



Supporting rural communities

RURACTIVE Forum, 10 February 2025

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European Commission*

AGENDA

- EU political and policy context
- Initiatives and funding instruments for smart rural communities



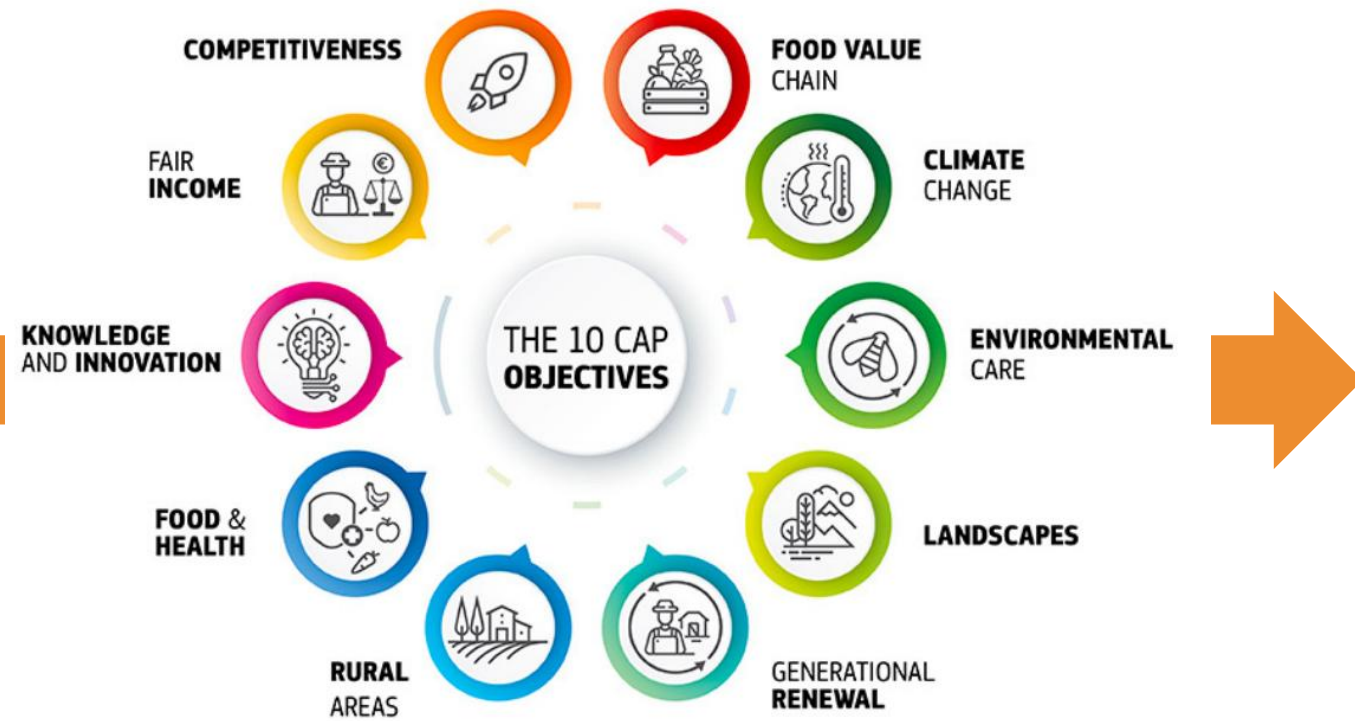
EU political and policy context

The existing framework



2021 + REPORT: The long-term vision for the EU's rural areas: key achievements and ways forward 2024

✓ **Research and innovation for rural communities**



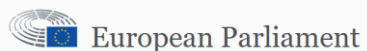
Launched in 1962; current CAP into force since 2023

A changing world: new EU priorities

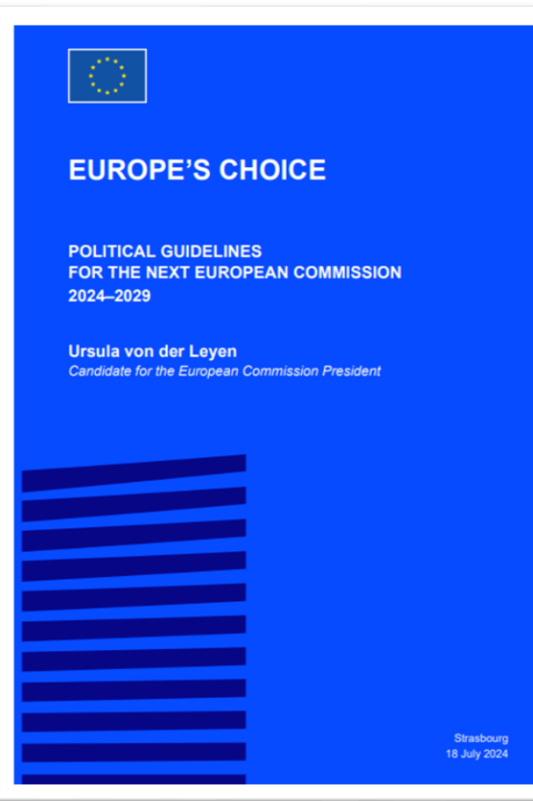
EU Strategic Agenda 2024-2029

- A free and democratic Europe
- A strong and secure Europe
- A prosperous and competitive Europe

European
elections
6-9 June 2024



July 2024



A new plan for Europe's sustainable prosperity and competitiveness

Europe as a continent of economic growth, enterprise and innovation by ensuring competitiveness, prosperity and fairness.



A new era for European Defence and Security

Meeting Europe's security and defence challenges, and enhancing preparedness and crisis management.



Supporting people, strengthening our societies and our social model

Promoting social fairness, increasing solidarity in our society, and ensuring equal opportunities for all.



Sustaining our quality of life: Food security, water and nature

Building a competitive and resilient agriculture and food system, safeguarding biodiversity, and preparing for a changing climate.



Protecting our democracy, upholding our values

Putting citizens at the heart of our democracy to empower all to help shape the future of our European Union.



A global Europe: Leveraging our power and partnerships

Focusing on our wider neighbourhood to tackle global challenges and promote peace, partnerships, and economic stability.



Delivering together and preparing our Union for the future

A modern and reinforced EU budget, and ambitious reform agenda to deliver on our goals.

- Build a competitive and resilient agriculture and food system, safeguarding biodiversity (**food security**)
- Boost **climate** adaptation, preparedness and solidarity in cities and rural areas

The future of Agriculture (and rural areas)



- New forum that aims to shape a shared vision for EU farming;
- First report September 2024.

Recommendation: **Invigorating rural communities**

- Mobilise investments in rural economy
- Support rural areas with structural change (agri-food sector)
- Support new skills and new and young entrants into the land use sectors
- Support **sustainable competitiveness** of economic sectors contributing to the viability of rural areas
- Improve infrastructure and services (clean mobility, incentivise decarbonised electricity structure for rural communities)

January 2025: **European Board on Agriculture and Food** chaired by Commissioner Hansen

- advice on strategic policy developments for the Vision for agriculture and food
- new culture of dialogue, trust and multi-stakeholder participation,
- advising on the preparation of policy initiatives in the fields of agriculture and food and to follow-up on the final report of the Strategic Dialogue on the Future of Agriculture.
- delivering an opinion on specific matters upon request by the Commission.

Mission letter – Commissioner for Agriculture and Food



- A Commission more present on the ground -> **go local**
- Food security competitiveness, resilience and sustainability of the agricultural sector are at the centre.
- **Vision for Agriculture and Food** (in consultation with the EBAF) *coming soon*
- **Youth Policy Dialogues** (started in December 2024) -> Strategy for **Generational Renewal** *coming soon*
- Leverage the power of digital tools to deliver better and faster solutions
- **Future CAP** -> fit for purpose: to provide targeted support to farmers who need it most, notably small-scale farmers, promote positive environmental and social outcomes through rewards and incentives for ecosystem services and to **support the right enabling conditions for thriving rural areas**.
- Develop instruments for **climate risk preparedness** and **crisis management** and you will ensure that the **needs of rural areas** are specifically catered for.
- Address targeted spread of **disinformation** in rural areas.



Mission letter – Executive Vice-President for Cohesion and Reforms



Raffaele Fitto

Executive Vice-President-designate for Cohesion and Reforms

Dear Raffaele,

The Commission we will serve in together will be called upon to make choices that will shape our Continent and our Union for years and decades to come. In a time of great global instability and great expectations of Europeans, we must live up to that responsibility. **We must deliver and lead from the front**, working closely with the people and regions of Europe and the parliaments, governments and institutions that serve them.

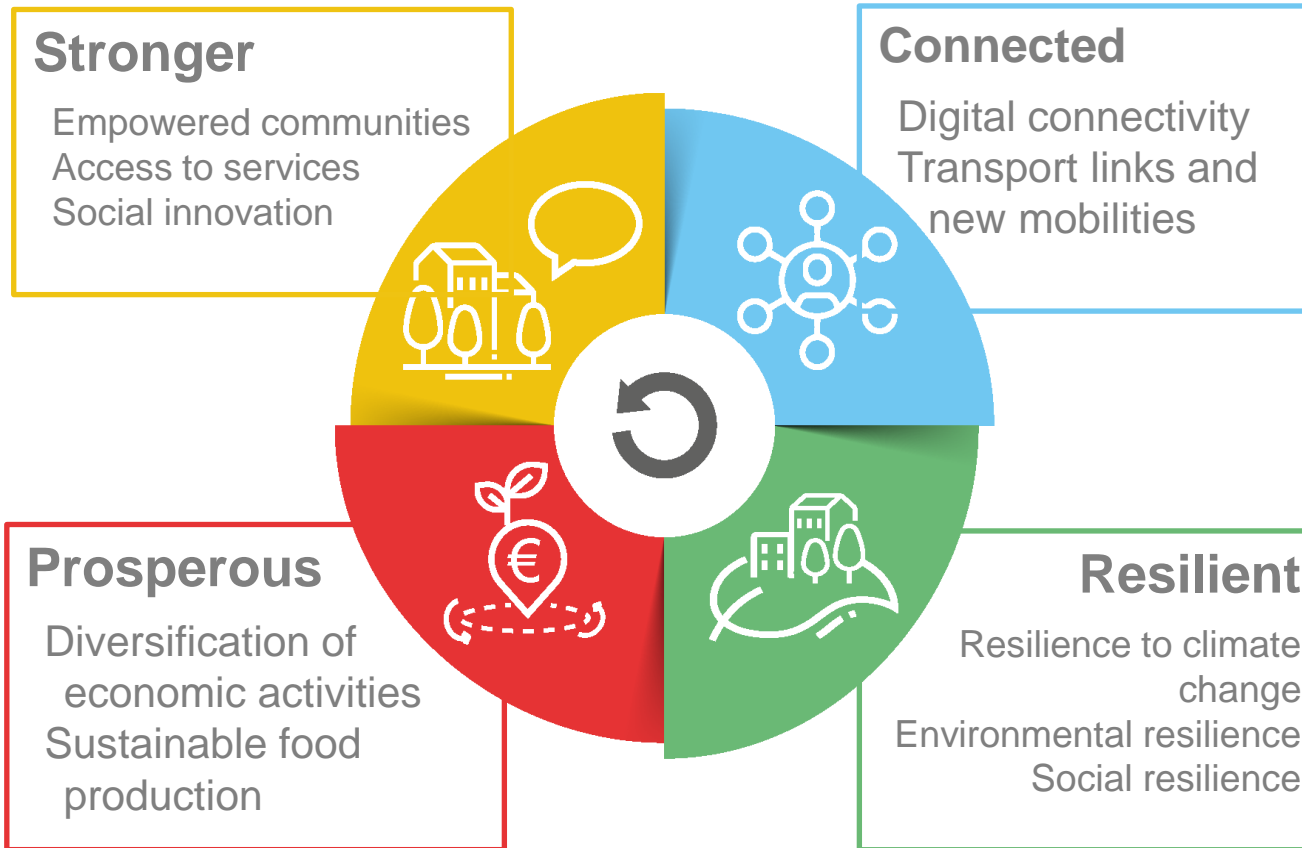
This was the spirit of the Political Guidelines which I presented to the European Parliament in July 2024 – our common plan for European strength and unity. It focuses on ensuring our **security** in every sense in a more dangerous and turbulent world, on supporting people and citizens by strengthening our **prosperity**, our social market economy, green and digital transitions and sustaining our unique quality of life. We will strengthen our **democracy**, rally around our values and ensure that we are stronger at home. We will work with our partners and better assert our interests around the world.

Together, we will respond to the real and legitimate concerns and expectations that Europeans expressed at the last elections. We will be closer to people and businesses where it really matters with practical support and sustained investment. We will strive to **make Europe faster and simpler** in the way that we act – and in the way we interact

“You will strive for all citizens to have an effective right to stay in the place they call home by supporting what a community needs: public services and private activities, education and skills, health, transport and digital connectivity. You should tackle regional disparities, providing tailor-made solutions to regional and local challenges and supporting regions to catch up”.

Initiatives and funding instruments for smart rural communities

Research and innovation is contributing to the implementation of the Long-term Vision for EU's rural areas



Rural Action Plan flagships:

✓ **Rural revitalisation platform**

✓ **Research and innovation** for rural communities



✓ **Sustainable multimodal mobility** best practices for rural areas

✓ **Rural digital futures**

✓ Support rural municipalities in **energy** transition and fighting climate change

✓ Climate action in **peatland** through **carbon farming**

✓ EU mission: **A soil deal for Europe**

✓ **Social resilience** and **Women in rural areas**

✓ **Entrepreneurship** and **social economy** in rural areas.

HORIZON EUROPE

EURATOM

SPECIFIC PROGRAMME: EUROPEAN DEFENCE FUND

*Exclusive focus on
defence research
& development*

Research
actions

Development
actions

SPECIFIC PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTING HORIZON EUROPE & EIT*

Exclusive focus on civil applications



Pillar I EXCELLENT SCIENCE

European Research Council

Marie Skłodowska-Curie

Research Infrastructures



Pillar II GLOBAL CHALLENGES & EUROPEAN INDUSTRIAL COMPETITIVENESS

Clusters

- Health
- Culture, Creativity & Inclusive Society
- Civil Security for Society
- Digital, Industry & Space
- Climate, Energy & Mobility
- Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture & Environment

Joint Research Centre



Pillar III INNOVATIVE EUROPE

European Innovation
Council

European Innovation
Ecosystems

European Institute of
Innovation & Technology*

WIDENING PARTICIPATION AND STRENGTHENING THE EUROPEAN RESEARCH AREA

Widening participation & spreading excellence

Reforming & Enhancing the European R&I system

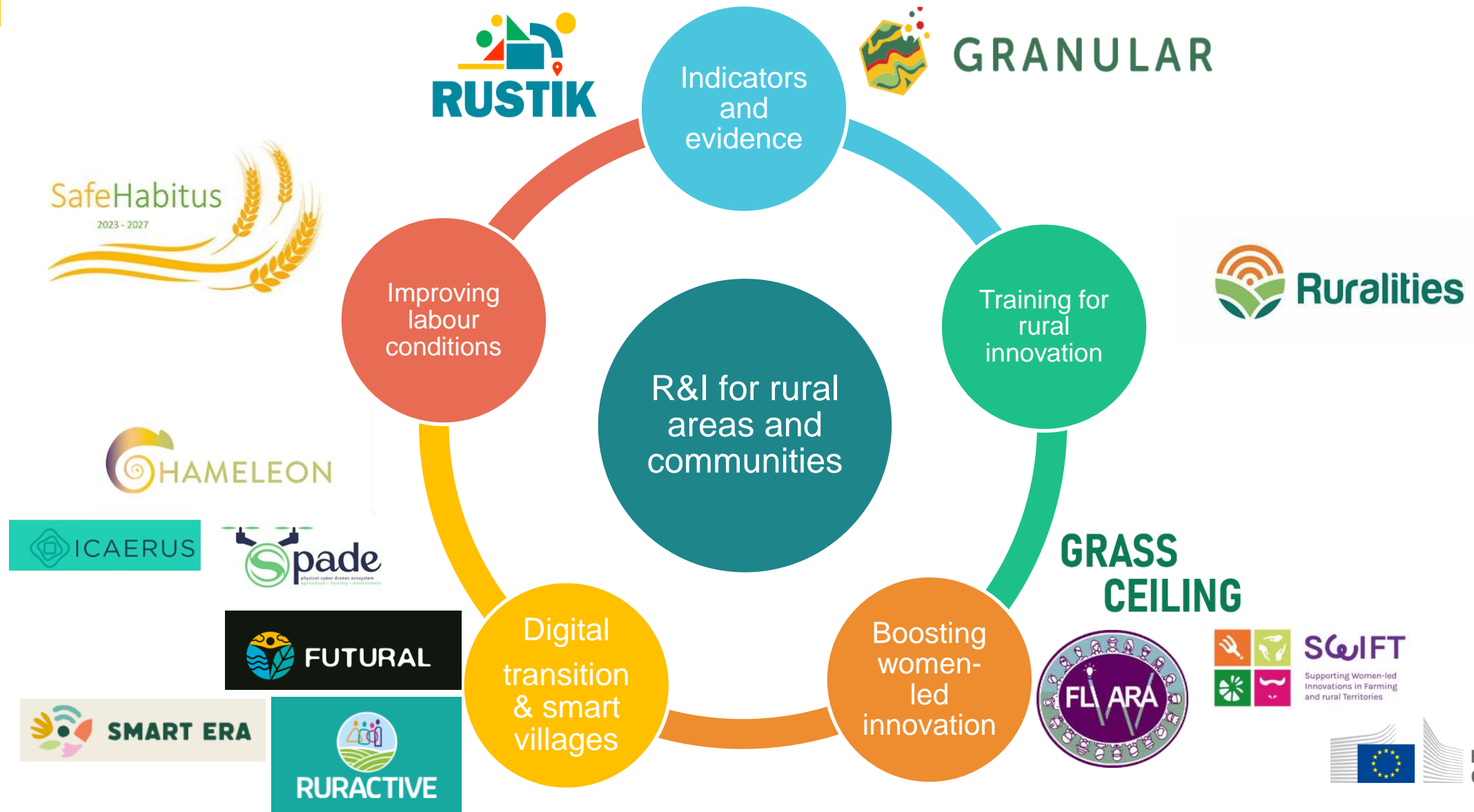
Fusion

Fission

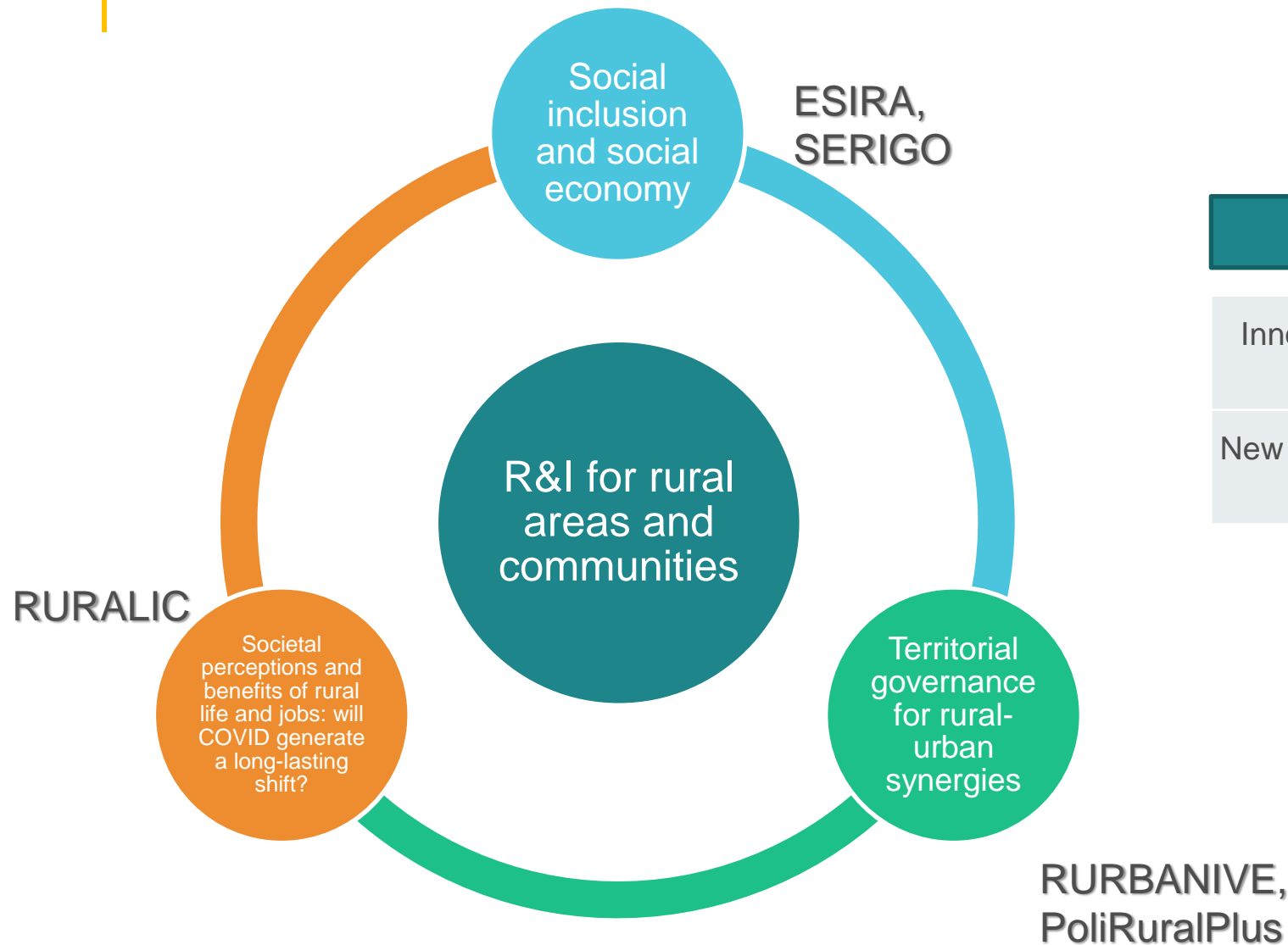
Joint
Research
Centre

* The European Institute of Innovation & Technology (EIT) is not part of the Specific Programme

Horizon Europe rural projects under cluster Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture & Environment



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WP 2024

Innovating for climate-neutral rural communities by 2050

New business and production models for farmers and rural communities

Common Agricultural Policy

Smart villages can be supported under **Cooperation intervention, LEADER, Investments under the CAP.**

In total, **20 MSs** (Austria, Belgium-Flanders, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Finland, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain/Extremadura, Sweden, Slovenia) plan to support smart village initiatives. So far, based on the target of 10 MSs, there will be a **minimum of 1073 smart village strategies or projects.**

- 5 MSs have planned to support smart village strategies and projects under cooperation intervention
- 20 MSs have planned to support smart villages through LEADER
- 3 MSs have planned to support infrastructure investments related to smart-village strategies



More information and network

- Building on the results of the [Pilot Project on “Smart Eco-Social Villages”](#) and the [1st Preparatory Action on ‘Smart Rural Areas in the 21st Century’](#)
- the **second preparatory action on Smart Rural Areas in the 21st Century - Bis (commonly called Smart Rural 27 Project)** aimed at preparing Member States and rural communities for a successful implementation of the new concept of **Smart Villages** within the CAP 2023-2027 -> report including recommendations for the post-2027 regulations: [Smart Rural Areas in the 21st Century - European Commission.](#)
- Rural Pact Community Platform: [Community Group on Smart Villages](#) -> you can share information on RURACTIVE activities and results.

Thank you



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