



**PRESS RELEASE #3 – RURAL RiSE**

**Project: RURAL RiSE – Rural Reskilling and Upskilling for Social Enterprises**

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# **RURAL RiSE concludes its European journey: rural communities, social enterprises and local authorities unite to build sustainable and inclusive futures**

RURAL RiSE – Rural Reskilling and Upskilling for Social Enterprises is reaching the conclusion of its 24-month European cooperation process, presenting comprehensive results that demonstrate how transnational cooperation, strategic capacity building and locally anchored action planning can generate meaningful opportunities for rural communities across Europe.

Co-funded by the European Union through the Single Market Programme under Grant Agreement No. 101169921, RURAL RiSE was implemented from September 2024 to August 2026 by eight partners from Italy, Spain, Serbia and Belgium. The partnership was coordinated by Materahub and brought together municipalities, Social Economy organisations and European networks to strengthen the role of Social Economy as a driver of rural development and to create new opportunities for unemployed people, with particular attention to young people and women living in rural areas.

## A two-year journey of research, capacity building and local action

RURAL RiSE built its results through three integrated phases:

European research and mapping: partners conducted extensive analysis of education, training, lifelong learning, green employment and Social Economy initiatives across rural areas, identifying best practices and barriers to rural development.

Transnational capacity building: Capacity Building Labs were organised in Miglionico (Italy), Palilula (Serbia) and Valdefuentes (Spain), followed by a fourth and final Capacity Building Lab in Brussels. These activities created spaces for peer learning, dialogue and exchange of practices among municipalities, Social Economy organisations, professionals and community representatives. The final Brussels event, "Made in Rural Europe: From Plans to Action", brought the project's local and European dimensions together to present the work developed in participating territories, exchange lessons and reflect on how the results can inspire future rural policies, partnerships and initiatives.

Local action planning: building on this process, the partners supported the development of Local Action Plans for Miglionico, Matera, Valdefuentes and Palilula, each tailored to its territorial context and developed through stakeholder participation.

## Tangible deliverables for rural transformation

The project has produced the following key resources:

Rural RiSE Training Toolkit: a guide supporting local authorities, Social Economy organisations and stakeholders in using Social Economy as a strategic tool for sustainable rural development. The toolkit covers Social Economy models, social entrepreneurship, cooperation mechanisms, stakeholder engagement and participatory local planning.

<https://ruralrise.wazo.coop/rural-rise-training-toolkit/>

Local Action Plans for Miglionico, Matera, Valdefuentes and Palilula: community-informed development strategies identifying territorial priorities, concrete actions, available resources, key organisations and opportunities for future cooperation. Each plan places Social Economy enterprises at the centre of rural regeneration and promotes the participation of young people and women.

<https://ruralrise.wazo.coop/rural-rise-brussels/>

Communication and dissemination materials: a common visual identity, a dedicated website, newsletters, press releases, online content and a European awareness-raising campaign reaching rural communities, public authorities, policymakers and European stakeholders.

<https://ruralrise.wazo.coop/join-rural-rise-in-open-call-for-funded-mobility/>

<https://www.instagram.com/p/DZeqUdCimql/>

## **The New European Bauhaus as guiding framework**

Throughout all project phases, the values of the New European Bauhaus – sustainability, inclusion and quality of experience – provided a shared framework for analysing rural challenges and designing responses. This approach encouraged participants to consider environmental, social, cultural and economic dimensions as interconnected elements of rural development.

Participatory processes, cross-sector cooperation and active community involvement were central to the RURAL RiSE methodology, positioning rural territories as places of creativity, innovation and opportunity.

## **Building networks and enabling replication**

RURAL RiSE has created lasting foundations for continued cooperation:

A transnational network of municipalities and Social Economy organisations committed to rural regeneration through social entrepreneurship and green employment.

Practical methodologies, toolkits and action plans ready for adaptation and replication in other rural European territories.

Evidence of how local authorities and Social Economy organisations can work together to approach rural challenges through complementary perspectives.

A basis for continued cooperation beyond the project, with the Local Action Plans providing frameworks for long-term implementation and resource mobilisation.

## **Next steps and sustainability**

As RURAL RiSE concludes its formal project period, the participating territories are working to transition project results into operational local action. Each municipality and partner is exploring opportunities for continued funding and implementation through:

LEADER / GAL funding for rural development initiatives.



Erasmus+ and Interreg programmes for continuing transnational cooperation and capacity building.

National and regional programmes supporting social entrepreneurship, youth employment and green jobs.

Direct implementation of the Local Action Plans through municipal initiatives and partnerships with local Social Economy organisations.

## Resources and further information

All project results, news, resources and contact information are available through the official RURAL RiSE website:

<https://ruralrise.wazo.coop/>

**For media enquiries, partnership opportunities or additional information:**

Email: [info@ruralrise.wazo.coop](mailto:info@ruralrise.wazo.coop)

## About RURAL RiSE

RURAL RiSE – Rural Reskilling and Upskilling for Social Enterprises is a 24-month European project co-funded by the Single Market Programme under Grant Agreement No. 101169921 (September 2024 – August 2026).

The project supports the development of Social Economy enterprises in rural areas through research, capacity building, skills development, knowledge transfer, local action planning and transnational cooperation.

Its activities focus particularly on unemployed young people and women in rural communities and on the potential of Social Economy and green employment to contribute to sustainable and inclusive territorial development.

### Project partners

Materahub (Italy) – Project coordinator

Municipality of Miglionico (Italy)

Municipality of Matera (Italy)

DIESIS Network (Belgium)

Municipality of Valdefuentes (Spain)

Wazo Coop (Spain)



Municipality of Palilula (Serbia)

Young Ambassadors (Serbia)

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Hashtag: **#RuralRise**

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