



Ruralities

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

Newsletter – Issue 1

September 2023

WELCOME

Welcome to the first edition of the [Ruralities](#) Newsletter! Within these pages, you will find news and updates on our activities. We invite you to subscribe and explore our website! Follow us on social media and learn more about the world of [Ruralities](#) and its achievements.

[Ruralities website](#)

What is Ruralities about?

The [Ruralities](#) project, a Coordination and Support Action (CSA), focuses on creating knowledge-based rural expertise and training centers with a climate-smart and ecosystem-enhancing approach. It employs innovative methodologies, a blockchain-based digital platform, and a network of living labs to engage, connect, and empower participants.

The project involves recruiting and training over 1,000 facilitators across participating countries who play key roles in shaping the learning framework. [Ruralities](#) aims to establish expertise and learning centers through real-scale practices in six simplified rural socio-ecological systems (SIMSES) across Italy, UK, Slovenia, Spain, and Romania.

The project coordinates actions of local authorities, promoting rural innovation and establishing [Ruralities Hubs](#) for expertise and training. This initiative contributes to regional and national policy instruments in the involved countries.



Project Framework

This project has received funding from the European Union Horizon Europe Innovation program under the 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

Overview of the Consortium

Ruralities is coordinated by Pedal Consulting, located in Slovakia and it involves 51 partners, 32 from European countries and 19 from African countries. Ruralities, a diverse, intercontinental partnership, brings essential know-how from the environmental, economic, and social science dimensions. With vast international experience, the group strategically focuses on sustainable rural development through education and expertise. Each partner excels in capacity building, research, and knowledge transfer, ensuring broad coverage in science, economy, individual and collective action, and governance. The consortium is committed to actively engage and incorporate rural people from vulnerable groups for a fairer and equitable approach in achieving its goals.



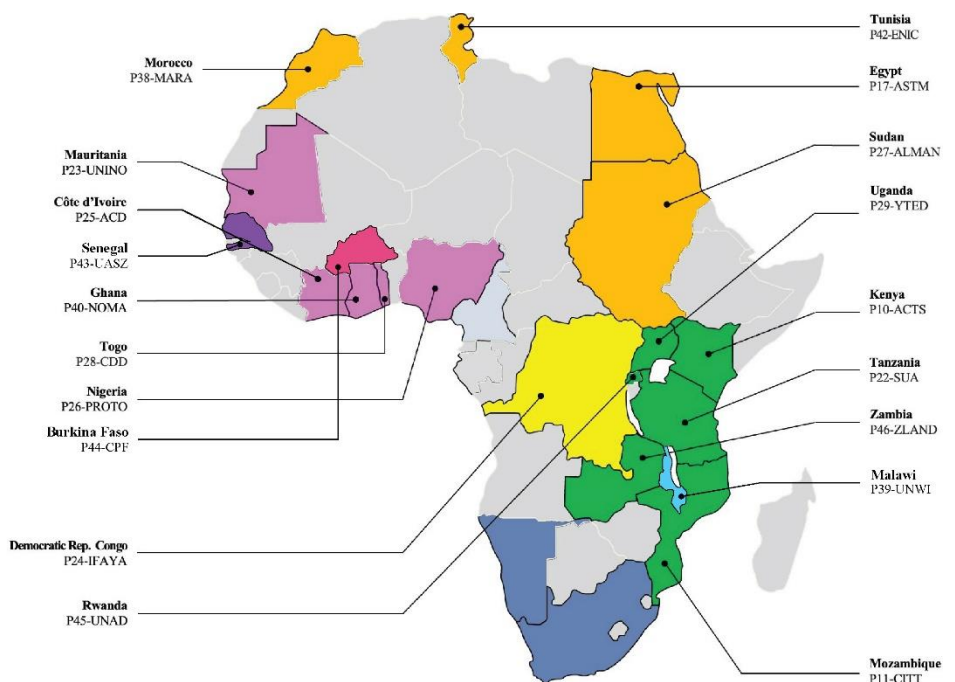
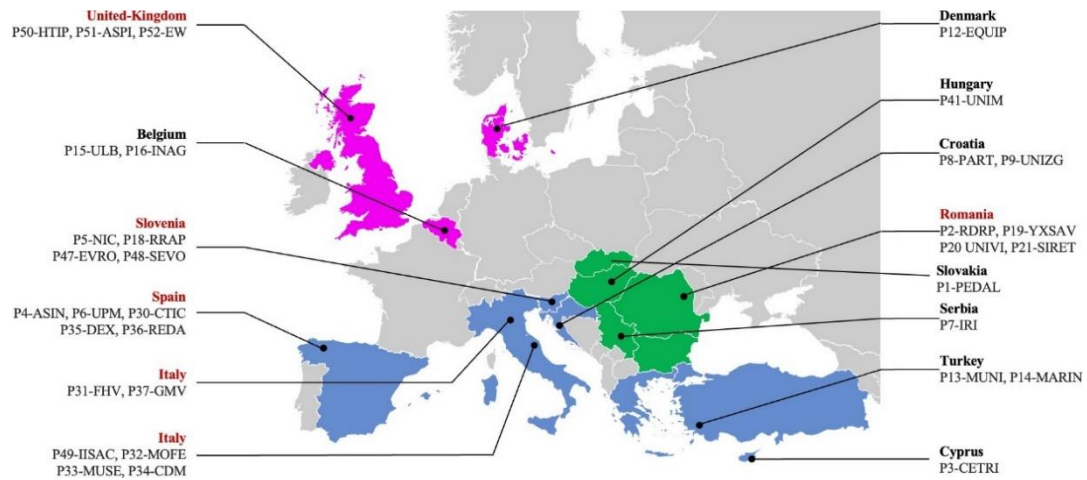
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What are the main goals of Ruralities?

The main goal of **Ruralities** is to establish learning hubs called “Ruralities”, serving as expertise and training centers. These hubs will utilize innovative methodologies and a wide network of living labs to empower rural actors. Embracing a multi-point approach, the project engages diverse actors, disciplines, systems, and sectors on a multi-level network.

However, to create the **learning hubs** the project will engage and connect with six real-scale rural areas called “simplified rural socio-ecological systems (SIMSES) across Italy, the UK, Slovenia, Spain, and Romania. The six participating SIMSES exhibit notable diversity, ranging from highly urbanized regions with rural areas adjacent to cities (e.g., Italy, UK, Spain) to moderately urbanized regions (e.g., Romania) and remote rural areas with dispersed rural-urban links (e.g., Slovenia). These SIMSES will act as “demonstrators” or “pilot areas” with their unique but also common characteristics serving as the basis for the learning framework the project aims to establish. **Ruralities**, guided by the demonstrators, will be able to strengthen interregional, transnational, and intercontinental cooperations in the rural arena, and establish the training hubs.

Where are the pilot areas?

The 6 simplified rural socio-ecological systems (SIMSES) will serve as demonstrators in order to establish the training and expertise centers. The rural actors, of the selected SIMSES, coming from a vast socio-economic background spanning from community leaders, farmers entrepreneurs, to mayors or local governing agents are the key influential individuals who will produce the learning framework which will be transferable to other rural locations, especially in Africa. The pilot regions are the following:

Marche, Italy
Veneto, Italy
Scotland, UK
Posavje, Slovenia
Asturias, Spain
Iasi, Romania



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Highlights during the first year of the project

1. The **Ruralities** KOM was held in Bratislava, Slovakia on 21 and 22 of October 2022. All partners got together to celebrate the start of **Ruralities** a Horizon Europe project fostering rural innovation and sustainable development. Read more [here](#).



2. The **Ruralities** 6M Board Meeting was held in Brussels on 21 of March 2023. The day before, our partner **INAGRO** (P16) organized a farm visit and a tour at **Agrotopia** research center. More details on our [website](#).



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3. Our partner **Maroc Horizon d'Aventures** (P38) together with other local organizations planned two workshops:

- The first from 24 to 27 May 2023, visiting a number of villages in the Anti-Atlas, in the Commune of Adar, in the Province of Taroudant.
- The second on 30 May 2023 in the rural commune of Zagmouzen, Taliouine district, Taroudant province, also located in the Siroua mountains (Anti-Atlas).



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During these tours, the **Ruralities** Project was presented to local stakeholders in the villages to raise awareness of good water management practices, biodiversity conservation, preservation of local seeds, daily practices to combat climate change, etc.



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4. At the first **AU-EU Innovation Festival** held in Cape Town, South Africa, on 15 of June 2023, hosted by the European Union, the African Union and the Republic of South Africa, our partner **Prototipi Nigeria** (P26) introduced **Ruralities**. Many of our partners join the event virtually, while several attended in person engaging in networking opportunities with potential





rural actors from the region. An initiative, showcasing the remarkable collaborative potential between Africa and Europe. Learn more on the [website](#).



Creating Synergies

The consortium is seeking synergies by hosting interactive workshops, uniting representatives from public and private sectors and individuals interested in contributing to the creation of new knowledge training centers. Thus far we have established collaboration with the following projects:

- ❖ [Rurallure](#) project - share a mutual goal of promoting rural development through the establishment of a rural stakeholder's network.
- ❖ Collaborative activities have been initiated with [LEAP-RE Project](#) and [CLEVER FOOD Project](#). More details in the upcoming months.
- ❖ Our partner [RDA Posavje](#) (P18) hosted a workshop at Rajhenburg Castle in Slovenia. The workshop concluded that creating "living labs of knowledge" in Posavje *requires joint efforts (public and private sector) to preserve the cultural landscape and environment through traditional knowledge.*



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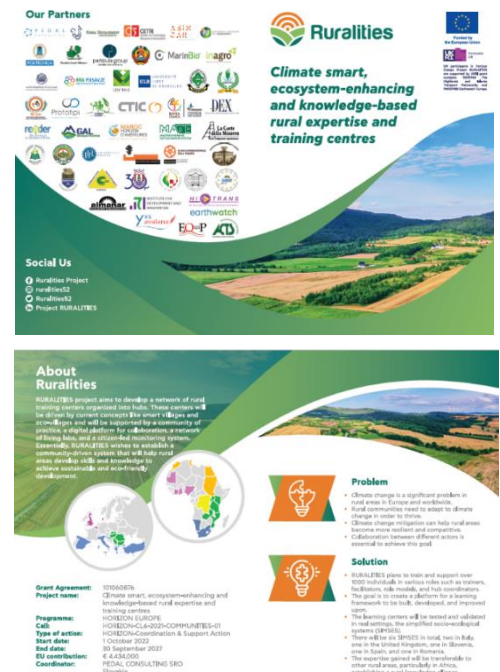


Communication Highlights

Roll up Banner



Leaflet





Future Events

1. Ruralites 12M Board meeting in Inverness Scotland in October 2023.
2. Workshops among common projects.
3. Establishment of Living Labs in the SIMSES regions.

Ruralities Partners



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