



## **Place-based innovation of cultural and creative industries in non-urban and peripheral areas: What roles for actors and policies?**

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The place of and the role played by innovation in rural and peripheral areas has long been underestimated. Although generally conceptualised in a very technological way, today many researchers accept the idea that innovation in these territories is, above all, of a social, organisational or institutional nature. Thus, significant reflection must be given to the social economy and to the actions carried out by local individuals and groups, whose dynamics support the life and development of the territories. In this context, the role played by the cultural and creative industries (CCIs) in this dynamic is often still poorly studied and informed. This is mainly due to two reasons: on one hand, these industries are systematically underestimated in their contribution to overall economic output in non-urban areas and, on the other hand, they are often considered to have primarily an urban dimension.

Culture and creative industries produce and disseminate artistic and creative products and services that generate wealth through the use of cultural assets. Additionally, these activities generate a plurality of socioeconomic impacts and, especially in non-urban territories, the scope of CCIs must incorporate the wide range of cultural organisations and culture-based actions for which economic outcomes are not primary, but are more socially oriented in nature. While research on CCIs in non-urban areas has traditionally been underdeveloped (Duxbury, 2000), a growing array of multidisciplinary efforts are revealing the nature and vitality of CCI organisations and occupations in non-urban areas across Europe (e.g., McKerrell, 2022; Tessarin et al., 2022; Velez et al., 2022; Leick et al., 2023; Sanjuán Belda, 2023; Collins and Murtagh, 2024; Crociata et al., 2024; Kozina et al., 2024; Mathisen et al., 2024).

This Special Session is part of the activities of the Horizon Europe project, “IN SITU: Place-based innovation of cultural and creative industries in non-urban areas.” The aim of the workshop is to gain a better understanding of the role and place of the CCIs in rural and peripheral areas, particularly in Europe, and to deepen the debate on the practices and methods used to promote their recognition and development. In particular, we are looking for presentations on experiments carried out in

different territories, for results in terms of the statistical and economic importance of these activities, and for measures of their impact on the development or activity of rural or peripheral areas. Particular attention will be paid to the presentation and study of the actions undertaken in favour of the implementation and functioning of the CCIs, whether these actions come from communities and groups of actors at the local level or whether they are driven by public policies, coming from the European Union (EU), States or local authorities. We will question the more bottom-up or top-down dimensions of these actions, as well as their recognition by public authorities. In addition, cultural policies at various levels are of great importance to us. How do cultural policy processes take place at the regional and state levels? Who are the actors? Which structures are used? How is there a link with EU policies? What challenges and potentials arise here?

The IN SITU project combines research and experimental actions to advance the innovation-related practices, capacities and potential of cultural and creative industries (CCIs) based in non-urban areas of the EU, a constituency of the cultural and creative sector that has grown in visibility and significance over the last decade in Europe and internationally but which is still vulnerable due to the lagging attention of research and policy to its needs, characteristics, and potentials. The project aims to advance understanding of the forms, processes, and governance needs of CCIs located in non-urban areas of Europe and to advance the ability of non-urban CCIs to act as drivers of innovation, competitiveness, and sustainability for the locales in which they are located. The IN SITU project is funded by the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation programme under Grant Agreement no. 101061747.

The special session expects to receive communications in the topic areas below:

1. Understanding Innovation in Rural and Peripheral Areas – Exploring social, organisational, and institutional innovation beyond technological aspects.
2. The Social Economy and Local Dynamics – Contributions of local actors and community-driven initiatives to territorial development.
3. Role of Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs) in Non-Urban Areas – Challenges in recognizing and assessing the significance of CCIs, with case studies from rural Europe.
4. Economic and Social Impacts of CCIs – Examining the socioeconomic outcomes of both economically driven and socially oriented cultural initiatives.
5. Recognition and Policy Support for CCIs – Strategies for promoting CCIs in non-urban areas through local and EU policy frameworks, including top-down and bottom-up approaches.
6. Governance of CCIs in Non-Urban Contexts – Cultural policy processes and the role of public authorities and stakeholders in shaping CCI governance.
7. Experimental Actions and Innovation Practices – Insights from innovative practices and experimental actions like those under the IN SITU project.
8. Statistical and Economic Analyses of CCIs – Measuring the economic significance of CCIs, particularly comparing their performance in rural versus urban contexts.
9. Future Potentials and Challenges for CCIs in Non-Urban Areas – Linking CCIs to regional competitiveness, innovation, and sustainability while addressing vulnerabilities.

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