RURACTIVE Rural Development Drivers

Sustainable multimodal mobility

- **Purpose:** Promote integrated transport solutions that reduce emissions and improve connectivity in rural areas.
- **Challenges:** Limited infrastructure, high dependency on private cars, and lack of investment in public transport options.
- **Relevant EU Policies and Initiatives:** EU Green Deal, Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy, TEN-T policy for rural connectivity.[1]
- **Opportunities for Rural Actors:** Rural actors can advocate for inclusion in mobility funding programs, pilot multimodal hubs, and engage in regional transport planning.

MFF Insights[2]

- Transport funding remains supply-heavy, with strong coverage of modes and decarbonisation targets, but insufficient emphasis on rural mobility.
- The new Performance Framework Indicators track kilometers of infrastructure or vehicles deployed, while rural realities, with handicaps on low-density demand, affordability, and accessibility, are not systematically monitored.
- This creates a gap between EU ambitions and local needs: shared mobility, demand-responsive transport, or rural accessibility are not captured in the performance framework.
- Addressing this requires new social sustainability metrics (affordability metrics, accessibility for vulnerable groups i.e. elderly/disabled, rural coverage) and stronger multimodal coordination indicators to integrate rural into wider mobility corridors.

Questions:

1. **Sustainable multimodal mobility**

   1.1. How can rural mobility leapfrog straight into climate-neutral transport, instead of waiting for urban solutions to "trickle down"?

   1.2. What if we designed mobility in rural areas as a *service*, not an infrastructure — what would it look like?

   1.3. Can EU funds help rural communities co-create their own low-cost, flexible mobility systems, instead of relying on top-down models?

EU Budget specific:

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

[2] 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)

a. How can the next EU funding period shift from measuring infrastructure outputs to measuring real accessibility ensuring that rural residents, including older and vulnerable groups, can move affordably and reliably?
b. What new performance indicators could capture affordability, inclusiveness, and coverage in rural areas, making social outcomes as visible as decarbonisation targets?