

EVENT DESCRIPTION SHEET

PROJECT	
Participant:	Regionalna agencija za razvoj istocne Srbije (RARIS)
PIC number:	933647020
Project name and acronym:	Rural communities' engagement bringing green solutions — RURAL GREEN

EVENT DESCRIPTION			
Event number:	5		
Event name:	WORLD CAFE «CIRCULAR ECONOMY IN TOURISM »		
Type:	World café (conference)		
In situ/online:	in-situ		
Location:	Bosnia and Herzegovina, Banja Luka		
Date(s):	October 6-8, 2025		
Website(s) (if any):	https://rural-green.raris.org		
Participants			
Female:	44		
Male:	20		
Non-binary:	0		
From country 1 Bosnia and Herzegovina:	38		
From country 2 Serbia:	6		
From country 3 Bulgaria:	4		
From country 4 Croatia:	5		
From country 5 Slovenia:	1		
From country 6: Italy	2		
From country 7 Czech:	5		
From country 8 Slovakia:	2		
From country 9 Poland:	1		
Total number of participants:	64	From total number of countries:	9

Description

Provide a short description of the event and its activities.

The fifth transnational partner meeting of the RURAL GREEN project, co-funded by the European Union through the CERV Programme, was held from 6 to 8 October 2025 in Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and organized by the project partner CERD – Center for Education and Rural Development. The event, named “Circular Economy in Tourism” consisted of steering committee meeting, site visits, conference and world cafe, accompanied by « coffee for journalists ». The event brought together 64 participants from 9 European countries, including project partners, rural tourism businesses, ministries, and NGOs.

The three-day programme was designed to combine project management discussions, practical learning through field visits, and an international conference and world cafe focusing on circular economy approaches in rural tourism. The event contributed significantly to the exchange of experiences among participants, deepened the understanding of sustainable development opportunities in rural areas, and created a foundation for new cross-border initiatives.

1. Steering Committee Meeting (6 October 2025, Hotel Jelena)

The event officially began with the Steering Committee Meeting of the RURAL GREEN project, held at Hotel Jelena in Banja Luka. The meeting focused on several key topics related to overall project coordination and the completion of remaining deliverables:

- Review of general project management and progress.
- Discussion on the elaboration and finalization of the RURAL GREEN E-book, which compiles results, good practices, and lessons learned.
- Preparation and coordination for the upcoming online Final Conference planned for late 2025.
- Establishment of the Working Group for Introducing Circular Economy in Rural Areas as a permanent structure to continue promoting project outcomes beyond the project's lifetime.

During the meeting, partners have signed the Memorandum of Understanding on the establishment of the Working Group, marking an important step toward long-term cooperation after the project end.

The meeting reaffirmed partners' shared commitment to promoting circular and sustainable practices in rural development while ensuring the continuity of the RURAL GREEN network after the project's completion.

2. Study Visit and Networking Activities (7 October 2025)

The second day was dedicated to a study visit showcasing examples of sustainable rural tourism and circular economy practices in the region surrounding Banja Luka. The itinerary included:

- A tour of Ljubačevo village, highlighting local rural tourism initiatives and cultural heritage.
- Visit to Rafting Center Kanjon, one of the leading adventure tourism providers in Republika Srpska, known for its environmental responsibility and community involvement.
- A visit to the Marija Zvijezda Monastery, a unique Trappist monastery preserving centuries-old spiritual and cultural traditions.
- Lunch at Lovački Bar, a local restaurant promoting regional gastronomy and short food supply chains.
- A visit to the Crveni Brijeg Winery, an example of family-based entrepreneurship that integrates sustainable viticulture and local production.

The study visit provided an excellent opportunity for participants to exchange experiences with local stakeholders, observe practical examples of rural innovation, and discuss how circular economy principles can strengthen rural tourism and entrepreneurship.

3. International Conference and World Cafe (8 October 2025)

The highlight of the meeting was the International Conference and World Cafe titled “Circular Economy in Tourism”, which gathered more than 60 participants, including representatives of ministries, local governments, businesses, universities, NGOs, and media outlets.

The conference aimed to explore the intersection between the circular economy and rural tourism and to identify opportunities, challenges, and practical pathways for applying circular principles in rural contexts.

The programme consisted of two main segments:

a) Plenary Session

In the first part which has a format of conference panel, five presentations were made:

- Rural Green project and best practices examples given by host organization and RURAL GREEN Project partners
- Living Lab as an example for youth engagement in rural development
- Experience from Czech Republic on Community-Led Local Development
- Case study from Slovakia about Lisov museum
- Food waste as a part of circular economy

The session continued with thematic presentations from RURAL GREEN partners and guests, including contributions from other international initiatives. Presentations illustrated diverse approaches to rural circularity, innovation, and youth entrepreneurship.

b) World Café Session

In the second part of the event, through world café, participants were divided into 4 groups structured around three thematic rounds:

- Opportunities for applying circular economy principles in rural tourism;
- Challenges and barriers to implementation;
- Practical solutions and recommendations to support rural businesses in adopting circular models.

Facilitated discussions enabled participants to contribute insights from their own regions and projects. The results were synthesized into a set of conclusions and recommendations which will be gathered in Policy Paper, aimed at policymakers, tourism organizations, and entrepreneurs.

4. Outcomes and Key Results

The Banja Luka event successfully:

- Strengthened cooperation among project partners and external stakeholders.
- Enhanced knowledge and understanding of circular economy principles in the context of rural tourism.
- Showcased good practices and innovative approaches from local and international examples.
- Established a Working Group dedicated to promoting circular economy in rural areas.
- Collected inputs and recommendations for the forthcoming online Final Conference and for the project's E-book.

The meeting in Banja Luka marked an important milestone in the implementation of RURAL GREEN, reinforcing the project's commitment to building greener, more resilient, and collaborative rural communities across Europe.

Key outcomes included the identification of training and funding needs, policy recommendations, and the formation of a Working Group to support continued collaboration and practical implementation of circular economy approaches in rural areas. The event successfully fostered knowledge exchange and strengthened partnerships across Europe for greener, more resilient rural communities.

This document is also published on the web site: <https://rural-green.raris.org>

HISTORY OF CHANGES		
VERSION	PUBLICATION DATE	CHANGE
1.0	17.10.2025	Initial version