



ROBUST Project

Unlocking Rural-Urban Synergies – Thematic workshop on Urban-Rural Connections

“The Vibrant Rural North 2030”

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“Cities are centres of industry and innovation while the countryside remains a place for food production and recreation.”

This image often dominates our understanding of rural and urban areas. ROBUST breaks with this false dichotomy and stresses inter-connection, interdependence and blending of rural, peri-urban and the urban areas.

ROBUST

- a) to advance our understanding of the interactions and dependencies between rural, peri-urban and urban areas and
- b) to identify and promote policies, governance models and practices that foster mutually beneficial relations.

Improved governance arrangements and synergies between rural, peri-urban and urban areas will in turn contribute to Europe's smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, maximising the creation of rural jobs and value-added.

To achieve these goals, ROBUST works with 11 Living Labs and 5 Communities of Practice.

Five domains of spatial relations & interdependencies

1. New businesses and labour markets
2. Public infrastructures and social services
3. Sustainable food systems
4. Cultural connections
5. Ecosystem services

What drives businesses and job opportunities in rural and urban areas?



Urbanisation, suburbanisation, rural depopulation and counter-urbanisation processes all impact on the development of new businesses and job opportunities in rural and urban areas. Yet, socio-economic interrelations between rural, peri-urban and urban spaces and economic activities are highly complex. It is critical to understand how and under which rural-urban interactions can translate into a more balanced and more inclusive socioeconomic development.

How can public infrastructures and services be delivered equitably?



Public infrastructures and services, such as health care and education, are cornerstones for the well-being of citizens. Changes in the technology, access and demand for these services imply a re-thinking of rural-peri-urban-urban boundaries and include new modes of service provision. This raises questions about equitable access, fair assessment, representation and compensation of rural and urban needs and interests.

How are new food systems redefining urban-rural linkages?



Europe's urban areas are provided with food through spatially extended food supply chains. Recently, an increasing awareness about some of the negative social, cultural, economic, health and environmental side-effects of globalised food chains has emerged. Regional food policies are trying to reshape rural-urban linkages through food and to create links with other policy domains like public health, social equity and regional economic growth.

How do rural-urban relations affect our natural resources?



Ecosystems provide a wide variety of goods and services such as renewable energy, purification of air and water, climate change mitigation and adaptation. Urbanisation trends impact upon land use and therefore on the availability, accessibility and quality of ecosystem goods and services. This makes it important to identify the functional relationships between rural and urban areas and their effect on the provision of these services.

Cultural connections



Rural and urban areas share cultural features and qualities with each other that are appreciated by residents as well as visitors. Understanding the blurring of rural-urban boundaries is crucial for understanding dynamics, such as rural commuting, rural lifestyles, cultural entrepreneurship or the commercialisation of cultural elements in rural areas.

ROBUST is a European research project involving 24 partners from 11 countries. It is coordinated by Wageningen University in the Netherlands. The project receives funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 727988. ROBUST kicked off in June 2017 and will run for 48 months until 2021.

Rural-urban.eu is a website operated by ROBUST, a project funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 program. The site gives regular updates on the activities, news and results of ROBUST in particular and the topic of rural-urban interactions in Europe in general. It serves as an entry point into this topic and a place to debate the latest developments of Rural-Urban Europe.

Thank you!

<http://rural-urban.eu/about>



