



Introduction to SIMRA

The Social Innovation in Marginalised Rural Areas (SIMRA) project, supported with over 5.57m from the European Union's Horizon 2020 Programme

Topic: ISIB-03-2015 - Unlocking the growth potential of rural areas through enhanced governance and social innovation (SI); duration: April 2016-2020; coordination: the James Hutton Institute; launched on April 1, 2016.

Overarching aim: understand & enhance social innovation:

in marginalised rural areas (MRA) by advancing state-of-the-art in SI and connected governance mechanisms in agriculture, forestry & rural development (RD), with a special focus on the Mediterranean region.





- **Innovation (IN) reflects the capacity to create & implement new ideas which are to deliver value** (BEPA, 2011). It comprises new outcomes, i.e. ideas, products, services, models, social relationships & institutional (INST) changes that should, ideally, meet individual interests & societal needs.
- The **primary social needs that IN is to deliver concern quality of life & well-being** of people. It begins with ideas, develops into prototypes & pilots, can become more stable initiatives, then potentially up-scales and may eventually create systemic change.
- **Social innovation (SI) includes new INST environments & arrangements, actors' relationships & interactions** (e.g. new attitudes, collaborations, values, behaviours, skills, practices & learning processes) and new fields of activity (e.g. social entrepreneurship & enterprises).



Aiming at **improving human wellbeing**, social innovation:

- **creates new responses to pressing social demands;**
- **responds to social demands that are traditionally not addressed by existing institutions;**
- **manifests itself in new social relationships & collaborations**, while governance mechanisms based on new social networks can advance social capital and create new SIs.

SIs can be macro or micro, structural or local, vertical or horizontal, introduced by entrepreneurs and/or through solidarity, by INST changes or/and policy reforms (Nussbaumer & Moulaert, 2007). However, whatever is their nature, context or scale **they are to strengthen actors' ability to respond to societal challenges** (Lehtonen, 2004).

SI & enhanced governance are seen as **crucial for transition towards SD** & enhancement of smart and inclusive growth.

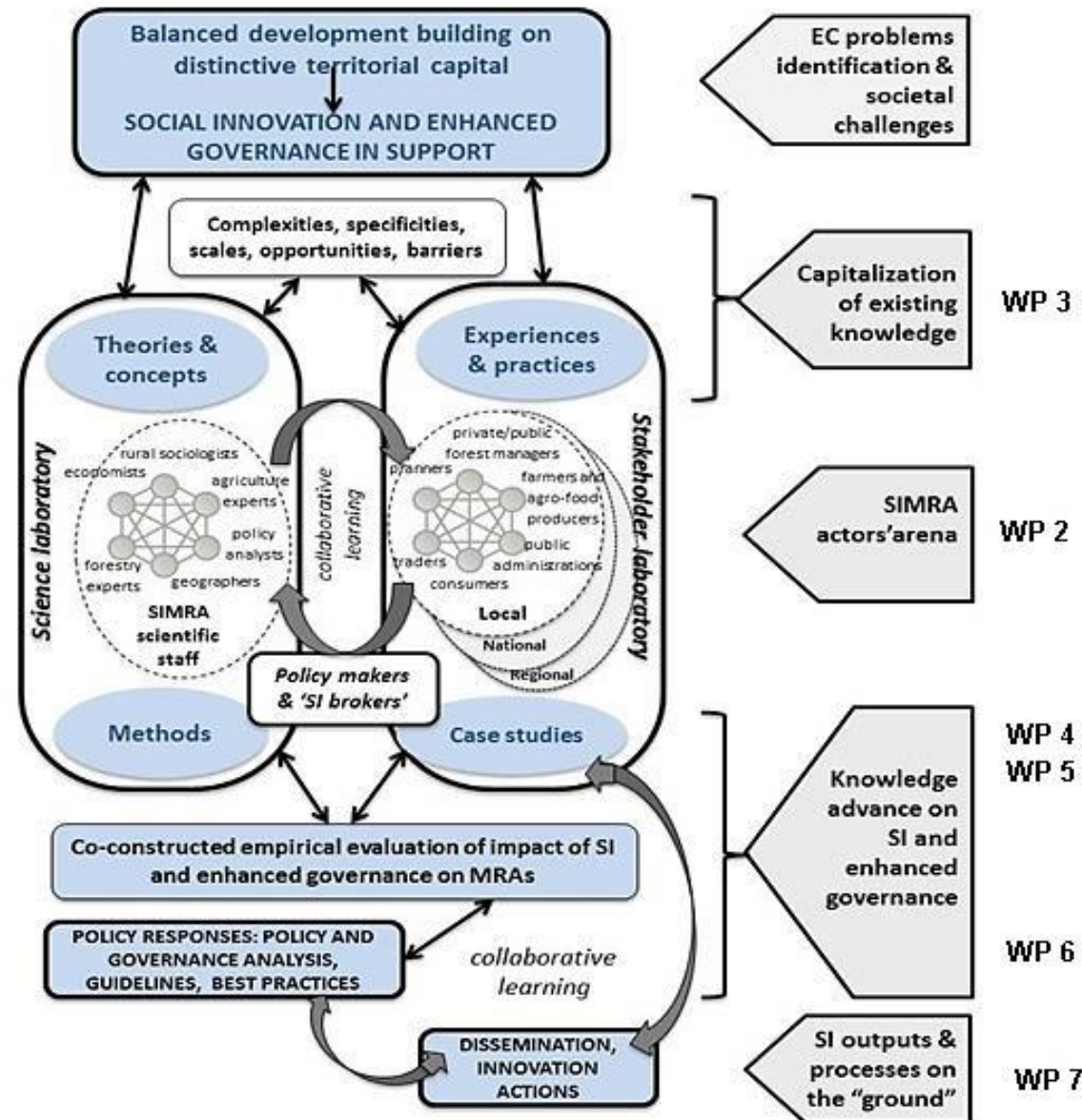


SIMRA will blend diverse theoretical positions into an explanation of spatial variability of SI, encompassing its diversity, co-constructing a novel evaluative toolkit, and developing improved knowledge (KN) to answer: **how to support enhanced governance and SIs, addressing specificities and priorities of social needs and new social relationships and collaborations.**

Specific Objectives

- i) **Develop systematic theoretical & operational framework** for categorising, understanding, operationalising SI in settings and across scales
- ii) **Categorise/classify** the SIs observable considering the varying specificities in terms of social needs, priorities, social relationships & collaboration types
- iii) **Develop an integrated set of methods** developed for the evaluation of SI and its impacts in rural areas across the target region
- iv) **A co-constructed evaluation** of success factors for SIs across selected case studies, covering variation and heterogeneity of regions
- v) **Synthesise and disseminate** to policy makers/end-users the **new/improved KN** of SIs and novel governance mechanisms
- vi) **Develop collaborative learning, networking & IN actions** by integrating, consulting and engaging stakeholders

Logical frame





	Q1				Q2				Q3				Q4				Q1				Q2				Q3				Q4																			
	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6	M7	M8	M9	M10	M11	M12	M13	M14	M15	M16	M17	M18	M19	M20	M21	M22	M23	M24	M25	M26	M27	M28	M29	M30	M31	M32	M33	M34	M35	M36	M37	M38	M39	M40	M41	M42	M43	M44	M45	M46	M47	M48
WP1	Scientific Coordination																																															
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T1.2																																																
WP2	Theoretical and operational frameworks to understand and implement Sis																																															
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WP3	Holistic analysis & categorisation of examples of Sis																																															
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WP4	An integrated set of methods to evaluate SI in agriculture, forestry and RD																																															
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WP5	Evaluation of SI case studies																																															
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WP6	Policy and practice: analysis and recommendations																																															
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WP1 (HUT): Scientific coordination, efficiency & quality

UNIPD, BOKU, DLO, Perth, IAMZ-CIHEAM, UO, AWI, Euromontana, RDC

WP8 (HUT): Management & administration, All, but minor

WP7 (IAMZ–CIHEAM & Euromontana): Communication, dissemination & IN actions, All

WP2 (IFE SAS): Theoretical & operational approaches

HUT, UNIPD, BOKU, DLO, Perth, EFI, ICRE8, AWI, Euromontana, RDC, UNIBE

WP3 (PERTHCOLLEGE): Holistic analysis & categorization of SIs

HUT, UNIPD, BOKU, DLO-LEI, IFE SAS, EFI, ICRE8, UO, AWI, EURAC, ULANC, UNIFG, CU, SEEDS-int, FORECO, RDC, CETIP

WP4(UNIPD): Innovative integrated methods

HUT, BOKU, DLO, IFE SAS, EFI, ICRE8, EURAC, UNIFG, CETIP, CTFC

WP5 (EFI MED): Evaluation of SI case studies

HUT, UNIPD, BOKU, DLO, Perth College, IFE SAS, ICRE8, UO, AWI, EURAC, UNIFG, CU, FAOSNE, RDC, CETIP, ÖAR, CTFC, UNIBE, SAB



WP6 (BOKU): Policy and practice: analysis & recommendations, Almost all

The coordinator



James Hutton
(1726 – 1797)
Founder of
modern geology

- The James Hutton Institute - international research centre based in Scotland
- A main research provider to the Scottish Government



Strategy to tackle global challenges and address UN Sustainable Development (SD) Goals 2030 Agenda

- Social and natural sciences
- Transdisciplinary research addressing challenges of food, land and people
- Putting research into practice with policy, business and communities
- Reconnecting people to the land & environment





The **consortium** comprises **26 partners** from **15 countries** from across the EU and the wider Mediterranean area, and associated international networks.

It consists of **10 public bodies** (8 universities & 2 research institutes), **8 not for profit organizations**, **5 SMEs, NGOs & networks**, and **3 international organisations** http://cordis.europa.eu/project/rcn/200385_en.html.

Representatives from other countries, including of North Africa & East Europe, will be involved as **supporters** coming from the South and South-Eastern European Mountain Network, the Carpathian Network S4C, IUFRO, FLEG II, Earth System Governance, Ecosystem Services Community Scotland, et al.

We **will examine what characterises SI** in areas as varied as north-west Europe & Scandinavia, the Mediterranean and North Africa region, Alpine, Central & Eastern Europe, Guadalupe? (France), etc.

We **will work with those initiating or benefiting from SIs** to learn about end-users motivations and experiences of support SIs or barriers encountered.



- **Three major groups of stakeholders** will be involved:
 - i) European, Associated & non-EU stakeholders of SITT;
 - ii) local stakeholders linked to case studies (CS) & IN actions;
 - iii) ‘locally grounded’ stakeholders from outside the CS areas.

Throughout SIMRA, the **SITT = SAB + SIB** members will help with:

- **defining variables of SI in MRAs (WP2);**
- **database of SI examples and diverging pathways (WP3);**
- **development of criteria for SIs assessment (WP4);**
- **identifying policy processes & providing feedbacks on the practical guidelines & recommendations (WP6);**
- **being consulted for the training & local workshops (WP7).**

SAB = Scientific Advisory Board

SIB= Stakeholders Involvement Board

Some of our expectations from SIMRA include:

- Improved understanding of theoretical underpinning of SI.
- Co-constructing of knowledge of SI across Europe and beyond in the view of boosting SI and linked governance mechanisms.
- Advancing understanding of main challenges facing communities, businesses and institutions in developing and implementing SIs.
- Building capacities for SI by bringing scientists, businesses, governments and civil society together to create sustainable solutions to the most pressing challenges.
- Developing new research relationships and collaborations.





- Website: www.simra-h2020.eu
- Facebook: www.facebook.com/SIMRAeu/
- Twitter: https://twitter.com/simra_eu/status/753903906443370496
@SIMRA_eu, associated with the hashtag #SIMRA_eu
- Scoop it!: www.scoop.it/u/simra-1
- Research Gate:
www.researchgate.net/project/SIMRA-Social-Innovation-in-Marginalised-Rural-Areas
- LinkedIn:
<https://www.linkedin.com/groups/8546624/8546624-6159676893563015168>

