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## Culture and cultural innovation

- **Purpose:** Foster cultural activities and creative industries to strengthen rural identity and economy.
- **Challenges:** Limited funding, digital divide, and lack of cultural infrastructure in rural areas.
- **Relevant EU Policies and Initiatives:** Creative Europe Programme, New European Bauhaus initiative, Digital Europe Programme.<sup>1</sup>
- **Opportunities for Rural Actors:** Local organizations can apply for cultural grants, promote digital skills, and influence cultural policy frameworks.

### MFF Insights<sup>2</sup>

- Support for culture is integrated in the MFF proposals despite limited EU competence, with solid indicators on participation, gender, and cross-border cooperation.
- That been said, rural cultural ecosystems remain undervalued, with indicators still prioritising quantitative outputs over qualitative resilience.
- Missing are measures of fair working conditions, income diversity of artists, or the role of digital innovations in broadening access. Without these, cultural aspects in rural areas risk being seen only through the prism of tourism or urban regeneration.
- The opportunity lies in reframing culture as a driver of rural innovation and social cohesion, embedding new metrics around inclusiveness, resilience, and media trust.

### Questions

#### 1. Culture and cultural innovation

- 1.1. Rural culture is often seen as “traditional” — how do we turn it into a driver of *innovation* and EU-wide cultural leadership?
- 1.2. Could EU funds enable cultural initiatives in rural areas to scale like startups — with cross-regional “cultural unicorns”?
- 1.3. How can rural communities own their cultural data and digital heritage, instead of being passive content providers for platforms?

#### EU Budget Specific

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<sup>1</sup> Sinerma, J., & Pazos-Vidal, S. (2025). Analysis of EU policies around rural innovation, RURACTIVE Policy Brief. Zenodo. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15227863>

<sup>2</sup> AEIDL on behalf of RURACTIVE submission public consultation EU's next long-term budget (MFF) – implementing EU funding with Member States and regions - Feedback from: European Association for Innovation in Local Development (AEIDL)

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- a. Rural culture is often seen as “traditional”. How can EU support help it evolve into a source of local innovation, social cohesion, and wider European cultural value, beyond tourism?
  - b. Current indicators mainly track participation and cross-border cooperation. What new metrics could better capture resilience, fair income and working conditions for artists, and the role of digital innovation in rural cultural ecosystems?