



VERVE - co-creative Visioning procEsses for tRansformative social innoVation in rural arEas

VERVE aims to explore and enable transformative social innovation (TSI) in European rural areas. Transformative change is urgently needed to break free of unsustainable development paradigms and to build regenerative futures where both socio-economic wellbeing and ecosystem health can thrive. To address this challenge, VERVE seeks to: 1) develop a transdisciplinary framework that broadens the concept of TSI to incorporate place-based socio-ecological regeneration; 2) prototype and test a novel methodology for co-creative place-based visioning, to shape future regenerative pathways for local governance processes. VERVE employs an action-oriented approach, engaging multi-sectoral and multi-level stakeholders, and empowering youth and women. It does so in partnership with a Local Action Group (LAG), a bridging organization acting as a social innovation catalyst in the case study area. This, like many rural areas, faces pressing sustainability challenges, while showing potential for innovative bottom-up experimentation. VERVE yields impacts at multiple dimensions: it activates synergies across different scientific disciplines (e.g. political science, rural sociology, human geography, future studies) and develops cutting-edge visual and arts-based techniques for sustainability science; it fosters community deep learning through inclusive deliberation and co-creation of solutions; it supports locally-led innovation pathways, empowering key players (i.e. LAGs) with new collaborative tools and sustainability narratives; it provides empirical insights and a portfolio of instruments on TSI (papers, toolkit, policy brief), contributing to the relevance and effectiveness of EU policies (e.g. CAP, Green Deal, Social Cohesion). VERVE matches the fellow's experience in action-oriented place-based sustainability approaches with the host's expertise in social innovation and rural governance (UNIPD), and with the secondment host's excellence in transdisciplinary research (UBERN).

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Total EU Contribution: Euro 183.473,28

Call ID: H2020-MSCA-IF-2020

Project Duration in months: 24

Start Date: 01/09/2022

End Date: 31/08/2024

Find out more: <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101025710>