

Building resilient social and ecological innovation ecosystems across Europe

Insights from local plans in Navarra, Östergötland and Torres Vedras, and pathways to scale

PARI Webinar – 31 August, 2026

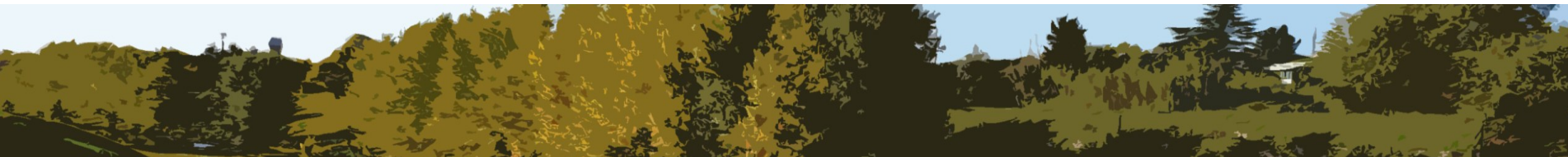
REVES



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Project factsheet

- **PARI – Paths for Rural Innovation**
- **Framework:** the COSME-SMP (Single Market Programme)
- **Duration**
 - 24 months (01/09/2024 – 31/08/2026)
- **Project objective**
 - **Accelerate the creation of CSEIs** (clusters of social and ecological innovation) in rural areas by improving capacities and operational frameworks for **social economy actors**, in partnership with **local public authorities, businesses, academia, and other stakeholders**
 - This objective is pursued across territories with very different institutional, cultural and economic conditions - a diversity that shapes how CSEIs emerge



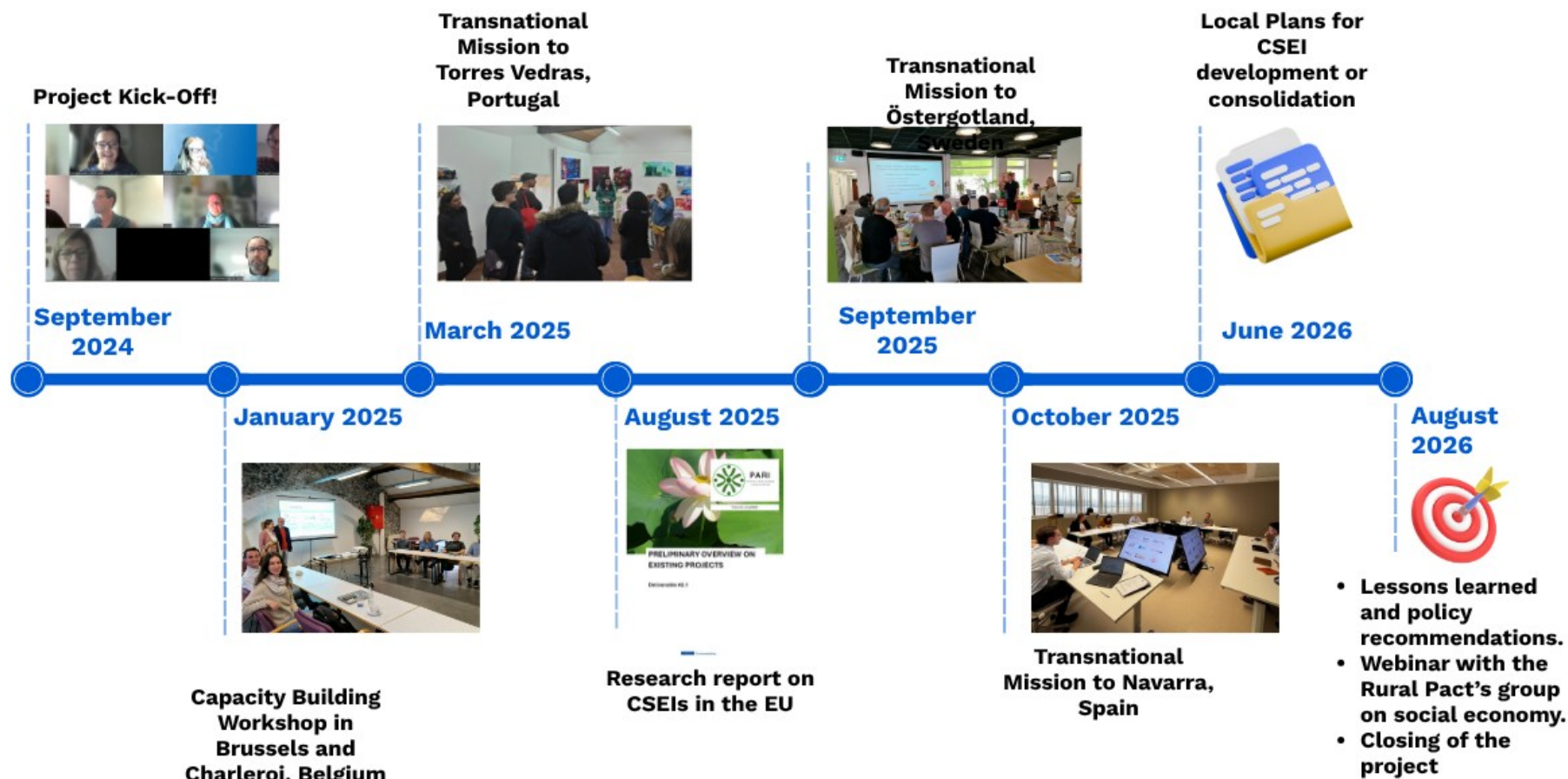
The project team

- **Countries:** Belgium, Portugal, Spain, Sweden
- **Partners**
 - REVES Aisbl (EU - Coordinator)
 - DIESIS Network (EU)
 - Câmara Municipal de Torres Vedras (PT)
 - Comunidad Foral de Navarra – Gobierno de Navarra (ES)
 - ANEL - Asociación de Empresas de Economía Social de Navarra (ES)
 - Region Östergötland (SE)
 - Coompanion Östergötland Ekonomisk (SE)



The project process

Our process combines **research**, **field observation** and **participatory co-design** with local actors



Understanding *Clusters of social and ecological innovation*

CLUSTER => The conventional definition

- **Groups of interconnected actors**
- Collaboration by **pooling resources** and **expertise**
- **Collective effort** to achieve goals they could not reach as effectively on their own
- Clusters are aimed at fostering:
 - **innovation**
 - **productivity**
 - **growth** and **competitiveness**

This conventional definition is useful but insufficient to capture the social and ecological dimensions of **rural innovation**

CSEIs: beyond conventional cluster models

What is a Cluster of Social and Ecological Innovation - CSEI?

Reference: European Commission: Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs: ***Clusters of social and ecological innovation in the European Union, perspectives and experiences – The role of clusters and similar forms of business cooperation in fostering the development of social economy***, Publications Office of the European Union, 2021,
<https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2873/07591>



Multi-Actor Networks

Social economy entities, local governments, businesses, research institutions and **citizens**



Dual Integration

Social AND ecological dimensions built into both operations and strategy



Collective Agency

Governance platforms, trust-building, shared data, enabling legal frameworks >>
proximity, shared values and mutual accountability

What have we found from research and direct observation?

- Experiences, practices and models observed and analysed from:
 - Belgium, France, Germany, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden

Full research report can be downloaded from:

https://www.revesnetwork.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/PARI_Preliminary-overview-of-existing-projects_FINAL.pdf

What have we found from research and direct observation?

- **Place-based patterns of CSEIs** across rural areas in the EU.
- Differences emerging from:
 - Motivation and purpose
 - Culture and adopted approaches
 - Participating actors
 - Scale – geographical, involved players, economic activity, etc.
 - Legal basis
 - Connection with existing local strategies and policies
 - Characteristics of innovation
 - Funding and other resources
 - Governance model

*"Supporting CSEIs means investing in
connective infrastructure, not just
subsidising individual organisations"*



From diversity → to enabling conditions

- Such variety validates our approach: focusing on meaningful practices, lessons learned and concrete recommendations that help territories identify **which dimensions and priorities matter most in their own context**, and how they can strengthen them
- Because CSEIs emerge differently depending on local conditions, our role is not to prescribe a model but to identify what consistently enables them

Governance

- Across all territories, governance emerged as one of the most decisive enabling factor, despite differences in structure

Governance as a strategic asset within CSEIs

01



Participatory decision-making

Governance structures that are **inclusive by design**: not consultation, but genuine co-production of strategy and outcomes

02



Multi-stakeholder collaboration

Quality partnerships with **co-investment** of resources, **co-production** of knowledge and **co-responsibility** for results

03



Public authority as enabler

Local government provides legitimacy and funding access while **multi-stakeholder deliberation** shapes substance

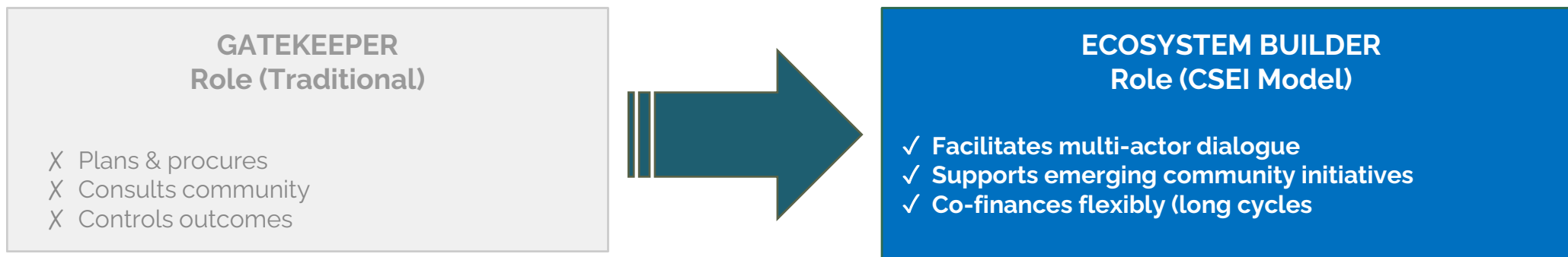
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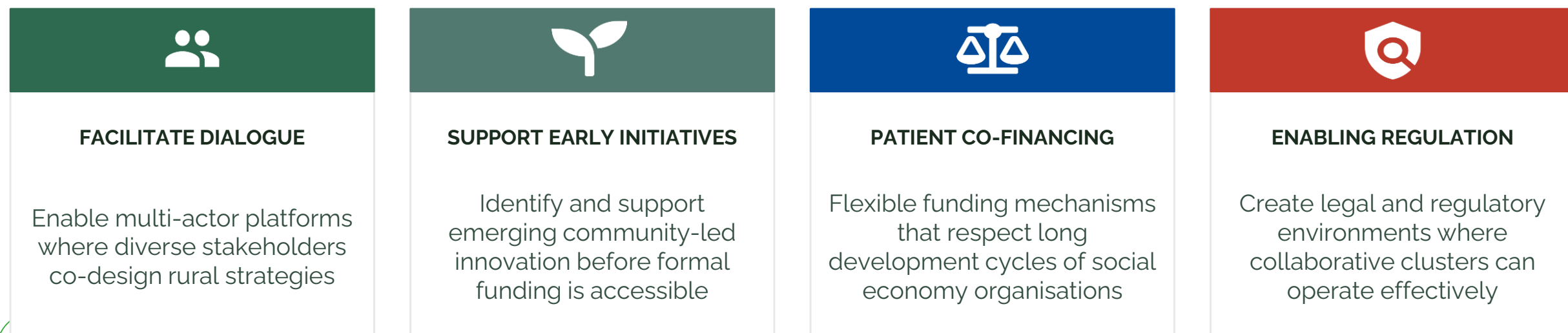
Trust-based network architecture

Informal or semi-formal governance grounded in shared values rather than rigid statutes, **building social capital**

Public authorities: from gatekeepers to ecosystem builders



New institutional competencies required



A pilot in PARI: the *local plans*

- Local participatory processes to co-design the local rural CSEI
 - In Torres Vedras, Region Östergötland, Navarr
- Local participatory processes have included and actively engaged **key stakeholders**, ensuring **their input shapes project outcomes and fosters collaboration at the community level**

Thank you!

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



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