

FORMACIÓ I ASSESSORAMENT AL SECTOR AGROALIMENTARI

LEADER COOPERATION

LEADER COOPERATION A KEY TOOL FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT

May 2014

P03 Catalan Leader Cooperation **P08** Leader Cooperation Projects **P28** The interview



La comunitat virtual agroalimentària
i del món rural
www.ruralcat.net



Generalitat de Catalunya
Departament d'Agricultura, Ramaderia,
Pesca, Alimentació i Medi Natural
www.gencat.cat/agricultura

A word cloud of Catalan terms related to rural development, set against a background of a rural landscape with a church and a cow. The words are arranged in various sizes and orientations, with some appearing vertically and others horizontally. The colors of the text range from green to yellow. The background image shows a green field with a cow, a stone wall, and a church with a bell tower in the distance under a blue sky.

FEM PARC
TREBALL EN XARXA
SOSTENIBILITAT
TRANSFERÈNCIA
INNOVACIÓ
FEM PARC
PARTICIPACIÓ
TERRITORI
TERRITORI
ODISSEU
GRUP D'ACCIÓ LOCAL
ENERGIA I FOREST
VI + NET
COOPERACIÓ LEADER
MASIES + SOSTENIBLES
COOPERACIÓ LEADER
COWOCAT RURAL
GESTIÓ SOSTENIBLE RURAL
ESTRATÈGIA SPORTOUR
MASIES + SOSTENIBLES
ESTRATÈGIA
GESTIÓ SOSTENIBLE RURAL
PARTICIPACIÓ
COL·LABORACIÓ
ESTRATÈGIA
TREBALL EN XARXA
VI + NET
COOPERACIÓ LEADER
EMPRÈN RURAL
INNOVACIÓ
TREBALL EN XARXA
COWOCAT RURAL
EMPRÈN RURAL
PRODUCTE LOCAL
GUSTUM
COL·LABORACIÓ
ENERGIA I FOREST
PRODUCTE LOCAL
GRUP D'ACCIÓ LOCAL
SOSTENIBILITAT
TRANSFERÈNCIA
ODISSEU
SPORTOUR
COL·LABORACIÓ
COMUNICACIÓ
COMUNICACIÓ

PRESENTATION



Josep Maria Pelegrí i Aixut
Minister of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries,
Food and Natural Environment

The Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries, Food and Natural Environment of Catalonia, focus part of the activities of the Rural Development Programme on 13 geographical areas using a decentralised and participative approach, delegating its management to the Local Action Groups, which are constituted by active and representative territorial actors designing an economic development strategy, according to EU criteria, in each of the fields of action.

This know-how, supported by the Community initiative Leader since the 90s, has been a pattern which has taken advantage of the potentialities of each territory, an example for social participation to design its own future.

As a result of these initiatives there are some innovative experiences, which although they were created in a specific field, they can also be used or adapted to others, contributing with an experienced knowledge.

In order to spread and implement with success these experiences, a cooperation network among these Leader groups has been created, with the purpose of taking action on voluntary basis and on those topics which are considered as a common field of work for dissemination and that can contribute with results.

Therefore, we are encountering a collaborative network to spread exponentially and all over the country, innovative experiences, sources of economic activity, new jobs, strengthening social networks, teamwork learning, amplifying results, territorial balance, and definitely, to provide the backbone of the Country.

As a proof of the creativity and methodological efforts of our Leader groups in this report you will find the 10 proposals in progress, which include more consolidated aspects as the Corporate Social Responsibility considered as a methodological approach for SMEs, and the valorisation of the local food products through its inclusion into the gastronomic offer, or less developed aspects so as taking action over the whole food chain to provide the greatest added value to the territory, or less known aspects as the retention of talent or the interaction among natural parks.

They could seem minor issues, but if they are analysed one by one they gather a huge accumulated experience as proposals that can enhance the local economy, and if they are seen together and through the perspective of networking they give a clear image of Catalonia, with an active social base, with an entrepreneurial spirit, which looks for new opportunities and creates activities to mobilise resources. In short, a Country that works and has faith in its own future.

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May 2014

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Editorial Board
Domènec Vila Navarra, Jaume Sió Torres, Joan Gòdia Tresanchez, Xavier Clapès Alemany, Ignasi Rodríguez Galindo, Joaquim Xifra Triadú, Agustí Fonts Cavestany (IRTA), Montserrat Alomà Masana, Mireia Medina Sala, Àngela Seira Sanmartín, Joan S. Minguet Pla i Josep M. Masses Tarragó.

Coordination
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Production
Teresa Boncompte Ribera, Josep Maria Masses Tarragó i Annabel Teixidó Martínez.

Proofreading and linguistic advice
Joan Ignasi Elias Cruz. Lluís Piqueres Pla. Núria Domènech Pont.

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Departament of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries, Food and Natural Environment
Gran Via de les Corts Catalanes, 612, 4a planta
08007 - Barcelona
Tel. 93 304 67 45. Fax. 93 304 67 02
e-mail: dossier@ruralcat.net

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LEADER COOPERATION IN CATALONIA



01 Introduction

The 59th report, published in November 2012, presented LEADER: an innovative approach of rural development policies.

LEADER is a working methodology of the European Rural Development Policy, applied both in the planning and the implementation stage, which has been put into practice during the last two decades and seeks the integrated development of rural areas, with the cooperation and consent of all local actors.

The difference between LEADER and other more traditional methodologies is that it indicates “how” to proceed rather than “what” needs to be done, and it achieves its objectives taking as a basis seven essential characteristics which are complementary and interlinked:

- local development strategies;
- bottom-up approach;
- local action groups;
- innovation;
- integrated and multisectoral actions;
- networking;
- cooperation.

This report is dealing with Cooperation, because it integrates every one of the features that define LEADER.

02 The value of the LEADER cooperation

Cooperation under the LEADER approach means that a Local Action Group (LAG) starts a common project with other LAGs or territories with similar interests, objectives or needs, either among rural areas within the same region or country, among different member states, or among third countries.

LEADER Cooperation gives **an added value to the rural territories** because it implies an agreement among different Groups and agents to define a shared approach or objective: the accomplishment of a project where everyone can win and everyone learns. To make it possible, Leader cooperation implies:

- Building the partnership;
- Promoting transformations through territorial animation;
- Generating added value by obtaining something new or renewed;
- Joining efforts by means of Agreement and Commitment;

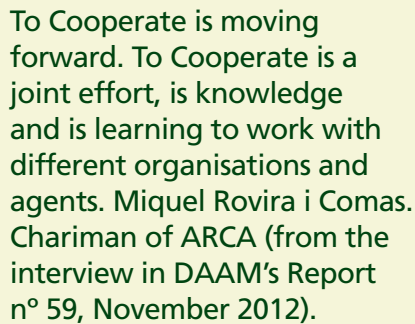


Cooperate is working or acting together for a common purpose or benefit (Dictionary description)

- Being Flexible to adapt every time to changes and situations;
- Recognising when and how to act.

Moreover, Cooperation in LEADER is gaining **contact with local issues** and with territorial **authenticity**, since it works with people, resources and with the opportunities and handicaps of rural areas.

Cooperation is not a project with expiring date. It is tangible facts which lead to changes, it facilitates the evolution of a territory and, thus, to its development through a coordinated work and a better use and efficiency of the available resources. They are facts which persist, and a few continue beyond the cooperation project ending and financing date .



- Better governance;
- More opportunities;
- Greater Transference of Knowledge;
- An approach to Innovation.

Furthermore, cooperation enables innovation in rural areas.

04 Explained histories: the art of communication

the work that it is being undertaken. For this reason it is indispensable to Communicate and make Visible cooperation projects encouraged from the territories and, especially, their progresses and results. LEADER cooperation needs to use an understandable and plain language in order to connect with society, with the aim to spread and recognise the task that is being done in rural areas. Only that way, Catalan rural areas will have the visibility and recognition that they deserve.

Likewise, the Groups and society come with an already consolidated tool so as the website *www.desenvolupamentrural.cat*, a pool of resources which gathers and updates continuously the information about all projects, press releases and events through the Calendar. The Ministry of Agriculture also manages the portal *www.ruralcat.net* to strengthen the dissemination tasks.

05 The measure 421 about Catalan Cooperation of the Rural Development Programme 2007-2013

During the programming period 2007-2013 the Catalan Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries, Food and Natural Environment has encouraged Cooperation among Catalan Local Action Groups through the measure 421 of Axis 4 of the Rural Development Programme (RDP) 2007-2013.

As a result, Catalan Cooperation among Leader groups started in year 2012 when the first call for projects was launched: 5 cooperation projects were approved and 577.498,19 € were invested (30% cofinanced by EAFRD). Since then, the Catalan Cooperation projects have been consolidated and in 2014, on the last call, 10 projects were approved with a total foreseen investment of 1.160.760,00 € (55% cofinanced by EAFRD).

06 Leader cooperation: in line with the territorial strategies

Catalan cooperation allows the Leader territories to consolidate their local development strategies.

Each territory defines its own strategy and working fields at the beginning of each programming period. Although each territory has its own specificities and particularities, there are shared challenges and needs among the majority of the rural areas. Thanks to this reality cooperation projects among different groups with related strategies are started out.

To sum up, the strategies of the 13 Local Action Groups are shown in table 1:

Thus, among the 10 ongoing Catalan cooperation projects, there are some that incorporate new services which give **distinction to the territories** as the project *Rural Sustainable Management: consolidation of smart territories*, where more than 258 enterprises beneficiaries of Leader grants are implementing the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) (from which 164 have already certified the CSR process). Thanks to this project the enterprises could upgrade their business management through the implementation of environmental, social and economic improvements. At the same time, the project enabled the creation of a new



Below you can see the executed investment, the projects and the participating LAG groups in each Catalan cooperation projects by year of call:

Year	Executed investment (€) % EAFRD Amount EAFRD (€)	Total n° of projects	N° of participant LAGs by project
2012	577.498,19 € 30% 173.249,46 €	5	-13 LAGs: . Sustainable Rural Management (smart territories) . GUSTUM; . ODYSSEUS (youth). - 6 LAGs: . Energy & Forest; . VER (rural business incubators).
2013	247.787,90 € 50% 123.893,95 €	6	-13 LAGs: . Sustainable Rural Management; . GUSTUM; . ODYSSEUS (youth); . Energy & Forest. -10 LAGs: . Sustainable rural houses. -7 LAGs: . VER (rural business incubators).
2014	Approved Investment 1.160.760 € 55% 638.418 €	10	- 13 LAGs: . Sustainable Rural Management; . GUSTUM; . ODYSSEUS (youth); . Energy & Forest. - 10 LAGs: . Cowocat. - 10 LAGs: . Sustainable rural houses; . Wine+net.cat (wine). - 7 LAGs: . Let's do Park (Natural protected areas); . SporTour. - 4 LAGs: . VER (rural business incubators).

Table1. Measure 421 Catalan Cooperation: executed investment, projects and participating LAG groups by year.

professional profile which accompanies and advises enterprises throughout the whole process.

Or the projects *Let's do Park* and *SporTour*, which have started the present year 2014 in 7 different Leader territories and they promote the implementation of services to generate new economic activities based on the use of natural and cultural resources of the territory.

Other projects are more focused on **enhancing and promoting local products and short**

circuits, like the *Gustum* project, which has been consolidated in the Catalan Leader territory after 3 years of implementation.

Close to *Gustum*, in 2014 starts *Wine+net.cat*, which wants to achieve **the sustainability of the primary sector, especially the wine sector**, in 9 Leader territories.

Moreover, there are projects more focused on **improving employment and promoting a more specialised entrepreneurship with innovative elements** which contributes to



project: programme to promote the return and employment of youth in rural areas. As its name indicates, it **promotes the return of talented educated youth** to rural areas. This project is implemented in the 13 Leader territories, and allowed to work in cooperation with youth agents and youth professionals of these territories.

Others promote the **energy efficiency and the use of renewable energies** as *Energy & Forest* which enabled the creation of Info-energy points, pioneers in the Catalan rural areas, or the project *Sustainable rural houses*, which is about sustainability and the implicit difficulties of the disperse habitat. This last project has boosted complementary activities in the territory and gained an honourable mention at the Environmental Awards of the Catalan Government of 2012.

enhance the traditional productive activities or which encourages new activities in emergent sectors. We are talking about *Rural Business Incubators* which the present year takes a new direction as *Rural Entrepreneurship* or *Cowocat*, a project which takes off in 2014 with 10 Leader territories as partners. *Cowocat* offers an innovative

element since it brings the coworking philosophy closer to the rural territories which means a new working approach and sharing working spaces, up to now, unknown in rural areas.

In line with the **improvement of employment and job placement** there is *ODYSSEUS*



ASSOCIACIÓ PER AL DESENVOLUPAMENT RURAL DE LA CATALUNYA CENTRAL

- Surface: 2.010,10 km²
- Population: 64.317 inhabitants
- Population Density: 32 ha./km²
- Municipalities: 58

Giving value to the territory and the environment, as essential elements of cohesion and territorial responsibility. Promoting the entrepreneurial spirit and investing in human capital in order to improve employment.

info@catcentral.cat - www.catcentral.cat



ASSOCIACIÓ PER AL DESENVOLUPAMENT RURAL INTEGRAL DE LA ZONA NORD-ORIENTAL DE CATALUNYA (ADRINOC)

- Surface: 1.594,99 km²
- Population: 67.040 inhabitants
- Population Density: 42,03 ha./km²
- Municipalities: 51

Implementing Corporate Social Responsibility policies to achieve a model of sustainable territorial development.

info@adrinoc.cat - www.adrinoc.cat



ASSOCIACIÓ PER A LA GESTIÓ DEL PROGRAMA LEADER DEL RIPOLLÈS-GES-BISAURA

- Surface: 1.149,3 km²
- Population: 34.318 inhabitants
- Population Density: 29,86 ha./km²
- Municipalities: 27

Promoting the use of renewable energies as a viable alternative to develop rural areas.

leader@ripollesgesbisaura.org - www.ripollesgesbisaura.org



CONSORCI DE DESENVOLUPAMENT DE L'ALT CAMP, LA CONCA DE BARBERÀ I L'ANOIA

- Surface: 1.362,61 km²
- Population: 64.602 inhabitants
- Population Density 47,41 ha./km²
- Municipalities: 52

Enhancing the creation of enterprises and micro-enterprises through the establishment of business incubators in different areas of the territory; diversifying the rural economy by boosting tourism, micro-enterprises and the Cister's Route; and increasing the repercussion of the added value that means the wine sector for the territory.

concadebarbera@cd52.cat - www.cd52.com



CONSORCI GAL DE L'ALT URGELL - LA Cerdanya

- Surface: 1.762,70 km²
- Population: 24.421 inhabitants
- Population Density 13,85 ha./km²
- Municipalities: 24

Promoting the conservation and improvement of the rural landscape in order to achieve a sustainable territory and strengthening business and quality agro-food producers.

cauc@cauc.cat



CONSORCI PER AL DESENVOLUPAMENT DEL BAIX EBRE I EL MONTSIÀ

- Surface: 1.146,13 km²
- Population: 51.160 inhabitants
- Population Density: 44,64 ha./km²
- Municipalities: 23

Strengthening and encouraging the investment and job creation, as well as easing the territorial cooperation with the aim to promote the economic diversification and to build synergies among different potential sectors, so as the agro-food and the tourist sector.

leader@leader.cat - www.leader.cat - facebook.com/consorcibemo



CONSORCI DE LES GARRIGUES PER AL DESENVOLUPAMENT DEL TERRITORI

- Surface: 1.261,43 km²
- Population: 27.099 inhabitants
- Population Density: 21,48 ha./km²
- Municipalities: 36

Creating an own territorial brand based on the olive oil landscape and culture.

consorci@garrigues.cat - facebook.com/pages/Consorci-Garrigues-per-al-desenvolupament-del-Territori/437533796329047 - twitter.com/ConsorGarrigues



CONSORCI GRUP D'ACCIÓ LOCAL DE LA NOGUERA - EL SEGRIÀ NORD

- Surface: 1.829,40 km²
- Population: 44.737 inhabitants
- Population Density: 24,45 ha./km²
- Municipalities: 33

Promoting the agro-food sector, enhancing the tourist sector and giving support to business and entrepreneurs.

leader@noguerasegrianord.cat



CONSORCI CENTRE DE DESENVOLUPAMENT RURAL DELS PALLARS - L'ALTA RIBAGORÇA

- Surface: 3.147,80 km²
- Population: 25.034 inhabitants
- Population Density: 7,95 ha./km²
- Municipalities: 32

Deseasonalising tourism by implementing a sustainable model based on the natural and cultural heritage, restructuring the primary sector through an innovative product management, and diversifying the economic activity in order to generate quality employment.

info@cederpirineus.cat



CONSORCI LEADER DEL PRIORAT - EL BAIX CAMP

- Surface: 838,99 km²
- Population: 23.332 inhabitants
- Population Density: 27,80 ha./km²
- Municipalities: 41

Enhancing nature and the wine and olive oil culture and taking action on the valorisation of quality products and natural areas as sources of diverse initiatives.

info@priorat-baixcamp.cat - www.priorat-baixcamp.cat



CONSORCI INTERCOMARCAL D'INICIATIVES SOCIOECONÒMIQUES

- Surface: 1.570,7 km²
- Population: 35.787 inhabitants
- Population Density: 22,78 ha./km²
- Municipalities: 26

Giving value to the agro-food and landscape products to achieve a self-managed development, and bringing closer the use of ICT to population to create new sorts of employment.

info@cisiberaebre-terraalta.org - www.cisiberaebre-terraalta.org



CONSORCI PER AL DESENVOLUPAMENT DE LA CATALUNYA CENTRAL

- Surface: 2.379,29 km²
- Population: 46.348 inhabitants
- Population Density: 19,48 ha./km²
- Municipalities: 54

Encouraging the energy and environmental sustainability and promoting projects which offer proximity services to the rural population.

info@lcc.cat - www.lcc.cat



CONSORCI LEADER DE L'URGELL - EL PLA D'URGELL

- Surface: 905,30 km²
- Population: 74.864 inhabitants
- Population Density: 82,69 ha./km²
- Municipalities: 37

Giving support to processing and commercialisation of local products, by increasing their added value and their links with the territory.

jtorrent@consorcileader.cat - www.consorcileader.cat - www.gustumcatalunya.org - www.gustum.org

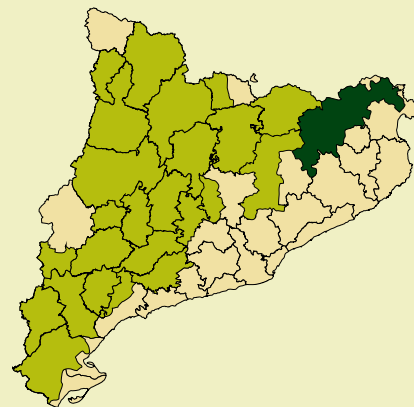
LEADER COOPERATION PROJECTS

01 Project's fact sheets

SUSTAINABLE RURAL MANAGEMENT: IMPLEMENTATION OF CSR IN LEADER TERRITORIES (In Catalan *Gestió Sostenible Rural*)

Leading LAG: Associació per al Desenvolupament Rural Integral de la Zona Nord-Oriental de Catalunya
Years of implementation: 2009-2014
Website: www.gsrural.org
Social networks: Twitter: @gsrural-facebook.com/ gestio.sosteniblerural

Contact:
 Associació per al Desenvolupament Rural Integral de la zona Nord-Oriental de Catalunya
 Av. Onze de Setembre, 22, 2a
 17800 Olot
 Telephone: +34 972 27 16 00
 Email: info@adrinoc.cat



"This is a win-win process: if the enterprises win, the territories win!"

• PROJECT'S DESCRIPTION:

Sustainable Rural Management is a cooperation project where all Catalan Leader Local Action Groups (LAG) are involved. The project places the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) as a strategic axis of a territorial socioeconomic development model which involves and aligns all interested parties in a common challenge: the **construction of smart and responsible territories**. The project has promoted the integration of CSR policies in enterprises beneficiaries of the Leader grants (Axis 4-RDP 2007-2013), as a tool to guarantee its sustainability and, additionally, the sustainability of the territories where they are placed: **If the enterprises win, the territory wins**.

The project is based on a methodology implemented during the Community initiative Leader Plus in the county of Garrotxa (Girona), which engages the beneficiaries of funds to assume social, environmental and economic respectful management policies within their surrounding environment and population. This methodology is based on a specific tool of diagnosis and measurement of CSR called **Sustainable Management Code** and on a process of individual advising to each organisation in order to implement the improvement measures. The project counted with the explicit support of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries, Food and Natural Environment of the Catalan Government, which, in 2009, approved the incorporation of this diagnosis and advising methodology for enterprises within the procedural management of RDP 2007-2013 Leader grants.

In 2012 the thirteen participating territories decided to take a step forward and involve and align in their local development strategies the other interested parties, understanding that sustainability is not a responsibility only for enterprises but for all active members of a territory. In this sense, the project started to shift its objectives to create **Smart territories**, through the development of communication networks and intercooperation among

actors to establish and face new challenges towards sustainability.

• WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE? – PROJECT'S OBJECTIVES:

- Promoting the management of social responsibility in public and private organisations in the 13 Leader territories of Catalonia, by implementing a shared working methodology: the Sustainable Management Code.
- Facilitating the dialogue and intercooperation among organisations in order to establish and face new challenges towards sustainability.
- Spreading and giving value to the achievements on the field of smart, sustainable and integrated growth of the Catalan rural territories (Territorial Social Responsibility).

• WHAT DO WE DO? – PROJECT'S ACTIVITIES:

The project has developed an action plan focused on four work fields :

LAGs training

- Training to public representatives and managers in each LAG regarding CSR.
- Elaboration of common methodological guidelines.
- Reinforcement of the LAG structure by incorporating specialized CSR staff.
- Technical training.
- Permanent CSR assistance.

Implementation of CSR in rural enterprises

- Individual advising sessions to implement CSR policies to organisations beneficiaries of Leader grants.
- Group advising sessions to beneficiaries.
- Specific training for the elaboration of the sustainability

reports according to an agreement signed with the prestigious international organisation Global Reporting Initiative.

- Creation and awarding of Rural Sustainable Management certificates to the beneficiaries which have finished the process.

Territorial awareness

- Elaboration of spreading material about CSR.
- Awareness sessions.
- Workshops and visits to exchange knowledge among enterprises.
- Encouraging public-private cooperation networks to face territorial sustainable challenges.

• Territorial intercooperation

- Constitution of technical assistance cells among neighbouring territories.
- Creation of an Observatory and an online platform to promote the intercooperation among territories.
- Exchange and training trips.

• WE SPEAK WITH.....:

"This programme helped me to systematise the management of my enterprise. It allowed me, for example, to identify more clearly the environmental impacts of my activity and involve customers into it. I want to thank the guidance received".

Joan Vendrell

Owner of Cal Vilaseca, Llobera (Solsonès)

LAG: Consorci per al Desenvolupament de la Catalunya Central

"Rural Sustainable Management meant a crucial step for the consolidation of responsible policies in our enterprise, in social, economic and environmental issues. It is an ambitious project and we are very satisfied with the obtained results".

Marta Puigsegur

Director of Visual 13 Comunicació Audiovisual, Vilajuïga (Alt Empordà)

LAG: Associació per al Desenvolupament Rural Integral de la Zona Nord-Oriental de Catalunya

• AND THE RESULTS? – PROJECT'S IMPACTS:

Beyond the obtained impact figures, **Rural Sustainable Management** has achieved some crucial results for rural areas: on one hand, it has placed CSR as a transversal axis of the local development strategies of the Leader groups and has given advantage to those organisations which made a bet for a responsible management with public resources from RDP; and on the other hand, it has given an enhanced added value to the participating enterprises and, thus, an improvement of their competitiveness; and finally, it has transformed the Leader territories of Catalonia into a paradigm of the responsible territories.

Some results to highlight:

- Implementation of CSR policies in **258 enterprises** beneficiaries of RDP grants, which are **planned to turn into 500** at the end of the programming period.
- More than **70% of the organisations** evaluate as **excellent**

the guidance received; **76% declares that they have improved** and **93% would recommend it to other enterprises**, according to the results of the programme evaluation survey filled by the beneficiary enterprises.

- **More than 25 training sessions with enterprises** about issues related to CSR: strategic planning, carbon footprint, intercooperation, sustainable marketing, etc.
- **Training to 74 enterprises to elaborate their sustainable report** and publication of **40 reports**, according to an agreement signed with the organisation **Global Reporting Initiative**, which is the principal international entity in the definition of CSR measuring and communication parameters.
- Creation of a **network with 12 specialised CSR technicians**.
- **Seven specific training sessions** addressed to the CSR technicians in charge of the implementation the CSR policies.
- Elaboration of methodological common guidelines: **Manual of the CSR tutor** and **review and edition of the Sustainable Management Code**.
- Permanent territorial awareness, with the organisation of **100 activities** with a direct participation of **2.500 people**.
- **Edition and distribution of spreading material about CSR**: brochure (4.000 copies), CSR guidelines (6.300 copies), CSR roll-ups, merchandising (3.000 notebooks; 4.500 boc'and'roll; 2.200 bags and 2.500 pens); corporative video about the project, among others.
- Creation of tools and instruments of **permanent cooperation among territories**: Observatory of CSR in rural areas (www.gsrural.org), with more than 10.000 yearly visitors; virtual platform for technical intercooperation; creation of territorial CSR technical assistance cells; and crowdsourcing platform (www.smartrural.org).
- Two institutional awarding events to award 164 socially responsible enterprises.
- 367 press impacts and more than 25 presentations of the project in CSR national and international forums.



Training session addressed to CSR specialised staff, which took place in Ribes de Freser on February 2011.

Author: Associació per al Desenvolupament Rural Integral de la Zona Nord-Oriental de Catalunya

Ownership: Associació per al Desenvolupament Rural Integral de la Zona Nord-Oriental de Catalunya

GUSTUM, LOCAL PRODUCTS

Leading LAG: Consorci Leader Urgell-Pla d'Urgell

Years of implementation: 2011-2014

Website: www.gustumcatalunya.org / www.gustum.org

Social networks: Twitter: @InfoGustum – facebook.com/InfoGustum

Contact:

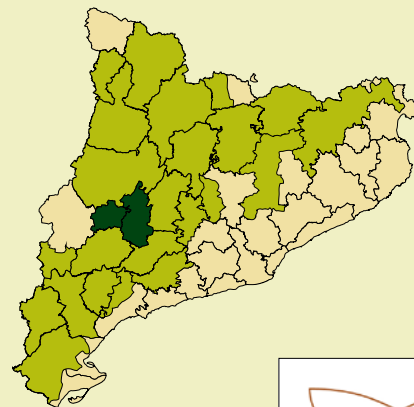
Consorci Leader Urgell-Pla d'Urgell

Prat de la Riba, 1

25230 Mollerussa

Telephone: +34 973 60 41 38 / +34 973 711 313

Email: tfuentes@consorcileader.cat



"The catalan cuisine is its landscape put into a cooking." Josep Plà

• PROJECT'S DESCRIPTION:

GUSTUM is a Catalan cooperation project where all Local Action Groups participate, and its goal is to **promote the rural development by encouraging quality agro-food products produced locally, in synergy with restoration, tourism and business sector**. The project was born from the Spanish cooperation project "Gustum", developed during years 2009-2014, and where 6 Leader groups from Lleida province participated.

When processing the agro-food products their added value is increased and the incomes of the rural population are enhanced, ensuring their permanence in rural areas and preserving the agrarian landscape.

Furthermore, if the product marketing is made in the same area where it is produced, the local economy is stimulated. Simultaneously, the consumer benefits from a quality product and collaborates with the maintenance of the economy and landscape. Additionally, the traditional cuisine is built on the basis of these products that give its identity.

This is **Gustum** purpose, giving value and promoting the local agro-food products by creating links with restauration, tourism and business sectors.

By working together all Catalan Local Action Groups, the activities implemented have a greater impact and helps to create an integral and coherent image of the project which enables to spread the Catalan products and producers. Although working locally, there is a joint effort which enables the exchange of information and products among different areas, while expanding the concept "local products" at Catalan level.

• WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE? – PROJECT'S OBJECTIVES:

With Gustum project we want to:

- Increase the knowledge about local products and their producers within the territory given.
- Give value to these products and identify them as quality food products in terms of nutritional and organoleptic values but also as elements of culture and identity of the territory.
- Identify the producers and food products of the territory.
- Provide tools to producers in order to promote and commercialise their products.
- Promote the producers partnership set up of the agro-food sector.
- Link the agro-food sector with local restaurants and touristic routes, while looking for an integrated rural development.

• WHAT DO WE DO? – PROJECT'S ACTIVITIES:

The project is developed by means of 3 working axes:

- Adding value to local agro-food products, by its promotion through means of spreading, awareness and training activities, thus providing a comprehensive picture of the territory:
 - Carry out territorial diagnosis to identify the productive fabric and tourism stakeholders in each area.
 - Edition of corporative spreading material: videos, photography reports and ICT tools (database, website and social networks).
 - Organisation of local products markets in municipalities, by selecting local producers and food processors.
 - Encouraging the assistance to local producers and food processors to participate in other gastronomic and agro-food fairs.
 - Engage in other territorial activities through workshops, informative sessions and local cuisine show cookings.

- Developing tools and working spaces that boost the promotion and commercialisation of producers and food processors:

- Sectorial working groups to promote the producers partnerships.
- Seminars and training sessions about the marketing and promotion of local products.

- Linking the agro-food local products with the local gastronomy and tourism:

- Workshops among producers, food processors, restaurant managers and tourism stakeholders.
- Gastronomic sessions using local products.
- Definition and spreading of gastronomic and tourist routes.

• WE SPEAK WITH.....:

"Gustum is a good partner for small producers and food processors. We attended many markets and fairs within the project; moreover we participated in a training seminar to learn new marketing techniques. Thanks to this project we reinforced the associative links with other local producers and we formulated common activities with the local restaurants".

Ares Prades

Owner of Bolets Prades, Llesp (Alta Ribagorça)

LAG: Consorci Centre de Desenvolupament Rural Pallars - Ribagorça

"My philosophy is the same that Gustum spreads. 90% of the products that we offer are Catalan products and we like to explain to our customers where they are from and who produces them. If they want to, we also provide them contact details of our suppliers to facilitate customers to buy their products directly. Furthermore, we work together with other restaurants to make purchases, reinforcing though the collaborative work and obtaining better prices."

Albert Marimon, Best Catalan Chef 2012 at the Gastronomic Forum of Girona.

Restaurant La Cava, Tàrraga (Urgell)

LAG: Consorci Leader Urgell - Pla d'Urgell

• AND THE RESULTS? – PROJECT'S IMPACTS:

Under the umbrella of **Gustum**, local products and their producers have been made visible and known within their closest surroundings, thanks to the support to open new marketing channels too.

Gustum has become a representative brand of quality local products. Its participation in events, at national and local level, with significant impact in media and the spreading activities done by means of their own communication channels (website and social networks) helped to spread the project and acquire reputation. Although the scope it is difficult to quantify, we can say that **more than 100.000 people** have attended any of the events where **Gustum** has participated and they also have had direct contact to some of their main stakeholders (producers, food processors, restaurant managers or project staff).

- Gustum attended to **130 spreading and commercialisation**

activities which include the organisation of local markets, fairs attendance and participation in other activities in cooperation with public and private organisations of each territory, in order to make people know the project.

- **88 awareness activities have been organised**, with workshops, informative sessions and local cuisine show cookings, with the participation of **5.280 people**.

- These activities involved more than **1.500 producers and food processors**, and **more than 500 restaurant managers and chefs**.

- More than **2.000 people** have attended any of the **62 training activities**, addressed to producers and food processors as well as to restaurants and small shops.

- Must be highlighted the **Campaign to introduce olive oil in schools**. This was a joint activity of the participating LAGs, holding educational sessions at **65 schools**, with the participation of **more than 2.600 students**.

- Besides, an important effort to animate each territory has been done with **the setting up of working groups** where the needs of each involved agent are gathered in order to design new actions and create stronger links among producers.



Participation of GUSTUM at the Origins Fair in Olot
Ownership: Consorci Leader Urgell-Pla d'Urgell

ENERGY AND FOREST (In Catalan *Energia i forest*)

Leading LAG: Associació per la Gestió del Programa Leader Ripollès Ges Bisaura

Years of implementation: 2012 – 2013 – 2014

Website: www.ripollesgesbisaura.org

Social networks: Twitter: @LeaderRGB - [facebook.com/leaderripollesgesbisaura](https://www.facebook.com/leaderripollesgesbisaura)

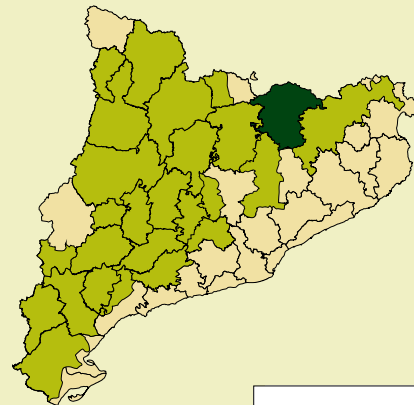
Contact:

Associació per la Gestió del Programa Leader Ripollès Ges Bisaura

Pol. Ind. Els Pintors. Joan Miró, 2
17500 Ripoll

Telephone: +34 972 704 499

Email: leader@ripollesgesbisaura.org



"A new energy and forest management model for rural areas of Catalonia. Carbon sink territories."

• PROJECT'S DESCRIPTION:

Energy & Forest is a cooperation project which gathers together the 13 Local Action Groups (LAG) of Catalonia. The project, which doesn't have productive aims, gives an added value to all local and regional initiatives which aim the **implementation of biomass and the recuperation of forest management** and that are taking place in the Catalan rural areas.

It is crucial to have a regional framework to exchange knowledge, coordinate and raise awareness, on one hand, in order to give a **global view of the isolated experiences** which are already spontaneously happening in the territories. And, on the other hand, to **optimise the resources, provide information and give solutions** to these experiences on biomass implementation and restoration of forest management.

According to this framework, information points have been put into operation in each territory with the purpose of:

- Developing activities to awareness-raising, provide information, promote and implement renewable energies (especially, to catalyse, guarantee and coordinate the implementation of forest biomass).
- Encouraging energy saving and efficiency measures in rural municipalities.

Energy & Forest has meant an added value for the territory. The creation of a **working group for the territorial coordination and the involvement of the public administration** enabled the investments improvement in energy efficiency for these areas.

• WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE? – PROJECT'S OBJECTIVES:

Energy & Forest wants to boost the sustainable development of the Catalan rural areas, adopting a **strategy based on encouraging energy saving and efficiency, and promoting**

the use of renewable energies based on local sources, especially the biomass.

To undertake these goals, it is necessary to engage the stakeholders involved in the development of rural areas of Catalonia (local population, local administrations, associations, forest owners and business) and enable their participation in the project.

• WHAT DO WE DO? – PROJECT'S ACTIVITIES:

Energy & Forest has developed several activities, at individual and collective level. As *collective activities* we highlight the following:

• **The organisation of training and informative sessions in the field of:**

- **Training course on forest management**, in order to train experts on the use of the weeding machine, the chain saw and the cut down of small trees.
- **Training course on biomass production**, in order to train experts on the biomass management (concept, production, storage, types...).
- **Training session on Smart Grids**, with the aim to provide basic knowledge about Smart Grids.
- **Training course on municipal energy management**. Implementing and maintaining an energy accounting service to the interested LAG municipalities. The energy accounting is based on the management and control of energy expenditure in public buildings.
- **Training course addressed to the projects' staff**. Two Infoenergy training sessions in order to transfer knowledge in the field of energy accounting, data analysis and diagnosis of the facilities.

• **The creation of an inter-territorial working group on biomass**, with the purpose of boosting a common

strategy to promote and implement forest biomass in rural areas of Catalonia. And as individual activities we highlight the following:

- Promoting the **energy accounting** in LAG municipalities.
- **Transferring and updating the Biomass Strategic Plan** of Ripollès to the other territories.
- **Acquisition of 20 panels about the biomass cycle.**
- **Assessment of biomass' pre-projects.** Technical and economic assessment to shift the conventional heaters to biomass heaters.
- Testing an **energy management and carbon footprint calculation tool for tourist buildings.**
- **Diagnosis of public facilities** in order to analyse the need to implement energy audits and put into practice the first saving and efficiency measures.
- **Acquisition of smart electricity monitors to elaborate energy diagnosis.**

• WE SPEAK WITH.....:

"Being involved in the service offered by Energy & Forest project helped us to identify easy and comfortably the deviation of the municipal energy accountings. It allowed taking decisions with technical criteria to adapt the electric contracted power to the needs of the buildings and to know which areas generate higher energy expenditure and which their uses are. Besides, it allowed gathering improvement measures for the coming years and foreseeing the energy costs in the budget, thanks to the technical reports."

Gerard Soler i Serra
Town councillor of Treasury and Economic Development
Council of Campdevàrol

"The participation in Energy & Forest project permitted to carry out the energy accounting of one municipality of our territory. For the Town Council beneficiary of this service, has represented an opportunity to implement energy saving and efficiency measures and, thus, to reduce the municipal expenditure. We plan to increase the number of municipalities to implement the energy accounting management and, at the same time, other activities addressed to promote the energy savings and the use of renewable energies, mainly the biomass, in order to boost a territorial development model based on sustainability."

Laura Farré,
Leader technician
LAG: Consorci Intercomarcal d'Iniciatives Socioeconòmiques

• AND THE RESULTS? – PROJECT'S IMPACT:

The impact of the project on the partner territories has been highly satisfactory. The target audience has much appreciated the whole project and the savings that meant for the territory, in economic and energy terms. Besides, the project was the seed to create the *Network of energy managers of forest areas of Catalonia*, since there is the intention to keep on working in this issue in the future.

In quantitative terms, some results are highlighted below:

- Consolidation of a **network of 13 municipal energy managers.**
- Implementation of **energy accounting in 56 municipalities.**
- **Energy diagnosis for 6 public facilities.**

- Updating the **Regional Biomass Strategic Plan of Ripollès.**
- **Transference of the Regional Biomass Strategic Plan** to the 5 partner territories.
- Installation plans for **30 public biomass heaters.**
- Acquisition of **20 panels about the biomass cycle.**
- **One itinerant exhibition.**
- **Educative games about energy and occupational workshops.**
- **Training to 12 people on biomass production.**
- **Training to 21 people on basic forest management.**
- Organisation of **two informative sessions about energy accounting.**
- Organisation of **two training courses on Infoenergy.**
- Organisation of **one introductory session about Smart Grids**, with the attendance of 18 people.
- Organisation of one **training session on local energy management** addressed to municipal technicians of the Catalan LAGs, with the attendance of 26 people.
- Testing a tool to calculate the CO₂ emissions in 7 tourist buildings.
- Acquisition of **material to elaborate the energy diagnostics** (8 smart electricity monitors).

The participating Leader territories on Energy & Forest project have been selected by the Clima project, in its call for projects 2012 and 2013.

The Clima projects, which are promoted by the Carbon Fund for a Sustainable Economy, are conceived to drive the shift of the Spanish productive system to a low carbon model. The Carbon Fund for a Sustainable Economy, which belongs to the Spanish Ministry of Agriculture (MAGRAMA), is an economic instrument for climate that wants to re-address the economic activity to low carbon models while contributing to the accomplishment of the international targets assumed by Spain to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases.

Participating in the Clima project, means for the Leader territories to perceive 7,10 Euros per tonne of CO₂ not been emitted in comparison of the original heater and means a free of charge monitoring of the biomass consumption until the 31st December 2019 and an annual verification of the biomass heater emissions.



Training course on biomass, which took place the 6th and 7th November 2013 at Consorci d'Espais d'Interès Natural of Ripollès.

Author: Associació per la Gestió del Programa Leader Ripollès Ges Bisaura

Ownership: Associació per la Gestió del Programa Leader Ripollès Ges Bisaura

ODYSSEUS. PROGRAMME TO PROMOTE THE RETURN AND EMPLOYMENT OF YOUTH TO RURAL AREAS (In Catalan *Odisseu*)

Leading LAG: Consorci GAL Alt Urgell-Cerdanya

Years of implementation: 2012-2014

Website: http://www.desenvolupamentrural.cat/mes_iniciatives/odisseu-programa-per-al-retorn-i-la-insercio-laboral-dels-i-les-joves-al-medi-rural

Social Networks: @mireiafontg - www.facebook.com/gal.alturgellcerdanya.com

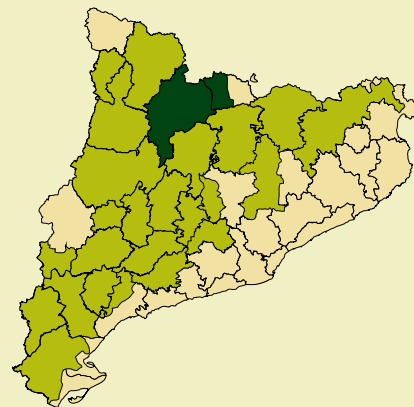
Contact:

Consorci GAL Alt Urgell – Cerdanya

Passeig Joan Brudieu, 15

25700 La Seu d'Urgell Telephone: +34 973 353 112

Email: cauc@cauc.cat;



"Youth talent is crucial for the development of rural areas"

• PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The purpose of the **ODYSSEUS project is to promote the return and employment of youth to rural areas**, by creating a programme which eases this return and encourages the social engagement of rural youth with its territory. The programme is propelled by the *Directorate General of Rural Development* and the *Directorate General of Youth* of the Catalan Government, from a joint initiative of the *Foundation of the Rural World* and the *Association of Rural initiatives of Catalonia* (ARCA), with the collaboration of the 13 Leader Local Action Groups of Catalonia and the network of youth professionals.

To encourage the return of the rural youth it is crucial to **involve of all the stakeholders who might have an influence on this transition**: educational centres, enterprises, associations, public administrations and the youngsters. For this reason, **ODYSSEUS is implemented at local level through working groups** composed by Leader technicians and youth workers, who design together the activities to develop to promote the return of youth.

The project targets are, on one hand, the young people who is about to finish their studies, university or vocational training studies, and they will face in short the working world. And, on the other hand, those youngsters who are about to leave their rural areas of origin to continue their higher studies in urban environments.

In this sense, one of the working areas of ODYSSEUS is focused on the organization of activities to promote entrepreneurship and employment, and spreading activities about good practices on rural youth entrepreneurship. The aim of these actions is encouraging the entrepreneurial spirit among young people and their employment through workshops, training, development of applications, online platforms, networking sessions, etc.

ODYSSEUS also works to **facilitate the contact between the rural enterprises and young people** suitable to fit their needs and, furthermore, that want to return and establish in rural areas once they finish their studies. In this sense, some activities have been organised, such as visits to rural enterprises by young people and the promotion of internships in rural enterprises (gathering the interests of enterprises, informative sessions and advising services for enterprises). Therefore, ODYSSEUS becomes as a meeting point between young people and rural enterprises.

• WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE? – PROJECT'S OBJECTIVES:

ODYSSEUS is a project which works to achieve the following aims:

- Preventing and **stopping the brain drain of rural youth to urban or periurban areas** and promote the return of trained human capital to rural areas.
- Facilitating and encouraging the social commitment of youth to its rural area of origin and **promote its employment in the territory.**
- **Promoting and counselling youth employment.**
- Encouraging the **creation of new enterprises** lead by young people, which contributes to the development of rural areas.
- **Rising awareness to business sector** about the added value that means youth 'knowledge' and 'talent' for their enterprises.
- **Rising awareness to youth, society and local agents**, about the effects and **impacts of youth migrations in rural development issues.**
- **Generating debate and analysis** among actors and institutions which take part in youth and employment policies and programmes.

• WHAT DO WE DO? – PROJECT'S ACTIVITIES:

The first stage of the project was developed in **2011**, with the **elaboration of the diagnosis "Rural youth migrations:**

what does the labour market offer to youth?" where a general analysis on youth migrations in Catalan rural areas was done and in depth analysis of the opportunities for settlement was done in 5 pilot regions (territorial diagnosis). In addition, similar programmes and projects at European and International level were analysed, and the programme *Place aux jeunes en région* of Quebec was chosen to exchange good practices in a trip. Thanks to this information the working methodology of the ODYSSEUS programme was designed.

Since then, ODYSSEUS *has moved forward* and, nowadays, the Catalan LEADER areas have **14 ongoing Territorial Working Groups and their corresponding territorial diagnosis**. These working groups are representative committees composed by the stakeholders who take part in youth issues at regional level: LEADER representatives, employment and economic development actors, enterprise representatives, youth representatives, etc.

At the LEADER territories, several **activities** have been organised in order to favour the connection between youth and rural enterprises; as well as workshops to promote **entrepreneurship, employment and social commitment with rural areas**; and awareness actions about ODYSSEUS project by participating in other events.

• WE SPEAK WITH.....:

"The programme helped me to don't feel afraid when contacting with enterprises..."

"I acquired greater self-confidence, thanks to the training to create an enterprise..."

"I never thought about starting my own business, now I see that it is viable, especially because I saw the real difficulties and not only the theory..."

"I have a better view of the corporate world and of the available employment opportunities that I have, I opened my mind..."

Miriam Martínez, Gemma Guilló, Rocio Romero and Sónia Torrent

Participants of the pilot project about youth entrepreneurship and employment "In Alt Urgell you can also start"

LAG: Consorci GAL Alt Urgell Cerdanya

• AND THE RESULTS? – PROJECT'S IMPACTS:

The analysis of the results of ODYSSEUS project can be done according to the year of implementation: in year 2012, as a starting year for all Leader groups; and year 2013, as a period of consolidation of the project's methodology in the participating territories. Before, we would like to highlight two relevant impacts: the **increase of activities organised with the educational centres and the success of the team composed by the technical staff of LEADER groups and the youth agents**, through the Territorial Working Groups.

At qualitative level, it is also necessary to highlight:

- Putting in operation **14 Territorial Working Groups**, with 531 participants during year 2012.
- The internal meetings and parallel working groups in each of the partner territories, with 425 participants.
- The organised **activities about entrepreneurship and employment** addressed to rural youth:

- 30 workshops in secondary schools, with 500 participant students.
- 2 rounded tables about entrepreneurship, with 88 participants.
- 9 seminars about entrepreneurship, with 104 participants.
- 6 workshops "ODYSSEUS Youth & Enterprises", in the framework of the Annual Plan of Technology Transfer of the Ministry of Agriculture, with 160 participants.
- Awareness session "Talent and territory" at Montsià Secondary School of Amposta, with the attendance of 400 youth participants.
- 7 craft workshops, with 83 participants.

More than 600 young people have received guidance regarding employment, 2 job opportunity platforms have been created, 2 secondary students' databases have been elaborated and, up to now, 456 students of 8 educational centres have been introduced.

Finally, we would like to mention the organisation of the "Seminar on rural youth migrations and employment". The seminar, organised by the *Association of Rural initiatives of Catalonia*, counted with the participation of 50 experts from Romania, Tuscany, Northern Ireland and Catalonia who debated about the rural youth migrations, entrepreneurship and employment.



Youth entrepreneurship workshop at Ripollès.

Author: LAG: Associació per a la gestió del programa Leader Ripollès Ges Bisaura

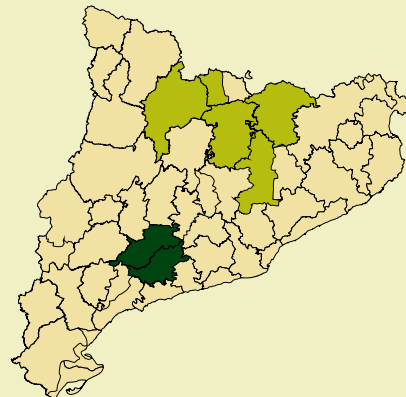
Ownership: LAG: Associació per a la gestió del programa Leader Ripollès Ges Bisaura

RURAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP (RURAL BUSINESS INCUBATORS) (In Catalan *Emprèn Rural*)

Leading LAG: Consorci de Desenvolupament Alt Camp,
Conca de Barberà i Anoia
Years of implementation: 2010-2014
Website: www.ver.cat

Contact:

Consorci de Desenvolupament Alt Camp,
Conca de Barberà i Anoia
Daroca, 1
43400 Montblanc
Telephone: +34 977 861 338
Email: oad@concadebarbera.cat



"If one does not know to which port one is sailing, no wind is favourable" Seneca

• PROJECT'S DESCRIPTION:

RURAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP is a Catalan cooperation project with four partner Local Action Groups (LAG), which implies continuity for the Spanish cooperation initiative "Rural Business Incubators". The project wants to **boost the creation of new businesses and jobs in rural territories**, providing facilities and granting necessary support to entrepreneurs through business incubators.

The **business incubators** are public infrastructures which assist the creation of new economic activities, helping entrepreneurs to avoid expensive investments when starting up their business. Thus, they temporarily use these facilities and are able to position the product in the market, in order to further establish by themselves in the future.

The Winery Incubator (in Catalan *Viver de Celleristes*) of Conca de Barberà, which was the first business incubator specialised in the wine sector, has inspired the project. At the present time, 9 new wine enterprises with Designation of Origin (DO) Conca de Barberà elaborate about 100.000 quality wine bottles using the mentioned facilities, and have a turnover of more than 1 million Euros. Two entrepreneurs have already created its own winery and currently develop their activity outside the Incubator, resulting in economic activity and new jobs creation. All the enterprises of the Incubator elaborate wine from Trepát grape, which is a native variety in the area, by ageing it in Pyrenean oak barrels, also native from the area, contributing determinedly to the research and development of new products.

In metropolitan areas these initiatives are very widespread, but not in rural environments, where there aren't facilities with such characteristics. Therefore, Rural Entrepreneurship is an initiative that seeks to implement business incubators in rural areas, setting up the necessary infrastructure which allow youth entrepreneurs to start their business activity in their own territory.

The project also incorporates the values of the cooperative movement, about sharing goods and services for the production, in order to reduce the overcharges of untapped investments, as a new pattern to produce competitive local products, goods and services. Moreover, the project intends to monitor the new created economic activities originated in the Incubator until they are consolidated, providing to entrepreneurs training activities to overcome the needs identified in the setting up of their business.

RURAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP is a project aligned with the territorial strategies of the participating LAGs. For that reason, every LAG has chosen the typology of business incubator to develop, according to its strategy. As a result, the project has supported an incubator specialised in the wine production, an incubator specialised in the cheese production, as well as a conventional office incubator to encourage the diversification of activities in the territory. **The LAG groups have been provided with a common guidance and monitoring methodology for entrepreneurs, developed specially for this project.**

The project added value falls mainly on the fact that business incubators help **entrepreneurs to start up their economic activity without the need of an initial investment**. This support to entrepreneurship enables venturing, without taking risks when starting new businesses. Certainly, it is a real good opportunity for rural entrepreneurs.

• WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE? – PROJECT'S OBJECTIVES:

The project aims to boost the **creation of businesses and jobs in the territory**, by supporting entrepreneurs that want to start businesses and productive activities linked to the territory, by being hosted in business incubators. The idea is to adapt the business incubator to local

processes and establish a common working methodology which enables:

- Giving support to entrepreneurs that want to be hosted on the business incubator.
- Monitoring the entrepreneurs to assist their consolidation and generate jobs.
- Providing better access to training and contacts to boost the growth of the businesses hosted on the incubator.

In a few words, the project wants to give support to entrepreneurs hosted in business incubators encouraging a common methodology for the partner territories, and providing the necessary facilities in both material and human resources.

• WHAT DO WE DO? – PROJECT'S ACTIVITIES:

Initially, each territory chose the field or typology of business incubator that seeks to be developed. Once the facility is available, the project has contributed in a small extend to arrange the space according to the chosen business typology that wants to be supported.

Due to budgetary issues, this support was only implemented for minor investments, and **major efforts were focused on aspects related to entrepreneur's advice**, directly by the technical staff of LAG groups, or contracting external consultants specialised in the incubator's entrepreneur's fields.

It is necessary to highlight the **activities related to training and promotion of entrepreneurship**. They were organised in order to spread the opportunities offered by business incubators aimed at potential entrepreneurs of the territory and, thus, to promote the start-up of new economic activities in the Incubators areas of influence.

Each participating LAG had a **Manual to support entrepreneurs**, in order to provide an **individual monitoring for each new economic activity** hosted in the business incubator.

• WE SPEAK WITH.....

"Nowadays we are selling Molí dels Capellans to United States, Thailand, Chine, United Kingdom and Dubai, among others. The Winery Incubator enabled starting our activity and consolidating in the market; selling quality wines produced from the native variety Trepát grapes within DO Conca de Barberà. When I will have my own winery I will always remember that it has been possible thanks to the initial facilities provided by the Winery Incubator of Conca de Barberà"

*Jordi Masdeu,
Founding partner of Molí dels Capellans, Barberà de la Conca (Conca de Barberà)
LAG: Consorci de Desenvolupament 'Alt Camp, Conca de Barberà i Anoia*

"The advantages of being hosted in a business incubator have been the access to common facilities, as the conference

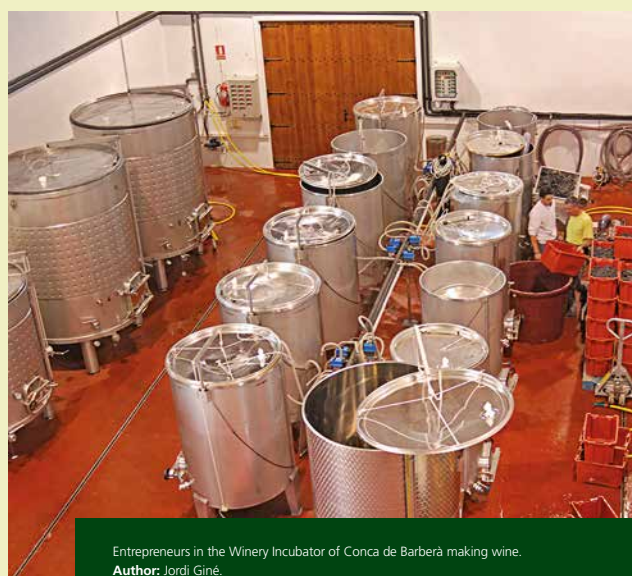
hall is, being in a place easily located, having an office and paying a reasonable rent, among others."

*Joan M. Sala Clos
Manager of Portal Berguedà Empresa d'Inserció, Cercs (El Berguedà)
LAG: Associació pel Desenvolupament Rural de la Catalunya Central*

• AND THE RESULTS? – PROJECT'S IMPACT:

The Rural Business Incubators are forward-looking for entrepreneurs who want to start their business in a favourable environment. The results of the initiative are at long term; however, there is available data to pay attention regarding the creation of new economic activities linked to business incubators:

- 82 hosted enterprises in Rural Business Incubators.
- 52 spreading activities related to entrepreneurship.
- 148 training activities.
- 165 advised entrepreneurs by the technical staff of LAGs.
- 18 advised entrepreneurs by external experts.



Entrepreneurs in the Winery Incubator of Conca de Barberà making wine.

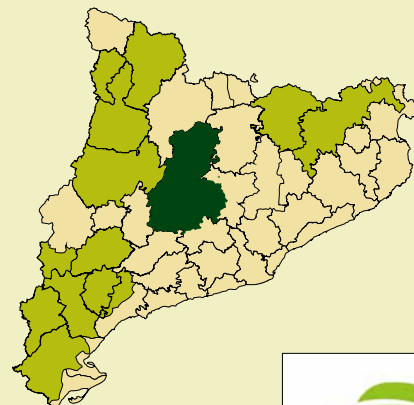
Author: Jordi Giné.

Ownership: Consorci de Desenvolupament Alt Camp, Conca de Barberà i Anoia

"SUSTAINABLE RURAL HOUSES. ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS IMPLEMENTATION IN THE DISPERSED RURAL HOUSING OF CATALUNYA
(In Catalan *Masies + Sostenibles*)"

Leading LAG: Consorci per al Desenvolupament de la Catalunya Central
Years of implementation: 2009-2014
Website: www.masiessostenibles.cat
Social networks: Twitter: @leadercatcent - facebook.com/Leadercatcentral

Contact:
 Consorci per al Desenvolupament de la Catalunya Central
 Pujada del Seminari s/n
 25280 Solsona
 Telephone: +34 973 481 644
 Email: info@lcc.cat



"Towards the sustainability and self-reliance of 'masies'"

• PROJECT'S DESCRIPTION:

Sustainable Rural Houses is a cooperation project with ten participating Leader Local Action Groups (LAG) from Catalonia. The project seeks to **identify the situation at the present time of the isolated rural housing and their inhabitants, and improve their living conditions.**

The *masies* (typical Catalan isolated rural houses) have been a symbol of self-sufficiency and sustainability in the rural environment. This project aims to **encourage the restoration, sustainability and self-reliance of this kind of housing, by spreading the use of sustainable and renewable alternatives which allow their endurance over time**, and, at the same time, improve the living conditions of its inhabitants, according to their needs and the modern comfort.

The project Sustainable Rural Houses is based on 4 axes: self-reliance, energy efficiency, restoration and eco-building and water and waste management.

The project matches well with the local development strategies because:

- Improves the sustainable conditions of isolated housing and of the activities that run on it: rural tourism, adding value to local products, etc.
- Promotes the use of the own resources of the territory such as the biomass, natural materials and wood, among others.

• WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE? – PROJECT'S OBJECTIVES:

The project wants to achieve the **sustainability and self-reliance of "masies"**. In the current context of economic, energy and environmental crisis, and taking into account the resources of each territory and the available technology, **the isolated housing has to move towards the improvement of the sustainability of the system.**

Therefore, Sustainable Rural Houses works to:

Acquire knowledge about the current conditions of isolated rural housing, the "masies", and its level of sustainability. Implement and give value to a model of self-sufficiency and sustainability for "masies".

Establish new technology and construction systems which give answer to the environmental and architectural challenges of "masies".

Promote the linkage and cooperation among enterprises, professionals and inhabitants of rural areas.

• WHAT DO WE DO? – PROJECT'S ACTIVITIES:

The project has developed an activity programme based on four axes:

Research and demonstration

- Identifying and characterising the "masies" of the rural territories by creating a database.
- Elaboration of energy efficiency and carbon footprint audits to know the level of sustainability of the "masies".

Awareness and environmental guidance

- Becoming an information point through the project's website and individual guidance.
- Stimulating the implementation of sustainable patterns in isolated rural houses, through the organisation of informative sessions and the Sustainable Rural Houses Fair.
- Edition and publication of spreading material about the new knowledge related to the environment, energy efficiency, water management and eco-building.
- Raising environmental awareness by organising film seasons, expositions and awards.

Territorial cooperation and knowledge and experiences transfer

- Creation of regional sustainable networks and organisation of exchange visits.

Spreading and dissemination of the project

- Creation of the project's website, designing and edition of spreading material, apps and organisation of spreading activities with media.

• WE SPEAK WITH.....:

"Attending to the Sustainable Rural Houses Fair and informative sessions has given us useful ideas and knowledge to undertake improvements in our "masia".

Daniel Rovira - Ester Moreno

Owners of Masia Xalagues, Lladurs (Solsonès)

LAG: Consorci per al Desenvolupament de la Catalunya Central

"The implementation of measures for the environmental management, energy savings and renewable alternatives, certified by Ecolabel and DGQA, gives additional benefits to our customers and ranks our business in the sustainable tourism sector".

Pilar Bielsa

Owner of Masia Rovira, Pinell de Solsonès (Solsonès)

LAG: Consorci per al Desenvolupament de la Catalunya Central

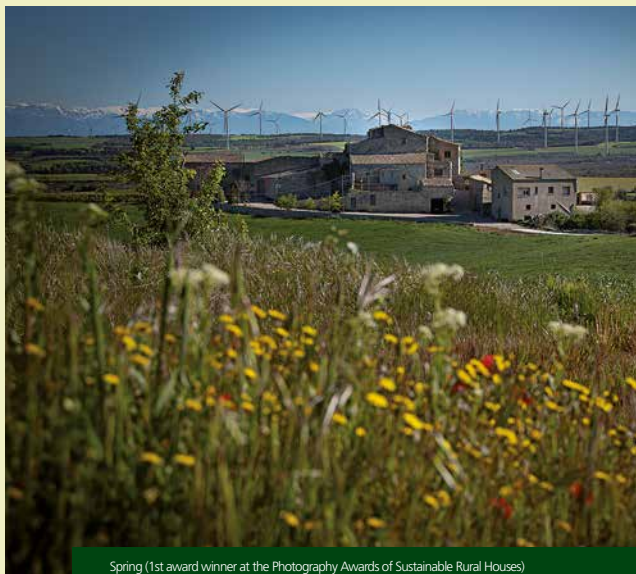
• AND THE RESULTS? – PROJECT'S IMPACT:

The Sustainable Rural Houses impact has been quantitative regarding the organised activities and the number of participants; and qualitative, since it has become a referent in the field of rural sustainability, for public administration, business, professionals and media; as well as for the rural inhabitants. It is important to highlight that the project has been awarded with

an **honourable mention at the Environmental Awards of the Catalan Government 2012**, on the category of environmental protection and improvements using renewable energies; and with the **Environmental Science Award of the Environmental Scientists Association of Catalonia 2012**, on the category of business initiative.

Some results to emphasize are the following:

- Development of **3 studies**: *Study about the dispersed rural housing and sustainability*; *Study about the forest energy uses in "masies", the biomass*; and *Study about the dispersed rural housing urbanism*.
- Edition of technical guidelines, such as the **1.000 copies of the "Guidelines for the sustainable restoration and construction: the sustainable "masia"**.
- Edition of the documentary **"Living in the "masia"**.
- 3 editions of the **Sustainable Rural Houses Fair**, with 485 participants, 45 enterprises and 30 workshops and technical seminars.
- Creation of the **"masies" of Catalonia database: MASICAT**.
- Implementation of **9 energy efficiency and carbon footprint audits**.
- Implementation of **awareness activities**: exhibition about the Catalan "masia", photography awards, and films seasons on environmental issues.
- Edition of **spreading material** about Sustainable Rural Houses.
- **17 awareness sessions**.
- **183 media appearances** (written press, television and radio).
- **10 exchange visits** with other territories to go into detail about living in the dispersed rural housing and the activities implemented.



Spring (1st award winner at the Photography Awards of Sustainable Rural Houses)
Author: Xavier Calvet Camats
Ownership: Consorci per al Desenvolupament de la Catalunya Central

WINE+NET (In Catalan *Vi+net*)

Leading LAG: Consorci Leader Priorat-Baix Camp

Years of implementation: 2014

Website: www.priorat-baixcamp.cat (the leading LAG will include information about the present project in its corporate website)

Contact:

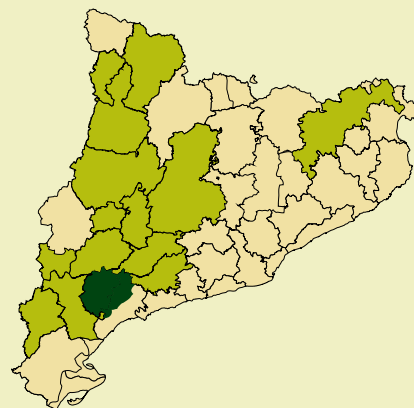
Consorci Leader Priorat - Baix Camp

Av. del Priorat, s/n

43730 Falset

Telephone: +34 977 830 259

Email: info@priorat-baixcamp.cat



"It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent that survives, but rather the one most adaptable to change". Charles Darwin

• PROJECT'S DESCRIPTION:

Wine+Net is a project that arises from the Spanish cooperation project "+Wine-CO₂", implemented during 2010 to 2013. The project gathers together 9 Catalan Local Action Groups with the purpose to contribute to **mitigate and reduce the greenhouse gases (GHG) of the viticulture sector**.

The wine world has become and becomes an important economic, social and agrarian resource for the culture and tradition of many of the Catalan territories. Its importance and weight means environmental and landscape repercussions to take into account, especially in the agrarian environment, where it is essential to work towards a more sustainable relationship between the need of conservation and the social and economic development of the territory.

The **Wine+net** project is born in this context, with the aim to contribute to mitigate and reduce the greenhouse gases, which are the main cause of the climate change, and one of the most important environmental issues.

The **Wine+net** project wants to **rise awareness to small wineries about their carbon footprint and promote their commitment to reduce their emissions of GHG**. Moreover, the project promotes their active participation in the climate change mitigation and adaptation.

The initiative is a **new and clear support to reach a relationship between quality products and territorial quality**. Wine+net focus on adding value to local products (in particular wine) and the territory itself; because it is not possible to understand the product detached from the territory and the landscapes where it is born and is developed, and which gives a unique and distinguished personality to the product.

In the field of the productive sector, the project wants to overcome the tradition/innovation dichotomy, searching

for the balance of these approaches with the purpose of transforming them into the principal mainstay of the participating territories and wineries.

To achieve this ideal, the project attempts to analyse the energy expenditure of the wine production process, with the aim to demonstrate that it contributes positively to improve the natural environment, reduces the greenhouse gases and its negative effects on the climate change.

This environmental improvement will generate a greater added value on the wine production process, and will help the sector to move towards the environmental certification of its products, as an added value that will enable their consolidation to more demanding markets.

• WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE? – PROJECT'S OBJECTIVES:

The general aim of **Wine+net** is **the improvement of the environment and the creation of employment**. In addition, it wants to give value to rural areas promoting activities that mitigate the emission of GHG of the viticulture sector and demonstrating that the traditional practices also contribute to reduce the emission of these gases.

As specific objectives of the project there are:

1. The definition of a **standardised methodology to measure the carbon footprint** for the wine production process
2. Elaboration of a **Manual of good practices on viticulture**
3. **Training** related to tools, methodologies and techniques in order to reduce GHG addressed to **wine makers and technicians of small wineries of the territory**.
4. **Spreading activities**, sharing experiences and results and **promoting crosswise and complementary exchanges with other agents of the same territory**.
5. **Creation of networking structures** which actively collaborate with each other.

• WHAT DO WE DO? – PROJECT'S ACTIVITIES:

In order to implement the project the following activities will be put into practice:

- Good practices on viticulture. A standardised methodology will be defined in order to measure the carbon footprint in the whole wine making process. Information will be gathered together and wineries and wine producers will be identified, becoming pilot experiences. Besides, a manual of good practices on viticulture will be edited in order to reduce GHG.
- Training the viticulture sector. Training will be given to wine producers and wineries' technicians regarding tools, methodologies and techniques to reduce the emission of GHG.
- Carbon footprint calculation. Besides the calculation of the carbon footprint, a specific tool for the wine production sector will be designed.
- Create networking structures through Local Action Groups, which actively collaborate with the purpose of giving support to wine producers and technicians of small wineries in the field of climate change, taking into account the synergies among territories and institutions.

• WE SPEAK WITH.....:

"The participation in the project meant learning about the Life Cycle Analysis of the wine production process that we did not know so far. The guidance received, as well as all the available tools to estimate the carbon footprint, have been very useful and enabled the creation of a methodology which can be adapted to all wineries which want to know their footprint".

Joan Ignasi Domènech
Owner of the winery *Vinyes Domènech, Capçanes (Priorat)*
LAG: Consorci Leader Priorat-Baix Camp



Training session "The impact of sustainability on the commercialisation of wine", that took place on July 2013.

Author: Consorci Leader Priorat-Baix Camp

Ownership: Consorci Leader Priorat-Baix Camp

"The training and informative sessions organised by the project have been helpful to share information and experiences with the other participating wineries of the project, a very useful point. The participation in the project has also opened us to other ways to reduce the carbon footprint, which meant an added value and a distinguishing feature of our winery among the others."

René Barbier
Owner of the winery *Clos Mogador, Gratallops (Priorat)*
LAG: Consorci Leader Priorat-Baix Camp

• AND THE RESULTS? – PROJECT'S IMPACTS:

Although the project has started in Catalonia the present year 2014, we show the results obtained thanks to the Spanish cooperation project "+Wine-CO₂", where Consorci Leader Priorat-Baix Camp also participated.

Hence, we highlight:

- The **training sessions addressed to the participating wineries from different regions of Spain**, in order to:
 - Estimate the carbon footprint using different and available methodologies.
 - Integrate the carbon footprint in the voluntary agreements to reduce and compensate the emission of GHG.
 - Calculate the carbon footprint of the viticulture sector.

Training session about "The impact of sustainability on the commercialisation of wine", where the most efficient methods for a sustainable viticulture were presented, as a tool to give distinction to wineries.

– **Project's spreading sessions:**

- Session "6x4: Project +Wine-CO₂ and Consorci Leader Priorat Baix Camp"
- Session "The carbon footprint on the wine production process in the Priorat's county".

Calculation of the carbon footprint of **40 wineries**.

Edition of a **Good practices manual**.

Design and elaboration of a **tool to estimate the carbon footprint for wineries**.

LET'S DO PARK. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF NATURAL PARKS OF CATALONIA (IN CATALAN *Fem Parc*)

Leading LAG: Consorci Centre de Desenvolupament Rural Pallars – Ribagorça.

Years of implementation: 2014.

Contact:

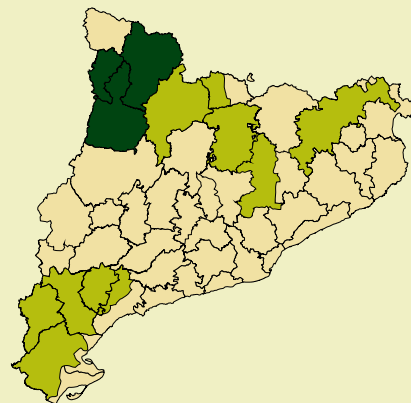
Consorci Centre de Desenvolupament Rural Pallars – Ribagorça

Pau Casals, 14. Baixos

25620 Tremp

Telephone: +34 973 652 529

Email: info@cederpirineus.cat



“The sustainable use of the natural resources of a given territory is crucial for its development.”



• PROJECT'S DESCRIPTION:

7 Local Action Groups participate in the **Let's do Park** project. The initiative is born with the aim to **encourage the socioeconomic development of natural protected areas and their influence areas, bringing it into line with the environmental protection and conservation.**

The natural protected areas of Catalonia are an important element of the tourist offer of the territory. Their relevance for the socioeconomic development of the area and its influence area requires taking especial attention further than the conservation and protection management. In this sense, it is necessary to animate the use of these areas by implementing sustainable development plans which guarantee the compatibility of conservation and its public and tourist use.

The project will be implemented in the following protected areas: Alt Pirineu i Aran Natural Park, Aigüestortes i Estany de Sant Maurici National Park, Cadí-Moixeró Natural Park, Zona Volcànica de la Garrotxa Natural Park, Els Ports Natural Park and Serra del Montsant Natural Park.

Let's do Park is an initiative which wants to play a role in this line, looking for the cooperation among the involved agents and participating Leader groups as well. A joint effort which will enable formulate and implement *Common Action Plans* with the purpose of strengthening the socioeconomic development of natural protected spaces and their influence areas.

Let's do Park is a project **aligned with** the territorial strategy. The project gives answer to the latent needs of the participating groups: *enlarge the tourist season, retain the primary sector and diversify the productive system, among others.* Therefore, it is necessary to work

to integrate the protected areas within the territorial dynamism of the areas, seeking for a balance between biodiversity protection and the productive activities of its inhabitants.

Hence, **the added value of Let's do Park is raising awareness about the opportunities that Natural Parks enclose for the economic development and the improvement of the quality of life of their inhabitants, instead as being a barrier for their activities.** Simultaneously, the project works to unify the area stakeholders to raise awareness of the value of their own territory.

• WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE? – PROJECT'S OBJECTIVES:

Let's do Park is an initiative which wants to:

- Rise the knowledge of society about Catalan natural areas, in order to increase the support to maintain and protect these spaces.
- Create new jobs inside the protected areas and their surroundings, by increasing the business activity in the tourist, leisure, sports and educative sectors.
- Promote the generational continuity of communities and towns located inside the protected areas and their influence areas.
- Spread the natural, cultural, agricultural and livestock heritage of these territories.
- Improve the quality of nature tourism.
- Analyse the impacts of the attendance of visitors in protected areas.

• WHAT DO WE DO? – PROJECT'S ACTIVITIES:

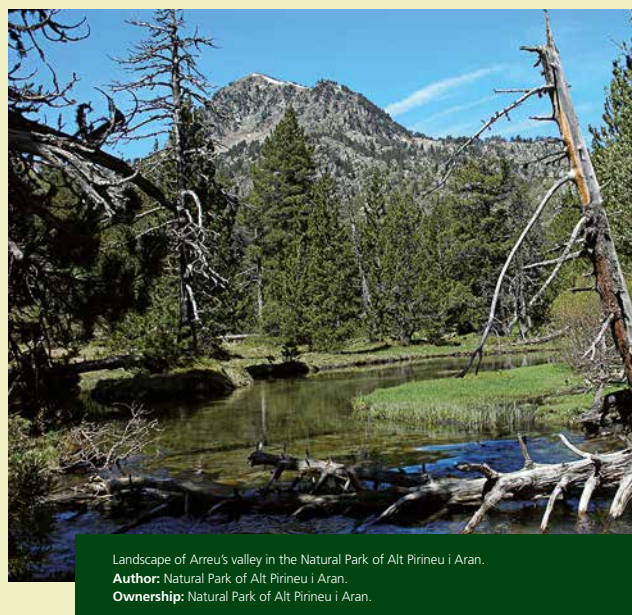
Among the planned activities of Let's do Park project, we highlight the following:

- **The creation of working groups** involving social stakeholders (natural environment, tourism, sports,

employment and economic development), public and private agents, in order to create a common framework to detect the needs of the territory.

– **Designing innovative ecotourist products**, taking into account that will be needed to:

- Identify the natural and cultural heritage elements which are available to practise sports and that have a high potential to become tourist resources of the territory.
 - Identify the effects and factors of environmental risk of the designed products.
 - Define the needed mechanisms to add value to these products without damaging its conservation conditions.
 - Identify the possible target audience for the new designed products.
 - Describe each product in a fact sheet which gathers all the information.
- **Elaboration of an Action and Development Plan of the area**, which includes the outcomes of the Working groups, the fact sheets of the designed ecotourist products, the analysis of the opportunities and threats that affect its development and the needed activities to implement.



Landscape of Arreu's valley in the Natural Park of Alt Pirineu i Aran.

Author: Natural Park of Alt Pirineu i Aran.

Ownership: Natural Park of Alt Pirineu i Aran.

SPORTOUR, RURAL SPORTS TOURISM OF CATALONIA (IN CATALAN *Esportour*)

Leading LAG: Consorci per al Desenvolupament del Baix Ebre i Montsià

Years of implementation: 2014

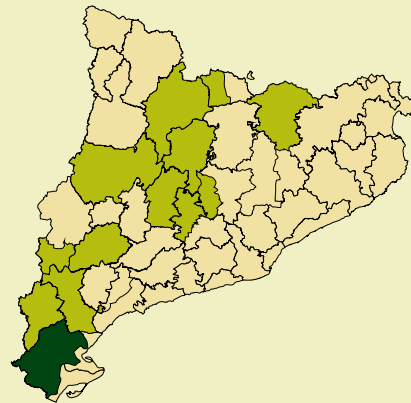
Contact:

Consorci per al Desenvolupament del Baix Ebre i Montsià
Plaça d'Alfons XII, 7. 1r B

43500 Tortosa

Telephone: +34 977 442 116

Email: leader@leader.cat



"Rurality and sport, a necessary, sustainable and productive communion"



• PROJECT'S DESCRIPTION:

SPORTOUR is an initiative where 7 Local Action Groups participate and cooperate to elaborate a common **Integrated Plan for the Management of Sports Tourism**.

The project is born to consolidate a central strategy rooted to all Leader areas: **promoting tourism as a rural development asset**. Despite of this, it is focused especially on **promoting sports tourism and its synergies with local services and the historic, natural and gastronomic heritage of the territory**.

The sports tourism is defined as a type of tourism *focused on people who practise sports and/or physical activities during their holidays and their leisure time*. Resulting of the current social situation, we can confirm that this would be a new emergent sector to develop.

This growing trend will be the basis to boost and promote the project within the territory. Therefore, in the first place, **SPORTOUR** wants to use the already planned sports events as an element for the economic development and, at the same time, to create new attraction points in the field of sports tourism.

With the purpose of achieving these targets, it is necessary to promote the territorial cooperation and association of the socioeconomic actors related to tourism and sport, and drive the conditions to help rural areas acquiring the required facilities to develop sports activities and promote this tourism type.

The added value of this project is trusting in an **harmony between the rural environment and its potential through sport as a device of a more sustainable and integrated tourism**.

• WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE? – PROJECT'S OBJECTIVES:

At the first stage, **SPORTOUR** wants to create a cooperation linkage among the participating organisations, administrations and socioeconomic stakeholders; with the aim of promoting and encouraging the territory potentials and help rural areas to become a suitable environment to practice sports tourism.

The initial task will be to collect, assess and catalogue data regarding the available tourism and sports resources in rural areas. In parallel, a diagnosis about the economic impact of sports activities of the territory will be carried out. From the obtained data, the priorities at sports and tourist level will be defined in order to reach the rural development through the promotion of sports tourism.

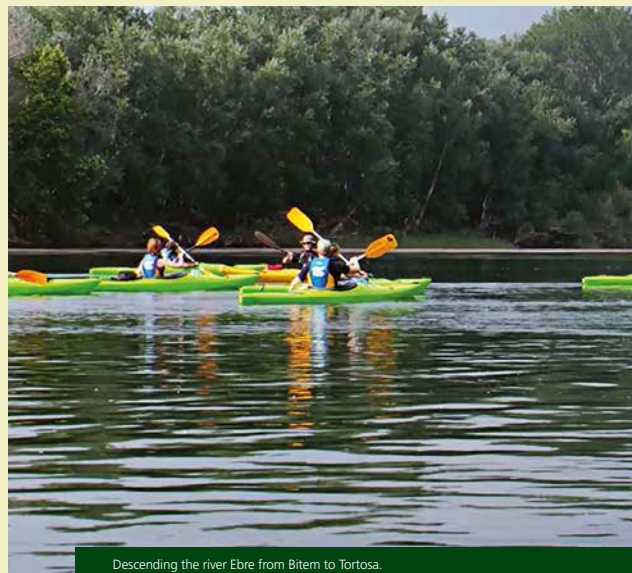
Another key issue of the project is training the service sector, at tourist and sports level, and the public administration as well with basic knowledge about marketing and communication.

• WHAT DO WE DO? – PROJECT ACTIVITIES:

The activities of **SPORTOUR** are focused on promoting sports tourism and encouraging the links among the different involved sectors. Taking into account this point, some of the planned activities are:

- Creation of a **working group** to design and propel the actions in each participating LAG.
- **Diagnosing the sports and tourist resources** of the territory.
- **Assessment of the economic impact** to the territory of the sports events.

- **Developing tools and methodologies that favour the promotion of season events in rural areas:** fairs, common actions for promotion and animation, unifying the sport event calendar, etc.; which generate synergies with the productive sectors of the territory.
- **Encouraging training sessions** in sports communication and marketing addressed to the private sector.
- Putting in value the natural, historic and landscape heritage of the territory and link it to the rural sports practise.
- Creation of an **image database** with the sports activities developed in the natural environment of the Leader groups.
- Designing a **new website** which gathers together all the sports resources of the participating territories.



Descending the river Ebre from Bitem to Tortosa.

Author: Consell Comarcal del Baix Ebre.

Ownership: Consell Comarcal del Baix Ebre.

COWOCAT RURAL

Leading LAG: Consorci Intercomarcal d'Iniciatives Socioeconòmiques

Years of implementation: 2014.

Contact:

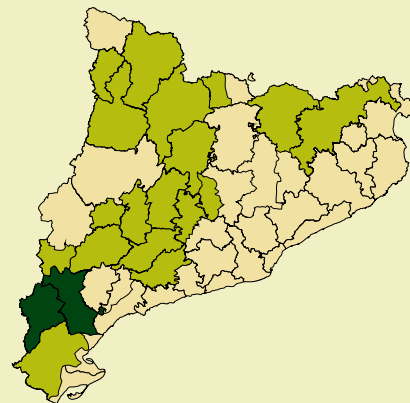
Consorci Intercomarcal d'Iniciatives Socioeconòmiques

Plaça Sant Roc, 2

43740 Móra d'Ebre

Telephone: +34 977 402 792 / +34 977 401 851

Email: info@csiberaebre-terraalta.org



"COWOCAT RURAL, coworking ecosystems: collaboration and working through ICT in a rural environment".



• PROJECT'S DESCRIPTION:

The **COWOCAT RURAL** cooperation project was born from the need to **promote entrepreneurship using Information and Communication Technologies – ICT**. The initiative wants to strengthen the creation of coworking environments in the rural territories, and to promote the principles of coworking and teleworking in the territories of the 10 participating Local Action Groups.

Coworking or **collaborative working** is a working approach which allows independent professionals, entrepreneurs and SMEs from different sectors, to share a common physical and virtual working space, in order to develop independent professional projects while promoting projects in common.

This new working approach means an **opportunity for professionals which have ICT as basis of their activity and that want to work in a collaborative space without renouncing to the rural environment**. Therefore, rural coworking spaces drive indirectly the economic boost of the territory and help to maintain its working population.

The implementation of this project will be an opportunity to transfer the experience of the Ribera d'Ebre's county, which is a pioneer in this field, to other rural areas in Catalonia which could benefit from the already obtained results. Furthermore, it will imply an opportunity to drive the creation of a network of rural coworking spaces, which will enable their collaboration and increase their value gaining a greater impact.

COWOCAT RURAL is a cross-cutting project. Taking ICT as a working axis, coworking is a philosophy which can be implemented in many different sectors to share knowledge, establish synergies and create alliances.

The basis of the project fits in with the local development strategies established in each territory, since most of them have as a strategic axis to **"promote the return and keep people in rural areas and encourage the economic diversification of the territory"**.

• WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE? – PROJECT'S OBJECTIVES:

The objectives of the project are focused on:

- Identifying possible professionals which can develop the managing role of the coworking spaces and train them appropriately.
- Identifying potential co-workers, people that according to their professional profile can be suitable users of the coworking spaces.
- Promoting teleworking and coworking habits among entrepreneurs of rural areas.
- Raise awareness about this issue in rural areas, following similar initiatives which have already been developed in other European countries.

COWOCAT RURAL will attract and keep qualified human capital in rural areas with the corresponding retention of talent, a key factor for the development of these territories.

• WHAT DO WE DO? – PROJECT'S ACTIVITIES:

The foreseen activities to achieve the planned objectives are grouped in three areas:

First, there are activities towards the **managers training and preparation of the coworking spaces**, these includes exchange visits to ongoing coworking spaces and individual and group training sessions, among others.

Second, there are activities focused on **identifying and training future co-workers**.

Finally, there are activities to **exchange experiences, create synergies among other actors of the territory and spreading activities**.



Coworking workshop in Ribera-roja d'Ebre.
Author: Consorci Intercomarcal d'Iniciatives Socioeconòmiques
Ownership: Consorci Intercomarcal d'Iniciatives Socioeconòmiques

**N70 DOSSIER TÈCNIC**



Jesús Fierro i Rugall was born in Capdella, La Vall Fosca, in 1961 and from a very young age he moved to La Seu d'Urgell, Alt Urgell, the place where he lives nowadays.

He has developed his professional activity on the bank sector although since many years ago, having a clear vocation on politics at the service of rural areas, he became town councillor, county councillor and provincial representative. At the beginning of the 90s, while being the county councillor of Alt Urgell County Council, he drove the creation of the first Local Action Group of the County in the framework of the Community initiative Leader II which resulted in the implementation of the first Leader programme in the southern part of the County.

In 2002, he assumed the presidency of the Local Action Group Alt Urgell XXI, in the framework of the Community initiative Leader plus, organisation which managed the Leader programme in the whole County during the period 2000-2006. In 2008 the Consorci GAL Alt Urgell-Cerdanya was constituted to implement the Leader programme in the counties of Alt Urgell and Cerdanya in the framework of the RDP of Catalonia, and he also assumes its presidency which he still holds nowadays, ensuring the coordination and harmony between both territories.

He has a clear commitment to Leader programmes and its support to the creation of economic activity in rural areas. Today, he has already started working for the new programming period (2014-2020) in order to keep the Leader programme going and, therefore, to support the business projects in the territory.

THE INTERVIEW

Jesús Fierro Rugall

Chairman of the Consortium
Local Action Group of Alt Urgell and Cerdanya
La Seu d'Urgell (Alt Urgell)

The implementation of multi-funding Leader for the period 2014-2020 is an opportunity to define an integrated local development strategy with a higher added value.

Basing on your experience as Chairman of Consorci GAL Alt Urgell – Cerdanya, one of the 13 Local Action Groups which implements the Leader programme in Catalonia, what do you think that the Leader methodology has brought to your territory, taking into account that Alt Urgell is one of the areas where Leader is implemented since 1994? How do you assess the evolution of the Leader programme along these years?

The Leader programme has experienced a very positive evolution along time, obtaining very good results which permitted its consolidation in the territory. Leader is a very important tool to animate rural areas: creates employment, gives support to entrepreneurs, boosts the creation of new business, etc. I think that one of the main issues to ensure the good implementation of Leader in rural areas is the public-private partnership and the convinced commitment of the territory, as well as a bottom-up strategy, involving the local population and the grants management in the same way, from down to top, which consequently brings the Leader programme closer to the population.

One of the characteristics of the Leader programme is cooperation among Local Action Groups; these projects help the territories to develop their strategies and challenges. In the past 2012 and 2013 calls for applications, six Catalan cooperation projects have been developed and in the present call, four new initiatives have been incorporated, rising a total number of 10 cooperation projects, with a foreseen investment of 1.160.760 million Euros for 2014. Which is your opinion?

The cooperation projects allow the Leader groups to boost projects in common with other territories that share strategies, objectives or needs. They are long-lasting actions that meet the needs defined in the local development strategies. Nowadays, we are working on already consolidated projects as GUSTUM, where a consistent link between producers and restaurant managers has been created, or ODYSSEUS, a project which wants to drive the connection between youth talent and rural enterprises, with the aim to promote the return of youth in rural areas. We are talking about activities encouraged from the groups, which involve diverse territorial agents and doesn't disappear once the project is finished.

Likewise, new cooperation projects are starting with the aim to explore new channels of collaboration among territories. Some project examples are the LET'S DO PARK, an initiative which wants to stimulate the socioeconomic development of protected natural spaces and their area of influence, while making it compatible with their environmental protection and conservation, or the COWOCAT which aims to study and encourage the collaborative working and teleworking in rural areas.

The new programming period strengthens the Leader methodology and cooperation as one of its most important added values and impacts over the territory. For example, during the period 2014-2020 the possibility offered to LAGs to manage different funds will allow boosting synergies among different funds and aids and, therefore, reinforce the territorial strategies. Which do you think that are the challenges for Local Action Groups in this new context?

On my opinion one important challenge for the new programming period will be that the EU regulations introduce the possibility that LAGs can manage other European funds. In this context, we should not miss the opportunity to become pluri-fund, in order to manage these funds from the territories where they are implemented, thus moving them closer to citizens and enterprises. The past experience on managing European funds by the Leader groups in rural areas are the best guarantee that shows that funds can be managed involving the territory and encouraging local governance without the need of creating new entities.

Another important challenge for LAGs will be to maintain their contribution to the economic development of rural areas, but also ensuring the implementation of strategic and solid projects, looking for innovative financing and counselling formulas which consolidate the socioeconomic networks.

Finally, I think we should reinforce cooperation at all levels, also at transnational level, in order to develop suitable projects in line with LAGs strategies. These groups, which work from the territory have already demonstrated that they are able to manage other financial funds and to develop cross-cutting projects, as they did through the cooperation projects developed during the period 2007-2013.



Generalitat de Catalunya
Departament d'Agricultura, Ramaderia,
Pesca, Alimentació i Medi Natural



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