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Social innovation is a driver of local development in marginalised rural areas



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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.



What is SIMRA doing?



SIMRA has defined social innovation in marginalised rural areas as “the reconfiguring of social practices, in response to societal challenges, which seeks to enhance outcomes on societal well-being and necessarily includes the engagement of civil society actors”.



SIMRA has characterised marginalised rural areas across Europe and the Mediterranean region according to physical constraints, limited access to infrastructure (road networks, electricity, ...), and social marginalisation (people with low incomes, at risk of social exclusion, high levels of infant mortality, high proportion of early leavers from education and training).



SIMRA has set up an interactive database of social innovation examples. By early 2018, we already had over 50 entries of exciting innovative solutions which are being implemented all over European and the Mediterranean area. Are you ready to add yours to this growing list?



SIMRA has launched 12 case studies and 6 innovation actions that will activate rural territories and disseminate new knowledge to policy-makers and practitioners.

Case Studies

SIMRA Case Studies collect and analyse empirical evidence of social innovations in agriculture, forestry and rural development, particularly focusing on the Mediterranean region. Case studies include examples of social farming, community energy, food cooperatives, volunteer fire prevention organisations and revitalisation of rural areas through cultural heritage and other initiatives.



Why SIMRA?

Rural areas, especially those considered marginalised, face difficulties such as declining and ageing populations, as well as agricultural, environmental and social challenges. Social innovation can introduce new solutions to these challenges.

To link social innovations with desired policy outcomes, conditions and intermediating factors should be taken into consideration to make better use of social innovations for the development of marginalised rural areas.

Preliminary results of the project are starting to be shared and will be targeted at policy-makers, local development organisations, communities and individuals working at the community and rural level across Europe and the Mediterranean region. Rural areas face difficulties, such as declining and ageing populations, as well as agricultural, environmental and social challenges.

Innovation Actions

SIMRA Innovation Actions enable that relevant actors in marginal rural areas test and exploit their potential for social innovation, with the aim of realizing impacts in the territory and the market, in businesses, investments opportunities and in building capacity within local governments.