



A long-term vision for the EU's rural areas

“Rural areas are the fabric of our society and the heartbeat of our economy. They are a core part of our identity and our economic potential. We will cherish and preserve our rural areas and invest in their future.” was the main message of new push for European democracy from Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission.



Rural areas of Europe should empower local communities, enabling inhabitants to take active part in development processes, involving a broad range of stakeholders and networks. Innovative and creative solutions should be developed, making the most of the possibilities offered by digital tools and encouraging strongly social innovation.

Rural areas can become more prosperous by diversifying economic activities to new sectors with positive effects on employment, population

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maintenance... but it should be based on sustainable local economic strategies including measures that make their environment attractive. [More information.](#)

As part of the project MaC Village, we have encouraged cooperation between rural/classical entrepreneurs and creatives entrepreneurs and developed new product and services.

Innovative products/services developed in Central Europe region by MaC village partners

Germany

Training sessions

An important step towards the results of the MaC Village project is marked by the training courses. The content of our trainings was first of all to continue working on the business ideas with the project participants and thus to prepare for market access or for implementation of the measures. On the other hand, the trainings should also serve to transfer knowledge about the MaC Village method of Frugal Innovation and to pass it on and disseminate it to companies and other stakeholders, such as administrations, multipliers, and moderators.

Our trainings for the project participants therefore focused on the implementation of their business models. The most advanced business models were first analysed in terms of their components. These include products and target groups, competitors, contracts, finance aspects, and marketing and sales. Selected **Support kits** were then presented and made available to the participants for any remaining individual deficits. These tools provided the participants with in-depth knowledge, additional know-how and further suggestions for rounding off their corporate planning. Finally, some participants worked concretely on their company presentation or pitch. ... [more information](#)

Here we would like to thank as Lead partner especially our project partners Regional Management Burgenland (AT) and Danube Development Transnational Group (HU) for initiating the conception of the trainings and the timely preparation of the extensive training material.



Results in Germany

Currently, the trainings that have already been carried out are being evaluated. Today we can state for our region south-west of Berlin that the business ideas developed in the innovation workshops could be pushed even further in the trainings, i.e., significantly advanced, and partly already brought to a successful completion.

As results, we present three examples here. The pitches for the following innovative business ideas are current edited versions. The final video versions still need to be adjusted regarding publicity regulations:

The first business idea involves offering workshops and incentives on native natural herbs, natural cosmetics, mindfulness, and team building... [more information](#)

A business idea for market expansion through cooperation is the species-appropriate keeping of pigs in year-round free-range husbandry and their regional marketing. The entrepreneur obtains the feed exclusively in organic quality from a local partner. A contribution to the strengthening of the circular economy in the rural region... [more information](#)

The third business idea is a start-up for holistic energy consulting. With the USP of independence and holistic approach, the company wants to build a stable market share in the context of managing the energy transition... [more information](#)

On September 8 and 9, our 6th Transnational Meeting took place in Maribor, Slovenia. Since our meeting in Vienna in November 2019, we could finally all meet again in person. We sincerely thank Ksenija Napast and Zlatka Zastavnikovitch from the Institute for Comprehensive Development Solutions (E-Institute) in Ptuj for the perfect organization of the meeting and the great hospitality. The possibility to present our MaC Village project results and the exchange with the participants of the **EU network conference on Circular economy and social innovation** were a highlight of the meeting in Maribor. As a crowning finale, a visit of the castle and park in the Race village and of the Tourist & Eco-farm Pri Baronu at an altitude of 700 m on Pohorje Mountain took place... [more information](#)

The mutual getting knowledge of the partner regions contributes decisively to a better understanding of the valuable potentials of the cultural heritage and the opportunities it contains for the strengthening of rural regions.



Italy

During summer project partner have carried out the last three training sessions of MaC Village, held physically after a long period of online workshops, and they took place in the three pilot villages of Rocca Susella, Borgoratto Mormorolo and Borgo Priolo.

The training sessions focused on the development of the three project ideas were elaborated during the previous 9 workshops. The first idea concerns the sharing of a territorial analysis that in appreciating the quality of the territory also identifies weaknesses in terms of services and innovative products on which it will be necessary to focus, not only to increase tourist attractiveness but also and above all to make the life of residents and new citizens more sustainable and pleasant. The second idea is about the need to build a unitary representative and identifying image of the territory; the Oltrepò Territorial Quality Charter is designed to foster greater identity awareness of the special features and values held by the entire community of citizens residing in the four municipalities of the Unione di Comuni Lombarda Borghi a Valli d'Oltrepo' (Lombardy Union of Municipalities - Villages in the Oltrepo' Valleys). The third idea is about the identification of Taste Micro-Paths aimed at promoting and enhancing tourism in the area and which may be "inaugurated" during the National Day of the Authentic Villages of Italy scheduled for 10 October this year.

The trainings sessions provided the participants with a focus on three "tool-kits" designed by the project, with the aim to deepen some topics regarding the business planning of the identified innovative project ideas: "Financing", "Sales, Branding and Social Media" and "Customers and Target Groups".

The most valuable result of Italian partner, in addition to the designed project ideas, is the creation of the basis of a permanent "cooperation platform" between local authorities, SMEs and CCI that should be kept active also beyond project's conclusion.

Austria

Also, Austrian partner RMB have carried out the training during summer. Because of the COVID-19 crises most workshops have been carried out online. Trainers have gain new experience and knowledge about the target groups digital literacy and participants have learn to use new digital tools.



During the summer they have carried out the last set of trainings and the following ideas have thrived with collaboration:

- Living Lexikon Burgenland: *An educational project based on the multilingualism of Burgenland*
- Miteinand´ am Radweg: *New bicycle route between two federal regions*
- Liszt Art: *Art competition for up-coming artists*
- Grenz-LAND - Markt Schattendorf: *Monthly cross-border food market between Austria and Hungary*



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Nach 8 Monaten endlich wieder am gleichen Ort innovativ sein können! Die Ergebnisse der online-Zusammenarbeit können sich sehen lassen! Marie-Theres und Roman machten Station in Güssing und Raiding... Wir freuen uns auf den feierlichen Abschluss im Oktober mit allen drei Regionen/Mac Village aus dem Burgenland!
RMB
MaC Village – 😊 motiviert mit Marie-Theres Zirm.

Ines Graus, Elke Höfler und 2 anderen gefällt das.
1 Mal geteilt

Slovenia

Two partners from Slovenia are cooperating in project and 6 innovative products/services have been developed. The project partner BSC Kranj have aim to promote, value, and enhance the quality and quantity of local wooden and food products, handicrafts, works of art and their links with the

history, the culture, and the traditions to enriching the tourist offer in area. The flowing ideas have sprouted:

- Danica Inn & Guest House will connect all elements of Bohinj - either on a plate or through authentically designed interior - led by locals, domestic knowledge, traditional skills, tales, ancient recipes, and innovation.
- A dynamic short seasonal food supply chain set-up between farmers, herb gatherers, beekeepers and food processing companies will deliver crops and food products also towards restaurants, schools, retirement homes, catering services and wedding ceremonies organizers, following sustainable farming, harvesting and food delivery practices.
- Park Jezersko Ltd, as a project idea leader, will at the same time through the Fairy Tale Park introduce a sustainable business model by demonstrating a case of integrating local artists, professional storytellers, hospitality and tourism services providers, Alpine rescuers, herbalists, farmers, carpenters and local craftsmen into design and construction of sculptures, creative workshop spaces and play structures. As well as through implementation of the park's guided tours and events.



The second Slovenian partner EZVD have carried out during the summer last trainings and started to help entrepreneurs to bring the ideas to the market and the following ideas have been developed:

- Promotion of cultural heritage: to attract a larger number of tourists, also of different profiles, local entrepreneurs decided to set up an escape room, and present the cultural heritage of Rače village in an innovative way.
- Promotion of short supply chains: establishment of farmer's market offering local product from farmers every day and connecting the food producers (combining supply and saving time).
- Promotion of the pumpkin oil: the pumpkin oil is a traditional ingredient in Podravje area and is becoming well know also abroad. In Fram village we have the oldest Pumpkin Oil Factory, and they would like to establish the pumpkin museum to maintain the cultural heritage for the future generations.



Hungary

The two Hungarian partners have carried out the last trainings and presented the following ideas:

- In Bácsalmás, local producers and the creative experts chose the idea of a local brand, Bácska Buffalo for further development. Originally a very strong chilli paste produced and used by the locals and because the buffalos are common in the region. Brand could be extended to a regional brand that reinforces local identity
- Establishment of the special brand “Valley of the Dragons” is the second project idea and is combine with nature, gastronomy, local organisations, inhabitants.
- The last idea is titled Via Mariae Mecsetum and is connecting local products and services with a multifunctional route



Presentation of the project on the conference dedicated to circular economy and social innovation

We have a special slot to present developed product and used methodology to participants of the conference organised by partners of project US4F, co-financed by program UIA. The event was held in [Maribor on 9th of September 2021 in Maribox Cinema Hall.](#)



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