

PARI – PAths for Rural Innovation. Implementing Clusters for Social and Ecological Innovation to improve quality of life in rural areas



What is the PARI Project about?

The PARI project is a two-year action supported by the European Union in the framework of the Single Market Programme (SMP). Started in September 2024, **PARI intends to facilitate the setup or the consolidation in rural areas of a specific sort of clusters, named Clusters of Social and Ecological Innovation (CSEIs).** In this respect, through the **improvement of capacities and operational frameworks for social economy actors, in partnership with local authorities, entrepreneurial actors (and other players)** in the partner territories, PARI aims at identifying and implementing pathways to accelerate the creation of CSEIs.

Generally speaking, **clusters** are experiences of convergence of resources from different sources, aimed at pursuing objectives that could not be achieved by individual actors with the same success.

CSEIs, in turn, represent a special case as they go beyond sectors or silo approaches, and aim at gathering resources of different nature to improve the systemic capacity to respond to social and environmental challenges through targeted innovation paths.

The PARI Project Consortium

The PARI project is coordinated by **REVES – the European Network of Cities and Regions for the Social Economy**.

and is collaboratively carried out by a consortium of six partners:

Diesis Network (Belgium),
Region Östergötland and **Coompanion Östergötland** (Sweden),
Gobierno de Navarra and **ANEL** (Spain),
Câmara Municipal de Torres Vedras (Portugal)



<https://www.revesnetwork.eu/project/pari/>



The “Mission-Based Approach”

A defining feature of PARI is its mission-based approach, which prioritises learning from real-life experiences, practices, and expertise already present in partner territories.

Field missions serve as crucial tools for gathering first-hand data, observing local conditions, and understanding the unique challenges and opportunities of each rural context.

The PARI transnational missions, designed as in-depth study visits, enable project partners to collect evidence and develop a shared understanding of key issues. The process is driven by mutual learning, where stakeholders exchange knowledge based on concrete data and real-world insights.

Objectives

By fostering a collaborative, evidence-based approach, the transnational missions act as a platform for exchange, discussion and mutual learning, facilitating further actions aimed at innovating strategies for local development, ensuring that these are deeply rooted in the partners’ realities.

The Integration of Research Findings into Policy Learning

The research in PARI aims to develop a clear and nuanced understanding of the CSEI concept. This entails going beyond generic definitions to investigate the multifaceted nature of CSEIs, drawing on established theoretical frameworks (such as cluster theory, social economy principles, and innovation studies) as well as concrete, real-world examples.

The objective is to articulate what defines a CSEI, how it differs from other forms of economic or social organization, and what its unique value proposition is, particularly in rural contexts. Additionally, the research seeks to identify the key characteristics, success factors, and challenges associated with CSEIs. The objective is to articulate what defines a CSEI, how it differs from other forms of economic or social organization, and what its unique value proposition is, particularly in rural contexts. Additionally, the research seeks to identify the key characteristics, success factors, and challenges associated with CSEIs.



The Local Plans

In the form of “participatory local pilot experiences”, these processes will be carried out with the aim of formulating local plans for establishing CSEIs. In these experimental settings, diverse multi-stakeholder groups will be actively engaged to facilitate inclusive dialogue, share knowledge, and exchange practical experiences. These collaborative processes are intended to generate valuable insights and enrich the overall project approach through mutual learning. The emphasis is on moving beyond traditional siloed approaches and fostering a collective mindset grounded in systemic thinking.

The PARI Key Outputs



Research and analysis



Missions and mutual learning



Local plans for CSEI setup

