIES resources get extra attention here leveraging the Knowledge Alliance as a central hub for knowledge creation and sharing, encompassing various fields like transportation, eco-tourism, cultural heritage, agriculture, vocational education, and training. Participants' expertise is integrated into this knowledge base, enriching it with practical insights and experiences. Additionally, the project utilizes a supportive ecosystem of living labs for real-scale practice and experimentation, along with a digital platform for knowledge exchange and collaboration.

In terms of knowledge development, this section offers continuous learning opportunities through explaining training programs, workshops, and seminars tailored to enhance participants' skills and knowledge. Peer-to-peer learning is mentioned as well, facilitating knowledge exchange among role models and replicators. Participants are expected to actively gather information, participate in events, and stay updated on relevant developments, contributing to the alliance's knowledge base. The project also provides access to various resources, including guides, toolkits, and publications to support individuals in their role in knowledge development, with the ultimate goal of benefiting rural communities.

### 3.1.8 OUTCOMES – Focusing on results

The RURALITIES Knowledge Alliance and the RURAL Thrive 2050 campaign constitute pivotal elements within the project, offering a profound and comprehensive resource ecosystem to all participating actors.

The Knowledge Alliance serves as a central nexus for the creation and dissemination of knowledge across a spectrum of domains, ranging from transportation and eco-tourism to cultural heritage, agriculture, vocational education, and training. Through active engagement, participants contribute their invaluable expertise to this alliance, enriching it with practical insights and real-world experiences. This collaboration is designed to transcend the project's immediate duration, creating a robust foundation for ongoing utilization and long-term impact.

Moreover, the RURAL Thrive 2050 campaign complements this knowledge ecosystem by encapsulating the overarching vision and goals of the initiative. It acts as a strategic roadmap, offering a coherent framework for stakeholders to navigate and align their efforts. The campaign's emphasis on sustainability, innovation, and holistic rural development underscores its enduring relevance. By embedding the principles and insights generated through the Knowledge Alliance into the fabric of the RURAL Thrive 2050 campaign, the project aspires to leave an indelible and positive mark on rural communities, fostering lasting improvements and resilience well beyond the project's initial timeframe.

### 3.1.9 The way forward

In conclusion, the finale of the preceding sections is encapsulated with a comprehensive visual representation that briefly illustrates the essence of the anticipated activities within RURALITIES project. This visual serves as a powerful reminder of the multi-actor co-creation approach, the utilization of project resources through the Knowledge Alliance and supportive ecosystem, and the continuous knowledge development process. Beyond being an informative summary, this concluding segment serves as a clarion call to action, inspiring readers to actively engage with the project team. It implores individuals to reach out and join the collaborative efforts, leveraging their diverse expertise and experiences to make a meaningful impact on rural communities, thus turning the vision of RURALITIES into a tangible reality.

## 3.2 Creation process

In this section, we offer a comprehensive insight into the complex process of crafting our training materials, shedding light on the significant role that background knowledge played in shaping our strategic decisions. We delve into the particular steps taken to develop these resources and the wealth of contextual information and expertise that informed our choices, ultimately ending in a well-informed training program.

### Analyses

Prior to the design of the training material, conducting a thorough analysis of training needs was imperative. This critical step was essential to ascertain that the program aligns with the specific requirements and expectations of participants and project partners, with the ultimate goal of ensuring their sustained engagement and active participation throughout the program. This matter has been deliberated at the work package level, involving active participation and discussions among the various partners within the working group.

### Audience

The audience for the programme is wide ranging and requires engaged role models to deliver useful outcomes. Within D5.1 steps are laid out about how the project identifies and maps out key actors within the SIMSES. This then facilitates partners in identifying which of these actors could be trained to be facilitators and role models who will engage with this capacity building programme to recruit further actors to meet the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

Participants are expected to have a baseline proficiency in English for effective communication; however, it's crucial to note that the training materials will be translated into the respective languages of the SIMSES regions as needed. This step is of paramount importance to the project, given its diverse presence across multiple countries, and it serves as a means to foster engagement from all these regions. By minimizing language barriers and enhancing collaboration, the project aims to facilitate seamless knowledge sharing where it is most required, ensuring accessibility and ease of information dissemination.

The identification of facilitators for the RURALITIES project will be a result of extensive communication and engagement efforts within the selected SIMSES. This process is documented in D5.2 (to be completed by M24) and supplemented with D6.3 (also by M24) to establish the RURALITIES Hubs. To ensure maximum engagement and efficiency, selected facilitators may be grouped together, given the project's wide-reaching scope and the substantial number of participants involved. Grouping facilitates the dissemination of information, reducing the number of necessary workshops. Depending on how these groupings are organized, they can also encourage open communication across various levels of participant knowledge and expertise across different sectors. By grouping across target groups, as outlined in D4.1, participants gain a deeper understanding of the unique challenges each group faces, fostering collaborative problem-solving and the consolidation of valuable knowledge within the project.

## Design

The training material for the RURALITIES project will be presented in PDF and PowerPoint (PPT) formats and is designed to stand alone as a comprehensive resource. The effectiveness of this resource hinges on its design, which aims to ensure that the training material is not only easy to comprehend but also reflects the core ethos and brand of the project. Electronic formats enable straightforward navigation and links to other essential project resources that will be essential for role models and replicators. However, recognizing the diverse geographical regions we aim to reach, the material will also be designed with accessibility in mind, allowing for the possibility of printing hard copies for dissemination in areas with limited internet access or as a contingency plan for technical issues.

The project has already established templates and brand guidelines, ensuring consistency in the RURALITIES visual identity across all materials, including the training material. Visual aids such as images and graphics are strategically incorporated to illustrate relationships and pathways, enhancing participants' understanding at various stages of the project. Importantly, the training material will encapsulate the RURALITIES ethos, permeating through the imagery and content, enabling participants to gauge alignment with the project's values and their potential contributions to it. This comprehensive approach aims to ensure a shared understanding of the program, whether at the participant or facilitator level, throughout the project's lifecycle.

## 3.3 Implementation

The RURALITIES TRAINING (Annex 1) is an easy-to-understand explanation of RURALITIES and as such its use is two fold: it provides self-directed learning for facilitators and role models and can also be used at workshops or networking events as an introduction to the RURALITIES project. The training material can be used at various stages of the training to ensure that all facilitators have the same understanding, no matter what point they join the project as it spans into the future.

The material will be disseminated to all role models and replicators for self-directed learning but if a number of facilitators join at the same point, the presentation can be delivered at short introductory workshops. If required, these workshops will be repeated on a semi-regular basis, every 6 months as new participants join the project.

As workshops are held and this material is used, feedback should be encouraged from facilitators so that adjustments can be made. This will also allow partners conducting any sessions to see any patterns or areas where questions might be continually asked and therefore need to be included in later iterations of the handbook, if required. The 'Plan, Do, review' cycle will be used to gather any pertinent feedback. A short

summary or survey will be completed after workshops to note any issues and can be brought together to see patterns of questions that are repeatedly asked. This also allows an opportunity for continued support for facilitators and reinforces the idea of collaboration with their feedback for changes to the document. Addressing any issues early in the series of workshops means that the material can develop with the project and become a stronger resource.

Creating role descriptions and entry requirements for facilitators in the RURALITIES project is a crucial step in ensuring that the right individuals are selected to effectively contribute to the project's objectives. These descriptions will be meticulously crafted, outlining the specific skills, qualifications, and experience required for facilitators to excel in their roles. Considerations regarding the diversity of backgrounds and expertise needed to cater to the project's multi-actor approach, encompassing various stakeholders, including role models, local communities, experts, and policymakers.

The screening and selection process of facilitators are based on these role descriptions and may involve interviews, assessments, or other evaluation methods. This step is essential to identify candidates who not only meet the entry requirements but also align with the project's ethos and values, as highlighted in project ethics. Additionally, considerations related to accessibility, inclusivity, and diversity are paramount.

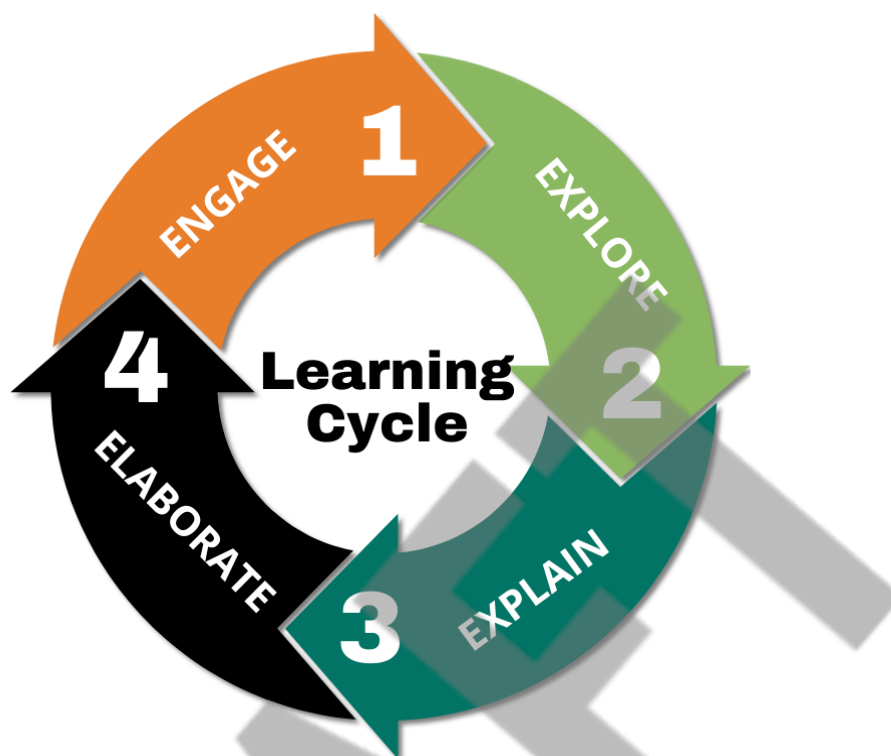
This selection process ties into the overarching framework of WP4, which focuses on the project's multi-actor approach and stakeholder engagement. By carefully defining roles and entry requirements, the project can better execute its objectives, ensuring that facilitators possess the necessary skills and qualities to drive collaboration and knowledge sharing effectively across the diverse range of participants and stakeholders involved in RURALITIES.

### 3.4 Evaluation

The evaluation of the training material and activities is a vital component of the RURALITIES project, as it helps identify areas that may need further refinement or clarification. The material has intentionally been designed with simplicity in mind to facilitate understanding of the project's complexity. However, as the project progresses, it's important to remain open to potential additions or adjustments as needed.

The proposed learning cycle, which involves engaging, exploring, explaining, and elaborating, offers a structured approach to evaluating the training material (Figure 1). It starts with engaging participants and introducing them to the project's ethos, particularly crucial as role models are volunteers. During the exploration phase, workshops with role models can help extract their expertise and knowledge, which should be incorporated into the training material from their respective sectors.

The explanation phase involves providing step-by-step guidance to role models, ensuring they fully grasp the concepts and buy into the project's goals. Finally, the elaboration phase recognizes that participants may have varying levels of understanding, requiring different degrees of detail and clarification. This learning cycle is continuous, allowing for ongoing feedback and adjustments to improve the training material until the desired outcomes are achieved. By using this iterative approach, the project can ensure that the capacity building handbook remains effective and relevant throughout its implementation.



*Figure 1 Learning cycle*

### 3.5 Impact measurement

In line with the previous section, evaluating the training's effectiveness can encompass both quantitative and qualitative measures. Quantitative measures may include monitoring invitation uptake, tracking drop-out rates, and recording completion numbers among participants. These metrics provide numerical insights into the engagement and progress of learners within the program.

On the qualitative side, gathering learner feedback is essential. It may be collected through surveys, interviews, or focus groups, allowing participants to share their insights, suggestions, and perceptions about the training material. Additionally, follow-up assessments after a defined time period can gauge the long-term impact of the training on participants' knowledge and skills. Learner self-evaluation is another qualitative measure, enabling participants to reflect on their own progress and learning journey. Ultimately, the feedback collected from both quantitative and qualitative measures will inform the refinement of the training material to meet the desired outcomes. This iterative process ensures that the handbook remains effective, aligns with the project's ethos, and continues to serve the needs of the diverse group of participants and stakeholders involved in RURALITIES. The data and insights obtained through these measurements will be carefully analyzed and included as valuable components in the documentation outlined in D4.3.

## 4 SUPPORTIVE TOOLS AND MEASURES

To facilitate the effective dissemination and comprehension of the information integrated into our training materials, we have taken deliberate measures to provide additional resources that enhance the facilitation process. One such resource is a carefully prepared PowerPoint presentation (PPT) that complements the core training material. This PPT (in Annex 3) serves as a valuable tool for facilitating quick and informative introductions during workshops and online events, offering a visual aid that can significantly help participants in grasping the key concepts and insights presented in the training material. It acts as a dynamic supplement that helps to engage learners more effectively, making complex information more accessible and digestible.

Additionally, we have carefully crafted a step-by-step guide, documented (in ANNEX 2), specifically designed to assist our project partners in introducing role models and replicators to the RURALITIES project. This guide serves as a comprehensive resource, providing project partners with clear and detailed instructions on how to effectively onboard and engage these critical stakeholders. By offering this structured approach, we aim to ensure that project partners can seamlessly integrate role models and replicators into the RURALITIES framework, fostering an environment of collaboration and knowledge exchange.

Importantly, both the PowerPoint presentation and the step-by-step guide are designed to be adaptable and flexible, allowing for adjustments based on the invaluable feedback and insights received from our project partners and stakeholders. This iterative approach guarantees that these resources remain current, relevant, and aligned with the evolving needs of the project and its diverse community of actors.

## 5 CONCLUSION AND WAY FORWARD

D4.2 is designed to be a living and evolving resource, continually updated to reflect dynamic components such as the Rural Thrive Campaign and the RURALITIES Knowledge Alliance. These elements are expected to undergo changes and adaptations throughout the duration of the project, necessitating periodic revisions. HITRANS, as the anticipated task owner, will oversee the process of making necessary adjustments to the document in response to the evolving project landscape. They will also ensure that the consortium and the wider RURALITIES community are kept informed and updated regarding any modifications. This approach allows D4.2 to remain relevant and responsive to the project's evolving realities.

Several aspects and findings arising from these training activities, which encompass valuable feedback provided by role models and replicators, will play an integral role in shaping and contributing to the content and outcomes of D4.3. This deliverable is anticipated to be submitted by M18.

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## 6 ANNEXES

### 6.1 Annex 1 - RURALITIES TRAINING to Empower Role models and Replicators

# "RURALITIES TRAINING", designed to empower and equip Role Models and Replicators



**Ruralities**

## RURALITIES: Empowering Rural Futures, Together

### WELCOME TO RURALITIES

#### Introduction

Welcome to the 'Climate Smart, Ecosystem-Enhancing, and Knowledge-Based Rural Expertise and Training Centres' project, or RURALITIES in short. This innovative initiative is designed to transform the way rural communities engage and benefit from advancements in sustainable practices and technology. At its heart, RURALITIES is about empowering rural areas through knowledge and expertise. This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation program under grant agreement no 101060876. UK participants in Horizon Europe Project RURALITIES are supported by UKRI grant numbers: 10051963 The Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership and 10050988 Earthwatch Europe.



Funded by  
the European Union



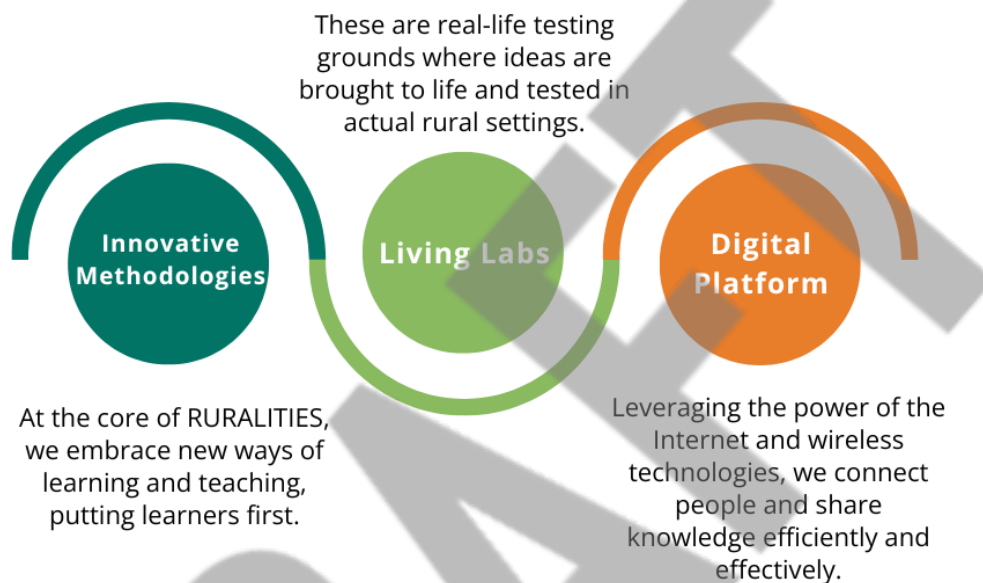
Innovate  
UK

#### What is RURALITIES?



RURALITIES is a project that establishes a network of learning hubs, known as 'RURALITIES Hubs.' These hubs are the epicentres of learning and innovation, designed to enhance ecosystems and drive climate action in rural settings. The project uniquely combines various elements:

## Ruralities elements



*Figure 2 RURALITIES Elements*

### The Role of Facilitators and Role Models

A key to our approach is the deployment of over 1,000 facilitators across participating countries. These individuals are more than just trainers; they are coaches, role models, and hub coordinators. They are instrumental in weaving the network that supports our learning framework.

### Real-Scale Practice in Simplified Rural Socio-Ecological Systems (SIMSES)

RURALITIES is not just theoretical; it's grounded in real-world practice. We have 6 SIMSES – or demonstration sites – spread across Italy, the United Kingdom, Slovenia, Spain, and Romania. These sites allow us to test, implement, and refine our approaches in genuine rural settings.

### Our Goals

The ultimate goal of RURALITIES is to foster rural innovation. By connecting local and regional authorities and influencing policy, we aim to create a sustainable and resilient future for rural communities. Our training and expertise sharing across the RURALITIES Hubs are tailored to ensure that rural innovators are not left behind in the rapidly advancing world.

### Join Us

As a part of RURALITIES Community, you are joining a movement that values rural communities and seeks to enhance them through education, innovation, and collaboration.

Welcome aboard on behalf of RURALITIES Project Consortium!

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## RURALITIES Project Ethos



At the heart of the RURALITIES project lies a deep commitment to empowering rural communities through an innovative blend of sustainability, ecosystem enhancement, and knowledge sharing. Our ethos is built upon the following foundational pillars:

### 1. Sustainability as a Way of Life

We believe in fostering a sustainable future where rural communities thrive in harmony with the environment. Our actions and initiatives are driven by the pursuit of long-term ecological balance and resource efficiency.

### 2. Ecosystem Enhancement

Central to our mission is the enhancement of rural ecosystems. We champion practices that support biodiversity, soil health, water conservation, and overall ecological integrity. Our living labs and SIMSES are testaments to this commitment, serving as real-world examples of how rural landscapes can be rejuvenated and preserved for future generations.

### 3. Empowering through Knowledge

Knowledge is the cornerstone of progress. RURALITIES is dedicated to creating and disseminating knowledge that empowers rural innovators and communities. Through our network of hubs and digital platforms, we facilitate learning, skill development, and the exchange of best practices.

### 4. Collaborative Learning and Innovation

We believe in the power of collaboration. By bringing together facilitators, role models, local authorities, and community members, we create a dynamic environment where ideas flourish and innovation is nurtured.

### 5. Inclusivity and Accessibility

Inclusivity is at the core of our approach. We strive to make our resources, learning opportunities, and innovations accessible to all, regardless of their background or location.

### 6. Adapting to Future Challenges

The RURALITIES project is not static; it is a living, evolving initiative. We are committed to future-proofing our strategies and methodologies to adapt to new challenges and advancements in rural innovation.

### 7. Policy Alignment and Influence

Recognizing the importance of supportive policy frameworks, we actively work towards aligning our initiatives with regional and national policies, ensuring that our efforts are not only effective but also sustainable in the long run.

## WHO? – The Involvement

### Role Models

Role models are individuals who serve as examples to be emulated by others, particularly in terms of behaviour, attitudes, and successful achievements. They play a crucial part in setting standards and exemplifying positive traits.

#### Roles:

- **Inspiration and Motivation:** They inspire and motivate others by demonstrating what is possible through their own actions and achievements.
- **Guidance and Mentorship:** Role models often provide guidance and mentorship, sharing their experiences and wisdom.
- **Setting Standards:** They set standards of excellence and ethical behaviour in their respective fields or communities.
- **Influencing Change:** By leading by example, they influence others to adopt positive changes in their behaviour and attitudes.

### Replicators

Replicators are individuals or entities that duplicate or replicate successful models, practices, or systems developed elsewhere. They adapt these models to new contexts or locations, ensuring that successful practices are widely disseminated and utilised.

#### Roles:

- **Adaptation and Implementation:** Replicators adapt successful models to new contexts, ensuring relevance and effectiveness.
- **Spreading Best Practices:** They play a key role in spreading best practices and innovations across different areas or communities.
- **Learning and Feedback:** Replicators contribute to the learning process by providing feedback on the implementation of replicated models, leading to improvements and refinements.
- **Creating Impact at Scale:** By replicating successful models, they help to create a broader impact, benefiting larger communities.

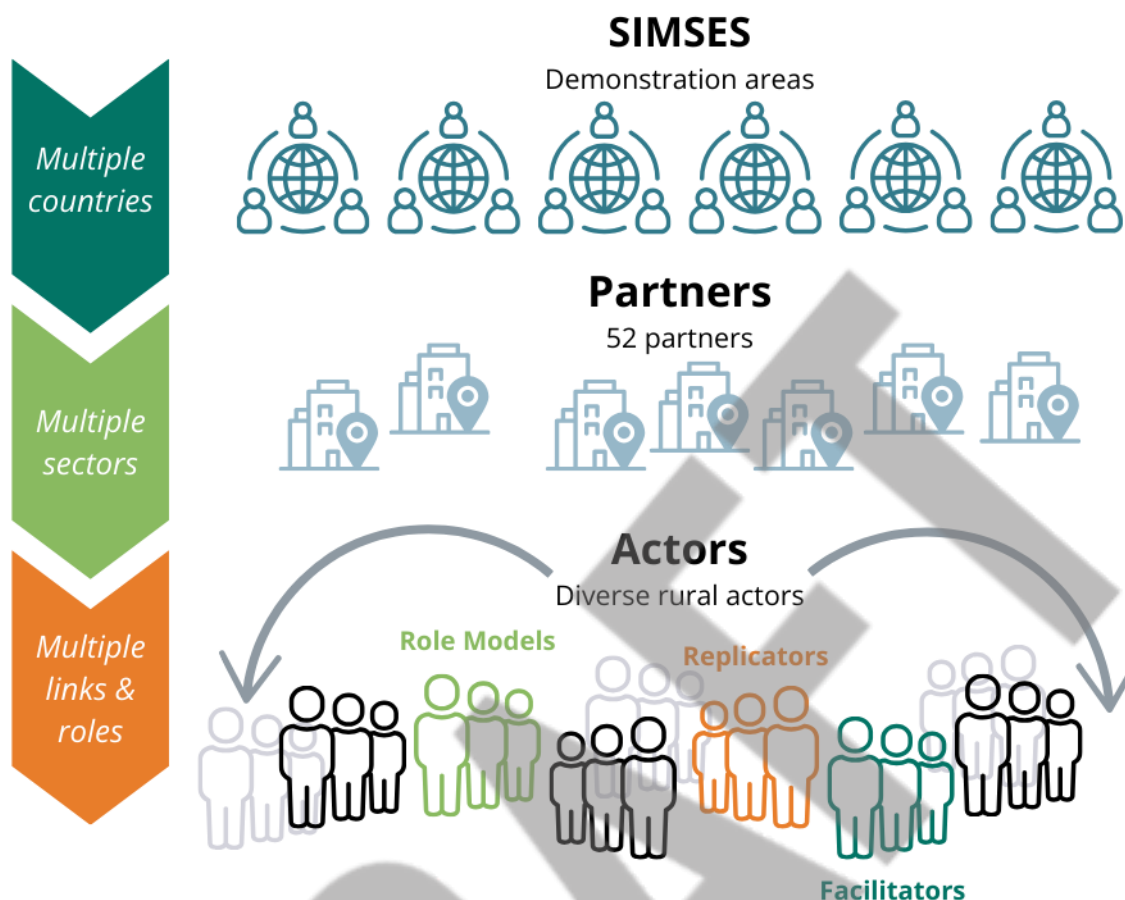


Figure 3 Actors of RURALITIES

### The Link to RURALITIES Project

In the context of the RURALITIES project, both role models and replicators have pivotal roles:



**Role Models:** These individuals will be key in demonstrating the efficacy of RURALITIES methodologies and practices. They will inspire and guide facilitators and local communities, showcasing how sustainable practices and innovative solutions can be successfully implemented in rural settings. Their real-life examples of success will be a driving force in motivating participants to embrace and implement project initiatives.



**Replicators:** These will be crucial in taking the successful practices and learnings from the RURALITIES Hubs and adapting them to various rural contexts across the participating countries. They ensure that the innovations and methodologies developed in the project are not confined to the demonstration sites (SIMSES) but are spread widely, leading to a larger-scale impact. By adapting the RURALITIES model to diverse rural settings, they help in realising the project's vision on a broader scale.

Both roles are integral to the RURALITIES project, ensuring not just the adoption of new practices and technologies but also their adaptation and widespread implementation across diverse rural landscapes.

### Diverse Rural Actors

Rural actors in the context of the RURALITIES project include a wide range of stakeholders within rural communities – from farmers, local business owners, and educators to community leaders and local government officials.



### Roles of Rural Actors:

- **Implementation Partners:** Rural actors are key in implementing the practices and innovations proposed by the RURALITIES project within their communities.
- **Local Knowledge and Expertise:** They bring invaluable local knowledge and expertise, crucial for adapting project initiatives to local needs and conditions.
- **Community Engagement:** They play a significant role in engaging and mobilising the wider community, ensuring broader participation and support.
- **Feedback and Insights:** Rural actors provide essential feedback and insights, helping to tailor the project to be more effective and relevant to local contexts.
- **Sustainability and Continuity:** Their involvement is vital for the sustainability and long-term success of the project, ensuring that the initiatives continue to thrive beyond the project timeline.

### Project Partners

Project partners are essential collaborators in the RURALITIES project, representing a diverse group of organisations, institutions, and stakeholders committed to rural development and sustainability.

### Roles of Project Partners:

- **Implementation:** Project partners actively participate in the implementation of the RURALITIES project's initiatives. They are instrumental in translating project concepts into actionable steps within their respective areas of expertise and geographic regions.
- **Knowledge and Expertise:** Leveraging their deep understanding of local conditions, project partners contribute invaluable local knowledge and expertise. This knowledge is indispensable for adapting project initiatives to the unique needs, cultures, and environments of rural areas.
- **Community Engagement:** Project partners are at the forefront of community engagement. They serve as liaisons between the project and local communities, fostering meaningful connections and mobilising community members to participate actively in project activities.
- **Innovation Integration:** Partners with a focus on innovation and technology play a crucial role in identifying cutting-edge solutions and integrating them into project initiatives.
- **Collaborative Network:** Project partners are part of a collaborative network that extends the reach and influence of the RURALITIES project. Their collective efforts, expertise, and resources create a powerful force for rural development and innovation.

In the RURALITIES project, we have the privilege of working with a diverse and dedicated group of partners from across the globe. Our team is made up of 52 partners in total, each bringing their own unique strengths and resources to the project. These partners come from various organisations, and together, we collaborate effectively to achieve our project goals.

### EU Ruralities Partners

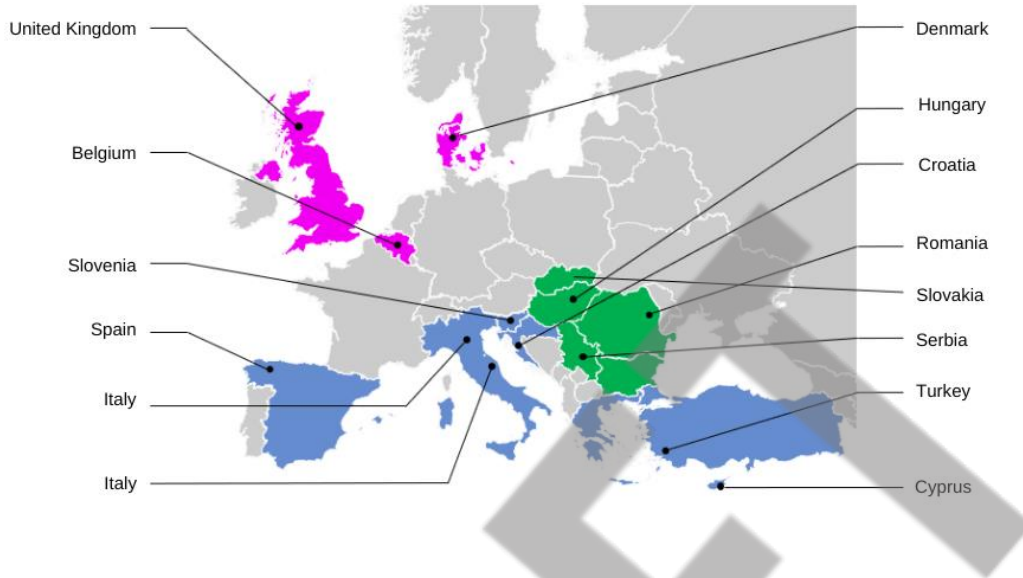


Figure 4 Map of partner countries in Europe

### AU Ruralities Partners

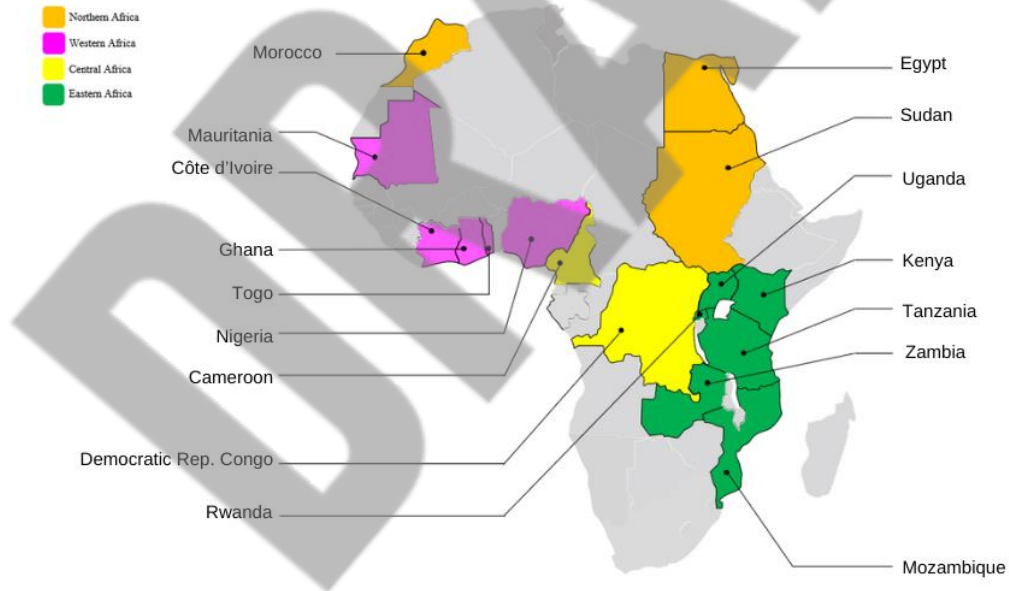


Figure 5 Map of partner countries in Africa

## WHERE? – Pilot Areas and Beyond

### SIMSES (Simplified Rural Socio-Ecological Systems)

In the RURALITIES project, SIMSES refers to specific sites or areas selected for implementing and demonstrating the project's methodologies. These are real-world, operational environments where various aspects of the project are tested, refined, and showcased.

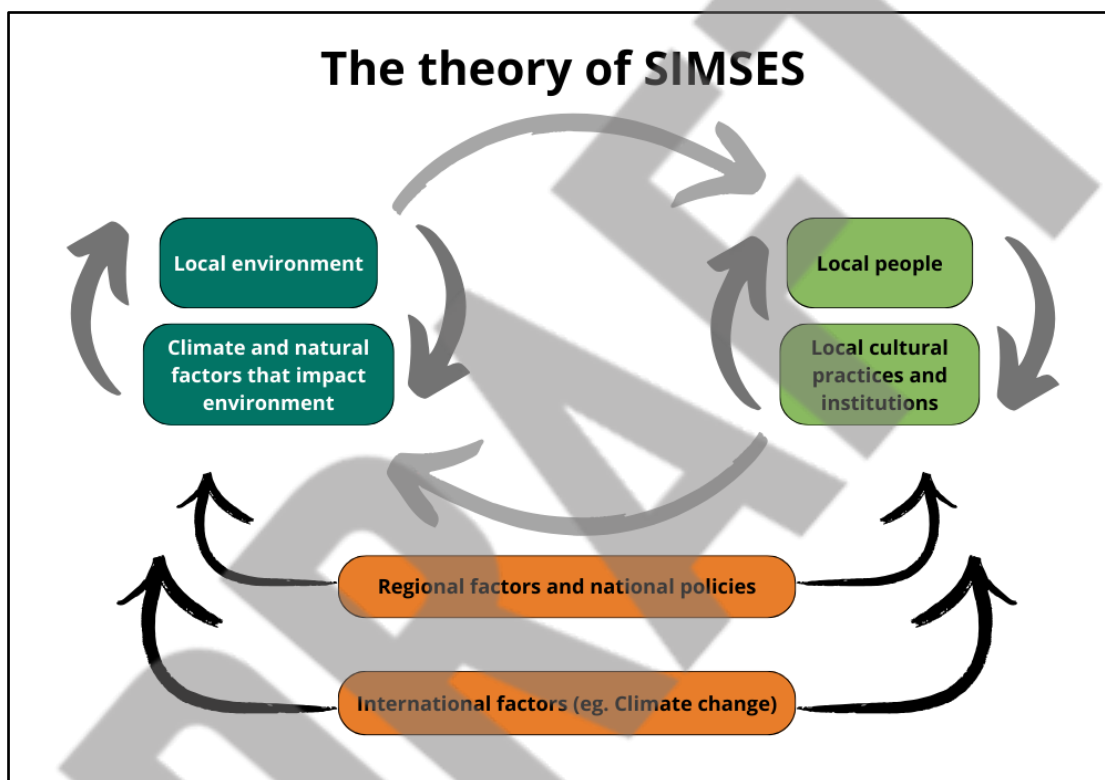


Figure 6 Credit: *Complex Social-Ecological Systems* by Bronwen Powell

### Roles of SIMSES:

- **Testing Grounds:** SIMSES serve as practical, real-life environments where new ideas, technologies, and methodologies can be tested and observed.
- **Demonstration Sites:** They act as showcases for successful practices, providing tangible evidence of the project's impact and effectiveness.
- **Learning and Adaptation:** SIMSES are crucial for learning about the local ecosystem and community dynamics, allowing for the adaptation of practices to suit specific rural contexts.
- **Feedback Loop:** These sites provide continuous feedback, aiding in the refinement and improvement of project methodologies.
- **Engagement Platforms:** They serve as engagement platforms for local communities, stakeholders, and project participants, fostering collaboration and participation.





*Figure 7 SIMSES locations in RURALITIES*

## SIMSES of RURALITIES

**Introduction to SIMSES (Simplified Rural Socioeconomic Systems):** SIMSES, an acronym for Simplified Rural Socioeconomic Systems, represents a unique approach to understanding and analysing rural regions across different parts of the world. These systems provide a comprehensive framework for evaluating various aspects of rural areas, including their geographical features, population, economic activities, and development strategies. Within the RURALITIES project, SIMSES areas serve as focal points for in-depth exploration, enabling us to delve into the distinctive characteristics and challenges faced by rural communities.

### **Demonstration Areas of Project RURALITIES:**

In the context of the RURALITIES project, 6 demonstration areas have been identified to showcase the diverse nature of SIMSES across different regions. These areas include:

Asturias	Highlands & Islands	Iasi	Pesaro Urbino	Posavje	Veneto
In northwest Spain with a strong rural presence	Across multiple NUTS-3 regions in Scotland	Northeast development region of Romania	Located in the Le Marche region of Italy	Situated in south-eastern Slovenia	Within province of Vicenza in Italy
78 municipalities	Natural beauty	Balanced and sustainable growth as part of National Plan for Rural Development	52 municipalities	Emphasising sustainability, vitality and connectivity	19 municipalities
10,604.09 sq. km	38,955 sq. km	339.28 sq. km	2,567.71 sq. km	885 sq. km	2,722.45 sq. km
Population of 1,011,560	Population of 448,253	36,114 inhabitants	Unique provincial structure	75,807 inhabitants	Substantial population of 855,297

Figure 8 SIMSES information

In summary, SIMSES are critical for the practical demonstration and adaptation of the RURALITIES project's methodologies, while rural actors are pivotal in implementing these methodologies, ensuring their relevance and sustainability within local communities. Both are integral to the success and impact of the RURALITIES project in enhancing rural innovation and sustainability.

#### Project Partner countries from Europe and Africa

RURALITIES is dedicated to ensuring that the valuable findings and insights gained from our Simplified Rural Socio-Ecological Systems (SIMSES) are not confined to demonstration areas alone. Our commitment extends to transferring these findings not only to the participating countries in the EU but also to our partners in Africa. This knowledge transfer is a cornerstone of our mission, and it will be achieved through a multi-faceted approach. We will actively engage with local communities, policymakers, and stakeholders in participating countries to ensure that the lessons learned and successful practices are integrated into regional and national policies. Moreover, our collaboration with African partners will facilitate the exchange of knowledge and best practices, empowering rural communities on a broader scale. This commitment to sharing and disseminating our findings underscores our dedication to global rural development and sustainability.

# WHAT? – Knowledge Alliance and RURAL Thrive 2050 campaign

## Knowledge Exchange in the RURALITIES project

One of the core pillars of the RURALITIES project is the establishment of the RURALITIES Knowledge Alliance. This alliance serves as a dynamic hub for knowledge creation, sharing, and distribution. It is a space where diverse skills and expertise converge to drive rural innovation and sustainability forward.

In this section, we will delve into the concept of knowledge exchange within the RURALITIES Knowledge Alliance. This exchange operates on a two-way street, encompassing both knowledge transfer to the alliance and the distribution of the knowledge base to rural actors through various channels.



### 1. Knowledge Transfer to RURALITIES Knowledge Alliance

The RURALITIES Knowledge Alliance thrives on the wealth of knowledge contributed by role models and replicators like you. Here's how your expertise plays a vital role in enriching the alliance:

#### a. Sharing Your Expertise

Your diverse backgrounds, skills, and experiences are invaluable assets. As role models and replicators, you will contribute to the alliance by sharing your knowledge of rural development, transportation, eco-tourism, cultural heritage, agriculture, vocational education, and training and many more areas.

#### b. Feeding into the Alliance

Your insights will be integrated into the alliance's collective knowledge base. This knowledge will serve as the foundation for innovative methodologies, best practices, and strategies aimed at enhancing rural ecosystems and promoting climate-smart practices.

## Multichannel approach



Figure 9 Multi-channel approach

### 2. Distributing the Knowledge Base to Rural Actors

The knowledge generated within the RURALITIES Knowledge Alliance is not confined within its boundaries. It is meant to reach and benefit rural actors across different regions. Here's how this knowledge is distributed:

#### a. Multi-Channel Approach

The RURALITIES project adopts a multi-channel approach to disseminate knowledge. This includes traditional methods such as workshops, seminars, and presentations, as well as digital platforms, publications, and collaborations with local and regional authorities.

## Rural Thrive 2050 Campaign: Driving Rural Sustainable Development

### Introduction

The RURALITIES project is not only about innovation and knowledge exchange within its network but also about making a significant impact on a global scale. One of the key components of this mission is the transcontinental African Union and European Union campaign 'Rural Thrive 2050.' This campaign aims to drive rural sustainable development and aligns with the correlated EU agendas for 2030 and 2050.



### Your Role in Rural Thrive 2050

As role models and replicators, you play a pivotal role in the success of the Rural Thrive 2050 Campaign. Your involvement includes:

- **Participative Design:** Contributing to the co-creation process by sharing your expertise and insights.
- **Local Testing:** Actively participating in the testing phase, engaging with local communities, and ensuring the campaign resonates with rural actors.
- **Awareness Building:** Promoting the campaign's message, EU goals, and strategies for 2030 and 2050.

- **Knowledge Dissemination:** Sharing RURALITIES' evidence-based solutions, project results, and key findings to empower rural communities.

# The Roadmap to Rural Thrive 2050

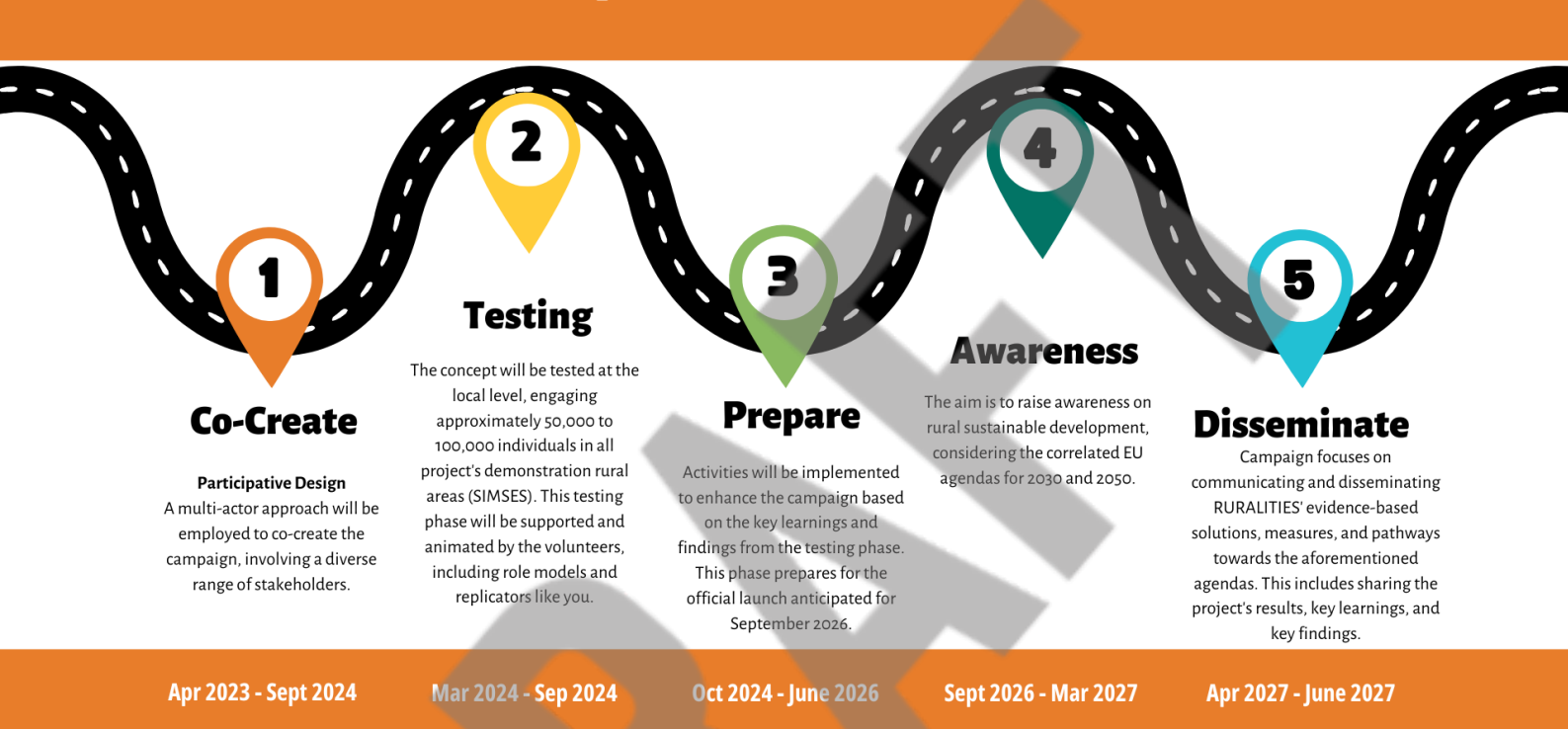


Figure 10 The Roadmap of RURAL Thrive 2050

The Rural Thrive 2050 Campaign is a transformative journey that aligns with the vision of rural sustainable development. Your active involvement in all phases of the campaign will make a significant impact on raising awareness, driving change, and promoting the goals of 'Rural Thrive 2050.' Together, we will create a better future for rural communities.

# WHY? – Synergies, Problem-Solving, and Knowledge Building in the Rural Scene

Understanding the 'why' behind our actions is crucial to driving meaningful change. In the context of the RURALITIES project, it's essential to grasp why creating synergies, solving problems, and building knowledge within the rural scene is of paramount importance. Let's explore the 'why' behind these endeavours.

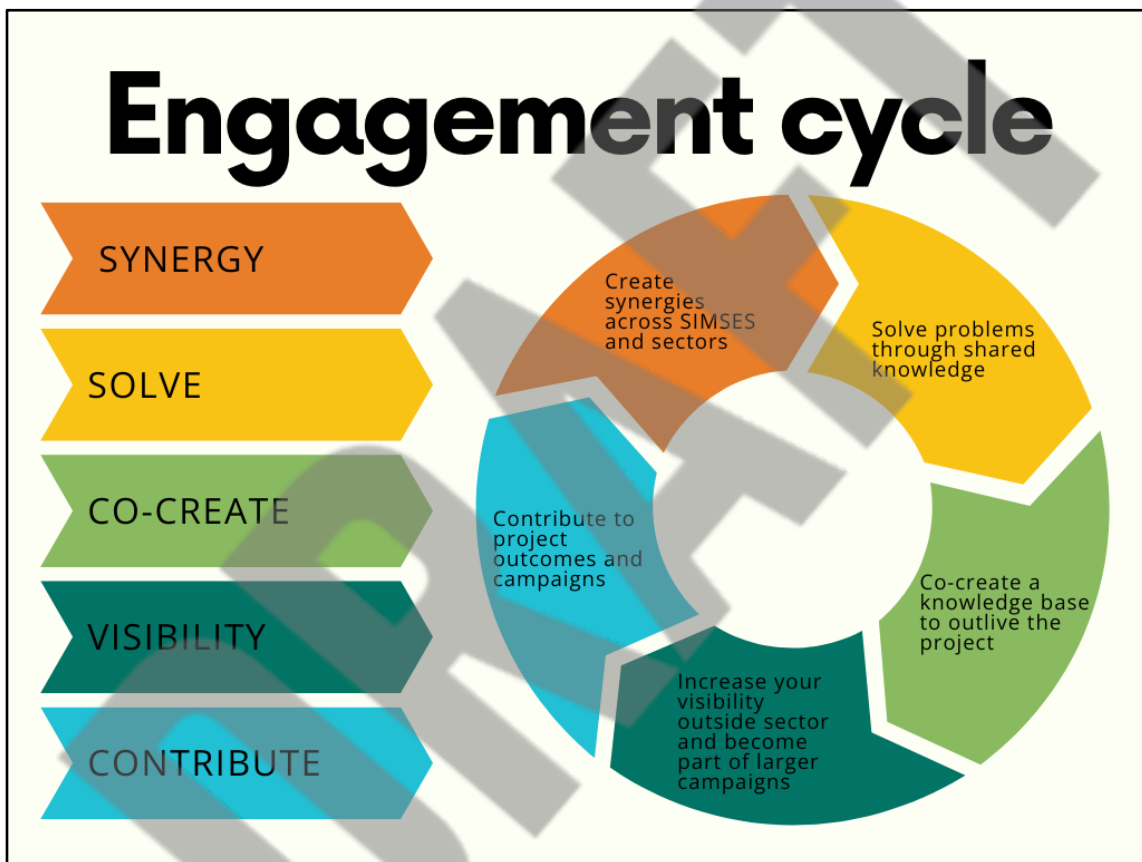


Figure 11 Engagement in RURALITIES

## 1. Creating Synergies

### Enhancing Impact

**Why Synergies Matter:** The challenges faced in rural areas often require comprehensive solutions that no single entity can provide. By creating synergies and collaborating with diverse stakeholders, we multiply our impact and address complex issues effectively.

**Addressing Interconnected Challenges:** Rural development encompasses multiple facets, from agriculture and education to transportation and sustainability. These



challenges are interconnected. Synergies enable us to approach them holistically, achieving greater results.

## Fostering Innovation

**Why Synergies Matter:** Innovation thrives when different perspectives, skills, and experiences come together. Synergistic collaborations spark creativity, leading to innovative solutions that can transform rural communities.

**Breaking Silos:** In rural development, siloed approaches limit progress. Synergies break down these silos, allowing knowledge and resources to flow freely, promoting holistic and innovative solutions.



## 2. Problem-Solving

### Addressing Urgent Needs

**Why Problem-Solving Matters:** Rural areas often face pressing challenges, such as limited access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities. Effective problem-solving is essential to address these needs promptly.

**Improving Quality of Life:** Solutions generated through problem-solving directly impact the quality of life in rural communities. They provide better access to essential services, enhance livelihoods, and promote sustainability.

### Empowering Communities

**Why Problem-Solving Matters:** Empowering rural communities to actively participate in finding solutions fosters a sense of ownership and pride. It encourages self-reliance and resilience.

**Building Sustainable Futures:** Problem-solving isn't just about short-term fixes. It's about building the foundation for sustainable and thriving rural communities that can adapt to future challenges.



## 3. Building Knowledge

### Leveraging Expertise



**Why Building Knowledge Matters:** Knowledge is a valuable resource. Building a repository of rural development knowledge empowers us to tap into the expertise of individuals and organisations, accelerating progress.

**Continuous Improvement:** A knowledge-rich environment enables continuous learning and improvement. It allows us to refine strategies, adopt best practices, and adapt to changing circumstances.

### **Amplifying Impact**

**Why Building Knowledge Matters:** Knowledge is a multiplier. When shared and applied effectively, it amplifies the impact of our actions. It ensures that successes and lessons learned benefit a broader audience.

**Informing Policy and Decision-Making:** Informed decision-making is essential for policy development. Building knowledge provides evidence-based insights that can influence policies favourably for rural development.

The 'why' behind creating synergies, solving problems, and building knowledge in the rural scene is clear: to drive positive change, enhance impact, and empower rural communities. As role models and replicators, your active engagement in these endeavours is not only essential but also transformative. Together, we will be catalysts for rural innovation, sustainability, and prosperity.

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# HOW? – Co-Creation and Knowledge Development in RURALITIES

To achieve the ambitious goals of the RURALITIES project, it is essential to understand how co-creation, the utilisation of project resources, and knowledge development will be facilitated. This section provides insights into the "how" aspect of our journey.

## 1. Co-Creation

### a. Multi-Actor Approach



**Diverse Stakeholders:** Co-creation in RURALITIES thrives on involving diverse stakeholders, including role models, replicators, local communities, experts, and policymakers. This multi-actor approach ensures a rich tapestry of perspectives and expertise.

**Participative Workshops and Seminars:** We will host participative workshops, seminars, and interactive sessions where ideas will be shared, discussed, and refined collaboratively. Your input is invaluable in shaping the project's direction.

### b. Collaborative Decision-Making



**Consensus Building:** Decision-making will be a collaborative effort, with consensus-building as a core principle. We aim to create solutions that resonate with all stakeholders, fostering a sense of ownership and commitment.

**Iterative Process:** Co-creation is an iterative process. We value feedback and will use it to refine and improve project methodologies and strategies.

## 2. Utilising RURALITIES Resources

### a. Knowledge Alliance

**Central Hub:** The RURALITIES Knowledge Alliance serves as the central hub for knowledge creation and sharing. It's a dynamic space where insights from diverse fields, including transportation, eco-tourism, cultural heritage, agriculture, vocational education, and training, converge.

**Knowledge Integration:** Your expertise will be integrated into the alliance's knowledge base, enriching it with practical insights and experiences.

### b. Supportive Ecosystem

**Living Labs:** RURALITIES leverages a network of living labs, enabling real-scale practice and experimentation. These labs serve as testbeds for innovative methodologies and solutions.

**Digital Platform:** Our digital platform combines internet and wireless technologies to connect and empower actors. It serves as a bridge for knowledge exchange and collaboration.



## 3. Knowledge Development

### a. Continuous Learning

**Training and Workshops:** The project offers a range of training programs, workshops, and seminars to enhance your skills and knowledge. These sessions are tailored to equip you with the information you need to contribute effectively.

**Peer Learning:** Peer-to-peer learning is encouraged. Engaging with fellow role models and replicators can be a valuable source of knowledge exchange.



### b. Access to Resources

**Information Gathering:** You will actively collect information from the areas you work in, participate in events, and stay updated on relevant developments. This information feeds into the alliance's knowledge base.

**Resources:** The project provides access to a wealth of resources, including guides, toolkits, and publications, to support your role in knowledge development.

The "how" of co-creation, resource utilisation, and knowledge development in RURALITIES is rooted in collaboration, inclusivity, and a commitment to continuous learning. By actively participating in this process, you become a driving force behind the project's success, ultimately contributing to the betterment of rural communities.

## OUTCOMES

### Augmented Knowledge Alliance



The Augmented Knowledge Alliance within the RURALITIES project is poised to achieve significant outcomes:

**Knowledge Enrichment:** The alliance serves as a dynamic hub for knowledge creation, sharing, and exchange. As role models and replicators contribute their expertise, the alliance's knowledge base grows richer.



**Innovative Methodologies:** Insights gathered within the alliance are translated into innovative methodologies, best practices, and strategies. These innovations drive rural ecosystem enhancement and climate-smart practices.

**Alignment with Rural Thrive 2050:** Through active participation, the alliance ensures that it aligns with the transcontinental AU-EU campaign 'Rural Thrive 2050.' This alignment strengthens the campaign's impact and reach.

### Rural Thrive 2050 Campaign

**The 'Rural Thrive 2050' Campaign is set to achieve transformative outcomes:**

**Participative Design:** The campaign's participative design phase involves multi-actor collaboration. Diverse stakeholders contribute to shaping a campaign that resonates with rural communities.

**Local Testing and Engagement:** By engaging 50,000 to 100,000 individuals in testing, the campaign ensures its relevance and effectiveness at the grassroots level.



**Awareness and Advocacy:** Rural Thrive 2050 raises awareness about rural sustainable development and amplifies EU goals and strategies for 2030 and 2050. It advocates for positive change in rural areas.

#### **A Living Resource for Dissemination**

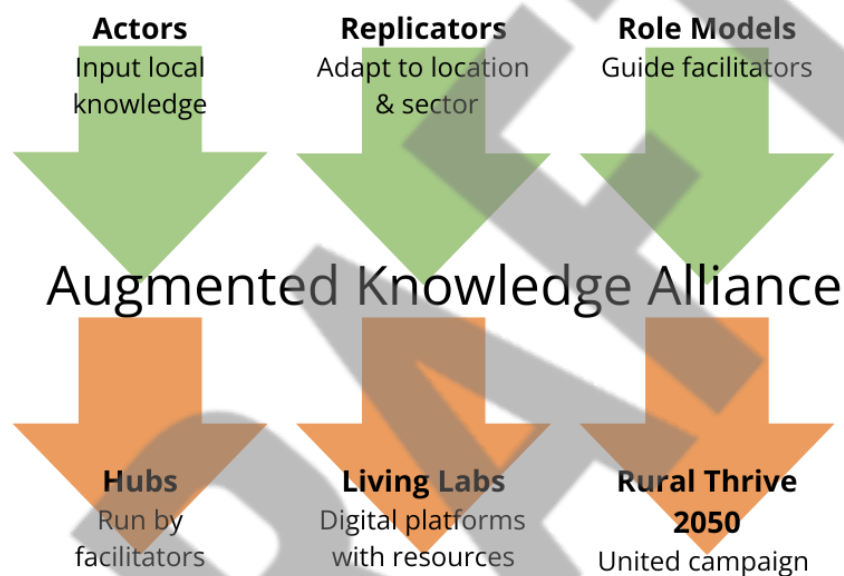
RURALITIES is not confined to a project's timeline; it leaves a lasting legacy:

**Sustainable Knowledge Hub:** The Augmented Knowledge Alliance continues to thrive, enriching its knowledge base even beyond the project's completion.

**Ongoing Campaign Impact:** The Rural Thrive 2050 Campaign remains an enduring force, promoting rural sustainable development and disseminating evidence-based solutions.

**Empowering Rural Communities:** RURALITIES' impact extends to rural actors who benefit from ongoing knowledge dissemination and advocacy.

The outcomes of RURALITIES extend far beyond its project duration. The Augmented Knowledge Alliance, Rural Thrive 2050 Campaign, and the enduring legacy of RURALITIES continue to empower rural communities, drive innovation, and advocate for a sustainable rural future.



*Figure 12 The outcomes of the activities*

## THE WAY FORWARD

Remember, you are not alone. You are part of a supportive and dynamic network. Reach out to fellow actors, collaborate, and together, we will make a lasting impact on rural development, sustainability, and innovation.

### Engaged Actors Shaping the Future

The success of the RURALITIES project hinges on one crucial element: engaged actors. It's not just about passive participation; it's about active involvement, dedication, and a shared vision for a sustainable rural future. As we conclude this training program, let's reflect on why engaged actors are the driving force behind our mission.



*Figure 13 Action plan*

Let's be the change-makers, the innovators, and the advocates for rural thrive. The future of rural communities depends on us, and together, we can create a brighter, more sustainable tomorrow.

Thank you for your commitment to the RURALITIES project. Let's go out there and make a difference!



## 6.2 Annex 2 - Step-by-Step Guide for Project Partners: Introducing Role Models and Replicators to RURALITIES

### **Ruralities**

**Climate smart, ecosystem-enhancing and knowledge-based rural expertise  
and training centres**

#### **Step-by-Step Guide for Project Partners: Introducing Role Models and Replicators to RURALITIES**

##### **Introduction:**

This guide is designed to assist project partners in effectively introducing role models and replicators to the RURALITIES project. Role models and replicators play a crucial role in knowledge dissemination and community engagement. By following these steps, project partners can ensure a structured and successful onboarding process for these essential stakeholders.

##### **Step 1: Understand the Role Models and Replicators Concept**

- Familiarize yourself with the core concepts of role models and replicators within the RURALITIES project.
- Recognize the importance of their contributions in facilitating knowledge exchange and community development.

##### **Step 2: Identify Potential Role Models and Replicators**

- Collaborate with project stakeholders to identify potential role models and replicators within your region or sector.
- Consider individuals with relevant expertise, experience, and a commitment to the project's ethos.

##### **Step 3: Outreach and Engagement**

- Initiate contact with the identified role models and replicators through formal communication channels, such as email or phone.
- Clearly explain the RURALITIES project's objectives, the role they are expected to play, and the benefits of their involvement.
- Encourage open dialogue and address any questions or concerns they may have.

**Step 4: Onboarding**

- Provide the selected role models and replicators with access to project resources, including the training material, visual identity and facilitation tools.
- Orient them on the project's objectives, values, and the collaborative framework in place.
- Ensure they are well-informed about their responsibilities and how their expertise will contribute to the project's success.

**Step 5: Collaboration and Knowledge Sharing**

- Foster an environment of collaboration by facilitating interactions between role models, replicators, and other project participants.
- Encourage them to share their knowledge, experiences, and best practices within their respective sectors or regions.
- Emphasize the importance of mutual learning and ongoing engagement.

**Step 6: Feedback and Evaluation**

- Continuously gather feedback from role models and replicators regarding their experiences and challenges within the project.
- Use this feedback to refine the onboarding process, training materials, and overall project strategy.
- Evaluate the impact of their contributions on the project's objectives and make adjustments as necessary.

**Step 7: Promote Sustainability**

- Consider strategies for long-term engagement and sustainability of the role models and replicators within the project.
- Explore opportunities for them to take on leadership roles or mentor new participants.
- Ensure that their involvement remains meaningful and aligned with the project's evolving goals.

**Step 8: Document and Share Success Stories**

- Showcase the positive impact of role models and replicators through success stories and case studies.
- Share these stories within the project community to inspire and motivate other participants.
- Highlight how their contributions have made a difference in rural communities.



**Conclusion:**

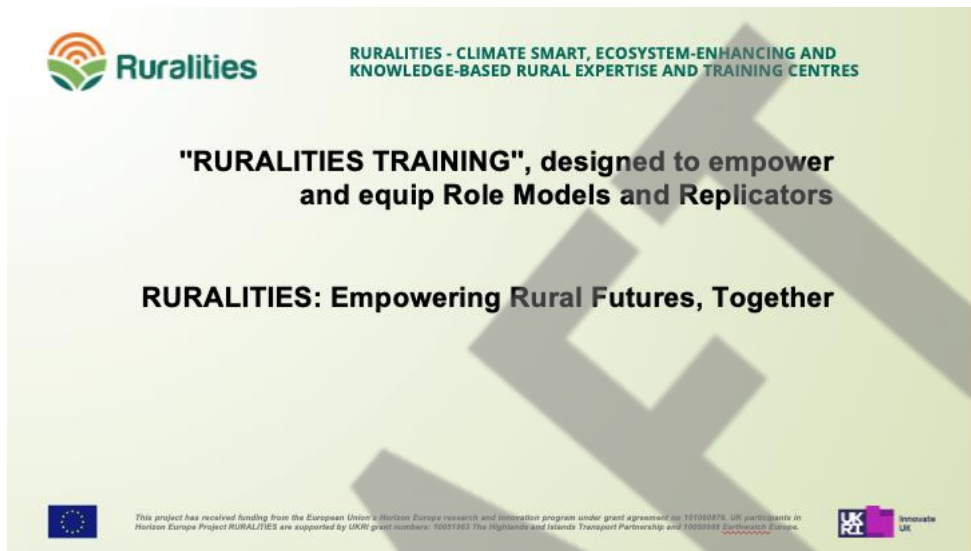
Effectively introducing role models and replicators to the RURALITIES project is essential for knowledge exchange and community development. By following this step-by-step guide, project partners can ensure a structured and successful onboarding process, ultimately contributing to the project's success and its positive impact on rural communities. For further information and support please contact with partners involved in WP4 specifically in T4.3.


**Good luck to your engagement activities.**

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### 6.3 Annex 3 - RURALITIES TRAINING to Empower Role models and Replicators PPT for partner support (sample)

Due to the PPT's size constraints, only the initial 5 slides are included in this ANNEX to serve as a representation of the supporting tool. The full presentation is available online at <https://www.ruralities-project.eu/deliverables/>.






 **Ruralities** RURALITIES - CLIMATE SMART, ECOSYSTEM-ENHANCING AND KNOWLEDGE-BASED RURAL EXPERTISE AND TRAINING CENTRES

**"RURALITIES TRAINING", designed to empower and equip Role Models and Replicators**

**RURALITIES: Empowering Rural Futures, Together**

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation program under grant agreement no 101060876. UK participants in Horizon Europe Project RURALITIES are supported by UKRI grant numbers: 10051963 The Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership and 10050988 Earthwatch Europe.




 **Ruralities** RURALITIES - CLIMATE SMART, ECOSYSTEM-ENHANCING AND KNOWLEDGE-BASED RURAL EXPERTISE AND TRAINING CENTRES

**WELCOME TO RURALITIES**  Funded by the European Union  Innovate UK

**Introduction**  
Welcome to the 'Climate Smart, Ecosystem-Enhancing, and Knowledge-Based Rural Expertise and Training Centres' project, or RURALITIES in short. This innovative initiative is designed to transform the way rural communities engage and benefit from advancements in sustainable practices and technology. At its heart, RURALITIES is about empowering rural areas through knowledge and expertise. This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation program under grant agreement no 101060876. UK participants in Horizon Europe Project RURALITIES are supported by UKRI grant numbers: 10051963 The Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership and 10050988 Earthwatch Europe.

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## Ruralities


**RURALITIES - CLIMATE SMART, ECOSYSTEM-ENHANCING AND KNOWLEDGE-BASED RURAL EXPERTISE AND TRAINING CENTRES**

### What is RURALITIES?

RURALITIES is a project that establishes a network of learning hubs, known as 'RURALITIES Hubs.' These hubs are the **epicentres** of learning and innovation, designed to enhance ecosystems and drive climate action in rural settings. The project uniquely combines various elements:

#### Ruralities elements

These are real-life testing grounds where ideas are brought to life and tested in actual rural settings.





**Innovative Methodologies**  
At the core of RURALITIES, we embrace new ways of learning and teaching, putting learners first.

**Living Labs**

**Digital Platform**  
Leveraging the power of the Internet and wireless technologies, we connect people and share knowledge efficiently and effectively.

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## Ruralities

**RURALITIES - CLIMATE SMART, ECOSYSTEM-ENHANCING AND KNOWLEDGE-BASED RURAL EXPERTISE AND TRAINING CENTRES**

### What is RURALITIES?



#### The Role of Facilitators and Role Models

A key to our approach is the deployment of over 1,000 facilitators across participating countries. These individuals are more than just trainers; they are coaches, role models, and hub coordinators. They are instrumental in weaving the network that supports our learning framework.

#### Real-Scale Practice in Simplified Rural Socio-Ecological Systems (SIMSES)

RURALITIES is not just theoretical; it's grounded in real-world practice. We have 6 SIMSES – or demonstration sites – spread across Italy, the United Kingdom, Slovenia, Spain, and Romania. These sites allow us to test, implement, and refine our approaches in genuine rural settings.

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## Ruralities

**RURALITIES - CLIMATE SMART, ECOSYSTEM-ENHANCING AND KNOWLEDGE-BASED RURAL EXPERTISE AND TRAINING CENTRES**

### What is RURALITIES?

#### Our Goals

The ultimate goal of RURALITIES is to foster rural innovation. By connecting local and regional authorities and influencing policy, we aim to create a sustainable and resilient future for rural communities. Our training and expertise sharing across the RURALITIES Hubs are tailored to ensure that rural innovators are not left behind in the rapidly advancing world.

#### Join Us

As a part of RURALITIES Community, you are joining a movement that values rural communities and seeks to enhance them through education, innovation, and collaboration.

#### Welcome aboard on behalf of RURALITIES Project Consortium!

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