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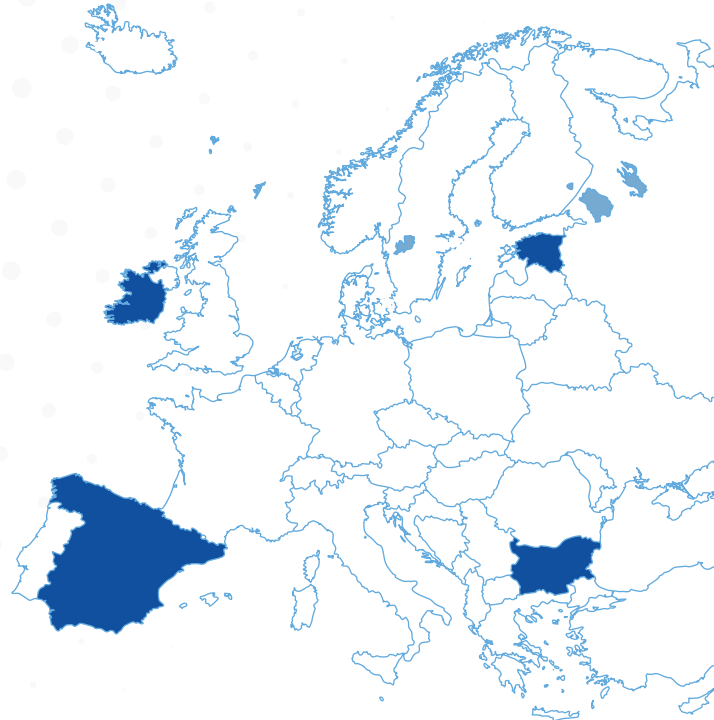
**Coop4RURALGov**

**Coop4RURALGov improves governance through rural proofing, reviewing legislation impact in rural, coastal and mountain areas ensuring citizens equality.**

**[www.interregeurope.eu/coop4ruralgov](http://www.interregeurope.eu/coop4ruralgov)**

# *What have we done so far?*

1. Estonia
2. Bulgaria
3. España
4. Irlanda



# Estonia



On **August 23 (2023)** the national kickoff meeting for the Coop4RuralGov project was held at the Ministry of Regional Affairs and Agriculture. Participants were introduced to the rural proofing concept and the Coop4RuralGov project, and discussions were held with key stakeholders about the expected outcomes and learning opportunities.



On **November 17 (2023)** the second national Estonian stakeholder meeting for the Coop4RuralGov project took place in Alatskivi, Peipsiääre Rural Municipality. The mayor of the municipality opened the meeting with an overview of the ongoing problems and challenges in Peipsiääre. During the meeting, project partners, including the Ministry of Regional Affairs and Agriculture and the Association of Municipalities of Tartu County, provided an overview of activities carried out at both national and international levels. Future activities and the Estonian situation study were also discussed.

From **May 8-10 (2024)** the Estonian study visit for project partners was organized by the Ministry of Regional Affairs and Agriculture and the Association of Municipalities of Tartu County.



The visit began on **May 8** in Peipsiääre Rural Municipality, Tartu County, where project partners met with local entrepreneurs and community leaders. Together, they exchanged good practices during a seminar titled "How to Survive in the Borderland?".



On **May 9**, partners were given an overview of how rural development and management decisions are supported by data-driven management tools, with examples from the portal [www.minuomavalitsus.ee](http://www.minuomavalitsus.ee) dashboards and the large datasets of the Agricultural Registers and Information Board (PRIA). They also discussed cooperation initiatives based on experiences from organizing the "Living in the Countryside" day.

The visit concluded on **May 10** at the Riigikogu (Estonian Parliament) building with a seminar focused on the state's perspective on regional policy and discussions on how better legislation can help achieve the desired outcomes.

# Bulgaria



On Tuesday, **July 18 (2023)** the First Stakeholders' group meeting in Bulgaria within the frame of Coop4RURALGov took place. The two Bulgarian partners, Association Center for Sustainability and Economic Growth /CSEG/ and the Municipality of Bratsigovo, organized an initial stakeholders' group meeting in Bulgaria within the Coop4RURALGov project.

Within this initial stakeholder meeting, the Bulgarian partners also focused on identifying and adapting to the needs, resources and capacities of rural areas. Finding solutions and highlighting the advantages, challenges and opportunities at local and regional level, i.e. at municipal level in Municipality of Bratsigovo and at regional level in Pazardzhik Province, during the new programming period from 2021 to 2027.

The event was attended by various stakeholders such as representatives of public administrations and educational authorities, social workers, representatives of NGOs, energy agencies, and SMEs association. Most of these organizations comprise high-quality experts in specific sectors like education, environment protection, sustainable energy, entrepreneurship, and policy making.



On Tuesday, **October 31 (2023)** the two Bulgarian partners, Association Center for Sustainability and Economic Growth /CSEG/ and the Municipality of Bratsigovo organized the event, inviting representatives of various institutions and organizations involved in policy development at local and regional level, from the Province of Pazardzhik.

During the meeting, the participants were discussing topics like the challenges related to improving the capacity of local governments to jointly develop sustainable policies and making regional impact assessment a routine part of decision-making process of officials as well as for policies, programmes and initiatives approved by legislatures in sparsely populated rural, coastal and mountainous areas were discussed, along with the development and marketing of local resources and the participation of local citizens and entities in these processes.

The event was attended by various policymakers from the Province of Pazardzhik such as representatives of public administrations, NGOs and civil organizations, energy agencies, and SMEs association. Most of these organizations comprise high-quality experts in specific sectors and work on policy improvement at local and regional level of various contemporary topics like education, environment protection, sustainable energy, and entrepreneurship.





On Wednesday, **January 10 (2024)** the Second Stakeholders' group meeting in Bulgaria took place. The participants were discussing topics like the challenges related to improving the capacity of local governments to jointly develop sustainable policies and making regional impact assessment a routine part of decision-making process of officials as well as for policies, programmes and initiatives approved by legislatures in sparsely populated rural, coastal and mountainous areas were discussed, along with the development and marketing of local resources and the participation of local people in these processes.

Within this second stakeholder meeting, the Bulgarian partners also initiated a debate on potential good practices for a sustainable development of rural regions in Bulgaria. Interesting suggestions were given by the participants, and these suggestions are yet to be analysed and proposed as good practices to the rest of the project partners.

The event was attended by various stakeholders such as representatives of public administrations and educational authorities, social workers, representatives of NGOs, energy agencies, and SMEs association. Most of these organizations comprise high-quality experts in specific sectors like education, environment protection, sustainable energy, entrepreneurship, and policy making.



Interregional study visits focused on good practice cases, part of Coop4RuralGov project, was held between **19.02.24** and **22.02.24** in Bratsigovo, Bulgaria. Representatives of all partner organisations from Spain, Ireland, Estonia and Bulgaria attended the event. On the first day, the event was opened by the Mayor of Bratsigovo Municipality – Mrs. Nadezhda Kazakova, who welcomed all guests and briefly introduced them to interesting historical and economic facts about the town. After her speech, a number of good practices and projects taking place on the territory of Bratsigovo were presented to the guests. They learned about the programs for renovation of residential buildings, the renovation of the city stadium, a number of social projects, etc. In the afternoon, the hosts had organized a tourist city tour, where, with the help of local guides, the sights of Bratsigovo and its history were presented.

On **21 February**, the guests visited the village of Chavdar - an example of a municipality with a successful policy in the preparation and implementation of a number of projects funded by the EU and the national budget. One of the core activities in the region is related to the local mining industry, but few years ago the municipality decided to transform Chavdar into a popular touristic site and started to work on that strategy in order to ensure a sustainable development of this rural region in a long-term period.





The amount of investments made in recent years per capita ranks Chavdar among the leading municipalities in the country. It is located in Sofia region in the Zlatishko-Pirdop valley. There they were welcomed by the mayor of the village as well as by the chairwoman of the municipal council. After the welcoming speeches, a tour of the village followed - the partners had the opportunity to get acquainted with the local lifestyle and culture, to taste traditional dishes, as well as to get acquainted with ongoing and already implemented projects of the municipality. Some of the attractions they visited were the folklore centre, the St. Petka area, and the Topolnitsa archaeological park.

# España



The project held its kick-off meeting in Pamplona, Spain, on **26 and 27 April**, with the presence of representatives from the countries that are part of it: Estonia, Bulgaria, Ireland and Spain. On the Spanish side, the NGDO Cives Mundi, an organisation based in Soria, and the Directorate General of Local Administration and Depopulation of the Government of Navarre, which is leading the project, took part. From the other three countries in Pamplona were the Centre for Sustainability and Economic Growth Association from Bulgaria, the Estonian Ministry of Rural Affairs, the Union of Tartu County Municipalities in Estonia, Galway County Council in Ireland and the Municipality of Bratsigovo in Bulgaria.

Eleven people from the four countries participated at the different stages of the meetings.

This kick-off meeting was held in the Palace of Navarre, the seat of the Navarre Regional Government, in two sessions on Wednesday and Thursday (from 11.30 am and 9.30 am respectively). These were working meetings in which questions of the internal functioning of the project, timetable, communication and next steps to be taken were raised. On Wednesday afternoon, the delegations enjoyed a guided tour of Pamplona, including a tasting of the typical "pinchos" (tapas).

ESTUDIO DE LA SITUACIÓN DEL  
MECANISMO RURAL DE GARANTÍA EN  
ESPAÑA Y EN NAVARRA

Mayo del 2024

In **May 2024** the study 'La situación del macanismo rural de garantía en Navarra' (The situation of rural guaranteed macaanism in Navarra) was published.

The study assesses the situation of the rural approach and the specific needs of rural areas in Navarra and in Spain in Navarra and Spain, in order to determine how to integrate these considerations in the formulation and implementation of public policies formulation and implementation of public policies, initiatives and programmes, in order to positively benefit the population living there. positively benefit the population living in these areas.

It carries out an exhaustive and comparative analysis of various aspects, including the institutional and administrative context, socio-economic indicators, public policies, initiatives and programmes, in order to positively benefit the population living there. institutional and administrative context, socio-economic and governance indicators, as well as socio-demographic socio-demographic indicators of population, demography, territory, economy, employment, education, health, population at risk of poverty or social exclusion, and grants and funds for rural and urban areas. for rural and urban areas. All this between 2012 and 2022.



It also includes information on existing legislation and impact assessment mechanisms, as well as existing systems and best practices. and best practices for ensuring balanced and sustainable development, as well as on the main challenges facing the sustainable development, and on the main challenges facing rural areas today.

As a result of this study, a comprehensive picture has been obtained of the situation and challenges facing rural areas in Navarra and the region. facing rural areas in Navarre and Spain, as well as recommendations to improve the formulation and implementation of policies the formulation and implementation of policies, initiatives and public programmes that promote the creation of a concrete and shared narrative of what Navarre and its territorial diversity should be and have. to be and to have.

The project partners met again in Pamplona the week of **16-22 October**, in a meeting framed within the Presura 2023 'Amanecer Rural' Fair, which took place from 20-22 October in the capital of Navarre, and in which we participated in a panel of the event's programme.

# *Irlanda*



The Rural Proofing Project in Galway, Ireland is predicated on the Local Economic and Community Plan (countywide). Through this Plan, it is anticipated that good practice examples will emerge as part of the LECP implementation plan, which will commence when the Local Economic & Community Plan is adopted in 2024.

The Coop4RURALGov project will improve "governance" capabilities in its scope and area of influence by measuring the expected impact on rural and coastal areas of measures adopted in the LECP that will contribute to physical, financial, institutional, social, environmental, and other benefits to a society, community, or group of people through one or more development interventions.

The LECP, as a statutory process, will facilitate the delivery of agreed key actions while fulfilling governance responsibilities.

During **May 2023**, Work progressed on the Socio-Economic Statement which set out the proposed goals and objectives for the LECP. Following approval of the Socio-Economic Statement and draft High-Level Goals by the Economic (SPC) Strategic Policy Committee and approval of the Local Economic and Community Committee a consultant was appointed to lead the public consultation process and to progress to the next stages of the plan.

Galway County Council invited the public to participate in the consultation process for the development of the LECP 2024 – 2030.

The online consultation Portal ([www.galwaycountylecp.com](http://www.galwaycountylecp.com)) ([consult.galway.ie](http://consult.galway.ie)) invited the public to view and access the draft Socio-Economic Statement and High-Level Goals document, participate in surveys and stay informed about the planning process and its goals.

The anticipation is the LECP will go before plenary Council for adoption in the Autumn of 2024.

Galway County Council, together with all partners, have undertaken an initial situation study to assess the situation of the Rural Approach, to describe and assess the general situation and to design, initial data collection strategies for rural proofing initiatives which will in turn feed into a comparative study. These studies will provide an input for the comparative study to define realistic objectives and comparable rural policy development.



Galway County Interregional Study Visit focussed on sharing Good Practice in Galway Ireland. **18th 19th June 2024**

The visit kicked off in County Hall with Presentations on the Local Economic and Community Plan, Public Participation Networks and overview of the Situational Study, this was followed with Site visits to projects across the rural areas of Galway County, from the west in Connemara and Lettermullen, (a small Island and Village on the coast of Southern Connemara) to Portumna, a market town in the south-east of Galway County, where the River Shannon enters Lough- Derg (Lake) in Irelands Hidden Heartlands.

A Site visit was arranged at the Bia Innovator Campus/Food Innovation Hub in Athenry, where the group attended a series of presentations and learned about ongoing Interreg projects by Staff at the facility, this was followed by a tour of the facility and grounds with BIA EU projects team staff and BIA Technical team staff which included networking & discussion opportunities

*<https://biainnovatorcampus.ie/about/>*

*<https://biainnovatorcampus.ie/european-outlook-from-the-outset/>*

A presentation and overview of the Connected Hubs Network and Platform was also given by the Western Development Commission. <https://connectedhubs.ie/>

This was followed by a short tour of RV Facilities in Portumna, and new Trail funded through the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme funded through the Department of Rural & Community Development “Our Rural Future” Rural Development Policy 2021-2025.

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/4c236-our-rural-future-vision-and-policy-context/>

# An interregional cooperation project for improving **policy governance** policies

## Project Partners

**Dirección General de Administración Local y Despoblación del Gobierno de Navarra (ES)**  
ONGD Cives Mundi (ES)  
Association "Centre for Sustainability and Economic Growth" (BG)  
Ministry of Rural Affairs of Estonia (EE)  
Association of Municipalities of Tartu County (EE)  
Galway County Council (IRL)  
PMunicipality of Bratsigovo (BG)

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