



Ruralities

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

Newsletter – Issue 2

October 2024

WELCOME

Welcome to the second edition of the [Ruralities](#) Newsletter!

Within these pages, you will find the latest news and updates on our activities as the [Ruralities](#) project proudly marks 24 months of progress. We invite you to read our [first issue](#) and explore our website to learn more about our journey so far!

Follow us on social media to stay connected and discover more about the world of [Ruralities](#) and its achievements.

[Ruralities website](#)

Celebrating the first year of Ruralities

The [Ruralities](#) project, a Coordination and Support Action (CSA), conducted its 13M Board meeting on the 3rd of October 2023 in Inverness, Scotland. Our host, [HITRANS](#), The Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership, organized a milestone meeting reflecting on the progress made towards improving rural communities. More details [here](#).



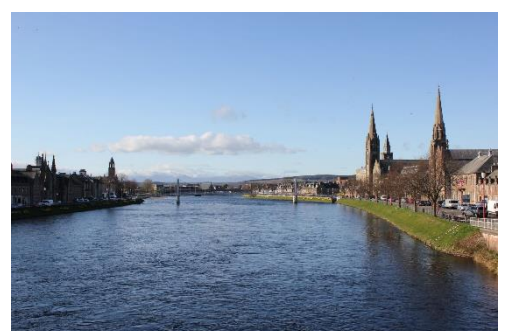
Project Framework

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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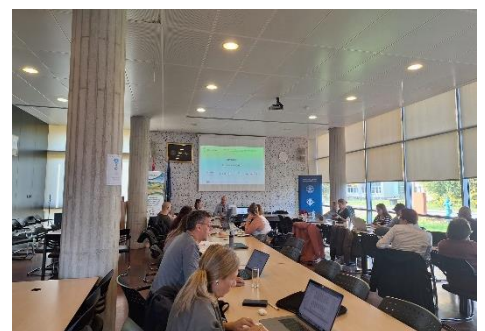
Saluting the 3rd Board Meeting of Ruralities

The Ruralities Project held its 3rd Board Meeting on May 15–16, 2024, in Iași, Romania, hosted by the [Rural Development Research Platform](#) at the Iași University of Life Sciences. The meeting reviewed progress across work packages, tackled challenges, and refined strategies for establishing living lab networks. A key milestone was setting pathways for African partners to take on a more active role starting in month 24. This productive meeting reinforced the strong and collaborative foundation driving the project forward! More details on the meeting and the lab tour [here](#).



Celebrating the Second year of Ruralities

The Ruralities Project conducted its 2nd year General Assembly Meeting on October 29–30, 2024, in Zagreb, Croatia, hosted by the [University of Zagreb Faculty of Agriculture](#). A summary of achievements from the first two years of the project was presented. The unique rural challenges were highlighted and the framework for the establishment of the expertise centers was set. The meeting ended with a **SIMSES** workshop focusing on the Rural thrive campaign's testing phase. More details [here](#).



Main Technical Accomplishments

Over the past 24 months, all partners have dedicated efforts towards achieving the five primary objectives of Ruralities, with various notable accomplishments outlined below:



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Objective 1: Engaging and Empowering SIMSES Actors

- Completed a mapping exercise in six pilot areas (Marche, Veneto, Scotland, Posavje, Asturias, Iași), identifying 986 SIMSES actors across sectors.
- Created a Multi-Actor Repository to support knowledge sharing and collaboration.
- Engaged 122 role models and replicators to mentor, share best practices, and replicate successful initiatives in pilot areas.

Objective 2: Characterizing Rural Landscapes

- Highlighted reliance on the EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) in Europe, contrasting with limited public funding for rural areas in Africa.
- Compiled [10 practice abstracts](#) on SIMSES landscapes, drawn from literature and socio-economic data, offering tailored solutions and insights into rural development.

Objective 3: Accelerating Innovation with Tools and Resources

- Developed the "RURALITIES Handbook on System Thinking Methodology," currently under review for dissemination.
- Established a network of seven [living labs](#) to foster innovation and collaboration aligned with the 6 objectives of the EU Taxonomy Regulation:
 - Climate change mitigation,
 - Climate change adaptation.
 - The sustainable use and protection of water and marine resources.
 - The transition to a circular economy.
 - Pollution prevention and control.

Read more on the [Ruralities training material](#) designed to empower and equip Role Models and Replicators – to create the learning hubs which are at the core of the [Ruralities](#) rural innovations.

Objective 4: Establishing Expertise Centres

- Preparatory work is underway to support the future establishment of [Ruralities](#) expertise centres focused on rural innovation.
- Efforts aim to strengthen collaboration between rural initiatives and research/innovation actors.

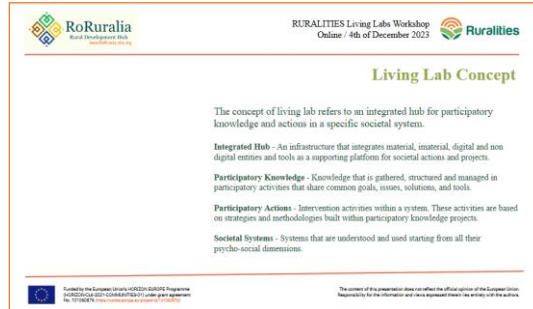
Objective 5: Developing Training Centres

- A working group has been formed to plan and coordinate activities for establishing [Ruralities](#) training centres.
- These centres will focus on a learning framework interlinked with project outcomes and impacts.



Living lab Workshops

On December 4, 2023, two partners, the [Institute for Development and Innovation](#) (IRI) and the [Rural Development Research Platform](#) (RDRP), hosted the **1st online Living Lab workshop** for the consortium. The session introduced the concept of living labs, featuring insights into the Pannonia Climate Neutral Agriculture Living Lab - [PCNA LL](#) in Serbia (IRI is part of it) and the [RoRuralia living lab](#) in Romania.



On February 29, 2024, two partners from Spain (Asturias region), [Asincar](#) and [Fundacion Ctlic](#) hosted the **2nd online Living Lab workshop** - shedding light on the creation, preservation and the management of their living labs. Through persistence, innovation, cooperation, knowledge transfer, technology transfer both labs have thrived and offer great services to their local communities. [Learn more.](#)

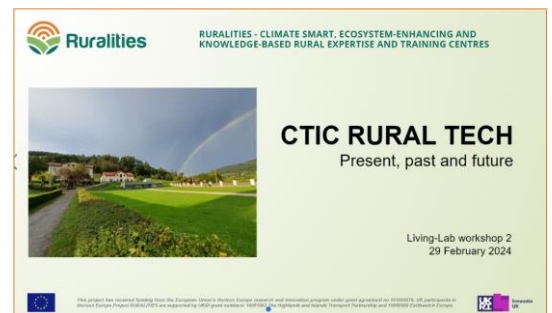


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Creating Synergies

The consortium has established synergies with a number of projects sharing knowledge and expertise. All the details can be found [here](#).

The long-term vision for the EU's rural areas

On March 27, 2024, the European Commission released its report outlining the long-term vision for the EU's rural areas. The full report is available [here](#).

The EU's long-term vision for rural areas provides a vital framework for strengthening and revitalizing rural communities across Europe, focusing on sustainability, innovation, and inclusivity. The [Ruralities](#) project aligns perfectly with this vision by implementing practical

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solutions such as rural innovation hubs, living labs, and a climate-smart learning framework. By addressing key challenges like depopulation, skills shortages, and the digital divide, **Ruralities** helps turn the EU's aspirations into actionable outcomes, contributing directly to a stronger, connected, and more resilient future for rural areas.

Celebrating Women in Rural Development

International Day of Rural Women on October 15 2024

We honor the incredible contributions of women in **Ruralities**, showcasing how our partners are empowering women, driving sustainable development and strengthening rural communities:

Inagro vzw: Engages women in short supply chains, recreation, and farm visits, enhancing social connections and economic activity.

MarinBio: Supports young women in farming, horticulture, and events like AgriExpo Africa, fostering youth and rural engagement.

Asincar (SIMSES5): Focuses on impactful actions for elderly women in rural areas, ensuring inclusive development.

Maroc Horizon d'Aventures: Highlights the essential role of women and girls in Morocco's Anti-Atlas Mountains.

RDAP (SIMSES4): Promotes gender equality through workshops, training, and entrepreneurship, emphasizing intergenerational collaboration.

Université de Nouakchott: Surveys challenges faced by rural women, advocating for social and economic integration.

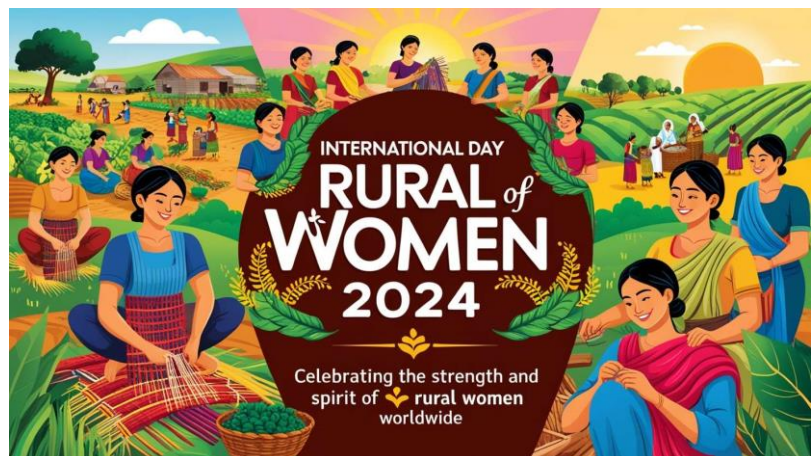


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Get more information on the [World Health Organization website/](#)

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Communication Highlights

In this issue we highlight the African partners initiatives in the project:

On November 28-30 2023, the **Université Assane Seck Ziguinchor** in Senegal, participated in the 1st Biennale of Research, Innovation, and Industrialization in Africa (BRII-Africa), organized by the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation. Read more [here](#).



February 15 2024, the **University of Nouakchott** in Mauritania held a workshop and field excursion on Environmental Biology and Sahelian Ecosystems, combining theory with practical solutions. This initiative enhances learning while promoting sustainability in rural communities. More on the [website](#).



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February 19-20 2024, **MarinBio** took part in a great exhibition, the 7th AFRICA AGRI EXPO Agriculture Exhibition (AAE 2024) in Kenya. With Africa's growing population and rising demand for modern agriculture, AAE 2024 provided MarinBio a key platform to engage with stakeholders, policy makers offering valuable networking and knowledge-sharing opportunities. Details about the event [here](#).



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July 10 2024, **Apodissi** contributed to the panel "EU-Nigeria ongoing successful R&D projects" at the Nigeria-EU Innovation Days in Lagos, presenting the successful implementation of **Ruralities** Project and its valuable contribution to support small holder farmers capacity building. More details [here](#).



IFA-Yangambi in CONGO, initiated innovative agricultural strategies in Bakumu-Mandombe, [Ubundu](#). creating the CEDIADE" (Center for Experiments and Demonstrations of Innovations in Sustainable and Ecological Agriculture) to support both environmental and economic growth for the ±65,000 residents in the region.



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DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO
MINISTRY OF HIGHER AND UNIVERSITY EDUCATION
INSTITUT FACULTAIRE DES SCIENCES AGRONOMIQUES DE YANGAMBI
(IFA - YANGAMBI)



Future Events

1. Workshops among sister projects.
2. Living-Labs events
3. Establishment of expertise and training centers.
4. Rural Thrive campaign getting formalized.

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Ruralities Partners



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Project Coordinator

Gabor Mester - Pedal Consulting
email: g.mester@pedal-consulting.eu

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