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Duration

April 2016 to March 2020



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement 677622

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SIMRA

SIMRA

Social Innovation in Marginalised Rural Areas

is a four-year project (2016-20) funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 programme. It aims to advance understanding of social innovation and innovative governance in agriculture, forestry and rural development, and how to boost them, in marginalised rural areas across Europe and around the Mediterranean, including non-EU countries.



Why

Why SIMRA?

Social innovation aims to increase human wellbeing, responding to social demands that markets or existing institutions do not traditionally address. Through social innovation, diverse actors, including civil society, entrepreneurs, and policy makers, create or reconfigure social arrangements or networks, with the goal of enhancing development outcomes with respect to the economy, society and the environment.

Social innovation can introduce new solutions to challenges faced by rural areas, especially those considered to be marginalised. To link social innovations with desired policy outcomes, account needs to be taken of local conditions and intermediating factors, to make better use of social innovations for the development of marginalised rural areas.

What will SIMRA do?

- Develop systematic frameworks that improve knowledge of the complexity of social innovations and their capacity to unfold territorial capital, and to advance understanding of the preconditions and factors for their successful implementation.
- Create a classification of social innovations in rural areas. This will encompass their characteristics in terms of social priorities and relationships or collaborations, for use in exploring why regions with similar conditions display diverging paths, turning 'diversity into strength'.



- Create an integrated set of methods to evaluate social innovations and their impacts on the economic, social, environmental, institutional, and policy dimensions of territorial capital. These methods will be used to evaluate case studies across European and Mediterranean rural areas.
- Synthesise and disseminate new and improved knowledge of social innovations and novel governance mechanisms that promote social capital and institutional capacity building.
- Create collaborative learning and networking opportunities, and launch innovative actions at different scales.

Expected impacts

SIMRA will develop new patterns of cooperation, co-construction and collaborative learning using novel approaches and new shared knowledge, to bridge gaps in links between research, policy and practice. It will ensure significant contributions to science, policy-making at all scales, and direct operational impacts on the ground.



SIMRA will support the widest possible community engaging in social innovation, particularly in Mediterranean marginalised rural areas.