



# RURACTIVE

## Lessons learned from past Horizon projects

RURACTIVE Forum launching event

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# Introduction

- The European Union has long been committed to developing **policies** that foster mobility, culture, services and health, innovation and sustainability.
  - Through initiatives such as Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe, the EU has funded numerous projects aimed at addressing the key challenges of climate change, socio-economic inequality, and technological advancement.
- AEIDL has **examined 15 recent Horizon projects**.
- Provide insights on **lessons learned** regarding RURACTIVE's six RDDs.

# Lessons learned 1/3

**Agrifood and ecosystem management** are critical for ensuring food security, biodiversity, and sustainable rural development. The past Horizon projects have highlighted interconnected solutions to optimise land use, promote sustainable agriculture, and enhance ecosystem services.

- ***Integrated approaches to food systems:*** Policies should consider the entire agrifood value chain, from production to consumption, to enhance efficiency, reduce waste, and improve resilience.
- ***Biodiversity and resilience:*** Maintaining and enhancing biodiversity is essential for sustainable agricultural practices. This includes supporting pollination, water conservation, and soil fertility.
- ***Ecosystem-based land use:*** Coordinating land-use policies to balance agriculture, conservation, and urbanisation ensures sustainable resource allocation and ecosystem health.
- ***Circular agrifood systems:*** Fostering systems where organic waste is repurposed into fertilisers or bioenergy contributes to resource efficiency and environmental sustainability.

**Nature based and cultural tourism** driven by natural and cultural assets is a cornerstone for sustainable economic growth, especially in rural and peri-urban regions. It also serves as a vehicle for conservation and cultural preservation.

- ***Sustainability as a main objective:*** Tourism policies should minimise environmental impacts while maximizing socio-economic benefits. This includes promoting eco-tourism and responsible travel practices.
- ***Community-led tourism governance:*** Engaging local communities ensures that tourism activities align with local values and foster shared benefits.
- ***Integration of cultural assets:*** Cultural tourism provides an opportunity to celebrate regional identities while driving local economic development. Linking tourism to heritage preservation strengthens these ties.
- ***Digital innovation in tourism:*** Leveraging technology, such as augmented reality or digital storytelling, enhances visitor experiences and promotes sustainable engagement with cultural and natural sites.

# Lessons learned 2/3

European Union's commitment to climate neutrality by 2050 is a driving force behind policies aimed at **Energy transition and climate neutrality**. The reviewed past Horizon projects emphasize renewable energy adoption, energy efficiency, and community-driven approaches.

- **Decentralised energy models:** Community-led renewable energy projects, such as wind farms or solar cooperatives, enhance energy resilience and local ownership.
- **Smart energy grids:** Integrating renewable energy with advanced grid management systems ensures reliability and accommodates fluctuations in energy supply.
- **Efficiency as a priority:** Modernising infrastructure and encouraging the adoption of energy-efficient technologies reduce energy demand and operational costs.
- **Climate adaptation in energy:** Resilient energy systems that can withstand extreme weather events are vital for maintaining supply and achieving sustainability goals.

**Multimodal mobility** is a critical enabler for economic activity, social inclusion, and environmental sustainability. Multimodal solutions integrating various transport systems are essential for reducing emissions, improving connectivity, and enhancing user experience.

- **Comprehensive transport systems:** Policies must emphasise seamless integration of public transit, cycling, walking, and shared mobility options to optimise efficiency and reduce emissions.
- **Low-carbon and active mobility:** Encouraging the use of bicycles, pedestrian pathways, and electric vehicles supports sustainability while improving public health.
- **Accessibility and equity:** Ensuring that rural and peri-urban regions have access to efficient transport infrastructure reduces disparities and fosters territorial cohesion.
- **Digital-driven mobility solutions:** Smart transportation systems using real-time data optimize network performance, reduce congestion, and improve user experience and satisfaction.

# Lessons learned 3/3

**Culture and cultural innovation** are pivotal for fostering social cohesion, economic vitality, and regional identity. Cultural innovation not only preserves heritage but also drives transformation in areas like education, tourism, and urban regeneration.

- ***Culture as an economic driver:*** Policies that integrate culture with economic development encourage creative industries, cultural entrepreneurship, and innovation hubs.
- ***Cultural inclusion and diversity:*** Promoting diverse cultural expressions fosters inclusivity and reflects the richness of regional and local identities.
- ***Educational linkages:*** Integrating cultural activities into educational systems enhances creativity and fosters a deeper understanding of heritage.
- ***Cultural digitalisation:*** Digitising cultural assets ensures broader accessibility while preserving heritage for future generations.

High-quality, equitable **local services**, establish community resilience, **health**, and overall **wellbeing**. Horizon projects underscore the importance of integrating digital and physical service delivery models tailored to local needs.

- ***Place-based service:*** Customising local services to reflect the unique needs of rural, urban, and peri-urban areas ensures accessibility and relevance.
- ***Digital integration in services:*** Digital health services, e-learning, and online public services extend access to healthcare, education, and governance, particularly in remote areas.
- ***Mental and physical wellbeing:*** Policies must address holistic wellbeing, emphasising mental health services, community centers, and green spaces.
- ***Community engagement:*** Actively involving communities in service planning fosters trust, ensures alignment with actual needs, and enhances sustainability.

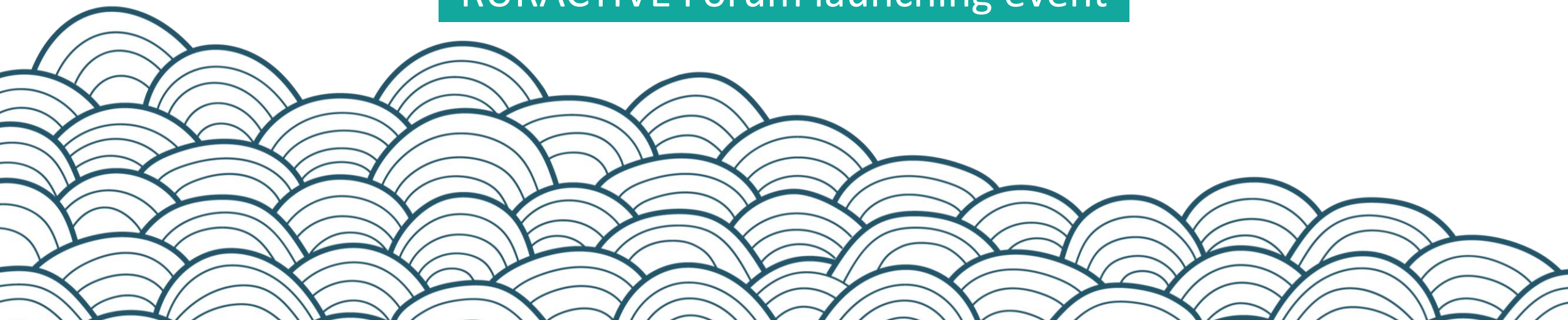




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