



# SUSTAINABILITY PLAN



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# INTRODUCTION

The SURF – Sustainable Rural Future project concludes in December 2025 having created a practical suite of tools, evidence and relationships to help rural territories perceive, mitigate and adapt to climate change. This Sustainability Plan sets out how these results—training, guides, maps, reports, media and the European Rural Network (ERN)—will remain accessible, useful and alive beyond the funding period.

The plan pursues three interlocking aims. First, to preserve SURF’s assets in stable, open, replicable and easily discoverable formats. Secondly, to activate continued use: keeping materials updated, hosting periodic community touchpoints and enabling partners and new actors to reuse content. Thirdly, to grow collaboration through the ERN so that knowledge exchange, joint experimentation and peer support can continue across regions.

Crucially, the plan recognises that resilience is social as well as technical. The ERN provides the connective tissue between people, places and practices: a space where rural stakeholders—individuals and organisations—can access SURF resources, share good practices via the interactive map, co-design learning offers, and initiate joint projects. By aligning content stewardship with community stewardship, the plan safeguards the long-term value and real-world impact of SURF’s results.



# PURPOSE, SCOPE AND AUDIENCE

## PURPOSE

This plan sets out how SURF results will remain available, usable and updated after December 2025. It defines light, practical arrangements for open access and continued dissemination for each project result.

## AUDIENCE

- Project partners
- ERN members (individuals and organisations)
- External users (rural stakeholders, educators, public administrations)

## SCOPE

Project actions have prioritised consolidation and uptake across partner countries and their pilot territories —Province of Castellón (ES), Brescia Lowlands & Province of Palermo (IT), and Gorenjska (SI)— with a view to scaling the results to other European rural regions. These territories represent diverse yet recurring scenarios across Europe, making the solutions developed within SURF transferable beyond the study areas.

The plan focuses on Mediterranean and Continental rural contexts sharing similar climate risk profiles and promotes replication through Local Action Groups (LAGs), municipalities and educational centres. Materials will remain accessible in EN or EN/ES/IT/SL, as specified for each output, and partners will encourage their adoption through national and regional networks, in alignment with the EU long-term vision for rural areas and community-led local development frameworks.



# PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY

## PRINCIPLES

- Each output will remain accessible under a clear name, accompanied by a short description and public access link on the project website.
- Open access: All SURF results are released under the **Creative Commons CC BY 4.0** licence, allowing free use and adaptation with attribution.
- Single access hub: The **SURF website** will continue serving as the central entry point to all outputs for at least 5 years. Responsible: ARCES. Key materials will also be mirrored on partners' institutional websites.
- Wider dissemination: All outputs will be uploaded to the **Erasmus+ Project Results Platform and EPALE** to maximise visibility and long-term accessibility. Responsible: Low Carbon Economy Foundation.
- Community-led relevance: Outputs will remain dynamic. New case studies, updates and translations will be incorporated, ensuring ongoing relevance to rural communities. Responsible: Each project result leader.
- Network engagement: The **European Rural Network Towards Climate Change Resilience** will serve as the ongoing structure connecting partners, stakeholders and new members to sustain exchange, collaboration, and collective learning.



# PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY

## APPROACH

- Each main project result will have a designated **lead partner and one supporting partner responsible** for maintenance, visibility and updates.
- **Access and hosting:** The SURF website will remain the primary access point (Responsible: ARCES). Master files and editable versions will be securely stored in the shared repository managed by the project leader.
- **Regular monitoring:** A light internal check will be conducted twice per year to confirm updates, assess items that may need archiving, and identify actions for partners.
- **Communication and outreach:** Partners will continue sharing SURF materials, events, and updates through institutional channels, the LinkedIn group of the Network, and other relevant EU or regional platforms.
- **Capacity building:** The Network will promote the continued use of the SURF training materials in local workshops, webinars and adult education programmes, supporting replication in other European rural areas.



# SURF OUTPUTS

1

CLIMATE CHANGE  
HANDBOOK



2

PARTICIPATORY ACTION  
RESEARCH (PAR) TRAINING



3

GOOD PRACTICES  
GUIDE



4

INTERACTIVE ONLINE MAP



5

ADULT EDUCATIONAL  
ITINERARY



6

REPORTS (CHALLENGES,  
INITIATIVES, CONNECTIONS)

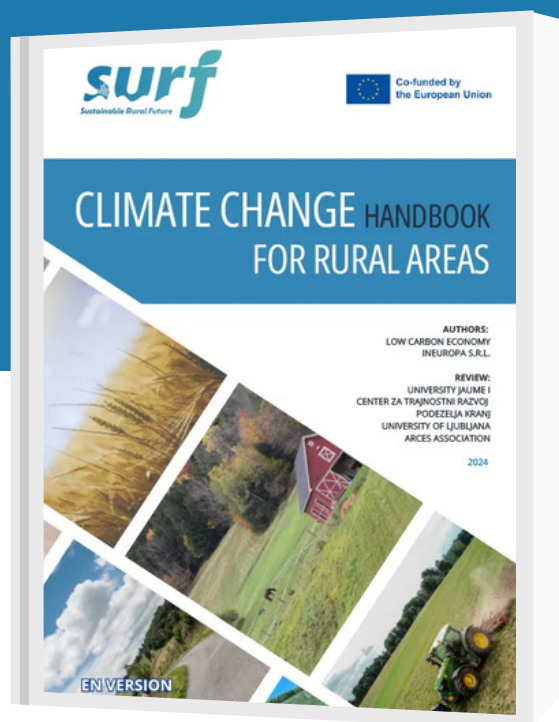


7

EUROPEAN RURAL  
NETWORK (ERN)



# CLIMATE CHANGE HANDBOOK



This Handbook is an introductory framework for the project and serves as an essential resource designed to **enhance the understanding and engagement of climate change adaptation**, particularly in rural settings. The guide aims to educate and empower **adult educators, community members, local authorities and other stakeholders** by providing essential knowledge, engaging resources, and interactive elements that foster community participation and dialogue. By enhancing understanding and involvement, the guide will serve as both a learning tool and a starting point for collaborative identification and addressing of local climate adaptation challenges. This guide encourages discussions and enables citizen participation in **identifying problems and developing climate change adaptation strategies** tailored to each community.



Available in EN, SL, IT, SP.

# TRAINING ON PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH

SURF offers a coherent training pathway that equips adults—local development staff, educators, civic leaders and community organisers—with the skills and confidence to apply Participatory Action Research (PAR) and related tools in rural contexts. The pathway blends foundations in social research, hands-on participatory techniques, and strategic planning so participants can co-design, implement and evaluate community initiatives for climate resilience and sustainable development.

Online courses:

- Core module: **Participatory Tools for Community Development**
- Two optional support modules:
  - **Social Research Techniques for Local Development**
  - **Participatory and Sustainable Local Development Planning**



Core module available in Spanish/Valencian with subtitles in EN, IT and SL.

Support modules are in Spanish with automatic translations into EN, IT and SL.

# GOOD PRACTICES GUIDE (GPG)



Since November 2023, rural actors and stakeholders in Spain, Italy and Slovenia, together with SURF partners, have been documenting how rural communities perceive, mitigate and adapt to climate change.

The GPG is a curated, readable selection of cases from partner regions that:

- span key rural sectors (agriculture, forestry & fisheries, tourism, recreation, infrastructure, etc.);
- address specific climate hazards (e.g., altered rainfall regimes, heat extremes, drought);
- show how different target groups (beekeepers, hunters, tourism providers, farmers, civic groups) are adapting;
- highlight governance levels (local-regional-national) and their systemic approaches.



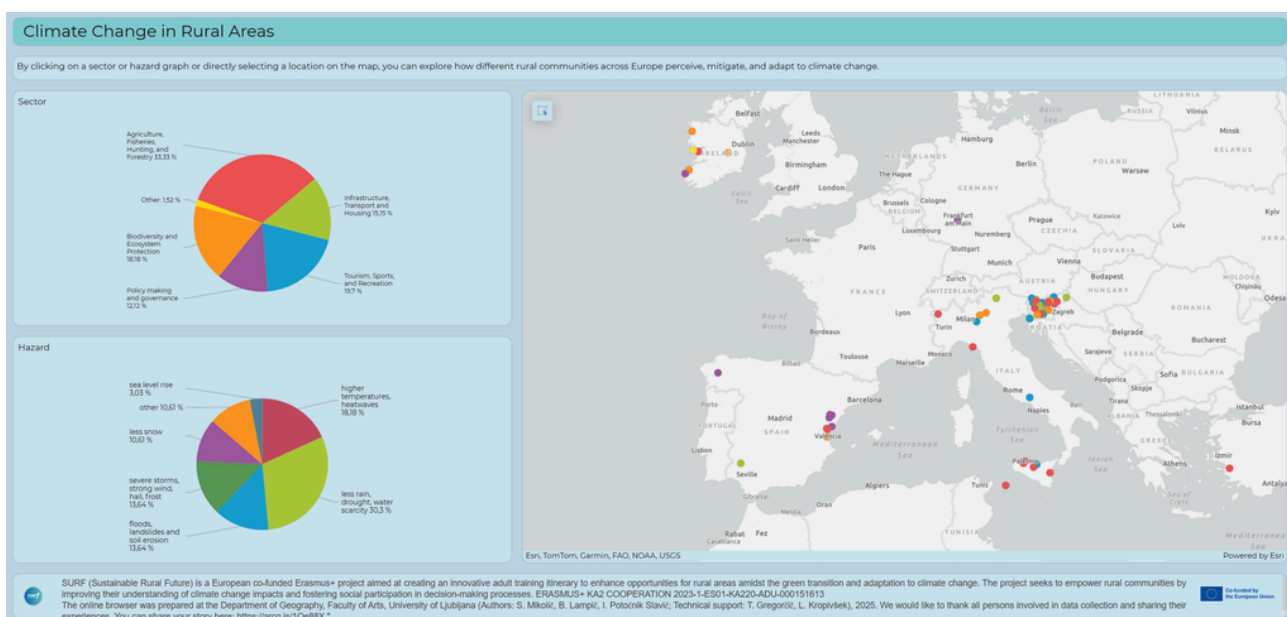
Available in EN, SL, IT, SP.

# INTERACTIVE MAP



The SURF Online Browser (Interactive Map) is an ArcGIS-based, searchable map of good practices collected by SURF and contributors across Europe. It enables to explore cases, open each practice sheet (PDF), and compare how territories with similar risks are responding. Filter by:

- Economic sector (e.g., agriculture, tourism, infrastructure...)
- Climate risk/hazard (e.g., drought, heavy rain/floods, heatwaves, late frosts...)



**OPEN ONLINE BROWSER**

Available in EN, SL, IT, SP.



## WHY USE BOTH?

- The Guide gives a concise, curated entry point.
- The Map lets you search, filter and dive deeper, turning lessons into actionable ideas for your territory.

## ONGOING UPDATES AND NEW CONTRIBUTIONS

The GPG and the map act as both a repository of inspiring local mitigation and adaptation strategies and a living resource that will continue to grow. New members and stakeholders are encouraged to contribute their own examples of climate resilience and sustainable practices, enriching the map and fostering greater awareness and knowledge-sharing across Europe.

- The PDF version of the Guide will remain freely accessible for download.
- New entries will be reviewed by partners, coordinated by UL, and, if accepted, added to the map and future updates of the Guide.
- The online browser will remain available and regularly updated for at least five years, with hosting and public access maintained.
- Continued dissemination will ensure deeper exploration of the content and a wider impact across rural development networks and EU initiatives.

# ADULT EDUCATIONAL ITINERARY



The Adult Training Itinerary is a short, practice-oriented programme that brings together all SURF learning tools to support rural climate adaptation. Designed by the University of Ljubljana and CTRPK with all partners, it targets local authorities, LAGs, farmers, SMEs, NGOs, educators and community groups, helping them understand rural climate risks, use participatory diagnostics and develop local adaptation initiatives. Through modular sessions on hazards and vulnerabilities, climate-smart agriculture, water and landscape management, nature-based solutions and PAR-based community planning, participants work with SURF outputs (Handbook, Good Practices Guide, online browser and PAR course) to co-create elements of a Local Climate Adaptation Action Plan. The itinerary is flexible and replicable, so rural territories can adapt its duration and focus to their needs while strengthening collaboration, governance and practical skills for climate resilience.

Partner responsible for maintenance, visibility and updates: **University of Ljubljana**

# CHALLENGES, INITIATIVES & CONNECTIONS REPORTS

Partners collected and analysed data over two years of project implementation, compiling it into a reports with three complementary sections. It forms the analytical backbone of the project and the basis for subsequent outputs.

- Challenges Report: perceived risks, barriers and needs.
- Initiatives Report: application of PAR and finding solutions.
- Connections Report: cross-territory analysis of similarities /differences and implications for learning pathways.

## Post-project actions:

- The PDF version will remain freely accessible for download from the SURF hub.
- Continued dissemination through E+PRP, EPALE, and SURF and partners' channels will ensure deeper exploration of the content and a wider impact across rural development networks and EU initiatives.



Available in EN.

# EUROPEAN RURAL NETWORK (ERN)

## TOWARDS CLIMATE CHANGE RESILIENCE

The ERN is a long-term collaborative space for exchange, learning, and cooperation among organisations and individuals working to foster sustainable rural development across Europe.

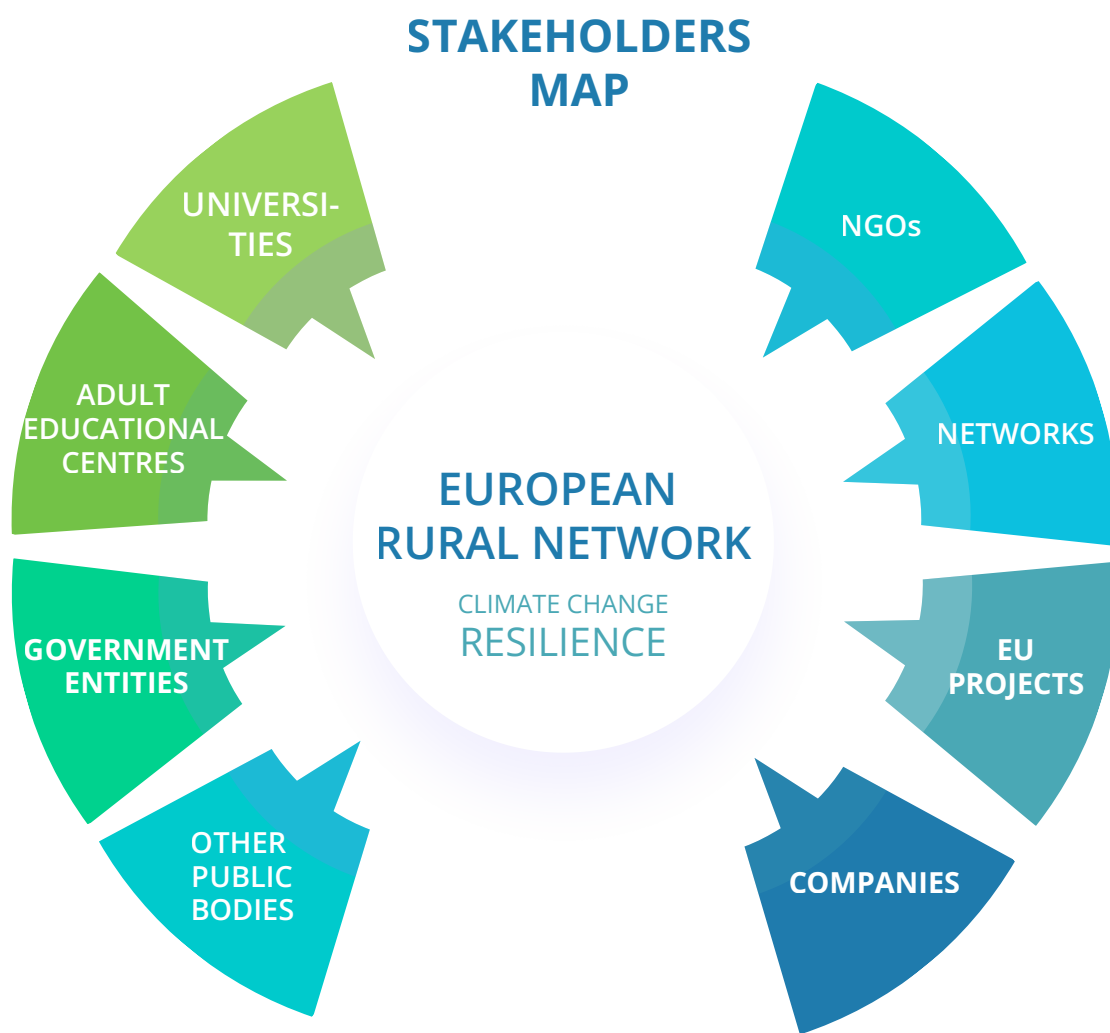
Its purpose is to improve the quality of life in rural areas by promoting education, participation, and practical approaches to sustainability and climate change adaptation. The ERN acts as an open meeting point where members share ideas, experiences, and good practices, and gain access to knowledge and methodologies developed within the SURF project, including the PAR approach.

Ensuring its long-term sustainability is crucial for maintaining and expanding its role as a **collaborative hub for innovation, policy dialogue, and territorial action**.

The network brings together a broad and diverse range of stakeholders, including local and regional authorities, public administration professionals, non-governmental organisations, foundations, and companies engaged in rural development. This diversity not only enriches the dialogue within the network but also ensures that its activities are grounded in the realities of rural communities across different contexts.

Partner responsible for maintenance, visibility and updates: **ARCES**

At present, the ERN brings together around **50 members** from public and private sectors across the partner countries. Its growing membership highlights the need for a transnational platform that fosters cooperation, amplifies local successes, and addresses common challenges in rural regions.



- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Universities</b></li> <li>Universitat Jaume I</li> <li>University of Ljubljana</li> <li>ARCES University College</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Other Public Bodies</b></li> <li>CORERAS (Consorzio Regionale per la ricerca applicata e la sperimentazione)</li> <li>Razvojna agencija Zgornje Gorenjske (Regional development agency)</li> <li>Razvojna agencija Sora (Regional development agency)</li> <li>Savinja, zavod za razvoj podeželja in turizma (Institute of the rural development)</li> <li>Mancomunidad de Alto Palancia</li> <li>Azuébar Municipality</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>NGOs</b></li> <li>Low Carbon Economy Foundation</li> <li>CENTER ZA TRAJNOSTNIRAŽVOJ PODEZELJA KRANJ (Centre for Sustainable Rural Development)</li> <li>Fondazione Castello di Padernello</li> <li>ECOADAPTA</li> <li>Novessendes Foundation</li> <li>Associació Cultural CRESOL</li> <li>Environmental Association LAALMA</li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Adult Educational Centres</b></li> <li>ARCES Association</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>EU Projects</b></li> <li>FRACTAL; PastoralPEU; RUSTIK; StoneWalls4Life; EMPODERA (EmpleaVerde, Fundación Biodiversidad); Erasmus+ KA210: SPARROWS, RURAL SECAPS; Erasmus+ KA220: WOVEN, TREASURE HUNT</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Networks</b></li> <li>Xarxa Experta</li> <li>GAL Valle Trompia</li> <li>CERPOK Preserje, LAS Barje z zaledjem (LAG Barje with hinterland)</li> <li>LAS Prlekija (LAG Prlekija)</li> <li>Slowfood Terreacque Bresciane</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Government Entities</b></li> <li>Občina Izola (Municipality of Izola)</li> </ul>  |   |   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Companies</b></li> <li>InEuropa srl</li> <li>Agriturismo Villa Mirto</li> <li>Enrevall Investments Sl.</li> </ul>           |   |   |



# NETWORK BENEFITS FOR MEMBERS

To encourage continued participation, it is essential to clearly communicate the value of being part of the SURF network. Both individuals and organisations will benefit from:

- **Access to high-quality resources:** Ongoing access to SURF's training materials, methodologies, case studies, and toolkits developed during the project.
- **Visibility and recognition:** Opportunities to showcase activities, share best practices, and be featured in SURF-related dissemination efforts.
- **Collaboration opportunities:** Invitations to participate in future projects, research, and policy initiatives promoted by the network or its members.
- **Peer exchange and knowledge sharing:** Participation in thematic discussions, webinars, and online forums where members can exchange experiences, challenges, and solutions.
- **Professional development:** Learning opportunities through continued engagement with experts, access to resources, and participation in joint events or training.

Membership is open to both individuals and organisations. Interested participants can join through the [online form](#) or by signing the [official letter of support](#).

**JOIN THE NETWORK**



# CROSS-CUTTING SUSTAINABLE STRATEGIES

To ensure the long-term sustainability of the ERN and SURF project results, the project partners believe that communication and awareness raising actions are very important. To this end they have identified practical tools and approaches that can support the ongoing growth and relevance of the network beyond the project's official timeframe. The partners commit themselves to promote the network through:

- The maintenance of the **Project Website** after the funding ends.
- Dissemination of the **Membership Invitation Letter**, available on the official project website, to encourage new members to join the ERN.
- Creation of a dedicated **LinkedIn Group** to share events, ideas, and best practices related to rural development and climate change mitigation across different territories, offering a space for continuous collaboration remaining active after the end of the project.
- Webinars recordings will be accessible through **SURF YouTube channel** and website.
- Create a **section for the ERN** on each partner's institutional project website to enhance the visibility and outreach of the ERN.

These activities are designed not only to support ongoing engagement but also to reinforce the ERN as a living, evolving space for innovation and collaboration in rural sustainability.



# STAKEHOLDER DATABASE

Partners have identified and consolidated stakeholder contacts in a shared Excel file. The database is GDPR-compliant and intended strictly for project purposes.

## PURPOSE

An internal contact base to:

- Invite relevant actors to the ERN and project events.
- Matchmake between territories (e.g., similar hazards/sectors).
- Source new cases for the Interactive Map and future Good Practice Guide updates.
- Target dissemination by country/sector/role.
- Validate the quality and usefulness of project results (peer checks, pilot users).
- Support local events and follow-up engagement.

## MINIMUM DATA FIELDS

- Stakeholder / Associated Partner: organisation or individual name
- Type: LAG, municipality, NGO, SME/company, adult education centre, university, network, individual, public body, etc.
- Country / City
- Sector focus
- Contact details (email/phone)
- Referred by (partner)
- Notes



## ACCESS & PRIVACY

- Not public. Available only to SURF partners.
- Use solely for SURF-related invitations, dissemination, and collaboration.
- Stored on the project's secure shared drive with download restrictions.
- Processing follows GDPR principles.

## STATUS & NEXT STEPS

- Current entries: 82 contacts.
- Partners will continue to add and tag contacts for ERN invitations, Interactive Map contributions and dissemination of related activities.

# SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

## AUTHORS:

ARCES ASSOCIATION

LOW CARBON ECONOMY FOUNDATION

## COLLABORATORS:

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UNIVERSITY OF LJUBLJANA

2025

EN VERSION

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