



# Ruralities

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

## **D6.3 -NETWORK OF FACILITATORS ON INNOVATION ACTION**

**Horizon Europe Grant agreement: 101060876**

17/09/2024 by Luka Dobrovic (PARTICULA)  
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## ACRONYMS

Acronym	Description
<b>AU</b>	African Union
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>KPI</b>	Key performance indicators
<b>SIMSES</b>	Simplified Socio-ecological Systems
<b>RURALITIES</b>	Climate smart, ecosystem-enhancing and knowledge-based rural expertise and training centres
<b>WP</b>	Work Package
<b>GDPR</b>	General Data Protection Regulation
<b>IT</b>	Information technology
<b>FINRUR</b>	RURALITIES Funding and Innovation Services
<b>RURIIS</b>	RURALITIES Incubator and Innovation Services
<b>RURNex</b>	RURALITIES Nexus

# 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 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
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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 LAS TECNOLOGIAS 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 EXTERIORES SA	ES
36	BEN	REDA	ASOCIACION RED ASTURIANA DE DESARROLLO 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 ELETTUDOMANYI EGYETEM	HU
42	BEN	ENIC	ECOLE NATIONALE D'INGENIEURS DE CARTHAGE	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 A CECCHI	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 **D6.3 -Network of facilitators on innovation action** 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.

Work package (WP) 6 generates instruments and mechanisms to assist shortening the innovation cycle of identified projects tackling the environmental, economic, social and societal nexus (RURNex) made available via the RURALITIES resources platform. Creates a system thinking approach to be practiced defining rural challenges in a structured manner. Establishes a 'RURALITIES Co-Lab' in each of the project's participating countries, which are events in space and time to host a vast panoply of activities from awareness-raising events to capacity building workshops. WP6 generates the project's citizen science monitoring framework 'RURALITIES Citizen Sensing' which is a citizen-driven Mobile App allowing rural people to interact comprehensively with their peers and with all actors of their simplified rural socio-ecological systems (SIMSES). Also generates a comprehensive innovation ecosystem encompassing systemic mechanisms supported by an actionable knowledge basis, a fund-raising mechanism, a team of 100+ facilitators, and practical instruments, spanning the full innovation spectrum of the RURNex from land use to public services. WP6 aims at generating mechanisms to raise funds up to 5 million euros via private channels and donors to finance as many AU based projects identified via WP5.

Within the strategic framework of WP6, D6.3 is linked to **Task 6.4 - FAST-TRACK Innovation Management Programme**. This task aims at generating a comprehensive innovation ecosystem encompassing systemic mechanisms supported by an actionable knowledge basis, a fund-raising mechanism, a team of 100+ facilitators, and practical instruments, spanning the full innovation spectrum of the RURNex from land use to public services. FAST-TRACK generates a gap analysis, identifies and builds accurate services packages to answer identified and assessed needs. Ensure effective co-creative and co-production processes with all actors of the SIMSES and contributing partners as well. Generate 'RURALITIES Incubator and Innovation Services' (RURIIS) encompassing an actionable guidebook, a team of facilitators, an OER-driven Capacity Building programme, a vast panoply of events (focus on webinars), learning material, audio-video capsules (witnesses, good practices, etc.), all coordinated by the RURALITIES hubs. FINRUR is demonstrated in each SIMSES (to be selected). Establish the 'RURALITIES First Seed' funding scheme, a private capital funding scheme, a pre-seed stage funding instruments to support the financial dimension of the innovation.

**The deliverable, D6.3, is structured to achieve two primary objectives:**

- **Documenting the Network's Growth:** It aims to chronicle the development and expansion of the influential network, providing a detailed account of how the network has evolved over time. This includes recording milestones, strategies, and the key events that have contributed to its growth.

- **Demonstrating KPI Realization:** The document also serves to illustrate how a specific Key Performance Indicator (KPI) has been realized. This is done by presenting quantifiable results and achievements, which provide clear evidence of success and progress in relation to the KPI.

Additionally, D6.3 functions as a platform to feature and explain the roles and contributions of the team of facilitators, often referred to as “knowledge brokers.” These individuals play a crucial role in facilitating communication, knowledge transfer, and collaboration within the network, and their activities are highlighted to demonstrate their impact on the network's growth and the attainment of the KPI.

## 2.1 Objectives

D6.3 presents the establishment of a network comprising a repository of 100+ facilitators whose role is to assist the end-users of WP6 instruments. This network is a feature of the RURALITIES Hub.

The network of trained 100+ facilitators will serve as a vital resource, providing mentorship and expertise in key areas such as agriculture, technology, education, and governance. Their diverse skill sets will foster a comprehensive approach to rural development, addressing various community needs effectively.

Engaging local leaders as champions is also a strategic move. Their established relationships and understanding of community dynamics will be instrumental in building trust and encouraging active participation. By leveraging these intangible assets, the hubs can create a sustainable environment for growth and innovation in rural areas, ultimately enhancing resilience and self-sufficiency.

This collaborative model will not only empower communities but also foster a sense of ownership, ensuring that development efforts are aligned with local priorities and aspirations.

During the first 24 months of the project, RURALITIES partners have focused on establishing a global repository of RURNex actors as part of Task 5.1. This initiative follows a multi-actor strategy, designed to identify facilitators who will act as role models, influencers, and replicators. By September 2024, the project aims to have identified over 100 facilitators who will participate in a co-creation process, contributing to the growth of the RURALITIES network.

The vision for this initiative includes creating an online platform that will house a repository of more than 10,000 actors within the RURNex network globally. Facilitators, once engaged, will be trained and equipped with the skills and tools to expand and oversee the network's development over the course of the project. One of the core objectives is to ensure that these facilitators are empowered to sustain and enhance synergy within the RURALITIES ALLIANCE, even after the project's formal conclusion, fostering long-term collaboration and growth.

## 2.2 Structure of the document

D6.3 presents a structured and systematic approach outlining the development of the network and the underlying considerations. This document has been structured into five primary sections, each serving a distinct purpose and containing a unique set of information:

1. **Chapter 1 and 2:** present an initial overview of the context in which this report was crafted, along with its intended objectives.

2. **Chapter 3 Network of facilitators on innovation action:** focusing on the description of profiles, and on the creation process.
3. **Chapter 4 Engagement strategy:** formulating concrete actions for engaging these facilitators.

# 3 RURALITIES NETWORK OF FACILITATORS ON INNOVATION ACTION

## 3.1 Profiles

The RURALITIES Network of facilitators on innovation action is indeed a crucial component of the broader RURALITIES project. To effectively characterize and outline the profiles of individuals and organizations within the RURALITIES SIMSES and Community, consider focusing on the following key aspects:

- **Expertise:** Identifying the specific areas of expertise (e.g., agriculture, technology, social innovation) of each facilitator.
- **Experience:** Detail their professional backgrounds, including relevant projects or initiatives they've led or participated in.
- **Roles:** Clarify their roles within the network (e.g., mentor, trainer, project manager)

### Definition and Context

While there is no formal definition for "Facilitators on Innovation action" in SIMSES and EU countries, various related roles (e.g., market organizers, LEADER coordinators, rural development advisors) contribute to the development of such facilitators in RURALITIES project. These roles provide a foundation for defining what a "rural facilitator" could encompass.

WP6 leader **PARTICULA**, together with project coordinator **PEDAL** and WP participants **IRI** and **UNIZG**, has formulated key facilitator profile responsibilities:

#### 1. Strategic Planning

- Lead local food strategic plans and operational programs.
- Conduct strategic and pre-operational studies.

#### 2. Governance and Coordination

- Implement sustainable governance frameworks.
- Facilitate and coordinate monitoring bodies.

#### 3. Networking and Stakeholder Engagement

- Build networks among European, national, and local stakeholders.
- Organize actions to raise awareness and mobilize food and consumer stakeholders.

#### 4. Documentation and Reporting

- Prepare essential documents such as partnership agreements and technical reports.
- Carry out administrative and budgetary monitoring.

## 5. Event Organization

- Host info days, conferences, study tours, and other professional events.
- Organize farmers' markets and explore various sales opportunities.

## 6. Support and Consultancy

- Offer legal consultancy to farmers or other rural actors.
- Assist in branding and sales practices.

## 7. Public Relations and Communication

- Manage communication efforts, including publications and social media.
- Organize training sessions and information exchanges.

## 8. Administrative and Technological Assistance

- Provide administrative support and help with access to funding.
- Assist in adopting technological solutions.

## 9. Monitoring and Evaluation

- Monitor and report on the benefits of Innovation actions.
- Share successful management and logistical models.

Facilitators on Innovation action are identified as actors who can bridge gaps across value chains by facilitating market access for small farmers, promoting dialogue between farmers and consumers, identifying market changes, and addressing local needs. Their specialized training and broad skill set could play a pivotal role in enhancing the sustainability and efficiency of short food supply chains. On top of this, access to finance through other WP6 tools will also be a crucial part in their future work.

### Some of the Essential Competencies for Facilitators on Innovation action:

#### 1. Sustainable Rural Development

- Knowledge Areas: Environmental sustainability, community development, job creation, small-scale food production, agritourism.
- Implications: Facilitators should understand local development methods and the ecological aspects of food systems to promote sustainable practices.

#### 2. Understanding of Public, Private, and Civil Sectors

- Knowledge Areas: Expectations, contributions, potential conflicts of interest, dynamics of civic groups.

- Implications: This understanding helps facilitate collaboration among stakeholders and navigate differing interests.

### **3. Business Planning**

- Knowledge Areas: Strategic thinking, resource management, financial management, recruitment, performance monitoring.
- Implications: Facilitators need to develop comprehensive business plans to ensure the viability of Innovation actions.

### **4. Sales and Marketing**

- Knowledge Areas: Sales channels, branding, social media usage, consumer outreach.
- Implications: Knowledge of marketing strategies is crucial for promoting local products and engaging consumers.

### **5. Project Management**

- Skills: Resource management, project evaluation, strategic objective alignment.
- Implications: Effective project management skills enable facilitators to execute community-oriented initiatives successfully.

### **6. Social Competences and Soft Skills**

- Skills: Facilitation, motivation, conflict resolution, communication, teamwork.
- Implications: Strong interpersonal skills are essential for engaging diverse community members and fostering collaboration.

### **7. Knowledge of Legislation**

- Knowledge Areas: Legal frameworks, food security regulations, investments regulations.
- Implications: Facilitators must navigate legal requirements to ensure compliance and promote innovation.

### **8. IT and Technological Proficiency**

- Skills: Website development, IT marketing solutions, food production technologies.
- Implications: Leveraging technology can enhance communication and operational efficiency within innovation.

### **9. Practical Organizational Skills**

- Skills: Meeting organization, workshop moderation, public participation techniques.
- Implications: Facilitators must effectively coordinate events to engage stakeholders and gather input.

While no single individual can possess all these competencies, the role of innovation facilitators is to identify and leverage the necessary skills within their networks. By fostering cooperation between local actors and consumers, they can enhance the effectiveness of the innovation process. Collaboration with specialists in various fields (e.g., marketing, legal, technological) will further enrich the knowledge base and capabilities of the facilitators, ultimately supporting all stages of the supply chain.

### 3.2 The repository creation process

To ensure consistent communication and foster collaboration among SIMSES partners, we have participated in weekly WP6 calls organized by PART as well as in bi-weekly SIMSES calls, coordinated by PEDAL.

These calls serve as vital platforms for maintaining regular contact and are instrumental in the structured mapping of facilitators, which are subsequently cataloged in the Actors Input Repository. This repository will facilitate in-depth analysis and the development of targeted engagement strategies.

In line with our commitment to ethical standards, we adhere strictly to the protocols outlined in the D1.1 Data Management Plan and D3.1 RURALITIES Ethics Appraisal Scheme. We have implemented measures to ensure full compliance with GDPR regulations, prioritizing the protection of personal data. This commitment is essential to maintaining the integrity of our project and the trust of all stakeholders involved.

The distribution of facilitators per SIMSES country is comprehensively illustrated in Figure 1.

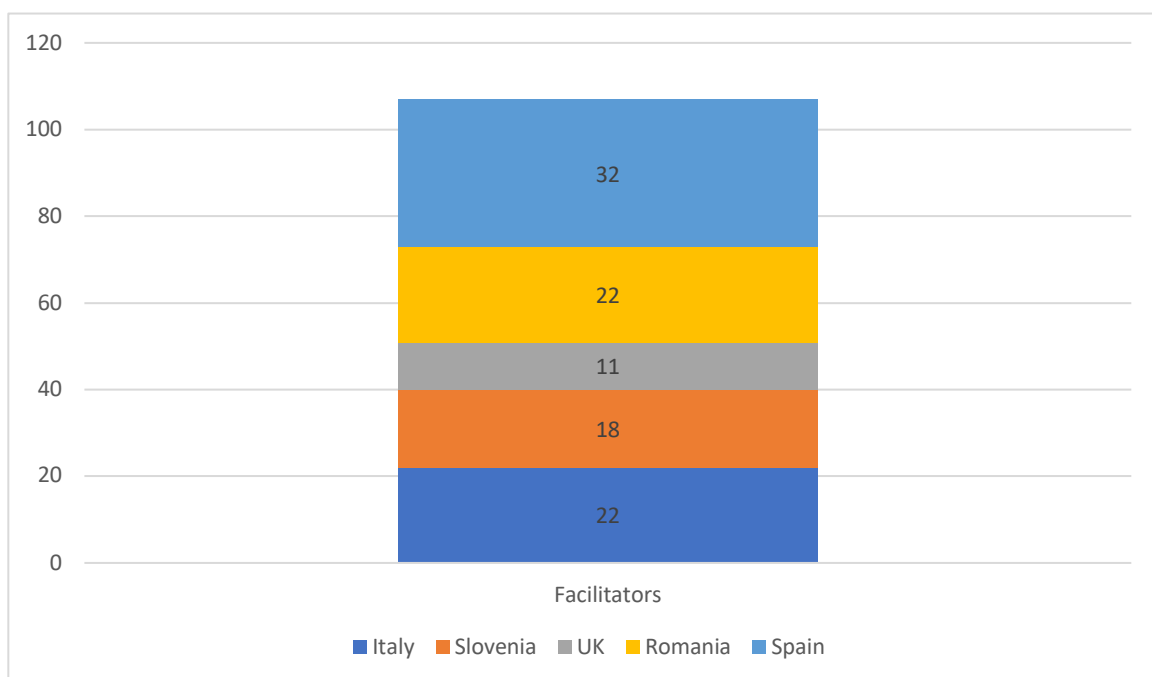


Figure 1 Number of facilitators per SIMSES country

During this crucial phase of the project, the concerted efforts and dedication of the SIMSES partners have successfully led to the identification and engagement of 105 facilitators. This achievement represents a significant milestone for the project, fulfilling a key objective and confidently meeting the Key Performance Indicator (KPI) for M24. This success highlights the project's progress and lays a strong foundation for the continued expansion and sustainability of the RURNex network moving forward.

SIMSES partners have actively created their network through a diverse range of activities, including workshops, events, campaigns, field visits, and webinars. These initiatives are strategically designed to foster interaction, share knowledge, and facilitate collaboration among stakeholders.

### **Key Activities:**

- **Workshops and Webinars:** These platforms enabled in-depth discussions and learning opportunities, allowing participants to explore specific topics and gain valuable insights into project activities.
- **Events and Campaigns:** Orchestrated to raise awareness and promote project objectives, these initiatives successfully reached a broader audience, generating interest in our efforts.
- **Field Visits:** Providing hands-on experiences, these visits offered participants real-world context, allowing them to observe the practical application of innovative practices.

Through these multifaceted engagement strategies, SIMSES partners have not only expanded their network but also enriched the collaborative ecosystem, driving the project's goals and promoting sustainable development.

Our focus will remain on leveraging this robust network of motivated individuals and organizations. By fostering ongoing collaboration, we aim to enhance the project's impact and significantly contribute to the sustainable development of rural communities.

## 4 ENGAGEMENT

### 4.1 Strategies for Stakeholder Engagement

Our stakeholder engagement strategy follows a structured, four-tiered approach, ensuring a gradual but effective progression: **informing**, **consulting**, **involving**, and ultimately **collaborating**. This framework not only maximizes engagement but also nurtures strong, committed partnerships vital for the success of our initiative, particularly in the context of RURALITIES.

1. **Informing:**

The initial step in our engagement process is to inform stakeholders, primarily through a training program. Here, facilitators will be introduced to the scope, objectives, and goals of the project. This early-stage engagement is crucial in laying the foundation for deeper interactions, establishing the groundwork for future collaboration.

2. **Consulting:**

Following the training, we enter the consultative phase. At this stage, stakeholders are invited to provide feedback on the project's relevance and impact. This feedback loop not only helps evaluate their interest and potential involvement but also signals the next step towards deeper engagement. This consultative process enables stakeholders to begin shaping their role within the project.

3. **Involving:**

As stakeholders transition from consultation to active involvement, they start playing a more proactive role in the project. Their engagement becomes more meaningful as they begin contributing their expertise and taking ownership of various aspects of the initiative. This stage is pivotal in fostering a sense of responsibility and shared purpose among stakeholders.

4. **Collaborating:**

The ultimate goal of our engagement strategy is collaboration. At this level, stakeholders are fully engaged, not only supporting the project but also leveraging their networks to expand its reach. Their participation becomes integral to the project's success as they actively disseminate knowledge, share insights, and drive the project forward. This collaborative partnership transforms stakeholders into co-creators, whose contributions enrich the alliance and reinforce the overall objectives of RURALITIES.

By following this strategic engagement process, we ensure a seamless transition from merely informing stakeholders to transforming them into committed collaborators. This progression ensures that each phase builds upon the previous one, culminating in a dynamic and productive partnership that enhances the project's impact and sustainability.

### 4.2 Feedback mechanisms and participant experiences

To ensure the continuous improvement and relevance of our training programs, incorporating a concise electronic survey as part of the feedback mechanism is a critical strategy. This approach allows us to gauge participant experiences effectively, whether through self-directed training packs or in-person seminars, and to capture valuable insights at key moments of the training process.

**Survey Distribution:**

- Electronic Surveys:

Distributing the survey electronically at the end of training sessions ensures timely feedback, capturing participants' reflections while their experiences are still fresh. This method is particularly efficient for virtual or self-directed learning programs, as it enables easy and immediate response collection.

- Physical Surveys for In-Person Events:

In physical seminars or events, offering participants a printed copy of the survey toward the end of the session can significantly boost response rates. Allocating dedicated time during the session to complete the survey further increases participation, while also providing an opportunity for participants to clarify questions or provide real-time feedback. This interactive environment enhances engagement and helps facilitators address concerns or confusion on the spot.

**Post-Training Follow-Up:**

To reinforce participant engagement and provide additional support, a follow-up email will be sent approximately one week after the training. This follow-up serves two purposes:

**Encouraging Reflection:** It offers participants a chance to revisit the training material, share it with their networks, and reflect on how the content fits into their work or role within the project.

**Providing Additional Support:** The follow-up email ensures that participants can ask any lingering questions or provide further feedback after more thoughtful consideration of the training content.

Although the response rate for this secondary feedback may vary, it emphasizes the project's dedication to ongoing participant support and fosters a culture of continuous improvement within our training programs.

## 4.3 Impact and Evaluation

Evaluating the RURALITIES project presents unique challenges due to its extensive scope and long-term nature. Evaluation plays a pivotal role in supporting participants, ensuring sustained engagement, and acknowledging the critical insights and expertise they contribute. By valuing evaluation, we reinforce participants' commitment to the project's ongoing success.

**Evaluation Methods:**

To assess the project effectively, a variety of tools and methods will be employed:

- Surveys and Feedback Questionnaires:

These will be key instruments in collecting data from participants, providing both quantitative and qualitative insights. They will be developed collaboratively with partners, ensuring they are tailored to the specific needs of different sectors and the broader SIMSES context. Before large-scale distribution, the surveys will undergo pretesting to confirm their relevance and adjust for clarity or applicability.

- Insights from Training Leaders:

Leaders who facilitate seminars and workshops will provide valuable observational feedback, complementing survey data with qualitative perspectives on participant engagement, learning outcomes, and areas for improvement.

### **Initial Outcomes and Enhancements for Participants:**

The first round of surveys will establish a baseline for evaluating the project's early impact. This will be followed by periodic evaluations at various stages, targeting both new participants and those advancing to new roles within the project. This dynamic approach will allow us to monitor:

Participant engagement and retention rates as quantitative indicators of the project's reach and relevance.

Qualitative feedback trends, which will reveal areas where training content may need to be refined, expanded, or adjusted to remain effective and impactful.

By analyzing these factors, the project team will be able to make evidence-based decisions that improve training materials, formats, and engagement strategies, ensuring that the project stays aligned with participant needs and expectations.

### **Comprehensive and Iterative Evaluation:**

This ongoing evaluation process will be designed to be both inclusive and comprehensive, incorporating feedback across various roles and industries within the SIMSES framework. It will help to minimize bias by gathering diverse perspectives, ensuring that training adjustments are made equitably and in response to consistent patterns in the feedback.

### **Key outcomes from this iterative evaluation process include:**

**Continuous Refinement:** The feedback will allow for continual improvement of training content to ensure it evolves alongside the project.

**Strategic Insights:** Evaluation data will offer long-term insights that extend beyond the immediate scope of RURALITIES, helping to identify new directions for future initiatives.

Ultimately, this approach positions evaluation not as a one-time activity but as a cornerstone of ongoing improvement and strategic planning, ensuring that RURALITIES remains effective and impactful over its lifespan and beyond.

### **Mitigation Strategies for Failed Stakeholder Engagement**

If the stakeholder engagement strategy for the project proves to be ineffective, several mitigation strategies will be introduced to address potential challenges and ensure the project's success. First, communication and outreach efforts will be enhanced by developing tailored messages that cater to the specific needs and interests of different stakeholder groups. A variety of communication channels, such as social media, email, newsletters, and in-person meetings, will be used to reach a wider audience. Regular feedback mechanisms will also be established to gather input from stakeholders and make adjustments to the strategy as needed.

Additionally, efforts will be made to increase stakeholder involvement by promoting inclusive decision-making, allowing stakeholders to actively contribute to project planning and implementation. Collaborative partnerships with other organizations that share similar goals will be sought to strengthen engagement. Incentivization programs, such as offering training, networking opportunities, or financial support, will also be considered to encourage greater participation.

Finally, adaptability and flexibility will be key in managing the stakeholder engagement process. Regular evaluations of the strategy will be conducted to identify areas for improvement, and contingency plans will be developed to address potential challenges. Lessons learned from any initial failures will be analyzed and applied to inform future strategies.

## 4 CONCLUSION AND WAY FORWARD

D6.3 is aimed at showcasing the involvement of facilitators in the RURALITIES project, with a significant milestone of engaging 105 individuals marking a crucial foundation for expanding the project's reach. D4.2 complements this by providing theoretical and practical training resources for these individuals. This effort is grounded on the actors' input repository and is supported through collaborative efforts of several partners, along with bi-weekly SIMSES meetings for consistent oversight and progress tracking. Moving forward, this engagement process will be systematically replicated across all participating countries as the project progresses toward its conclusion. This approach aims to mobilize and activate over 1,000 facilitators by M51, ensuring widespread participation and fostering a comprehensive and cohesive implementation of project objectives on a broad scale.