

## 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:	WP7	
Event name:	Final Conference “Practical Solutions for Circular Economy and Citizen Participation”	
Type:	Conference	
In situ/online:	Online	
Location:	Zaječar, Serbia	
Date(s):	13.11.2025	
Website(s) (if any):	<a href="https://rural-green.raris.org">https://rural-green.raris.org</a>	
Participants		
Female:	142	
Male:	94	
Non-binary:	19	
From country 1 [Slovenia]:	36	
From country 2 [Croatia]:	31	
From country 3 [Bosnia]:	42	
From country 4 [Serbia]:	88	
From country 5 [Bulgaria]:	41	
Unable to Determine	17	
Total number of participants:	255	From total number of countries: 5
Description		
<i>Provide a short description of the event and its activities.</i>		
Overview of the Event		

The online conference Practical Solutions for Circular Economy and Citizen Participation was successfully held on 13 November 2025, starting at 11 :00 CET. The event attracted remarkable interest, gathering 255 participants from Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, and Bulgaria.

The objective of the conference was to help stakeholders better understand and practically apply circular economy principles in rural areas through real examples and proven solutions from across the region.

## Participants

The conference brought together representatives of local development agencies, SMEs, civil society organizations, municipal administrations, and experts working in the fields of sustainability, waste reduction, and rural development. With 255 attendees, the event exceeded expectations and confirmed the relevance of circular economy topics in rural communities.

Since the call for conference was published on social networks and participation was open to the public, during the online event, number of participants was bigger than the number of previously registered.

**Before the Conference, through the registration forms, the number of registered participants was 234, with following structure:**

Female: 136

Male: 98

Non-binary: 0

From country 1 [Slovenia]: 44

From country 2 [Croatia]: 25

From country 3 [Bosnia]: 49

From country 4 [Serbia]: 74

From country 5 [Bulgaria]: 42

Total number of registered participants: 234

Total number of countries: 5

**According to the report generated by ZOOM application, the real number of participants on the conference was 255.** Since the participants didn't enter their full name when entering the ZOOM platform, it is not possible to be exact about the gender and country of origin of all participants. This number is based on estimation, but we can consider the estimation very precise. The estimation was done using the following methodology:

### 1. Participant Count & Gender Distribution

This analysis is an **estimate** based on **gendered first names**: Common gendered associations for first names were used (e.g., "Bogdan" is typically male, "Jelena" is typically female). This may not account for all cultural nuances or unisex names.

Total number of unique participants and estimation of their gender.

- **Total Number of Participants: 255**
- **Estimated Number of Women: 142**
- **Estimated Number of Men: 94**
- **Cannot be determined: 19**

This gives a rough distribution of **~56% women** and **~37% men**.

## 2. Participants by Country

**As a first selection criteria, the explicit country codes were used:** country codes (e.g. BG, SRB, CRO, BiH) that many participants have appended to their names, determined their country of origin. **Second criteria was their organization** - many participants were identified through affiliations (e.g. "RRA Savinjska," "LAS," etc., which are Slovenian regional development agencies or local action groups). For names without a code or organization, the most likely country is guessed based on the linguistic origin of the name, which is also an estimation. Names like "Mojca," "Urška," "Živa" are typically Slovenian. Emil, Jordanka, and similar, are typically Bulgarian. Suada, Aida etc. are typically Bosnian, and so on. Some participants are identified by their last name, which, in most cases, are distinctive for Bulgaria, Serbia, Slovenia...

Country	Participant Count	Percentage
<b>Serbia (SRB)</b>	88	34,51%
<b>Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH)</b>	42	16,47%
<b>Bulgaria (BG)</b>	41	16,08%
<b>Slovenia (SLO)</b>	36	14,12%
<b>Croatia (CRO)</b>	31	12,16%
<b>Unable to Determine</b>	17	6,67%
<b>Total</b>	<b>255</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Conference Programme

The event followed the agenda shared with participants:

1. Introduction – Rural Green project and key results was presented by Lead Partner - RARIS.

The opening session presented the goals, activities, and achievements of the Rural Green project, highlighting practical support for rural areas in transitioning toward more sustainable economic models.

2. Good practice examples from five countries:
  - Bosnia and Herzegovina: CERD – Center for Economic and Rural Development, presented by Miodrag Matavulj
  - Bulgaria: Chamber of Commerce Vidin, presented by Krasimir Kirilov
  - Croatia: CEKOM – Center of Competence for Advanced Engineering, presented by Jelena Pirović
  - Serbia: RARIS – Regional Development Agency of Eastern Serbia, presented by Dragan Milutinović
  - Slovenia: RA SAŠA – Development Agency of Savinja–Šalek Region, presented by Mladen Blatnik

Each organization showcased concrete circular economy solutions implemented in rural environments, including resource-saving practices, waste-reduction models, and innovative approaches that strengthen local economies.

3. Discussion and collaboration opportunities

Participants engaged in a dynamic discussion about challenges, replicability of presented solutions, and potential areas for cross-border cooperation. The session provided space for networking and exchange of experiences across the five countries.

## Key Outcomes

Strong participation (255 attendees) demonstrated growing regional interest in practical circular economy approaches.

Participants gained hands-on insights into applying circular economy principles in rural settings.

The event strengthened regional cooperation by connecting organizations and experts from five countries of the region.

The presented good practices encouraged attendees to consider new approaches for improving resource efficiency and supporting sustainable local development.

### Conclusion

The conference successfully fulfilled its goal of sharing knowledge, encouraging cooperation, and promoting practical and replicable circular economy solutions for rural communities. The high level of engagement confirms that the Rural Green project has generated strong regional momentum toward building a more sustainable future.

This Conference was also streamed on the lead partner official Youtube channel and is available on the following link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wu-urjEQPT0&t=228s>

This document is also published on the web site:

<https://rural-green.raris.org>

HISTORY OF CHANGES		
VERSION	PUBLICATION DATE	CHANGE
1.0	20.11.2025	Initial version