

## **Memorandum of Understanding**

### **Between the CERUI Partnership**

**And following party**

**COMPANY NAME ADDRESS AND MAIL/CONTACT PERSON**

#### **1. PREAMBLE**

The **CERUSI** project (Central European Rural Social Innovation), funded through the Interreg Central Europe Programme, has been successfully implemented by the CERUSI Partnership between 01.02.2020 and 31.01.2022. The CERUSI Partnership is compiled of the following organisations:

1. CERUSI RSI Partnership
2. Regionalmanagement Burgenland GmbH
3. Social Impact gGmbH
4. Fondazione Democenter-Sipe – Democenter-Sipe Foundation
5. Fundacija za izboljšanje zaposlitvenih možnosti PRIZMA, ustanova - Foundation for Improvement of Employment Possibilities PRIZMA
6. Nezisková organizácia EPIC - EPIC non-profit organization
7. Fundacja Fundusz Współpracy - Cooperation Fund Foundation
8. Regionální rozvojová agentura jižních Čech RERA a.s. - Regional Development Agency of South Bohemia
9. Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio di Modena - Foundation Cassa di Risparmio di Modena

The project aimed to strengthen skills and capacities for social innovation and social entrepreneurship in rural areas throughout Central Europe. It used a bottom-linked, co-creative and transnationally embedded regional development approach through the establishment of a temporary support framework for social innovators.

In order to **ensure the sustainability of the project and its outputs**, explained in the following section, and **to raise awareness on and knowledge of the importance of social innovation and social entrepreneurship**, the signing parties hereby establish the Rural Social Innovation Partnership.

The following components have been established throughout the course of the project:

- The transnational *Rural Social Innovation Lab Caravan*, which has harvested the creative and socially innovative ideas in rural areas of the CE region and connected them with challenges identified on the regional and transnational level via the RSI\_Skyrocket platform.
  - The RSI\_Caravan approach enabled people to get in touch with citizens in their communities and their home region. It identified challenge owners who are looking for sound and innovative solutions for societal problems, and solution proposers who had innovative ideas tackling societal challenges. It was operationalised in the region by renting caravans, setting up interactive tour stops in local municipalities and by renting stands at local festivals. The Lab Caravan concept not only lays out a strategy on how to casually (yet structured) exchange with citizens about their daily challenges and demands living in rural areas. What is more, the concept also presents ingredients to guide conversations towards first steps in discussing and developing ideas to remedy local malfunctions and shortcomings.
- The *RSI\_Lab modules*: made use of the ideas harvested in the Lab Caravans. This approach helped actors turn their sketched ideas into reality and to adapt them to context specific situations and conditions. The Rural Social Innovation Labs approach helped participants ask the right questions, get structured feedback on their thoughts and concepts and provided a framework to analyse, hone and prototype ideas. Therefore an intermediary network connecting innovators, policy makers, researchers and financiers had been established to create concrete and tangible impacts in the regions. The RSI\_Labs connected the stakeholders in innovation sprints in order to enhance competencies related to the understanding, design, facilitation and implementation of social innovation and social entrepreneurship.
- The *RSI Academy*: is a comprehensive educational platform on social innovation covering topics from Stakeholder Engagement to Impact Finance. It was created in the scope of the Central Europe Social(i)Makers Project and was transformed into a regionally tailored “Rural SI Skyrocket Platform in the CERUSI project. It embeds transnationally facilitated online interaction into actual social and physical relations between innovators, policymakers, social business support organisations, researchers and private actors. It provides specific training and upskilling modules from the SENTINEL project for mentoring and support structures for social enterprises and the RAIN-Business model developed in the H2020 project LiveRuR for rural circular economy.

These outputs all together have contributed to an improved capacity of public and private actors to design, implement and evaluate social innovation initiatives in peripheral and rural regions by introducing needed knowledge resources and expertise via transnational connections and the exchange of experience on multi-level governance management models, as well as by developing necessary tools to institutionalize a social innovation accelerator framework in rural regions.

The signing parties therefore agree to actively make use of these outputs, to maintain them to the best of their abilities and to foster and spread social innovation and the importance of social entrepreneurship.

## **2. JOINT ACTIVITIES**

In order to connect actors further, not only to local authorities, but also to transnational knowledge networks, the CERUSI partners thus hereby establish the RSI\_Partnership. The MoU signed by the members of the transnational RSI\_Partnership will ensure the sustainability and visibility of the importance of social entrepreneurship and social innovation in rural regions in Central Europe.

The Partnership is a low threshold, high impact network that connects actors from rural and peripheral regions in Central Europe. The RSI\_Partnership ensures the sustainability of the project outputs, strengthens regional development, and shall also act as multiplier for the proven pilot concepts implemented. In order to ensure a broad impact of the measures taken, the participating and associated partners use their networks in the Central European region to get other regional actors engaged in the Partnership, thereby equipping citizens, innovators, entrepreneurs and regional and local authorities with the necessary resources and skills to address their communities' challenges.

Parties declare that they are determined to establish this active future cooperation framework and therefore have agreed to:

- raise awareness of and actively promote the importance of social entrepreneurship and social innovation in rural areas,
- make use of the project's outputs (Caravan Approach, Labs Approach, RSI Academy, Transnational Strategy) to the best of their abilities,
- provide support for new ideas, coordinate new RSI\_labs in the regions and exchange regional experiences on challenges, solutions and methods to support people inspired to make a change in their local communities.

### **3. LEGAL STATUS**

The parties have entered into this Memorandum of Understanding on a good faith basis for the purposes of future cooperation. This Memorandum of Understanding does not impose any legal or financial obligations on the Parties whatsoever, it is not intended to be legally binding on the Parties and do not constitute representations on which either party may rely.

After carefully reading and interpreting the above provisions, the parties jointly sign this Memorandum of Understanding, as fully corresponding with their contractual intentions.

Vienna, 20 January 2022

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**COMPANY NAME**