

Transforming Rural Landscapes

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Service offering

For LAGs

Description

Transforming Rural Landscapes (TRL) is an international cooperation format for Local Action Groups that want to explore how vacant or underused rural spaces can be activated for culture, creative work, entrepreneurship, and community life. It is designed for rural territories that see potential in empty buildings and local infrastructure, but need a clearer path for how to move from scattered ideas to concrete opportunities.



About Us

Rural Radicals is a innovation agency dedicated to empowering non-urban creative spaces and communities across Europe. We support local governments, NGO's and entrepreneurs with the knowledge, network and strategy they need to transform underused buildings into thriving places. The Creative Grounds framework is how we do that, offering everything from inspiration to activation of vacant rural buildings, developed from years of hands-on work in rural regeneration across Europe.

The TRL format

TRL is a nine-month learning trajectory for LAGs working on rural activation and the reuse of vacant buildings. Each month, project partners come together for a check-in, and the programme is collectively shaped to fit the needs of each LAG's local project and strategic plan.

The trajectory includes three core components:

- 3 public webinars
- 3 study visits
- 1 shared publication

Rather than offering one fixed model, TRL is designed to help each territory understand what is specific about its own places, what kinds of uses may fit them, and what conditions need to be in place for real activation to happen.

Who is it for?

TRL is designed for LAGs that want to strengthen their approach to vacant buildings, rural infrastructure, cultural activation, and community-led rural development. It is for territories that want inspiration, but also structure: practical examples, strategic conversations, international peer learning, and a clearer sense of what kinds of actions, pilots, or collaborations could be developed locally. The aim is not only to exchange ideas, but to help each LAG identify realistic next steps for its own territory and connect local ambition with a broader European network.

Three components of the TRL

The full project is designed and coordinated by the Rural Radicals team for quality insurance and optimal impact for all participating organisations.

1. Public webinars

Online sessions that bring together LAGs, municipalities, researchers, practitioners, and invited experts around key themes in rural transformation, covering topics such as building mapping, rural–urban connections, and the role of culture and creativity in local development. Each session builds shared knowledge while positioning local challenges within a wider European discussion. The project partners decide upon the topics together.

2. Study visits

Place-based visits hosted by partner territories, combining local presentations, site visits, and participatory workshops open for all local stakeholders of the LAG area. Partners engage directly with buildings, landscapes, governance contexts, and community dynamics, moving from abstract ideas to grounded territorial learning.

3. Publication & public presentation

A final publication documents the insights, methods, and reflections gathered across the full trajectory, designed to be useful beyond the immediate partnership and presented publicly at a relevant European conference or sector event.

Value for participating LAGs

Through online sessions, study visits, peer exchange, and a final publication, LAGs gain practical inspiration, visibility, and concrete tools to strengthen local rural development strategies and prepare future transformation projects.

The publication gives participating LAGs a concrete and shareable output that translates the TRL process into clear insights, examples, and recommendations. It can be used to communicate the value of the work to local stakeholders, municipalities, policymakers, funders, and community partners, while also strengthening the visibility of each territory within a wider European rural development conversation.

Beyond documentation, it becomes a practical advocacy and positioning tool: showing what has been learned, what can be replicated, and why vacant rural spaces deserve strategic attention and investment.

TRL 2027

A new edition of TRL is now being prepared for 2027, and the application is open for a limited number of LAGs from different European countries. We are looking for LAGs that are interested in rural transformation through empty and underused spaces, cultural and creative regeneration, rural–urban linkages, and new forms of local development. Participation is especially relevant for LAGs that want to explore these themes together with municipalities, local initiatives, and other territorial actors in a structured but collaborative format.

For TRL 2027, 3 LAG spots are available. The starting date is not decided yet, this depends on the availability of the participating LAG's, but is anticipated for the beginning of 2027 with a duration of approximately 9 months.

Outcomes TRL 2026

- **4 LAG partner organisations across 3 countries** are currently involved in TRL: Finland, the Netherlands, and Romania.
- So far, TRL has included **2 international study visits**, each one involving a delegation of 25+ participants.

The project has hosted **2 open webinars with 100+ participants in total, reaching people from 30 countries**. Across the current edition, **4 local projects** are in progress in partner territories. TRL has already brought in 5 rural development expert speakers on topics including building mapping, rural–urban connections, and the reuse of vacant buildings.

What happens next?

It starts with a first conversation. We would simply like to hear where your LAG currently stands, what kinds of vacant spaces or rural transformation questions are relevant in your territory, and whether TRL could be a good fit for your priorities in 2027. From there, we can explore together whether participation in the next TRL trajectory makes sense and what form it could take.

Contact Details

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