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ESIRA – ENHANCING SOCIAL INNOVATION IN RURAL AREAS

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COOPERATION PLAN

Deliverable D6.5

WP6 – Dissemination, Exploitation and Communication



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List of acronyms

Acronym	Full name
WP	Work Package
WP3	Framework setting for Multi-Actor Platforms operating as community-led innovation spaces
WP4	Research on drivers of rural marginalization and the opportunities of community-led social economy initiatives for social inclusion
WP5	Community-led innovation spaces and pilot social economy initiatives
WP6	Dissemination, Exploitation and Communication
Task 6.4 (T6.4)	Cooperation with existing projects and initiatives
UBU	UNIVERSIDAD DE BURGOS
SODEBUR	SOCIEDAD PARA EL DESARROLLO DE LA PROVINCIA DE BURGOS
F02	FUNDACION OXIGENO
HETFA	HETFA KUTATOINTEZET KFT
MRSZA	MAGYAR REFORMATUS SZERETETSZOLGALAT ALAPITVANY
IRI	INSTITUT ZA RAZVOJ I INOVACIJE - IRI
ERDN	EUROPEAN RURAL DEVELOPMENT NETWORK
LSMC	LIETUVOS SOCIALINIŲ MOKSLŲ CENTRAS
Druskininku VVG	DRUSKININKŲ VIETOS VEIKLOS GRUPE
EURICSE	EURICSE
BORGHIIIN	BORGHIIIN RETE DI IMPRESE
FTC	FEDERAZIONE TRENTINA DELLA COOPERAZIONE SC
INN	HOGSKOLEN I INNLANDET
INNLANDCOUNTY	INNLANDET FYLKESKOMMUNE
Euromontana	Euromontana

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1. Summary

The deliverable Cooperation Plan with sister projects and similar initiatives outlines a strategic approach to fostering collaboration and synergy with relevant projects and initiatives throughout the project's duration. The Cooperation Plan's primary goals are identifying projects with similar objectives, enhancing networking opportunities, and establishing pathways for mutual learning and resource sharing.

Although there is no universal definition, in this document the term "sister project and initiative" refers to a project, initiative or association that aims to achieve a similar goal, have a similar mission, target similar groups and/or have a similar implementation approach.

This deliverable presents the methodology approach in mapping, prioritizing and cooperating with the representatives of sister projects and similar initiatives.

MAPPING: When mapping relevant sister projects and similar initiatives, the methodology will include a phase approach. In phase 1 initial mapping will be conducted when an initial list of sister projects and similar initiatives is developed. After the initial mapping, a periodical updating of the list will be conducted annually through the questionnaire developed and distributed to all partners by IRI. The methodology both for initial and annual updating of the list includes researching of: EU Funding & Tenders Portal, targeted online keyword searches, and social media platforms.

PRIORITIZATION: The prioritization of sister projects will be based on criteria designed to maximize synergies and ensure alignment with the project's goals. Key criteria include the similarity of project objectives, focusing on projects from the same EU call or specific topics (with higher priority for the former), geographic relevance, target group or thematic relevance, complementarity in methodology, and willingness to collaborate. The ESIRA project will cooperate with all listed sister projects. However, projects with strong alignment in above mentioned areas will be prioritized for cooperation, ensuring that joint activities will have the most significant synergistic impact.

COOPERATION: The ESIRA project will engage with sister projects and similar initiatives in a variety of cooperation activities, including organizing joint events (conferences, workshops, webinars), exchanging knowledge and resources (publications, tools, methodologies, newsletter), and joint communication activities (social media campaigns, promotional events). Based on the prioritization level of the sister project, these activities can vary. High-priority projects will be invited to participate in all types of activities, while with the medium-priority projects the focus will be on knowledge exchange and joint communication efforts. Finally, with low-priority projects focus will primarily be involved in knowledge exchange through newsletters. This approach ensures targeted

collaboration and maximizes synergies between projects, taking into consideration the limited resources of the projects, improving the efficient use of resources, and avoiding duplication of funding for the same activities by different projects.

Finally, this deliverable presents the probable effects of the cooperation among listed sister projects and similar initiatives and provides measurable success indicators such as: a) Number of mapped sister projects, b) number of highly prioritized sister projects, c) number of joint events – online and live, d) number of participants from sister projects on joint events – both online and live, e) number of shared posts regarding the joint activities.



2. Introduction to the cooperation plan

2.1 Definitions, purpose and target group

The deliverable Cooperation Plan with sister projects and similar initiatives outlines a strategic approach to fostering collaboration and synergy with relevant projects and initiatives throughout the duration of the project. Its primary goals are to identify projects that share similar objectives, enhance networking opportunities, and establish pathways for mutual learning and resource sharing. Networking and cooperation among these projects will ensure the achievement of common goals and maximize the impact of all project activities.

Although there is no universal definition, in this document the term "sister project and initiative" refers to a project, initiative or association that aims to achieve similar goal, have similar mission, target similar groups and/or have similar implementation approach.

This deliverable provides strategies for networking with sister projects, upcoming initiatives, and other relevant actors. It is closely linked to Task 6.4, which focuses on mapping sister projects and similar initiatives with the support of project partners. By doing so, the cooperation plan creates a structured framework for collaboration, helping to strengthen ties across the ecosystem and enabling the exchange of best practices, knowledge, and innovative approaches.

The deliverable is primarily for the use of the ESIRA project partners, to guide outreach efforts with relevant and similar projects and initiatives. It contains best practices for cooperation at European and international level and serves as a starting plan, elaborating the approaches to be taken by project partners.

2.2 Contributions of partners

IRI coordinated the activities regarding the development of the Cooperation plan, development of the methodology and mapping potential sister projects and initiatives. However, all project partners took a part in development of this deliverable mostly by providing relevant information regarding potential sister projects and initiatives that align with the objectives of the ESIRA project. Additionally, partners were included in initial activities and communication with potential sister projects while mapping all relevant initiatives. Finally, all partners will be involved in the implementation of cooperation activities stipulated in this deliverable.

Table 1 Future expected contributions from project partners

Partner name	Contributions
IRI	IRI will coordinate the implementation of activities stipulated in this deliverable. IRI will initiate and/or participate in events relevant to social inclusion organized together with or by sister projects and initiatives. IRI will use its own platforms and networks for dissemination of ESIRA results. IRI will report all partners regarding the implementation of the activities from this deliverable.
UBU, SODEBUR, FO2, HETFA, MRSZA, ERDN, LSMC, Druskininku VVG, BORGHIIN, FTC, INN, INNLANDCOUNTY, Euromontana	Partners will aim to take part in external events relevant to social inclusion in rural areas and make use of their own platforms and networks for dissemination (i.e. Euromontana for mountain actors). Partners will contribute to mapping all relevant projects and initiatives and to updating this list. Partners will participate in the events organized in the ESIRA project relevant to the cooperation with sister projects and initiatives.
Euromontana	Euromontana, as a Brussels based rural network, will act as interface with other rural network at EU level.

2.3 Contribution to other project work packages

The Cooperation Plan with sister projects and similar initiatives is closely tied to the work of the project's work packages. For instance, through collaboration with external initiatives, the project can enrich the framework for Multi-Actor Platforms by integrating diverse experiences and methodologies. Insights gained from these partnerships can enhance the design of community-led innovation spaces, ensuring they are built on proven practices and aligned with the needs of rural communities. These synergies not only strengthen the project's foundation but also foster mutual learning and the exchange of innovative approaches to empowering local actors (WP3).

Furthermore, this collaboration supports the research on rural marginalization by providing access to additional data, case studies, and findings from similar projects. Shared knowledge about social economy initiatives and their impact on inclusion can refine the project's analysis, creating a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities in rural areas. This interconnected approach ensures that the project achieves its goals more effectively while contributing to a broader ecosystem of initiatives addressing rural marginalization and social innovation (WP4 and WP5).

The Cooperation plan also amplifies the project's dissemination, exploitation, and communication efforts by leveraging shared platforms, networks, and audiences, thereby increasing the visibility and uptake of results (WP6).

3. Methodology approach

3.1 Steps in mapping relevant sister projects and similar initiatives

Step 1: Mapping of the relevant sister projects and initiatives

The Cooperation plan includes the initial list of mapped sister projects and initiatives. However, this list is not a finalized document, and it needs to be updated periodically. The process of mapping relevant sister projects needs to include tools to enable the project team to maintain the list of mapped projects updated and relevant. Therefore, the methodology approach in mapping relevant projects and initiatives will include:

1. Initial mapping of relevant projects and initiatives.
2. Annual updating of the mapped projects and initiatives.

IRI will initiate the annual updating of the mapped projects and initiatives by distributing tailored online questionnaires to project partners to gather insights about their existing networks and past or ongoing projects. This questionnaire will include questions about:

- Previous collaborations on similar topics.
- Connections to organizations or initiatives in related fields.
- Recommendations for potential synergies.

More regarding the methodology for mapping and updating the list of sister projects and initiatives is in part 3.2. of this deliverable.

Step 2: Prioritization of sister projects

Having in mind limited resources of the project and majority of projects and initiatives that have similar missions to support vulnerable groups and rural communities, it is necessary to conduct prioritization of listed sister projects by using developed criteria (more in 3.3.). This prioritization will enable the project team to map the most relevant sister projects where joint activities will have the most significant synergistic effect.

The ESIRA project team will cooperate with all listed projects and initiatives through activities developed in this deliverable. However, the focus of cooperation activities will be on those projects and initiatives that are prioritized. More regarding the type of activities in part 4 of the deliverable.

3.2 Methodology for identifying sister projects and similar initiatives

From the beginning of the project (M1) IRI coordinated all partners in preparing the initial list of potential sister projects and similar initiatives (T6.5). All partners, particularly Euromontana, with its extensive network of rural stakeholders across Europe, provided assistance.

The methodology for identifying sister projects and initiatives includes following steps:

1. Search via the Funding & Tenders Portal:

- Utilize the EU's comprehensive portal, which provides detailed information on all funded projects, their objectives, and consortium partners.
- Filter by program, thematic area, or geographic location to pinpoint relevant projects.

2. Keyword-Based Online Search:

- Conduct targeted searches using key terms related to your project's focus area (e.g., rural, vulnerable groups, community of practice, sustainability, innovation, agriculture).
- Use advanced search operators to refine results and identify ongoing or completed initiatives with shared objectives.

3. Social Media and Keyword Analysis:

- Explore platforms like LinkedIn, Twitter to find organizations, projects, and discussions around similar themes.
- Monitor trending hashtags and project-related posts to stay informed and connect with relevant stakeholders.

This methodology ensures a comprehensive approach to identifying potential collaborators, benchmarking similar efforts, and fostering synergies within your project's domain.

3.3 Criteria for prioritization sister projects and similar initiatives

To ensure a high-quality exchange of knowledge, experiences, and best practices, the Institute for Development and Innovation (IRI) proposes a set of criteria for prioritizing collaboration with sister projects and similar initiatives. These criteria are designed to maximize synergies and ensure alignment with project goals.

1) Similarity of the project objectives

a) Projects from the Same Call of the European Commission

Rationale: Projects originating from the same call (HORIZON-CL6-2023-COMMUNITIES-01-1) are likely to share similar objectives, methodologies, and deliverables, making them ideal candidates for collaboration.

Priority: These projects receive 10 points due to their thematic and procedural alignment.

Example: The SERIGO project aligns perfectly with this criterion, showcasing significant overlaps in topics and goals.

b) Projects funded under specify topics

Rationale: Cooperation with projects funded under the topics HORIZONCL2-2022-TRANSFORMATIONS-01-02 and HORIZON-CL2-2021-TRANSFORMATIONS-01-03 or other calls with similar topics to ESIRA.

Priority: These projects receive 5 points due to their thematic and procedural alignment on the one hand, but they are not as similar as the projects originating from the same call.

2) Geographic Relevance

Rationale: Projects targeting similar geographic regions will likely have more synergetic effect in addressing region-specific challenges collaboratively.

Priority: If the majority of geographic regions/countries are the same the project receives 10 points. If some of the geographic regions are the same the project receives 5 points. If none of the geographic regions are the same the project receives 0 points.

3) Target groups or Thematic Relevance

Rationale: Projects and initiatives focusing on the same or related themes or same target groups (e.g., rural areas, women entrepreneurs, marginalization groups, youth in NEET, elderly people, people with disabilities) can enhance each other's impact through knowledge exchange and co-created solutions.

Priority: If majority of target groups and/or targeted themes matches – 10 points. If some of the target groups and/or targeted themes matches – 5 points. If none of the target groups and/or targeted themes matches – 0 points.

4) Complementarity in Methodology approach

Rationale: Projects that offer same, similar or complementary methodology approach (e.g. using same tools, policies, bottom-up approach methodologies) can fill gaps and

strengthen overall outcomes and provide relevant exchange of knowledge between the project teams.

Priority: If methodology approach is mostly similar – 5 points as these collaborations can be highly strategic but may require more effort to align goals. If methodology approach is different – 0 points.

5) Willingness for Collaboration

Rationale: The success of any partnership depends on the willingness of other projects to engage, share resources, and actively participate in joint activities.

Priority: If sister project team is willing to collaborate – 10 points, as enthusiasm and openness are critical for productive collaborations. If the sister project team is not willing to collaborate this is an eliminatory criterion.

Table 2 Prioritization Criteria and possible points to be awarded

No	Prioritization Criteria	Points awarded
1	Similarity of the project objectives	Project from the same call – 10 points Projects from under specified topics – 5 points
2	Geographic Relevance	The majority of geographic regions/countries matches – 10 points Some of the regions/countries matches – 5 points None of regions/countries matches – 0 points
3	Target groups or Thematic Relevance	The majority of target groups and/or targeted themes matches – 10 points. Some of the target groups and/or targeted themes matches – 5 points. Target groups and/or themes are different – 0 points
4	Complementarity in Methodology approach	Methodology approach mostly similar – 5 points Methodology approach different – 0 points
5	Willingness for Collaboration	Project team willing to collaborate – 10 points Project team not willing to collaborate – <u>eliminatory criterion</u>
Total		Max 45 points

Prioritization will be conducted based on the awarded points according to the following scoring list.

Table 3 Scoring list for prioritization

High priority projects / initiative	35 and more points
Medium priority projects / initiative	From 20 to 35 points
Low priority projects / initiative	Up to 20 points

4. Approaches to cooperation

4.1 4.1. List of possible cooperation activities

Sister projects and similar initiatives can engage in a wide range of activities that foster cooperation, facilitate knowledge exchange, and enable the joint achievement of goals. Below are potential activities that could be organized by the ESIRA project. Additionally, the ESIRA project team will participate in similar activities organized by the project teams of listed sister projects and similar activities.

4.1.1 Organization of Joint Events and Workshops:

Within the ESIRA project conferences, seminars, workshops, webinars are planned to be organized. Whenever the event is public and not focused on internal project team coordination and networking, representatives of sister projects and similar activities will be invited. The main focus of these events is usually on the presentation of project results and exchange of experiences between projects.

4.1.2 Exchange of Knowledge and Resources:

Within the ESIRA project set of publications/analysis/infographic etc. is going to be published aiming in broadening the knowledge regarding the rural communities, social economy, social innovation and other similar topics. All publications will be shared with sister projects periodically. Additionally, tools, methodologies or data sources could be shared that can help in future research of sister projects.

As part of the exchange of knowledge project newsletter can be used to inform sister projects regarding the activities completed and planned in the future period in the ESIRA project. Newsletter is a form of “short news” that can briefly inform the reader about the activity on the project leaving the contact for more information if needed.

4.1.3 Joint Communication Activities:

Following Communication and Dissemination and Exploration plan implementation the ESIRA project team will have promotional events, social media campaigns and other forms of communicating and disseminating the results of the project. Promotion on social media can be conducted both through the official the ESIRA social media accounts but also through the social media accounts of individual partners on the ESIRA project if it is more effective, taking into account the activity that is being promoted.

While participating in the joint events sister projects and similar activities will be tagged and properly visible. Social Media Campaigns will be used to promote shared values and achievements.

4.2 Activities based on prioritization

Based on conducted prioritization of the listed sister projects and similar initiatives different activities will be organized. The proposed approach is presented in the table below.

Table 4 Activities based on prioritization of sister projects

Prioritization status of the sister project	Proposed cooperation activities
High priority projects / initiative	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Organization of Joint Events 2. Exchange of Knowledge and Resources 3. Joint Communication Activities
Medium priority projects / initiative	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Exchange of Knowledge 2. Joint Communication Activities
Low priority projects / initiative	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Exchange of Knowledge (e.g. through the newsletter)

5. Expected impact

The methodology for cooperation presented in this deliverable directly contributes to one of the key objectives of the project – improving the situation of marginalized groups in nine rural areas – while simultaneously enhancing the visibility of the project (WP6).

The success of the cooperation plan between the ESIRA project, sister projects, and similar initiatives will be reflected in:

- Improved cooperation with relevant projects and initiatives, leading to the achievement of shared goals.
- Expansion of the interested audience for the activities and outcomes of the ESIRA project.
- Strengthened knowledge exchange and dissemination of best practices among stakeholders.

Success will be assessed through clearly defined indicators, ensuring measurable and objective evaluation of outcomes. Therefore, we propose following success indicators:

Table 5 Success indicators and set targets for the period M12–M48

Success indicator	Set minimum target
Number of sister projects and / or similar initiatives mapped	30
Number of highly prioritized sister projects and / or similar initiatives mapped	5
Number of joint online events / workshops etc.	10
Number of people from sister projects/initiatives attending joint online events / webinars / workshops	100
Number of live events attended by sister project members	1
Number of people from sister projects/similar initiatives attending conference / live events	20
Number of shared posts on social media regarding the cooperation	30
Number of shared documents (analyses, newsletters, infographics etc.)	30

6. Cooperation activities so far

6.1 Initial list of sister projects and similar initiatives so far

In collaboration with all project partners, IRI developed the initial list of sister projects and similar initiatives presented in the table below. The next step in the cooperation methodology is to conduct the prioritization process that will be completed in the following months.

Table 6 Initial list of mapped potential sister projects and similar initiatives with initial prioritization scoring (M1-M12)

No.	Project name	Acronym	Implementation status	Prioritization points						Initial Prioritization
				Similarity of the project objectives	Geographic Relevance	Target groups or Thematic Relevance	Complementarity in Methodology approach	Willingness for Collaboration	Total	
1	Enhancing Resilience, Social Inclusion, and Well-being in rural areas through Social Innovation	SERIGO	Ongoing	10	5	10	5	Yes - 10	40	High
2	Climate smart, ecosystem-enhancing and knowledge-based rural expertise and training centres	RURALITIES	Ongoing	10	10	5	5	Yes - 10	40	High
3	Empowering the future through innovative smart solutions for rural areas	FUTURAL	Ongoing	10	0	10	5	Yes - 10	35	High
4	Gender Equality in Rural and Agricultural Innovation Systems	GRASS CEILING	Ongoing	10	5	10	5	Not evaluated yet	30 – not final	Medium
5	Rural Sustainability Transitions through Integration of Knowledge for improved policy processes	RUSTIK	Ongoing	10	10	5	5	Not evaluated yet	30 – not final	Medium

6	Giving Rural Actors Novel data and re-Useable tools to Lead public Action in Rural areas	GRANULAR	Ongoing	10	5	10	5	Not evaluated yet	30 – not final	Medium
7	Empowering rural communities to act for change	RURACTIVE	Ongoing	10	5	10	5	Not evaluated yet	30 – not final	Medium
8	Architecture for Unified Regional and Open digital ecosystems for Smart Communities and wider Rural Areas Large scale application	AURORAL	Ongoing	5	5	10	5	Not evaluated yet	25 – not final	Medium
9	Supporting Women-led Innovation in Farming Territories	SWIFT	Ongoing	10	5	5	0	Not evaluated yet	20 – not final	Medium
10	Twin transition and changing patterns of spatial mobility: a regional approach	MOBI-TWIN	Ongoing	5	5	5	5	Not evaluated yet	20 – not final	Medium
11	Reframing non-metropolitan left behind places through mobility and alternative development	Re-Place	Ongoing	5	5	5	5	Not evaluated yet	20 – not final	Medium
12	Exploring sustainable strategies to counteract territorial inequalities from an intersectional approach	EXIT	Ongoing	5	10	5	0	Not evaluated yet	20 – not final	Medium
13	Migrants Labour Insertion in	MILIMAT	Ongoing	5	5	10	0	Not evaluated yet	20 – not final	Medium

	Multicultural Agricultural Teams									
14	Green, social and digital transition via local impact ventures	GRESODI	Ongoing	5	5	10	0	Not evaluated yet	20 – not final	Medium
15	Women-led innovation in rural areas	FLIARA	Ongoing	10	0	5	0	Not evaluated yet	15 – not final	Low
16	"Policy REcommendations to Maximise the beneficial Impact of Unexplored Mobilities in and beyond the European Union	PREMIUM_EU	Ongoing	5	5	5	0	Not evaluated yet	15 – not final	Low
17	Economic, Social and Spatial Inequalities in Europe in the Era of Global Mega-trends (ESSPIN)	ESSPIN	Ongoing	5	5	5	0	Not evaluated yet	15– not final	Low
18	Mapping inequalities through the life course	Maplneq	Ongoing	5	5	5	0	Not evaluated yet	15 – not final	Low
19	Samarbeid- Arbeidskvalifisering- Inkluderings- Livsmestring	Sail	ongoing	0	5	5	0	Not evaluated yet	10 – not final	Low
20	ImpactED: Gamified Social Entrepreneurship	ImpactED	Ongoing	5	0	0	0	Not evaluated yet	5 – not final	Low

	Educational Approach									
21	DRURAL	DRURAL	Implemented							N/A
22	MOuntain Valorisation through INterconnectedness and Green growth	MOVING	Implemented							N/A
23	Digitalisation: Economic and Social Impact in Rural Areas	DESIRA	Implemented							N/A
24	Heritage for Rural Regeneration	RURITAGE	Implemented							N/A
25	Rural Science-Society-Policy Interfaces	SHERPA	Implemented							N/A
26	"Improving farmers' wellbeing through social innovation"	FARMWELL	Implemented							N/A
27	Education for local development of rural areas	ELDORA	Implemented							N/A
28	The opening of rural areas to renew rural generations, jobs and farms	RURALIZATION	Implemented							N/A

6.2 Joint activities so far

The first joint activities with sister project were webinar on the topic of Communities of Practice, organized by the SERIGO project, which was held online. A representative of the ESIRA project, Coordinator Sonia Marcos Naveira, participated as a panelist. She shared the experiences of the ESIRA project and presented its main goals to an audience of over 60 attendees.

7. Conclusions

Collaboration between the ESIRA project and its sister projects, as well as similar initiatives, represents a strategic approach to maximizing impact and achieving shared objectives. By pooling resources, knowledge, and expertise, these partnerships create synergies that enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of activities. Joint efforts enable the identification and implementation of innovative solutions to common challenges, fostering a stronger collective contribution to the overarching goals of sustainable development and social inclusion.

Such collaboration also plays a crucial role in expanding the reach and visibility of project outcomes. By engaging a wider audience, sharing best practices, the projects can amplify their messages and ensure greater awareness among stakeholders. This mutual support strengthens the dissemination of results and increases the likelihood of sustained impact beyond the project's lifecycle.

Ultimately, these partnerships establish a foundation for long-term cooperation and capacity building. They encourage the alignment of efforts within the broader ecosystem of relevant initiatives, facilitating policy influence and systemic change. Through collaboration, projects not only achieve immediate objectives but also contribute to a lasting legacy of innovation, inclusion, and progress.

8.Partners

