

EVENT DESCRIPTION SHEET

(To be filled in and uploaded as deliverable in the Portal Grant Management System, at the due date foreseen in the system.)

 *Please provide one sheet per event (one event = one workpackage = one lump sum.)*

PROJECT	
Participant:	Municipality of San Xoán de Río
PIC number:	889765675
Project name and acronym:	<i>Connecting Rural Europe: Networking and development in small towns</i> Rural EU

EVENT DESCRIPTION			
Event number:	WP 3		
Event name:	NATIONAL FOCUS GROUPS FOR RURAL YOUTH (SPAIN)		
Type:	Focus Group		
In situ/online:	In situ		
Location:	San Xoán de Río, Ourense (Spain)		
Date(s):	24/05/2025		
Website(s) (if any):	https://sanxoanderio.es/gl/nova/rural-eu-conectando-la-europa-rural		
Participants			
	Female:	14	
	Male:	18	
	Non-binary:	0	
	From country 1 [Spain]:	31	
	From country 2 [Romania]:	1	
	Total number of participants:	32	From total number of countries: 2
Description			
<i>Provide a short description of the event and its activities.</i>			
The event held in San Xoán de Río (Ourense, Spain) on May 24th marked the continuation of a participatory process that began with a survey involving 86 young people from rural Galicia.			

The aim was to explore their experiences, aspirations, and challenges while living in small villages, and to give voice to a generation that is often absent from rural policy debates. The survey findings served as the basis for a collaborative, in-person focus group that brought together **32 participants** from across the region.

The event followed a structured format, combining institutional engagement, youth-led dialogue, and participatory workshops:

- **10:00 – Institutional Opening**
 - Patricia Domínguez (Mayor of A Pobra de Trives)
 - José Miguel Pérez (Mayor of San Xoán de Río)
 - María Álvarez (Ministry for the Ecological Transition and Demographic Challenge – MITECO)
- **10:15 – Interventions by Youth Political Organisations**
 - Iago Suárez (Galiza Nova)
 - Borja López (Xuventudes Socialistas)
 - Nicole Grueira (Novas Xeracións)
- **10:30 – Inspirational Talks**
 - Geanina Lascu (Equality)
 - Pablo Osorio (Rural Entrepreneurship)
 - Rocío Ovalle (Designing the Future from the Land)
 - Dani Diéguez (Strengths of Rural Mindsets)

- **11:10 – World Café (Part 1):**

Small group work identifying needs and opportunities for living and thriving in rural areas.

- **11:50 – Networking Coffee Break**

Informal space with snacks to foster connections among participants.

- **12:20 – World Café (Part 2):**

Continuation of group discussions focused on potential solutions and proposals.

- **13:30 – Conclusions**

Summary and collective reflection of each team's contributions.

- **13:50 – Institutional Closing**

- José Miguel Pérez (Mayor of San Xoán de Río)
- Patricia Domínguez (Mayor of A Pobra de Trives)

Throughout the **World Café sessions**, participants addressed three key themes of the Focus Group:

- **Youth participation and engagement in rural communities**
- **Access to opportunities: employment, education, mobility**
- **Visions for the future of rural Galicia**

The predominantly quantitative findings from the earlier survey were complemented by **rich qualitative input** gathered during the group sessions. Participants expressed both the barriers and the deep emotional bonds they feel with their territories. They shared how difficult it can be to access services, jobs, and housing—but also highlighted the peace, identity, and sense of community that rural life provides.

Key ideas and proposals raised during the event included:

- Establishing youth councils at municipal and regional levels
- Strengthening public transport and digital infrastructure
- Expanding opportunities for rural youth entrepreneurship
- Facilitating cross-border youth collaboration between Galicia and northern Portugal
- Increasing support for returning migrants and newcomers
- Promoting cultural and leisure initiatives led by young people
- Ensuring access to housing and co-working spaces in small towns

As reported by the regional media, the event demonstrated the **willingness of rural youth to shape the future of their communities**. They are not only asking to be heard—they are proposing concrete actions and demanding tools to stay, return, and lead.

The results of this event, alongside mirror activities in Italy, Croatia, and Romania, will contribute to a transnational report feeding into WP5 of the RuralEU project. The group of participants will continue to be engaged in future public events, contributing to long-term strategies for the revitalisation of rural Europe.

HISTORY OF CHANGES

VERSION	PUBLICATION DATE	CHANGE
1.0	29.05.2025	Initial version (new MFF).
2.0	20.06.2025	updated link to the website