

NEWSLETTER

THE ESIRA PROJECT'S RURAL LABS DRIVE SOCIAL INNOVATION THROUGH 57 ACTIVE INITIATIVES ACROSS RURAL EUROPE



TOP NEWS

- ◆ THE FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY WAS HELD IN LITHUANIA
- ◆ PROJECT DELIVERABLES, TRAINING MATERIALS AND PRACTICE ABSTRACTS ARE AVAILABLE ON THE ESIRA WEBSITE
- ARENA_GAMING KONGSVINGER OFFICIALLY ESTABLISHED
- ESIRA REGIONAL DISSEMINATION WORKSHOP IN LESKOVAC HIGHLIGHTS SUPPORT FOR RURAL WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

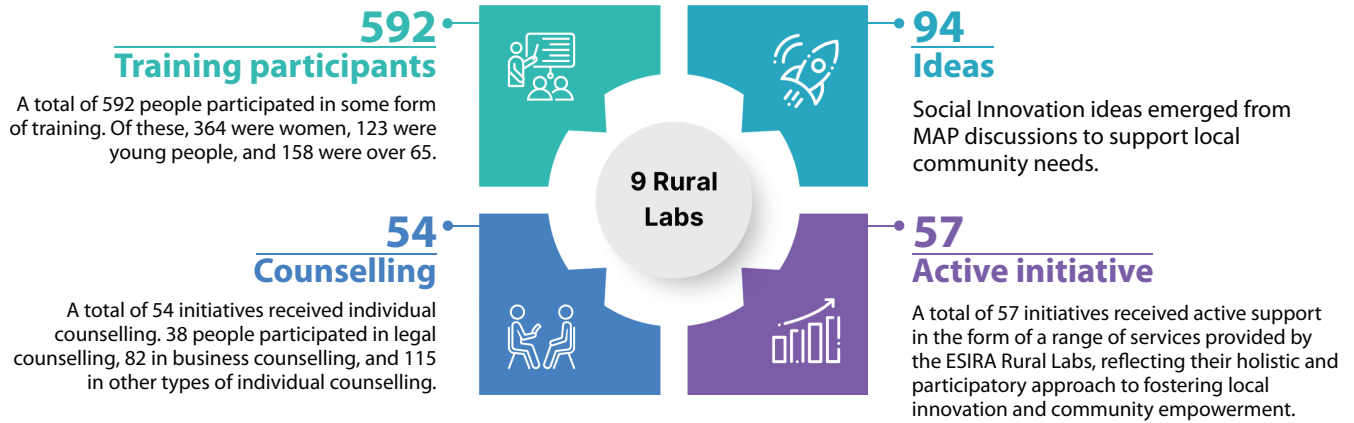
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ESIRA RURAL LABS IN NUMBERS

- Rural Labs are currently supporting **57 active initiatives** across nine regions, all focused on promoting social innovation in rural Europe.
- Supported initiatives cover areas such as healthcare, mobility, education, cultural heritage, environmental sustainability, social inclusion, and community-based entrepreneurship.
- **202 people** participated in some form of training during this period (68% of whom were women).
- Rural Labs offered incubation support through mentoring, training, counselling, and networking activities.
- **12 grant** applications were submitted.
- The initiatives have collectively raised **over €1 million in funding**.

ESIRA RURAL LABS IN NUMBERS



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE PAST 6 MONTHS OF THE PROJECT


FIFTH ESIRA GENERAL ASSEMBLY HELD IN LITHUANIA

The fifth General Assembly of the ESIRA Project took place from 20–22 May 2026 in Druskininkai, Lithuania. The three-day programme included partner presentations, discussions, workshops, and field visits, showcasing local social economy initiatives that successfully combine community engagement, sustainability, and entrepreneurship.



PROJECT DELIVERABLES, TRAINING MATERIALS AND PRACTICE ABSTRACTS ARE NOW AVAILABLE ON THE ESIRA WEBSITE

These resources present key findings, practical recommendations, and tools developed within the project to support rural development, strengthen social economy initiatives, and assist rural stakeholders in implementing innovative and sustainable solutions.



PROJECT DELIVERABLES, TRAINING MATERIALS AND PRACTICE ABSTRACTS HAS BEEN PUBLISHED ON THE ESIRA WEBSITE!

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ACTIVITIES IN PILOT AREAS



INFORMATION HUB WORKSHOP IN TRENTO EXPLORES INCLUSIVE ACCESS TO INFORMATION FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

The Information Hub workshop in Trento on 25 February 2026 within the ESIRA project brought together stakeholders from the City of Trento Round Table “Graziella Anesi,” facilitated by Cooperazione Trentina. The session focused on the “informative hub” concept and barriers in access to information for people with disabilities. Participants mapped key accessibility dimensions and systemic gaps, laying the groundwork for co-design of solutions in the next project phase.

PINARES COMMUNAL SCHOOL PRESERVES LOCAL KNOWLEDGE AND STRENGTHENS COMMUNITY BONDS

The Pinares Communal School, developed within PINARES LAB under the ESIRA project, aims to preserve and share traditional knowledge from the Pinares region while strengthening intergenerational connections. It brings together knowledge holders and younger generations through workshops and community activities focused on local traditions and practices. The initiative also promotes social cohesion and helps reduce loneliness by creating shared community spaces.



BODROGKÖZ BASKET COMMUNITY CONNECTS LOCAL PRODUCERS IN NORTHERN GREAT PLAIN

As part of the ESIRA project, the MAP in the Northern Great Plain (Cigánd District) is launching the Bodrogköz Basket Community to connect local producers with the community through fresh, local products. Participants recently visited a successful model store in Nyíregyháza to learn from its long-standing operations and customer service approach. The initiative will be supported through mentoring and start-up assistance to help establish the model locally.



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ESIRA MAP MEETING IN LITHUANIA HIGHLIGHTS SOCIAL ECONOMY INITIATIVES

An ESIRA MAP meeting in the Druskininkai and Lazdijai regions gathered local stakeholders to discuss development and cooperation. Participants presented examples of social economy initiatives, including a furniture business and a senior care enterprise, showing their role in job creation and rural services. The meeting supported knowledge exchange and strengthened cross-sector collaboration.



ARENA_GAMING KONGSVINGER OFFICIALLY ESTABLISHED

ARENA_Gaming Kongsvinger, an ESIRA pilot in Norway, was established as a non-profit initiative to create an inclusive gaming and e-sports space for the local community. It aims to develop a multifunctional arena for digital activities and social participation, in cooperation with local partners. The pilot represents a social economy approach to youth engagement and is currently seeking suitable accessible premises.

ESIRA REGIONAL DISSEMINATION WORKSHOP IN LESKOVAC HIGHLIGHTS SUPPORT FOR RURAL WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

An ESIRA workshop in Leskovac, Serbia, brought together rural women entrepreneurs and experts to share experiences and discuss business development. The event highlighted improvements in branding, visibility, and market opportunities through ongoing support activities. It concluded that combining training and knowledge exchange strengthens women's entrepreneurship and local economic resilience.



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