

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:	WP6		
Event name:	Local Events		
Type:	workshop		
In situ/online:	in-situ		
Location:	Serbia (Zajecar), Bulgaria (Vidin), Croatia (Nova Gradiška), Slovenia (Velenje), Bosnia and Herzegovina (Banja Luka)		
Date(s):	13.05.2024, 17.10.2024, 25.08.2025, 28.08.2025, 20.11.2025		
Website(s) (if any):	https://rural-green.raris.org		
Participants			
Female:	55		
Male:	78		
Non-binary:	0		
From country 1 [Serbia]:	23		
From country 2 [Bulgaria]:	24		
From country 3 [Croatia]:	22		
From country 4 [Slovenia]:	46		
From country 5 [BIH]:	18		
Total number of participants:	133	From total number of countries:	5
Description			
<i>Provide a short description of the event and its activities.</i>			
<p>Within Work Package 6, all project partners successfully organized one-day local workshops in their respective countries, aimed at identifying, discussing, and proposing practical solutions for greening rural economies and accelerating the transition towards a circular economy, in line with specific local and regional needs.</p>			

Each local event was structured to enable participatory dialogue among key stakeholders and resulted in the development of one national Policy Paper per partner country. These Policy Papers were prepared through interactive workshops and consultations and reflect locally grounded challenges, opportunities, and proposed measures.

All five Policy Papers have been compiled and included as annexes in the project E-book, which was developed to ensure wide dissemination of project results. The E-book presents the main activities, outputs, and good practices of the project, provides concise summaries of discussions held during both local and international events, and showcases the Policy Papers and other key outcomes. The E-book has been distributed to project participants and stakeholders and is publicly available on the project website.

Local workshops also served as a platform for:

- Sharing and transferring experiences and results from international project events,
- Further discussing key topics raised at transnational level,
- Strengthening cooperation between local actors and international experts.

The main target groups of the local events were local stakeholders, rural inhabitants, local authorities, civil society organisations, and SMEs, with the participation and support of experts from neighbouring countries. All events were conducted in the national languages of the host countries, ensuring accessibility and strong local engagement.

As a follow-up to the local workshops, partners finalized the Policy Papers, which focus on:

- Greening the rural economy,
- Empowerment of rural women in the green economy,
- Access to education and training,
- Control over productive resources,
- Participation in decision-making processes,
- Changes in household structures,
- Impacts of climate change and digitalisation

These documents outline concrete activities and provide recommendations addressed to local self-governments and decision-makers, aiming to support long-term transition to circular and sustainable rural development. Each Policy Paper was prepared in the national language of the partner and translated into English.

Description of Local Events

Serbia – Zaječar

Date: 13 May 2024

The local event was organized in Zaječar, Serbia, on 13 May 2024, with the primary objective of increasing awareness and strengthening knowledge about circular economy principles and their application in rural and regional development, with a special focus on Eastern Serbia.

The event gathered 24 participants (12 women and 12 men), of whom 20 were from Serbia and 4 from Bulgaria, contributing to a valuable cross-border exchange of perspectives and practices.

The workshop was opened by Mr. Vladan Jeremić, Director of RARIS, who emphasized the strategic importance of the circular economy for sustainable economic transformation and rural resilience. A presentation of the RURAL GREEN project was delivered by Mr. Dragan Milutinović, Project Manager of RARIS.

The core of the event consisted of a moderated panel and interactive workshop covering:

1. Circular economy as a new business approach;
2. Environmental conditions and circular economy in Eastern Serbia;
3. Development of recommendations for a circular future of rural Serbia.

The event concluded with an open discussion. Participants highlighted the need for stronger cooperation between local authorities, businesses, and civil society, improved access to training and

information, and stronger institutional support for rural entrepreneurs. The workshop generated concrete inputs for the Serbian Policy Paper.

Bulgaria – Vidin

Date: 17 October 2024

The local workshop was held in Vidin, Bulgaria, and gathered 25 participants, including five representatives of partner organisations from Serbia and Slovenia. Participants included representatives of rural municipalities, NGOs, community centres, and regional institutions.

The workshop focused on sharing outcomes of the international project events, showcasing good practices from Bulgaria and partner countries, and jointly developing policy proposals. These proposals were consolidated into the Bulgarian Policy Paper, which outlines solutions for greening the rural economy and accelerating circular transition, with a strong focus on the empowerment of rural women.

Participant feedback confirmed that the event:

- Successfully achieved its objectives,
- Delivered clear and relevant content,
- Was well organized and highly rated in terms of speaker quality and knowledge improvement,
- Strengthened networking and future cooperation.

Croatia – Nova Gradiška

Date: 25 August 2025

A local follow-up event was held in Nova Gradiška, Croatia, after the international World Café conference “Circular Economy in Manufacturing Industry” (February 2025).

The event focused on transferring international discussions to the local level and addressed:

- European values of rural sustainability,
- Sustainable transition in rural areas,
- The role of local communities in shaping manufacturing policies,
- European circular economy models.

The event gathered 18 participants (5 women and 13 men). Discussions explored challenges such as lack of infrastructure, limited access to finance, low awareness, fragmented production, and demographic decline, while highlighting achievements and future visions. The outcomes formed the basis of the Croatian Policy Paper.

Slovenia – Velenje

Date: 28 August 2025

The local event took place at Ljudska univerza Velenje, organised by RA-SAŠA. The workshop gathered 43 participants (18 women and 25 men), including local stakeholders, experts, and community members.

The programme included:

- Presentations of project goals and international experiences,
- Q&A sessions,
- Open discussions on circular economy applications in regional development.

The event successfully strengthened awareness, stakeholder engagement, and contributed to national policy inputs for Slovenia.

Bosnia and Herzegovina – Banja Luka

Date: 20 November 2025

The local event had a title “Development of Circular Economy and Sustainable Food Systems in Local Communities (with focus on rural tourism)”

The workshop was organised by CERD as a continuation of the international conference held in October 2025.

The event gathered 23 participants from three European countries, including project partners, rural tourism businesses, ministries, and NGOs.

The programme included:

- Presentation of key policy recommendations,
- Good practices from Domestica and CERD,
- Participatory validation of policy proposals,
- Presentation of the B2GreenHub platform by ONEX Digital Innovation Hub.

The main outcome was the formal acceptance of the national Policy Paper and the strengthening of dialogue between local stakeholders and decision-makers regarding green economy models in sustainable food systems and rural tourism.

Overall results of WP6

The local events under WP6 successfully:

- Strengthened local capacities and stakeholder engagement;
- Transferred international knowledge to the local level;
- Enabled participatory development of five Policy Papers;
- Contributed to long-term institutional and policy dialogue on circular economy and rural sustainability.

HISTORY OF CHANGES		
VERSION	PUBLICATION DATE	CHANGE
1.0	09.12.2025	Initial version (new MFF).